

TAPROOT DANCE* WORKSHOP

WHAT IS DANCE? NON-UTILITARIAN BODY MOVEMENTS – movement to “feel good”, or for symbolic, magical, religious or artistic reasons.

WHAT ARE THE MOST BASIC DANCES? In the Balkans, where hands are held, most movements are confined to the legs and feet.

Because we’re balanced on two legs, in order to move, one can

- A. shift from one leg to the other (Uneven Walking) or
- B. stay on one leg and move the other in the air. (**Taproot Dances**)

During **Taproot Dances**, one can either

- B1.** Change the rhythm of the step, **B2.** Change the direction of the step, **B3.** Both

Taproot Dances, based on pairs of steps

T-4 – 2 pairs- 1. **step, step**, 2. **step**, _____, move back-and-forth or in-and-out

T-4A – Same as T-4, but using **Aksak** or **Additive** (uneven) rhythm

T-6 – 3 pairs- 1. **step, step**, 2. **step**, _____, 3. **step**, _____, in 1 direction

T-6A – Same as T-6, but using **Aksak** or **Additive** (uneven) rhythm

T-8 – 4 pairs- **step, step, step**, _____, **step**, _____, **step**, _____, back-and-forth

T-10 – 2 pairs + 3 pairs – [**step, step**,]x2, + [**step**, _____,]x3

T-12A – 6 pairs – (add 2 steps in front of each pair in T-6) in 1 direction
[**step,step**,]x2, plus [**step, step, step**, _____,] x2

Characteristics: **A.** Overall movement is go & stop (many pauses).

B. Left-right symmetry. In step, _____, sections, what’s done starting on the right foot is repeated starting on the left. (mirror image)

C. T-4, -8, -12 start on alternate feet, T-6, -12, on same foot

Variations of _____, include lifts, touches, kicks, pauses, stamps, and other non-weight-bearing steps **OR** 2 quick weighted steps,

PROTOTYPE

EXAMPLES of (*dances demonstrated in italics*)

(Saturday party dances in **bold italics**)

T-4 – *Hora Mare**,

Polka, Schottische

T-4 – ***Le Maitre de la Maison, Damat Halayi****

La Bastringue, Salty Dog Rag,

T-4A – *Tamzara**

T-4A – *Tamzara*

T-6 – *Sta Tria* Pravo** **T-6 –** ***Valle Jarnana, Čoček*, Sa Sa****,

T-6A – *Lesnoto**

T-6A – ***Makedonsko Devojce*, Jovano Jovanke****,

T-8 – *Kolo**

T-8 – *U šest*, Moravac*, Uzicko kolo**

T-10 – *Za Pojas**

T-10 – *Kopačka**,

T-12A – *Devetorka**,

T-12A – ***Niška Banja*, Na srce mi lezi mila mamo****

QUIZ??? *Biala Roza**, *Tsamikos**, *Chilili*, *Gocečki Čačak**, *Eleno Mome**

*a song or dance described in detail on my website folkdancefootnotes.org

From 1821-1946 Southeast Europe was constantly at war, constantly changing or creating national boundaries. What began as 2 empires (Austria-Hungary & the Ottoman Empire) ended with no empires and 15 countries. Large multi-cultural regions became split into smaller enclaves divided by new national borders. Forced expulsion or destruction of populations made the new motherland more 'pure'.

At first the village peasants who survived benefitted from the changes. Increased communication with the outside world meant more opportunities to create income, more things to spend it on, more ideas to incorporate. Costumes, music, and dances became more elaborate. The highlight of village peasant culture was probably the 1900's - 1930's.

World War II changed everything, by destruction, and by replacing 'sovereign' monarchies with Soviet satellite governments. These satellites were determined to 'modernize' economies by replacing peasant subsistence farms with mammoth state-controlled industries and industrial-scale farms. Large populations were moved from villages to cities, cutting them off from their traditions and ties to the land.

State control extended to culture: the recently destroyed peasant lifestyle was transformed into an entertainment industry. A farm system of local amateur musicians and dancers competed for prizes, channeling the most talented to schools training dancers and musicians to become professional performing artists. This distorted folk culture, as local groups tweaked their local dances to orient them to an audience, and to make them more attractive to judges. Professional schools introduced concepts and training regimes from classical music and ballet to make folk performances more like "art", and chose and tweaked the flashiest dances to wow foreign audiences.

Meanwhile in Western Europe and The Americas, change was happening at an even more accelerated pace. Music and entertainment went from something you performed at home with friends and relatives, to something you consumed at home or at dedicated venues. The very idea of what constituted music was transformed by the recording industry. Early records had a playing limit of about 3 minutes, training our minds to accept that length as 'normal'. To compete and sell, newer recordings have more elaborate arrangements, novel instrumental breaks, 'hooks'. New dances are invented, each with its own music. Constant airplay and listening to music at home means folks quickly tire of a recording, spurring demand. Bombardment by advertising reminds us of the everlasting 'new' that must be consumed. Every skill has a teacher.

By the time folk dancing became popular here, (the 1950's) Westerners already differed from Southeast Europeans in their understanding of what constituted music, dance, and its role in their everyday lives. Although a few people were transformed by their introduction to another culture, becoming 'Balkanized', the 'exotic' sounds and formations of SE European music and dance, were (and are) for most of us an interesting sideline. Thus it is no surprise that what 'we' want from, and consider to be, a 'folk' dance differs from what 'they' did and still do. We expect a 'folk' dance to be about 3 minutes, with about 2-3 changes in dance steps synched to music changes.