

OPAS

(Bulgaria)

This dance is one of the most popular from the Dobrudzhan ethnographic area, found in Northeastern Bulgaria. The performers of this dance, men and women, join hands in a particular fashion called "za opas," from which the dance takes its name.

The usual performance of this dance is in two parts: a slow part and second, slightly faster part. During the first part the dancers move around a circle. In the second they remain in place, dancing complicated movements. At various points the dance moves forward and back. All of this is highly typical of the Dobrudzhan style and character. The stirring of the shoulders and the characteristic pounding of the feet, as with the strong and definite stance of the Dobrudzhan, illustrate his will and connection with the land.

This dance is sometimes executed only by men. When this occurs abrupt stops, accents, and much bending are included in the dance. The dance is a beautiful expression of the goodwill and happiness typical of Dobrudzha.

Petur Iliev learned this dance in a village near Silistra, called Kalipetrovo, from one of the best and oldest representatives of the Dobrudzhan dance style, Baï Stoïcho.

PRONUNCIATION: Ó-pas

FORMATION: Open circle. "Za Opas" holds. Men and women placed alternately.

STYLE: The men's dance style is characterized by deeply bent knees, arched back, and raised backside. The women stand straight and carry themselves proudly.

MUSIC: Original field recording.

METER: 2/4

PATTERN

Meas

FIRST PART OF DANCE: These six measures are repeated several times.

- 1 While moving to the right, jump from L to R and R to L, with L crossing in front of R.
- 2 Jump from L to R. Retain L crossed in front of R at knee level. Jump on R.
- 3 Jump from R to L. Jump on L. R is positioned next to L at ankle.
- 4-5 Repeat meas 1-2.
- 6 Jump from R to L and stamp with heel of R next to toes of L.

SECOND PART OF DANCE: 13 measures.

- 1-3 Repeat meas 4-6 of first part.
- 4 Jump from L to R and stamp with whole foot of L next to toes of R.
- 5 In same position, stamp on R, stamp on L, stamp on R, stamp on L.

Opas (cont.)

- 6 Turning to L. step on L and stamp on heel of R next to toes of L.
- 7 Stamp three times on heel of R while turning to the right from previous position.
- 8 Stamp on heel of R and jump from L to R. L is now in air.
- 9 Step on L in forward direction. Jump and L and at the same time swing R in front of body, fully extended, with toes up.
- 10 Jump from L to R and R to L while moving backwards.
- 11 While moving backwards slightly, stamp on R, stamp on L, on R, stamp on L.
- 12 Men squat. Women bend forward slightly at waist and raise toes up, balancing on their heels.
- 13 Jump from both feet to L and stamp on heel of R next to toes of L.

Handwritten notes:
Opas (cont.)
6. Turn to L. step on L and stamp on heel of R next to toes of L.
7. Stamp three times on heel of R while turning to the right from previous position.
8. Stamp on heel of R and jump from L to R. L is now in air.
9. Step on L in forward direction. Jump and L and at the same time swing R in front of body, fully extended, with toes up.
10. Jump from L to R and R to L while moving backwards.
11. While moving backwards slightly, stamp on R, stamp on L, on R, stamp on L.
12. Men squat. Women bend forward slightly at waist and raise toes up, balancing on their heels.
13. Jump from both feet to L and stamp on heel of R next to toes of L.