

ORIJENT

Line dance from Serbia (Yugoslavia) as taught by Dick Crum.

Pronunciation: O'ree-yent

Recordings: Du-Tam 1001-A "Orijent"; RTB EP 14347 "Ciganski Orijent" is good, but drastic adjustments in the following sequence must be made to fit it.

Formation and Styling: Line or open circle, no partners, hands joined and held down. The leader, at right end, may conduct the line in a circular or serpentine path. Often men will dance Orijent in separate, all-male lines, in which case they may place hands on neighboring dancers' nearest shoulders. Style is light, heels never touch the ground, knees are elastic throughout. Trunk is held very erect, head high, except as indicated in Fig. II below.

Background Notes: In the 1950's Orijent, Setnja and Moravac (U sest) were the most popular kolos at fairs in the villages within a radius of twenty-or-so kilometers south of Belgrade. Orijent was danced with great enthusiasm by village young people, among them workers, apprentices and students, many of whom spent part of the week in Belgrade and part at home in the village. Thus, Orijent could be found in Belgrade as well, at impromptu get-togethers in the less pretentious industrail-district coffee-houses. Concensus of both dance scholars and native dancers is that Orijent is of Gypsy origin, though its curious name (it means "Orient") is a puzzle. Perhaps there is some connection between it and the famous Orient Express train which daily traverses the above-mentioned villages on its way through the Balkans to Istanbul.

Variants and Sequence: The three "figures" below are an arbitrary selection from a number of local and individual variants of Orijent, arranged by Dick Crum in a sequence intended for convenient learning and enjoyment by recreational or performing groups. In its native setting the dance's sequence is determined by the whims of the leader who, not at all rarely, may limit himself to a sole variant (give or take a flourish or two here and there!) throughout the playing of the music. Fig. I given below is the most common variant, the "basic" Orijent, as it were. Fig. III is really a variation on Fig. I; Fig. II is a rarer, more individualistic variant. Dick noted Figs. I and III in Zeleznik village, Easter Sunday, 1954; Fig. II was learned later from a group of Belgrade young men.

The Dance:

Time: 2/4

Figure I:

- Meas. 1 Place ball of Lft on ground across in front of Rft, momentarily sharing weight on both feet (ct. 1); shift weight entirely onto Lft, raising Rft a bit off the ground -- do not kick Rft high up in back! (ct. 2).
- Meas. 2 Step Rft in front of Lft, having brought it across in a slight "slicing" movement, heel leading, turned-in (ct. 1); step onto Lft behind Rft, moving a bit to R (ct. 2); step Rft beside Lft (ct. 2).
- Meas. 3-16 Repeat movements of Meas. 1-2 seven more times for a total of eight.

Orijent (Continued)

NOTES: Style in Fig. 1 is erect, head high. The steps in ct. 1 of both Meas. 1 and 2 are done with a noticeable lead with heel. The elastic knee (what the Serbs call "mekanost" or "softness") appears in two important places; the straightening-and-flexing of the knee, though extremely slight, gives down-up patterns:

Meas. 1	ct. 1 down	Meas. 2	ct. 1 even
	ct. & up		ct. & even
	ct. 2 down (deeper)		ct. 2 down
	ct. & up		ct. & up

Figure II:

- Meas. 1 With a goodly stretch of L leg and a shaking movement of L ft., step out to side with L ft. (ct. 1); step R ft. across in front of L ft. (ct. 2). (During this measure, dancer is bent forward from waist)
- Meas. 2 Step diagonally forward, right with left foot, straightening body (ct. 1); pause (ct. 2).
- Meas. 3 Step straight back on R ft. behind L ft. ("as if on a tightrope") (ct. 1); step straight back on L ft. behind R ft. in same style (ct. 2).
- Meas. 4 Step back ("on tightrope") with R ft. behind L ft. again (ct. 1); pause (ct. 2).
- Meas. 5-16 Repeat movements of Meas. 1-4 three more times for a total of four.

Figure III:

- Meas. 1 Step slightly forward on ball of L ft., keeping feet close, no weight on R ft., turning heels to L (ct. 1); same with R ft., turning heels to R (ct. 2).
- Meas. 2 Step L-R-L in the same style as steps in Meas. 1, continuing to move forward (ct. 1 & 2).
- Meas. 3-4 Same as Meas. 1-2, continuing forward toward center.
- Meas. 5-6 Same as Meas. 1-4, but backwards, returning to place.
- Meas. 9-16 Repeat all of Meas. 1-8 once more.

