

SRPKINJA  
(Vojvodina)

Originally, Srpkinja (SRRP-kee-nyah) which means "Serbian girl", was not a folk dance in the strictest sense. Its music and movements date from the first decade of this century, and are the work of the Serbian composer, Isidor Bajic. He intended to combine Serbian national elements (the name, the kolo formation, the melodic style, etc.) with Western European dance fashion (partnering, bows, stylized "pointees," etc.) popular in the urban ballrooms of the time. Romantic, patriotic lyrics were later written for Srpkinja by Jovan Zivojnovic, and Bajic even incorporated the whole piece in his opera, Prince Ivo of Semberia.

The dance spread throughout Vojvodina in what is now northeastern Yugoslavia, and eventually it was picked up by the village folk, who modified its mannered movements to conform to the style of their traditional folk dances. Srpkinja was still occasionally danced up into the late 30's in Vojvodina. It is reported to have been danced (though rarely) by Serb immigrants to the U.S. Michael and Mary Ann Herman, of Folk Dance House in New York, were shown a version of the dance in the 40's by an ailing older immigrant woman who was then said to be "the only one around who remembered it."

The original ballroom version is given here, as researched by Dick Crum, based on native sources dating from about 1910 to 1935. It differs from U.S. versions in several ways.

Record: Folk Dancer MH 1008, "Srpkinja". 2/4 meter.

Formation: Any number of cpls in a closed circle, W on M's R, hands joined at shoulder height ("W" pos). In the old days it was sometimes danced in circles of 4 cpls, as a kind of quadrille; occasionally, it was danced in contra-like lines of cpls facing each other (ptrs in same line).

MeasPattern

- FIGURE I - Visit and kolo right and left
- 1-2 Facing ctr, step fwd 3 steps, R-L-R, and bow twd ctr, closing L ft beside R ft, without taking wt.
- 3-4 Still facing ctr, step bkwd 3 steps, L-R-L, and close R ft beside L ft, without taking wt (no bow).
- 5-6 Facing very slightly R of ctr, take 3 steps to R, R-L-R, and close L ft beside R ft, without taking wt, and again face ctr.
- 7-8 Same movements as meas 5-6, but to L with opp ftwk.
- 9-16 Repeat movements of meas 1-8.
- FIGURE II - Balance and kolo right and left
- 17 Facing ctr, step R ft a bit sdwd R (ct 1); point L toe in front of R ft (ct 2).
- 18 Repeat movements of meas 17 with opp ftwk.
- 19-20 Repeat movements of meas 5-6 (Fig I) (R-L-R-close to R).
- 21-22 Repeat movements of meas 17-18 with opp ftwk (step L, point R, step R, point L).
- 23-24 Repeat movements of meas 7-8 (Fig I) (L-R-L-close to L).
- 25-32 Repeat movements of Fig II, meas 17-24.

SRPKINJA (cont)FIGURE III - Bows, circling, and kolo right and left

- 33 Release all hands and face ptr; moving very slightly to own R (W sdwd twd ctr, M sdwd away from ctr) step on R ft (ct 1); close L ft beside R ft, taking wt on both ft (ct 2).
- 34 M bows, W curtsies, to each other.
- 35-36 Join both hands with ptr and take 4 steps, R-L-R-L, moving in a curved path to own R into ptr's home pos.
- 37-38 Release hands and repeat movements of meas 33-34 (step-close and bow/curtsy), M sdwd twd ctr, W sdwd away from ctr.
- 39-40 Repeat movements of meas 35-36, returning to own home pos, and rejoin all hands in one circle again, facing ctr.
- Note: During meas 33-40, each dancer actually traces a small circle CCW, moving essentially sideways, to return to home pos.
- 41 Facing ctr, step R ft sdwd R (ct 1); close L ft beside R, taking wt (ct 2).
- 42 Step R ft sdwd R (ct 1); close L ft beside R, not taking wt (ct 2).
- 43-44 Repeat movements of meas 41-42 with opp ftwk and direction.
- 45-48 Repeat movements of meas 41-44.
- 49-64 Repeat movements of Fig III, meas 33-48.

Presented by Dick Crum