

Drmeš for Three

(Croatian-American)

The *drmeš* (shaking dance) is the most typical dance form in northwestern Croatia. In former days each village had at least one melody, and often several, to which the dancers did the same local *drmeš* movements. A typical *drmeš* consisted of a circle of dancers who alternated some sort of "traveling" steps with various types of "shaking" steps, either in place or moving in one direction or another.

In Croatian communities in the eastern U.S., a number of *drmeši* are reported to have been done in the early days of the "second immigration" (the period between 1890 and World War I). However, by the time the American-born grandchildren of those immigrants began to take interest in Croatian folk dances in the 1940s and 1950s, only one *drmeš* had survived. Known simply as "the *drmeš* *", it was done at least once during any full afternoon or evening of tamburitza music and dancing at Croatian clubs, church halls, and picnic grounds in the 1950s.

Its trio formation is unusual for a *drmeš* -type dance. Quite possibly it developed in the U.S. as a blend of the circular *drmeš* and some other South Slavic threesome dance such as *Milica* or *Logovac*. Its tune is a countermelody to that of *Turopoljski drmeš*, a dance still preserved and performed by Croatian village groups at folk festivals, but there is only a remote relationship between the movements of the two dances.

* The title "Drmeš for Three" has been chosen by Dick Crum purely for the convenience of folk dancers who are familiar with other *drmeši* that have been introduced into the U.S. since the mid-1950s.

Pronunciation: DUHR-mesh

Music: 2/4 meter

Formation: Trio. 1 M between 2 W. W are facing in LOD, M is facing in RLOD. W's inside hands are on M's nearest shldr, their outside hands on own outside hip. M's arms reach across in front of W's waists, and he grasps the W's hands at their hips.

Meas

Pattern

I. TRIO MOVES IN LOD

- 1 M: Moving bkwd, step on ball of R ft behind L (ct 1); hop on R, bringing L ft around in back in air (ct 2).
- 2 M: Continuing bkwd, repeat meas 1 with L (step-hop in "reel" style).
- 3-16 M: Repeat meas 1-2 seven more times, for a total of 16 "reel"-style step-hops bkwd in LOD.
- (1-16) W: Moving fwd, 16 step-hops beg R, and on each "step" placing the active ft directly in front of the other ft.

Drmeš for Three—continued

II. MAN DANCES WITH EACH WOMAN

1-8 Release all hands. M faces W on his R and places hands on her hips; she places hands on his shldr. In this position they do a “buzz swing” as in a square dance, eight buzzes on R ft. Lone W dances in place using the “reel”-type step-hop done by the M in Part I, beg R.

9-16 M leaves R-hand W, takes the shldr-waist pos with the L-hand W and does identically the same buzz swing with her (8 buzzes on R ft), while lone W does the “reel”-type steps-hops in place.

Note: Sometimes, instead of the “buzz-step” swing, some dancers did “step-hop-steps” in cpl turn as follows:

In shldr-waist pos, with R shldr close to each other, step fwd on R, beginning to turn CW as a cpl (ct 1); hop on R, continuing CW turn (ct 2); step fwd on L, continuing CW turn (ct &). Do a total of 7 of these, spinning CW; instead of the 8th one, do two stamps, R, L, and break to get into position for the next movements.

Original notes by Dick Crum
Presented by Dick Crum