

Kjustendilska Răčenica

PRONUNCIATION: kyoo-sten-DEEL-skuh ruh-cheh-NEE-tsu

TRANSLATION: Răčenica from the town of Kjustendil, Bulgaria

SOURCES: Dick Oakes (from Dick Crum); Jaap Leegwater (from Maria Eftimova at the State Choreographers Dance School in Sofia), who also observed variations in villages in the Šopluk region; Steve Glaser (from Ivan Doukov of the Trnovo Ensemble). Dance description from notes by Dick Oakes, Andrew Carnie and Steve Glaser.

BACKGROUND: “Răčenica” is used to describe the particular dance rhythm of 7/16, as well as the group of dances done to this rhythm. The Răčenica is generally regarded as Bulgaria’s national dance and is done throughout the year and in all ethnographic regions. The term comes from the Bulgarian root words for hand or forearm, “răka” (singular) or “răce” (plural). The town of Kjustendil is in the Šopluk ethnographic region of western Bulgaria. The dance has movements typical of Šopi dances in western Bulgaria.

MUSIC: NAMA 1 (LP) 1001, Side 1, Band 5; Balkan-Arts (LP) MK 6G 1, Side B, Band 7; Balkanton (LP) BHA 340, Side 2, Band 3 (Atanas Vulcev); Balkanton (LP) BHA 402, Side 2, Band 4 (Boris Karlov); Leegwater, Pan Bulgarian Folk Dances (cass) JL 1987.02; Nevofoon (LP) 15007, Side 2, Band 2 (Ensemble Iskra); XOPO (LP) X-LP-1, Side 1, Band 4; MH 45-3057. Sheet Music includes the following – Holt, Marcus B.: Orchestral Melodies for Gajda, Gadulka, Kaval, and Tambura: 1977, includes Kyustendilska Ruchenitsa.

FORMATION: Open circle or line of mixed men and women. Hands are joined and held down in “V” position or they may hold neighbor's belts with the right arm under the left. The dancers on the ends may hold their belt, place their free hand on their hip (fingers forward and thumb back for women; fingers down and thumb forward for men), or wave their hand, arm or a handkerchief or scarf usually made of linen or silk, called a “răčenic”, which is often fringed and is a part of the costume in many areas of Bulgaria. Dancers hold the răčenic by opposite corners and twirl it or hold it by one corner and wave it.

METER/RHYTHM: The 7/16 răčenica rhythm is the most popular irregular dance rhythm in Bulgaria. It consists of two beats of two counts followed by one beat of three counts (2+2+3=7). These three major beats are counted in the step descriptions (shown below) as three dancer's counts of two quick beats and one slow beat (QQS). The tempo of the răčenica ranges from very slow to very fast.

STYLE: This dance is done with small and energetic steps. The upper body bends slightly forward at the hips in coordination with the leg movements and footwork. The shoulders are relaxed and tend to gently bounce with the action of the steps.

STEPS:

- ◆ ČUKČE (CHOOK-cheh): Standing on one foot, lift and lower the heel of that foot, leaving the ball of the foot on the floor.
- ◆ GRAOVKA (gra-OHV-kuh): Do a hop-step-step, with the hop being a Čukče (as described above) and the two steps being slightly in LOD and close to the supporting foot.
- ◆ RĂČENICA (ruh-cheh-NEE-tsu): Do a step-step-step, alternating feet and emphasizing the last step.

DANCE:

<u>Measure</u>	<u>Description</u>
	<u>BASIC STEP</u>
	PRĂSTI (PRUSS-tee) – “toe”
1-2	Facing diagonally L, dance two Graovka steps backward to R.

- 3 Turning to face diagonally R, do one Râčenica step forward to R, starting with R.
- 4 Do one Râčenica step forward to R with a “rocking” pattern, i.e., step forward to R with L, step in place with R, step forward to R with L. NOTE: Some versions of the dance do this step without the rocking pattern.
- 5 Čukče on L while turning to face center (ct uh, before beat 1); step on R slightly sideward to R, bending knees slightly (ct 1); pause (ct 2); hop R bringing L knee up in front of R and swing L foot across in front of R (ct 3).
- 6 Hop on R, moving slightly to L, while L knee remains in front of R (ct 1); step on L sideward to L (ct 2); step on R across in front of L, bending knees slightly (ct 3).
- 7 Hop on R, moving slightly to L (ct 1); step on L sideward to L (ct 2); step on R in back of L, bending knees slightly (ct 3). NOTE: Some versions of the dance do this step without bending the knees.
- 8 Čukče on R while still facing center (ct uh, before beat 1); step on L sideward to L (ct 1); pause (ct 2); hop on L, bringing R knee up in front of L and swing R across in front of L (ct 3).
- 9 Pressing ball of R ft onto floor slightly forward and keeping R knee straight, Čukče on L (ct 1); Čukče on L (ct 2); step on R diagonally across in front of L (ct 3).
- 10 Pressing ball of L ft onto floor slightly forward and keeping L knee straight, Čukče on R (ct 1); Čukče on R (ct 2); step on L next to R (ct 3), turning body diagonally to L in preparation for repeating the dance from the beginning.

VARIATIONS

HLOPKA (HLOPE-kuh) – “cowbells”

- 8 Čukče on R while still facing center (ct uh, before beat 1); step on L sideward to L (ct 1); pause (ct 2); hop on L, bringing R knee up in front of L and swinging R foot around to the R (ct 3).
- 9 Click R to L, straightening knees and taking weight momentarily onto both (ct 1); pause (ct 2); Čukče on L bringing R knee up in front of L and swinging R foot around to the R (ct 3).
- 10 Click R to L, straightening knees and taking weight momentarily onto both (ct 1); pause (ct 2); Čukče on L (ct 3), turning body diagonally to L in preparation for repeating the dance from the beginning.

NOŽICA (NOH-zhee-tsuh) – “scissors”

- 8 Čukče on R while still facing center (ct uh, before the beat); light jump onto both feet together in place, bending knees slightly (ct 1); pause (ct 2); Čukče on L, extending R forward close to floor with toe down (ct 3).
- 9 Small leap onto R in place, extending L forward close to floor with toe down (ct 1); small leap onto L in place, extending R forward close to floor with toe down (ct 2); small leap onto R in place, extending L forward close to floor with toe down (ct 3). NOTE: Body leans slightly forward from hips with this action.
- 10 Small leap onto L in place, extending R forward close to floor with toe down (ct 1); small leap onto R in place, extending L forward close to floor with toe down (ct 2); small leap onto L in place, extending R forward close to floor with toe down (ct 3), turning body diagonally to L in preparation for repeating the dance from the beginning.

KRÂGOVE (kruh-GOH-veh) – “circles”

- 8 Čukče on R while facing center (ct uh, before the beat); light jump onto both feet together in place, bending knees slightly (ct 1); pause (ct 2); Čukče on L, swinging extended R leg across L (ct 3).
- 9 Hop on L, quickly swinging R in an arc to end up behind L (ct 1); step on R immediately behind L, extending L forward (ct 2); step on L next to R (ct 3).
- 10 Repeat action of measure 9, turning body to face diagonally to L on ct 3 in preparation for repeating the dance from the beginning.