

Rachenitsa Na Sryata **Bulgaria**

- Pronunciation:** Rah-cheh-NEE-tsah nah sree-YAH-tah.
- Source:** Michel Cartier, 1962 Texas Folk Dance Camp.
- Notes:** Michel learned this version of the dance in Bulgaria in 1957 and again in 1959. The dance is performed during the wedding festivities when the families of the bride and groom meet. "Na sryata" means "to meet" (note: The correct wording should be "Rachenitsa Na Sreshta," which means "rachenitsa of 'meeting' or 'encounter'") and this represents the character of the dance – the families meet, part and meet again. Many different steps are possible. The ones in this description are as Michel presented the dance.
- Music:** 7/16 rhythm. Recordings are XOPO LP-1, side A, band 6, "Pred Tsenkini-Rachenitza" and Folk Dancer LP-MH 109, band 4, "Rachenitsa from Briagovo."
- Formation:** Two lines of dancers, 8-10 feet apart and facing each other. It is preferable, but not mandatory, to alternate M and W. Dancers hold belt of adjacent dancers, R hand over. End dancers carry handkerchief and twirl it as the spirit moves them.
- Footwork:** The footwork is precise and controlled; the posture is erect. The dance moves quickly and is always flowing in feeling. The 7/16 rhythm is broken into 3 counts per measure: quick (counts 1-2); quick (counts 3-4); slow (counts 5-7). However, for purposes of this description, the counts will be given as 1, 2, 3 (quick, quick, slow). The steps are described as follows:
Basic Step: Leap forward onto ball of R foot (count 1); close L foot to R foot, stepping on ball of L foot (count 2); leap forward onto ball of R foot, bending L knee sharply and bringing L foot up in back (count 3). The vertical motion of the step is emphasized more than the horizontal motion, although the step is used to move forward and backward during the dance.
Chukche: Raise and lower the heel of the supporting foot sharply.
Pas de Basque: Step onto R foot (count 1); cross L foot in front of R foot, taking weight (count 2); step on R foot in place (count 3). Typically, the step is repeated, beginning with L foot.

FIGURES

Measure

- 1-24 INTRODUCTION. Dancers flex knees, feeling the rhythm.
- I. BASIC STEP
- 1-3 Beginning with R foot, move forward with three Basic Steps.
- 4 Turning L shoulder slightly toward opposite line, step toward opposite line onto L foot, leading with outside of foot (count 1); hold (count 2); do a Chukche step, shouting "hey!" (count 3).
- 5-7 Facing opposite line and beginning with R foot, move backward with three Basic Steps.
- 8 Turning L shoulder slightly away from opposite line, step away from opposite line onto L foot (count 1); hold (count 2); do a Chukche step, shouting "hey!" (count 3).
- 9-16 Repeat action of Measures 1-8, Fig I.
- II. TOE POINT
- 1 With R foot extended slightly toward opposite line, toe pointed forward, hop on L foot twice (counts 1, 2); step forward onto R (count 3).
- 2 Repeat action of Measure 1, Fig. II, reversing footwork and continuing to move forward.
- 3-4 Repeat action of Measures 1-2, Fig. II, continuing to move forward.
- 5-8 Beginning with R foot, move backward with four Basic Steps.
- 9-16 Repeat action of Measures 1-8, Fig. II.
- III. SWEEP
- 1 With R foot pointed to R, hop forward on L foot (count 1); with R foot pointed forward, hop forward on L foot (count 2); step onto R foot across in front of L foot (count 3). During this step, the R foot is moved from R to L with a sweeping motion.
- 2 Repeat action of Measure 1, Fig. III, reversing footwork and continuing to move forward.
- 3-4 Repeat action of Measures 1-2, Fig. III, continuing to move forward.
- 5-8 Beginning with R foot, move backward with four Basic Steps.
- 9-16 Repeat action of Measures 1-8, Fig. III.
- IV. HOP-STEP-STEP
- 1 Turning L shoulder slightly away from opposite line, hop toward opposite line on L foot, lifting R foot with bent knee (count 1); step toward opposite line onto R foot with a stamp (count 2); close L foot to R foot, taking weight (count 3).
- 2-4 Repeat action of Measure 1, Fig. IV, three more times, continuing to move forward.

- 5-8 Facing opposite line, do four Pas de Basques, moving backward and beginning with R foot.
9-16 Repeat action of Measures 1-8, Fig. IV.

V. JUMP AND HOOK

- 1 Jump lightly and slightly forward onto both feet, R foot crossed in front of L foot (count 1); in same position, bounce lightly twice (counts 2, 3).
2 Repeat action of Measure 1, Fig. V, reversing footwork and continuing to move forward.
3-4 Repeat action of Measures 1-2, Fig. V.
5 Hop on L foot, lifting R foot forward, knee extended (count 1); step onto R foot, adjacent to and on the L side of L foot (count 2); lift L foot backward, bending knee, just to free it (ct 3).
6 Lift L foot in front, knee bent (counts 1, 2); replace L foot exactly where it was (behind and to R side of R foot) (count 3). Note: The action in Measures 5 and 6 is smooth and rapid.
7 With R foot crossed behind L foot, jump slightly backward lightly three times (counts 1, 2, 3).
8 With L foot crossed behind R foot, jump slightly backward lightly three times (counts 1, 2, 3),
9-16 Repeat action of Measures 1-8, Fig. V.

VI. BASIC AND CROSS STEP

- 1-8 Beginning with R foot, move backward with eight very small Basic Steps so that opposing lines are again 8-10 feet apart.
9 Jump onto both feet, R foot crossed in front of L foot and weight equally distributed (count 1); hold (count 2); jump onto both feet, spreading feet to sides (count 3).
10 Jump onto both feet, L foot crossed in front of R foot and weight equally distributed (count 1); hold (count 2); jump onto both feet, spreading feet to sides (count 3).
11 Repeat action of Measure 9, Fig. VI.
12 Jump forward onto both feet, bringing feet together (count 1); jump backward onto both feet, spreading feet to sides (count 2); jump onto both feet in place, closing feet sharply (count 3).

Repeat dance from the beginning. On the XOPO LP-1 recording, the entire dance is done twice through and ends after the first 16 measures of the dance the third time through.

Original dance description from 1962 Texas Folk Dance Camp syllabus; re-created by Franklin Houston on October 12, 2012.