

Florida FolkDancer

May 2000

Spring Fling 2000



Julius Horvath's annual Spring Fling is a remarkable event that has blessed Florida folkdancers for many years. On April 29, Julius and his Port Orange club provided us with 8 to 10 hours of non-stop dancing. (at 3-4minutes each = 15 dances per hour X10=150 dances) What a repertory!

And he also arranged for all the details: Tables covered in ethnic cloths for the Flea Market of folklore stuff for sale. Tapes and CDs and players and amplification devices Alpha lists of available music Food and drinks and tableware Expert leaders to subtly help us learn or recall the patterns of a special dance.

For Demetrius and I the most important feature was the sprung floor. We noticed that when a heavy person walked in front of us, we and the floor bounced up and down. Due to loss of cartilage and torn ligaments, our dance-endurance lately has been 2 hours. SO we felt it was a miracle that we could continue to dance on and off for 8 hours. We feel very grateful to all you true-believers who gave us such a memorable experience:

John Ward doing airbourne pirouettes on some Israeli dance Eva Stunkel at the head of the line doing the fancy footwork of a Balkan jig DA Tyler in elegant red boots leading us in one of Vonnie Brown's Slovak dances with exceptional grace and style The Senyks leading us in a lovely Polonaise If you need to sit one out, you get treated to a Great Performance
Shirley & Dmitri Babiak

Florida FolkDancer

The Florida FolkDancer is a monthly publication of the Florida Folk Dance Council, Inc, a non-profit corporation whose purpose is to further knowledge, performance, and recreational enjoyment of International Folk Dance.

President: John Daly
779 Acacia Ave.
Melbourne Village, FL
32904
407-951-9623
Vice-President: Bernice Roth
Treasurer: Willa Davidsohn
Secretary: Bernice Roth

Please send all submissions to:

Editor: Barbara Daly
e-mail in plain text is very helpful:
jdaly@palmnet.net
Written material:

779 Acacia Ave.
Melbourne Village, FL 32904

Articles in the Florida FolkDancer are copyright by the Florida Folk Dance Council, Inc., or by their individual authors.

Orlando International Folk Dance Club

It has been awhile since our last installment so I will try to catch everyone up on the events in Orlando this year. We had a great time at camp and many thanks to John and the other Melbourne people who did a great job in their first camp year! We also enjoyed seeing Janel Wheeler, who was our nominee and winner of the Olga Princi Scholarship, there. Most people also met our new dancer, Melanie Marecek who just started dancing with us last December. She and Janel have livened up our group. It is so nice to have new dancers come to the group. This seems to be the year for an infusion of new people, both at our group and the Israeli dance group here also.

We have been doing a few performances. On April 1, we danced for the first annual Culturefest for the city of Casselberry. Then, on April 7, we danced again at a local middle school. We are scheduled for another performance at a charter school on April 26. It is fun to take our group out into the community and share our love for dance.

On April 16, a group of us visited and danced for Frank Cross in his Orange City nursing home. He still has paralysis on his right side and says only a few words and sounds. He understands everything we say and he even hummed some of the songs as we danced. He played the tambourine with his left arm. We hope that he will have a breakthrough in his recovery very soon.

We will be dancing every Wednesday night through June and then taking our annual hiatus in July and August. Melbourne here we come!

Pat Henderson

Greek Kefi Hellenic Dancers

We now meet on Wednesdays in the recreation room at the Castaways Beach Resort.

Claudia Terrence

Thoughts on Camp

I heard several people comment: "I know enough! I really don't want to learn any new dances. It's more fun to review what we have learned in the past years." So we were thinking: for camp next February, could we have just one teacher?

Could some of our excellent Florida dancers lead their specialties? Could we have a few dance performances every evening? Could we make the quality of the sprung wooden floor the number one priority in choosing the place to hold camp? I recall that Camp Winona has an excellent sprung floor. The facilities are truly CAMP, but perhaps we could rough it for our knees sake. We are doing our fifth annual Cinco De Mayo show at Alta Vista school this Friday ; we costume the principal in a skirt with a sequined eagle and she addresses the parents in Spanish . The parents and teachers and school children are delighted.

Shirley & Dmitri Babiak

ABOUT ORIJENT

by Dick Crum

The Serbian kolo, Orijent, has been among the top forty in folk dance circles for several years now, in numerous variants and interpretations. As a folk dancer travels from one coast to the other, he finds that once he had learned the two or three different sequences currently being done around the country his visits to various groups will be quite comfortable, and that he can fit in almost anywhere when the Orijent record is put on. If a native Serb dancer were to make that same trip, however, he would be pretty baffled - either he wouldn't recognize his dance, or he would find it extremely painful to stay in the line very long.

Given the fact that an evening program in the average group consists of several dozen dances from as many ethnic origins, it is not surprising that a kind of homogenization of style has occurred among American folk dancers: having borrowed dances from many diverse sources, we tend to dance everything with the same style - in a sense, we have our own village. And John Q. Folkdancer, with everything else he has to do, can hardly be expected to devote the time necessary to mastering several dozen different ethnic dance styles. Besides, everyone dances for different reasons, and John Q. may simply be interested in losing weight - criticisms of his styling may be totally irrelevant to him.

This article on the dance Orijent is aimed at those dancers who would like to reproduce the original native dance styling as closely as possible and who are interested in Orijent from the point of view of its cultural setting. I have the feeling that the number of such dancers would increase if the background of more folk dances were known better.

I first witnessed Orijent in the village of Železnik in Serbia on Easter Sunday, 1954. It was a splendid sunny day, and villagers from Železnik and surrounding areas had gathered on an immense field to celebrate. I guess there were several thousand. Many kolo circles polka-dotted the field, each practically crushed in by the sea of on-lookers. As I pushed my way from one circle to another, I noted that

most were dancing some form of U Šest, occasionally a circle was doing Šetnja, but many were doing a kolo I was informed was called Orijent. As the afternoon wore on, I noted down about a half dozen variants of Orijent, this fascinating dance I had never seen before.

Of the many variants of Orijent that I observed in Železnik and other places, I picked three and combined them in a fixed sequence for use in a stage choreography I was preparing in 1956 for the Duquesne University Tamburitians. This little three-figure sequence later spread around the United States among recreational folk dancers. It is in a sense artificial, of course, since in its native setting Orijent would never be seen in a fixed sequence. Its usefulness in this form is to give American folk dancers, unused to improvising in a foreign idiom, a chance to savor the dance in several of its variants.

In its native setting, Orijent is performed without a conscious shift from one "figure" to another - it is a fluid affair, generally guided by the leader, who performs the same two-measure pattern over and over again, embellishing it now and then with an improvised movement. The others in the line do not attempt to imitate him - the idea is the same as in U Šest: individual variation on a basic pattern without disturbing neighboring dancers.

Structurally, Orijent is something of a puzzler among dances of this area of Serbia. First, whereas other dances begin with the right foot, all the variants of Orijent begin with the left, though the over-all movement of the dance follows the Serbian rule of the thumb in moving right (Counterclockwise). Secondly, the entire pattern of any given variant is two measures long - a feature which, though not unknown in Serbian dances, is rare in the present-day Sumadijan repertory. Also, the name "Orijent" is puzzling. It means (you guessed it) "Orient" and is not a native word. The only feasible interpretation is that it is somehow related to the famous Orient Express that passes through this area on its way to Istanbul. Native dancers readily informed me that the dance is of Gypsy origin, though now done widely by non-Gypsy Serbs. For this reason it is sometimes called "Ciganski Orijent" ("Gypsy Orijent").

Though unique in several ways, Orijent is nevertheless done in the typical local style. This style is sometimes called the "Sumadijan" style,

name after Sumadija, the broad heartland area south of Belgrade. Other dances in Šumadijan style are Šetnja and U Šest. It is a style that has spread out all over the rest of Serbia in recent years.

Individuals vary, of course, but in general the Šumadijan style can be summed up as follows;

1) Very straight posture from the knees up.
 2) What the Serbs call "makano koleno" ("soft knee") - by which they mean that the flexions of the knee cause a firm but gentle up-and-down movement of the body as a whole - a kind of subtle rhythmic bobbing.

3) Though movements on the flat or whole foot are often seen, Sumadijan dancers usually tread on the forward portion of the foot. Heel contact with the ground is incidental.

4) Dominance of vertical movement over horizontal: the dancer tends to cover very little ground, preferring to turn his energies inward rather than dissipate them in larger steps in space. True, he may fling his feet up in back, or make a slicing step down in front or back from a considerable height out to the side, but these flings and slices are practically in place - he doesn't travel great distances on any given step.

In American renditions of Orijent, by the way, it is this fourth feature that is most "violated." American folk dancers seem to respond to the call "charge!", and whip halfway around the floor in a wild, "liberated" interpretation of the first figure!

This article by Dick Crum was originally published in the New York Folk Dance News, Vol. 11, No. 4, Oct.-Nov. 1972, pages 6, 7, "Dance Footnotes" section. It is reprinted here by the kind permission of the author.

For the very new dancers who may not know him, Dick Crum is a noted authority on Balkan Dance. He has introduced a large number of well-known dances basic to the American folk dance repertoire, including Bucimis, Čačak, Godečki Čačak, Jove Male Move, Kopceto, Ludo Kopano, Orijent, Petrunino Horo, Plovdivska Kopanica, Ripna Maca, Sedi Donka, Šetnja, Trite Puti, and Yambolsko Pajdusko No. 2. Dick has given workshops and has taught at virtually all major folk dance camps and festivals in the United States (including our own FFDC Camp) during the past few decades.

Gainesville

We performed on April 8++ (and even in two places in the same day!)

Where#1: Lake Wauburg north, Sport Club Open House

Who#1: Kim, Nell, Toshi, Raluca

Where#2: Stephen O' Conell center, Dance Marathon

Who#2: Kim, Nell, Toshi, Pam, Randy, Raluca

big hand and big thanks to all of them!

What(we've danced) : Erev Ba(Israel), Sabrali Se Sabrali (Bulgaria), Urmetsineri Par (Armenia) (Yes, the 'killer dance', the 'row back' dance!)

We can say that we've danced for food and photos at Lake Wauburg (well, it's not so easy to share people's attention with two horses!) and for pure fame at the marathon.

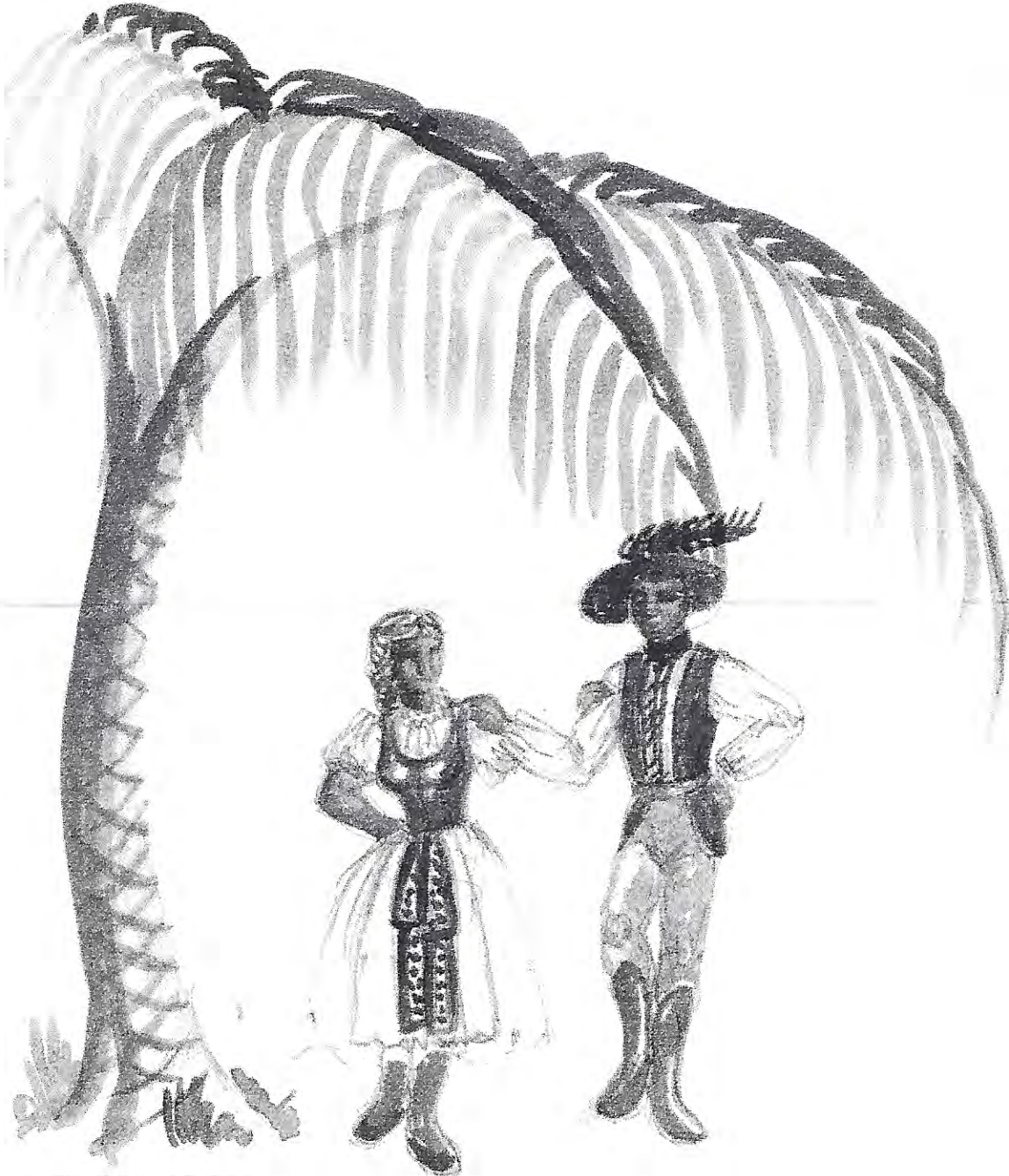
Next performance: Earth Day, Saturday April 22, (Gnv) Downtown plaza, 5 pm (there we'll have the time to do some participatory dances as well)

Anybody willing to join?

Raluca I. Rosca

Camp and Fling Photos

As time permits, we're adding photos from Camp and Spring Fling to the web page. Come visit our site at www.folkdance.org.



Willa Davidsohn

MEMBERSHIP FORM

FLORIDA FOLK DANCE COUNCIL

Membership in the Florida Folk Dance Council keeps you in touch with Dance events through the Florida FolkDancer. If you haven't already renewed for 2000, please do so now.

\$12.00

Please complete one form for each family:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Email: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip _____

Send \$12.00 to:

Willa Davidsohn
Treasurer, FFDC
1643 Old Colonial Way
Melbourne, FL 32935

Florida Folk Dance Council
c/o Daly
779 Acacia Ave.
Melbourne Village, FL 32904
Address Service Requested

