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| U ŠEST : | Serbia |
| PRONUNCIATION: | oo SHEST |
| TRANSLATION: | In six |
| BACKGROUND: | U šest is short for U šest koraka, meaning "in six steps." According to Dick Crum, noted Balkan dance researcher, the Serbian definition of a "step" (korak) is "a shift of weight onto a given foot plus whatever follow-up movement of the other foot." The step pattern described here as "sedam," along with its accompanying "syncopated threes," is the basis for the naming of this "kolo," or circle dance, which is the most popular dance type in Serbia. Most Serbians do not know the dance by the name "U šest;" they simply call it "kolo," although it is also known in some circles (so to speak) as "Moravac" after one famous U šest melody because of its popularity |
| MUSIC: | There are thousands of shest recordings. The Skimos band does a nice one that they call "Surbsko kolo, chicken" |
| FORMATION: | Open cir or line of mixed M and W with hands joined and held down in "V" pos, or linked arm-in-arm in "Q" pos as if being escorted, or (especially when danced only by M) on neighbors' shldr in "T" pos. End dancerr may place free hand at small of back, hold lapel of vest or coat, or even put it in a trouser pocket. The end person at the R is the leader. |
| METER/RHYTHM: | 2/4 |
| STEPS/STYLE: | In Serbia, this dance is freely improvised by each dancer within the symmetrical pattern of 4 meas to the R and 4 meas to the L using the arms as flexible shock absorbers. The selected steps described below may be danced in any order and for any number of repetitions depending upon the whim of each individual dancer. SYNCOPATED THREES: Turning to face slightly L, step R slightly swd with the heel slightly turned out, bending supporting knee slightly (ct 1); pause (ct &); step L next to R (ct 2); step R next to L (ct &). For next meas repeat with opp ftwk. NOTE: The Syncopated Threes also may be danced with bounces instead of steps on cts 2,&. Style varies considerably from dancer to dancer--from the easy, relaxed, soft, rolling walk of the elderly or tired to the highly energetic leaping and bouncing of the young or "hot shots." |

MEAS

MOVEMENT DESCRIPTION

I.HAJDE (KOKONJEŠTE) - "let's go!" ("noble")

- 1 Facing slightly R and moving R, step R (ct 1); bend R knee slightly (ct &); step L across in front of R (ct 2); bend L knee slightly (ct &);
- 2 Turning to face slightly L of ctr, step R slightly swd with the heel slightly turned out (ct 1); bend R knee slightly (ct &); touch L heel next to R instep (ct 2); bend R knee slightly (ct &);
- 3 Repeat action of meas 2 to L with opp ftwk;
- 4 Repeat action of meas 2.
- 5-8 To continue this Fig, repeat action of meas 1-4 to L with opp ftwk.

II. ČUJEŠ - "listen"

- 1 Facing slightly R and moving R, step R, bending R knee slightly (ct 1); low hop R (ct 2); step L across in front of R (ct &);
- 2-4 Dance 3 Syncopated Threes in place.
- 5-8 To continue this Fig, repeat action of meas 1-4 to L with opp ftwk.

III. ČETIRI - "four"

- 1 Step R swd (ct 1); step L across in back of R (ct &); step R swd (ct 2); step L across in back of R (ct &);
- 2-4 Dance 3 Syncopated Threes in place.
- 5-8 To continue this Fig, repeat action of meas 1-4 to L with opp ftwk.

NOTE: If the dancer prefers, he may dance the first meas crossing in front or even alternating back and front or front and back.

IV. TRI SKOČI - "three hops"

- 1 Step R swd, bending R knee slightly and at the same time bringing L heel to R instep (ct 1); low hop R (ct 2); step L across in back of R (ct &);
- 2-3 Repeat action of meas 1 two more times;
- 4 Dance 1 Syncopated Three in place.
- 5-8 To continue this Fig, repeat action of meas 1-4 to L with opp ftwk.

V. SEDAM (U šest) - "seven"

- 1 Step R swd (ct 1); step L across in back of R (ct &); step R swd (ct 2); step L across in back of R (ct &);
- 2 Step R swd (ct 1); step L across in back of R (ct &); step R swd, bending R knee slightly (ct 2); pause (ct &);
- 3-4 Dance 2 Syncopated Threes in place, beg L.

5-8 To continue this Fig, repeat action of meas 1-4 to L with opp ftwk.

NOTE: If the dancer prefers, he may dance the first two meas crossing in front or even alternating front and back or back and front.

VI.ČEKAJ - "wait"

1 Step R swd, extending slightly bend L leg fwd (ct 1); pause (ct 2); quick shift of wt momentarily onto ball of L in front of R (ct &);

2-4 Dance 3 Syncopated Threes in place.

5-8 To continue this Fig, repeat action of meas 1-4 to L with opp ftwk.

COMBINATION FIGURES

There are many other steps available to the native dancer. Because this is a "still living" dance form, its variations are constantly evolving and changing. For instance, combinations may be made from just the above steps to further enhance the dance, such as these (each followed by 1 Syncopated Three):

Čuješ-Skoči-Čuješ
Skoči-Čuješ-Skoči
Čitiri-Skoči-Skoči
Skoči-Skoči-Čitiri
Čuješ-Čitiri-Skoči
Skoči-Čuješ-Čitiri
Skoči-Čitiri-Čuješ
Čitiri-Skoči-Čuješ
Čuješ-Skoči-Čitiri
Čitiri-Čuješ-Skoči
etc.

By adding Čekaj in place of any one of the above steps, the list extends even more!

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MORE BACKGROUND: Originally called U šest koraka, the name was shortened to U šest, and it is now shortened even more to šest. So how did this most typical Serbian dance come to be danced by Macedonians? To be honest, it is not danced universally by Macedonians, because there is still some resentment among some Macedonians of anything Serbian. But at one time Macedonia was known as Southern Serbia and there were Serbs scattered throughout Macedonia. In addition, in the USA, many Serbian and Macedonian bands play at each other's functions, or at the least, Macedonians go to Serbian functions, and vice-versa. And, it is a nice dance. Also remember that borders do not stop culture from crossing over. Šest has crossed the border and is now danced in Skopje and heading south.