

Perth Town Hall performance March 2021 - Part of Tuesday Holly Wood - Bernard Carney's gig

These notes accompany the slides

Dance tour of Eastern Europe, Armenia and Israel by Perth International Dancers.

### MAP slide

We practice dances primarily from around Europe, anywhere from the Faroe islands to Israel, but to talk about *international* dance is really a misnomer.

Folk dance originates in folk, groups of people with a shared cultural heritage and usually a shared geographical region. Nations are a relatively new invention and generally encompass several 'folk', so that within each nation there is usually a variety of dance styles. Conversely dance styles are not defined by national boundaries, thus the dances of northern Romania (Transylvania) are more akin to the dance styles of Hungary than to those of southern Romania, which, in turn, share characteristics of those from northern Bulgaria.

We have chosen to represent dances of Eastern Europe today because they tend to be line or circle dances, whereas those of Western Europe are often danced by couples, the practice of which has been proscribed in this Covid era.

We start with **Tsakonikos** a dance from Arcadia in southern Greece, in the middle of the land mass hanging off to the south of the Greek mainland. For those of you familiar with Zorba, you will see that it is quite different to those energetic, unstructured dances from around Athens performed primarily by men.

It tells the story (*if you want to go into that*). Hence the winding patterns. It also has the regular but unusual time signature of a 5/4, with 5 beats to the musical bar rather than the usual 2, 3 or 4.

### Slides of Greek costumes.

Next we take you to the northern coast of Turkey, with **Muhktarin Ogli Ali**. Sardine fishing off the Black Sea coast is a traditional occupation here, and the traditional costume for this dance involves many dangling silvery pieces that the dancers shake to mimic the jumping of the sardines when caught in the nets, *can we find a slide of this costume ,??*

Travelling further east we come to Armenia where women's dances often involve graceful arm movements accentuated by long flowing sleeves as shown in **Ovive Yerk**

*Jenny I know nothing about the back ground of this dance, there is nothing on the web (except PID) and no notes, so this bit is up to you.*

Flying west across the Black Sea we come to Bulgaria. While it looks a small country it has a great variety of styles, but perhaps even more interestingly a great variety of musical rhythms. People from Western Europe are familiar with the 2/4, 3/4 (the waltz) the 4/4 and even the daring 6/8, which are regular rhythms, but Bulgaria is the king of irregular rhythms where the duration of notes is not necessarily an integer multiple of the shortest note. They claim to have 83 documented rhythms and we will show you one irregular rhythm with **Jove Male Mome**, where the rhythm can be called an 18/16, but more usefully (at least for a dancer) a mixture of S Q Q (where the slow is 1.5 times the duration of the Q) called a chetvorno rhythm and a Q Q S Q Q, a kopanitsa rhythm.

See if you can recognise the S Q Q Q Q S Q Q rhythm as we dance. This dance comes from the Shop region of southern Bulgaria around the capital Sofia where the dances often comprise very small and extremely fast steps much beloved by tourist restaurants.

*(Would that rhythm be worth a slide??)*

*Slide of Bulgarian costumes.*

The Danube valley is shared by Bulgaria on the southern shore and Romania on the northern shore and dances are similar on both sides of the river. **Rustemul** is a type of Romanian dance from Muntenia, the region including the capital Bucharest.

Our next dance **Jiana de la Tilisca** also comes from Romania, but is markedly different coming from the Transylvanian region, close to the Hungarian border and commencing with the typical Hungarian czardas step.

Further north still we come to Poland, where many of the folk dances are for couples, but **W Moim Ogradetsku** is an example of a circle dance. *Can Arek give us any thing more about this dance?*

So folk dance arises in cultural groups, but when members of a group migrate, they tend to take their dances with them. This is how USA became the birth place of 'international dance' when the offspring of European migrants to the US at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> started to share the dances that their parents had taught them.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the biggest cultural melting pot has been Israel to which Jews have flocked from all over Europe, the near East and Africa bringing dances from their former homelands with them. Israel therefore has the most varied repertoire of folk dance, with both pan European and Arabic influences. Furthermore it is very much a living tradition with new dances regularly being choreographed for enthusiastic dancers of all ages. There is no traditional Israeli costume, they just dance on the beaches, or anywhere else, in their jeans and t-shirts. We have chosen to show you **Salamati**, a dance with Moroccan influences, set to a song sung in Farsi.