

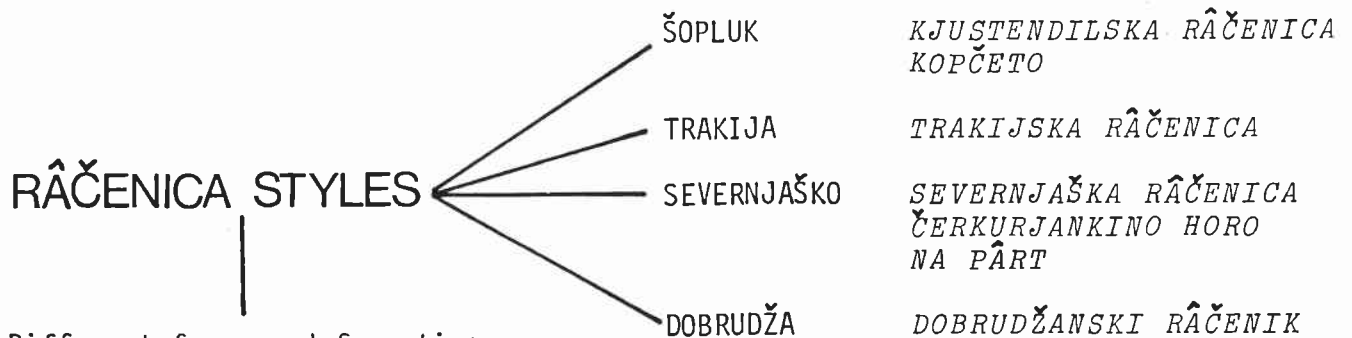
- OBJECTIVES :
1. To become familiar with the different forms of the Bulgarian Râĉenica.
 2. To obtain a Râĉenica "vocabulary" (i.g. a repertoire of basic steps, movements and patterns, for both men and women) as a basis from which a free-style or improvisational Râĉenica can be performed.
 3. To become aware and sensitive to regional style difference and acquire an ability to recognize and connect dance and musical accompaniment from the same ethnographical region.

MUSIC : Any Râĉenica recording can be used.
The following recording in particular is very suitable for the improvisational Râĉenica: it is a little bit longer than most available recordings and varies in both tempo and mood.

Cassette "FOLK DANCES FROM BULGARIA" - JL1991.01
Presented by Jaap Leegwater Side B, Nr. 17.
DOBROVNIŠKA RÂĀENICA
Perf. by Petâr Raĉhev - accordion

- THEORY : Along with the practical dance instructions the following handouts can be consulted for a theoretical foundation and overview.
1. Ethnographic Map of Bulgaria.
 2. Regional Difference and Characteristics.
 3. The Râĉenica

OVERVIEW :



Different forms and formations:

1. *Ediniĉna* ("Single")
Solo, individual, improvisational
2. Ritual function
Preceding wedding procession
3. *Po Dvojka* ("for two")
4. *Po Trojka* ("for three")
5. *Na Horo* or "Line dance"
Na Lesa or "Belt hold dance"

THE RÂČENICA

CATAGORIES

The Râčenica is the most popular irregular dance rhythm throughout Bulgaria. Unlike any other Bulgarian dance this one is performed

- In all kinds of formations:
Individually as a solo dance, po dvojka (for two), po trojka (for three) or na lessa and na horo (belt hold and as a line dance).
- All yearround or only on special occasions, such as weddings (Svatbarska Râčenica), seasonal festivals and rituals (Lazarska Râčenica).
- In all ethnographical regions, each bearing the typical local and regional style characteristics.
See page 5 for some examples and page 6-8 for a description of regional differences in style and character.







Because of its versatile character, the Râčenica takes a unique place in the Bulgarian dancing repertoire and is often seen as Bulgaria's National Dance. Often done in a chain, open circle or line, most Bulgarian dances are above all groupdances. The participants hold each other by the hand, waistband or belt and all perform the same step sequences at the the same time together. Unlike these groupdances, or Horà (pl. for Horo) as they are called in Bulgarian, the Râčenica takes on many forms of which the improvisational and individual performance is the oldest and most conspicuous one. Bulgarians themselves distinguish those two dance forms from each other, something that is illustrated in the title of many Bulgarian Folk Dance records and books, namely Bâlgarski Narodni Hora i Râčenici which translates to Bulgarian national linedances and Râčenica's.

MEANING

1. The word Racenica is derived from the Bulgarian noun Râka (sg), Râce (pl) meaninh hand or forearm.
Often the dance is performed with waving hand and arm gestures or the twirling of a Râčenik (a scarf or handkerchief) high above the head.
2. In dance and music termonology the term Râčenica is used to indicate a dance in 7/8 meter (2-2-3) and it is also the name of its basic three-step.

METER

7/8  in dance notation counted as

						
1	2	3		1	2	3
Q	Q	S		Q	Q	S
R	L	R		L	R	L
		⇒				⇒

TYPES OF RÂČENICA

1. EDINICNA or SOLOVA ("Single")

Probably the oldest and most original way of performing the Râčenica is the spontaneous expression of an individual who jumps on his feet and dances to the 7/8 beat by following his heart, his emotions and the inspiration of the music.

The solo Râčenica is the least structured one and leaves the dancer a lot of freedom and space for improvisations based on the Râčenica three-step. This step varies widely in the solo performance in directions and in what steps or counts are stressed. It can be done in any direction or on the spot with or without turns. Also, the 7/8 three-step is stressed in different ways from person to person or region to region.

Here are some examples:



The Râčenica step can be with tiny little steps and high knee liftings like in Western Bulgaria, with crossing steps or in a more subtle bouncy way giving the step a "Pas-de-Basque" character like in the Thracian performance.

Because the dancers don't hold each other by the hand, there is an optimal freedom for hand and arm gestures, waving and clapping. The men sometimes add squats and kneelings when they get excited or even rhythmic movements while lying down.

This all is part of the improvisational or solo Râčenica.

Quite often two dancers face each other and try to impress or outdance each other in a playful way through the movements they make.

The Edinicna or Solova Râčenica can also develop into a couple dance or emerge when somebody breaks out of the circleline and proceeds with a solo in the middle of the dancefloor, while the rest continues dancing their Râčenica in the circleline.

2. THE CUSTOMARY RÂČENICA

These Râčenica's are of ritual-customary nature and accompany certain holidays and customs connected with the old calendar cycle, name-days and weddings. There is a special dance for each occasion and they are often accompanied by songs and symbolic movements and gestures.

A good example is the Râčenica one can often see performed in front of a wedding procession supposedly to clear the path of the newlywed couple of evil spirits and bad luck. This custom has a symbolic meaning that is related to old purification rituals and beliefs.

Other Râčenica's are part of fertility and spring customs and are done by young girls only on St. Lazarus-day.

The structure and choreography of the customary Râčenica is usually fairly simple, it often takes the form of a line or two lines facing each other moving forward and back or a long winding serpentine.

3. PO DVOJKA (for two)
PO TROJKA (for three)

As mentioned in the description of the solo Râćenica, often the improvisational communication between two people through dance develops into a couple dance. The dancers either hold each other by the hand or dance opposite each other. The choreographed couple versions or trio Racenica's are believed to be of later origin and influenced by other danceforms from outside the country such as, the ballroom dance done at the courts, the Quadrille and the Russian Trojka.

In the Râćenica po Trojka who is also called Râćenica Pletenica (from knitting, tangle) the man in the middle leads his two female partners skilfully into whirling turns and "dip and dive's" under the arches formed by their arms. This Râćenica is particularly popular in Eastern Thrace.

4. NA HORO (in the circle, line)
NA LESA (belt hold)

This Râćenica is done in large groups formed in circles or lines. It has the same characteristics as is described in the paragraph on the Horo in the chapter about the Pravo Horo in the sense that it is part of a social event and is typically a group dance.

Line Râćenica's can be done in a mixed formation by men and women in one line or seperately. The name of the dance often indicates the group by which it is performed, like Ženska Râćenica (Women's) and Stareška Râćenica (Old Folk's)



RÂÇENICA NA LESA