

Forgatós

(Hungary/Transylvania)

“Forgatós” in Hungarian means “one who is spun.” This dance is the last and quickest of a series of dances in the traditional dance cycle of the Hungarians known as “Szeklers,” pronounced (SEHK-lers) or “Szekely” (SAY-kay-ee) living in eastern Transylvania, Romania. They served as border guards against the Turks and were rewarded with special privileges by the Hapsburg court, such as freedom from taxation and the right to own land. Today, they are still considered a special group by native Hungarians.

Forgatós is improvised from a wide body of figures and requires a close partnership between man and woman. Danced in a heavy, springy style, the M spins the W in complex figures, both exchanging places frequently.

Couples are side-by-side, at nearly right angles; M places near hand at W shoulder blade or on back of upper arm; W places near hand at M nearest shoulder blade under M arm; other hands are joined low in front, M hand thumb-down, palm forward.

Following are a few of the many figures for this improvised dance. Forगतos was originally taught at the University of the Pacific Folk Dance Camp at Stockton by Andor Czompo. It is an integral part of today’s Hungarian “tanchaz” repertoire. Richard Duree has learned the dance from numerous teachers, including Sandor Timar, Zoltan Farkas, Jancsi Olah, Zoltan Zsurovsky, Kalman Magyar, and Steve Kotansky.

Pronunciation: (FOHR gah tosh)

Music: 2/4 meter

Formation: Couples are side-by-side, at nearly right angles; M places near hand at W shoulder blade or on back of upper arm; W places near hand at M nearest shoulder blade under M arm; other hands are joined low in front, M hand thumb-down, palm forward.

Meas

Pattern

I. BASIC PUSH-PULL

1 Step or small leap twd ptr on inside ft, knees flexed (ct 1); touch ball of free ft in place or stamp outside ft in place (ct &); step bkwd to original position (ct 2); touch inside ft in place (ct &). Lead is with both arms.

Variation: Step toward ptr and away with down-up movement.

II. BASIC CROSS-OVER

1 M: Step twd ptr on near ft, knee flexed (ct 1); step in place on free ft, straightening knees (ct &); repeat step on near ft (ct 2); touch free ft in place (ct &). Figure is usually repeated on opposite direction and footwork; used frequently while leading W through her figures.

W: Step in front of M on near ft, knees flexed (ct 1); step in place on free ft, leg turned in and facing ptr (ct &); step away from ptr on original ft, knees flexed, turning almost full turn and moving to partner’s opposite side; resume hand hold with opposite hands. Note: This is W most-used figure. Usually repeated at least twice in opposite direction and footwork.

Note: Figures II and II may be danced in any combination; it is used as a rest step or as a preparatory or closing figure for one of the following variations:

Forgatós—continued

III. “SQUARE”

- 1 W on M R side: begin with Fig 1.
- 2 M: raise L arm and lead W across in front with R arm; W dance Figure 2 across to M L side (cts 1,&,2).
M: turn ¼ R and step fwd on R ft (ct 1); turn ¼ R and step bkwd on L ft (ct 2).
- 3 W: Repeat Fig II, returning to orig pos (cts 1,&,2).
M: Repeat meas 2 completing “square” to return to original position (cts 1,2).
- 4 Repeat Fig II as in meas 1 (cts 1,2).

IV. RIDA TURN

Rida is a “down beat” spin in “side-car” position,” stepping sharply on inside ft (ct 1); slightly fwd on outside ft (ct &); step may be done in either direction, but usually L hips adjacent, spinning CCW. M holds W L arm with R hand at back of her upper arm; L hand catches W at waist.

M leads W fwd with R hand & steps R on R ft (ct 1); hold (c &); begin Rida on inside ft on L ft (c 2). Repeat Rida until ct 6; step on ball of R ft & releve slightly (ct &); turn W to M L side with heavy step twd W on L ft (ct 7); step away on R ft (ct 8).

W begin rida with inside (L ft) and continue Rida until M lead (cts 1,&,2,&,3,&,4,&,5,&,6); turn to face M & step twd M on R ft (ct 7); step away on L ft (ct 8).

V. W CROSS BEHIND

- 1 W on M R side: begin with Fig 1.
- 2 M lead W in Fig II across to L side, retain hold on W R hand with M L hand, finish with joined hands fwd (cts 1,&,2).
- 3 M repeat Fig II moving L fwd diag, leading W to cross behind him to finish on M R side (cts 1&2).
- 4 Repeat Fig I.

VI. W SWING-OUT

- 1 W on M L side; fwd hands joined, begin with Fig I.
- 2 M dance Fig II to L & lead W fwd R, L, R in small ¼ circle in front of M (cts 1,&,2).
- 3 M move R with Fig II & lead W bkwd L, R, L to orig pos (cts 1,&,2).
- 4 Repeat meas 2, bringing W in front (cts 1,&,2).
- 5 M move R with Fig II and turn W full turn CCW (cts 1,&,2).
- 6 M move L with Fig II and turn W full turn CW (cts 1,&,2).
- 7 M move R with Fig II and turn W full turn CCW (cts 1,&,2).
- 8 Finish figure with Fig I (cts 1,2).

Note: Figures are notated here in 8-count arrangements. As dancers gain skill, the man may begin to leave out the preparatory movements of Fig I and II and mix the figures in different sequences.

Presented by Richard Duree and Ruth Levin

Notes by Richard Duree