

# **April 1, 2000 - Saturday In The Studio, Eastern Europe**

## **Introduction**

Begin sitting in a circle and talk to dancers about last week's countries. What do you remember about Flamenco & Tango dancing? Then give information about today's folk dances from the Eastern Europe. Some influences come from the countries of Hungary, Romania, Serbia, and Greece. Where are these countries? Who are the people? How do they dance?

## **Body Warm-Up**

- Standing up in a circle, ask students to suggest a body part to move. Encourage them to use the entire body. If they get stuck ask them something like, "Can someone show me a way to move my (knee, toe, ear)? My students chose things like circling arms, hips, heads; and reaching legs and arms; kicking; jumping; and turning. String all of the movements together into a sequence. See if you can repeat the sequence two times. Then see if you can reverse the sequence two times.

## **Listening Warm-up**

Still in a circle, take dancers through a series of sounds, hitting different body parts with your hands.

- Start on top of the head; move to the cheeks on your face, then go to the chest. Next find the belly, thighs, shins, and floor. Give them time to hear the sound each body part makes when hit. Reverse the sounds moving from the floor and eventually ending on top of the head. Then challenge the dancers to follow with eyes closed, listening for when the group moves on to each body part.

## **Quickness And Control Warm-Up**

Stress to dancers that today they will have to be good at body control because we will be working together in a large group and we must be careful with others. Review the tango warm-up from the previous week in order to help find balance and control.

- Dancers choose a shape to put their body in. They must hold the shape for eight counts. Then pick a new shape and hold for eight counts. Then change your shape again and hold for four counts. Change to another shape and hold it for four counts. Then continue changing in two counts / two times and in one count / four times. Repeat this dance as many times as you want. Emphasize that the dancers must try to keep their balance as they hold the beginning shapes, and then they have to find quick shape transitions as the changes get faster. If shapes are too repetitive, encourage the dancers to use the low space, middle space, and high space to make their shapes.

## **Folk Dancing Movements**

While standing in a circle, explain to dancers that many of the folk dances from Eastern Europe have similar movements. Some of these movements are stomping, clapping, circling, kicking, jumping, twisting, rocking.

- Have volunteers come into the center of the circle and demonstrate different ways to do these movements. All dancers will try the demonstrated variations.
- After all of the movements have been explained dancers will do an improvisation using the folk dance movements. Remind dancers of their seven movement choices. They may only use those choices, but they can put them in any order they want, at any tempo, at any size, etc. It is important to give the young dancers enough structure so that they don't run around out of control, but at the same time give them an opportunity to find new ways to move. After the dancers improvise for a while they will hear a specific sound. We used a cymbal. At that sound they must freeze until the folk dance music starts again. Do a few cycles of improve and freezing before going on to the next thing.

### **Serbian Inspired Dance Taken From The Savila Se Bela Loza (A Grapevine entwined in itself)**

- Standing in a circle, everyone holds hand and faces right. Begin jogging 19 steps to the right. Change directions and face left on count 20. Then run 19 counts to the left. Change directions and face front on count 20.
- Next, step sideways to the right, step together left, step sideways right, and hop on the right foot. Repeat this same movement stepping left first and hopping on the left foot.
- Repeat the step/hop movements a total of four times alternating right and left sides. Repeat entire dance from the beginning.

### **Challenge**

- Next challenge the dancers to move from the "folk dancing movement" improvisation into the Serbian circle dance at the sound of the cymbal crash. Emphasize to the dancers that they have to be aware of all of the others they are dancing with. They must also be ready to cooperate with each other at any moment in order to perform the Serbian circle dance. It may be helpful to repeat the challenge a couple times. The dancer's sensitivity to one another gets better with practice.

### **Quartets**

- Divide students into groups of four. Have students work together to make their own circle dance using: 1) any variation of the folk dance moments they have learned; 2) some type of circling; and 3) some way of being connected (whether it is holding hands in a circle or using some "staying connected" material from last week).
- It may be necessary to put a minimum/maximum of 3-6 parts in the dance, depending on the energy of the dancers. Dancers should be able to do this assignment in ten minutes. If they get done early encourage them to

practice it over and over in order to solidify what they have. Then divide the room in half and have each group perform for the other.

### **Across the Floor**

- Divide the class into groups to come across the floor. They could be in rows, lines, or en mass.
- Divide the dance-space in half using some type of landmark in the room. We used a black line between the wood and marley dance floor.
- Dancers began on the wood skipping halfway across the room to the black line.
- Once they reach the black line they explored clapping by finding different ways to clap, different body parts to hit, and different sounds.
- Last, dancers arch across the marley floor improvising various turns and curving movements. This movement series may be repeated a number of times. Try reversing the order.

### **The Hora**

*The Hora is a celebration dance from Israel. In 1948 the Jewish people came from all over the world to Israel, bringing with them Hungarian, Polish, Greek, and even African influences. Roots of this dance may go back to Hungary or Greece.*

- Begin with everyone standing in a circle and holding hands. Stomp the left foot and then hop on it. As you are hopping on the left foot simultaneously kick out the right leg in front of you. Repeat these movements on the other foot by stomping and jumping on the right, and kicking the left foot front.
- Next begin a grapevine step to the right. To do the grapevine step begin by stepping side with the right foot. Next step with the left foot and cross it in front of the right. Step side with the right foot again. Then step with the left again, but this time cross the foot in back.
- Repeat the entire sequence from the beginning over and over again. It may be fun to start the dance very slowly and then pick up speed as you go. Another fun variation is to have a leader release the person's hand on their right, breaking the circle. When performed in a circle the leader may either serpentine the line, or spiral in toward the center and then reverse the spiral direction to take the dancers back to the original circle.

*I shared with the dancers that the song Hava Nagilah usually accompanies this dance. Hava Nagilah in Hebrew means let's celebrate. This dance is done on festive occasions and shows the unity of the people. We also learned the Hebrew word Shalom which means hello, goodbye, and peace. We said, "shalom" to each person we passed as we spiraled back into our circle.*

### **Across the Floor**

We liked to end class by really moving across the floor.

- Begin by organizing all of the students on one side of the room in rows, lines, or smaller groups en mass. Choose a visual reference point in the room that divides the room in half. We used the black tape on the floor dividing the marley from the wood. Have the dancers skip all the way up to the black line.
- Once the dancers reach the black line have them stay there and find different ways to clap. Encourage dancers to find different body parts and different sounds with their claps.
- Then end the movement across the floor by having dancers explore carving /circling movements. Encourage the dancers to initiate with different body parts and to move on different levels (low to high space).