

Traditional Folk Art in the Northern Region from Bulgaria by Elitsa Dimitrova Zaverdzhieva

#CODANEC YOUTH COMPETITION #My Culture My Story

Bulgarian folk dancing is an exceptionally beautiful art. Bulgarians are famous for their skills as dancers. Ever since I was a little girl I have had a passion for Bulgarian folk art. For me, folk dancing is a way through which we Bulgarians express ourselves. The folk dances of our land are free, lively, cheerful, widely performed and bring positive emotions. Bulgaria is divided into several folklore regions: Shopska, Thracian, Rhodope, Pirin, Dobrudzha, Northern folklore region. In each of these regions the dances have their own character.

It is typical for dances in the Dobrudzha folklore area to play the body and shoulders, both for women and men. The Dobruja man dances crouching or sitting down. The steps resemble daily labour and the relationship of the people to the fertile land. Popular dances: ruchenik, sborenka, ruka, tropanka, cherkezka, danets, opuz, etc.

The dances in the Northern folklore area are a mixture of the other areas. Typical dances are: the Severnyashko (Turnovsko), Svishtovsko, Elenno mome, Daichovo, Gankino, etc.

In the Thracian folklore area the dances are cheerful and lively. Popular dances in this region are "The Three Times" and "Kasamska Rachenitsa", also called "Dzhidovska".

In the Shopska folklore area the abundance is the greatest. The Shopians dance with their feet held high and their arms crossed. This is what makes Shopa dancing the most difficult and beautiful at the same time. The most popular dances are: graovsko, petrunino, samokovsko, gypsy, quadruple, shopska rachenitsa, etc.

In the Pirin folklore region the dances are varied and are divided into male and female. Characteristic for the area are the Macedonian horo, djangoritsa, ochridsko, shirto, etc. The dances of the Rhodope people are smooth, wide and with distinct hard steps. Traditional for the Rhodope region hora are: Bachkovsko, Enino, Pravo Rhodopsko, etc.

I live in a small town and it is very impressive to me that we have not lost our folk spirit here. There are several folk ensembles in the town, with people of all ages practising in them. There are also celebrations in the neighbourhoods where the ensembles and the residents gather and from day to noon there is folk music and merriment. People gather, rejoice, dance. Even schools have started to organise folk dance events and offer students free elective classes to perform folk dances or reenact skits of different customs. These events are proof that even as generations change, the folk spirit does not die, but on the contrary, it is preserved and passed on. If these actions are practiced in most places in the country, the problem of preserving our heritage will begin to be solved. Folk creativity has no boundaries, it is not just for certain people, it is for everyone. Every country has its own way of expressing itself, its own "folk dances". Some countries' dances have characteristics that are unique to that country, although sometimes neighbouring countries have similar characteristics. For example, some Serbian, Bulgarian and Croatian dances share the same or similar dances, and sometimes even use the same name and music for these dances.