

HORA (Israeli)

The Jewish people, dispersed over the earth for many years, have kept their religion alive, but many of the folk traditions have become broken or lost. When the people returned to Israel, they brought dances from their former homelands.

The Sephardic Jews, who left Spain during the Inquisition, settled in the Balkan area. They danced the Balkan hora, adopting it and incorporating it into their festivities.

The word hora, a Croatian-Serbian word, means "tempo" or "movement." Although the earlier hora dances were probably a part of primitive agricultural rites (the leaps and high jumps in the dance suggest and were supposed to induce high growth of corn); the hora became more subdued and restrained as the people danced it indoors in small spaces. As danced in Israel today, it has absorbed the flavor of the people living there and is once again danced out of doors.

Formation: Single circle, hands on shoulders of person on either side, arms straight.

DIRECTIONS FOR THE DANCE

Meter 4/4

MEASURES

- 1-3 Moving counterclockwise, step right to side, place left behind right, and step right. Kick left in front of right while hopping on right. Step left to side, kick right across left while hopping on left. This same pattern is repeated throughout the dance.

NOTE:

The music supplied with your unit is all very fast. You may want to practice the dance a few times without the music and then introduce the music.

Begin the hora slowly in order to establish the rhythm, keep the tempo slow and the music soft, and then gradually accelerate the rhythm and increase the volume. If the group is large, it is interesting to have several concentric circles, some circles beginning with the right foot, moving clockwise, and others beginning with the left foot, moving counterclockwise.

STYLE

If the movement of the dance begins mildly, with a tiny hop, it can build gradually to a larger hop as the tempo increases.

If dancers extend arms and lean back, keeping head up, the momentum is easier. Dancers should hold up their own arms, not press down on shoulders of the person to each side.