

NIŠKA BANJA
Serbian

PRONUNCIATION: NEESH-kah BAHN-yah

TRANSLATION: Baths of Niš

SOURCE: Dick Oakes learned the dance from the Serbian community of Los Angeles, California, where it had been danced since the mid 1950s, and subsequently introduced the dance to folk dancers in the United States in 1980. Bora Gajicki, presented the dance in 1985 in San Diego, California.

BACKGROUND: Niška Banja is a naturally hot mineral spring health resort about ten kilometers east of the town of Niš in southeast Serbia. It is believed that the waters help people with cardiovascular diseases. The spring, which was used by the Romans, is slightly radioactive. After the Ottoman invasion, the spa continued to be used by men and women, who came to bathe on a regular basis. The song words, which symbolize the Dionysian joy of life, music, and dance, are meant to be humorous as well as provocative. Every generation adds its own words so the lyrics are quite extensive and often quite bawdy. The lyrics have become the unofficial song of Niš.

The song on the Festival recording listed below is from the Aleksandar Petrović film "Skupljači Perja" (gatherers of goose feathers) and includes both Serbo-Croatian and Rom verses. The film was shown in the United States in 1968 with the English title "I Even Met Happy Gypsies" and was awarded a 1968 Best Foreign Language Film Golden Globe nomination. It was made in the Bačka area of Vojvodina, in the town of Sombor, and offers a poignant look into the lives of the Gypsies of that part of the world. The melody, originally called "Duj Duj," has become popular with musicians in several countries and especially with American tamburica orchestras. Macedonians play it with a different break and Romanian musicians from Făgăraș play it in 5/4 time.

MUSIC: Festival (45rpm) DY-8405
Narodna Kola (Cassette) NK-85-2

FORMATION: Open cir of mixed M and W with hands joined and held dn in "V" pos.

METER/RHYTHM: 9/8. The rhythm is quick-quick-quick-slow (2-2-2-3), and is counted here in four dancer's beats with the fourth being the longest.

STEPS/STYLE: The dance is spirited and lively. During the second figure, adjacent M and W may turn twd each other and interact by dancing fwd and bwd facing each other or moving close to each other's shldr. Often two W will do the same, and in some cases an individual may move down the line of dancers to dance with another, but returns to place before the first figure begins again. W may slowly shake their shldr during this figure as they feel inclined. Usually, only a few cpls will dance together in this manner, and then not during each repetition of the figure.

MEAS MOVEMENT DESCRIPTION

INTRODUCTION (Described for the Festival recording)

1-8 No action, or dance Fig I.

9-16 No action, or dance Fig II.

17-18 This is a two-meas drum solo on the Festival recording--no action, or continue to dance the action of Fig II.

I. GRAPEVINE

1 Facing slightly R, step R swd (ct 1); step L in back of R (ct 2); step R swd (ct 3); small hop R (ct &); step L across R (ct 4).

7-8 Repeat action of meas 1 seven more times.

II. CLAPPING

1 Releasing handhold and swinging arms bwd, step R diag R twd ctr (ct 1); step L twd ctr, swinging hands fwd (ct 2); step R fwd, swinging hands up in front (ct 3); touch L heel fwd and clap hands about 6 to 8 inches in front of face (ct 4).

2 Facing ctr, step L bwd, swinging hands down and back (ct 1); step R next to L, swinging hands fwd (ct 2); step L fwd, swinging hands up in front (ct 3); touch R heel fwd and clap hands about 6 to 8 inches in front of face (ct 4).

3 Repeat action of meas 2 with opp ftwk.

4 Repeat action of meas 2.

5-8 Repeat action of meas 3-4 two more times.

Repeat entire dance from beg.

NIŠKA BANJA

Serbia, Yugoslavia

Niška Banja is a place about which many off-color song verses are sung due to its past reputation as the "Mustang Ranch" of Serbia. On the Festival recording, some of the verses are sung in Serbo-Croatian and some in Rom (the language of the Gypsies) and some in Serbo-Croatian. (SC=Serbo-Croatian, R=Rom)

/Niška Banja, topla voda
za mangupe ziva zгода./
/Em ka lavlam, em kamavla,
and'o Niši ka mekav la./

/Mi Cigani meraklije,
ne mozemo bez rakije./

/Bez rakije, šljivovice,
i bez mlade Cigančice./

/Jedan, dva, tri, četir, pet, šest,
sedam, osam, devet, deset./

Deset, devet, osam, sedam,
šest, pet, četir, tri, dva, jedan.

Deset, devet, osam, sedam,
šest, pet, četir, tri, dva, nula.

Duj, duj, dešuduj
čumidav la and'o muj.

/Em ka lavla, em kamavla,
and'o Niši ka mekav la./

The public bath near Niš, hot water,
for the naughty boys a real convenience. (SC)
I will get her, I will love her,
and in Niš I will leave her. (SC)

We Gypsies love a good time,
we can't make it without plum brandy; (R)

Without grape brandy, plum brandy,
without a young Gypsy girl. (SC)

One, two, three, four, five, six,
seven, eight, nine, ten. (SC)

Ten, nine, eight, seven,
six, five, four, three, two, one. (SC)

Ten, nine, eight, seven,
six, five, four, three, two, zero. (SC)

Two, two, twelve,
I'll kiss her on the face. (R)

I will get her, and I will love her,
and in Niš I will leave her. (R)

NIŠKA BANJA

Serbia, Yugoslavia

The following is another Serbo-Croatian version (translation by Djordje Marjanović).

/Niška Banja, topla voda
za Nišljije živa zgodā./
/Nišku Banju siljalice krase
danu gore, a nocu se gase./

/Mi Nišljije, meraklije
ne možemo bez rakije./

/Bez rakije, sljivovice
i bez mlade devojčice./

/Niška Banja, voda mlaka
leci žene od stomaka./

/A kod kuće muza laze
da joj voda ne pomaze../

/Jedan, dva, tri, četir, pet, šest,
sedam, osam, devet, deset./

Deset, devet, osam, sedam,
šest, pet, četir, tri, dva, jedan.

Deset, devet, osam, sedam,

šest, pet, četir, tri, dva, nula.

Duj, duj, duj, duj, ti ne luduj
tebe dragi pamet mucu.

Ostavila, ti si kriva
što me žena ostavila.
At Niška Banja's warm water
for young men from Niš (Nišljije) great.
Niška Banja is decorated with street lights
that are on during the day and off at night.

We Nišljije, fun loving people
cannot live without brandy.

Without plum brandy
and without young girls.

Niška Banja, tepid water
cures women from stomach troubles.

But at home, (a wife) lies to her husband
that water is not helping her.

One, two, three, four, five, six,
seven, eight, nine, ten.

Ten, nine, eight, seven,
six, five, four, three, two, one.

Ten, nine, eight, seven,
six, five, four, three, two, zero.

Duj, you drive me crazy;
You, sweetheart, torture my head.

She left me; it's your fault
that my wife left me.

NIŠKA BANJA

Serbia, Yugoslavia

The following are Serbo-Croatian words that may be sung to the same music. (Loose translation by John Filcich).

/Niška Banja, topla voda
za mangupe život zgodu./
/Niška Banja ti si kriva
što me žena ostavila./

/Mi Cigani meraklije
ne možemo bez rakije./

/Bez rakije, život ide
i bez mlade Cigančice./

/Jedan, dva, tri, četir, pet, šest,

sedam, osam, devet, deset./

Deset, devet, osam, sedam,
šest, pet, četir, tri, dva, jedan.

Deset, devet, osam, sedam,
šest, pet, četir, tri, dva, nula.

Duj, duj, duj, duj, ti ne luduj
tebe dragi pamet mucu.

Ostavila, ti si kriva
što me žena ostavila.
At Niška Banja's warm waters
a rascal's life is very good.
Niška Banja, it's your fault
that my wife left me.

We Gypsies enjoy euphoria;
we cannot go on without whiskey.

Without whiskey life just goes on
and without young Gypsy girls.

One, two, three, four, five, six,
seven, eight, nine, ten.

Ten, nine, eight, seven,
six, five, four, three, two, one.

Ten, nine, eight, seven,
six, five, four, three, two, zero.

Duj, you drive me crazy;
You, sweetheart, torture my head.

She left me; it's your fault
that my wife left me.

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