



Let's Talk Folk Dance

Membership network email update and musings on local folk, historical, traditional and community dance
Folkdance.org.nz



Dancing Round the World in Gizzy ...continued

..... Living on the eastern extremity of the antipodes brings with it a delicious freedom to make things up as I go: I am notoriously bad at context and tradition. For me it is enough that people come together and enjoy themselves. I let the music and dance speak for itself.

I do realise there is a place for getting it right. We live in Aotearoa after all, where kapahaka is fiercely competitive. Last year I enjoyed learning the subtleties of the Bourée from our visiting French trio, and I similarly loved my trip to Armenia to learn dance from Armenians. But in Gisborne I don't stress about being a style-expert. I share what I can and I figure that's enough.

In Den Haag (Netherlands) last October I was invited to their club night at the Danshuis. Pretty serious stuff. Here the teaching is done by *graduates* of tertiary folkdance courses, and many of the dancers travel annually to Eastern Europe. Provenance and style, like qualifications, are important.

I particularly liked one Bulgarian dance we did. Someone kindly wrote the name of it down for me. Last Friday night, when I was putting together my playlist and desperately searching for something new, I came across the name. I found the demonstration on the internet. Check. But no music on i-tunes. Hmmm. Knowing how seriously they take their dance, it was with some trepidation that I emailed my Dutch friends for the music. When I woke up on Saturday, the soundtrack was there in my inbox. We danced it that evening – twice.

In these times of intellectual property and cultural appropriation I am all too aware of the pitfalls of my approach. On the other hand, once a month on a Saturday night a group of people who have become friends hold hands, laugh, make eye contact, and dance, and all while the music of the world washes over them.

[Editor Comment: Thanks Jane for sharing this – this is a good example of having fun folk dancing without having to think about a weekly class / group or performance practice. It's great to read that you really are getting more folk dancing in Gizzy! We can all share in the fun September 23 – 25 this year with the 'Rhythm and Grapevines' Folk Dance weekend in Gisborne]

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