

Russian Folk Dance: its peculiarities and perspectives of development

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Historical facts have always influenced the Russian folk dance development.

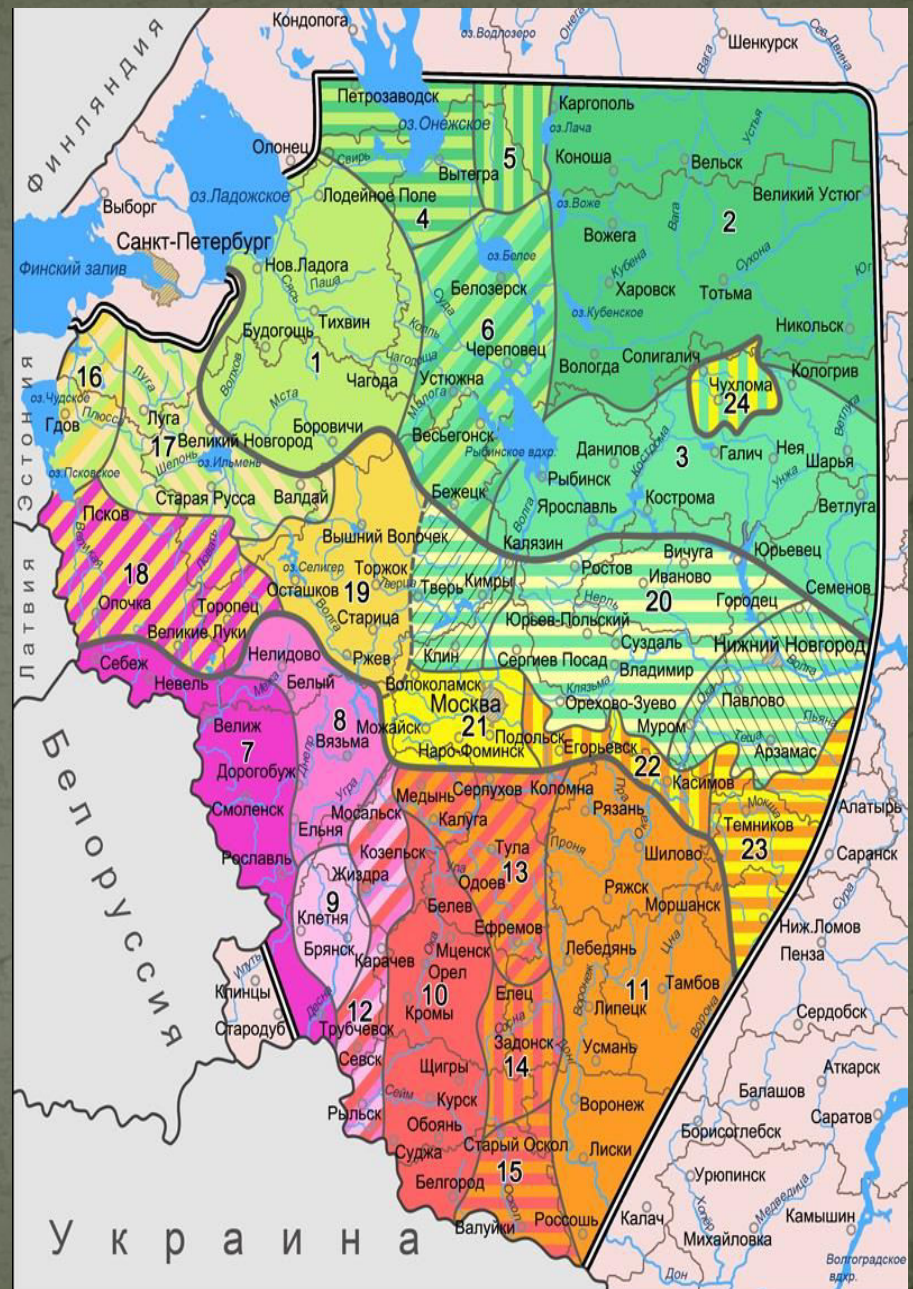
Dance rules evolved, old dance styles faded and made way for new ones. The dancing expressive means changed.

A dance, which possessed a religious and magical sense in the past, which took place on religious holidays with a certain purpose, has lost its ritual meaning being separated from rites and has become a part of everyday life, expressing the dancer's joyful mood.

The dance was no more connected with seasons.

The Russian choreographic tradition includes three basic regional complexes that are rooted in the East European Plain. These are the North, the South and the Cossack dance complexes. (Dance styles of the central, West and East regions are considered as transitional).

The frontier between the North and the South dancing traditions usually refers to the frontier between two main Russian dialects.





The Cossack dancing tradition is expanded on the territories occupied by the Cossacks by 1912

- The North Russian dancing tradition is characterized by slow round dances, or khorovods, of young women who move out of rhythm



- While quicker round dances that are called “fast” and are accompanied by shuffling for every quarter often have an ornamental pattern base



«Walked barin» - playing dance of the Tver region

- The closer to the South, the less slow round dances one can notice. The traditional dancing genre includes more joyful and playing dances
- In the North khorovod dancers hold their hands low, but closer to the South they hold their hands at their chest-level or even higher





«Timonya» - karagod of the Kursk region

At the end of the 19th – at the beginning of the 20th century the “quadrille” dance became popular in Russian villages and then on the whole territory of Russia (excluding some southern regions like Kursk and Belgorod regions)



The quadrilles were accompanied by songs or just folk melodies (mainly by Russian accordion)



Quadrille «Vosmyora» («Eight») of the Arkhangelsk region

It is necessary to mark the main features of the folk dance that characterize the Russian traditional dancing culture. We can count 5 (five) basic typical features that can be traced in all the regional dancing traditions in the European part of Russia:

1. Syncretic (synthetic) nature of musical choreographic texts
2. The so-called “kantilena” which means keeping the dancer’s knees a little bit bent both in round dances, solo dances and other dancing movements
3. Polycentric character of moving arms and feet
4. Polyrhythm – two or more dancers move simultaneously with different rhythmic patterns
5. Improvisation



An example of polyrhythm - “peresek” of the Belgorod region



An example of improvisation - men's fling of the Kostroma region

It is difficult to study the folk dance under such conditions as it is impossible to repeat the dancing samples unchanged as many times as necessary.

An attempt to note all the nuances also complicates the comprehension of the dance. Authors who record dances usually mark only the mise en scene and movement schemes.

The description of the dancing movements is usually given in supplements and doesn't include all the peculiarities of the dancer's individual manner of performance.

Three components of the Russian folk dance are the following:

- authentic dance in everyday life
- performance dance (or stylized scenic folk dance)



- ethnic dance performed by folk groups



All Russia dance festival of Russian folk dance «Pereplyas»

«Pereplyas» is a remarkable project that aims at the revival and preservation of the Russian dance heritage and is going to attract young people to the Russian dance culture.



The idea of the Festival was to implement the ethnic dancing traditions in modern life.



The Festival was aimed at showing that the Russian folk dance tradition is an irreplaceable part of the Intangible cultural heritage



Members of the Russian folk dance festival “Pereplyas” are folk and dance ensembles and performers of different ages – children from 7 and adults from 25 and older.





The main criteria of evaluation are the ethnographic authenticity of dance performances, as well as mastering the technique of regional performance peculiarities

Lack of special folk dance schools or amateur clubs remains one of the most acute problems today.

There are schools of so called “stylized scenic Russian dance” which is characterized by inadequate stylization and lack of artistic and stylistic unity of the folk costumes.

Recently a department of the Russian folk dance appeared in the Republican Centre of the Russian folklore, but we still cannot say that there is a centre in Russia which coordinates folk dance studies as a universal multifunctional system which requires complex scientific research and united efforts of experts of different profiles.

Thank you for your attention