

Name of dance: Karapyet

Pronunciation: kah-rrah-PYET

Place of origin: old-time Russian ballroom dance

Source of music: Folk Dancer MH 1058, *Karapyet*; Kismet 101A

Learned from: Dick Crum, 1991; Timor & Susan Darkhosh, 1975; Natalie Lüthi, 1965

About the dance: The name *Karapyet*, or “black Pete”, is a common Armenian male first name. The strong romantic appeal of the Caucasus and things Caucasian (Georgian, Armenian, etc.) to the Russians is reflected in *Karapyet*’s name and in its melody, which strongly resembles an old Caucasian (Kabardinian) dance tune. Although the dance may attempt to be “in the Caucasian style”, it was invented in Russian ballrooms of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and was popular in Russian, Ukrainian and Ashkenazic Jewish communities in their homelands and among immigrants abroad who often kept the dance alive when it had been forgotten where it started. In the U.S.A., the dance was also known as the *Russian Two-Step*, and even in Russia and the Ukraine it is often called simply *Tu-step*, a name reportedly dating back to World War I and visits by American navy men to Black Sea ports such as Odessa.

Rhythm: 2/4

Formation: Couples in open ballroom position ready to move CCW in a circle around the room. So men face out, women face in, and both begin with their outside feet (men’s L, women’s R) free. Men’s and women’s footwork and direction is *opposite* throughout the dance. Directional symbols are given for men only (women should simply reverse them).

<u>Direction</u>	<u>Measure</u>	<u>Step</u>
		<u>Figure I:</u>
┆	1	Point outside toe (men’s L, women’s R) slightly diagonally forward in the line of travel, while rising slightly on standing foot in place (ct. 1), pause (ct. 2).
	2	Point same outside toe to touch inside one’s own standing instep or arch, again rising slightly on other foot (ct. 1), pause (ct. 2).
←	3	Still in ballroom position, couples take 2 smooth flowing steps along the line of travel, men stepping L, R, women stepping R, L (cts. 1-2).
	4	Continue traveling one more step, men stepping L, women stepping R (ct. 1), pause without stepping while turning to face the opposite direction, back towards where you just came from, <i>without changing ballroom position hand hold</i> (ct. 2).
	5-8	Repeat Measures 1-4 with reverse direction and footwork, except that on the last count you <b>do</b> release your ballroom hold and simply join inside hands (men’s R, women’s L),

Direction	Measure	Step
		<p><u>Figure I</u> (continued):            while leaving outside hands free and extended out to the sides in preparation for next figure.</p>
		<p><u>Figure II:</u></p>
←	1	<p>Beginning with the outside foot free (man's L, woman's R), take a smooth running step-close-step (man: LRL, woman: RLR) in the direction of travel, turning slightly away from partner while bringing joined hands slightly forward and free hands slightly back (cts. 1 &amp; 2), pause (ct. &amp;).  <i>Note: To make these 'polka' steps smooth, the "close" step must be just as light and smooth as the other ones.</i></p>
	2	<p>Repeat Measure 1 with reverse footwork and hands swinging the opposite way (free hands forward, joined hands back), but still traveling smoothly in the same direction.</p>
	3-4	<p>With 2 more smooth running step-close-steps (man: LRL, RLR, woman: RLR, LRL), release inside hands to make 1 full turn away from partner (man: CCW, woman: CW), while continuing to travel forward (cts. 1&amp;2,1&amp;2)</p>
	5-8	<p>Rejoin inside hands to repeat Measures 1-4.</p>
		<p><u>Figure III:</u></p>
←	1	<p>With inside hands still joined, and beginning with the outside foot free (man's L, woman's R), take 2 walking steps in the direction of travel (man: LR, woman: RL) (cts. 1,2).</p>
┆	2	<p>Take one more walking step in the direction of travel (man: L, woman: R) (ct. 1), turn to face in reverse direction of travel and kick inside foot forward low in this new direction you are facing (man's R foot, woman's L foot) (ct. 2).</p>
	3-4	<p>Repeat Measures 1-2 with reverse footwork and direction, still keeping inside hands joined.</p>
←	5-6	<p>Repeat Figure II, Measures 1-2, but end in closed ballroom position.</p>
	7-8	<p>In closed ballroom position, take 2 light step-close-steps (man: LRL, RLR, woman: RLR, LRL) turning as a couple once clockwise around and continuing to travel slightly</p>

<u>Direction</u>	<u>Measure</u>	<u>Step</u>
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Figure III (continued):

forward. At the end of the turn, release outside hands (men's L, woman's R) to resume open ballroom position so the dance can begin again.

dance notes based on those by Dick Crum,  
expanded here and there by Erik Bendix