

ESTONIAN NATIONAL DANCE “OAT JOHN”

Here you can see a video instruction about dancing the Estonian national dance:



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fw_CsQQyD5U

The dance Oat-John is a simple dance. It is a contra folk dance made up of long lines of couples or pairs. Dancing a similar dance to Oat John is widely spread from the Baltic countries to Poland.

The background history about the dance. It has mixed origins from English country dance, Scottish country dance, and French dance styles in the 17th century.

In 1889 a village blacksmith called Jaan hid himself in the Manor's washroom to peek at the girls doing the laundry. Jaan was caught peeking and the girls came up with a teasing song about him. The song starts with the words: Kaera Jaan, Kaera Jaan get out and take a look! Originally it was a long song about this event but now we use only 2 or 3 stanzas. Nowadays everybody knows the song and the dance.

The lyrics:

∴ Kaera-Jaan, oi Kaera-Jaan,
oi karga välja kaema! ∴
∴ Kas on kesvad keerulised,
kaerad katsa kandilised! ∴
∴ Kaera-Jaan, oi Kaera-Jaan,
oi karga välja kaema! ∴
∴ Kas on kikas kaevu läinud,
Kaera-Jaan ta välja toonud! ∴
∴ Kaera-Jaan, oi Kaera-Jaan,
oi karga välja kaema! ∴
∴ Mis on Kaiel viga saanud,
et ta valjult kiljatanud! ∴

Oh, Oat-John, oh, Oat-John.
oh, hop out to see!
Is the barley spiral,
is the oat square!
Oh, Oat-John, Oh, Oat-John,
oh, hop out to see!
Has a rooster fallen into the well,
Has Oat-John brought him out!
Oh, Oat-John, oh, Oat-John,
oh, hop out to see!
What has happened to Kaie,
that she screamed so loud!