

Bătrîneasca

(Romania)

Bătrîneasca (buh-tren-YAH-skah) means "the old peoples' dance." I learned this dance from well-known Romanian folk dance researcher and teacher Tita Sever (Theodor Vasilescu's senior colleague) in the late 1970s or early 1980s.

MUSIC: "Bătrîneasca" CD: *Balkan and Beyond*, Band 8

FORMATION: closed circle, dancers "tightly packed," that is, very close to each other. High handhold. "W"

STYLE: Bent knees and bent forward from waist. Stiff movements, upper body following the movement of the feet, emulating in an exaggerated fashion the movements of older people.

METER 4/4

PATTERN

Meas

(No introduction.)

I. FIRST FIGURE (to the L and back)

- 1 Facing center and moving to the L: step on L ft to L (1), step on R ft next to L (2), step on L ft to L (3), place (with slight stamp) R ft next to L, without weight (4).
- 2 Facing center and moving to the R: Step on R ft to R (1), step on L ft next to R (&), step on R ft to R (2), step on L ft next to R (&), step on R ft to R (3), step on L ft next to R (&), step on R ft to R and hold (4).
- 3-8 Repeat meas 1-2 three more times, but (*transition step*;) stamp R ft twd center, pigeon-toed, on last count of fourth time (ct 4 of meas 8).

II. SECOND FIGURE (to the R with pigeon-toed stamp)

- 1 Facing center and moving to the R: Step on R ft to R (1), step on L ft next to R (&), stamp R ft twd the ctr without wt, pigeon-toed, (2). Repeat 1&2. (3&4)
- 2 Facing center and continuing to the R while bringing hands slowly down to low handhold: Step on R ft to R (1), step on L ft next to R (&), step on R ft to R (2), step on L ft next to R (&), step on R ft to R (3), step on L ft next to R (&), stamp R ft twd ctr without wt pigeon-toed, bringing hands sharply back up to high handhold (4).

Cont...

3-8 Repeat meas 1-2 three more times, but (*transition step:*) simply step on R ft to R (do not stamp) on last count of fourth time (ct 4 of meas 8).

Repeat dance from beg until music ends.

Romanian strigaturi:

Aşa juca bătrînii
Cînd înflorea pelinii
Pelinii s-au scuturat
Bătrînii s-au saturat
De băut şi de mîncat.

Pronunciation guide:

ă (a with a boat over)=uh
î=ih (the sound you make when lifting something too heavy for you)
ş (s with a comma under)=sh
au= 'ow' in cow

Approximate pronunciation:

A-sha dju-kah buh-trih-nee
Kihnd ihn-flo-reha peh-lee-nee
Peh-lee-nee sau skoo-too-rat
Buh-trih-nee sau suh-too-rat
Deh buh-oot shee deh mihn-kat.

Raluca's literal translation:

This is how the old folks danced
When absinthe (a bitter plant) blossomed
Now absinthe flower is dry
The old folks had enough
Of drinking and of eating.

Lee Otterholt's rhyming free translation:

This is how the old folks danced
Among the hops and barley plants.
Hops and barley, blended well,
Made a drink that tasted swell.
Gave the old folks tales to tell