

GOVAND
(Armenia)

There are (or were) hundreds of different GOVANDS/HALAYS/KOTCHARIS, many going back to different regions of Armenia. Aside from these traditional dances, there are many modern versions, with many American-Armenian communities having their own unique dance and style distinct to that community. Originally a man's dance adopted from Kurdish mountain tribes, there are still many versions, both traditional and modern, done by men only. This particular GOVAND is typical of the Van/Moush areas.

Pronunciation:

Source: Arsen Anoushian

Music: Barbashi Tape #1 Side A/3 Armenian Folk Dances
Dance Armenian (John Vartan) Side B/2
The Armenian (J. Vartan) "zurna halay"
The Dance Album (John Berberian) Side B/4 - or any
good HALAY. 2/4 meter

Style: This men's dance is done with a heavy "sinking" style. The most outstanding characteristic is the "knee breaks" (dzoongodrel). Knees are always flexed, never straight or locked. Feet are shoulder-width apart, with the thighs pressing against those of the next person. The line moves as a single cohesive unit. Despite the knee flex, carriage remains erect.

Formation: Short lines in "Kurdish hold" (dancers very close with fingers interlocked and arms bent at elbows. The fore-arms point forward at a right angle to the body). The dance is almost stationary, and the leader (man on right) "pulls" the other dancers to move the line forward, back, etc

Meas Cts

Pattern

INTRODUCTION BREAK/FLEX KNEES

1-2 1-4 Bend knees to R(ct 1); flex knees twice (cts 2,&); bend knees to L (ct 3); flex knees twice (cts 4,&).
3 5- Repeat until leader changes (cts 5-).

I. IN PLACE

1-4 1-8 Walk 4 steps in place with "sinking," R,L,R,L (cts 1-4); Break to R (cts 5,6,&); break to L (cts 7,8,&).
5 9- Repeat until leader changes.

II. SIDE STEPS

1-2 1-8 Move to R by stepping on R to R (ct 1); close L to R (ct 2); repeat (cts 3,4). Step on R to R as break to R (cts 5,6,&); break to L (cts 7,8,&).
3 9- Repeat until leader changes.

GOVAND (Continued)III. FORWARD AND BACK

- 1-8 1-16 Walk fwd with 4 steps R,L,R,L (cts 1-4); break to R (cts 5,6,&); break to L (cts 7,8,&); back up with 4 steps R,L,R,L (cts 9-12); break to R (cts 13,14,&); break to L (cts 15,16,&).
- 9 17- Repeat until leader changes.

Note: During Fig III the line can crouch fwd when moving fwd, and straighten up when it backs up. The lines can face each other so that they approach each other, and then retreat as they back up.

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