

ALUNELUL DE LA CERNA

Romanian

PRONUNCIATION: ah-loo-NEH-lool deh lah CHAIR-nah

The -ul ending, pronounced "-oo" (colloquial) or "-ool" (more formal usage) is a form of the Romanian definite article, the equivalent of English "the;" hence alunelu = "hazelnut," alunelul = "the hazelnut."

TRANSLATION: Traditionally, it has been thought that "Alunelul" means "little hazelnut." Thus, this would be the "little hazelnut dance" as done in Cerna. Romanian folklore specialist, Theodor Vasilescu, favors the meaning as a contraction of "A lu Nelu" (where Nelu is the name "John" so the meaning is "John's dance") because, with the exception of Floricica ("little flower"), dances are rarely named for trees, plants, or flowers.

SOURCE: Dick Oakes learned this dance from Sunni Bloland who learned it from Anca Giurchescu, dance ethnographer at the Institute of Ethnography and Folklore in Bucharest (București), Romania, during her research trip in 1967-68.

BACKGROUND: This dance, from the village of Cerna in Dobrogea, is but one of many dances bearing the name "alunelul" which are found all over Oltenia in Romania. It is from the village's repertoire and is danced at the "Sunday Hora" as well as all other dance occasions. The ethnographic region of Oltenia is green and mountainous and has some of southeastern Romania's oldest surviving artifacts, edifices, and folklore, with little Turkish, Russian, or Greek influence. The Monastery Cave in Tismana is also known as Treasure Cave because the treasure of the Romanian National Bank was hidden there during the second world war. A monastery is situated near Tismana on the slope where the cell of St. Nicodemus lies at over 1,000 feet.

MUSIC: Naroc Records (7"EP) NA 1054-EP, Romanian Folk Dances, Side A, Band 1, "Alunelul." The music on the recommended recording, recorded in Cerna, is played by the village's local musicians.

FORMATION: Lines, open cir, or closed cir of mixed M and W with hands joined and held down in "V" pos.

METER/RHYTHM: 2/4. The dance is non-concordant with the music.

STEPS/STYLE: Meas 1-8 are danced rather flat-footed in an easy, relaxed way with knees nearly always slightly bent. The hands swing slightly fwd and bwd during each meas.
Meas 9-10 are danced on the ball of the ft.
Meas 11-13 are again flat-footed (as an even slide), but hands do not swing.

MEAS

MOVEMENT DESCRIPTION

INTRODUCTION - None.

THE DANCE

- 1 Facing and moving diag fwd R twd ctr, step R as arms swing fwd (ct 1); step L as arms swing bwd (ct 2);
- 2 Turning to face diag L and moving bwd diag R out of ctr, step R bwd as arms swing fwd (ct 1); step bwd L (ct &); step bwd R as arms swing bwd (ct &); pause (ct 2).

NOTE: Ft do not close together, but remain several inches apart during meas 2.
- 3-4 Repeat action of meas 1-2 to L in RLOD with opp ftwk.
- 5-6 Repeat action of meas 1-2.
- 7 Facing ctr, step L swd, bending knee and leaving R in place as hands swing fwd (ct 1); step R swd, bending knee and leaving L in place as hands swing bwd (ct 2);
- 8 Step L swd, bending knees and leaving R in place as hands swing fwd (ct 1); lift L heel slightly, while swinging R high and out to R with knee bent (ct 2);
- 9 Facing ctr, step R across in front of L (ct 1); step L in place (ct &); step R next to L (ct 2); step L across in front of R (ct &);
- 10 Step R in place (ct 1); step L next to R (ct &); step R slightly swd (ct 2); stamp L next to R (ct 2);
- 11 Step L slightly swd (ct 1); stamp R (ct &); step R slightly swd (ct 2); stamp L (ct &);
- 12 Moving slightly diag bwd to L, step L (ct 1); click R to L, taking wt, which displaces L and causes it to shoot out swd (ct &); step L diag bwd (ct 2); click L to R, taking wt, which displaces R and causes it to shoot out swd (ct &);
- 13 Step L diag bwd to L (ct 1); click R to L, taking wt, which displaces L and causes it to shoot out swd (ct &); step L diag bwd (ct 2); pause (ct &).

Repeat entire dance from beg.