

ÎNVÎRTITA RARĂ ȘI DEASĂ DIN SĂLAJ

(Transylvania - Romanian)

The slow and fast învîrtita of Sălaj are quite common among the Romanian population of Sălaj county in north-central Transylvania. The dances are in fact identical except for the rhythm and tempo of the music. The fast învîrtita is done to an even 2/4 beat, while the slow învîrtita has a somewhat freer rhythm, best described as 7/8. Both dances are improvised within a standard framework of basic steps, with the man controlling the changes in the dance.

The basic dance position is partners facing each other with woman's hands on man's shoulders, man's hands high on woman's shoulderblades. When turning clockwise, bodies are turned to the left so right hips are adjacent; reverse for counterclockwise turn. Basic style is flat-footed with knees very slightly bent but upper body erect. In the rară (RAH'-ruh, "slow"), the steps have a slightly "bouncy" feel; in the deasă (DYAH'-suh, "fast"), the knees are bent a little more and the steps are very level.

Because of the difference in rhythm between rară and deasă, and because the rhythm of the dance frequently crosses the beats in the music, the steps are notated here as a combination of quick (Q) and slow (S) beats.

Sources: Valeriu Buciu, professional folklorist and choreographer from Baia Mare, Maramureș county; Susana Colceriu, professional dancer born in Sălaj.

Recording: Custom cassette available at Insitute.

Basic figures

- I. Scurtă (SKOOR'-tuh, "short") [quick-slow, quick-slow, slow]

Turning CW with R hips adjacent, step forward on Rft (Q), step forward on Lft (S). Repeat (Q-S). Turning to own R to reverse hold, step back to own R on Rft (S). Repeat entire pattern with opposite footwork for CCW turn.

- II. Lungă (LOONG'-guh, "long") [quick-slow, quick-slow, quick-quick-quick-slow, quick-slow, slow]

First 4 beats are the same as the first 4 beats of scurtă (Q-S, Q-S). Step forward on Rft with slight bend of R knee (Q), step slightly forward on ball of Lft (Q), step forward on Rft with slight bend of R knee (Q), step forward on Lft, returning body to original level (S). Final 3 beats are the same as final 3 beats of scurtă (Q-S, S). Reverse footwork and direction for CCW turn.

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- III. Dublă (DOO'-bluh, "double") [Q-S, Q-S, Q-Q-Q-S, Q-S, Q-Q-Q-S, Q-S, Q-Q-Q-S, Q-S, S]

First 8 beats are the same as first 8 beats of lungă (Q-S, Q-S, Q-Q-Q-S). Repeat last 6 beats of this pattern (Q-S, Q-Q-Q-S) twice, then conclude with same final 3 steps as both scurtă and lungă. Reverse footwork and direction for CCW turn.

Both the rară and deasă consist simply of the above three figures, combined at the will of the partners. The rară uses mostly the scurtă and lungă patterns, with the dublă occurring only occasionally; the deasă is dominated by lungă and dublă, with the scurtă being used infrequently. Many variations of the patterns are possible; a few are described below.

Closing variations: Various closing figures can be used at the end of the lungă or dublă patterns (or even at end of the scurtă, although less often due to its shortness). A few examples follow:

- I. In place of the last 2 steps of the pattern (S, S), the M turns to face his partner without releasing her, jumping on both feet slightly apart (Q), click heels together in the air (Q), repeat jump and click (Q-Q). W continues normal footwork (S, S) in place facing partner.
- II. As in I above, M faces his partner jumping in place on both feet together and bending knees (Q), spring into air, straightening knees and spreading feet about shoulder-width apart (Q), land with both feet together and knees bent (Q), jump again on both feet together, knees slightly bent (Q). W continues normal footwork in place facing partner.
- III. (Described for end of CW turn, but may be done symmetrically at end of CCW turn.) On last quick beat before the final 2 slow counts, M release hold of W with L hand, both continue movement so W opens out to M's R side. M step forward on Lft (Q), swing R leg up forward with knee straight and slap inside of R boot top with L hand (Q), step in place on Rft (Q), swing L leg up forward with straight knee and slap inside L boot top with L hand (Q). W remains at M's R side, dancing normal footwork (S, S) in place; M's R hand remains on W's shoulderblade at all times. Next movement begins with M stepping on Lft behind Rft, bringing his partner across in front of him and turning to his R on the next slow step.
- IV. (Described for end of CW turn.) On last quick beat before the final 2 slow counts, M take hold of W's L hand with his R hand. M takes next 2 slow steps (L, R) in place as he turns his partner CCW under joined hands. W steps onto R heel into CCW double pirouette, ending with weight on Lft.

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The above variation may be used in either the rară or deasă, but are much ore common in the rară. Below are two additional lungă variations for the rară only:

- V. (Described in CW version.) Dance first 4 beats of lungă (Q-S, Q-S), step forward onto Rft bending R knee slightly (Q), step slightly forward on ball of Lft (Q), step back-ward onto Rft (Q), step backward onto Lft (S), continue stepping backward R,L (Q-S). Turning to own R, step on Rft to R as M brings W across him to face CCW (S).
- VI. (Described in CW version.) On first of the last 2 slow beats of lungă, both step forward on Lft, turning toward partner (S), continuing to turn to end facing opposite direction, step back into half-sit on Rft, leaving Lft in place.

Presented by Glenn Nielsen