

## ÎNVÎRTITA DIN MARAMUREȘ

(Transylvania - Romanian)

This învîrtita ('n-vur-TEE'-ta, "turning dance") is the most popular dance in the northern half of Maramureș county in northern Transylvania, comprising the valley of the Iza river and the surrounding mountains. The dance is unusual in one respect: although it is most commonly done by a man and a woman, it is often done by one man with two or even three women, and sometimes (though less frequently) two women dance together without a man. The dance is improvised, with the changes being controlled by the man, and is made up of two sections: an "in-place" section and a "turning" section, each of which has a number of possible variations.

The rhythm of the dance is even 2/4. The style is flat-footed, with a slight bend in the knees; the "in-place" steps have a slight downward accent on each beat, while the turning steps are more level.

Improvisational or "free-style" dances are difficult to describe because of the wide variety of possible variations; one of the biggest problems in this has to do with the phrasing of both dance and music. As a general principle, good dancers tend to follow the phrasing of the music, but do not necessarily follow it always. Western ears are accustomed to even phrases of 4 or 8 measures; Romanian music is often played in this structure, but music with phrase lengths of 5, 6 or 10 measures is quite common. For ease in both writing and understanding, the dance notes below assume phrases of 8 measures.

Sources: Valeriu Buciu, professional folklorist and choreographer from Baia Mare, Maramureș county; villagers in Giulești and other villages in northern Maramureș.

Recording: Balkan-Arts 45rpm.

### "In-place" steps

**Basic Step:** Partners face each other with woman's hands on man's shoulders, man's hands on woman's waist. Both step on Rft in place with W turning slightly to L (1), step on Lft in place with W turning slightly to R (2). Repeat same footwork for each measure of the "in-place" section.

Several movement variations are possible using this basic step:

**Slow CCW turn:** Using basic step, revolve very slowly CCW as a couple by stepping slightly to R on Rft on count 1 of each measure, and stepping on Lft beside Rft on count 2.

**Slow CW turn:** Still using basic step, revolve very slowly CW as a couple by stepping to L on Lft on count 2 of

## ÎNVÎRTITA DIN MARAMUREȘ (continued)

each measure, and stepping on Rft beside Lft on count 1 of the next measure.

**Side-to-side:** While M dances basic step in place, he can move W gradually to his L (her R) until they are side-by-side with R hips adjacent. M may release trailing hand or keep it on W's waist, as he chooses. Repeat as often as desired.

**Walkaround:** While M dances basic step in place, he can take his L hand from W's waist and push her gently to his L (her R) with his R hand. She continues basic footwork while walking CCW around him, keeping her L hand lightly in contact with M at shoulder level. When W completes a full circle CCW and is once again in front of M, partners can resume shoulder-waist position, or M can send W around him CCW again, or he can send her around him in the opposite direction (CW).

While dancing any of the above figures, M can dance bătaie (stamping steps) in the following patterns:

**Bătaie I:** Step on Rft in place (1), stamp Lft beside Rft (&), step on Lft in place (2), stamp Rft beside Lft (&). Repeat as desired.

**Bătaie II:** Step on Rft in place (1), step on Lft in place with slight extra bend of L knee (2), stamp Rft beside Lft but a little forward, taking weight on Rft and straightening R knee a little (&). Repeat action of count 2,& until a change is desired, ending with a step in place on the Lft on count 2 of any measure.

### Turning step

There is really only one "turning figure", consisting of a slow CCW turn alternating with a faster CW turn, but either part can be done for any number of measures. The description below goes 8 measures in each direction, but this is strictly for ease of description.

**Meas 1** In shoulder-waist position, step to R on Rft with W turning slightly to L (1), step on Lft beside Rft with turning slightly to R (2).

**Meas 2-7** Repeat action of meas 1 six more times, revolving CCW as a couple.

**Meas 8** Step to R on Rft with M turning to L (1), W step on Lft beside Rft while M step forward on L foot so that R hips are adjacent, releasing hold and placing R hand on W's L shoulderblade and L hand on W's upper

ÎNVÎRTITA DIN MARAMUREȘ (continued)

R arm ("turn position").

- Meas 9 M step forward on Rft (1), hop on Rft (2), step forward on Lft (&); all these steps have a slight stamping quality. W step forward with Rft with slight bend of knee (1), step on Lft beside Rft (&), step forward on Rft (2), step on Lft beside Rft (&); these steps also have a slight stamping quality, with an accent on count 1. While doing these steps, couple revolves CW around a common center.
- Meas 10-14 Repeat action of meas 9 five more times, with M emphasizing the stamp on counts 2,& of the last measure as a signal to his partner.
- Meas 15-16 M step forward on Rft with loud stamp (1), hop on Rft with loud stamp (2), step to R on Rft with stamp, turning to face W (1), pause (2). W dances same footwork without stamping.

Repeat complete turning sequence as often as desired.

Presented by Glenn Nielsen