

SĂRĂCIA

Romania

Sărăcia (suh-ruh-CHEE-ah, 'Poverty') is a folk dance popular in Romanian communities in the U.S. I learned it during my childhood among the Romanians in St. Paul, Minnesota. The Serbs and Croats in the eastern part of the U.S. also do variants of Sărăcia under the name Rumunjsko kolo (ROO-moon-skoh KOH-loh, 'Romanian kolo'), having learned it via the Romanian immigrant community in eastern Pennsylvania and adapted it to kolo style.

I have searched in vain for information on Sărăcia during research trips to Romania and through exhaustive inquiries and correspondence with folklore institutions and individual experts in that country. So far, no trace of this dance has been found (although, curiously, its "B" music appears as a brief motif in Igor Moiseyev's Moldavian Suite !).

I suspect that Sărăcia was an urban dance that enjoyed brief popularity in Romania at the time of immigration to the U.S. and subsequently disappeared in the homeland. It may also have been one of the so-called Romanian national dances that were taught at one time in schools and occasionally entered local folk-dance repertoires.

As danced in St. Paul and described here, it belongs to the pan-Romanian sârba family.

MUSIC: Old 78-rpm recordings of Sărăcia by the Boldi and Comloșan Romanian orchestras are long out of print; in a pinch you can use recordings of the Serb/Croat versions of Rumunjsko kolo: Folk Dancer MH 45-1010 and Balkan 525.

FORMATION: Closed circle, mixed men, women and children. Hands are joined and held down at sides ("V" position).

METER: 2/4

ACTION

Meas

Part "A" - Rocking steps with stamps

- 1 Facing ctr, step Rft in place of Lft, displacing Lft back in air (1); step Lft in place of Rft, displacing Rft forward in air (2).
- 2 Still facing ctr, step Rft again in place of Lft, displacing Lft back in air (1); hop in place on Rft, bringing Lft around in front in air (2).
- 3 Still facing ctr, step Lft in place of Rft, displacing Rft back in air (1); step Rft in place of Lft, displacing Lft forward in air (2).
- 4 Still facing ctr, step Lft again in place of Rft, displacing Rft back in air (1); hop in place on Lft, bringing Rft around in front in air (2).
- 5-6 Repeat movements of meas 1-2.
- 7-8 Stamp Lft in place 3 times beside Rft (without taking weight on Lft) (1,2; 1, pause).
- 9-16 Reverse footwork of meas 1-8

Part "B" - Sârba steps traveling to R

Meas

- 17-18 Facing directly to R (in LOD), take 2 step-hops : R-hop, L-hop (1,2; 1,2).
- 19 Turning briefly to face ctr, step Rft to R (1); step Lft in back of Rft (2).
- 20-22 Repeat movements of meas 17-19, continuing to travel in LOD.
- 23-24 Repeat movements of meas 17-18, continuing to travel in LOD. Then turn to face ctr and bring Rft around in front in preparation for return to Part "A".

Notes by Dick Crum, revised 3/91.