

Bătrîneasca
(Romania)

Lee Offholt

Bătrîneasca (buh-tren-YAH-skah) means "the old peoples' dance." I learned this dance from well-known Romanian folk dance researcher and teacher Tita Sever (Theodor Vasilescu's senior colleague) in the late 1970s or early 1980s.

MUSIC: "Bătrîneasca" CD: Balkan and Beyond, Band 8

FORMATION: closed circle, dancers "tightly packed," that is, very close to each other. High handhold. "W"

STYLE: Bent knees and bent forward from waist. Stiff movements, upper body following the movement of the feet, emulating in an exaggerated fashion the movements of older people.

METER 4/4

PATTERN

Meas

I. FIRST FIGURE (to the L and back)

- 1 Facing center and moving to the L: step on L ft to L (1), step on R ft next to L (2), step on L ft to L (3), place (with slight stamp) R ft next to L, without weight (4).
- 2 Facing center and moving to the R: Step on R ft to R (1), step on L ft next to R (&), step on R ft to R (2), step on L ft next to R (&), step on R ft to R (3), step on L ft next to R (&), step on R ft to R and hold (4).
- 3-8 Repeat meas 1-2 three more times, but (transition step:) stamp R ft twd center, pigeon-toed, on last count of fourth time (ct 4 of meas 8).

II. SECOND FIGURE (to the R with pigeon-toed stamp)

- 1 Facing center and moving to the R: Step on R ft to R (1), step on L ft next to R (&), stamp R ft twd the ctr without wt, pigeon-toed, (2). Repeat 1&2. (3&4)
- 2 Facing center and continuing to the R while bringing hands slowly down to low handhold: Step on R ft to R (1), step on L ft next to R (&), step on R ft to R (2), step on L ft next to R (&), step on R ft to R (3), step on L ft next to R (&), stamp R ft twd ctr without wt pigeon-toed, bringing hands sharply back up to high handhold (4).
- 3-8 Repeat meas 1-2 three more times, but (transition step:) simply step on R ft to R (do not stamp) on last count of fourth time (ct 4 of meas 8).

Repeat dance from beg until music ends.

Bătrâneasca, cont'd.

Romanian strigaturi:

Call:

Aşa juca bătrînii

Cînd înfloreau pelinii

Pelinii s-au scuturat

Bătrînii s-au saturat

Response:

- Hej – hej, jar așa!

- Hej – hej, jar așa!

- Hej – hej, jar așa!

De băut și de mîncat! (Or, to simplify, the leader could drop this fifth line and the others answer, as before, “- Hej – hej, jar așa!” after the fourth line)

Pronunciation guide:

ă (a with a boat over)=uh

î=ih (the sound you make when lifting something too heavy for you)

ș (s with a comma under)=sh

au= 'ow' in cow

Approximate pronunciation:

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 1 & 2 & 3 & 4

A-sha dju-kah buh-trih-nee - Hey – hey, yah rah shah!

Kihnd ihn-flo-reha peh-lee-nee

Peh-lee-nee sau skoo-too-rat

Buh-trih-nee sau suh-too-rat

Deh buh-oot shee deh mihn-kat!

Raluca's literal translation:

This is how the old folks danced - Hey – hey, one more time!

When absinthe (a bitter plant) blossomed

Now absinthe flower is dry

The old folks had enough

Of drinking and of eating!

Lee Otterholt's rhyming free translation:

This is how the old folks danced

Among the hops and barley plants.

Hops and barley, blended well,

Made a drink that tasted swell.

Gave the old folks tales to tell!

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