

## BĂTRÎNESCU DIN CHIOAR

(Transylvania - Romanian)

Bătrînescu din Chioar (buh-tri-NESS'-koo deen kee-WAHR', "old people's dance from Chioar") is one of three commonly danced învîrtitas ('n-vur-TEE'-ta, "turning dance") from the Chioar region in the southwestern part of Maramureş county in northern Transylvania. The dance is done by young and old alike, and its name might be more accurately translated as "dance in the old people's style from Chioar". This is the first of three dances which form the dance cycle of Chioar; the others are De-nceput and Scuturat.

The dance has a soft, relaxed feel; knees and ankles are always slightly bent, and there is a small pliê (knee-bend) on each beat. Feet are parallel, with weight on the whole foot. The dance is improvised, with the flow from one figure to the next being controlled by the man. The figures fall into three general categories: turning figures, side-to-side variations, and in-place variations. The music is in 4/4 time.

Source: Valeriu Buciu, professional folklorist and choreographer from Baia Mare, Maramures county; peasant dancers from Chioar at a wedding in Baia Mare.

Recording: Custom cassette available at Institute.

### Basic turning figures

I. Scurtă (SKOOR'-tuh, "short") [  ]

With W's hands on M's shoulders and M's hands on W's shoulderblades, facing to R of partner and turning CCW as a couple, step forward on Rft (1), step forward on Lft (2), step forward on Rft (3); turning toward partner, step on Lft beside Rft (&), continuing to turn to end facing to L of partner, step in place on Rft (4). Repeat, reversing footwork and direction.

II. Lungă (LOONG'-guh, "long") [  ]

Beginning in the same position as in I, walk forward 7 steps R,L,R,L,R,L,R, turning CCW as a couple (1,2,3,4,5,6,7); turning toward partner, step on Lft beside Rft (&), continuing turn to end facing to L of partner, step in place on Rft (8). Repeat, reversing footwork and direction.

### Side-to-side variations

A common form of variation is for the W to move from one side of M to the other dancing the footwork of the scurtă figure, while the M dances some more elaborate version of the scurtă, often involving some form of boot-slapping. In all of these figures the M begins by dropping his R hand from W's L shoulderblade and moving to his own

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R; the W dances the scurtă to her R, turning CCW to end at M's L side. On the symmetrical movement the M pushes W gently across in front with his L hand, placing his R hand on her L shoulderblade as she turns CCW into place at his R side.

- A) M step to own R on Rft (1), step on Lft across in front of Rft (2), close Rft to Lft with sharp click (3), fall to own R on Rft with bent knee (4).
- B) M step to own R on Rft (1), step on Lft across in front of Rft (2), swing R leg forward with straight knee and slap inside of R calf with R hand (3), fall to R on Rft with knee bent (4).
- C) Same as B but on (3) raise R leg to R with bent knee and slap outside of R heel.
- D) Same as (B) or (C) but on count 4 leap onto Rft in place, kicking Lft up behind and slap inside L heel with R hand.
- E) Step to own R on Rft (1), step across in front of Rft on Lft (2), slap outside of R thigh with R hand (&) raising R leg slightly to R with knee bent, slap outside of R heel with R hand (3), slap outside of R thigh with R hand (&), step a little to R on Rft, bending knee (4).
- F) First 2 counts same as (E). Raising R leg forward with straight knee, slap inside of R thigh with R hand (&), slap inside of R calf with R hand (3), slap inside of R thigh with R hand (&), fall onto Rft in place (4).

In their normal form, these variants are only used when moving to the R, alternating with a basic scurtă or variant (A) to the L.

### Behind-the-back pirouette

This variation of the lungă can be executed in either direction; it is described below with movement to the R.

M releases hold of W's shoulders and takes hold of her upper L arm with his R hand. W removes her R hand from M's L shoulder but leaves L hand on M's R shoulder. M steps R,L in place, bringing W across in front of him; W steps R,L to her R (1,2) [Optional variant: M may raise L arm over his head]. M releases hold of W's upper L arm with a gentle push outward and steps R,L in place, turning to his own R; W executes a CCW pirouette on 2 counts, stepping across onto R heel and finishing pirouette with a step onto Lft (3,4). Both continue with remaining 5 counts of normal lungă (5,6,7,&,8), resuming normal hold as soon as possible.

## BĂTRÎNESCU DIN CHIOAR (continued)

### In-place variations

- I. Facing partner with arms raised above head in a relaxed way, M's L palm placed against W's R palm and M's R palm against W's R palm, both step on Rft in place, turning slightly to own L and pushing R palm a little forward (1), step on Lft in place, turning slightly to own R and pushing L palm slightly forward (2), step on Rft in place, turning slightly to own L and pushing R palm slightly forward (3), step on Lft beside Rft (&), step on Rft in place (4). Repeat symmetrically.
- II. In same position as I, but with weight on both feet placed together, raise up (relevé) onto balls of feet, turning slightly to own L and pushing R palm slightly forward (1), come down onto full feet, bending knees a little, turning back to face partner and returning hands to original position (2). Repeat symmetrically.
- III. Footwork identical to I, but hands are held a little lower. On counts 1 and 2, M releases W's R hand and turns her in a CCW pirouette under his R hand. W steps across to her L on R heel into the pirouette, which ends with a step in place on Lft on count 2. Place M's L and W's R palms together and finish footwork (step R,L,R) in place (3,&,4). Repeat symmetrically (or substitute I to L).
- IV. First 2 counts same as III (W's CCW pirouette). On counts 3,&,4 M steps R,L,R in place, turning W into another CCW pirouette; W again steps across onto Rft (3), then finishes pirouette by closing Lft to Rft without taking weight (4). Repeat symmetrically.

Presented by Glenn Nielsen