

BRÂUL PE OPT

Romanian

PRONUNCIATION: BREWL pay awpt

The -ul ending, pronounced "-oo" (colloquial) or "-ool" (more formal usage) is a form of the Romanian definite article, the equivalent of English "the;" hence brîu = "belt," brîul = "the belt."

TRANSLATION: The belt dance in eight

SOURCE: Dick Oakes learned this dance from Mihai David who learned it while he was with the *Romanian State Folk Dance Ensemble* during the years 1963 to 1965 and subsequently taught it to folk dancers in the United States. Martin Koenig, Steve Kotansky, and Eugenia Popescu-Judetza have taught variants.

BACKGROUND: Brâul pe Opt is from the Romanian ethnographic region of Oltenia in Romania. Oltenia is green and mountainous and has some of southeastern Romania's oldest surviving artifacts, edifices, and folklore, with little Turkish, Russian, or Greek influence. The brâu was originally named for the way the dancers were linked together by holding each other's belts ("brâu," literally "belt" in Romanian). Today, however, dances in this class also are seen with low handholds or shoulder holds. They are typically characterized by their powerful dynamism and are found with many variants in several folkloric zones of Romania.

Dances of this type are also found in villages on the roads that shepherds follow each year as they move their flocks from the south Carpathians to the wide meadows of the Danube Plain and Dobrogea. In the Danube zone, the dance is done in a circle or semicircle with a shoulder hold. When difficult variations are danced in the Brâul, it is a virtuosity dance. This form is done only by men, but a simpler choreography is dance by both men and women in a mixed semicircle.

MUSIC: Gypsy Camp Vol. II (LP) GC 5201-II

FORMATION: Semicircle or line of mixed M and W with hands joined and held down in "V" pos.

METER/RHYTHM: 4/4

STEPS/STYLE: The dance has a staccato feeling and is danced mostly on the balls of the feet.

MEAS

MOVEMENT DESCRIPTION

INTRODUCTION

1 Facing R, step back on ball of R in RLOD (ct 1); bring heel down, taking wt (ct 2);
step back on ball of L (ct 3); bring heel down, taking wt (ct 4);
2-8 Repeat action of meas 1 seven more times, turning to face ctr on last step.

I. SINGLE-CROSSING AND TWO LIFTS

- 1 Facing ctr, hop L, bringing R leg up fwd with lower leg turned out (ct 1); step R in front of L (ct 2); step L in place (ct 3); step R next to L (ct 4);
- 2 Step L in front of R (ct 1); step R in place (ct 2); step L next to R (ct 3); plause (ct 4);
- 3 Hop L, bringing R leg up fwd twd ctr (ct 1); step R in place (ct 2); step L in place (ct 3); pause (ct 4);
- 4 Repeat action of meas 3.
- 5-16 Repeat action of meas 1-4 three more times.

II. DOUBLE-CROSSING AND TWO LIFTS

- 1 Hop L, bringing R leg up fwd with lower leg turned out (ct 1); step R in front of L (ct 2); step L in place (ct 3); step R next to L (ct 4);
- 2 Step L in front of R (ct 1); step R in place (ct 2); step L next to R (ct 3); step R in front of L (ct 4);
- 3 Step L in place (ct 1); step R next to L (ct 2); step L in front of R (ct 3); step R in place (ct 4);
- 4 Step L,R,L in place (cts 1,2,3); pause (ct 4).
- 5-6 Repeat action of Fig I, meas 3-4.
- 7-8 Repeat action of Fig I, meas 1-2.
- 9-16 Repeat action of meas 1-8.

III. SINGLE-CROSSING AND SLAPPING

- 1 Hop L, bringing R leg up fwd with lower leg turned out (ct 1); step R in front of L (ct 2); step L in place (ct 3); step R next to L (ct 4);
- 2 Step L in front of R (ct 1); step R in place (ct 2).
- Turning to face L, fall onto L (ct 3); slap ball of R diag fwd, momentarily taking wt (ct 4);
- 3 Fall onto L (ct 1); slap ball of R diag fwd, momentarily taking wt (ct 2);
- NOTE: Dancers move slightly to L on these last 6 cts.
- 4 Facing ctr, step L in place (ct 1); step R in front of L (ct 2); step L in place (ct 3); step R next to L (ct 4);
- 5 Step L in front of R (ct 1); step R in place (ct 2); step L next to R (ct 3); step R in front of L (ct 4);
- 6 Step L in place (ct 1).
- Turning to face R, fall onto R (ct 2); slap ball of L diag fwd, momentarily taking wt (ct 3); fall onto R (ct 4);
- 7 Slap ball of L diag fwd, momentarily taking wt (ct 1); fall onto R (ct 2); slap ball of L diag fwd, momentarily taking wt (ct 3).

NOTE: Dancers move slightly to R on these last 6 cts.

- 8 Facing ctr, step R in place (ct 4);
Step L in front of R (ct 1); step R in place (ct 2); step L next to R (ct 3); step R in front of L (ct 4);
- 9 Step L in place (ct 1); step R next to L (ct 2); step L in front of R (ct 3); step R in place (ct 4).
- 10 Turning to face L, fall onto L (ct 1); slap ball of R diag fwd, momentarily taking wt (ct 2); fall onto L (ct 3); slap ball of R diag fwd, momentarily taking wt (ct 4);
- 11 Fall onto L (ct 1); slap ball of R diag fwd, momentarily taking wt (ct 2).

NOTE: Dancers move slightly to L on these last 6 cts.

- 12 Facing cr, step L in place (ct 3); step R in front of L (ct 4);
Step L in place (ct 1); step R next to L (ct 2); step L in front of R (ct 3); step R in place (ct 4);
- 13 Step L next to R (ct 1); step R in front of L (ct 2); step L in place (ct 3).

- 14 Turning to face R, fall onto R (ct 4);
Slap ball of L diag fwd, momentarily taking wt (ct 1); fall onto R (ct 2); slap ball of L diag fwd, momentarily taking wt (ct 3); fall onto R (ct 4);
- 15 Slap ball of L diag fwd, momentarily taking wt (ct 1).

NOTE: Dancers move slightly to R on these last 6 cts.

- 16 Facing ctr, step R in place (ct 2); step L in front of R (ct 3); step R in place (ct 4);
Step L,R,L in place (cts 1,2,3).

IV. TRAVELLING

- 1 Facing ctr, low hop L (ct 4 from prev meas);
Slap R diag fwd to R with straight R leg, taking wt (ct 1); pause (ct 2); step on ball of L across in back of R (ct 3); pause (ct 4);
- 2 Leap R swd (ct 1); step L across in front of R (ct 2); pause (ct 3);

- 3-16 Low hop L (ct 4);
Repeat action of meas 1-2 seven more times with pause on ct 4 of meas 16.

NOTE: On cts 1,2,3 of Fig II, meas 4, and Fig III, meas 16, dancers should bend fwd slightly and raise knees higher than usual.

Repeat entire dance from beg.