

JIANUL

Romanian

PRONUNCIATION: ZHYAH-nool

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 jianu = "legendary hero," jianul = "the legendary hero."

TRANSLATION: Legendary hero

SOURCE: Dick Oakes learned this dance from Larisa Lucaci who introduced it to folk dancers in the United States in 1954. She taught it at Michael and Mary Ann Herman's Folk Dance House in New York, the Maine Folk Dance Camp, at the 1955 Oglebay Institute in West Virginia, and at the 1966 Santa Barbara Folk Dance Conference in Santa Barbara, California.

BACKGROUND: Iancu Jianu, said to be one of the boyars (landed gentry) of Oltenia, fought in the 1821 Romanian Revolution against the "Phanariot" regime, so called because the Ottomans chose Greek rulers of Romania from the Phanar district of Istanbul, Turkey. Despite being rather wealthy, owning parts of four estates and 14 Gypsy slaves, he chose to become an outlaw, opposing the idea that the leadership of the country was given to Phanariotes instead of the local boyars. What made him become a hajduk was a tax collector (zapciu) who enforced the collection of due taxes while Iancu was away. On his return, Iancu killed the tax collector and became a runaway. He organized a band of outlaws, which numbered 20 to 25 people, but usually used smaller groups of 10 to 12 people in his interventions. In 1821, he brought to the army of Tudor Vladimirescu just 21 people. In the following months, Jianu and a part of his hajduks were caught and on December 30, 1812, he was ordered to hand them over to Bucharest where he was sent to prison, but following his relatives' intervention, he was pardoned.

Oltenia, also called Lesser Wallachia, with the alternate Latin names Wallachia Minor, Wallachia Alutana, Wallachia Caesarea in use between 1718 and 1739, is a historical province and geographical region of Romania, in western Wallachia. It is situated between the Danube, the Southern Carpathians and the Olt river (although counties in the east extend beyond the river in Muntenia in some areas).

MUSIC: Folk Dancer (45rpm) MH-1122-A
Folkraft FK (LP) LP 32 B-2

FORMATION: Closed cir of mixed M and W with hands joined and held down in "V" pos. To begin the dance, dancers face diag R and beg moving to the R in LOD.

METER/RHYTHM: 2/4

STEPS/STYLE: FLYING TWO-STEP: Long running step R fwd, swinging hands twd ctr (ct 1); short running step L fwd (ct &); long running step R fwd, swinging hands away from ctr (ct 2). While this motif resembles three simple running steps, the second step (on ct &) is actually shortened to give it the character of a legitimate Two-Step. The repeat is danced in the same dir with opp ftwk.

HANDS are held down and make short fwd and bwd swings during each Flying Two-Step.

LEAP: Facing ctr and bending slightly fwd at hips, Leap swd, extending free leg bwd and swinging arms fwd (ct 1); Leap across in back of supporting ft with free ft, straightening body and swinging arms bwd (ct 2).

HANDS are held down and make a large fwd swing on the first Leap and a large bwd swing on the second Leap.

MEAS

MOVEMENT DESCRIPTION

INTRODUCTION

1-4 No action.

TWO-STEPS AND LEAPS

1-2 Dance 2 Flying Two-Steps;
3 Turning to face ctr, Leap swd, leaning slightly fwd from hips and bringing free leg up in back (ct 1); leap across in back of supporting ft with free ft (ct 2).

Dancers continue in the same dir until a leader calls for a change in dir (see Calls below).

TRANSITION

3 When a leader calls for a change in direction on the two Leaps, dance three Flying Two-Steps instead of two, making an arc into the cir to end facing in the opp dir.
Turning to face ctr, Leap swd in new dir, leaning slightly fwd from hips and bringing free leg up in back (ct 1); Leap across in back of supporting ft with free ft (ct 2).

Repeat the dance in the opp dir, widening the cir on the first Flying Two-Steps, until a leader again calls for a change in dir, whereupon everyone dances a third Flying Two-Step as a transition, making an arc twd ctr to face opp dir.

STRIGATURI (CALLS)

Și la stînga, și! (SHEE lah STUNG-gah SHEEEEEEE) "Let's go to the left!"

Și la dreaptă, și, și, și! (SHEE lah DREHP-tuh shee shee SHEEEEEEE) "Let's go to the right!"

The calls may be made often, which keeps the dancers alert and the dance quite lively.