

Bračno Oro

(Yugoslav-Albanian)

Bračno Oro (BRAHCH-noh OH-roh), based on Shiptar (Albanian) dance motifs, was created by Ciga Despotovic of Yugoslavia. The title means “Wedding (Round-) Dance.” Such dances are traditionally segregated in Albania, but Ciga wanted a couple dance. His version, with a closed circle of alternating men and women, emphasized the gender differences in the dance patterns. It was taught by him and his wife Ivon at Stockton Folk Dance Camp 1979, along with the option of an open circle version of mixed men and women. The latter, described here, was learned from Ciga in the late 1970s by Lee Otterholt, who taught it at Stockton 2003.

- Music: CDs: “Bračno Oro” from “Born of Love” (Nevofoon CD 1997.1055)
Balkan and Beyond, Band 3.
Record: Ciga and Ivon Despotovic Vol 3, Side II, Band 7.
- Rhythm: Meter = 7/8=3/8+2/8+2/8, counted here as 1, 2, 3 or s, q, q, and (rarely)
7/8=2/8+1/8+2/8+2/8, counted here as 1, &, 2, 3.
- Formation: Open mixed circle of M and W facing diagonally right of center. Arms are open in a wide arc at chest level with hands joined, left over right.
- Styling: Generally men's steps are with movements larger than women's.

Meas	7/8 meter	Pattern
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INTRODUCTION None, or wait 8 measures for repeat of the first figure.

I. MOVING IN LOD AND RLOD (A melody)

Similar footwork for W and M.

- 1 Facing and moving in LOD, step on R, moving wt to ball of ft as L leg is raised fwd with knee bent (W with ft near ankle) (ct 1); bounce on R heel with a small bend of R knee (ct 2); repeat ct 2 (ct 3).
- 2 Repeat meas 1, cts 1-2 with opp ftwk (cts 1-2); bouncing on L with a small bend of L knee (ct uh); transfer wt quickly (almost a leap) to ball of R ft (W step slightly diag R fwd) (ct 3).
- 3 Take a long step fwd on L (ct 1); step on R (ct 2); step on L (ct 3).
- 4 Turning gradually to face RLOD, step on R in LOD (ct 1); facing ctr, step on L behind R (ct 2); facing RLOD, step fwd on R (ct 3).

Note: During meas 3-4 M may dance with a slight swagger.

- 5-8 Repeat meas 1-4 with opp ftwk and direction.

9-16 Repeat meas 1-8.

II. FIGURES FOR W AND M (B melody)

WOMEN

- 1 Facing and moving in LOD, step on R (ct 1); step on L (ct 2); step on R (ct 3).
- 2 Take a long step on L (ct 1); step on R (ct 2); step on L (ct 3).
- 3 Step on R (ct 1); raise L leg in front with knee bent (cts 2-3).
- 4 Pivoting to face ctr, bend R knee so that L leg dips (ct 1); straighten R knee and raise L leg twd ctr (ct 2); hold (ct 3).
- 5 Step fwd on L ft (ct 1); bounce on L heel (ct 2); releasing hands, step back on R (ct 3).
- 6 Turning to face diag R of ctr, lift slightly on ball of R ft (ct 1); step on L across in front of R (ct &); step on R back to place (ct 2); facing ctr, step on L beside R (ct 3).
- 7 Repeat meas 6 with opp ftwk and direction.
- 8 Repeat meas 6, but turn on ct 3 to face LOD and rejoin hands.
- 9-16 Repeat meas 1-8.

Woman's hands and arms: During meas 6-8 W's hands and arms retain open position to the sides and fwd in a wide arc at approximately chest level. Hands dip as palms rotate up to "scoop up water" on each ct 1; then hands slowly rotate inward to "let water run out," until palms are facing down on each ct 3.

MEN

- 1-5 Ftwk is similar to that of W, but M's larger movements differ especially in meas 4, where the W's dip becomes the M's plié, with L leg opening wide to L. To minimize interference with W during meas 6-8, M must step back generously on meas 5, ct 3.
- 6 Turning to face LOD, take a large step bkwd in RLOD with full wt on L, knee bent, while keeping ball of R ft fwd on floor with knee bent (ct 1); plié twice (cts 2-3).
- 7 Keeping ft in place, pivot to face RLOD, bending knees while assuming a position symmetrically opp to that of meas 6, and plié twice.
- 8 Repeat meas 6, but rejoin hands on ct 3.
- 9-16 Repeat meas 1-8.

Man's hands and arms: In meas 6 M's R hand is raised in front above head level, palm out, as if shielding eyes from sun. Bent L arm is back, with hand on small of back, palm out. In meas 7, hand positions are reversed. Meas 8 is like meas 6.

SEQUENCE: Repeat dance as written to end of music, which alternates throughout between A and B melodies.