

Gaida (Aroman, Romania)

Gaida (GAH-ee-dah), the Greek word for bagpipe, is the name of this old men's dance from the Aromanian villages of the Pindus Mountains of mainland Greece. It was presented at the 1997 Stockton Folk Dance Camp by Theodor Vasilescu, whose source was George Marcu, a native Aromanian ethnomusicologist and researcher at the Folklore Institute in Bucharest.

In what were once Balkan territories of the ancient Roman Empire, including Greece, Albania, Macedonia, and Bulgaria, minority communities that speak languages of Latin origin related to Romanian are called "Aromanian" and "Macedo-Romanian". Locally they are known as Vlachs and Cutzo-Vlachs in Greece, Rëmër (meaning Romans) in Albania, and Megleniti or Vlachs in Bulgaria. After World Wars I and II, many of these settled in Romania, especially in approximately fifteen villages of Dobrudgea. Their traditional cultures are a symbiosis from several civilizations:

- A native Dacian-Getic civilization, a northern part of the pre-Roman Trakian culture.
- A predominantly Latin-speaking civilization from the ancient Roman period.
- The Byzantine civilization, first Greek speaking, and then Slavonic speaking.

The result is a rich oral tradition, expressed in stories, legends, songs, dances, and ceremonies, which accompanies the whole cycle of life from birth until death.

Cassette: Theodor Vasilescu, Romanian Folk Dances, U.S.A. 1997, Side A/8

2/4 meter

Formation: Open circle of dancers facing center, hands joined down in V-pos.

Measures 2/4 meter

PATTERN

8 meas INTRODUCTION. No action

I. HOP STEPS AND FALL

Supporting knee is bent throughout Figure I.

- 1 Hop on L, raising R leg to R with knee bent (ct ah); take a big step on R to R (ct 1); hop on R, raising L leg with knee bent in front of R (ct 2).
- 2 Continuing to face ctr, repeat meas 1 with opp ftwk and direction.
- 3 Repeat meas 1, cts ah,1 (cts ah,1); moving in LOD (CCW), step on L behind R (ct 2).
- 4 Repeat meas 1, but end by turning to face diag R of ctr.
- 5 Continuing to move in LOD, take a big step on L in front of R (ct 1); raising R leg fwd, pivot CCW on L to face diag L of ctr (ct 2).
- 6 Moving in RLOD, step on R across L (ct 1); turning to face diag R of ctr, step on L in RLOD (ct 2).
- 7 Step on R behind L (ct 1); step on L in RLOD (ct 2).
- 8 Step on R behind L (ct 1); turning to face ctr, step on L to L (ct 2).

- 9 Close R sharply to L (ct 1); hold (ct 2).
- 10 Facing ctr with feet together and body initially erect, fall fwd onto R (ct 1); leap bkwd onto L (ct 2).
- 11-39 Repeat meas 1-10 three times. Replace last meas of final repeat with:
- 40 Continuing to face ctr, step heavily on R to R (ct 1); hold (ct 2).

II. SLOW GRAPEVINE WITH PIVOTS

- 1 Facing slightly R of ctr and moving in LOD, step heavily on L in front of R, while bending knees (ct 1); pivot CCW on ball of L ft to face ctr, as knees straighten (ct 2).
- 2 Step heavily on R to R (LOD) while bending knees (ct 1); straightening knees, pivot CCW on ball of R ft to face slightly L of ctr (ct 2).
- 3 Step heavily on L behind R while bending knees (ct 1); straightening knees, pivot CW on ball of L ft to face ctr (ct 2).
- 4 Step heavily on R in LOD while bending knees (ct 1); straightening knees, pivot CW on ball of R ft to face slightly R of ctr.
- 5-8 Repeat meas 1-4.
- 9 Bending knees and turning sharply to the left, take a big step on L in RLOD (ct 1); step on R in front of L (ct 2).
- 10 Facing ctr, step on L in RLOD (ct 1); hop on L, swinging R leg across in front of L (ct 2).
- 11 Turning to face diag R of ctr, step on R in LOD (ct 1); hop on R, bringing L ft in front (ct 2).
- 12 Bending R knee and twisting body and R leg CW, stamp L in front of R without wt (ct 1); straightening R knee, twist body and R leg CCW to face nearly ctr (ct 2).
- 13-14 Repeat meas 12 twice.
- 15-19 Repeat Figure I, meas 5-9.
- 20 Repeat Figure I, meas 40.
- 21-39 Repeat (Figure II) meas 1-19.
- 40 Repeat Figure I, meas 10.

SEQUENCE: Dance pattern as written twice, ending with stamp on R beside L.