

## Shifers Tants

(Southern Moldova)

Shifers Tants is a Yiddish dance from southern Moldova, once known as Bessarabia, particularly from the town or *shtetl* of Akkerman. The structure of this dance makes it a very slow version of the klezmer/Romanian dance *Sirba*, done moving forward and back, rather than side to side. Southern Bessarabia or Moldova is close to the Black Sea and is full of navigable rivers, which may explain the origin of the name: Shifers tants means ‘boatman’s’ or ‘sailor’s dance.’ Ron Wixman learned this dance from his family, who came from Akkerman. Erik Bendix learned this dance in 1990 from Michael Alpert, who had learned it from Ron Wixman. It was presented by Erik Bendix at Statewide 2010.

Music: 2/4 CD: Yiddish, Serbian, & Rom Dances taught by Erik Bendix, Statewide 2010; Other music sources include *Klezmorim: Streets of Gold (Arhoolie LP 3011, Side A Band 5 – ‘A Glezele Vayn’; Shura Lipovsky: Moments of Jewish Life (Syncoop 5733 CD 153, track 4) – ‘A Freylekhs fun der Khupe.’* Also can be done to any slow to moderate klezmer tune in 2/4, especially those with 4-bar melodies to fit the step and a heavy or drunken swing to the tempo.

Formation: Circle dance, hands clasped at waist height with forearms overlapped and shoulders touching.

Steps and Styling: The dance gradually progresses CCW around the circle, both when the circle shrinks and when it expands.

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<u>Meas</u>	<u>2/4 meter</u>	<u>Pattern</u>
7 meas	<u>INTRODUCTION</u> No action during instrumental. Dancing begins with singing.	
1	Facing slightly diagonally right of center, step forward onto L (ct 1), with full weight on L and leaning slightly toward center; flex L knee and either leave R in place or touch it behind L (ct 2).	
2	Step back onto R in place (ct 1), and leaning slightly back; flex R knee and either leave L in place or touch it in front of R (ct 2)	
3	Moving slightly diagonally R of center, step forward onto L (ct. 1); step R next to L (ct &); step forward onto L (ct 2); flex L knee and either leave R in place or touch it behind L (ct &).	
4	Repeat Meas 2 (ct 1-2).	
5	Repeat Meas 1 (ct 1-2).	
6	Moving away from center diagonally to your R side, step back R (ct 1), step on L next to R (ct &), step back on R (ct 3); flex R knee and either leave L in place or touch it in front of R (ct &).	

Variation 1:

1-6 Repeat Meas 1-6, replacing touches with weightless stamps.

Variation 2:

1-2 Repeat Meas 1-2, replacing touches with weightless stamps.

3 Moving slightly diagonally R of center, step forward onto L (ct. 1); scuff R forward (ct 'uh'); step forward onto R (ct &); scuff L forward (ct 'uh'), step forward onto L (ct 2); stamp twice on R next to L without taking weight (cts 'uh' &).

4-6 Repeat Meas 4-6