

Vallja e Pllanës

(Albania)

Vallja e Pllanës (VAHL-ya eh PLAH-nehs), The Dance from Pllana, is based on motifs from Pllana in the Lezhë district of northwestern Albania. Stephen Kotansky learned these motifs from Aldo Nika and dancers from his group in Shkodër, Albania in September 2018. Although the dance was originally taught to loder/tupan (drum) accompaniment, the dance fits nicely with the music Aldo Nika provided. The arrangement is by Aldo Nika and Stephen Kotansky. The crossed hands in Figure II represent the Double Eagle, a symbol associated with Albanian ethnicity and seen on the Albanian flag. Stephen taught this dance at the 2019 Laguna Folk Dance Festival, the 2020 Veselo Festival in Eugene, OR, and the Folk Arts Center of New England online workshop in 2020.

Music: 4/4 Meter *Laguna 2019 SK's Dances, Veselo 2020 SK* (CDs available at events); also available from Folk Arts Center of New England (facone.org).

Video: www.folkdance.com/video/vallja-e-plantas/

Formation: Dancers solo in a circle facing CCW, optional scarves, folded in half lengthwise over middle finger of each hand.

Steps & Styling: The walking step has a slight bounce, and the upper body sways slightly R and L as dancers flick their wrists R and L. This flick is done with a single downward gesture that mimics shaking off water.

Measures	4/4	PATTERN
1-4		<u>Introduction.</u> – No action (music, silence, music, silence)
	I.	<u>Walk and Hand-Flick.</u>
1		Face CCW, step R fwd, flick both wrists out to R at waist level (ct 1); step L fwd (may cross R slightly), flick wrists out to L at waist level (ct 2); repeat cts 1-2 (cts 3-4).
2-4		Repeat meas 1 three times, for a total of 16 steps.
	II.	<u>Double Eagle</u>
1		Face ctr, touch R to R, raise both hands with arms outstretched at shoulder level to their respective sides (ct 1); touch R fwd twd ctr, bringing R hand (arm bent at elbow) in front of chest, palm facing in, while bringing L hand to the small of the back, palm facing out (ct 2); touch R heel diag fwd to R, while crossing L hand over and in front of R to form a “double eagle” (ct 3); step R beside L, lower arms to respective sides (ct 4).
2		Repeat meas 1 with opposite ftwk and arm movements.
3		Repeat meas 1-2.

Vallja e Pllanës — continued

III. Turns

- 1 Face ctr, step R to R to begin a CW turn, with R arm bent and crossed in front of chest and L hand down at side (ct 1); continue CW turn, stepping L fwd to R, and bringing arms out to sides at shldr ht (ct 2); finish CW turn to face R of ctr, stepping R to R and bending knee slightly (ct 3); step onto the ball of L beside R (ct &); step R in place, bending knee slightly and bringing L arm bent and crossed in front of chest, lowering R hand to side (ct 4).
- 2 Begin a CCW turn, stepping L slightly L and bending knee slightly, bringing arms out to sides at shldr ht (ct 1); continue CCW turn stepping on ball of R beside L (ct &); continue CCW turn, stepping L in place and bending knee slightly (ct 2); finish CCW turn, stepping R to R to face ctr, while lowering both arms to sides (ct 3); step L in place beside R (ct 4).
- 3-4 Repeat meas 1-2.

IV. Drum Solo

- 1 Face ctr, touch R out to R, swinging both arms extended low and out to R about 45 degrees (ct 1); draw R up beside L inner calf, swing extended arms down in front of thighs (ct &); repeat cts 1,& (cts 2,&); repeat ftwk of cts 1-2, but raise arms above head with slightly bent elbows, waving hands twice in a windshield wiper motion R,L,R,L (cts 3,&,4,&).
Note: L ft remains in place, heel twizzles slightly CCW on cts 1,2,3,4), return to starting position on the “and” cts.
- 2 Repeat meas 1.
- 3 Begin a CW turn, stepping R to R with arms wide, L arm slightly higher than R (ct 1); continue CW turn, stepping L across R, reversing arms so R arm is slightly higher than L (ct 2); continue CW turn, stepping R to R with R arm low and bent L arm crossed in front of chest (ct 3); finish CW turn to face ctr, touch L slightly to L (ct 4).
- 4 Begin a CCW turn, stepping L in place on a bent knee, and bringing outstretched arms to shldr ht (ct 1); step on ball of R slightly to R (ct &); continue CCW turn; repeat cts 1,& (cts 2,&,3,&); finishing CCW turn to face ctr, step L in place with knee slightly bent (ct 4).
Note: This is a 4 ct buzz or rida turn.
- 5-7 Repeat meas 1-3.
- 8-9 Repeat meas 4 but continue for 7 cts (2 meas) before stepping L in place with knee slightly bent and facing R of ctr (ct 4). Note: The first time meas 4 is danced, it is a 4 ct CCW turn to the L (1 or 2 complete turns). The second time (meas 8-9), it is an 8 ct CCW turn to L (2-4 complete turns).

Sequence: [Fig I, Fig II, Fig III] twice.
[Fig. IV, Fig I, Fig II, Fig III] twice.
Ending: Facing ctr, walk fwd on R (ct 1);
walk fwd on L (ct 2), close R to L and
raise hands above head (cts 3-4).

*Map of Albania showing the
location of Pllana in the
Lezhë district.*

