

FOLK DANCES OF



R U M A N I A

By Petre Bodeut

At the invitation of the Sangeet Natak Akadami Shri Petre Bodeut and Shri Sabin V. Dragoi leading members of the Rumanian Cultural Delegation to India gave interesting and informative talk on December 8, 1957 in Delhi. They dealt with the Folk Dances, and Folk Songs of Rumania. They also gave a short account of the Folklore Institute of Bucharest, the premier organisation engaged in the systematic study and popularisation of Folklore. We are giving below an account of these talks.

—Editor

IT is a pleasure for us, as representatives of the art of the Rumanian people, to present to the great Indian people with their age-old culture a short review of our national folk dances.

We are fully aware of the significance of the ideals of Indian culture and of the features that distinguish Asian culture generally from the culture created by the peoples of Europe.

But, we realise, that whatever is human in a culture, offers, despite all its peculiarities, a vast domain of study and knowledge to the entire mankind.

We are inclined to believe that, even in the distinguishing features of the two great cultures—Asian and European—links can be found which might offer to mankind the possibility of a new and creative synthesis.

The more so as the special features of the Rumanian people's culture, having inherited

a tradition of thousands of years, have developed at the crossroads of West and East, keeping a constant touch with nature. The latter fact seems important to us as Europe's culture is a town-bred culture cooped up within walls. Western and Eastern influences have been brought to bear on our culture, the primitive foundations of its structure dating back to a period when the differences of culture between West and East were possibly less marked than they are today. These foundations have been unyieldingly preserved through a mode of life in permanent touch with nature.

Through its origin and its powerful links with Greek and Roman cultures, and, subsequently, with that of the European peoples, Rumanian culture belongs to European culture.

However, a most potent influence, assimilated through organic similitudes, has been that of Byzantine culture, which likewise represented a rich and flowering synthesis

of West and East. Through hundreds of years, through a process of original creative synthesis, the history of the Rumanian people, a welter of oppression and aspirations, has fashioned the innermost springs, the deepest significance of Rumanian folk culture.

This holds good for the entire Rumanian folk art, an art which many scientists, the world over, consider as the richest, the most varied and lively folk art in Europe, a fact which the research workers bent on the study of Rumanian folk dances should bear in mind.

And this has brought us to the object of our lecture.

The fact that Rumanian folk dances, in their movements, reflect the entire history of Rumanian life, is due to their having preserved throughout their original character of acts of creation and of direct and immediate practice of everyday life. Rumanian folk dances are not merely shows but they represent life itself.

Like all the other peoples, irrespective of their social classes, whose links with nature have been preserved, the Rumanians perform their dances, on different occasions, their subjects being childhood, youth, love, fighting, weddings, old age and death; besides, the subject may also refer to the earth, seeds, rains and crops, or the sky with the dreams and aspirations it arouses.

Although the Rumanian people have, in their history, known a feudal period with its princes, pageant and serfdom, the Rumanian dances are not courtly dances with rigid, conventional rules which, in the Orient have produced impressive artistic creations of great value through their perfection and style. Close contacts with nature, have instilled into them, as into the entire Rumanian folk art, a feeling of solidarity and fraternity, for which equivalents can easily be found in the East. The Rumanian word for folk dances actually means "games", for these dances are the games of the peasants and shepherds, free and direct games—the game of Rumanian life.

That is why the repertoire of the Rumanian folk dances represents the evolution of mankind, the most important moments of everyday life.

There are magic and ritual dances, some of which are danced with masks (dances for healing the sick) and others rendering battle scenes, the Calus, for instance, in which are preserved remnants of the convulsive dances; dances designed to bring fertility: the Calus, Dragaica and Paparuda; funeral dances: the Wake—to cite only the most important; dances belonging to the folk drama and connected with certain dates *Capra* (The Goat)—*Vicleim* (Bethlehem Play), *Plugusorul* (the Plough), etc.; children's dances, dances for the youths who for the first time take part in the village dance; wedding dances and ancient dances performed by elderly people, as well as dances reflecting the exuberant vigour and joy of life.

Rumanian dances are performed by men and women, men alone, young women alone, or by couples, the dancers being in a closed or open circle with different variations, or in a single file; there are dances during which the dancers sing or cry calls.

Before examining in greater detail the different Rumanian dances, we shall mention two features which account for most of the general characteristics of these dances.

Like the entire Rumanian folk art, Rumanian dances are chiefly of an abstract nature. The number of imitative dances is very small. Rumanian folk dances are, therefore, to a certain extent, geometrical. The fact that their abstract, geometrical quality never degenerates into lifeless abstraction and hieratic formalism is due to a European balance, and especially to an artistic instinct which always gives preference to the charming unending "clumsiness" of the organic, living elements over elaborate, perfect and artificial virtuosity.

Including within them these diverse tendencies—an abstract and an organic quality—Rumanian dances are characterised by refinement as well as by boundless vitality, glorious exuberance, tenderness and discretion, all blended into a harmonious, balanced and life-like whole, in which nothing is far-fetched, for everything springs from an astounding though natural intuition.

Another fact which should be mentioned here is the great variety of Rumanian folk dances of which several thousands are known. Like the costume of the dancer and the

musical accompaniment, Rumanian folk dances show peculiar features and a peculiar technique according to the region of the country where they originated.

This variety which can be observed in every group of villages and which constantly grows through an adjustment to present-day life and reciprocal influences, makes one strongly aware of an impressive picture of exuberant life.

We shall now proceed to examine the various Rumanian folk dances in greater detail.

Their great variety renders a classification imperative, though it is a most difficult task. The criteria ruling such a classification may be of different natures, but, whatever criteria are adopted, a number of dances will always be found to belong to several groups at the same time, because their significance is manifold. Therefore, although we shall make such a classification the simplest possible in order to have a general outline, we shall subsequently examine only the most important types of dances, irrespective of the classification adopted. Finally we shall try to characterize the peculiar styles and the technique in every region.

This, together with the examples we intend to give, is meant to draw a general, though summary picture of Rumanian folk dances.

Rumanian dances might be described as:

(1) magic and ritual dances (designed to bring fertility, or else work dances for healing the sick, or rendering battle scenes, wedding and funeral dances) and—

(2) dances reflecting exuberant strength and the joy of life.

Both the first and the second categories include children, young and elderly people's dances. The dances which come under the first category are generally connected with certain dates or with important events in man's life. Such dances, belonging to ceremonial occasions, are of greater stability and traditional fixity, on account of their ceremonial function and of the people's respect for the ceremonial. This is why they preserve their style and the character of their movements even though their old significance has sometimes been forgotten.

The dances that fall under the second heading are much more numerous, showing important specific characteristics in every region. We shall, therefore, give the characteristics of their style and technique in a survey of regional dances. We shall now review some of the more important dances.

The agricultural ceremonial regarding the drought includes a large number of dances and songs which go under the name of *Paparuda*.

The *Paparuda* dance, which originated in an age-old magic ritual, is held on the third Thursday after Easter.

It is danced by young girls clad in green foliage,—dwarf-elder and wormwood—and with willow twigs and flowers.

The tune to which it is danced is sung by a dancer who, together with two companions, dances in a circle or around the two other dancers. During the dance the onlookers sprinkle water over them.

The words are an invocation calling for rain, the tune being simple, rhythmical and melodious, of a recitative nature. The melodies are sometimes borrowed from dirges or from the more evolved songs which show a more advanced stage of melodic evolution. Here is a song for the *Paparuda* dance :

I'm a puppet bringing rain—
Come, rain, come.

Come from cloudy zones of wet
Pouring down upon the earth,
Come, rain, come.

Over all the crowds in glee
Digging hard and lustily,
Come, rain, come,

Let the rain pour down upon us
When the plough our tillage furrows—
Come, rain come.

Let the rain pour down like butter
Sifted down with gentle patter—
Come, rain, come.

Let the rain fill our barns full.
Women, hand the keys and pull
The gates open,
Come, rain, come.

Let the rain come pouring down—
Come, rain, come.

This is a dance found throughout the Danube low-land—in the south of Rumania—as well as in Banat and Transylvania.

Another agrarian ceremonial occasioned by droughts is the *Dragaica* dance which is named after the wild flower of the same name : hardhay or John's wort.

It is again a ritual dance performed by young girls alone when the harvest has been plentiful. The *Dragaica* dance, a hymn of praise, is danced on June 24th. The dancers carry baby bonnets tied round their waists, and wear beads round their necks, a waistband round their waists and a kind of sandals—in Rumanian, *opinci*—with little bells hanging from straps round their legs. The prettiest girl wears a wreath of corn spikes. A young man plays the shepherd's pipe to them, while dancing, the young girls sing :

Let us quickly, floweret dear,
Sow good grain again.

For we know the plight we're in
When we feed maize and thin
Fish soup in the winter.

Flowers delicate have come
To help in the reaping
Lavish summer showering
Gifts galore and plenty.

Look not down upon your sandals
Or I'll have you eat'em
Together with babies' bonnets,
Fine girls' beads,
And women's bracelets.

This ritual dance is held in the South of the country at harvesting time. In the old days it was also danced in Moldavia.

Harvesting songs, which are likewise part of a ceremonial, are sung in certain parts of Transylvania while the crop is being gathered in; the singers are groups of women—both married and unmarried—marching in ceremonial procession from the field to the house of the person whose grain has been reaped.

The words, of an epic nature with sometimes a legendary flavour, are usually sung to tunes both noble and solemn; they are simple in form and sonority, resembling those of other ceremonials, mostly in rhythmical style.



These tunes vary from one region to the other.

One of the most popular traditions of the Rumanian people—a deep-rooted tradition—is the age-old dance of the *Calusari* (Hobby-horse), which is held only once a year at Whitsuntide.

It is a pantomime dance of a complex nature with a dramatic setting—a dance, archaic in form and with a complicated technique which does not resemble any other Rumanian folk dance. Its many significances have drawn the attention of a large number of research workers; indeed, it is a war-dance as well as a fertility dance and one for healing the sick, and includes many magic formulas.

The *Calusari* are folk dancers who form into brotherhoods in the spring, at Whitsuntide to hold their dance. These bands must have an odd number of dancers, i.e., seven, nine, eleven or thirteen, under a leader called *Vataf*. Each band moreover includes a young man who carries the flag of the brotherhood, and two or three musicians. Generally the dancers are unmarried. Formerly, one of the main conditions for participation was to submit to a period of fasting and of retreat. The leader is older and the best dancer in the village.

The *Calusari* dancers are usually recruited during the year at the village dance, when the *Calus*, *hora* or *sirba* is danced. Such dances are performed only by men, the women being allowed to join in.

During the week preceding the *Calusari*'s oath, they prepare their special ceremonial costumes and on the last day of the week they go to the forest and select a pole for their flag.

From the moment that the pole has been hewn by a woodcutter, it is considered sacred and must not touch the ground except at the base, even though the flag has not yet been attached to it.

The flag is made of a richly-embroidered ornamental towel to which a bunch of healing herbs is tied: garlic, wormwood and water-hyssop. Garlic is used in empiric medicine as an anti-rheumatic and anti-cholera drug. Apart from which garlic is supposed, according to an old tradition, to drive evil spirits away.

The other plants are likewise of current use in combating diseases, being considered as deterrents to spirits and ghosts.

As has already been said, the most important person in the band is the leader, an unsurpassed dancer, a courageous man and, especially one well-versed in magic formulas which he can only reveal to another *Vataf*.

Another character who has an important role to play in the band is the "Dumb Figure", who wears a mask, and clothes quite different from those of his companions. The "Dumb Figure" is not allowed to speak throughout Whitsuntide. In certain regions, instead of the usual sword, the "Dumb Figure" carries a phallus. Formerly his mask showed the head of a horse, stork or goat. The "Dumb Figure" does not dance, his role consisting of comic buffoonery.

As part of the *Calusari* ritual, the *Vataf* and "Dumb Figure" play a most important role in the treatment given to the sick, and consisting of magic formulas.

The disease which is treated is given the generic name of "caught from the *Calusar*" or "caught from the sprites", the sprites, in Rumanian "*Iele*", being deities of the Rumanian mythology which can interfere with man's everyday life for good or evil.

Their influence, as legends have it, made itself felt especially at the close of winter and up to the period when the vegetables crop up, that is, in mid-spring.

The *calis* - dance is danced for ten days from Ascension Day to Whitsunday. The sick person to be healed is laid on the ground; the dancers dance around him and at a certain moment they tread over him one by one, from head to foot, after which they whisper certain set words (magic formulas) into his ear, ordering the disease to leave him. The ceremonial must be repeated three times for three days.

The dancers are dressed in white, wearing on their feet *opinci* from which hang bits of metal that clink at the slightest touch. This clinking sound throughout the dance makes it very spectacular. Their hats are adorned with feathers, beads and multicoloured ribbons hanging down the backs, in their hands they carry sticks symbolic of the swords worn in former days.

The ritual of the *Calusari* is made up of several dances succeeding each other in a well-defined order, namely:

1. The walk
2. On one leg
3. Cross-step
4. Holding waists
5. The spur
6. Dance for two
7. Marking time
8. The mint
9. The mirror
10. The river
11. The gimlet
12. The wheel
13. Little flower.

The complex *Calusari* dance, preserved as a reflection of the collective spirit, with all its magic implications derived from its antiquity, with all its significances as a war dance, a dance bringing cures and fertility, a dance of Spring and sunlight—shows an unleashing of manly strength, a dominating integration into the spirit of natural forces. It is a forceful hymn to life and freedom. The *Calusari* dance performed in all the villages of the Arges and Old districts is still very much alive. With its difficult and complex technique, this dance is a vivacious and forceful legacy of an old, forgotten culture.

Of the dances devoted to outstanding events in man's life, wedding and funeral ceremonials have the richest and most interesting repertoires.

A wedding is an occasion of entertainment, dancing and singing, with a special ceremonial made up of songs and dances dating back to different periods of the people's history, and in which children, young and elderly people take part.

Many dances, most of them of a ritual nature, are performed on the occasion; the wedding fir dance, the bride's dance, the dance of the bride's dowry, the dance of the bride putting on the matron's apparel, the dance that accompanies the serving of certain ritual dishes, the dance which ends the ceremonial

meal and finally the well-known wedding dance—the *Geampara* or *Perinitza*—are among the most important of those performed on the occasion of this outstanding event in village life.

And now a few details concerning their performance.

Before the bestowal of gifts has ended, the *Vornic*, whom we might describe as a master of ceremonies, invites the young people to come out into courtyard and dance. If it is already night the dance takes place indoors. The sponsor's wife orders the musicians to play a dance "as long as the hare's tail" for the bride's dance is to begin, with contributions in cash.

It is again the sponsor's wife who starts the bride's dance saying, "come and dance with me, bride, for everyone to see whether you are lame or not".

Next to the sponsor's wife come the sponsor, the standard-bearer and then all the guests. There follows a long interval without dancing during which the sponsor's wife together with several other women takes the bride into another room where they adorn her with coloured silk gauze handkerchief; the dancing is resumed in the house, everyone dancing now with whomever he pleases, without pay. Everybody rises from the tables, making up a dance-chain that goes round the courtyard including the bride-groom, the bride, the sponsors, the father and mother-in-law, the wedding guests and all the relations.

The dancers are all light-hearted; they look at each other for they all form a circle holding hands and are carried away by the same rhythm. This large circle creates unity of thought and feeling, selflessness and elevation. After a time the bride and bridegroom leave the circle and enter the house.

The elder people are the last to stop dancing and conclude with a lively *Briu* dance.

We should like to say a few words about the special ceremonial held for the young men and girls when they join the village dance for the first time.

For the young men this is the occasion of a festivity invested with some pomp. The young man has prepared his new clothes in good time. The parents announce to the other young men

that their son is to join the dance and, on the appointed day, musicians hired by the most hard-working and oldest of the young men are taken to a dinner given by the parents of the young man who is to join the dance. Five or six of the young people who have already joined the dance are of the party and, after drinking a glass of brandy offered them by the respective young men and his parents, they perform two or three dances. After which they all leave the house—the musicians playing them the while—to go to the Dance House. Here the young man joins the dance and shakes hands with all the other young men who congratulate him. The dance is started by the young man, being joined later by mothers with their daughters. The young man who has joined the dance for the first time on that day, shakes hands with all the young girls who are glad to find that there is another young man to dance with them. In the evening, when the sun sets and the dance comes to an end, the young women go back home and all the village learns that so-and so's son has joined the dance.

Nor is the young girl's first joining the dance an insignificant event. Before this happens the young girl prepares her new costume and beautiful shoes. The parents are already preparing dowry, for, as soon as she has joined the dance, a young girl may have suitors and it is better to be ready for the event.

The young girl's friends who have already joined the dance inform the young men and the other young women that on such and such a day so-and-so's daughter will join the dance. On the appointed day the girl goes to church and has a religious service read for herself after which she returns home and, having had dinner, dresses with the help of her friends. When she is ready, she is taken to the dance by her mother and her mother's friends. The young men shake hands with her, take her around to the other young women with whom she likewise shakes hands, they invite her to join the dance: on that day she is always the first to be asked to dance. However plain or poor she might be, all the young men, to the ugliest and poorest, must dance with her that day. By evening the whole village knows that so-and-so's daughter has joined the dance.

The young women who want to be courted by young men and to have a foremost place at every dance, never go to the dance without first reciting some spell. When they have dressed and are ready to go to the dance, they recite

the following poem, at a distance of three paces from the threshold of their house:

Holy Sundays,
Walk before me,
And visit all youths,
On their toes to tread,
Hands and shoulders spread,
Their hearts piercing hard.

Make them turn,
With words of kindness.

With sweet words,
That none may go,
To anyone but me,
My right hand to take,
And the dance to lead,
And with me to dance,
Until night is advanced.

On their way to the gate, again three paces from the threshold, they fan their faces with their gown and then recite the following verses while looking up at the sun.

Sun most holy,
Lordly sun,
From the earth I raise my eyes,
That thy beams
My head may crown;
That thy beams
My lids may gild.

Sun most holy,
Lordly sun,
Forty-four beams are now thine,
Four give me
And keep the forty.

Two beams for my shoulders
And two for my face and lids,
That all youths to me may hasten,
And with me alone may meet,
That all youths with me may dance,
Until night is far advanced.

From among the dances occasioned by funeral ceremonials, we should mention the ritual dance called the Wake, during which masks are worn. Such dances are still being performed in the mountain regions of Rumania.

A funeral dance of pagan origin, the Wake is performed on the nights preceding the burial in the courtyard of the deceased where tables have been laid and dishes are served. A big bonfire is lighted in the middle of the courtyard to show that there is a dead man in the house.

It is a merry ritual, the general impression being that left by a very pleasant entertainment.

The Wake occasions surprisingly lively scenes, with ritual performances.

The women do not lament aloud; they recite verses for everyone to hear, waving their hands in a typical manner as a symbol of the death ritual.

As we have already said, Rumanian folklore includes an extremely rich repertoire of dances, with an endless variety of styles in the different regions and also in the different villages of the same region, presenting nevertheless common features throughout the country.

The repertoire does not display the same variety everywhere; a single village may offer up to 30 different dances as is the case in Oltenia and Muntenia, while another may have only three or four dances to show, as, for instance, in Transylvania.

The dances are performed by men alone, some of them by one man to show his virtuosity, or else they are mixed dances performed in a circle, in columns or in pairs; again, some of them are danced only by young women. The simplest tunes are made up of two or three musical phrases, while others have ten to twelve phrases and even more, as is the case in Muntenia.

The musical phrases are repeated either freely, or in a certain order. Most of them have a common rhythmic measure with the exception of some of the Transylvanian *Invirtite* and of the dances in the south of the country—the *Geampara* and the *Briu* of Banat—where the rhythm is asymmetrical. *Dealungul*, a dance of impressive solemnity performed in the centre of Transylvania and which greatly differs from all the other Rumanian dances, is another exception, with its triple rhythmic measure.

A great rhythmical and melodic variety and richness make of these dances genuine folklore treasures.

They are played by solo instruments or bands and are often interspersed with rhymed calls of a facetious or satiric nature. Sometimes these calls of the dancers are mere directions given to the other dancers. The calls at times give rise to genuine humorous duels between the participants.

They are characteristic features of Transylvanian and Moldavian dances, but are less often met with in Oltenia or Muntenia and are non-existent in the south of the Banat. In certain parts of Transylvania they assume a melodic scheme played with a specific rhythm by an instrument, this rhythm often being different from the dance itself and from the steps, the result being an interesting polyrhythmical music.

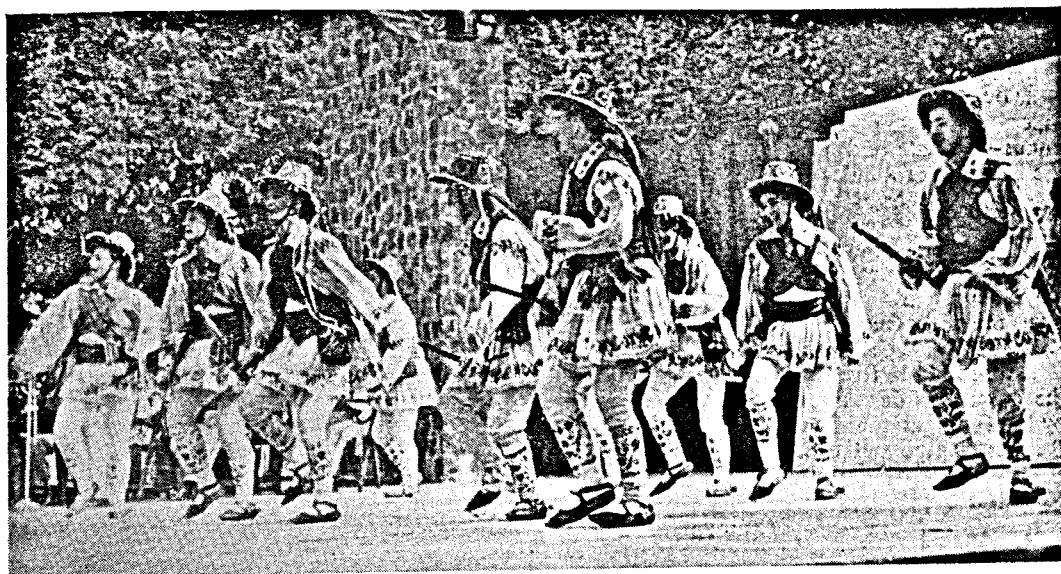
A number of dance tunes are played on various festive occasions without being danced to, hence their name: "To be listened to". On the other hand, thanks to the close link between instrumental and vocal music, the best part of the dance tunes can be arranged for some piece of poetry and thus enter the vocal repertoire.

We shall now try to define the Rumanian folk songs in every region, which will be an occasion to enumerate the main types of dances. Rumania is divided into several regions: Muntenia, Oltenia, Dobrogea, Moldavia, Transylvania and the Banat. We shall give a short description of the dances in each of these regions.

Muntenia boasts of its richest and most varied repertoires in Rumania. Its dances are more widespread than those of any other region. The *Sibra* and the *Hora*, characteristic for Muntenia, have passed into all the other regions and are now to be found everywhere.

The richness of Muntenia's repertoire is due to the large number of dances with variants known under different names, although they originate from common roots. The most frequent and specific dances are the *Hora* and the *Sirba*. Another dance characteristic of Muntenia is *Florica* (Little Flower) with its numerous variants.

The *Briu* is a dance originally danced in Muntenia by men, though nowadays women also take part in it. The dancers place themselves in a line or in a semi-circle, with their hands on their companions' shoulders or round their waists. The technique of the steps—most elaborate requires great virtuosity: this is an extremely dynamic dance, the dancers indulging in a genuine rhythmical passion. The dance unfolds in sequences made up of walks with syncopated steps alternating with the so-called *hooks* which consist in marking time, striking one heel with the other



foot, counter-time and syncopated beats, cross-steps in the air, etc. The *Briu* is the most representative dance of Muntenia.

We have already spoken about ritual dances—the *Calus*, *Paparuda* and *Dragaica*. The dancers perform to the tunes played by string bands with an accompaniment on the dulcimer and *cobza*.

Oltenia

The specific nature of Oltenian dances rests in its intense dynamics.

The richness and variety of the repertoire are shown by the fact that in most villages more than thirty dances are regularly performed.

Most of the dances are danced by both men and women, though dances performed by men alone, by couples or by young women alone are also frequent. Nearly all mixed dances are performed in a circle or semi-circle, the local population calling them "Hand-Horas" or "Shoulder-Horas" when the dancers put their hands on their partners' shoulders. The latter are mostly variants of the *Sirba* dances.

The young women's dances performed in a circle or semi-circle—the *Craite*, *Mindre*, and

ite—are danced at weddings, work-bees and sometimes at the usual village dance. Like in Muntenia, the Oltenian style is best characterized by the men's dances. These are performed in a line, the dancers crossing the arms and linking hands. The technique is that of the *Briu* of Muntenia.

Oltenian dances are generally named after flowers, animals, objects of everyday use, or women. Their movements are very swift and light. These dances create the impression that the dancers have wings for feet. It is the forepart of the foot that mostly comes into play, the weight of the body resting on the toes.

Calls characterized by high pitched tones are cried throughout the dances.

The young women are not outstripped by the men and their dancing is no less lively.

The basic dances throughout Oltenia are the *Horas de mina*, the *Sirbas*, the Oltenian *Briuri* and the *Rustems*. Of all Oltenian dances the *Rustems*, *Alumels* and *Trei Pazeste* are characteristic in their form and contents, their specific features being: rhythmical runs along the circle formed by the dancers, with swift movements of the head; marking time with simple or double cross-steps, energetic beats against the floor and light concluding beats.

The whole village attends the dance and most of the villagers take part in it. The children who are always there, have a *Hora* of their own with an accompaniment of shepherd's pipes. The music is provided by small string bands—a fiddle and a *cobza*, sometimes with the addition of a dulcimer and a double bass.

Dobroges

Although this region of the country has neither a specific repertoire nor a style of its own, the most frequent dances being the *Sirba*, *Hora*, *Briu* and *Geamparale*, it is interesting to note that the old forms have been preserved in the manner of dancing, which is accounted for by the fact that the tunes are mostly on the shepherd's pipe and on the bagpipe.

Moldavia

Compared with the exuberant dances of the other regions of the country, Moldavian dances are more subdued. The movements are quiet and harmonious, with a lively, ingenious rhythm without strong stresses and brusque movements. Small steps with numerous beats are predominant.

Alongside the *Hora* and *Sirba* we meet here a number of local, specific dances, performed in a circle or in a chain. The best known are the *Corabeasca*, *Arcanul*, *Briusorul*, *Ratta* and *Ursareasca*. Of the dances performed by couples, the *Bolobocul*, *Taraneasca* and *Musamaua* are the most characteristic.

The bands accompanying the dancers are usually more comprehensive, being made up of first and second violins, double bass and dulcimer.

Transylvania

Although in this region the repertoire is less comprehensive than in Muntenia and Oltenia, it is pre-eminent by the extraordinary richness of its contents, due to the fact that the region is subdivided into a number of zones showing a great variety of aspects.

(a) The *Purtata*, *Invirtita*, *Hategana*, *Fecioreasca*, *Sirba*, *Briu* and, on certain occasions, the *Hora* are danced in the south of the region—Sibiu, Tirnave and Fagaras—mostly in pairs.

Cycles of dances follow one another. For instance, three dances are performed in a pre-

established order without a break, after which follows an interval and the same dances are resumed.

The village repertoire includes also other dances which do not belong to the usual cycle but are performed on various occasions such as weddings, christenings, work-bees, socials, harvesting festivals, the Spring festivals, or else to invoke rain, etc.

The basic dance throughout Southern Transylvania is the *Invirtita* which is generally made up of two parts: a walk and a jig. In certain parts there are two more phases: "The Young Woman's Walk"—a slow walk with syncopated steps and "Under the Arm" during which the young women spin in double pirouettes which require great virtuosity. The *Hategana*, like the *Invirtita* is performed at every dance-meeting. It is made up of two parts: a walk in a wide circle, with the young woman and young man holding each other by the hand or putting their arms around each other's waist, and a jig in quick steps, the duration of a quaver. The *Briu* considered as a very old dance throughout the region, is performed by men standing in a column and greatly resembles the *Briu pe sase* of Muntenia. The *sirba* imported from Muntenia is danced with great pleasure throughout the region. Women's Dances—Group Dances with vocal accompaniment—are frequent in the Tirnava region. Originally ritual dances, they are now currently performed at the village dance and are also called "Women's Walks". They are most suggestive on account of the dancers' noble bearing, the slow rhythm and the lovely song with lyrical words.

Young men's dances: The *Calusari* and *Fecioreasca*. Originally a ritual song, the *Calusari* has lost its significance as a ritual, in these parts and has been handed down from generation to generation as a traditional dance performed on the occasion of the Winter Feasts by men, both married and unmarried, grouped in bands of nine to twenty-five.

In Southern Transylvania the musical accompaniment is played by a first and a second violin. The clarinet is fairly widespread and is often alone both to maintain the rhythm and play the melody of the dance. At other times there is a second clarinet or a small string band including a double bass. The shepherd's pipe is seldom used nowadays.

(b) In Maramures, Bihor and Tara Oasului, in Northern Transylvania, all dances are "Dances for Two", and the repertoire is restricted, comprising three or four dances in every village. On the other hand the dances are most impressive, being characterised by very small stamping steps, on the spot. The technique is vertical, that is, most of the steps are leaps which do not require great space sideways.

The rhythm of the steps includes many stresses and a great deal of syncopation, which are achieved by beats, the weight of the body being often shifted from one leg to the other. The movements are of restricted scope, the body being swung briskly from left to right, though it stands upright, while the legs perform leaps and strike against each other in the air or on the floor. The dance is characterized by great and sustained swiftness. The musical accompaniment is often provided by a single fiddle playing a time repeated ad infinitum.

In Nasaud, Somes, Cluj and Turda, another zone of Northern Transylvania, the dancers do not mark time; their movements require a wide space, especially in the specific dance of those parts, which is called *Dealungul*. Throughout Transylvania the repertoire includes a small number of dances, mostly "Dances for Two", which are specific to the entire region. The dances are *Dealungul*, *Invirtita* and the *Birbunc*—a young man's dance.

Dealungul is a slow dance with long steps, consisting of a walk taken by young men and young women, after which the young women pass under the men's arms. The rhythmical forms of the steps are elaborate, interspersed with syncopation and counter-time stops. The young man's dance makes a harmonious whole with the dance of the young woman which requires great virtuosity as she performs double pirouettes on her heels, while the young man makes short, conclusive movements, striking his boots with his palm during leaps. The *Dealungul* and *Invirtita* dances are usually danced in succession, forming a cycle.

The *Birbuncul* is a young man's dance with various figures which usually begin in the intervals when the musicians have stopped playing—a more complex arrangement which lends to the dance a specific quality. Generally the dances of this region include many flourishes which create an old-fashioned atmosphere, though the tempo is not a very swift one. The

musical accompaniment is provided by one or two fiddlers with the addition of a clarinet which takes the leading role.

Finally in the Western mountains and the *Tara Motilor*—a third zone of Northern Transylvania—the predominant dance is the *Tarina*—which is the Rumanian expression for "ploughed field".

It is a couple dance, made up of two parts. A walk, with the dancers holding each other by the hand, and a jig during which the young men hold the girls by the waist while the hands of the latter rest on the young men's shoulders. There are three variants of this dance with differences in the accompanying tune and in the manner of dancing: *Tarina Mocaneasca*, the oldest dance, *Tarina Vasarilor*, that is the dance of the potters and *Tarina Minerilor*—the miners' dance.

The dance tune is played on the violin and, less often on the shepherd's pipe.

The Banat

This is a region with a very rich repertoire which includes men's dances, dances for two and a small number of *Horas*, brought from Oltenia. The men's dances, the so-called *Posovaici* and *Banat Briuri*—are the most representative in the repertoire.

The steps are very quick, interspersed with frequent leaps achieved on one or the other leg, or on one leg while the other is swung forward. The steps are most elaborate, with flourishes, a genuine lacework. There is a musical quality which is specific to the Banat dances, this being the only region of Rumania where the steps do not follow only the rhythmical accompaniment of the music but are closely linked with the structure of the melody. This gives to the dance variety and harmonious balance. The most representative of the men's dances is the *Sorocul*.

The dances for pairs are similar to those of Northern Transylvania with small, stamping steps.

However, there is even more variety and richness in the dances for pairs of the Banat. Most of these dances are performed by dancers holding each other by the hand while they face each other. The dancers are arranged in couples forming a column placed in a semi-circle. It

is a lively dance with the young women often spinning under the young men's arms or going round the young men with quick leaping steps. The arms have an original part to play, being swayed along the body or else describing flourishes or being swung briskly during the pirouettes, etc.

The characteristic instrument accompanying the dance is the *taragot*, with a brass band or a string band which includes a violin, a dulcimer and a double bass. The rhythm of the dance being extremely lively, the *taragot* players make a show of great virtuosity.

The foregoing represent a brief sketch of Rumanian folk dances.

Using this material of great variety and richness as a starting point, the new life in Rumania is now creating choreographic art equal to the aspirations and possibilities of the present day.

The endeavour to create an outstanding style as part of the desire to present Rumanian folk dances to their best advantage, has gone through several stages.

In towns and villages, song and dance ensembles have been set up, mostly devoted to folk songs and dances, led by well-trained experts : choreographers, composers, ethnographers, writers, stage designers and skilled interpreters of folk art. These formations cooperate with folk art museums, the Folklore Institute and the Artist's Unions.

The material is selected in the various regions by teams of experts : one or two choreographers, a composer and a stage designer. The team endeavours to grasp the specific atmosphere in which the song or dance has been created, sketches are made, the steps and costumes are noted, and magnetic tape recordings are taken.

Such material which constitute the folklore archive of the ensemble, is arranged for the purpose required.

During the first stage—in the first years—the material was only slightly altered to suit the requirements of the stage, great attention being paid to ethnographic accuracy in order to strike an authentic note.

During the second period, scenarios were made by blending and arranging various elements with a view to obtaining a style with the most spectacular effect.

The experience and technique thus acquired and a long, detailed and full analysis of all component elements have made it possible to enter a third stage. The deep significance of folk productions is being enhanced, the resulting creations reaching a different plane by different means, transcending mere ethnographical considerations. Though moulded from the substance supplied by a profound study and knowledge of the ethnographic data, the final result is a new art which the people acknowledge as their own.

