

ARVANITOVLACHA  
(East Epirus, West Macedonia, Greece)

The name Arvanitovlacha or Arvanitovlachiko refers to the ethnic minority popularly called "Arvanitovlachs" i.e., Albanian Vlachs. A former transhumant sheepherding population which spoke a language based from Latin and akin to Romanian, they used to have their summer pastures in the plains of Thessaly. They were distinguished from the other main grouping of Greek Vlachs, the so-called Koutsovlachs, who lived a more sedentary life, because they originated from the regions of southern Albania near Frasher. In general the Vlachs usually refer to themselves as Arumani; the majority are bilingual, speaking Greek as well as Vlach. The dance Arvanitovlacha is found in the border regions of Epirus-Macedonia. The tune, however, is more widespread and is found throughout Epirus, Thessaly and Macedonia usually danced as either a simple Sta Tria or a Sta Dhio, depending on local preference. Source is as learned from Ted Petrides and the local dance troupe from the Vlach village of Samarina, where the dance is also called Karavlacha.

Pronunciation:

Cassette: Greek Dance Sum '87 4/4 meter

Formation: Open circle, simple "W" hand hold or "klisto" hold with elbows bent, forearms close together (L over R).

Meas

Pattern

- 1 Facing slightly R of ctr, step R fwd in LOD (ct 1); hold, with slight bounce (ct 2); touch L fwd (slightly past R) (ct 3); hold (ct 4).
- 2 Repeat meas 1, same direction, opp ftwk.
- 3 Step R fwd (ct 1); low swing L up and fwd, generally straight legged (ct 2); step L bkwd RLOD (ct 3); step R bkwd (ct 4).
- 4 Step L bkwd (ct 1); hold, with slight bounce (ct 2); touch R near L or over and next to L (ct 3); hold (ct 4).

STYLISTIC VARIANTS

- 1 Step R fwd LOD (ct 1); slightly bounce on R, bring L knee close to R leg (ct 2); touch L slightly fwd and out (on balls of ft) (ct 3); hold (ct 4).
  - 2 repeat meas 1, same direction, opp ftwk.
- OR
- 1,2 Take full wt on ct 3 and then rock back onto opp ft on ct 4.

STEP VARIANTS

- 3 Step R fwd (ct 1); slightly bounce on R, low swing L up and fwd (ct 2); step L across in front of R (ct 3); rock back onto R (ct 4).
  - 4 Step bkwd L,R,L (cts 1,2,3); lift R slightly up and near L (ct 4).
- OR
- 4 Step bkwd L,R,L (cts 1,&,2); step R back and slightly out (ct 3); rock back onto L (ct 4).

Presented by Joseph Kaloyanides Graziosi