

Braşoveanca

(Braşov, Transylvania, Romania)

One of the most popular dances today in the area of Țara Bârsei (southeastern Transylvania) is called *Braşoveanca*. It is also danced in some areas of Moldavia, Dobrogea, Oltenia and just about everywhere in Romania.

The origin of *Braşoveanca* is unclear, and there are a number of theories about it. *Braşoveanca* means “the dance of the city of Braşov.” In the past, Braşov residents called it *Săseasca* or “the dance of the Saxons”(Germans).

The German ethnic community had a large part in shaping the character, history, culture and architecture of Braşov. It was in the early 13th century that the Saxons—Germans from the Mosel-Rhine Valley—colonized the region of Braşov, where a large Romanian community lived. The founding of the city itself goes back to medieval times. A written document dated 1235 is the first to mention the city, under the name Corona, and it was located where the famous Black Church is now. Subsequently the city changed names several times: Brasco, Brasso, Stephanopolis, Kronstadt and Braşov. The last two names were the most popular.

Traces of the dance are found in Germany, of course, and also in Ukraine. The same music appears in Poland, in and around Krakow, with the name *Krakowiaczek Jeden* (“man from Krakow”).

Braşoveanca is a couple dance with variations, some of which—including the one presented here—are mixers, where the dancers change partners. Mixers are very rare in the Romanian repertoire. This feature—changing partners—together with the melody, lead us to believe that this dance is an “adopted child” among Romanian dances. Nonetheless, if you are lucky enough to visit Braşov and get invited to a popular festivity, the residents will ask you to join in their typical dances, and *Braşoveanca* is sure to be one of them.

Pronunciation: brah-shoh-VEHAHN-kah

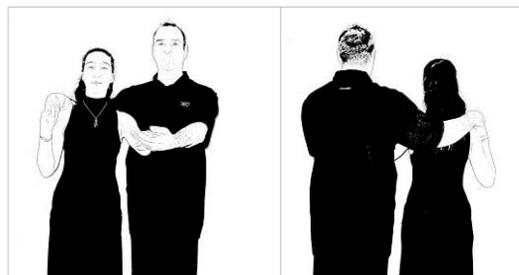
Music: 2/4 meter *Sonia Dion & Cristian Florescu Romanian Realm Vol. 5, Band 2*

Formation: Circle of cpls facing LOD, W on M’s R in Varsovienne Pos.

Steps & Styling: Varsovienne Position: See illustrations.

Basic Step

Meas 1: Step R (ct 1); step L (ct 2)
Meas 2: Step R (ct 1); raise on R heel and lift L leg (slightly) in front, knee bent at 45°, L ft near R ankle (ct 2).



Note: The Basic Step is done alternating the feet. M always starts a sequence with the R, the W always with the L. The Basic Step can be done going fwd, bkwd or sideways, depending on the figure.

<u>Meas</u>	<u>2/4 meter</u>	<u>Pattern</u>
1-32	<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	Instrumental. No action. The long introduction gives the dancers time to pair off and take their place in the circle.
	I.	<u>FORWARD AND BACKWARD</u> (Melody A: Doi pași înainte...)
1-2		One Basic Step fwd, M starting with R and W starting with L.
3-4		One Basic Step bkwd, M starting with L and W starting with R.
5-16		Repeat meas 1-4 three more times (four times total).
	II.	<u>CHANGING PLACES</u> (Melody B: Dai fata la stânga...)
1-2		M do one Basic Step to the R and behind W to start changing places: step R to R (ct 1); step L in front of R (ct2); step R to R (ct 3); lift on R (ct 4). W do one Basic Step to the L starting L.
3-4		Repeat meas 1-2 with opp ftwk and direction, M moving behind W.
5-16		Repeat meas 1-4 three more times (four times total).
		Note: The partners dance their steps on a slight diag (M bkwd, W fwd). The steps are small which makes changing places easier. The arms move in keeping with the changes in position and the variations (optional) shown here:



Variation: Raise the arms above the head; M helps W turn so that she's almost facing him.

	III.	<u>FWD AND CHANGE PARTNERS</u> (Melody C: Măi frunză verde...)
1-4		Do 2 Basic Steps fwd on LOD (starting M's R, W's L), holding hands in Varsovienne pos.
5-8		Release and lower hands, and with 2 Basic Steps, M execute a complete turn in place (CCW) and W move fwd (LOD) to reach a new ptr. Rejoin hands in Varsovienne Pos.
		Note: M will now dance with the W who was behind him.

Braşoveanca — continued

- 9-16 Repeat meas 1-8.
 Note: The dancers change partners during this Fig III, as indicated by the lyrics of the song, “Măi lasă fata să se ducă” (“Let the girl go”).
- IV. FWD AND CPL TURN (Melody D, instrumental)
- 1-4 Two Basic Steps fwd (LOD) starting with M ‘s R, W ‘s L) holding hands in Varsoviene pos.
- 5-8 With two Basic Steps, cpl executes a complete turn in place (CCW), M doing Basic Step bkwd, W doing Basic Steps fwd.
- 9-12 Repeat meas 1-4
- 13-16 Repeat meas 5-8, but cpl turns CW, M doing Basic Steps fwd and W doing Basic Steps bkwd.

Sequence:

Introduction

Fig I, Fig II, Fig III, Fig IV four times

Fig I, Fig II (music speeds up).

Presented by Sonia Dion & Cristian Florescu

Lyrics

/Doi paşi înainte şi doi înapoi măi
 Doi paşi înainte şi asta-i joc pe doi/

Two steps forward, two steps back
 Two steps forward, that’s the dance for two.

/Dai fata la stânga şi dai fata la dreapta
 Dai fata la stânga şi asta-i Braşoveanca/

Put the girl on your left, put the girl on your right
 Put the girl on your left, that’s the Braşoveanca.

/Măi frunză verde foi de nucă
 Măi lasă fata să se ducă/

Green leaf, walnut leaf
 Let the girl go.

/Doi paşi înainte şi doi înapoi măi
 Doi paşi înainte şi asta-i joc pe doi/

Two steps forward, two steps back
 Two steps forward, that’s the dance for two.

/Dai fata la stânga şi dai fata la dreapta
 Dai fata la stânga şi asta-i Braşoveanca/

Put the girl on your left, put the girl on your right
 Put the girl on your left, that’s the Braşoveanca.

/Măi frunză verde foi de nucă
 Măi lasă fata să se ducă/

Green leaf, walnut leaf
 Let the girl go.

Note: The forward slash (/) at the beginning and end of verses indicates the verse should be repeated.