

Haire Mamougeh (Armenia)

Susan and Gary Lind-Sinanian supplied the following notes when they presented the dance at the 1985 University of the Pacific Folk Dance Camp. Their sources are Arsen Anoushian, Hourig Sahagian, Eddie Keosian and Sossy Kadian, Armenian people with whom they do dance research in New England.

"Haire Mamougeh (HIGH-ruh mah-MOO-gay) is a delightful Armenian wedding dance for the 'khanamee' (in-laws), and comes from Rustoon, in the province of Van. The name probably derives from 'Hayr ou Mamoug eh' (the father and the grandmother). These two roles were quite influential in the traditional family structure.

In many areas of Armenia, the newly married bride and groom traditionally were not permitted to dance at their own wedding. As the 'King and Queen of the day,' they were required to sit on thrones and watch the festivities, rather than actively participate. They were never addressed by their actual names at the wedding, instead being referred to as 'Takavour ou Takouhie' (the King and Queen), or as 'Yergou Dzaghig' (the two flowers). These customs probably were vestigial practices from pre-Christian times.

In this dance, the bride's family and the groom's family form two separate lines facing each other. The lines advance towards each other and then back away, as the dancers sing. The lyrics of the song praise the new in-laws in the opposite line, and each side alternates praising the other. (We have not been able to locate the lyrics for this song at this time). The dance vividly illustrates several important principles of Armenian family life. The separate lines for each family recognize the solidarity and cohesiveness of the members of each family. The cooperation of the families needed for the dance formation, and reciprocity exhibited in the singing reflects between the two families. (Note: the term 'khanamee' (in-laws) in Armenian culture does not have the negative connotations often associated with the English word. It is a very positive, cherished relationship)."

RECORD: Facone 1001 "Traditional Armenian Dances" Side A/1 2/4 meter

FORMATION: Two lines of dancers facing each other about 6' apart. Within the lines hands are joined in "Armenian hold": little fingers linked with hands at shldr level, elbows bent and down. One line represents the family and friends of the bride - the other those of the groom.

STYLING: Carriage is erect, but the knees maintain a slight flex throughout the dance and the steps have a strong solid quality. The steps are comparatively small and restrained, but the whole body is involved in them - not just the feet. Maintain eye contact with opposite person - a friendly interchange and acceptance of each other is important.

MUSIC 2/4

PATTERN

Measures

- 12 meas INTRODUCTION No action. Begin with the dumbeg (drum).
- 1-2 Point L toe straight bkwd, leaning slightly fwd (ct 1); touch ball of L ft beside R, nowt, straightening torso (ct 2). Repeat for meas 2. Fwd lean is quite subtle.
- 3-4 Step diag fwd L on L ft (ct 1); close R ft to L, no wt (ct 2). Repeat with opp ftwk and direction, still moving twd opp line for meas 4.
- Note: There is a slight, almost imperceptible, torso turn to the R as L ft leads and to the L as R ft leads, but the head remains facing the opp line.
- 5-6 Repeat meas 3-4.
- 7-8 Move bkwd with small "sinking" steps: bending knee as step is taken, step on L, toes turned to L, slight torso turn to L, but continue to look at opp person (ct 1); repeat with R ft stepping bkwd (ct 2). Repeat for meas 8.
- Repeat dance from beginning.

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