

Gaida

REGION: Aegean Macedonian

TRANSLATION: Gaida is a Macedonian word meaning bagpipe

RHYTHM: 2/4

BACKGROUND: Gaida as done by Macedonian communities in the USA is usually danced by men only with a “T” arm hold. When women dance it, they usually start a separate line from the men and use the “W” arm hold. Most of the time, the women just watch as their men dance and encourage them. This dance is quite similar to the dances Kasapsko and Lesnoto except that the beat starts out very slow, lasts a long time, and ends up quite fast. The name comes from the instrument that originally played this dance, the Gaida. Modern orchestras usually start out using the clarinet to mimic the sound of the bagpipe, then the other instruments join in. I like to look at this dance as a 3 measure dance with two steps per measure. Counted as 1-and, 2-and, 3-and, 4-and, 5-and, 6-and where steps 4 and 6 are lifts.

Description

<u>Measure</u>	<u>Count</u>	
1	1	Facing slightly and moving in LOD step RF to right
	2	Step LF behind RF (or in front of RF)
2	1	Step RF to right
	2	Lift LF in front of right with knee to the left and toes towards ground. Slight pause with a chukche on RF.
3	1	Step LF to left
	2	Lift RF in front of left with knee to the right and toes towards ground. Slight pause with a chukche on LF

Variation 1: On measure 3, count 1, step LF forward (towards center of circle) instead of to left. Although this seems quite minimal, the feel of the dance is quite different. This means that on measure 1, count 1, you have to step back and to the right with the RF. If you do not, the circle will get smaller and smaller.

Variation 2: On measure 2, count 1, leap onto the RF, then leap onto the LF in front of right. On count 2, step back onto RF, lift LF in front of right with a chukche on RF. Continue with Variation 1.

Variation 3: On count 2 of measure 2, lift LF straight back of RF, pause. Continue with Variation 1.

Variation 4: On measure 2, count 1, step on RF to right, shift weight to LF. On count 2, bring RF beside LF, pause. Continue with Variation 1.

Variation 5: When the music speeds up, measures 2 & 3 change to a bas-de-basque.

Variation 6: When the music speeds up again, measures 2 & 3 change to step-swings.

Variation 7: When the music speeds up even more, those of the men that can and want to, all get into a smaller circle and all do squats. The arm hold is still hands on shoulders. The squats are down on both feet, up on the right, kick left, down on both feet, up on the left, kick right. The phrase up on the right or left does not mean erect up, but rather you are still squatting.

So how do you know when to change variations? Generally, you watch the leader of the dance, when he changes, you change. Sometimes this is a domino effect. In reality if everyone does not do the same thing, this does not ruin the dance. All the variations fit together, except for the squats. When the music speeds up, the natural tendency is to convert to the bas-de-basques and step-swings.

Historical Note: Traditionally, this dance (and many others) requires the band to pay close attention to the lead dancer and take its cues from him instead of the other way around. If the lead dancer goes slow, the band plays slow, if he speeds up, they speed up. It is a different way than the way we are used to currently, where the dancers dance to the beat of the band. This is probably due to the advent of recordings where there is no interplay between the band and dancers.