

# SIFD News



MARCH 2002

MARAMUREȘ, ROMANIA

SOCIETY FOR INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCING

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is done by Dalila Heath.

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This month's cover was drawn by Caroline Thomas.

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SUMMER SCHOOL, DURHAM, 27TH JULY TO 3RD AUGUST 2002

Recruitment to the Summer School is going well, with strong support for the Yugoslav/Albanian and Breton courses. The planning team hopes that the General courses will attract some new blood, beginners, school teachers and students wishing to teach dance in the national curriculum, as well as established dancers wishing to extend their repertoire. So please encourage anyone you know who would be interested.

As for accommodation, we still have a few spaces left in en-suite (mostly singles), some spaces in self-catering, and plenty of room in standard single rooms. Information is available from me for camping and other accommodation off site.

ROGER STURGE  
10 Carmarthen Road,  
Bristol BS9 4DU  
Tel: 0117 962 1802

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N.B. In Jack Richardson's article last month re the two S.I.F.D. weekends away, his typist made an error in one of the telephone numbers given. Jack's home number is 01792 403153.

## Judy Penaluna

Judy Penaluna died in January after an 18 month fight against cancer. She was 47 and leaves her husband George and their son Matthew who is nearly 10.

Judy was known for her integrity, her energy and organising ability, for her commitment to social and environmental issues, and as a loving mother and wife, as well as her love of folk dancing. Tributes at the Quaker memorial meeting in Cononley on 25 January reflected the affection and respect so many people, neighbours, friends, fellow Quakers, and fellow dancers have for Judy.

As Judy Clayden she taught Mathematics in a mission school for girls in Ghana for five years in the 1970s. At the memorial we heard of her teaching the girls Scottish dance and of her determination to organise a big cultural event in the school in spite of the political volatility of the time. Back in Britain and living in the Gower, Judy danced with Jack and Joan Richardson's group in Swansea. After her first marriage broke up she moved to London, putting her organisational skills to good use helping to run the Quaker programme of conferences for diplomats. At that time, George Penaluna worked for *The Friend*, the Quaker weekly magazine. Hilda and I had got to know Judy through dancing and as a Trustee of *The Friend* I knew George. It was a little while before we realised the George that Judy was marrying was the George I knew and the girl George was marrying was Judy. Needless to say, we were delighted.

Jack and Joan introduced Judy to the Central London group where she danced for several years, also with *Sborenka*. After they moved to Knaresborough, to be nearer their families in Scotland and the North East, Judy was occasionally able to dance with *Loidis* in Leeds. When they moved to Cononley, Judy threw herself into the life of the village, joining a walking group and also introducing her neighbours of all ages to folk dancing.

After the summer school at York in 1998 Judy volunteered to help plan the 2000 summer school. She looked after the local arrangements and organised a most enjoyable excursion to Helmsley and Rievaulx Abbey. In preparation for the 2002 summer school she helped with the choice of venue, and joined me in a visit to a college in Leeds in a period of respite after the operation at the beginning of her illness. She only withdrew from the Durham planning team a couple of weeks before she died.

It is a privilege to have known Judy as a dear and thoughtful friend and a graceful dancer. George and Matthew are facing the future with courage; we wish them well.

Roger Sturge



### SCANDIA IS MOVING!

From 11th March, Scandia will be meeting from 7.15 to 9.00 p.m. on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month at the Swedish Church, 6 Harcourt Street, London W.1. This is quite an exciting move for us as, of course, we're hoping to make contact with the Swedish community and, perhaps, to get some Swedish dancers and teachers as we roll on. Our initial scouting party reports that the hall is very pleasant and suitable for dancing and the Church is very close to Edgware Road tube and almost as close to Marylebone tube and B.R. We plan to start on the 11th with a mini Hambo workshop. As we go on, we want to dance some of our favourite figure dances as well as practising our polskas, schottis, waltz etc. New, old, and occasional members are always welcome. We'd be delighted to see anyone who can come and help us settle in at the Swedish Church on the 11th.

ANNE LEACH



All material for the April issue of SIFD NEWS must reach the Editor IN WRITING BY 17TH March. Please print in BLOCK CAPITALS all names of people, places and dances unless typewritten.

## WORKSHOP OF THE GREEK ISLANDS

At the end of January, Lykion held another very successful, well-attended workshop, this time featuring dances of the Aegean Islands of Greece. The excellent tutor was Yannis Kevrekidis, a professional teacher and specialist dance teacher for the Lykion in Athens. Many were lucky enough to have taken part in his previous Pontic workshop last year and Pontic is his favourite specialism.

Perhaps a first(!), Yannis had notes for his programme and a tape of the music there for £5. The course followed exactly that and he managed to teach each dance in a very relaxed way and still have time at the end for a run-through of the whole programme. All totally clear and easily accessible for all degrees of expertise. As always, he was very accommodating with the video-ing and not at all put out when Sula (doing the filming) requested a repeat of the dance name.

It was also very good indeed to be solidly dancing with just a wee pause while he gave information before the dance, which was kindly translated into English for "us lot", but it was not a long time-consuming ramble, so didn't unbalance the emphasis. One of the most delightful things about his way of teaching is the non-stop dancing on his part at full stretch - no marking, or saving energy. All the time there was his perfect example moving around so that everyone got a chance to have him dancing in front of them. Needless to say, he gave the men a fillip and showed very clearly all sorts of leader's show-offs and for the men when in couples.

It was a most worthwhile day. Predictably, his reception was extremely enthusiastic and appreciative. Haste ye back, Yannis. If you missed this one, it really is worth making an effort for the next Lykion workshop - probably the end of May or beginning of June. Watch this space.

DIKI GLEESON



## SPANISH DANCING

Robert Harrold has sent me details of the book "Spanish Dancing" by Helen Wingrave, Robert Harrold and Conchita del Campo, which is on special offer to S.I.F.D. members at the price of £14.00 inc. p. & p. (retail price £15.99) from Parapress Ltd., 5 Bentham Hill House, Stockland Green Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 0TJ. Tel/Fax: 01892 512118. A CD of guitar music is included in the price and has on it some practice music plus the music for a Tanguillo and a Bulerias, all played on guitar by Juan Ramirez.

I quote from the leaflet about the book and CD:

"Many people, thrilled by the magical beauty of Spanish dancing, want to master some of the intricacies of this exciting dance form. This step-by-step approach to style, posture, footwork, arms, hands, turns and use of castanets leads to two solos suitable for competitions or demonstrations; a Tanguillo and a Bulerias.

Information is given on Spanish Dancing centres and suppliers. Illustrated with drawings of exercises and postures, "Spanish Dancing" also aims to help professional and amateur dancers in the Latin American ballroom field to create that authentic "look". Before visiting Spain, you can study the traditional dances, and on returning you can re-live the experience with increased understanding".

Robert also sent me the article on The Sardana which he wrote for the newsletter of the Spanish Dance Society and which he has kindly allowed me to reproduce (see p.p.5, 6, 7).

Ed.

## THE SARDANA by ROBERT HARROLD

Wherever you travel in Catalonia, at some moment you are bound to hear the sounds of a *COBLA* band and find a group of people dancing the *SARDANA*. At fiestas and celebrations in the village or town square, a circle will form and everyone will join in. Women will even put down their baskets of shopping and enjoy the opportunity to dance this very popular dance. The *SARDANA* is the national dance of Catalonia, everyone knows it. At one time it was considered too nationalistic by the government then in power and it was banned... but not for long.

No one is quite sure when and how it started, it is one of those dances that is surrounded by various stories. It may have developed from the old Greek Farandole, a dance which is found all around the Mediterranean shores and wherever the Greeks traded. From the Farandole so many circle dances evolved. In the Catalan dictionary, Salvat, it is stated that the *SARDANA* came from Sardinia, hence the name and that it was a circle dance reflecting the sun and danced in honour of the goddess Ceres at the time of the harvest. Many dances have strong symbolic meanings and one that is attributed to the *SARDANA* is that the dance reflects the hours of the day. Unlike any other dances that at one time were banned by the church, the clergy seemed to approve of the *SARDANA* on account of its simplicity. The dancers are holding hands in a circle, not in couples, and in no way can the dance become "unruly" and disapproved of.

The *SARDANA* is always danced to the special band called a *COBLA*, which has a very distinctive sound. It is an exciting and unusual sound that seems to express the independence of Catalonia, typical of this region and not found elsewhere in Spain. The band is composed of 11 musicians playing the *TENORAS*, a type of oboe; the *FLAVIOL*, a tiny flute; *TAMBORI*, a small drum; the *CORNAMUSA* a type of bagpipe; *TIPLES* or woodwind instruments; trumpets; trombones; *FISCORNOS* and a double-bass.

The dance consists of 2 sequences of steps, the *CURTS* or short steps and the *LLARGS* or long steps. The dance looks easy as both the *CURTS* and *LLARGS*, look like a type of pas de bourrée, but it is in the construction and changes that causes the problems. The sequences of the steps, the *CURTS* and *LLARGS*, alternate throughout the dance but the number and length of each, together with a finishing step which separates the 2 sequences, differs with each tune. You can feel confident doing the *CURTS* but then suddenly you miss the change and they are dancing the *LLARGS*! Without realising it, they are back onto the *CURTS* and you are still struggling with the previous step. The dance is very misleading... it looks so uncomplicated, but believe me it is not. At one time the dance had 8 short steps, which symbolised the 8 nocturnal hours and 16 long, lively, bright long steps reflecting the hours of the day, the 24 hours. The dancers stand in a circle, alternately men and women with their hands joined and held down on the *CURTS*, but raised to shoulder height on the *LLARGS*. The dance begins with an introduction played on the *FAVIOL* with a call that imitates the sound of a cock crowing. This call has often been compared to that heard by St. Peter as it is played twice. Each section of the dance is called a *TIRADA* and there are usually 10 *TIRADAS*. The leader, an experienced dancer, has to count the beats while the *COBLA* is playing, to know when the changes in direction, beat and rhythm are coming. Often

Contd...

they will give a little squeeze of the hand to the next dancer in the circle to warn them of the change, and this in turn is quickly passed on.

A visit to Barcelona is very worthwhile as it is full of interesting sites. A special place is the hill of Montjuich, situated south of the city and overlooking the harbour. Here there is a life-sized sculpture by the Catalan artist, Joseph Canyas, depicting figures dancing the *SARDANA* and known as the Sardana Memorial of Montjuïc. Like the dance itself, this is an expression of Catalan independence. Catalonians frequently say that they are in Spain but not of it!

When you are in Barcelona you can see the locals dancing every Sunday at 10.00 a.m. in front of the Cathedral and also in the Placa de Catalunya. Later at 6.00 p.m. it is at Placa de Sant Jaume. Check on the times and places as it always changes!

September 24<sup>th</sup> is a time for big celebrations. For 4 days there is music, open-air dancing, parades of giants and big-headed figures. This marks the festival of *LA MERCÉ*, patroness of Barcelona.

I would like to thank Lily Avery for allowing me to use material from her article in the magazine of the Society for International Folk Dancing.

The following instructions on the complexities of the *SARDANA* counting were part of Mrs. Avery's article and were given to her some years ago by Kelsey Blundell, a folk dancer who lived and worked in Spain and had a great knowledge of anything Spanish.

#### LA SARDANA

Start L foot.

Flaviol.

A music. Two sets of shorts, danced continuously in order to count their length, finishing with a dos parat

and

B music. Two sets of long, danced continuously in order to count their length, finishing with a dos parat

and

A music. One set of shorts, finishing with a tres parat

and

B music. One set of longs, finishing with the simplest division according to the table (which will be either 3 or 5)

and

B music. One set of longs, finishing with the correct division according to the table that will finish with the L foot.

Flaviol.

B music. One set of longs with the normal division as per the table, finishing left.

Flaviol.

B music. One set of longs with the normal division as per the table, finishing left.

#### The Table

59, 67, 75, 83, 91, 99, 107 has a division of 3, i.e. a tres parat

57, 65, 73, 81, 89, 97, 105 has a division of 5, i.e. 1 short and a tres parat

55, 63, 71, 79, 87, 95, 103 has a division of 7, i.e. 2 short and a tres parat

53, 61, 69, 77, 85, 93, 101 has a division of 9, i.e. 3 shorts and a tres parat

This table applies when you have started the set on the left. If you have started on the right, then 3 becomes 7, 7 becomes 3, 5 becomes 9, 9 becomes 5.

(Kelsey occasionally wrote the equation for the tune being played, on the back of her hand in ink, so that while dancing, with hands held high, she could glance at it from time to time! And if, when in Spain, you think the "leading" Sardana dancer is looking rather pensive, it's probably because he is busy working out the Table!). L.A.



LA SARDANA



SARDANA MEMORIAL  
AT MONTJÜIC

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Lily,

I am writing to express my appreciation of the day course at Cecil Sharp House on 9th February in which some of the dances from the Yves Moreau workshop were reprised. I felt one of the great strengths of the original workshop was the excellent selection of music and dances. Frank Dowling's own choice of which dances to reprise was clearly made with great care and consideration, and contributed enormously to the success of the event. Given that many of those present had not learned the dances before, and that there was just one day of teaching rather than two, it is a tribute to Frank's skills that by the end of the day so many of the dances went so well. Throughout the day I particularly valued the attention given to improving style once the basic steps had been learned. This was really an object lesson on how not to fall into the trap of thinking you know a dance once you can get through it.

The same combination of careful planning and skilful teaching was evident in the Balkanplus social event M.C.'d by Fiona Howarth on the evening of the same day. I was delighted by the inclusion in the programme of all the dances from the day course, thoughtfully spaced throughout the evening. As usual, Fiona's energetic pacing presented an opportunity for those who wished to dance for almost the entire evening.

I congratulate the S.I.F.D. on organising an excellent course and I congratulate Frank and Fiona for co-ordinating so well. As I live in South Cumbria, attending courses in London involves lengthy travelling. The effort and expense feel well worthwhile when two such excellent events are available on one day.

Yours sincerely,

MICHAEL MACHIN  
2 Dove Bank, Kirkby in Furness  
Cumbria LA17 7XD

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Dear Lily,

Re "hands on hips"; there are clearly many reasons for the differing interpretations of the instruction "hands on hips". Our "natural" response to the instruction would in most cases derive from school physical training sessions rather than from participation in any living traditional dancing. I would, however, like to expand on the anatomical comment by Mike Gilbert (SIFD NEWS, February), "...to disguise a spreading waistline rather than an integral part of the style".

During my years with the Cambridge Club in the 1950/60s, where we did not worry too much about subtle differences in style, I got the impression that, on the instruction "hands on hips" girls tended to place their hands lower down their bodies than did the men. In fact, we men tended to interpret the instruction as a "hands on waist". Was this due to a difference in body shape?

Labanotation, which uses a simple sign to represent a basic position and qualifies it by the addition of a dot, tick, pin or whatever to indicate a slight variation, uses the basic unadorned sign for what appears to be a lower (feminine?) body position.

Yours sincerely,

G.D.TOWNER  
7 Woolven Close, Poole,  
Dorset BH14 0QT



Dear Lily,

Concerning your note in the January newsletter about printing only 'phone numbers as e-mail, website etc. details take up too much space; I do think printing e-mail addresses wherever possible is a good idea. For the increasing number of us who use it, it is a speedy and convenient way of communication, especially if one wishes to send the same message to a number of people. I also think omitting e-mail addresses gives the wrong message if we are seeking to attract younger people, an increasing number of whom have grown up taking such things for granted.

On a separate note, folk dancers with internet access may be interested in the East European Folklife Centre at [www.eefc.org](http://www.eefc.org) This American-based group runs an e-mail list to which you can subscribe and whose archives can be viewed via the website - always worth a look to see if there is any background information on particular Balkan dances.

Yours faithfully,

PAUL BOIZOT, 9 Sturton Road,  
Sheffield S4 7DE

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Dear Lily

I was alarmed to learn from the February NEWS (p.5) that in my piece for the January issue I had expressed myself so poorly as to give the impression of suggesting that there was any question of a 'right' or 'wrong' way. The comparison in mind was rather between 'then' and 'now' with the intention of drawing on observations of nineteenth-century practice to produce a tentative explanation of the apparently anomalous use of the term 'polka' to describe the turning step in 3/4 time in the *Warsaw Varsoviana* of c.1850. Perhaps I should have restricted myself to observing that for the waltz, introduced to England some forty years previously, the couple's starting position was to stand facing each other along the line of dance with the man facing the direction of travel and that this may be the reason why 'waltz' would not at that time have been considered an appropriate term to describe the turning figure of the *Varsoviana*, starting as it does from the position of the couple facing each other across the line of dance. Certainly by the mid-twentieth century such scruples had long since been forgotten and the turning figure in Swedish *Varsovienn*e was then called 'waltz', this starting position across l.o.d. having become adopted as the more familiar.

Nevertheless I have been struck by the earlier apparent predominance in Poland of orientation across l.o.d. for turning dances in 2/4 time, but along l.o.d. for turning dances in 3/4 time as evident in accounts drawn from memories of people born as early as the 1870s describing dances such as the obereks of the Mazowsze, Łęczycka and Opoczno regions (including *oberek w cztery strony*, *oberek okrągły* and *oberek zamasztyły* in the latter region). Some SIFD members will be familiar with two current survivals reflecting this practice in *sztajerek* (Śądecka region) and *żuraw* (Kurpie region). As previously admitted there were always exceptions to this rough rule of thumb and *walc szybki* was one such exception as the preserved account shows its alignment across l.o.d. although, unusually, with the man on the outside facing the centre and starting right foot. Curiously this dance seems nowadays generally to be taught with the alignment along l.o.d. I have never seen an oberek performed with alignment along l.o.d. but did experiment with it when teaching, using a Chopin oberek for 'period' flavour. Its advantage in manoeuvrability was shown on another occasion when dancing an oberek along a figure-of-eight line of dance.

TONY LATHAM  
9/118 Avenue Road  
London W3 8QG

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Apr.1st (Easter Monday). AN EVENING OF SIMPLE TRADITIONAL BALKAN DANCING with live music and song hosted by "Balkan Basics" as part of the 2002 Ulverston Walking Festival. 7.30 to 10.00 p.m. at Owl Barn, Back Lane (off Church Walk), Ulverston, Cumbria. £3.00 including refreshments. Walking Festival info. 01229 587 120/140. Balkan Basics info. 01229 889 362. (N.B. This is a special one-off event arranged for the Walking Festival. "Balkan Basics" continues to meet on the first Monday of the month. Next regular meeting will be on 8th April. Visitors to the Lake District are always welcome to join us). CLYDE OLLIVER. \*

Apr.12th/14th S.I.F.D. WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH WEEKEND at Glenfall House, Charlton Kings, Cheltenham. Glenfall House is a very pleasant listed Georgian house with beautifully renovated and converted rooms, extensive landscaped gardens and wonderful views across the Cotswolds. It is situated 5 mins. off the A40, 5 miles from M5 (Jn.11) and 3 miles from Cheltenham centre and station. Dance tutor will be Marina Wolstenholme, and the programme will be social dancing on Friday and Saturday evenings, dance tuition each morning, and Saturday afternoon free for sight-seeing, walking etc. Starts with dinner 7.00 p.m. Friday, ends after lunch on Sunday. Residential cost for the weekend inclusive of all meals and dance tuition £85 for S.I.F.D. members, £95 for non-members. Still a few places available. Contact Maggie Kaye for further information, 402 Heath Road South, Northfield, Birmingham B31 2BE. Tel: 0121 608 1437.

S.I. Apr.13th (not in March as originally advertised). Have fun dancing ECCENTRIC DANCES with tutor Jill Bransby. 10.30 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. at Stevenson Junior School, Wadsworth Road, Stapleford, Notts. Organized by Nutbrook I.F.D.G. £6.00 all day, £3.50 per session. Coffee available from 10.00 a.m. Bring your own lunch.

Apr.19th/21st BULGARIAN DANCE COURSE WITH EDDY TIJSSSEN at Derwent Bank, Lake District. Choice of General or Advanced course, or both courses. Non-dancing friends and family welcome. Full board en-suite accommodation £92.00. Each course £15.00. Details and booking forms from Cathy Meunier, 115 Chetwynd Road, London NW5 1DA. (s.a.e. please).

Apr.26th/29th 19TH GREAT ALNE LONG WEEKEND. Details given last month. Contact: Maggie Kaye, 0121 608 1437, or Andre Hobro, 02476 418949.

May 3rd/6th EASTBOURNE FESTIVAL.

S.I. May 3rd/6th S.I.F.D. DANCING/WALKING WEEKEND at Halsway Manor, Crowcombe. (walking on Exmoor and Quantocks). Enquiries to Jack Richardson, Chemical Engineering Dept., University, Swansea SA2 8PP. Tel: 01792 295194 (work), 403153 (home).

S.I. June 30th S.I.F.D. WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH ANNUAL COTSWOLDS SAFARI, from Moreton-in-Marsh to Stanton village, starting at 11.00 a.m. More details nearer the time.

July 4th/7th MILTON KEYNES FOLK FESTIVAL. To be confirmed.

July 9th/14th INTERNATIONAL EISTEDDFOD, LLANGOLLEN.

S.I. July 27th/Aug.3rd S.I.F.D. SUMMER SCHOOL at Durham. Enquiries to Roger Sturge, 0117 962 1802. See p.2.

Aug.4th/9th ISRAELI RESIDENTIAL DANCE COURSE at De Montford University Bedford, Lansdowne Road Campus. Various Israeli teachers, Advanced and Intermediate classes, workshops on teaching techniques etc., evening dances. Cost from £317 to £347 (surcharge of £20 for applications after 30th April). Further details from The Israel Folkdance Institute, Balfour House, 741 High Road, London N12 0BQ. Tel/Fax: +44 (0)20 8446 6427.

S.I. S.I.F.D. SUNDAY DANCES/WORKSHOPS at Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regent's Park Road, N.W.1

Mar.3rd M.C. Simon Guest, with help from Joan Guest

Apr.7th M.C.s Mike Gilbert, Pat Schicker and Dave Waterhouse (probably)

7.00 to 10.00 p.m. Admission £4.00 for S.I.F.D. members, £5.00 for non-members.



BALKANPLUS on 9th March at Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regent's Park Road, London N.W.1  
7.00 to 10.30 p.m. £5.00. M.C.s: Nick Green and Liz Mellish with "Vuhpross".  
Nick and Liz will be drawing upon their considerable knowledge of Balkan dances  
this month to give us a lively and enjoyable evening. They have a vast collection  
of music to draw upon, so you may well find a familiar dance accompanied by an  
unfamiliar tune. "Vuhpross" are a group of enthusiastic musicians scattered over  
a wide area who therefore cannot meet on a regular basis but who get together for  
special occasions (such as Balkanplus) and we look forward to seeing as many of  
them as possible.

The next Balkanplus will be on 13th April.

FRANCES HORROCKS



"PIRIN SINGS" - 15TH TO 28TH JULY 2002 - EXPERIENCE BULGARIA

A two-week residential course of Bulgarian folk dancing, folk singing, trad-  
itional instruments, traditional crafts and language, in the town of Bansko,  
at the foothills of the Pirin mountains (93 miles South of Sofia). Individual  
programmes can be made up. For information contact Polyarts Ltd., 11 Aksakov  
Str., 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria. Tel: +359 2/988 5194, 988 52 45.



**PassiOn Music mail-order Balkan folk music CDs.** Specializing in east European folk and  
dance music on CD from Hungarian, Bulgarian, Romanian, Transylvanian, Yugoslavian etc.

As from the 1st March, SIFD members are now entitled to a 10% discount from Passion Music  
on all purchases. When ordering please give your SIFD membership number. Sorry, but there  
is no credit card payment facility with this discount offer. In addition to details on each CD  
being available on the Passion Music web-site, there is also available a printed catalogue which  
can be had for 3 x first class stamps (please send to the address below).

Prices range between £10 and £12 for a single CD, with postage being only £1 no matter what  
size of order.

The music we sell is traditional folk music played on traditional acoustic instruments (fiddle,  
violin, bagpipe, cimbalom, hurdy-gurdy, viola, tambouritsa, guitar etc), and we have an  
extensive and growing selection. It includes authentic Gypsy or Romany music, Bulgarian folk  
music that is sung by large choirs or played by smaller ensembles at weddings etc, Hungarian  
folk music from Transylvania and Moldavia, Romanian folk music, and Serbo-Croat folk music.

For more details please log on to [www.passion-music.co.uk](http://www.passion-music.co.uk) or contact:  
Passion music, 37 Red Lion Lane, Overton RG25 3HH, Hampshire. Tel/Fax 01256 770747.  
Please note that we are mail-order only.

## A Few Thoughts On the Music of Shir al Etz (Song of a Tree)

Last March Lily kindly published the music I sent her of the dance Shir al Etz. I am grateful to David Bramson for sending me a version he transcribed from a Hebrew recording. He complains that his version differs from mine in a considerable number of places. This is not very surprising, as folk musicians, when they play from written music, do not usually feel obliged to play exactly what is written. However, good musicians do not change things just for the sake of it, so it I thought this a good opportunity to write another music article after a very long gap.

Firstly there was a difference of pitch, but in the examples below I have written both versions at the same pitch to aid comparison. There are also a number of minor differences of rhythm (some examples are shown below in the loops marked *A*; there are others). These, I think, reflect the requirement to fit the words as naturally as possible to the music (David's version was sung in Hebrew and mine was sung in Yiddish). All the recordings I have heard differ slightly in rhythm, not only from each other, but also between verses within each recording. It is not normally necessary to reflect these differences in the printed music - in fact it becomes confusing and fussy if one tries - so a better approach is to make the written copy fairly simple and let the musicians add their own subtleties of rhythm as they think fit. This does of course impose an extra burden on instrumentalists in that they have to do this imaginatively to make the music flow.

Another source of differences is the presence of suspensions in the Yiddish version which are absent in the Hebrew (marked *B*). One effect of this is to give a strong falling figure in the last bar of these phrases, which conventional wisdom says gives a rather melancholy feel to the melody. The Hebrew figure also falls, but doing it one beat earlier makes the effect far less pronounced. It may be fanciful, but this seems to me to be far more in keeping with the general tone of Israeli aesthetic, which frequently aims at an upbeat, positive feel. Interestingly, both versions have the same notes in bar 20, but the Hebrew version has an extra chord so the initial G is harmonised in its own right rather than treated as a suspension - which again lessens the sigh-like quality of the Yiddish.

The most striking difference is the final eight bars (marked *C*), which are sung to the Yiddish/Hebrew equivalent of la-la-la, so there is no question of having to fit the notes to words. The Yiddish version is, I think, very common in klezmer music (and maybe Yiddish song) whereas the Hebrew version is quite drastically different and is, to my ear, more reminiscent of Middle Eastern traditions. It also adds rising passages to what is basically a falling section. This also lessens the overall melancholy feel of the phrase - again more in keeping with Israeli aesthetics.

This leaves the melodic differences in bars 4, 7, 19 and 23. The Hebrew version of bar 4 is very effective, ending on the third of the chord rather than the keynote, but probably would not sound quite right in the idiom of the Yiddish versions. The differences in bars 7 and 19 are similar to each other and could be the aesthetic choice of the performers, because I cannot think of anything else to say about them. Bar 23 I would think is inspired by the language difference in that it has more notes to accommodate more syllables. It also has different notes and this, again, gives a rising figure in a predominantly falling end to the phrase.

This comparison is based purely on my perceptions, and not on any particular knowledge, so I apologise for any gaffes, but would be grateful to hear any contrary (or supporting) opinions.

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with a Yiddish staff on top and a Hebrew staff on the bottom. The key signature is G minor (two flats) and the time signature is 3/4. The Yiddish version is marked with circled letters A, B, B2, C, and D, indicating specific differences from the Hebrew version. Chords are written below the notes in both versions. The Yiddish version includes suspensions in bars 11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, and 20, which are absent in the Hebrew version. The final eight bars (23-32) are marked C, showing a significant melodic and harmonic divergence between the two versions.

## WHAT'S ON IN MARCH

Mar.2nd WORKSHOP IN IPSWICH WITH CORRY VERHEIJEN, 11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. in Bealings Village Hall, near Ipswich. Cost: £10.00. Please book with Sally Fletcher, 106 Westerfield Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 2XN. Tel: 01473 252824. PLEASE NOTE THIS IS A CHANGE OF DATE FROM THAT ORIGINALLY GIVEN (23rd Feb.).

S.I. Mar.2nd RAINMAKERS DAY COURSE with Marina Wolstenholme at Radwell Village Hall, near Baldock, Herts. 10.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. Marina will be teaching a variety of dances from Japan and Eastern Europe. £6.00 for full day, £4.00 for half a day. Further information from Peter or Jill Bransby on 01462 457791.

S.I. Mar.9th S.I.F.D. POLISH DAY COURSE at Trefusis, Cecil Sharp House, 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. £6.00 S.I.F.D. members, £8.00 non-members. Tony Latham will be teaching a further selection of Polish dances from the Cieszyn region. If there are any dances from his previous course which you would like to revise, please contact Tony in advance on 020 8992 9445.

S.I. Mar.9th GREEK DANCE DAY COURSE with Maggie O'Regan at St.Ursula's School, Bristol with Bristol I.F.D.G. 11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Bring your own lunch. £5.00. Optional evening meal at a Greek restaurant. Further details from Christine Tollerton, 15 Chardstock Avenue, Coombe Dingle, Bristol BS9 2RY (enclose s.a.e.). Tel: 0117 968 3974.

Mar.9th BRITISH BULGARIAN FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY MARTENITSA, 3.00 to 5.00 p.m. at The Brady Art Centre, 192-196 Hanbury Street, London E.1. Bulgarian and English folk dancing and music. Entrance £5.00 (concessions £3) to include light refreshments and a glass of wine.

S.I. Mar.9th BALKANPLUS. See p.7.

S.I. Mar.9th S.I.F.D. WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH SPRING DANCE, 7.30 to 10.30 p.m. at the refurbished, heated United Reformed Church Hall, Station Road (B4101), Knowle. M.C. Maggie Kaye. £2.00. Bring-and-share supper.

Mar.16th & 17th WEEKEND WORKSHOP WITH EDDY TIJSSSEN in Bognor Regis. £32.00. Optional Balkan meal on Saturday evening £10.00. Further details from Janet Douglas, 92 Rose Green Road, Bognor Regis PO21 3EQ. Tel: 01243 265010.

S.I. Mar.16th & 17th ROMANIAN WORKSHOP WEEKEND WITH SILVIU CIUCIUMIS in Manchester and Calver, Derbyshire, organized by Barlow I.F.D.G. and Derbyshire Dancers. Saturday 11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., Sunday 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. £12 for one day, £20 for the whole course including a Dance on the Saturday. Further details from Helen Clancy on 0161 881 0442.

S.I. Mar.22nd ARMENIAN DANCES AT BARNET. Dalila Heath makes her first visit to teach some of the enthralling dances from her repertoire. 8.00 p.m. at Church House, Wood Street, Barnet, Herts. £3.00. Further information from Brian Dowsett, 01992 582717.

Mar.22nd to 24th A SPRING DANCE CELEBRATION of dances from the Balkans, Romania and Russia at Freshwater Bay, Isle of Wight. Tutor: Bob Neal. Contact: Pamela Le Goaziou, 55 Mitchell Road, Bedhampton, Hants. PO9 3QA. Tel: 023 9264 1028. FULLY BOOKED. WAITING LIST.

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Events covered by S.I.F.D. insurance are marked "S.I.". Please note that the onus is on you to mark each event when sending in the notice if your event is covered by our insurance.