

Menim Balam

(Turkey)

This is an Azerbaijani women's dance. The music is a lullaby in which the mother and the child converse. Ercüment learned the dance steps in Turkey in 1987 from the visiting Azerbaijani state artists from the Soviet Union. Ercüment arranged the steps to fit this music and first taught Menim Balam in New York in March 1988.

Pronunciation: MEH-nihm bah-LAHM

Translation: My Baby (Boy).

Music: 4/4 meter

Ercüment Kılıç Presents, Track 1

Formation: Line or circle, no handhold.

Steps & Styling: Feminine, soft and delicate. Dancers typically wear long transparent veils with the ends of the veils attached to their pinky fingers. The finger positions in this dance allude to the use of veils.

Azerbaijani-Turkish Woman's Arm Position (ATWAP): Leading arm at shldr level with elbow bent at a slightly oblique angle, palm facing self, fingers pointing up with middle finger pointing slightly in; trailing arm is diag low at waist level, middle finger pointing slightly down, rest pointing away. The leading arm can be either R or L arm.

Changing the arm position: Move hands toward each other on a diagonal while rotating wrists to end with hands at chest level, leading palm facing down, trailing palm facing up; continue rotating wrists and moving hands to sides of body on a diagonal, to end with arms in opp position. Entire movement is done with a gradual, smooth motion.

Meas 4/4 meter

Pattern

INTRODUCTION. No action.

I. SWAYS R and L. Arms are at sides slightly away from the body, palms facing down with middle finger pointing down and the rest pointing away.

1 Facing ctr, sway R, bending knees (cts 1-2); straighten knees and hold with weight on R (cts 3-4).

2 Sway L, bending knees (cts 1-2); straighten knees and hold with weight on L (cts 3-4).

3-4 Repeat meas 1-2.

II. STEPS TO SIDE AND DRAW.

1 Facing ctr, step R to R (ct 1); step L beside R (ct 2); step R to R (cts 3-4).

2 Draw L ft next to R, L toe touching floor (cts 1-2); hold (cts 3-4). The body is bent toward drawn ft and eyes look toward drawn ft.

3-4 Repeat meas 1-2 with opp ftwk and direction.

5-8 Repeat meas 1-4.

III. INTO CTR AND OUT.

1 Stepping on the balls of the feet, move twd ctr three steps R-L-R (cts 1-3); step L beside R, putting the heels down (ct 4). Shoulders slowly pull back and arms trail body slightly during this movement.

- 2 Bend knees slightly (cts 1-2); straighten knees (cts 3-4).
- 3 Repeat meas 1 backing away from ctr (cts 1-3); place feet together (ct 4). Arms slowly return to side of body during this movement.
- 4 Move bent knees, held closely together, in a CW semi-circle (cts 1-4).
- 5-8 Repeat meas 1-4.
- IV. TURNING IN SMALL CIRCLE (LOOK IN THE MIRROR). Arms in ATWAP position. Throughout the figure, look at raised palm as if looking at a mirror. Steps on leading ft lead with the heel.
- 1 With R arm leading, begin a CW turn in a small circle with step R (ct 1); step L next to R (ct 2), step R (ct 3), step L next to R (ct 4).
- 2 Finish CW turn with step R, bending knees (cts 1-2); touch L to the side, straightening knees (ct 3); hold (ct 4).
- 3-4 Repeat meas 1-2 with opp ftwk, arm position, and direction, turning L.
- 5-8 Repeat meas 1-4.
- V. ROCKS IN PLACE (PRAYING FOR THE BABY).
- 1-16 Facing ctr, place hands over abdomen, palms facing in, L hand on top of R, and with head bowed, 16 sways in place starting with R: sway R (cts 1-2); hold (cts 3-4). Repeat with alternating ftwk.
- ENDING.
- 1-2 Repeat Fig IV, meas 1-2 (turn R looking at mirror).
- 3 Music slows at this point. Facing ctr, place hands over abdomen, palms facing in, L hand on top of R, and with head bowed, sway L (cts 1-2); hold (cts 3-4).
- 4 Sway R (cts 1-2); hold (cts 3-4);
- 5... Stand in place, with head bowed, until music ends.

Sequence:

Fig I-IV three times

Fig V

Fig II-IV

Ending.

Presented by Ercüment Kılıç