

SYRTOS or KALAMATIANOS :	Greek
PRONUNCIATION:	seer-TOHS, kah-lah-mah-tee-ah-NOS
TRANSLATION:	Syrtos means dragging dance; Kalamatianos means dance from Kalamata and is named for the song "San pas stin Kalamata."
BACKGROUND:	<p>Syrto comes from the verb syro (to move something from one place to another without lifting, to pull, to drag). It is a panhellenic dance, one that is done all over Greece. Many Greeks call it their "national dance."</p> <p>According to John S.Pappas, "Syrtos . . . applies to dances with a smoother flowing movement. The Kalamatianos has the same basic step as the Syrto, but it is often bouncy and leaping in character. When a dance is leaping, it is called Pithichtos [Pidichtos], or leaping dance. The Syrto can also be a Pithichtos in styling. Thus, one can see that the nomenclature is somewhat confusing. There is one more criterion for describing the dances: the Syrto is in 2/4 time, the Kalamatianos is in 7/8 time. Actually, then, it is the music which decides what the dance is called. The music also tells the dancer how to dance: some music demands smooth, dragging steps; other music demands high, leaping steps."</p> <p>In ancient dance, men and women danced in separate lines. Today, however, men and women dance together. A handkerchief, now as then, may be held between the lead and second dancer.</p>
MUSIC:	Any of thousands of Syrto or Kalamatianos recordings.
FORMATION:	Open cir of mixed M and W with hands joined and held at shldr height in "W" pos. The hands should not be pushed fwd into the cir, but should be comfortably back near the shldr. The leader and end person may either extend free hand out to side (this is typical for the leader) or place hand on hip or in a fist on the small of the back.
METER/RHYTHM:	4/4 or 7/8, counted below in three dancers counts (slow-quick-quick) with the first being the longest (Syrto is typically 2-1-1 or 4-2-2 and Kalamatianos 3-2-2).
STEPS/STYLE:	The style depends upon the music to which the dance is being done, but is generally smooth. A small hop may appear between meas one and two at times.

MEAS

MOVEMENT DESCRIPTION

INTRODUCTION

None. Begin with any musical phrase.

BASIC STEP (12-step Syrtos)

- 1 Facing ctr, step R swd (ct 1); step L across in back of R (ct 2); step R to R, turning to face diag R in LOD (ct 3);
- 2 Moving in LOD, step L across in front of R (ct 1); step R (ct 2); step L (ct 3);
- 3 Turning to face ctr, step R twd ctr (ct 1); small step L fwd (ct 2); small step R bwd (ct 3);
- 4 Still facing ctr, step L bwd (ct 1); small step R bwd (ct 2); small step L fwd (ct 3).

Repeat entire dance from beg.

LEADER'S OPTIONS

The leader, should he feel like it, may improvise on the basic step by adding turns, spins, and other variations, such as:

A.DANCING BACKWARD

At any time, the leader may turn his back to LOD (by facing the second dancer in line) and do his steps moving bwd without releasing the handkerchief (or the second dancer's hand, if handkerchief is not being used).

B.TURNS

The leader may do one or two turns (CW or CCW), usually during the first one or two meas. These are generally traveling turns in LOD and the leader may or may not release the handkerchief (or the second dancer's hand, if a handkerchief is not being used).

C.THROUGH THE ARCH

The leader and the second dancer raise the handkerchief (or the second dancer's hand, if a handkerchief is not being used), forming an arch. The leader passes behind the second dancer. The second dancer turns slightly to his L and brings the arch fwd over his head as he ducks bwd under the arch. The leader and the second dancer then move in RLOD as the other dancers pass under the arch without releasing hands, turning and following the second dancer. When the last dancer has passed under the arch, the leader resumes the orig dir of the dance.

D.KNEE BENDS, LEAPS, SLAPS

The strenuous athletic tricks are rarely found in the Syrtos or Kalamatianos and are usually reserved for other dances, such as the Tsamikos. Even when they are found, it is usually the

M who do them (although in recent years, W are also doing half-knee bends, low leaps, and light slaps). Slapping the shoe on the sole or side of the heel after a leap or deep knee-bend is typical and the cuts on which the leader does these variations is up to him. Experienced dancers usually emerge from such variations exactly on the beat (or with a pause), so that the resumption of the general direction of the dance is smooth. It is advised that dancers practice at home, perfecting their leaps and slaps before attempting them as a leader on the dance floor.

CHANGING LEADERS

The leader may relinquish the lead position to a new leader of his choosing. Without releasing hands, he may head toward a dancer he wants to become the new leader and then, breaking into the line between the new leader and the next dancer behind him, takes the new leader's L hand with his R. The old leader switches the handkerchief so it is now between himself and the new leader. The cut-off portion of the line dances slower than before. The two portions of the line resume the hand-hold as the end of the new lead portion comes by the beginning of the cut-off portion.

An alternative is for the old leader to simply release his hold on the handkerchief and walk to the opposite end of the line, leaving the second person as the new leader, who gives the handkerchief to the second in line.

Another alternative is for the old leader to ask someone to walk over and take the lead, transferring the handkerchief between himself and the new leader.

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