

## **General notes, and etiquette for dances**

In general, all Macedonian dances are formed as an open circle progressing in a counter-clockwise direction with the leader to the right. In some dances, the last person in the circle has an important function, and in many dances the second person is extremely important. The last person needs to keep the circle open wide, but in some cases may improvise and turn the circle in to form a much smaller circle towards the inside.

The second person needs to know the dance as well as the first person because that person needs to do the basic step while the leader may improvise with additional steps. With the additional steps, sometimes extemporaneous, the leader can claim that he/she is indeed the owner of that dance at that time. In addition, the second person needs to physically support the leader if the leader decides to do some feats of strength such as leaps, squats, knee bends, etc.

If the open circle is long and overlaps, the leader should take the circle on the outside instead of the inside. This is because most dances will collapse into the center as a natural consequence, and the leader will find himself trapped inside. Sometimes, this is done on purpose, such as in the dance syrto, so that a tricky maneuver may be done to extricate the line.

Because dancing is a social activity, the emphasis is towards the inside of the circle. In this manner, all the dancers may see the other dancers. It is awkward to turn the circle inside out so that the dancers are facing away from the center and facing the walls of the room. Young children sometimes tend to do this. Except for some stage presentation, this should be discouraged.

When first forming for a dance, the right-hand palm should be facing the inside of the circle, and the left-hand palm should be facing away from the circle. Grab the hand next to you, palm to palm. If the dance calls for a “W” hand position, simply raise your hands up to shoulder level.

Etiquette requires that when joining an already formed dance circle, the new comer should join at the end. Unless you know the two people you are separating, it is best to leave them together. Sometimes small groups want to dance next to each other, and breaking the group by joining them spoils the dance for them. This is especially so if the group is of similar age and dance ability. If they invite you in to their group, by all means join them.