

PIDICHTOS TSAMIKOS

Greek

PRONUNCIATION: pee-dtheek-TOHS TCHAH-mee-kohs

TRANSLATION: Leaping tsamikos. The Greeks have no letter for the sound "ch," so they used the two letters "ts" to spell the name of the dance.

SOURCE: Dick Oakes learned this dance from Madelynne Greene, who learned it from Agoritsa Kokkinou in Québec, Canada, in 1964, and referred to the dance as the "16-count Tsamikos." Miss Kokkinou taught many variations, some of which were later introduced by John Pappas and David Henry. Two variations are noted here. Oliver "Sonny" Newman also taught the "32-count Tsamikos" at the Santa Barbara Folk Dance Conference and Mary Vouras and Rickey Holden, in their 1965 book *Greek Folk Dances*, described eight variations on the 12-count tsamikos and seven variations on the 16-count tsamikos.

BACKGROUND: The tsamikos is probably named for the Tsames in Northern Epirus (today southern Albania), but some sources say it is named after the clothes of the Klefths (guerillas), the mountain fighters in the Greek War of Independence, which were called "tsamika." The main feature of the kleftiko costume is the foustanella, a type of white pleated kilt. The foustanella may be seen today in parades and special events where they are worn by the special segment of the Greek army called Evzones.

The tsamikos had already spread from Epirus to Thessaly and Roumeli when it was adopted by the klephtes, who danced the warlike movements before and after battles. They spread the dance further so that today it is danced all over Greece, but is most popular in the south and was the most popular dance in the area of Tsamidon. It is traditionally a men's dance and is the best opportunity for a Greek dancer to show off his acrobatic skills. In the larger Greek cities women now dance it minus some of the more acrobatic stunts. It may be danced in 3/4, 3/8, or 6/8 time. The most common version in villages and in America consists of 12 slow steps, but most Greek schools teach the 16-step version described below, which is now common in the major cities of Greece. There are 8-, 10-, and 14-step versions that still exist in some regions of Greece, as well as some faster versions.

MUSIC: Kefi (EP) KER-101
Folkraft (45rpm) 1469x45 B;
Festival (45rpm) F-3502 A;
Festival (45rpm) F-3511 B;
Olympia (LP) OL24-13, side 1, band 3, or Side 2, band 3 (preferred);
Roulette (LP) LP 25229;
or any other good Tsamikos music.

FORMATION: Dancers in a line or broken circle (usually segregated into M and W lines), facing LOD, hands joined with neighbors in "W" pos, but held almost at head level rather than at shldr level, higher than when doing the Syrto or Kalamatianos, for

example. Wt is on L, R knee bent, R toe poised on floor, touching outside edge of L.

METER/RHYTHM: 3/4. The rhythm is slow-quick (2 + 1 = 3).

STEPS/STYLE: The style is somewhat heavy for M, lighter for W. W do not raise knees as high as M (knee level). W steps are smaller than M, unless W are in line of mixed M and W. The M dance heroically with the leader being separated from the second person in line by a kerchief.

MEAS

MOVEMENT DESCRIPTION

INTRODUCTION - None. Dance starts at the whim of the leader.

THE DANCE

- 1 Step R in LOD (ct 1); step L across in front of R (ct 3);
- 2 Point R toe to R (ct 1); step slightly bwd on R (ct 3);
- 3 Point L toe to L (ct 1); step L across in front of R (ct 3);
- 4 Step R in LOD (ct 1); raise L knee in front of R (ct 3);
- 5 Step L to L (ct 1); step R across in front of L (ct 3);
- 6 Step L to L (ct 1); raise R knee in front of L (ct 3);
- 7 Step R to R (ct 1); step L across in front of R (ct 3);
- 8 Point R toe to R (ct 1); touch R toe over L, keeping wt on L (as in formation pose).

A. ROCKING VARIATION

- 1 Step RLR to R (cts 1,&,2); step L across in front of R (ct 3).
- 5 Step LRL to L (cts 1,&,2); step R across in front of L (ct 3).
- 7 Step RLR to R (cts 1,&,2); step L across in front of R (ct 3).

B. TURNING VARIATION

- 1 Dropping shldr hold and making one complete turn CW, step RLR (cts 1,&,2); step L across in front of R (ct 3).
- 5 Dropping shldr hold and making one complete turn CCW, step LRL (cts 1,&,2); step R across in front of L (ct 3).
- 7 Dropping shldr hold and making one complete turn CW, step RLR (cts 1,&,2); step L across in front of R (ct 3).

HOLDING THE HANDKERCHIEF

The typical manner of holding the handkerchief by the second person in line is: Lay half of the handkerchief over the outstretched fingers of the R hand, thumb up. Reach around in back of the R with the L and, raising only the index finger of the R hand away from the others, thread the back half of the handkerchief through the gap formed from back to palm so that the halves hang down the palm and are looped over the index finger. Close the hand into a fist with the two ends of the handkerchief hanging out the bottom. Now, if weight is applied by the lead dancer, the handkerchief cannot be pulled through the fist. Experienced dancers manage to do this one-handed with a twist of the R wrist!

CHANGING LEADERS

The leader may relinquish the lead pos to a new leader of his choosing. Without releasing hands, he may head twd 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 beg of the cut-off portion.

An alternative is for the old leader to simply release his hold on the hankerchief 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.
