

POLITIKOS SYRTOS

Greek

PRONUNCIATION: poh-lee-tee-KOHS seer-TOHS

TRANSLATION: The city leading-type dance

SOURCE: Dick Oakes learned this dance in the 1970s from "Papa" Mike Tzavaras who danced it in the Greek community of Los Angeles, California.

BACKGROUND: Politikos Syrtos is from the ancient Byzantium area of Konstantinoupolis or Constantinople in Asia Minor, named after the Emperor Constantine of the Byzantine Empire. It was a famous political center, a major cultural and intellectual center, and the most prestigious city for the Greek Orthodox religion. It also was the hub and a leading commercial center for Europeans bartering with the caravan carriers of the East. Its long and complicated name was shortened and was called "Polis," (the City), thus the name Politico. The city served as a great distributor of cultural dissemination and influenced the music, dances, and songs that crept into the societies of the Aegean islands and the coastline of Greece. The Syrto (from the Greek word "syros" meaning to pull or, more accurately, to lead) was influenced by the Ballos from the islands and in turn influenced the styling of the Syrto to the islanders. Politikos Syrtos is characterized by its slow-quick-quick rhythm within its 4/4 meter.

In case you were wondering, Politikos Syrtos is in the nominative case and Politiko Syrto is in the accusative case.

MUSIC: KEFI Records (45rpm) KER-101
Fiesta - Greek Dances (LP) GRS-327-B

FORMATION: Lines of mixed M and W with hands joined and held at shldr height in "W" pos but comfortably back near the shldrs.

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

STEPS/STYLE: The dance has a soft rolling down-up nature similar to the Ballos and other Aegean Island dances.

MEAS

MOVEMENT DESCRIPTION

1-8 INTRODUCTION - No action.

THE DANCE

- 1 Step L twd ctr, bending supporting knee slightly (ct 1); swing R slightly out and fwd as supporting knee straightens (ct 2); touch R heel fwd, bending supporting knee (ct 3); raise R slightly upward in front as supporting knee straightens (ct 4).
- 2 Repeat action of meas 1 to ctr with opp ftwk.
- 3-4 Repeat action of meas 1-2 moving bwd on ct 1 of each meas but touching heel fwd on ct 2.

- 5 Step L across in back of R, bending supporting knee slightly (ct 1); straighten supporting knee (ct 2); step R swd, bending supporting knee slightly (ct 3); step L next to R, straightening knees (ct 4);
- 6 Step R swd, bending supporting knee slightly (ct 1); swing L slightly out and fwd as supporting knee straightens (ct 2); touch L heel fwd, bending supporting knee (ct 3); raise L slightly upward in front as supporting knee straightens (ct 4).

Repeat entire dance from beg.

NOTE: Variations of the above description are possible but are usually only performed by the leader.