

HANIOTIKOS SYRTOS  
(Crete, Greece)

The Syrtos is probably the most popular dance on the island of Crete. Often called Haniotikos because it was originally most associated with the district of Hania, the dance is performed with slight variations depending on the local tradition. The term "Syrtos" is found throughout Greece as a designation for several different dances which are "pulled" by a leader (Serno--Syro = to pull, drag along). The Cretan Syrtos is different in that the semi-circle formation is retained throughout and the rhythmic pattern is Q,Q,S and not the more usual S,Q,Q. Crete is also one of the few areas of present day Greece where traditional music and dance is still very much alive even among the youngest generations.

Pronunciation:

Cassette: Greek Dance Sum '87 2/4 meter

Rhythm: 2/4: 1,&,2                    or 1,&,2,&  
          Q Q S                        Q Q Q Q

Formation: Semi-circle, open W arm hold, mixed line.

Meas

Pattern

Facing ctr, wt on R, hold (cts 1,&); brush swing L fwd (ct 2).

- 1 Step L back and behind R (ct 1); step R back next to L (ct &); step L fwd and across in front of R (ct 2).
- 2 Step R diag fwd to the R (ct 1); step L next to R (ct &); step R slightly fwd and L (ct 2).
- 3 Step L to the R across and behind R (ct 1); step R to the R (ct &); step L to the R across and behind R (ct 2).
- 4 Step R to the R (ct 1); hold (ct &); brush swing L fwd (ct 2).

OR

Slight bounce on L, lift R up or tap it lightly to the R (ct 1); step R to the R (ct &); brush swing L fwd or across R (ct 2).

VARIATIONS

- 1,2 Direction can be modified so that meas 1 and 2 are performed first straight back, then straight fwd, with the fwd Two Step of meas 2 being executed with either small or large steps. \_\_\_\_\_

("6" steps)

- 3 Step L to the R across and behind R (ct 1); step R to the R (ct &); repeat ct 1 (ct 2); repeat ct & (ct &).
- 4 Step L to the R across and behind R (ct 1); step R to the R (ct &); brush swing L fwd (ct 2).

OR:

Cts 1 and & executed fwd; ct 2 same as above.

HANIOTIKOS SYRTOS (Cont'd)SYNCOPATIONS

In meas 1 and especially 2, the step usually taken on ct 2 can be delayed a half count, with a bounce or scuff step substituted in ct 2, e.g.:

- 2 Step R diag fwd to the R (ct 1); step L next to R (ct &);  
scuff R slightly fwd (ct 2); small leap onto R fwd (ct &).

VARIATION - SHOOT FORWARD

- 1 (Small) step L bkwd (ct 1); step R next to L (ct &);  
step L bkwd (ct 2).  
2 Large step R fwd (ct 1); close L next to R (ct &);  
large step R fwd or perform a Syncopation as above (ct 2).  
3-4 Same as Variation "6" Steps as above but performed diag.  
back.

STYLISTIC NOTES

Swings: there is a tendency when swinging the foot fwd as in meas 4, ct 2 to flick the foot and bounce on the supporting leg at the end of the swing, i.e., on ct &.

Usually there is preference not to stop movement abruptly after the placement of weight on ct 2 in meas 1 and 2, but to continue with a slight bounce on what would be a following ct &. Often this is accompanied in meas 2 by a quick swing and flick of the free L ft.

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