

Levendikos

(Greece)

Levendikos is perhaps the most characteristic dance of Greek Macedonia. (It is also well-known in the former Yugoslavian republic of Macedonia and can also be called either Pousténo or Beranče.) Leader variations are an integral part of the dance, and leading this dance well is considered an honor and a challenge.

Pronunciation: Leh-VEHN-dee-kohs

Music: "Leventikos" on "Songs of Western Macedonia" (SDNM 109), or any other Levendikos melody.

Rhythm: 12/8 meter (3+2+2+3+2/8), counted either as S,Q,Q,S,Q or 1 2 3 4 5.

Formation: Open circle of M and W. High handhold (W-pos), handkerchief between leader (the person farthest to the R) and second dancer.

Styling: Individual. (See "style variations.")

Meas

Pattern

BASIC FIGURES

- 1 Turning to face ctr, hop on L and lift R leg twd ctr (ct 1); turning to face slightly R, hop again on L while bringing R leg to R (ct 2); step on R to R (ct 3); step on L across behind R (ct 4); step on R to R (ct 5).
- 2 Turning even more to the R, take a long skipping step onto the L across in front of R, that is: hop slightly on the R on the upbeat before stepping on the L (ct 1); turning to face ctr, hop on L (ct 2); step on R to R (ct 3); step on L across in front of R (ct 4); step on R in place (ct 5).
- 3 Dancing in place, hop on R (ct 1); hop again on R while bringing L ft around behind the R ft (ct 2); step on L behind R (ct 3); step on ball of R ft beside or slightly behind L (ct 4); turning to face diag R, step on L across in front of R (ct 5).

"SIMPLIFIED" BASIC STEP

The dance can also be "simplified" by merging cts 2 and 3 into one longer count of 4 pulses (2+2). The rhythm then becomes 3+4+3+2/ 8 and can then be counted S,Slower,S,Q or 1 2 3 4. This eliminates the hop on the 2nd ct of the usual rhythm, so the step which usually comes on the 3 ct of the usual rhythm now comes on the 2 ct (the "Slower" ct) of this "simplified" rhythm.

STYLE VARIATIONS

This dance is a popular dance and is danced by all types of people, young and old, so the "permissible" variations in styling are very wide indeed, as everyone more or less finds his or her own style. Older people tend to prefer slower tunes and a more stately style ("Geréndikos"-style), while younger people often prefer to dance it with more hopping and faster turning. To conserve energy, people sometimes do the "simplified" rhythm.

LEADER VARIATIONS

Basically, the leader (the person at the far R of the line) can do whatever he pleases of hops, jumps, foot- and thigh-slapping, twirls, and other acrobatic movements as long as he:

- 1) holds the rhythm, and
- 2) holds himself more or less to the 3-meas pattern, thus not stopping or disturbing the other dancers' basic step pattern.

SOME COMMON LEADER VARIATIONS ARE“Clockwise turn during the 2nd measure:”

Dance the first meas as usual, then make a CW turn (“outside,” that is, away from the second dancer) during the first 3 movements (“and-skip, hop, step”) of the 2nd meas.

“Counterclockwise turn during the 3rd measure:”

Dance the first 2 meas as usual, then release hands and spin once around CCW (“inside” turn, that is twd the second dancer) on the first 2 cts (2 hops) of the third meas.

Note: These turns can be combined at will.

“Dance in and dance face to face with second dancer:”

Dance first meas as usual, but step fwd twd the ctr on the first ct of the second meas, and continue turning 180° CCW, thus ending the second meas face-to-face with the second dancer. Use the first 2 cts (2 hops) of the third meas to make a half turn CCW under your own L arm to return to your original pos at the front of the line.

“Curl in and put your arm around the second dancer’s waist:”

“Curl in” as in the former variation, but turn 1/4 turn more CCW during the last cts of the second meas so that you are now facing LOD and can put your R arm around your second dancer's waist. Adjusting your own steps slightly, so as to “follow along with,” and not get in the way of your second dancer's steps, dance as many basic steps as you like, returning to your original pos at the front of the line much as you did during the last variation, turning a 1/4 turn CCW under your own L arm during the third meas of the basic step.

“Curl in and change hands:”

“Curl in” as before but place the handkerchief in your R hand and continue turning CCW until your back is to your second dancer. Move in unison (as “shadows of each other”) as many basic steps as you like, returning to your original position at the front of the line much as you did before, by returning the handkerchief to your L hand and turning CCW under your own L arm during the third measure of the basic step.

“Foot-slap:”

Dance the first meas as usual. Slap the bottom of your L ft on ct 4 of the second meas (instead of stepping on the L ft crossed in front, as you would otherwise).

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“Double foot-slap:”

Dance the first 2 meas as usual. Slap the bottom of your L ft with your R hand twice, once in front of the R leg and once behind it, during the 2 hops on the first 2 cts of the third meas of the basic step.

“Kneeling:”

Kneel on the R knee during ct 4 of the second meas of the basic step, and/or turn to face diag L of ctr and kneel on L knee on ct 4 of the third meas of the basic step.

“Pause:”

Step ft quickly together on the balls of the feet on cts 3,& of the third meas of the basic step. Hold on 4 (and even ct 5!), then step quickly across onto L ft at last moment before ct 1 of the new basic step.

“Freeze and chug:”

Freeze movement on ct 4 of second meas with wt on balls of both ft, L ft crossed in front of R. Hold on ct 5, then chug explosively on ct 1 of the third meas; hop on R ft while lifting L ft around behind on ct 2 and continue with rest of basic step as usual.

Many other leader variations (and combinations of leader variations) are possible. These particular variations are presented only as examples.

Dance description by Lee Otterholt
Presented by Lee Otterholt