

HASSAPIKO

This dance is one of the most popular forms of dance expressions to be found throughout the whole of the Near East, and like a number of others, has lost its Greek name and is popularly called by the Arabic-Turkish name for "butcher"—"Hassapiko."

Long before the Turkish conquest of the Byzantine empire, the dance was already popular throughout the area; it was popular during the Hellenic Age and was introduced by the soldiers of Alexander the Great's army. It was a war dance and was adopted from an ancient shepherd dance of the Macedonian-Thracian region.

The movements depicted a stealthy approach on the enemy; contact and battle with them; then victory. This was used to prepare the soldiers for battle; teaching them to move silently, signals for movements were transmitted by touch. As the battle ensued, commands were shouted and, in both cases, the shepherd, soldier or dancer was to move immediately into a new pattern. Finally the music speeded up so much that it was almost impossible to keep up with it—this depicted the victory.

It is this dance that the Butchers Guild of Constantinople adopted and was called during Byzantine days, Makellarion Horon. (*makellarios*: the Greek word for butcher).

This dance today has actually broken up into two distinct parts; there is no gradual acceleration and the very wild section at the end has been dropped altogether. There remains the slow Hassapiko (*Vari* or *Argho*) which is also known as the Naftiko (Sailor's dance), Ploioritikos (Stevedore's dance), Peiraeotiko (Piraeus is a seaport of Athens), etc. The fast Hassapiko is simply called hassapiko or sometimes Zoero (lively hassapiko). General terms are also applied to it such as: village dance, festival dance, wedding dance, etc. However, as was mentioned previously, we find this dance throughout the Near East under

various names and guises—in Arabic it is the *Debka*; Armenian, *Soorch Bar*; Ukrainian, *Arkhon*; Romanian, *Hora*; Jewish, *Hora*; Bulgarian, *Kasapsko Oro*; Yugoslav, *Kasapsko Kolo*.

Both the slow and fast parts have numerous variations, with the whole line participating in the execution of the intricate variations, which are performed spontaneously, as the leader signals them.

Characteristics: Gay and carefree. A high-spirited dance on balls of feet with many variations and fast, tricky steps.

Formation: Open circle. Hands on shoulders. General movement counter-clockwise.

Time: 2/4

Steps:

- 1 Step r. to r.
- 2 Step l. in front of r.
- 1 Step r. to r.
- 2 Hop on r. and kick l. in front of r. at the same time.
- 1 Step l. back next to r.
- 2 Hop on l. and kick r. in front of l. at the same time.

Variations

- 1 Step r. l. quickly to r.
 - 2 Step r. l. quickly to r.
 - 1 Step r. to r.
 - 2 Hop on r. and kick l. in front of r.
 - 1 Step l. back next to r.
 - 2 Hop on l. and kick r. in front of l.
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- 1 Hop on l. traveling to r.
 - 2 Hop on l. traveling to r.
 - 1 Step r. to r., step l. in front of r.
 - 2 Step r. in place.
 - 1 Step l. back next to r., step r. in front of l.
 - 2 Step l. in place.

1 Spring on r. foot and swing l. f. out in front of r. at the same time.

2 Spring on l. foot and swing r. f. out in front of l. at the same time.

1 Step r.

2 Hop on r., crossing l. in front r. (make 2 short kicks)

1 Step l. back next to r.

2 Hop on l., crossing r. in front l. (make 2 short kicks)

1 Skip r. (backwards)

2 Skip l. (backwards)

1 Step r. slightly to right side, step l. in front of r.

2 Step in place r.

1 Step l. back next to r., step r. in front of l.

2 Step in place l.

1 Hop l.

2 Hop l.

1, 2 Step hop r. lifting l. leg behind r.

1, 2 Step hop l., lifting r. leg behind l.

This variation is performed by the leader only:

1 Skip r., step l. } (These steps are taken forward into
2 Step r., l. } the circle.)

1 Step r.

2 (Reel steps) Hop r., step l. behind r.

1 (Reel steps) Hop l., step r. behind l.

2 (Reel steps) Hop r., step l. behind r.

*Note: a skipping step to the right is performed as follows—
hop left, step on right.*

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