

PENTOSALIS

(2-FIG)

Of the dances of Crete, the *pentosalis* and the previously mentioned *syrtós* are the most popular and widespread, both in Crete and in the U.S. (A third dance rapidly gaining in popularity throughout Crete, the Cretan community in the U.S., and lately being introduced to American folk dancers is the *kastrinós/maleviziótikos/pidhihtós* from Eastern Crete.)

The origin of the *pentosalis* is not known. Some natives believe that, like the other "leaping" dances, the *pentosalis* was once localized in Eastern Crete, in much the same way the *syrtós* was in Western Crete, and that, like the *syrtós*, it has become pan-Cretan. Others place it in Central Crete, saying that it was once danced in the *nomoi* (counties) of Rethymnon and Hania. As has been implied, the *pentosalis* today is danced throughout Crete. The commonly encountered melodies entitled *Pentosalis Haniótikos*, *Pentosalis Rethymniótikos*, and *Pentosalis Irakleiótikos* (the second word in each title is an adjective formed from the names of cities/counties of Hania, Rethymnos, and Irakleion, respectively,) indicate only where the compositions anonymously originated or the composers' home villages and do not give a definitive answer to the question of origin of the dance itself.

The *pentosalis* is not subject anywhere to the same rigid protocol that governs the *syrtós*; men, in an all-male line, continually switch places until everyone in line has danced in the first and/or second positions. Occurring very infrequently is an all-male group simultaneously doing identical movement--yet the most stunning *pentosalis* I have ever seen was danced by five men in this way in the village of Brasse, *nomós* Hania around 1970. As with the *syrtós*, the line can also be mixed, with a male or, occasionally, female leader.

During a festive event the *pentosalis* will be danced several times but not nearly as frequently as the *syrtós*. Most *parées* ("parties" or "tables" of friends) will dance only the *syrtós* or several *syrti*. If a *paréa* does another, that dance will be the *pentosalis* or the *sousta*. Sometimes a *paréa* will appear on the dance floor only to dance the *pentosalis* but this usually happens later in the festivities.

Today in Crete, a form combining another dance, the *sighanós*, with the *pentosalis* is being played with greater frequency; nonetheless, both forms continue to be played in their original independent versions. This combined form is seen in the U.S. only among recent immigrants.

It would be very hard to describe the attitude of native Cretans toward their *pentosalis* without sounding overly romantic. Nonetheless it is true that they hold the dance in an esteem akin to awe; good *pentosalis* dancers elicit wonder and admiration anywhere they go: "He dances the *pentosalis*!" I recall the reaction of my father, who immigrated from Crete some sixty years ago, when I reported the beautiful *pentosalis* I had seen in Brasse. He never mentioned it thereafter, until, quite unexpectedly on a return trip a year later he suddenly announced he wanted to go to the *panegyris* at Brasse to "see the *pentosalis*."

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## PENTZALIS (cont'd)

*Formation:* A line or open circle; dancers are connected by a shoulder hold.

*Meter:* 2/4

*Dance Phrase:* S | S | S Q Q | S Q Q  
 ♪ X | ♪ X | ♪ ♪ ♪ | ♪ ♪ ♪

*Recordings:* Those recordings available in the U.S. that include the pentzalis:

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| PA 5106           | - Thanasis Skordhalos-Forty (40) Years                |
| PS Margo 8060     | - Kostas Moundakis in His New Songs                   |
| Music Box 33MB308 | - Crete and Her Traditional Polk Songs                |
| EMIAL 25048-70375 | - Folk Dances and Songs from Crete - George Avissinos |
| NINA 66           | - Aegean Echoes                                       |

*continued...*

## PENTAZALIS (cont'd)

| MEASURE | COUNT                            | BODY ANGLE       | DIRECTION | VARIANT I  | VARIATION A  | VARIATION B   |
|---------|----------------------------------|------------------|-----------|--|--|---|
|         |                                  |                  |           |  |  |   |
| 1       | ♩ S 1<br>♩ S 2<br>♩ S 2<br>♩ S 2 | ↑<br>↑<br>♩<br>♩ | ↑         | (do in place)<br>♩ Rft steps in place              | ♩ Rft steps/leaps in place<br>Lft swings diag R fwd                  | ♩ Rft steps R<br>(line will progress R)                         |
|         |                                  |                  |           | --<br>♩ Lft swings fwd                             | ♩ --<br>♩ Bring L heel bkwd to front<br>of Rft                       |   |
|         |                                  |                  |           | --   | --   |   |
|         |                                  |                  |           | --   | --   |   |
| 2       | ♩ S 1<br>♩ S 2<br>♩ S 2<br>♩ S 2 | ♩<br>♩<br>♩<br>♩ |           | ♩ Lft steps in place<br>beside Rft                 | ♩ Lft steps/leaps in place<br>Rft swings diag L fwd                  |   |
|         |                                  |                  |           | --<br>♩ Rft swings fwd                             | ♩ --<br>♩ Bring R heel bkwd to front<br>of Lft                       |   |
|         |                                  |                  |           | --   | --   |   |
|         |                                  |                  |           | --   | --   |   |
| 3       | ♩ S 1<br>♩ Q 2<br>♩ Q 2<br>♩ Q 2 | ♩<br>♩<br>♩<br>♩ |           | ♩ Rft steps in place<br>beside Lft                 | ♩ Rft steps in place<br>beside Lft                                   | ♩ Rft steps in place<br>beside Lft                              |
|         |                                  |                  |           | --<br>♩ Lft steps in place<br>♩ Rft steps in place | --<br>♩ Lft steps in front of Rft<br>♩ Rft steps in its place (rock) | --<br>♩ Lft steps behind Rft<br>♩ Rft steps in its place (rock) |
|         |                                  |                  |           | --   | --   | --  |
|         |                                  |                  |           | --   | --   | --  |
| 4       | ♩ S 1<br>♩ Q 2<br>♩ Q 2<br>♩ Q 2 | ♩<br>♩<br>♩<br>♩ |           | ♩ Lft steps in place<br>beside Rft                 | ♩ Lft steps in place<br>beside Rft                                   | ♩ Lft steps in its place (rock)                                 |
|         |                                  |                  |           | --<br>♩ Rft steps in place<br>♩ Lft steps in place | --<br>♩ Rft steps in front of Lft<br>♩ Lft steps in its place (rock) | --<br>♩ Rft steps R<br>♩ Lft closes Rft                         |
|         |                                  |                  |           | --   | --   | --  |
|         |                                  |                  |           | --   | --   | --  |

Continued...

PENTAZALIS Variant I (cont'd)

VARIATION D

(Rft steps in place beside Lft)

VARIATION C

| MEASURE | COUNT                            | BODY ANGLE | DIRECTION  |
|---------|----------------------------------|------------|--|
| 1       | ♩ S 1<br>♩ S 2<br>♩ S 2<br>♩ S 2 | ↑          | ↑  |
| 2       | ♩ S 1<br>♩ S 2<br>♩ S 2          |            |  |
| 3       | ♩ S 1<br>♩ Q 2<br>♩ Q 2          |            | <p>♩ Rft steps/leaps in place beside Lft<br/>                     ♩ Lft juts diag front R<br/>                     ♩ Lft steps in place beside Rft<br/>                     ♩ Rft steps in front of Lft (rock)</p> |
| 4       | ♩ S 1<br>♩ Q 2<br>♩ Q 2          |            | <p>♩ Lft steps in its place (rock)<br/>                     ♩ Rft steps R<br/>                     ♩ Lft steps in front of Rft<br/>                     or Lft closes Rft</p>                                      |

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