

# Syrtaki

(Greece)

Syrtaki is the name given to the combination of three different tempos of the Hasapika dances (Vari Hasapiko, Hasaposerviko, Fast Hasapiko). It was common while dancing the Vari Hasapiko, the dancers incited the musicians to turn the beat into a faster temp Hasapiko for its conclusion. The motion picture “Zorba” played an important role in popularizing this modification of the Hasapika dances. The name “Syrtaki” is a misnomer as it is derived from the most common Greek dance “Syrτος” and this name is a recent invention. These “butcher dances” spread throughout the Balkans and the Near East all across the Aegean islands and entertained a great popularity. There is an underlined sense of a dialogue between the dancers, for it is imposed obligation for the dancers to be in unison with the leader as he reveals a vocabulary of movement which is traditional and improvisational. Its origins are traced to Byzantium, but the Argo Hasapiko (Slow) is an evolved idiom by the Aegean fishermen and their languid lifestyle. The name “Syrtaki” is now embedded as a dance form (meaning “little Syrτος,” though it is totally unlike any Syrto dance, but its international fame has made it the hallmark of Greek dancing.

Pronunciation: seer-TAH-kee

CD: The Spirit of Greek Dance with Athan Karras AK2001

2/4 meter

Formation: No more than 5-6 dancers in a line in T-pos, all dancers lean fwd slightly.

## Meas

## Pattern

### INTRODUCTION

- 1 Step on R to R (ct 1); bring L to R, no wt (ct 2).
  - 2 Repeat meas 1 with opp ftwk and direction.
  - 3-4 Repeat meas 1-2.
  - 5 Open toes diag out (ct 1); open heels diag out (ct 2).
  - 6 Close toes together (ct 1); close heels together (ct 2).
- This introduces the tempo.

#### A. BASIC ARGO HASAPIKO STEP

- 1 Starting with ft together, step to ctr with L, leaning body fwd (ct 1); bring R passing L ft (ct 2).
- 2 Swing R ft in a semicircle in the air (ct 1); step on R across behind L (ct 2).
- 3 Step on L quickly across behind R with a slight pause (ct 1); take one large step on R to R (ct 2).
- 4 Step on L across very close in front of R (ct 1); change wt to R in place and touch L heel (ct 2).
- 5-16 Repeat meas 1-4 three times (4 in all).

#### B. THREE, TWO, ONE FIGURE

- 1 Step on L across in front of R (ct 1); step on R to R (ct &); step on L across in front of R (ct 2); step on R to R (ct &).
- 2 Step on L across in front of R (ct 1); hold (ct 2).
- 3 Reverse and step on R across in front of L (ct 1); step on L to L (ct &); step on R across in front of L (ct 2).
- 4 Step on L across in front of R (ct 1); step on R across in front of L (ct &); step on L across in front of R (ct 2); step on R next to L (ct &).

## Syrtaki—continued

- 5 Open toes diag out (ct 1); open heels diag out (ct 2).  
 6 Close toes together (ct 1); close heels together (ct 2).

C. GRAPEVINE STEP (ZORBA) (meso-exo)

- 1 Grapevine: step on L across in front of R (ct 1); step on R to R (ct &); step on L behind R (ct 2).  
 2 Grapevine: step on R behind L (ct 1); step on L to L (ct &); step on R in front of L bending knees (ct 2).  
 3 Release T-pos and make a full turn to the L (CCW) rising to retake T-pos (cts 1-2).  
 Go directly into Hasaposerviko rhythm.

D. HASAPOSERVIKO (tempo changes)

- 1 Step on R to R (ct 1); step on L behind R (ct 2).  
 2 Step on R to R (ct 1); bring L ft to R, no wt (ct 2).  
 3 Step on L to L (ct 1); bring R ft to L, no wt (ct 2).  
 4-9 Repeat meas 1-3 twice (3 total).

E. MESA STEP

- 1-2 Repeat Fig D, meas 1-2.  
 3 Step on L to ctr (ct 1); swing R ft fwd (ct 2).  
 4 Step bkwd on L (ct 1); step bkwd on L (ct 2).  
 5 Step on R to R (ct 1); bring L to R, no wt (ct 2).  
 6 Step on L to L (ct 1); bring R to L, no wt (ct 2).

F. CLAPPING HANDS AND SLAP HEEL STEP

- 1-2 Repeat Fig D, meas 1-2.  
 3 Drop T-pos (ct 1); slap R heel (ct 2).  
 4 Bring R in front of L (ct 1); make a full turn and return to T-pos (ct 2).  
 5 Step on L to L (ct 1); bring R ft to L, no wt (ct 2).  
 Go directly into Fast Hasapiko step once or twice.

G. FAST HASAPIKO STEP (tempo changes)

- 1 Step on R to R (ct 1); step on L across in front of R (ct 2).  
 2 Step on R to R (ct 1); swing L in front of R (ct 2).  
 3 Step on L to L (ct 1); swing R in front of L (ct 2).  
 4-24 Repeat meas 1-3 seven times (8 total).

H. MESA STEP WITH PAS DE BAS

- 1-2 Repeat Fig G, meas 1-2.  
 3 Step on L to ctr (ct 1); swing R in front of L (ct 2).  
 4 Step on R behind L (ct 1); step on L behind R (ct 2).  
 5 Pas de bas to R (R,L,R) (cts 1,&,2).  
 6 Pas de bas to L (L,R,L) (cts 1,&,2).  
 7-48 Repeat meas 1-6 seven times (8 total).  
 Begin Fast Hasapiko Step again.