

# SYRTO'S

SYRTO? (Bear text)  
(Greece)

In ancient days, as well as today, there was not one specific Syrtos, but many, with variations of steps within each. Today Syrtos are danced in Greek clubs, cafes, and at weddings, with the melodies varying in length; consequently, there are a varying number of steps and variations. As a rule Syrtos are generally written in 2/4 meter although many are in 7/8.

Years ago men and women danced in separate lines and it was customary to hold a handkerchief between the leader and the second dancer. Today men and women dance in the same line, but the handkerchief is still used.

**MUSIC:** Ethnic Folkway-P 464B No. 1; Liberty 3713; Columbia 7214-F; Olympic OL 24-01; RCA Victor 26-0314; Olympic OL 24-13. "Picnic in Greece"; Folkcraft LP 3.

**FORMATION:** Open circle, leader at R end. Heads joined at shoulder level, extended slightly twd ctr of circle, elbows bent. Leader may extend R hand and snap fingers in rhythm to the music, or may place hand on R hip, fingers fwd. Dancer on L end of line may do either of the above. M or W may lead. Handkerchief is held between leader and second dancer.

**STEPS AND STYLING:** Walking. Knees slightly bent at all times. Upper part of body remains erect. Leader only may improvise on steps; second dancer maintains rhythm and step pattern and gives leader support by holding R hand steady and firm. The dance is performed with smooth, light steps, and with an air of solemnity or gaiety, depending on the accompanying music.

METER 2/4 or 7/8

PATTERN

Measures (7/8)

Pattern 1.

- 1 Face ctr, step R on R (cts. 1, 2, 3); cross L behind R (cts. 4, 5) step R on R (cts. 6, 7).
- 2 Step L across in front of R (cts. 1, 2, 3), step R on R (cts. 4, 5), step L beside R (cts. 6, 7).
- 3 Step on R, turning body slightly to L (cts. 1, 2, 3); touch ball of L ft slightly fwd of R and twd ctr of circle, flexing R knee (cts. 4, 5, 6, 7).
- 4 Step fwd on L (cts. 1, 2, 3), touch ball of R ft behind L, flexing L knee (cts. 4, 5, 6, 7).

Repeat pattern from beginning.

*continued...*

SYRTO (continued)

Note: Leader may begin dance any time he wishes. If he wants to relinquish the lead he does so during the first 2 meas. of the dance by joining the line on the L side of the dancer he chooses to be the next leader, pulling the intervening dancers along with him and changing the handkerchief from his L to his R hand.

(7/8)

Pattern III.

The following is a variation called "Syrto Pylatas" of "Kato St'Sionis," and has been described in Greek Folk Dances by Rickey Holden.

- 1 Facing slightly diag R and moving LCD, step fwd R (cts. 1, 2, 3), rock back slightly on ball of L ft (cts. 4, 5), step fwd onto R (cts. 6, 7).
- 2 Repeat action of meas. 1, reversing footwork.
- 3 Face ctr of circle, extending arms slightly above shoulder height, elbows straight. Step swd onto R (cts. 1, 2, 3), cross and step on ball of L ft behind R (cts. 4, 5), then look at R hand (cts. 6, 7).
- 4 Repeat action of meas. 3 reversing footwork.
- 5-12 Repeat action of meas. 1-4 twice.
- 13-14 Repeat action of meas. 3-4.

Repeat pattern from the beginning.

\*Parts of the background information and dance descriptions taken from Lidster and Tamburini, Folk Dance Progressions, Belmont: Wadsworth, 1965, pp. 113-120.