

Kalamatianós

Kalamatianós (kah-lah-mah-tee-ah-NOHS) is the generic name for a type of mainland syrtos in 7/8 (3+2+2) time with a set 4 measure pattern. The dance could also be called a “Syrtós kalamatianós” or just “syrtós.”

MUSIC: almost any syrtós melodi in 7/8 (3+2+2) time

RHYTHM: 7/8 (3+2+2 / 8), or ”long-short-short,” counted here ”one-two-three.”

FORMATION: Open circle of men and women.

HANDHOLD: High handhold (“W”), handkerchief between leader (the person farthest to the right) and second dancer.

STYLE: Individual. (See “style variations.”)

METER: 7/8

PATTERN

Meas

Basic figure:

- 1 Facing center and moving LOD: step on R ft to R (1), cross L ft behind (2), step on R ft to R (3).
- 2 Turning slightly R of center and continuing to move to the R: step fwd on L ft (1), step fwd on R ft (2), step fwd on L ft (3).
- 3 Dancing in place (diag R of center): Step on R ft to R (1), step on L ft crossed in front of R ft (2), step back on R ft in place (3).
- 4 Continuing face slightly R of center and continuing to dance mostly in place, step diag bkwd on L ft (1), step diag back on R ft (2), cross L ft in front of R (3).

Variations on basic step:

When this dance is taught in Greek schools (most often by physical education teachers), two small changes are made:

- 1) Turn body slightly L of center and cross L ft behind R on third count of second measure.
and

- 2) Turn body to face center during meas. 3 & 4 and, dancing more or less in place, do steps: side - cross in front - in place, side - cross in front - in place.

Style variations:

This dance is a very 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/her own style. Older people tend to dance it more smoothly while younger people often dance it with a typical hopping movement. This hopping movement can either be a short “skip” (hop) as a kind of “grace note” just before the first count of each measure, on the “a” of “a-one-two-three.” (This skip or hop being perhaps most pronounced just before the second measure.) Rhythmically more elegantly, this hop can “steal time” from the (long) first count and be done on the “one” of “one-and-two-three” (1+2+2+2/8).

Leader variations:

Basically, the leader (the person at the far right 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 7/8 (“long-short-short”) rhythm, and
- 2) holds himself more or less to the 4-measure pattern, moving to the R during the first 2 measures and dancing mostly in place during measures 3 and 4, thus not stopping or disturbing the other dancers’ basic step pattern.

Some common leader variations are:

“Inside turn during the fourth measure:”

Dance the first three measures as usual, then make a CCW turn (“inside,” that is, back toward the second dancer) during the three steps of the fourth measure.

“Outside turn:”

Dance the first measure as usual, then, as you turn a little to the R to begin the second measure, continue turning CW (“out,” that is, away from the second dancer) during the three steps of the second measure.

“Double outside turn:”

When you first start an outside turn on the second measure, why not continue turning, using also some of the third measure, to do a double CW turn. It sounds difficult, but is actually no more difficult (and is actually somehow less confusing!) than a single outside turn.

Note: “Inside” and “outside” turns can be combined at will. A simple stylistic variation is for the leader to take the handkerchief in both hands during these turns/combinations of turns.

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

Dance first measure as usual, but continue dancing “backwards” on the second measure, while “curling in” towards the center, thus ending up face to face with the second dancer. Dance the third measure as usual (remembering that your R and your second dancer’s R are now in opposite directions, your R now being RLOD!) and use the three steps of the fourth measure to make a half turn CCW under your own L arm to return to your original position at the front of the line.

“Curl in and put your arm around the second dancers waist:”

“Curl in” as in the former variation, but turn $\frac{1}{4}$ turn more CCW 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 position at the front of the line much as you did during the last variation, turning a $\frac{1}{4}$ turn CCW under your own L arm during the three steps of the fourth measure.

“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 three steps of the fourth measure.

“Foot-slap and twist:”

Dance the first three measures as usual. Jump onto your L ft during the first count of the fourth measure, slapping the R side of your R foot with your R hand at the same time. Cross your R ft in front of your L and, with weight on both feet, lean back and “twist” yourself CCW under your own L arm during the rest of the fourth measure, taking weight on your L ft in the end, so that your R ft is free to begin a new basic step.

“Windmill slap”

Dance the first two measures as usual. During measures 3: turning gradually CCW to face slightly L of center hop on L ft two times (1,2), step on R ft crossed in front of L ft (3). During measure 4: take weight on L ft in place, beginning to bring R leg up in front of you in a “windmill” movement (1), as you gradually turn back to the R, jump over onto R ft, kicking L high up in front of yourself (a “hitch-kick” movement) and striking the sole of your L ft with your R hand (2), step on L ft (3).

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

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