

VARI HASSAPIKO
(Greece)

This Slow Hassapiko, or Sailors Dance, like many Greek dances, is based upon a form that is freely interpreted by the leader. The rest of the dancers in the line follow his lead by signals passed down the line through the touch of the hand to the shoulder of the next dancer. (This will necessitate a short line of 4 to 6 people). Infinite variations can be developed by the leader and it is not necessary to do what is called the "basic step". In fact, many Greeks who do this dance do not know the "basic step", but are so familiar with the form and the mood that they can dance to the music without reference to any definite step. This is the ideal towards which a folk dancer should strive; but without the inherent feeling of the music or style one needs to have something basic to refer to and build upon. The following descriptions for Vari Hassapiko, are merely steps that can be used as a guide until you, as the dancer, become familiar enough with the idiom to improvise with ease.

Source: Bauzoukee taverns in the United States and Athens. S. Newman.

Music: Record: Any Vari Hassapiko

Formation: Short line of 4 to 6 dancers with hands on shoulders. Leader on R end of line.

Style: The music will determine the mood greatly and the style will be affected by it. Steps are slow, sharp, and tense. The body is generally bent fwd slightly.

<u>Meas</u>	<u>Ct</u>	<u>Pattern</u>
4/4		With body leaning slightly fwd from the waist.
1	1	Fall fwd onto L.
	&	Hold R behind slightly off floor, or tap behind L heel.
	2	Brush R in front of L.
	&	Swing R to back of L.
	3	Step R displacing L
	&	Swing L in small arc to back of R.
	4	Step L, displacing R
	&	Pull R back across L instep.
2	1	Step R to R, moving R.
	&	Step L to R, moving R
	2	Step R to R, to face ctr.
	&	Pull L back across R instep sharply and lean fwd at the waist preparing for ct 1 of meas 1.

The preceding completes the basic step. It may be repeated immediately as often as the leader wishes. Not infrequently, however, extra steps are added at this point, to complete the musical phrase of 2 meas. The following are 2 variations that you may use to fill the phrase:

(var 1)

3	Step on L lifting R behind slightly off floor.
&	Step back on R lifting L slightly off floor in front.
4&	Repeat

continued...

VARI HASSAPIKO (cont)

(var 2)

- 3 Place L heel on floor in front of R.
 & Tilt L toes to R.
 4 Tilt L toes to L.
 & Bring L back across R instep preparing for ct 1 of meas 1.

I would like to make a special note of the fact that each combination of steps described in this dance fit a phrase of music. It is not a rule that each step fit a phrase, but it is much more musical and more pleasing to the senses and is, therefore, easier to teach and to learn. The following are some variations that I have learned by dancing with the Greeks, and from teachers of Greek dancing.

VARIATION IMeas CtCROSS OVER WITH 3 DOUBLES AND 2 SINGLES

This step following the last count of the basic is quite natural and begins the development of the dance very nicely.

- 1 1 Step L over R to R.
 & Close R to heel of L.
 2 Step L to R.
 & Bring R around in front of L in preparation to reverse direction of ct 1.
 3, &, 4, & Repeat action of cts 1, &, 2, &, with opp ftwork.
 2 1, &, 2, & Repeat action of cts 1, &, 2, & of meas 1.
 3 Bring R over L and step on it.
 4 Bring L beside R and close on beat.

CROSS OVER WITH 2 DOUBLES AND 4 SINGLES

- 1 Repeat action of meas 1 in above pattern.
 2 Repeat action of meas 2, cts 3, 4 (single cross overs), beg L and do 4 single cross overs.

VARIATION II CROSS OVER-CENTER CROUCH

- 1 1 Step L over R to R.
 & Close R to heel of L.
 2 Step L to R.
 & Bring R around in front of L in preparation to move to ctr of circle.
 3 Step fwd R.
 & Close L to R.
 4 Step R bending with wt on R to a very low crouch. (L may touch floor behind R to maintain balance.)
 & Hold.
 2 1 Step L behind R and rise from crouch.
 2 Step R behind L.
 3 Step L behind R.
 4 Close R to L.

VARIATION III SQUAT, AND TURN

- 1 1 Step L over R to R.
 2 Extend R leg, hip high, diag fwd R.

Continued...

VARI HASSAPIKO (cont)

- 3 Take wt on both ft with R in front of L in full knee bend.
 4 Stand, extending R again.
- 2 1 Take wt on both ft, R behind L, full knee bend.
 2 Stand, extending L.
 3 Wt on both ft, L behind, full knee bend.
 4 Execute CCW pivot in full knee bend.

I usually follow this with a Basic Step with stamp on ct 1.

VARIATION IV

- 1 1 Jump to stride pos.
 2 Jump with ft together.
 3 Jump onto R ft, bending fwd at waist,
 & Tap L toe far behind supporting R.
 4 Brush L ft fwd, straightening body.
 & Hold L ft in front of R a few inches off floor.
- 2 1 Step L close to R side of R ft.
 2 Step R beside L.
 3 Step L close to R side of R ft.
 4 Step R beside L.

VARIATION V

- 1 1 Jump to stride pos.
 2 Jump with L ft close across R.
 3 Turn 1/2 CW (let hands drop).
 4 Jump to stride pos (Put hands on shoulders).
- 2 1 Jump with L ft close across in front of R.
 2 Turn 1/2 CW (let hands drop).
 3 Rock wt onto L in front of R (hands on shoulders).
 & Rock back on R.
 4 Close L to R.

Presented by Oliver (Sonny) Newman