

DABKE BA'ALBAKIA

Lebanese

PRONUNCIATION: DAB-keh BAH-ahl-bak-KEE-hah

TRANSLATION: Stamping of the feet from Ba'albek

SOURCE: Dick Oakes learned this dance from Samira Tamer, of the AMAN Folk Ensemble (aka, AMAN International Music and Dance Company) of Los Angeles, California, who learned it in Lebanon during a research trip in 1963. Vilma Matchette taught a variant from Syria at the 1958 California Kolo Festival.

Ba'albek, also known as Balbec, Baalbecm or Baalbeck, is a city in the Anti-Lebanon foothills east of the Litani River in Lebanon's Beqaa Valley, about 53 miles northeast of Beirut and about 47 miles north of Damascus. The capital of Ba'albek-Hermel Governorate, Ba'albek's population is mostly Shia Muslims, followed by Sunni Muslims, and a minority of Christians. It is reckoned a stronghold of the Shi'a Hezbollah movement. It is home to the annual Ba'albeck International Festival.

BACKGROUND: The dabke is the national dance of Lebanon and has been well preserved, not only in Lebanon but also by those Lebanese who have emigrated to Africa and the "New World." The dabke is the most popular Arab folk dance in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, the Palestinian Territories, the north of Saudi Arabia, and Syria. It is widely performed at weddings and joyous occasions. The leader, called the "raas" ("head") or the "lawweeh" ("waver"), twirls a handkerchief or string of beads known as a "masbha," while the rest of the dancers keep the rhythm. The dancers also use vocalizations to show energy and keep up the beat. The dabke leader is supposed to be like a tree, with arm in the air, a proud and upright trunk, and feet that stomp the ground in rhythm.

MUSIC: Festival Records (45rpm) FR-4113 "Baalbek Dabke Medley"
Arab Tunes (45rpm) SAC 102-B "Dabkeh"
or any suitable dabke tune

FORMATION: Open cir or lines of mixed M and W in "L" pos, hands clasped, R hand with palm fwd, R shldr slightly behind the shldr of the dancer to the R, elbows bent in right angle and held tightly to sides.

METER/RHYTHM: 4/4

STEPS/STYLE: The leader often improvises intricate steps in which he or she moves apart from the line with hands joined up at shldr level while the remainder of the line continues in the original formation pos. Leaders may change often, with each leader taking pleasure in his or her own improvisations. Steps are small and "tight."

INTRODUCTION

Because the dance phrases and musical phrases overlap, the leader may start the dance with any phrase.

THE DANCE

- 1 Facing slightly R, step L just in front of R bending both knees slightly (ct 1); small step R swd, straightening knees (ct 2); step L just in front of R, bending both knees slightly (ct 3); small step R swd, straightening knees (ct 4);
- 2 Low hop R in place, with ball of L remaining on floor and lifting L knee with slight circular motion up and back twd R knee (ct 1); light stamp L next to R without wt (ct 2).

Repeat entire dance from beg.

The dance is completed twice every three meas.