

Syngathistos

(Epirus, Greece)

The Syngathistos dance is indicative of a dance form found in the northern provinces of Greece—Epirus, Macedonia, and Thrace—and each with its own distinctive styling. The Syngathisto in Epirus can be seen as a couple dance. (It is not always mandated to be danced with a man and a woman. It is acceptable for two women or two men to dance as a couple.) The dance also changes form, such as a Pogonissios, or Tsamiko, or Hasipiko. It is called Syngathisto due to a particular movement in its styling which resembles a “sitting” step, and Syngathisto in Greek means “with sitting.” It begins as a line dance, slow and syncopated. This characteristic movement with a pause is found in the dances of the northwestern part of Epirus. In this version, it breaks out into a couple dance, and returns to a line dance in shcu as the “Vlahiko hasapiko,” a primitive form with large steps done by the Vlachs, a nomadic tribe in the Balkans, as they wander searching to feed their herds.

Pronunciation: seen-gah-thee*-STOHS
* th as in “thin”

CD: The Spirit of Greek Dance with Athan Karras AK2001

Rhythm: 7/8 meter (Q,Q,S) counted 1,2,3 and 2/4 meter counted 1,&,2,&.

Formation: Begins as a line with hands joined in V-pos, then goes to a couple dance with dancers facing, no hands joined, and in the Hasapiko line, arms are in T-pos.

Steps and Styling: Squat: With ft together, squat (as if in a sitting pos), snapping fingers, arms stretched out.

Meas

Pattern

7/8 meter A. TSINGASTO STEP

- 1 Step on L across in front of R (cts 1,2,3).
- 2 Step fwd on R (ct 1); step on L across in front of R (ct 2); step fwd on R (ct 3).
- 3 Extend L ft to L (cts 1,2,3).
- 4-12 Repeat meas 1-3 three times (4 total). This sequence can be done in line twice and then with hands free, facing ptr, and doing the same step in a small circle.

2/4 meter B. PARTNERS FACE AND SQUAT

- 1 Squat to L (ct 1); Squat to R (ct 2).
- 2 Squat to L (ct 1); rise (ct 2).
- 3 Hold (ct 1); raising R ft and placing it behind L ft, make a full turn CW and hold (ct 2).
- 4-6 Repeat meas 1-3.

Repeat Fig A and Fig B.

C. VLAHIKO HASAPIKO

- 1 In T-pos and moving in LOD, step on R (ct 1); step on L across in front of R (ct 2).
- 2 Repeat meas 1.
- 3 Step on R (ct 1); bring L ft in air behind R leg (ct 2).
- 4 Step on L (ct 1); bring R ft in air behind L leg (ct 2).
- 5-40 Repeat meas 1-4 nine times (10 in all).

Syngathistos—continued

D. VLAHIKO SQUAT

- 1-2 Repeat Fig C, meas 1-2.
- 3 Step on R (ct 1); Squat with ft together (ct 2).
- 4 Rise ending with wt o n L (ct 1); slightly leaning over, bring R ft behind L ft (ct 2).

Continue Fig D until music ends.

Presented by Athan Karras