

TSAMIKO (Greek)

Record: There are many Tsamiko records available, which you can purchase at Greek stores (grocery, notion, or music) in your community. Two record numbers we like are Victor 26-8250 and Victor 26-8152

Presented by Dave Rosenberg (As learned from Greek-Americans in Washington, D. C. and Boston, Massachusetts)

Formation: A broken circle, joined hands held at shoulder level, elbows bent. As done by Greeks, it is danced in short lines of from ten to fifteen dancers. The lines can move anywhere on the dance floor, as the leader determines.

1. Step to the right on right foot (count 1 and 2); step on left foot, crossed in front of right (count 3).
2. Repeat.
3. Repeat.
4. Step to the right on right foot (count 1); bend left knee and raise left foot in front of right leg (count 2 and 3). (The foot is raised with a slow, continuous motion, not a rapid or jerky lift, and should not be raised higher than a foot and a half from the floor. Men raise foot higher than girls, who throughout the dance move in a quieter, more restrained manner than the men.)
5. Turn slightly to left and take step to the left on left foot (count 1 and 2); step on right foot, crossed in front of left (count 3).
6. Step to left on left foot (count 1); bend right knee and raise right foot in front of left leg (count 2 and 3).

Start dance again from beginning, moving to right.

Sometimes the step is varied as follows: In parts 1, 2, 3, and 5, on counts 1 and 2, take a quick, small step, step-together, step -- and then cross foot in front.

The leader of the Tsamiko line holds a handkerchief between himself and the second in line, and often does fancy steps to show off his ability. He can turn, as he leads the line, either to his right or left. Or (this is for men leaders only), the man can occasionally slap the sole of his foot, in front or behind, or leap up in the air and come down on one knee. The rest of the line keeps up the basic pattern.

Tsamiko music at first sounds confusing to our ears and it is hard to find the beat. Keep practicing until you can catch the underlying basic rhythm of 1, 2, 3.