

Karsilamas

(Greece)

The 9/8 rhythm is most prevalent dance and song rhythm in the northern provinces of Greece, such as Macedonia, Thrace, Epirus, and in some Aegean islands as well as Cyprus. The dance varies in execution of style and tempo which often identifies the locale. Within the last half of the past century, the Greek urban communities became more aware of their traditional music, than tributes paid to western popular music. Right after World War II, Greek musicians and composers resorted to Greek traditional forms and rhythms and the 9/8 rhythm was evidenced in new and popular songs, thus the Karsilamas, which was a village traditional dance, now became the rage among urban communities as well, but to new tunes based on the ancient rhythm. Originally the dance in the northern provinces was referred to as “Antikristos” (two dancers facing each other). Because much of the “rebetika” music popular in Smyrna (current Izmir) the name Karsilamas (from the Turkish word “karsilamak” (meaning face to face) remained. The dance now is called Karsilamas and “antikristos.”

(Rebetika is a form of music well known by the seacoast regions of Asia Minor, with big Greek population centered around Smyrna. The cafe Aman and tavern music played with the bouzouki gave Greece a rich form of urban music which became popular right after WWII.)

The movements are totally dominated by the emphatic rhythm, and the figures offer the dancer to have fun and be flirtatious. When the dancers feel comfortable with the music and rhythm, they can improvise using these figures.

Pronunciation: kahr-see-lah-MAHS

CD: The Spirit of Greek Dance with Athan Karras AK2001

Rhythm: 9/8 meter 1-2, 1-2, 1-2, 1-2-3 (Q,Q,Q,S) counted 1, 2, 3, 4.

Formation: Two dancers facing.

Meas

Pattern

A. BASIC KARSILAMAS

- 1 Step on R to R (ct 1); step on L across in front of R (ct 2); step on R to R (ct 3); bring L ft next to R ankle and hold (ct 4).
- 2 Repeat meas 1 with opp ftwk.
- 3-8 Repeat meas 1-2 three times (8 total).

B. SHOULDER TO SHOULDER

- 1 Facing ptr, step fwd R,L,R, L to end R shldr meeting (cts 1,2,3,4).
- 2 Step bkwd R,L,R, L to return to original pos (cts 1,2,3,4).
- 3-4 Repeat meas 1-2 but with L shldr meeting.
- 5-8 Repeat meas 1-4.

C. DO-SI-DO

- 1 Step fwd R,L,R, L to pass R shldr and behind other dancer (cts 1,2,3,4).
- 2 Step bkwd R,L,R, L passing L shldr to return to original pos (cts 1,2,3,4).
- 3-4 Repeat meas 1-2, but begin passing L shldr (cts 1,2,3,4).
- 5-16 Repeat meas 1-4 three times (4 total).

Karsilamas—continued

D. TURNING STEPS

- 1 Dancers facing each other, turn individually to R (CW) with R,L,R, L (cts 1,2,3,4).
- 2 Dancers facing each other, turn individually to L (CCW) with R,L,R, L (cts 1,2,3,4).
- 3-8 Repeat meas 1-2 three times (4 total).

E. LADIES TWIRL HANKIE, MEN DEEP BEND DOWN

- 1-2 Repeat Fig A, meas 1-2. On ct 4, W, holding edge of hankie, twirl it.
On ct 4, M deep knee bend with ft together, slapping hands to accent.
- 3-8 Repeat meas 1-2 three times (4 total).

Presented by Athan Karras