

ZAGORÍSIOS

SOURCE: This is a dance from the Zagori area of Epirus in North-western Greece. The name means that this dance is from Zagori. The "Zagorísios" is a "slow, heavy, and stately manly dance of Epirus". (quote from Greek Dances by B. Papachristos, Athens, 1960.) It is mainly danced to a tune called "Konstantás". Rickey Holden, who includes this dance in the book written by Mary Vouras and himself, states that it is a line dance with no partners, implying that women, too, can dance it. This book (Greek Folk Dances by Mary Vouras and Rickey Holden, New Jersey, 1965) also includes a different melody for the dance. For the great majority of Greek dances, there are many tunes which can be used for each dance. Just so for "Zagorísios". However, it would seem, according to Papachristos, that "Konstantás" is the most popular melody.

I learned this dance from many sources. Sonny Newman taught a version of it; Katherine Tryfon does a version of the "Zagorísios" also. I saw it done in Greece by the men of Eleni Tsaouli's group of Hellenic Dances. I have also researched it in the books currently available.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Elliniki Hori, B. Papachristos, Athens, 1960.
Greek Folk Dances, Mary Vouras and Rickey Holden
New Jersey, 1965

MUSIC: 5/4 time in a rather slow tempo.
"Konstantás" Songs and Dances of Epirus, T'Aidonia label (LP-1)
"Zagorísios" Folkcraft LP-6

FORMATION: A line with hands joined, elbows bent -- hands should be at shoulder height. The leader is at the right end of the line.

CHARACTERISTICS: Like most dances of Epirus, the movements are generally slow and stately. The feeling is a manly, virile one, and the dance should reflect this in the style of the dancers. There is a tension in the movements -- this is not to say that they are stiff and jerky! The movements should be slow and fluid, but controlled at all times. Rather than moving immediately, there is always a slight delay to each movement. This expresses the heroic and stately qualities of the dancer. I feel that this is a dance more for men than for women, but since my sources are not entirely clear, I will say that women can dance this dance in a separate line and with appropriate feminine styling -- that is, subdued movements and less tension.

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ZAGORISIOS (CONTINUED)

- Counts
- 1 and 2 and 3 4 5
- MEASURE 1
Weight on right foot RAISE LEFT foot in FRONT very slightly and move left foot slightly to the LEFT (Swinging from knee)
Pause
Move LEFT foot across and in front of right foot
Step on LEFT foot
Slightly RAISE RIGHT foot (ankle height of left leg)
Pause
- 1 2 3 4 5
- MEASURE 2
STEP SIDEWARDS on the RIGHT foot to the right, almost facing line of direction
STEP ACROSS in front and to the RIGHT on LEFT foot
STEP SIDEWARDS on the RIGHT foot
STEP ACROSS in front and to the RIGHT on LEFT foot
Start to SWING RIGHT foot around to front
- 1 2 3 4 5
- MEASURE 3
Continue to swing RIGHT foot around to the front
Swing the right foot to right side
STEP BACK on RIGHT foot
RAISE LEFT foot to height of right knee and about 5 inches from the knee
Slightly bend RIGHT leg -- Pause
- 1 2 3 4 5
- MEASURE 4
STEP LEFT on LEFT foot
STEP ACROSS in front of left foot on RIGHT foot
STEP LEFT on LEFT foot
STEP on RIGHT foot next to left foot
Pause, raising LEFT foot slightly in front

VARIATIONS

- In Measure 3, swing LEFT leg BEHIND right leg on count 4.
In Measure 4, step BEHIND instead of in front on count 2.
On the 4th count of each measure SQUAT.
In Measure 1 (count 1), raise LEFT leg so that knee is high (leg bent) and STEP on LEFT foot in PLACE (count 3).
In Measure 3 (count 1) raise RIGHT leg so that knee is high (leg bent) and STEP on RIGHT foot in PLACE (count 3).

John Pappas