

KHORODTSI BIJO
(Armenia)

BIJO is a large class of dances done throughout the rural districts of Sepastia, a province of Western Armenia. The same name was used for a variety of different steps and melodies. KHORODTSI BIJO is from Khorod, an Armenian village in Southeast Sepastia. It was originally introduced to the Armenian Folk Dance Society of New York in 1939 by Mary Eretsian. The dance is still very popular among the Armenian communities of New York and New Jersey, and is commonly referred to as the "New York Bijo" to distinguish it from the other Bijo dances practiced in New England and Detroit. The "trite puti-like" arm swing maintained throughout the dance is quite easy once the correct rhythm is established.

Pronunciation:

Source: Arsen Anoushian, Mary Eretsian Pahlevanian, Eddie Keosaian, Hourig Sahagian, Margaret Kyrkostas.

Music: Barbashi Tape #1 Side A/5 Armenian Folk Dances
Armenian Party Time Side B/1 2/4 meter

Style: Relaxed, erect carriage. The dance starts slowly and smoothly, but gradually accelerates. As the tempo increases, the dancers must control their arm swing to maintain the smooth rhythm.

Formation: Open circle with hands joined and down.

Meas Cts

Pattern

INTRODUCTION

1-8 1-16 Stand facing ctr and swing arms in (ct 1); out (ct 2). Repeat 7 times (cts 3-16).

9-16 17-32 Still facing ctr, walk in CCW direction as continue to swing arms: Step on R to R (ct 17); step on L across R (ct 18). Repeat 7 times (cts 19-32).

Note: This arm swing continues throughout the dance, always going in on the odd counts and going out on the even counts.

BASIC

1-2 1-4 Still swinging arms, step on R to R (ct 1); step on L beside R (ct &); step on R in place (ct 2); press/step fwd on L, but keep wt still on R (ct 3); hold (ct 4); lift L sharply (ct &).

3-4 5-8 Step on L to L (ct 5); step on R beside L (ct &); step on L in place (ct 6); step/stamp R in front of L (ct 7); raise R slightly (ct 8).

5 9-10 Walk to R (ct 9); step on L over R (ct 10).

KHORODTSI BIJO (Continued)CLAP

- 1-2 1-4 Ftwk is same as in BASIC step. All let go of handhold. M put hands on hips. W extend hands fwd at waist level "Armenian style" (cts 1,&,2); all clap hands at waist level twice (cts 3,4).
- 3-4 5-6 Ftwk is same as in BASIC step. M put hands on hips. W raise hands with palms facing inward to top of forehead, and lower them smoothly along sides of face, so that they "frame" the face (cts 5,&,6). W rotate wrists "Armenian style" to end with palms facing outward as they stamp (ct 7); arms pause (ct 8).
- 5 9-10 Ftwk same as in BASIC step. W sway both arms to R as step R (ct 9); sway both arms to L as step L (ct 10).
- Note: M may turn 360 CW with two steps (cts 9,10) if so inclined.

BASIC

- 1-5 1-10 Ftwk is the same as in BASIC step, but the melody and movements are faster. The step becomes a little bouncier and the arm swing becomes tighter and more controlled.

SLIDE

- 1-2 1-4 Ftwk and arm swing are same as in BASIC step (cts 1-4).
- 3-4 5-8 Still maintaining arm swing, slide to L (CW): Step/slide on L to L (ct 5); close R beside L (ct &); step/slide on L to L (ct 6); stamp R in front of L (ct 7); lift R (ct 8).
- 5 9-10 Same as in BASIC step (cts 9-10).
- Note: During the slide/skip figure, M will often exaggerate their movements. When stamping (ct 7) they twist torso to L and stamp R across L; pause (ct 8); hop/skip onto R to R (ct 9); hop/skip onto L over R (ct 10).

The continuous arm swing throughout the dance is an ideal but is usually only seen with very skillful dancers. The average Armenian usually lets the arm swing lapse because he/she is too busy trying to concentrate on the faster ftwk.