

CRETIKE SOUSTA

This dance has its origins in an ancient war-dance. Vestiges of its pyrrhic elements remain, in that the line comes out onto the dance area as it came out onto the field of mock combat (as they also do in the Serra). Then after centering themselves on the field, partners face each other as the combatants did. The dancers move their arms up and down, like the wings of a big bird such as an eagle, in flight; this is similar to the movement of the shields and swords or spears up and down, away from the body, sort of daring your opponent to make a try against you, and a show of strength.

Now the combat begins, as the dancers move through intricate variations, moving from side to side, in and out looking for a weak spot; the dancers have no set pattern, the steps are improvised on the spot, until finally only one dancer is left, having defeated all the opposition by either wounding them or by sheer endurance. In the modern dance, of course, one couple remains, better yet, some poor unfortunate odd man, who in days of old, might have been the hero of the dance.

The present name for the dance is derived from the Italian word *susta*, which means spring. When the Italians saw the Cretans performing this dance they called it by its outstanding characteristic, which is the springy movement of the dancer.

Characteristic: Light, fast and springy. The warlike nature of this dance has been obliterated by the love-motif.

Formation: Open circle with regular W handhold. Circle moves slightly counter-clockwise, then movement is reversed, going clockwise. Couples are then formed by men turning to their left and women turning to their right. Man holds his partner's hands, facing her, stretches arms out at shoulder level, continues to dance, circling to the right, moving arms up

and down in winglike movement. Then circle to left. Man's right hand releases girl's left and girl turns right under his left arm and then left. Partners lock right elbows and circle clockwise, then lock left elbows and circle counter-clockwise. Couples break away, man moves away from girl, while girl dances, holding her hands clenched on her hips. The man does same; however, as he approaches his partner she stretches out her hands toward him as if to take him by his hands and as he stretches out his hands towards her, she teasingly rejects him by quickly placing her hands back on her hips, and turns back to him. This figure may be repeated several times. When she does take his hands, they can turn under, back to back, and do numerous figures by holding right hands facing each other.

At this point we wish to bring out that the original line was led by a man in front and man at the end of line. When the couples were formed, it left an odd man. This man takes one of the girls away from her partner, which brings on a sort of confused situation, for now the new odd man does the same thing to somebody else. This part can be called the mixer, since change of partners takes place (the men stealing each other's girls). Couples drop off one by one until, at the end, there is only one couple remaining.

Time: 2/4

Steps: . (Quick, Quick, Slow)

- I. Feet together, spring on balls of feet, shifting weight quickly from one to the other.
 - 1 Slight spring onto ball of r. foot.
 - & Slight spring onto ball of l. foot.
 - 2 Slight spring onto ball of r. foot with slight sideward thrust of l. foot.
 - & Hold.
- Repeat above, using opposite footwork to the left.

II.

- 1 Spring sideward onto ball of r. foot.
 - & Cross l. in front of r. (weight on ball of foot.)
 - 2 Shift weight back onto r.
 - & Hold.
- Repeat, using opposite footwork to the left.

III. (Slow, Slow)

- 1 & Jump slightly to right on balls of feet, l. foot in front of r.
- 2 & Jump slightly to left on balls of feet, r. foot in front of l.

IV. Rapid succession of short kicks, straight forward in place and slightly off the ground. (Two kicks per beat)

- 1 Forward r., forward l.
 - & Forward r., forward l.
 - 2 Forward r., forward l.
 - & Forward r., hold.
- Repeat, starting on the l. foot.

V. Step lifts

- 1 Forward r. in front of l.
- & Raise l. ankle to r. calf, lifting r. heel off the ground.
- 2 Forward l. in front of r.
- & Raise r. ankle to l. calf, lifting l. heel off the ground.
- 1 Backward r. in back of l.
- & Raise l. ankle to r. calf, lifting r. heel off the ground.
- 2 Backward l. in back of r.
- & Raise r. ankle to l. calf, lifting l. heel off the ground.

Note: Step I is basic step used throughout the dance to travel, in place, turn, etc. Variations are used as long and as often as one wishes and can be performed one after the other or by interjecting basic in between each figure.

PETRIDES