

6. In basic movement to right, step r., l., r. together; l., r., l. together; step r., step l., then step r. and balance l. rhythmically as follows: S-Q-Q, S-Q-Q, S-Q, etc.

PETRIDES

## TSIFTE TELLI\*

(*Kelikos Horos*)

The dance is performed either by couples or singly. The name means two strings which is in fact the trademark of the dance. One of the stringed instruments, usually the *ud* (a deep pot-bellied lute) or a guitar, etc., is plucked on only two strings when introducing or accenting the rhythm. The drum (usually a finger drum of an hour-glass shape) also accents two heavy beats: one in the center of the skin, the other closer to the rim. The lyra (the great-grandfather of the violin) or a violin, etc., is frequently played on two strings. In the Near East this is usually done in imitation of a wind instrument such as a bagpipe; the bowed instrument plays a wailing melody.

There are several different types of Tsifte Tellis. The medium slow; the one with heavy, even beats which is closer to the Arabic; another is more melodious and sounds like a rumba. There are two more, one of which sounds like a heavy Ballos and the other a light Ballos. The one that sounds like a rumba is sometimes called Syrto Tsifte Telli to describe its movement.

The origin of this dance appears to be closely connected with the worship of both Mother Earth and the Moon Goddess. At one time there were specific movements which were identified with each dance, but early in ancient times when the roles of the goddesses became confused and the role of one was superim-

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\* The above is the Greek spelling of the Turkish name for the dance, Çifte Telli. The comparative English spelling would be Chifte Telli, the ch pronounced as in the word church.

posed on the other, the dance became a potpourri of different dance movements.

The undulating movement of the body and arms depicted both the movement of snakes, in particular Ophion (in the creation myth with Mother Earth), and water, which was closely associated with the Moon Goddess, Aphrodite. The swaying body often illustrates the swaying tree, while the flowing handkerchief is a visible symbol of the wind. On occasion an undulating or rolling movement of the abdomen was used to put emphasis on the "World Egg" which was laid; and you can easily see that this was one of the dances performed at love or fertility rites; today a dance containing this movement is called a belly dance; the ancient Greek name of which was *kolia*. The abdominal movement is supposed to increase the muscle tone of the intestinal tract and womb.

This dance was not only danced as a solo by a temple priestess or groups of priestesses, but at times the priestesses were also accompanied by men and, notwithstanding what was mentioned above, the general aspect of the dancer was that of a bird—usually a swan. The swan was one of the birds which was sacred to Aphrodite or whatever name she had as moon goddess, the man also playing the role of a swan slowly becoming an eagle (Zeus' symbolic bird) until he captures his partner.

The movements of the head and neck, shaking of the shoulders and the quivering of the hips are all movements to be seen in the actions of birds (watch water birds shake water off their bodies). The swan is also known to issue forth two trumpet-like notes while in flight.

The Tsifte Telli is one of the most beautiful dances in the world and yet the steps are simple. It was and is most popular in the Eastern Mediterranean where the worship of a moon goddess remained strongest; Western Asia Minor, Syria, Phoenicia, Egypt; and besides Aphrodite would include, under one guise or another—Ashtarothe, Astarte, Ishtar and Isis. In Ionia, the dance finally degenerated to such an extent that many lascivious motions and attitudes became a part of the performance and it was these actions to which the Romans referred as

Ionic movements. These movements were also found in their dances to Dionysus.

Since the dance stems from the eastern Aegean area, it naturally contains elements of the Nésiotiko Syrto and the outstanding and characteristic step in this dance was the arch, which was inscribed, on the ground or in the air near the ground, by the free foot and leg. This circular movement was symbolic of the moon.

After losing its religious aspect the dance merely became a charm dance (Kêlēkos Horos), using every implication of the word to fit the mood of the music and the dancers—from mere fascination to seduction. As the Byzantine Empire crumbled, the Arab and Turkish conquerors fell under the sway of its superior culture, and the Muslim overlords adopted many of its arts and were especially fascinated by this dance. Most of the dancers were Christian slave girls and the dance became a harem or odalisque dance. Eventually, this dance was performed in the bazaars and cafés simulating the court and it was primarily performed by Muslim girls; for a good dancer could have both fame and fortune and perhaps find her way to the court of the Sultan or some other wealthy nobleman.

We must not forget, though, that this dance was being performed in the countryside in a simple fashion while it was becoming an art form at the court. The girl was coquettish and her partner danced with more vigor. Frequently her actions demonstrated her domestic capabilities, but one thing remained the same and does so to this day: the girl is to move as beautifully as she can.

*Characteristics:* The dancers move very liltingly. The girl's movements are gentle and refined; the man is more vigorous. The girl dances for the man and tries to tell him through mime how wonderful she is. The man likewise responds, succumbs and culminates the dance by whipping out his handkerchief and embracing her with its aid, being careful not to touch the girl.

*Formation:* The pair face each other and circle one another.

*Time:* 2/4

*Steps:* Move to right.

- 1 & Step on r.
- 2 & Tap l. foot in front of r. and circle around to the left.
  - 1 Set l. foot behind r.
  - & Side r.
  - 2 Cross l. foot in front of r.
  - & Shift weight on to r. or point l. foot.

Move to left.

- 1 & Step on l.
- 2 & Tap r. foot in front of l. and circle around to the right.
  - 1 Set r. foot behind l.
  - & Side l.
  - 2 Cross r. foot in front of l.
  - & Shift weight back on to l. or point r. foot.

General movement to right.

- 1 & Step on r.
  - 2 & Tap l. foot in front of r. and circle around to the left.
    - 1 Set l. foot behind r.
    - & Side r.
    - 2 & Cross l. foot in front of r.
- Repeat, etc.

Moving to right.

*Steps:*

- 1 & Stand on r. foot, lift up l. foot bending l. knee, lifting l. foot knee high up behind, raising up and down on r. foot.
  - 2 & Raising up and down on r. foot, swing l. leg forward and across r. leg.
    - 1 Step on l. foot across r.
    - & Step side r.
    - 2 & Step on l. across r. foot.
- Repeat, moving to the left.



The steps can be minimized so that the feet keep in ground contact and the body moves up and down slightly.

Another style of the same dance which does not have the bacarollic lilt to the music is illustrated below:

*Steps:* I

- 1 & Side r.
- 2 Cross l. over r.
- & Bring r. slightly forward of l.
- 1 & Side l.
- 2 & Bring r. next to l.

II

- 1 & Forward r.
- 2 & Forward l. slightly ahead of r., keeping weight on r.
- 1 & Back on l.
- 2 & Bring r. back slightly in front of l., keeping weight on l.

III

- 1 & Forward r.
- 2 Slightly forward l.
- & Forward r. slightly ahead of l.
- 1 & Forward l.
- 2 Slightly forward r.
- & Forward l. slightly ahead of r.

*Steps:* Balance figure

- 1 & Side r.
- 2 Cross l. over r.
- & Shift weight back on r.
- 1 & Side l.
- 2 Cross r. over l.
- & Shift weight back on l.

Double cross.

- 1 Cross r. over l.
- & Side l.
- 2 Cross r. over l.
- & Circle l. foot around r.

- 1 Cross l. over r.
- & Side r.
- 2 Cross l. over r.
- & Circle r. around l.

These steps can also be performed backwards.

Move to right. (In this step the r. foot is always forward of the l.)

- 1 Cross r. over l., move l. to right side.
- & Move r. to right and slide l. to right side.
- 2 Repeat 1
- & Repeat &

(The dance is performed with the weight of the heel on the foot that is in front and on the toe of the foot that is behind.)

To change direction:

- 1 Cross r. over l. move l. to right side.
- & Move r. to right and slide l. to right side.
- 2 Cross r. over l. move l. to right side.
- & Step side right and carrying l. foot with it lightly off ground.

Now l. foot stays in front.

- 1 Cross l. over r., move r. to left side.
- & Move l. to left side and slide r. to left side.
- 2 Repeat 1
- & Repeat &

These steps can be done a number of times before changing direction. Sometimes direction is not changed.

There are many more steps, and much is left to the individual ability of the dancers: twists, turns, back bends, etc. The hands are moved gracefully throughout the whole dance with an undulating movement of the hips.

The steps of the two styles are frequently intermingled.

*RETRO*