

BÁLLOS

(Aegean Islands - Greece)


Source: The Bállos (BAH-lohs) is a cpl dance from the islands of Greece.

The name of the dance is supposed to derive from the word "vallízo," to dance alone. The style of the dance varies depending on the location. Some Bállos are very smooth and lifting in style, while others are quick, almost bouncy with small steps. The variations are similar however. The dance is completely improvisational. The step variations I am presenting are from the islands of the Aegean.

Bibliography: Elliniki Hori, V. Papahristos (Athens, 1960).

VI-Folk Dances of the Greeks, T. Petrides (New York, 1961).

Greek Folk Dances, M. Vouras & R. Holden (New Jersey, 1965).

Music: 2/4 meter 

Any Bállos can be used if it is of the right tempo and style of the

Aegean. Some available recordings are:

Songs and Dances of Aegean Sea, Lyra LP 3216

Folkraft LP-3




Concerto for Bouzouki Vol. II (Alecter)

Picnic in Greece LP OL-24-13

Formation: The Bállos usually begins with a Nisiótiko Syrtó (Sylivrianós); the formation would be an open circle with hands joined at shoulder height with elbows down. Later, the line breaks into cpls facing each other. The M and the W should not be too far from one another (approximately four feet). It is really artificial to have cpls in a large circle. A more ethnic formation would be for each cpl to be located anywhere they please on the dance floor. Some cpls may dance in the ctr of the floor; others in the corners, etc.

Characteristics: The Bállos is a happy and flirtatious dance. There should be lots of communication between the partners, especially since the steps are improvisational. The styling should be very smooth, and the steps should not be too large.

Meas cts The very free-style Nisiótikos Syrtós (Sylivrianós) is usually done as an introduction to the Bállos. M is to the R of his ptr in the line.

I  Facing R, step fwd on the R ft (LOD).
 Take a small step fwd on the L ft.
 Take a small step fwd on the R ft.

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Continued...

BÁLLOS (continued)

- II ♪ Step fwd on the L ft.
 ♪ Take a small step fwd on the R ft.
 ♪ Take a small step fwd on the L ft.
 III. ♪ Step fwd on the R ft.
 ♪ Take a small step fwd on the L ft.
 ♪ Take a small step fwd on the R ft.
 IV. ♪ Step bkwd (RLOD) on the L ft.
 ♪ Step in place next to L on R ft.
 ♪ Step in place on L ft.

NOTE: The first, or slow, step on each meas may have a slight, gliding dip of the leg holding wt as you step fwd. The steps used in meas I-IV are used when the line breaks up into cpls.

The cpl steps of the Bálos may be described as being of three different types, according to Papahristos: the "Promenade," the crossing steps, and the sdwd steps. Usually the dancers use opp ftwork; thus, if the M begins with the L ft, the W will begin with the R ft. Although the Greeks don't always do this, I will describe the dance steps as done by the M; the W would do the opp ftwork.

In order to get from the Syrtós variation, it is necessary for the M to change wt so that he may do the dance with opp ftwork. One way of doing this is:

Dropping hands, the M does the Syrtós step in a small circle (LOD) so that he will end either facing his ptr, or standing next to her on her L. In meas IV, he should take two steps in place:

- IV ♪ Step in place on the L ft.
 ♪ Step in place on the R ft.

L. PROMENADE VARIATION

The M holds the W's L hand in his R. Their free hands are on their hips. As a cpl, the basic syrtós step is done. If desired, all or part of meas I-III may be repeated before doing meas IV of the syrtós.

II. PROMENADE (Woman backwards)

The M does the basic syrtós step with his R extended straight out to his side. The W, facing the M's arm (she is slightly to his R), does the basic syrtós step bkwd (away from him).

III. PROMENADE (Woman turns)

The M and W do the promenade with the W moving bkwd. On meas IV of the syrtós step, the W does a three-step turn to her L beginning with her L ft; she ends facing the M's arm again.

Continued...

BALLOS (continued)IV. PROMENADE (Man alternates with woman moving backward)

The cpl does the promenade with the W moving bkwd for two measures. At this point, the M pivot turns 1/2 to his R so that he is moving bkwd in the same direction he had been facing; he extends his L arm. At the same time, the W pivot turns 1/2 to her R so that she is moving fwd twd the M in the same direction she had been travelling. The cpl travels two meas and again turns to end in the beginning pos. (M turns 1/2 to his L, W 1/2 to her L.)

V. COUPLE FACE TO FACE

(Woman opp ftwork)

I Facing ptr, M steps sdwd to L on L ft.

Step across in front of L on R ft.

Step back in place on L ft.

II Step sdwd to R on R ft.

Step across in front of R on L ft.

Step back in place on R ft.

If the M and W are doing the variation with opp ftwork, they will be moving in the same direction simultaneously. They may both do the step with the same ftwork in which case they will be moving in opp directions.

Note: In meas II either ptr may do a three-step turn, ending to face ptr again.

VI. COUPLE FACE TO FACE (Man crosses over and back)

The W does variation V. The M does meas I and II of the syrto twd her, passing her on his R shoulder. He then does two meas of the syrto bkwd to return to place. If the M wishes, he may make a "do-si-do" of this step and return passing the W on his L.

VII. COUPLE FACE TO FACE (Sideways step)

(W with opp ftwork, but moving in same direction as M.)

I M steps sdwd to L on L ft.

Step on R ft next to and slightly behind the L (the instep of R ft is near the heel of the L).

Step sdwd to L on L ft.

II Step on R ft next to and slightly behind the L (the instep of R ft is near the heel of the L).

Step sdwd to L on L ft.

Step on R ft next to and slightly behind the L (the instep of R ft is near the heel of the L).

III Repeat meas I.

IV Step on R ft next to and slightly behind the L (the instep of R ft is near the heel of the L) leaving some wt on the L ft, slightly bend both knees.

Pushing off with the R ft, leap sdwd to the L on the L ft.

Leap across in front of L ft on the R ft.

BALLOS (continued)

During this variation (and the others) the M may put his free hands on his hips, behind his back, or he may do the following: Part of the M's costume is a kerchief that is often worn around the neck. The M may hold the kerchief by the two corners with his hands near his shoulders (the kerchief passes behind his neck). The M also may hold his arms out to the side at shoulder height.

As I mentioned above, the dance is improvisational. These steps are very typical of the types of variations that are done. They are not done in any particular order. Often only one cpl breaks off and does variations. You may do any or all of the variations in any order you wish. For learning purposes we might do the basic Nisiótikos Syrtós step four or eight times through. Then we might do each of the above variations four times each. Remember that this is a happy, flirtatious, and improvisational dance. If you tend to emphasis PATTERN over creativity, you will lose the joyous spontaneity of the dance.

Presented by John Pappas

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VI. COUPLE FACE TO FACE (Man crosses over and back)

The W does variation V. The M does mens I and II of the syrtós two her, passing her on his R shoulder. He then does two mens of the syrtós two her to return to place. If the M wishes, he may make a "do-si-do" of this step and return passing the W on his L.

VII. COUPLE FACE TO FACE (Sideways step)

(W with opp ftwork, but moving in same direction as M.)
 I M steps sdbw to L on L ft.
 Step on R ft next to and slightly behind the L (the instep of R ft is near the heel of the L).
 Step sdbw to L on L ft.
 II Step on R ft next to and slightly behind the L (the instep of R ft is near the heel of the L).
 Step sdbw to L on L ft.
 III Step on R ft next to and slightly behind the L (the instep of R ft is near the heel of the L).
 IV Repeat mens I.
 Step on R ft next to and slightly behind the L (the instep of R ft is near the heel of the L) leaving some wt on the L ft, slightly bend both knees.
 Pushing off with the R ft, leap sdbw to the L on the L ft.
 Leap across.

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