

# Karagouna

Origin: Thessaly, Greece

Record:

Formation: Open circle, mixed line, W or V hand hold

Source: Joseph Kaloyanides Graziosi

Note: The "Karagouna" is one of the most widely known folk dances of Greece. Standardized by physical education teachers for quite some time, it is part of the basic repertoire of most amateur dance troupes in Greece and of many folk dance clubs throughout the world. The name "Karagouna" is the feminine form of an ethnic appellation for the Greek peasant population of the western Thessalian plain centered around the town of Kardhitsa. Interestingly, the term "Karagounis" is also used for an Arvanito-Vlach people, formerly nomadic shepherds, who live in the mountains of Aetolo-Acarmania. However, the relationship between these two different peoples is unclear. Also unclear, is the etymology of the word itself. More than likely, "Kara" is the Turkish word meaning "black" while "guna/gunis" is probably related to the Greek word "ghuna" meaning "fur" of either Slav or Celtic origin. As danced in the Karagouniko villages, the "Karagouna" is a simple dance in which the leader continuously improvises (performing double steps, squats, brush steps, balance steps, syncopations, etc. while the dance lines, depending on local tradition, performs either a "Sta Trial" (6 steps), a "Sta Tria" with an extra pair of touch-steps (see Karagouniko below) or more often, just a series of walking steps. What follows below are various "figures" drawn from the standard school choreographies and the repertoire of the Laographikos Omilos of New York City (whose director, Paul Ginis, is a Karagounis from Thessaly).

Meter: 2/4

Style:

16 Meas. introduction

## FIGURE 1 "KARAGOUNIKO"

Meas.

- 1 Facing slightly R of ctr; Step R fwd LOD (ct 1); Step L fwd across in front of R (2).
- 2 Step R fwd (1); Touch L in front of R (2).
- 3 Step L back into place (1); Touch R in front of L (2).
- 4 Touch R diag back to the side right (1); Touch R in front of L (2)

## FIGURE 2 ROCK SIDE

- 1 Step R fwd LOD (1); Step L fwd across in front of R (2).
- 2 Step R fwd (1), Rock back onto L (&); Rock back onto R (2).
- 3 Step L fwd across in front of R (1); Step R fwd (2).
- 4 Touch L in front of R (1); Step L back into place(2), Lift R slightly up (&).

## FIGURE 3 SIDE TOGETHER

- 1 \_Pivoting to face ctr, Step R sideways right (1); Close step L next to R (2).
- 2-4 Repeat 3X.

## FIGURE 4 BRUSH STEP

- 1 Feet tog, facing ctr; Lifting R slightly up & back brush R next to L & swing fwd (1); slightly bounce on L (2), Repeat bounce (&).
- 2 Step R over & across L to the left (1); Step L behind across & close next to R, no wt. (2).
- 3-4 Repeat Meas 1-2 above, opp ftwk and direction.

FIGURE 5 "VLACHA KONITSIS"

- 1 Facing slightly R of ctr: Step R fwd (1); Step L fwd across in front of R (2).
- 2 Pivoting to face ctr, Step R sideways to right (1); Step L behind & in back of R (2), Step & rock onto R slightly to the left (&).
- 3 Step L sideways left (slightly fwd to circle line) (1); Touch R diag back (2).
- 4 Touch R in front of L (1); Touch R diag back to right (2).

FIGURE 6 KOUTSO

- 1 Facing slightly R of ctr: Step R fwd LOD (1); Step L fwd across in front of R (2).
- 2 Step R (bal on balls of ft) next to but behind L (&), Pushing off from R, Step L fwd (1); Step R fwd (2).
- 3 Touch L in front of R (1); Step L back into place (2).
- 4 Touch R diag back to right (1); Touch R in front of L (2).

FIGURE 7 STAVROTA

- 1 Facing ctr: Step & rock onto R across in front of L (1); Step L sideways left (2), Step R slightly back (&).
- 2 Repeat Meas 1, opp ftwk, opp direction.
- 3-4 Repeat Meas 1-2.

NOTE: The musical phrases are 4 Meas (8 cts), so the various figures are choreographed to the musical changes, with figures 1,2, 5, 6 associated with the main melodic phrases and figures 3,4,7 associated with the refrain. If an upbeat "Syrto" phrase is inserted into the music then a Kalamatianos is danced during the duration.