



## Orpheus Hellenic Folklore Society trip to Greece a success

The Glenview-based Orpheus Hellenic Folklore Society recently made its third trip to Greece since its inception in 1989. This summer, approximately 200 Orpheus members and their families visited the Peloponnese, specifically the city of Kalamata. Highlights included three successful dance and choral performances, meetings and workshops with local officials and dance groups, as well as several excursions around the Kalamata vicinity.

Accompanying the Orpheus dance troupe were members of the Chicago Hellenic Choir, directed by Eftihia Papageorgiou. For over two years, Orpheus has been working with Papageorgiou, practicing and presenting a variety of traditional and modern Greek songs, adding another dimension to the dance troupe. Selections included "Gerakina", "Thalassaki Mou" and "Tora Pou Pas Stin Ksenitia" performed to live music, courtesy of Papageorgiou and the Orpheus music ensemble.

The troupe's first performance was in the town of Finikounda. On their way to the beach side venue, the performers marched through the streets singing a traditional Greek song, "Eis Ton Afro Tis Thalassas" as onlookers applauded, cheered and sang along. Mr. Michelis, Mayor of Methoni and Deputy Mayor, Mr. Kourvelas were present for the performance. The crowd enjoyed the lively, animated performance while Mayor Michelis congratulated the troupe on their efforts in preserving Greek culture and traditions abroad.

Another performance was given in Ancient Messini, in the village of Mavrommati. Besides the energetic singing and dancing, members of the troupe gave insightful and moving speeches about what this experience meant to them. Many of the dancers, particularly the younger ones, commented that this trip was exceptionally meaningful to them. Not



Members of the Orpheus Youth Group perform at Finikounta Beach in Messinia, Greece during their weekly tour of the area during the last week of July.

only were they first-time visitors to a country with such a remarkable history, magnificent scenery and centuries old traditions and culture, but more importantly it was an opportunity to proudly give a dynamic, traditional performance in the birthplace of their grandparents and parents. Mr. Demetrios Kouvelakis, President of the Cultural Association "I Arxaia Messini", expressed similar sentiments as Mayor Michelis, and thanked Orpheus for participating in "Ithomaia 2007", their annual festival.

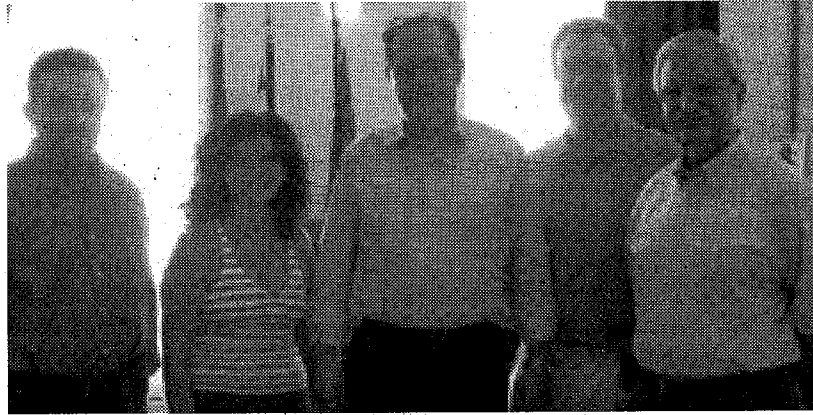
The last, and perhaps most remarkable, performance took place in Kalamata, at the famous Kastro Amphitheater. At the conclusion of the performance, the troupe received a standing ovation from the audience, who was impressed with the professional, enthusiastic, and moving production. Afterwards, the Mayor's office hosted a generous reception for Orpheus, their families and friends.

Members of the Kalamata Branch of the Lykeion Dance Group met with Orpheus for several workshop sessions. In addition to demonstrating variations on the traditional Peloponnese dances, *Kalamatianos* and *Tsamikos*, Director Tasos Mihos also taught the troupe some local

songs to accompany the dances. Likewise, Agis Tsakalagos introduced versions of the popular *Tsamikos* dance, along with *Sygarhistos* from Thrace. Representing material from Kalimnos, Anna Mavrou expertly exhibited traditional dances from this island. Along with Nikos Petroulias, Ms. Mavrou also conducted youth group dance sessions. The Lykeio instructors commented on Orpheus' strong and extensive dance skills, and

how organized and disciplined the group was, especially with so many younger members.

Orpheus President Yannis Economou and Youth Group Coordinator Bessie Grosso were invited to City Hall to meet with the Mayor of Kalamata, Mr. Panayiotis Nikas and Deputy Mayor Mr. Theofanis Kleidonas. Also present was ex-Vice President of S.A.E. of North and South America, Mr. Christos Tomaras.



At the mayor's office in the city of Kalamata. Pictured from left are: Deputy mayor Mpsanidis, Orpheus Youth Coordinator Bessie Grosso, Mayor of Kalamata Panagiotis Nikas, Orpheus director Yannis Economou and Christos Tomaras, ex-vice president of SAE of America.



Members of the Orpheus Dance Troupe attended dance workshops hosted by the Lykeio of Greek Women in Kalamata, Greece during their weekly tour of the area. Pictured in the middle, seating, is Tasos Mihos, director of the Lykeio dance group, who conducted some of the workshop sessions.

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By Maria A.

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