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The Newsletter for friends and members of OHFS
Vol. 5, Issue No. 3, Summer 1999

Orpheus Youth Group Debuts at Skokie Festival of Cultures!

The Orpheus Hellenic Society is moving forward into the future with the growing presence of its Orpheus Youth Group! The first group of young Greek dancers made their debut at the Skokie Festival of Cultures on a warm and sunny Saturday, May 22, and demonstrated remarkable poise and youthful spirit in their first public dance performance!

There was much excitement in the dressing rooms as the young dancers donned their costumes and were assisted by veteran members of the OHFS. "I'm so nervous, but excited, too!" confessed Genevieve Theodorakis with a smile as she tucked her hair into the hat of her *Gida* costume. Across the hall from the girls, the guys were proudly showing off their new Epirotan costumes (handmade by Mrs. Dina Sianis) while they practiced *Tsamiko* kicks and other *figoures* (variations).

As Orpheus youth instructors Christina Pagones and Alexander Kapotas cheered them on from the sidelines, the young dancers performed a series of dances from mainland Greece, including *Tsourapia* and *Bella Olympio* from Macedonia. The young men also performed the popular *Tsamikos* while the girls took their turn with *Dimitroula*, a Macedonian dance usually performed by women.

The youth group joined the Orpheus Dance Troupe for the last dance, *Zonarathikos*, and it was heartwarming to see the mix of youth and adult dancers carrying on the folk traditions of their Hellenic heritage. "The formation of the Orpheus Youth Group is vital to the perpetuation and preservation of our folk culture and traditions," commented John Economou, OHFS director. "We must expose our young people to elements of our Greek culture to strengthen our community and take it into the future generation." Added youth instructor Christina Pagones, "The youth group has shown such enthusiasm from the very first dance lesson, and I'm so proud to see them performing today! They did a great job, and we're looking forward to the summer session and the addition of many new students next year!" ☐

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The Orpheus Youth Group at their first performance.



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Orpheus Youth Group Summer Session

Due to popular demand, the Orpheus Youth Group dance sessions are continuing into the summer! The 8-week Summer Session will begin on June 17 and run through August 5. In addition to dances from the Greek mainland, various island dances will be incorporated into the young dancers' repertoire. Come join the fun on Thursday nights from 6:15-7:15 by registering at (847) 251-0856.

Two Sites for Orpheus Youth Group 1999-2000

Plans are also underway for the Orpheus Youth Group 1999-2000 classes! The Greek community has



Youth Group dancing the Tsamiko.

responded to our youth program with overwhelming enthusiasm and support. In the coming year, the OHFS will be offering dance classes for our youth at two locations: the original site at River Park in Chicago

and in Glenview, at the New Church. All parents of the community are encouraged to register their youngsters ages 10-14 to learn more about our Hellenic culture through folk dance! ☐

Orpheus Youth Group Branch in Glenview!

The Orpheus Hellenic Folklore Society is pleased to announce the expansion of its Youth Group program with the establishment of a second branch in Glenview, Illinois. The new branch will be launched during the upcoming fall season and

classes will be held every Saturday, 1:15-2:15 p.m., at the multipurpose room of the New Church, 74 Park Drive in Glenview. The new and spacious facility is located one block west of the intersection of Glenview and Shermer Roads. Classes will

start on Saturday, September 18, 1999 and will conclude on May 27, 2000. A total of 32 dance sessions have been tentatively scheduled during this period.

The North Shore branch was established in response to an increased demand by residents of the surrounding areas who were unable to commute to the city. This will provide the opportunity for many more young Greek Americans to become part of the OHFS family and enjoy the high quality instruction of Greek folk dances, history and tradition in a friendly and organized environment. The Chicago branch will continue its operation at its current location at River Park, where classes are held every Thursday from 6:15-7:15 p.m. The OHFS is very excited about this new opportunity to reach an even larger part of the community. Come join us!

For registration information, schedules and fees, please call (847) 251-0856 or contact us at www.ohfs.org ☐



Orpheus Youth Group before their performance at the Skokie Festival of Cultures.

Teaching Folk Dance

by Charles Kyriacou

Let us first admit from the start that many people do not consider 'folk dance' as a serious or even worthwhile endeavor. There are elements in modern society that consider folk dance 'primitive,' having been created by and for the 'peasants,' and not worthy of the allocation of scarce resources. Some of the reasons are that folk dance did not originate in the theater and its purpose was not to entertain an audience but rather to serve a set of functions within a rural society of the past. Many modern urbanites seem to believe that the fact it served a rural society exempts folk dances from being able to serve them in any meaningful manner. In addition, the quality of a majority of folk dance performances compared to other theatrical dance presentations is considered by many today as substandard.

The practice of dancing the folk dances of a past culture must also serve some purpose for those in the present if they are to perpetuate these dances. The three main functions of folk dance in the village are social

interaction as part of the structured life of the villager, enjoyment leading to dance ecstasy, and catharsis.

To enable the preservation of Greek folk dance and culture, it must serve a function for the modern-day participants of the dance as well. Folk dance serves a similar function in urban society as it has done, and sometimes still does, in the village for both Greek urbanites as well as Greek immigrants in their dinner-dances and festivals as social interaction and as a means of bringing their Greek youth together in a Hellenic setting to meet each other. Young people's opportunities in the village before the turn of the century to meet other youth and make choices about potential mates were concentrated at the village festival. But living in an urban environment or the Diaspora, Greek youth have other opportunities to meet young people within and without their own ethnicity.

The physical enjoyment of moving to beautiful music is still served, but the functions of dance ecstasy and catharsis seem to be weakly served and could be enhanced if people

learned to express themselves freely in the dance. Those who have learned the dance in their own village setting over a prolonged period of time naturally absorbed the step, style and context of the dance. The rest of us are at a severe disadvantage.

The two main components necessary to teaching folk dance, in general, are steps and style. A third component important to understanding folk dance is the context: who created the dance, on what occasion is the dance done, what customs and traditions surround the occasion of the dance? In addition, dance groups come face-to-face with one of the most irascible questions in folk dance that tends to cloud and strain the impetus to teach context, the question of authenticity versus entertainment value. Most dance groups aspire both to entertain and preserve culture with their performances. How much 'artistic license' should be used to change the dances to overcome the monotony that an uninitiated audience experiences when it observes folk dance; dances that in the village context are danced for hours and have the purpose of creating hypnotic, cathartic and socializing functions for villagers that the audience cannot possibly experience if they are not part of the 'event'?

I believe Professor Alkis Raftis (1992) has expressed his yearning for a higher quality of [folk dance] performance vehicle in this way:

"This question around authenticity is important because it demonstrates, at least in words, a sensitivity of the dance groups for the preservation of dance in this original form." □

Editor's Note: This article was condensed from the original first published in *I didaskalia to horou (Teaching Dance). Proceedings of the 7th International Conference on Dance Research, Portaria, July 7-11, 1993*, International Organization of Folk Arts, Athens, 1993.



Practice session, Panegyri 1996, St. Louis, Missouri.

Metsovo Society Dinner Dance

The Orpheus Dance Troupe has performed at many dinner dances hosted by local Greek American organizations whose members originate from a particular region or village of Greece. When Mr. Dino Vadevoulis, president of the Metsovion Cultural Association, invited the Troupe to perform at the organization's first annual dinner dance, he made an interesting proposition: the dance presentation would include not only dances from the village of Metsovo but, through his contacts, authentic costumes from Metsovo would be transported from Greece for the Troupe members to wear during their performance.

From that moment the Orpheus Dance Troupe went on a Metsovo red alert! The Troupe began to pull together music and tapes of Metsovo dances from the OHFS collection. Just last October, during the North American Dance Conference in Montreal, Quebec, the Troupe had learned a suite of dances from Metsovo, taught by Dimitri Tzortzis. In addition, during the events commemorating Greek Independence



Orpheus Dance Troupe with Mr. Dino Vadevoulis (center).

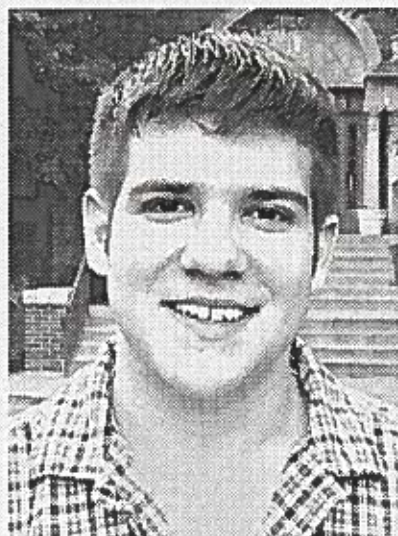
Day in Chicago, the dance group of the cultural association "Krystalli" of Epirus, Greece, performed an expanded repertoire of dances from that region. During their stay, members of the group generously demonstrated the appropriate style and presentation of the dances of Metsovo and the entire Epirotan region in general to OHFS.

Jim Stoyhoff, Chicago's renowned clarinet player who has accompanied

the Orpheus Dance Troupe in several appearances, loaned OHFS a high quality audio tape with dances from Metsovo from his personal collection, as well as a videotape filmed in Metsovo, which included locals performing their dances. This material was an invaluable resource in understanding the authentic style and steps of their dances from Metsovo.

Just a couple of days before the performance, the costumes arrived

spotlight on Orpheus dancer...



Antonis Giannopoulos

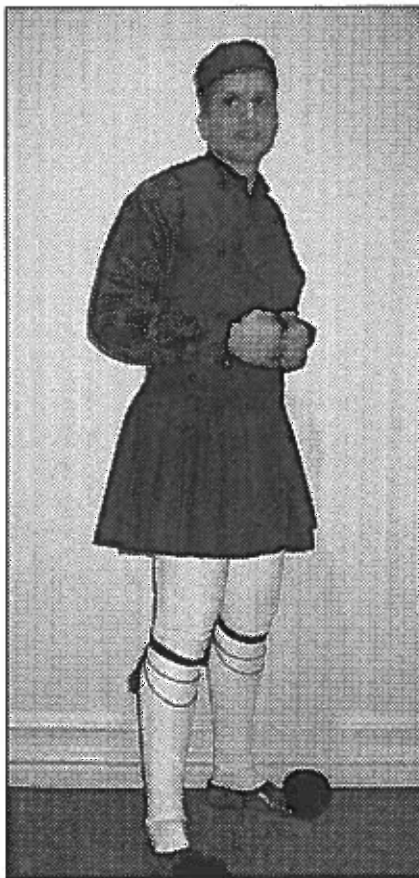
Name:
Antonis Vasilius Giannopoulos

Hometown:
Elmwood Park, IL

Parents/Family From:
Father: Kardama, a village near Pyrgo
Mother: Vahlia, a little town in the mountains near Tripoli

Occupation:
Student at Fenwick High School

Years Dancing with OHFS:
1-1/2 yrs



Examples of male and female Metsovo costumes.

in Chicago. Their beauty, workmanship and colors were astonishing! In order to accommodate additional Troupe members, costumes from the

OHFS collection were also utilized. Many thanks are extended also to Dr. Michael Kontos, Eva Kontos and Nick and Elena Vranas of the Apollo Dance

Troupe who loaned the OHFS costumes from their collection to complement the male costumes from Metsovo. They all went out of their way to accommodate this request.

The debut of the new dances took place the same day during an early afternoon performance at the Skokie Festival of Cultures. Trying to coordinate three performances in one day which included the Youth Group's first performance, proved to be challenging. That day, over 60 costumes were used for all three appearances!

That night, despite being rushed onto the stage almost an hour earlier due to a scheduling change in the program, the OHFS performance at the impressive International Ballroom of the Chicago Hilton and Towers was enthusiastically received. The only disappointment was letting the beautiful Metsovo costumes go as they were returned to Greece the next day. They will be missed!

The OHFS would like to thank Mr. Dino Vadevoulis and the Metsovion Cultural Association for their gracious invitation and the trust they bestowed on local talent to be part of their affair. ☐

Thoughts on Dancing:

It's lots of fun. Through dancing I am able to express myself in a way very out of the ordinary. Plus, it's a great workout!

Favorite Dance:

There are so many dances and they are very diverse in style and step, so it is hard for me to pick just one dance. But, if I had to choose, it would have to be *Pidihtos* or *Ikariotikos*.

Most vivid OHFS memory:

I have two... 1) At the Museum of Science and Industry performance in 1998 I slipped doing the guys' *figoures* (variations) during *Pentozalis*. I would

have fallen flat on my back if it were not for me holding on to that Greek Man of Mystery, Yanni. 2) I really enjoyed the Metsovo Society dinner dance performance. It was great wearing the costumes that were brought from Greece specifically for us to wear.

Favorite Place in Greece:

I've only been to Greece once, but out of all the places I visited, Nafplio was the coolest.

Where I heard about OHFS:

I was recruited by a friend. ☐

Lyra has a new look

By now, you have all noticed *Lyra's* new look! This is the second issue to be published using a new layout. OHFS member and graphic designer Christina Kakavas was assigned the

task of re-designing the newsletter to give it an updated look.



"I was striving for a layout which would reflect the creativity of our dance group," Christina commented; she also intends for the *Lyra* to express the youthful and innovative direction of the OHFS.

A varied selection of layouts was presented to the newsletter committee before this particular format was finally chosen. In addition to the new *Lyra* logo on the front page, other changes in the new format include the use of more photographs and graphics, a new section for anecdotal stories written by members of the troupe, an expanded personals sec-

tion and a new layout for the spotlight dancer segment. Also, the newsletter itself has been expanded, with extra pages added to accommodate these changes and allow for more information in each issue!

Through Christina's efforts and the work of the entire newsletter editorial staff (always busily working behind the scenes), the *Lyra* will continue to provide updated news from the Orpheus Dance Troupe and its members, as well as educational information on Greek folk dance and the rich traditions of our Hellenic culture. We hope you enjoy our new look! ☐

Orpheus Debuts in Michigan

The OHFS paid its first visit to the state of Michigan by performing at the St. Demetrios Church Festival in Saginaw. The three day trip included five performances which consisted of dance suites from the Greek mainland and islands, incorporating two sets of costumes.

The St. Demetrios Church was founded in 1937 and is currently located on a spacious 22 acre piece of land that is ideal for hosting an outdoor festival. The festival's program offered a steady stream of entertainment provided by the five participating dance troupes. In addition to the OHFS, three local church groups and the Glendi Dancers from Detroit performed. This was not the first time the Orpheus Dance Troupe has performed with the Detroit group. The Glendi Dancers have previously visited Chicago during past Diocese dance conferences as well as various local affairs.

The main area of the festival grounds had a raised stage for the dance presentations and amphitheater style seating was arranged in front of the stage. The crowds attending the festival were huge.

According to organizers, the St. Demetrios festival is the largest Greek church festival in the state! Excellent organization and planning, ample space, homemade quality food, and a warm spirit have definitely contributed to the festival's popularity!

The OHFS would like to thank the festival committee and the commu-

nity of St. Demetrios for their warm reception and hospitality. Many thanks also to Mrs. Soula Economou who made all the necessary arrangements for the Troupe's participation, and our gratitude is extended particularly to the members of the local dance groups for attending to our needs and providing us with fond memories! Hopefully, we will see you again next year! ☐



Members of participating dance groups at Saginaw, Michigan.

OHFS Anecdotes

By John Economou

It was the summer of 1991. The Orpheus Dance Troupe was preparing for a series of performances during the annual Pan-Macedonian Convention. For the first time in its short history, the Troupe's performance would be accompanied by live music from artists who were coming directly from Greece.

George Melikis, a renowned ethnographer and Greek folk music researcher, was leading an extremely talented group of musicians, each of whom was skilled in playing a variety of musical instruments. It was an

amazing sight to see the musicians play first as a Macedonian ensemble utilizing the gaeda (bagpipe), daouli (drum) and zourna (wind instrument), then transform into a Greek island musical group by switching to the violin, lute and toubeleki (small drum), and then go back to mainland Greece by playing Epirotan tunes with the clarinet, lute, violin and defi (tambourine)!

The setting was Daley Plaza in downtown Chicago where the Orpheus Dance Troupe was performing an hour long program as part of the "Under the Picasso" series sponsored by the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs. During the dance of *Zonaradikos*, as

the Troupe was circling around the raised stage, two female members somehow disappeared, falling off of the stage! The rest of the dancers quickly closed up the circle while their two fallen dancers were left at the bottom of the stage, stunned and luckily unhurt. Despite the original shock, as the circle came around the stage again, the two unfortunate dancers discreetly joined the line and completed the dance!

Needless to say, everyone was particularly careful with their footing for the remainder of the program. It was an experience that, after the initial shock was shaken off, was part of many subsequent jokes and laughs. ☐

personals

Evangelia and Elias Pagones have a new baby sister! 8 lbs. 2 oz. Kyriaki Ioanna was born on May 23rd to Andy and Mary Pagones. Congratulations! *Na sas zisi!*

Orpheus member Joan Kakos will wed Nick Christofer on Sunday, July 11th. Joan, a member of Orpheus for many years, will be moving to California where Nick is finishing law school. Best wishes to them both!

Alexander Kapotas will be joining the Orthodox Christian Mission Center's team to Guatemala City this summer. The team will be doing outreach to the 150+ orphans at the Orthodox Christian orphanage, as well as structure repairs.

Dr. Angie Beltsos proudly announces a scholarship endowment which has been initiated in her parents' name. The Nicholas J. and Katherine Beltsos Scholarship will be awarded to any Eastern Michigan University student of Hellenic heritage and is renewable every year. If any student is interested in attending EMU, please inquire about this exciting opportunity with the school.

Antonis Giannopoulos was selected to attend a 3-week liberal arts study program this summer at the University of Rethymno, Crete. This program, which is open to all high school students of Hellenic descent worldwide, is sponsored by the Greek government, which selects the students on the basis of scholarship and character. Good luck, Antonis — make us proud!

New jobs: Congratulations to Harilaos Georgakopoulos on his new position with Motorola. Kiki Kakavas will be joining Cook County Hospital, and Christina Rigas will be working at Thresholds, a psychiatric rehabilitation center. Best of luck!



Namesday greetings: Patty Panagakis, Peter Panagakis, Patty Pappas, Marianna Keenan, Marianna Kaltsa, Sherry Dagrizikos, and Maria Seretis on August 15th; Alexander Kapotas on August 30th; Voula Drougas on September 14th; Sophia Sianis and Sophia Tsipianitis on September 17th.



Birthday wishes: Jim Thanopoulos on July 3rd, Kathy Tomaras on July 14th; Christina Kakavas on August 15th; Melpo Katsaros on August 21st, Peter Panagakis on September 2nd, and Alexander Kapotas on September 29th.

New members who have joined the ranks of OHFS this year: Ioanna Antonopoulos, Athanasios Arvanitis, Emmanuel Bistas, Eftychia Gouvas, Marianna Kaltsa, Stavroula Kardasis, Frank Kopanis, Athanasia Kyriakakos, Eleni Makris, Demetra Moustakis, Larissa Rolley, Betina Roussos, and Noreen Yonkoff. New Youth Group members include: Colleen Kelly, Emma Keenan, Eleni Press, and Sarah Press. Welcome to our family and good luck!!! ☐

performance schedule

Lincolnwood Ethnic Festival

Lincolnwood, IL
Saturday, July 10
4:00 pm

St. Haralambos Summer Festival

Niles, IL
Saturday & Sunday, July 17 & 18
8:00 pm both nights

Patriarch of Damascus Dinner Reception (Antiochian Diocese Dinner Dance)

Hyatt Hotel - Chicago, IL
Thursday, July 22 * see note
8:00 pm

St. John's Festival

Des Plaines, IL
Sunday, August 22
8:00 pm

Greek Town Festival

Halsted Street - Chicago, IL
Sunday, August 29
8:30 pm

Chicago Summer Dance

Grant Park - Chicago, IL
Thursday, September 9
6:00 - 9:00 pm

Christmas Around the World

Museum of Science & Industry - Chicago, IL
December 1999 (TBD)

* Practice will be held on Wednesday, July 21, due to the performance on Thursday, July 22 at the Hyatt. Please mark your calendars!

Performance schedule and times are subject to change. For the latest information visit <http://www.ohfs.org>.

Practice Schedule

Orpheus Youth Group:

6:15 p.m. - 7:15 p.m.

Beginner/Intermediate:

6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Intermediate/Advanced:

7:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Every Thursday at:

River Park Field House
5100 N. Francisco
Chicago, IL
312.742.7516

Youth Group: Dancers ages 10-14.

Beginners: Members with little or no previous dance experience.

Intermediate: Dancers who have shown progress in the beginners' class attend the last hour of practice. At the discretion of the instructors, the intermediate level dancers will be practicing in a separate line.

All dancers, especially beginners, are encouraged to obtain a personal tape of the music used for performances, in order to practice on one's own and become accustomed to the music. Please provide John or Kostas Economou with a blank cassette tape.

Submissions for the Fall issue of *Lyra* will be accepted until September 15, 1999. We are always interested in educational essays/articles dealing with the subjects of Greek folk dance, folk music, and folk traditions. We continue to accept personal announcements and all other submissions pertinent to the dance troupe and its membership. If an individual wishes to contribute material on a continuous basis, please inform the Editor.



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