

# OHFS Prepares for 1999!

## INSIDE

*OHFS Prepares for 1999* ..... 1  
*Letter to the Editor*..... 2  
*Costume Donors*..... 2  
*Educational Article: "The Eptanisa"* ..... 2  
*OHFS Second Vasilopita* ..... 3  
*Performance Schedule* ..... 4  
*Practice Schedule* ..... 4



Happy New Year everyone! Now that the holiday events have subsided and the snow on the streets is clearing out, the planning for 1999 has started for OHFS and its members.

The expansion of the Dance Troupe's repertoire, the continued improvement of OHFS's newsletter and website, the promotion of the Orpheus Youth Group, the search for challenging venues for the Orpheus Dance Troupe, the purchase of new costumes, the enrichment of OHFS's educational resources and their best utilization in order to serve its mission are some of the goals for this year.

The success that OHFS enjoyed during its 10<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary Benefit last November will without a doubt be of assistance in the implementation of the above programs. A big heartfelt Thank You goes to all of the OHFS supporters that made November 6, 1998 probably the most memorable night in its history! In addition to the ever critical financial support that OHFS received from the community, its members received a vote of confidence for their accomplishments and a big morale boost for their future endeavors.

The OHFS display at the James Thompson Center two weeks prior to the Benefit was well received and all flyers and newsletters

were taken by onlookers passing through the lobby of this downtown landmark. The display featured posters, photographs, costume pieces and books related to Greek folk traditions. Many thanks to Pat Michalski, assistant to the governor for ethnic affairs, for her assistance.

A new Board of Directors will be installed in February for the 1999-2000 period. The Board oversees the daily operation of the organization and has a two-year limit. Eligible to participate is any Orpheus member willing to undertake and be committed to carrying out the organization's tasks.

The continued success of OHFS' public service will not be realized in its entirety unless the Greek American community and particularly its younger members take advantage of the quality programs that have been developed over these last ten years. It is equally important that the Greek American family, as a unit, prepares and encourages its children to join such endeavors. Today's youth is occupied with a variety of extra curricular activities such as sports, music, scouts or clubs. Spare time, even for middle or high school students, has become a premium and along with their parents they are struggling to make the right choices for investing that time as constructively as possible. Not only do OHFS programs offer many of the benefits that other activities do, but they also offer the Hellenic dimension. The past ten years have proven that a consistent quality program can become a reality in the Greek community and that a team of dedicated young people are committed to supporting it as long as the community appreciates it and becomes part of it.

We, at OHFS thank you again for your support over the last ten years and we look forward to your encouragement and participation in our activities in the years to come.

**The following letter was received following OHFS  
10<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary Benefit:**

11-11-98

Dear John,

Even though I will be seeing you this coming Monday when the dance troupe performs for my Music of World Cultures course here at Concordia, I wanted to get a letter off to you to thank you for inviting me to the ensemble's anniversary celebration last Friday evening.

I was honored to have had such a generous invitation extended to me and looked forward to the event. I had no idea how impressive an experience I would have! Everything was done with pride and distinction and it was obvious to me why the ensemble has developed such an impressive reputation in the ten years of its existence.

I was made to feel welcome by all the troupe members who saw me as well as the musicians that performed. It was especially enjoyable to be able to see the full group dance in a space more conducive to its dances than the performance space we offer you here at Concordia. The enthusiasm and pride I noted in the audience were wonderful to be surrounded by. I certainly can empathize with their connection to culture as I am involved in performances and celebrations related to my own Scottish background and have similar feelings for our dances, food, music, family and history.

I truly appreciate having been included in such an important event for you and your group. I am grateful for the time and energy you give to the presentations the ensemble has made to my class over the past few years and hope the connection continues. I know how much my students have benefitted from what they have seen and heard each time you come. Personally, I have learned a great deal and always look forward to your visits to strengthen my understanding of Greek culture through the music and dancing. What you and your group do are a vital part of what makes Chicago a great city.

May God continue to richly bless both the members of your group and the fine work that they do. Teaching and artistry are essential to the preservation of culture.

Most sincerely,  
Jean E. Harrison  
Assistant Professor of Music Education

In addition, following are statements from guests that attended OHFS Benefit:

" Every time I watch the Orpheus Dance Troupe perform, something moves inside me. These young people have to be commended for their hard work, dedication and personal sacrifice. I am particularly happy about the overwhelming turnout from the community during this event. OHFS has represented the Greek community in an excellent fashion and I want to congratulate them for all of their efforts"

*Honorable Nicholas Zafiropoulos,  
General Consul of Greece in Chicago*

"OHFS has been the most remarkable effort in the Greek American community during the last ten years. This is the type of program that has to be supported by all. Congratulations and I am looking forward to future events from Orpheus such as this one."

*Demetris Kozonis, Chairman,  
Chicago-Athens Friendship Committee*

**A Big Thank You to our Costume Donors**

Mr. and Mrs. James Anderson  
Mr. and Mrs. Dravilas  
Greek Town Gift & Music Shop  
Mr. Demetrios Kozonis - Delko Costruaction  
National Bank of Greece  
Mr. John Petenes-In Memory of His Mother Virginia  
Mr. Larry Daravakos  
Dr. George Sianis & Family  
Superior Coffee  
Woodfire Chicken Restaurant  
Dr. Demetrios Zikos  
Mr. William Touloumis  
Mrs. Maria Davis  
Mr. Manthos Economou  
St. Paul Federal Bank

and

Fountain Blue Restaurant  
Mr. and Mrs. Giannakopoulos

## Eptanisa (the "Seven Islands")

The Eptanisa form a geographic, historic and administrative unit of seven primary islands stretched along the western edges of Epiros, Sterea Ellatha, and the Peloponnese. The exception being the island of Kithira which is located south of the Laconia area of the Peloponnese. The islands, in land mass order, are: Kefalonia, Kerkyra, Zakynthos, Lefkatha, Kithira, Ithaki, and Paxzi, which are all surrounded by a number of smaller islands. They belong to the administrative district of the Ionian islands except for Kithira which belongs to the Piraeus state.

Historically these islands never formed one united political body. Instead, each island was independent up



until the Venetian rule which started with the occupation of Kerkyra in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and lasted until the take-over of Lefkatha in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when, they united with the Venetian government

as a colony with the capital in Kerkyra. The islands passed on to French rule in 1797. They were for a short time period under the rule of the Sultan in the form of a 'Ionian State' under the protection of the Russian state (1800). They were returned to France in 1807 and finally were recognized as the 'United State of the Ionian Islands' under the protection of the British (1815). In 1864 Britain gave the islands to Greece as a 'gift' after the election of George the First as King of the Greeks. The most recent history of the islands is characterized by constant struggles, either for issues of social equality or independence and for the unification with mainland Greece.

The Eptanisa have many western influences which are evident in their songs, music and costumes. In the songs we find principal western choral forms and serenades which resemble Italian songs and more infrequently older forms in traditional tunes. In any rate, in some very old songs the tunes are restricted by Byzantine remnants both in structure and meter of the lyrics. Their subject matter is similar to those of the rest of Greece, that is to say-historical, old parables, love, irony, carols, and other themes.

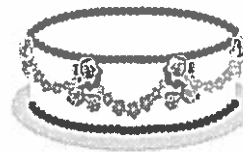
The music is also choral, but there are many

examples of older non-choral melodies. In Ithaki and Kefalonia we encounter melodies originating from Constantinople, obviously due to the contact with sailors and foreigners from Constantinople and the Danube area.

The instruments that accompany the songs and dance are the violin, the guitar and sometimes the clarinet according to the influence of the opposite shore. The older musical instruments in the villages are the "tsampouna" (in Kefalonia), the "niakara" (Byzantine 'anakara') which is a type of small 'zournas' (Zakinthos) and there are indications that earlier the lyra was played (Kerkyra).

If in the realm of song, music, and dance, common elements between the islands have been clearly shown to exist, in costume, and primarily in female dress, this is very difficult to show. Each island has shaped its own type of dress. We can say that each has been influenced by the West. The cut of the clothing is European in style and the materials used are expensive and usually imported, primarily in the urban centers. Women, primarily from Kerkyra and Lefkatha, adorned themselves with expensive jewelry on the chest and wore precious earrings and gold, studded with pearls and semi-precious stones. The jewelry was a gift from the groom and was purchased from local area goldsmiths or traveling jewelers.

The men wore 'vrakes' (baggy pants) cut in different styles, a vest, a belt, and covered their heads with either a kerchief, a fez, or a hat.



## OHFS Second Annual Vasilopita!

For the second year, OHFS members along with friends and relatives had their annual Vasilopita gathering. This year's host was Mrs. Dina Sianis who generously offered her house for this enjoyable affair. The fellowship and warm spirit made up for the frigid conditions and piles of snow that were outside. Elizabeth Economou was again the recipient of the Vasilopita coin and all the good luck that accompanies it. Spending time outside dance practice, performances or other organizational affairs had been a rare occasion for OHFS members during a particularly busy 1998 and catching up with others was refreshing.

A big thank you to Dr. George Sianis, Mrs. Dina Sianis and their daughter Sophia for their hospitality. Their support and friendship to OHFS has been invaluable through the years. "Kai tou Hronou" (until next year).

## **P**erformance Schedule:

**Athena Greek School Celebration**  
Golden Flame Banquet Hall  
Chicago, IL  
January 30, Saturday, 8:00 p.m.

**Greek Independence Day Celebration**  
Location To Be Determined  
March 21, Sunday, 3:00 p.m.

**Greek American Parade**  
Greek Town  
Chicago, IL  
March 28, Sunday, 2:00 p.m.

**Chrisafitis Society Annual Dinner Dance**  
Golden Flame Banquet Hall  
Chicago, IL  
May 2, Sunday, 8:00 p.m.

**Skokie Festival of Cultures**  
Oakton Park  
4701 Oakton Street  
Skokie, IL  
May 22, Saturday, 5:00 p.m.

**For the latest performance schedule  
visit our web site at  
<http://www.ohfs.org>**

## **P**actice 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 Street  
Chicago, IL  
(312) 742-7516

**BEGINNERS:** Members with little or no previous dance experience.

**INTERMEDIATE:** Dancers who have shown progress in the beginners' class can 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.

Board of Directors/Committee Meetings are held immediately following practice on the *first Thursday of every month*, unless otherwise stated, at the Hilltop Restaurant. Upcoming meetings are to be held on: January 14, February 4, March 4.



Submissions for the April-June issue of the newsletter will be accepted until April 15.

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.

### *Lyra*

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