

inside

this issue...

Channel 11	2
Web Updates	2
Cyprus/Chios Performances	3
Thassos Costume	4
Metaxathes Costume	5
Spotlight	4-5
Vasilopita	6
Journey Through The Greek Isles	7
Personals	7
Performances	8

The Newsletter for friends and members of OHFS
Vol. 6, Issue No. 1, Winter 2000

Orpheus Youth Group Performs at Museum of Science and Industry

The Orpheus Dance Troupe has been performing for the past several years at the annual "Christmas Around the World" Festival at the Museum of Science & Industry, but this year's performance was a special one. For the first time, the Orpheus Youth Group performed at the festive event, which is held each holiday season at the museum.

OHFS supporter and friend, Mrs. Dina Sianis, along with other parents of the group's members, spent many hours making replicas of authentic costumes from Thrace and Epirus. The end result was a very professional and impressive presentation by the Youth. The future of the Orpheus Dance Troupe is indeed bright! Many thanks also go to the dedicated team of instructors who were responsible for the preparation and presentation of the Youth Group.

Nearly 30 members of the Youth, all dressed in traditional costumes, performed a program of mainland Greek folk dances which included a dance suite from Epirus and other selections from central Greece and Macedonia. The group was received enthusiastically by the audience, which included Metropolitan Iakovos, head of the Greek Orthodox Diocese of Chicago, and many proud family members and friends. Dancers from the adult group cheered the Youth on from the sidelines, and later performed a lively suite of island dances to complete the Orpheus program.

Future presentations of the Orpheus Youth Group will take place on Friday, February 25 at St. Peter & Paul Greek Orthodox Church and then later in May at the 10th Skokie Festival of Cultures.

Registration for both Youth Group branches in Chicago and Glenview is always open and we encourage new members to register. Please contact any of the individuals listed in this newsletter for more information. ☐



HELLENIC FOLKLORE SOCIETY

350 Skokie Ct.
Wilmette, IL 60091
847.657.0958
e-mail: orpheus@ohfs.org
<http://www.ohfs.org>

Tax-exempt
Not-for-profit
Organization

John Economou
847.657.0958
Director/President

Kostas Economou
847.729.3406
Instructor

Marianna Damianides-Keenan
847.967.5103
Artistic Director/
Vice President

Christina Pagones
773.549.7830
Editor



The Orpheus Youth Group at their first performance for the Museum of Science and Industry.

Orpheus Volunteers for Channel 11 Pledge Night

"Channel 11 - May I take your pledge?" The public television airwaves were taken over by Greek *filoxenia* and traditional music as the Orpheus Dance Troupe and other members of the Chicagoland Greek community participated in the Channel 11 airing of "The Greek-Americans II" last December 6.

Orpheus members (dressed in traditional folk costumes and official OHFS T-shirts) spent a fun evening at the WTTW Channel 11 studios working as pledge drive volunteers to raise funds for the public television station during the sequel episode of the popular Greek-American series. The second show in the series further highlighted the important contributions made by Greek immigrants and their families to American culture, the political arena, popular entertainment and successful business ventures all around the nation, and featured commentary from an impressive array of prominent Greek-Americans.

In preparation for the hard work ahead, the evening began with dinner, which was kindly provided for the hungry volunteers by WTTW and even included some Greek favorites, which were donated by local businesses. After station employees briefly explained the volunteers' duties for the night, the group of about 60 volunteers settled into their seats and eagerly waited for the countdown to airtime!

At the signal for each pledge break, the OHFS members and their comrades turned on their phones and went to work, diligently (tirelessly) taking pledges from callers who pledged money in hopes of reaching the designated goal of \$50,000 set for the night. Well, we can proudly say the Greek community came through with flying colors,



Orpheus members taking a break from the phones.

as the enthusiastic group of volunteers succeeded in surpassing their goal!!

During the course of the evening, the volunteers were taken on a tour of the impressive WTTW studios, and even took some calls from friends and relatives, who were treated to a shameless show of mugging for the camera! Our thanks to Voula Drougas, Orpheus member and Channel 11 employee, for all her help in arranging the OHFS participation in the membership drive. A good time was had by all! ☺

Letters to OHFS...

Dear John,

On behalf of all of us at Channel 11, thank you for bringing your group to answer phones during our December membership campaign. You helped raise \$56,925 that night. Good work! We are also happy to report that this campaign brought over \$2,013,000 from more than 14,700 pledges! We could not have done it without your group's help.

Your commitment to viewer-supported television was certainly demonstrated through the time and effort you invested to recruit and schedule volunteers. We appreciate your hard work!

Thank you for your help, and we look forward to having your group return for a future membership campaign.

Best Regards,

Sabrina Fesco
Volunteer Coordinator

Web Updates

The Orpheus web site has truly evolved since its inception in September, 1997! The web site was originally created to mirror the Orpheus newsletter, a medium which informed members and friends of performance schedules and general news about the dance troupe. Due to improved computer technology and frequent updates, the web site has evolved into a fun and educational tool serving the Greek folk dance community in Chicago as well as around the world!

Most notable is the addition of a detailed section for the Orpheus Youth Group which includes videos, pictures, practice schedule calendars for the Chicago and Glenview branches, performance information and "spotlight" features of our young dancers.

The *Dance Repertoire* section has been expanded, and now features a new "clickable" map of Greece. Want to view a list of dances and accompanying map from the Aegean Islands? Click on that section, and voila! A detailed list of dances will appear for the selected region.

Did you attend the Orpheus 10-year anniversary benefit? If you'd like to see the fruits of your generous donations, simply go to the Orpheus *Costume Collection* section. On display are pictures and descriptions of the newest additions to the collection: a series of female island costumes from Thassos, female Metaxades costumes from Thrace and male Epirotan costumes for the Youth.

Brand new to the Orpheus web site are "Site Map" and "Search" buttons. A "site map" is an organizational chart which shows the structure of the web site. Why manually search through the web site to find out about the Orpheus trip to Athens? Just click on the "Search" button, type in "Athens" and the article will pop up on your computer screen!

In a nutshell, if you'd like to find out what is new with Orpheus, click on the "Web Updates" button and you'll find up-to-date information. The web site is continuously updated and improved, so check back with us often! ☺

Orpheus Showcases Cypriot and Chian Dances

During the past year, the Orpheus Dance Troupe had the challenging opportunity to showcase folk dances from three particular regions of Greece at dinner dances hosted by organizations whose members trace their origins from those regions. The first such appearance, as mentioned in a previous edition of "Lyra", took place at the Metsovion Association Dinner Dance last May, where the group performed a suite of dances from the Epirotan village of Metsovo.

Last November, the Orpheus Dance Troupe performed at the Cypriot Brotherhood Dinner Dance, where a program of dances from the island of Cyprus was featured. Traditional costumes from Cyprus were worn for this event. The male island costumes in the OHFS collection are from Cyprus, and the men performed wearing traditional vrakes. The female dancers wore traditional Cypriot costumes as well, some of which were made available by Orpheus dancer and Cypriot Brotherhood member, Rebecca Moraris. The majority of the Cypriot dance repertoire consists of dances that are performed strictly by men or women, in couples or solo.

The principal dances of Cyprus are the *antikristoi*, face-to-face dances performed by men or women at weddings or festive

gatherings. The Cypriot *antikristoi* are always danced by pairs of either men or women but never by mixed couples. However, in years past on the second evening of the wedding, the bride and groom danced the women's *antikristoi* together. Both types of *antikristoi* consist of five dances: the "first", "second", "third", "fourth", *antikristoi* and the *ballos*. Today, the *ballos* is usually omitted and the accompaniment is instrumental: violin and lute, violin and *tsamboutcha* (a large tambourine), when there is no lute. Formerly, a song followed the third women's *antikristoi* and accompanied the men's *ballos*. The "third" *antikristos* is also called *mandilouthin* (from *mandili* which means handkerchief), because each dancer carries a handkerchief.

Later that same month the Troupe performed at another dinner dance sponsored by the association "Karies", whose members come from the island of Chios, which is located in the eastern Aegean



Orpheus member Sophia Tsipianitis performing the women's suite of dances from Cyprus.

Sea. The Orpheus Dance Troupe performed a suite of dances from various villages of Chios. Apart from the violin, another characteristic instrument utilized in this area is the *tsabouna*, a kind of bagpipe that is commonly played on certain Aegean islands. The most common dances from the island of Chios are the *Syrtos*, *Ballos*, and dances performed during the *Apokries* (carnival season). A lot of festivities take place during the *Apokries* that can last for several days and usually take place at the *mastihogoria* villages where the famous *mastiha* (mastic) is produced. A moving moment for the Orpheus members occurred when a couple of guests who were from those same villages, approached them and expressed their enthusiasm and surprise to see these dances for the first time in Chicago!

The Orpheus Dance Troupe is always looking for similar opportunities to research, learn and showcase material that is representative of the many different regions of the Hellenic world. ☐



Orpheus members Sherry, Niki, and Bessie taking a moment to pose for a picture at the Chiotan Dinner Dance.

Orpheus Costume Collection Additions

Thassos, North Aegean

The island of Thassos, famed since antiquity, lies in the North Aegean, surrounded by ports and towns that were at one time of some prominence. The products of local agriculture and animal husbandry were meagre but adequate to support the inhabitants of the island, who plied the Aegean and other seas with their ships. With so many urban centers, such as Constantinople, Kavala and Thessaloniki, within easy reach, it was natural for the ladies of Thassos to wear a bourgeois style of dress, sewn from expensive cloth. The shopkeepers of Kavala were said to have been willing to "exchange ten of their Kavala customers for one from Thassos." The courtesy and manners of the island's womenfolk were legendary.

The bridal blouse was made of fine silk or a mixture of cotton and silk. The best ones were trimmed with little crocheted cockerels around the opening of the bodice and the cuffs. Over this was worn the *alatzas*, a narrow-sleeved waistcoat sewn by an island tailor, using striped silk or cotton-and-silk cloth; at the bottom of the sleeves were "tongues" which were trimmed with gold braid, as was the bodice. On top went a sleeveless pinafore, likewise stitched by a tailor using expensive cloth or taffeta, and embroidered with

gold around the opening of the bodice.

Round the waist was tied a silk apron trimmed with little pleats, gold lace and bands of different-colored material. The belt, which was made of velvet or gold-embroidered silk, fastened at the front with a heavy silver clasp. The black felt waistcoat was the most richly embroidered garment worn, and for this work the tailor and embroiderer were paid handsomely in sovereigns. At the beginning of this century, women stopped wearing the *tzamandani* and added the "tongues" from its sleeves to the waistcoat in such a way as to make it appear to have two sets of sleeves. The opening of the bodice of the blouse was fastened with a gold and often diamante clasp. Wealthier bridegrooms used to hang one or two chains of gold coins around the bride's neck.

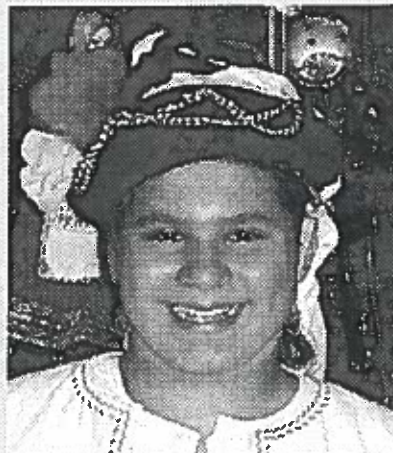
The bride's hair was plaited into braids and wrapped around the little flat fez, the top of which was embroidered



Orpheus member Christina Economou modeling the Thassos costume with Hara Deligiannis and Nancy Harmanda from the Lyceum of Greek Women, Athens, Greece.

with gold thread or covered with 4 or 5 coins. A printed yellow cotton scarf was wound around the plaits to make the fez "sit" properly on the head. For everyday use or attending church, a large printed woolen scarf *thiplarika* was thrown over the top. For weddings and other special occasions, this was replaced by an expensive silk scarf, and great care was taken to

spotlight on Orpheus Youth dancer...



Catherine Grosso

Name:
Catherine Vasiliki Grosso

Hometown:
Chicago

Parents/Family From:
Father: Baglada, Italy
Mother: Lahantha, Messinia, Greece

Occupation:
Student at Plato Academy

Time Dancing with Orpheus Youth Group:
2 years

ensure that each one had its own unique design. If another woman bought one which was of the same design, it was not worn again; this custom was eventually deemed to be rather pretentious and fell into disuse some years ago. The white stockings, either bought or home-knitted, were made of wool in the winter and cotton in the summer. The women of Thassos also wore embroidered velvet slippers, but later replaced them with black leather lace-up shoes. ☐

(40 Greek Costumes From the Dora Stratou Theatre Collection, editor Alkis Raftis)

Metaxathes, Thrace

The Orpheus Hellenic Folklore Society is very pleased to announce the recent acquisition of eight new female Metaxathes costumes from the region of Thrace in northern Greece! This purchase was made possible through the generosity of our costume donors.

The new regional costumes have added an air of authenticity to the presentation of the stylistically unique dances of Thrace and Anatoliki Romelia (Eastern Thrace). With the continued expansion of the OHFS dance repertoire into the Thracian regions of Greece, these new costumes are a very welcome addition to the OHFS collection.

The village of Metaxathes lies in the mountains near the border with Bulgaria and this style of dress has many similarities

with those of its Slavic neighbors. The particular costume version acquired by the OHFS consists of a white cotton under-dress with long sleeves. Over this is worn a black Thracian *tsoukna*, a sleeveless cotton over-dress. The *tsoukna* is heavily embroidered around the bodice with multi-colored threads. The openings to the right and left (through which the village women breast-fed their babies) are also trimmed with embroidery. On top of the *tsoukna* there is a woven apron held in place by the intricate Thracian enameled belt. The *barboula*, or head-dress, consists of several multi-colored floral scarves, which are decorated with

flowers. To complete the ensemble, there are beaded *perilemia* (necklaces) patterned knit stockings and *terlikia* (embroidered cloth slippers).

The new Metaxathes costumes were showcased at several summer festivals and the audience response was exceptionally positive, not only regarding the look of the costumes, but also in appreciation of the fine quality of workmanship. The OHFS looks forward to making many future presentations with these beautiful new costumes. Again, we would like to extend our thanks to all those who made this purchase possible. ☐



Orpheus members Tina, Marianna, Niki, and Linda modeling our new Metaxathes costumes.

Thoughts on Dancing:

I like Greek dancing with the youth group because it makes me feel good, I've made a lot of new friends, and I have a great time!

Favorite Dance:

Dimitroula (dance from Macedonia), because the dance steps start out slow, and as the beat of the music changes the steps become much faster.

Most Vivid Orpheus Memory:

During the performance at the Museum of Science and Industry, we were dancing *Zonaradikos* and we had all made a mistake and stopped dancing prematurely before the song had finished.

Favorite Greek Dish:

Souvlaki

Favorite Place in Greece:

Finikounda. I really enjoyed the beaches there when we visited Greece last summer.

Hobbies / sports / other interests:

Basketball, soccer, violin, piano, and ceramics.

Where I Heard About Orpheus Dance Troupe:

From my GREAT MOM!!! ☐

OHFS Celebrates Vasilopita 2000!!!

It looks like 2000 will be a great year for Orpheus member Sherry Dagrzikos! Sherry found the coin in her piece of one of Mrs. Dina Sianis' famous Vasilopites at the 3rd Annual Orpheus Vasilopita on January 15th. This year the event took place in the church hall of St. Haralambos Greek Orthodox Church in Niles, IL. The big group of almost 200 guests included OHFS members, and also many friends and family members.

The Orpheus Youth Group highlighted the evening with a small presentation of dances they had learned over the past year, and were then joined by the senior members of the group for a night of music, food and dancing. Orpheus members Haris and Anthi Georgakopoulos, Pete Panagakis, and Dimitri Dallas entertained everyone with their musical talents on *bouzouki*, tambourine and drum, and Mr. Dino Dallas accompanied them as the evening's disc jockey.

In addition to the live entertainment, videotaped performances from the past year played on a television screen and a computer station allowed guests to browse the Orpheus web site. Of course, there were many opportunities to visit with friends and make new ones as well!

Fr. Dean Botsis, proistamenos of St. Haralambos, blessed the loaves and spoke briefly about the Vasilopita tradition and its place in the Greek Orthodox faith. Each member then went forward to receive his piece of bread in hopes of finding the spe-



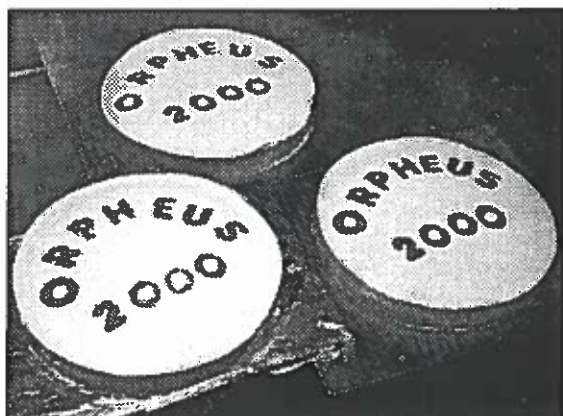
The Youth Group giving a short dance presentation.

cial "ORPHEUS 2000" gold coin, which was graciously donated by Mrs. Dina Sianis. As a token of its appreciation, the OHFS presented Mrs. Sianis with a framed picture of the youth for all her hard work in making the Youth Group costumes and supporting the group's tremendous growth this past year.

The Orpheus Vasilopita tradition began a few years ago as a way for members to celebrate the success of the past year and look forward to the new and exciting opportunities that lie ahead. The event was moved to the church hall a St. Haralambos due to the growth in membership Orpheus has enjoyed in the past

year and the success of the Youth Group. The Orpheus Dance Troupe has performed for the St. Haralambos annual Greek Fest in past years.

Many thanks to the Dallas family for donating the main course of the evening as well as providing the sound equipment. Thanks also go to OHFS members Patty Panagakis and Sherry Dagrzikos for organizing this special event and to the Youth Group families for providing side dishes and many scrumptious desserts! Also, thanks again to Mrs. Sianis for her delicious Vasilopites and for donating the commemorative Orpheus coin! *Kai tou chronou!* ☐



The delicious vasilopites Mrs. Sianis baked for the event.



Mrs. Sianis cutting the vasilopites as Orpheus members look on.

A Journey Through The Greek Isles

For Orpheus members Voula Drougas, Christina Rigas, Niki Rigas, Jim Thanopoulos and Niko Paras, the journey through the culture of the Greek islands began as soon as they arrived in Florida for the Epiphany 2000 Winter Dance Conference in Tarpon Springs. The Orpheus dancers found themselves immersed in the unmistakable welcome of fellow dancers and instructors alike. Folk dance enthusiasts from all over the world were brought together by their common love of Greek dance, music and culture. What was to follow would be a week-end full of instruction, dancing, friendship and pure enjoyment!

The dance instruction began each morning and captivated the dancers until late afternoon in a series of workshops focusing on dances from the Greek islands. Nicholas Gavallas, from Pensacola, Florida, presented a suite from the Cyclades islands, specifically the islands of Paros, Naxos, Mikonos and Amorgos. He challenged the dancers to go beyond the basic steps of the dances and to let their bodies move naturally to the island music.

Continuing the journey into the islands of the Aegean Sea were two instructors from the Lyceum of Athens, Lazaros Hatzipanagiotou and Niki Niora.

The conference participants were inspired by the sweet sounds of the lyra, violin, clarinet, sandouri, laouto, outi, tsabouna, daouli and toubaki, all traditional instruments indigenous to these islands. The Lyceum instruction concentrated on dances from the islands of Chios, Mitilini, Limnos, Samos, Thasos, Samothraki and Ikaria. Like Nick Gavallas, these masters of instruction also encouraged the dancers to let their bodies unfold and allow the lyrical music to guide their movements.

One of the highlights of the dance conference for the Orpheus dancers occurred

when the participants joined their instructors for dinner, conversation and glendi. Dancers and instructors shared thoughts, anecdotes and much laughter together as they relaxed after the long hours of learning, teaching – and dancing!

Overall, the conference was a warm experience for the Orpheus dancers (and not just because of the Florida weather!). The participants made new friends, learned much about the island dances, and gained a new appreciation for the folk dances of their heritage. Although the conference eventually came to a close, the fire ignited in the dancers will never cease to burn. ☐



Orpheus members with Lyceum of Ellinidon instructor Lazaros Hatzipanagiotou (third from right).

personals

Welcome aboard new Orpheus members Fani Daskalakis, Bess Chidicimo, Sophia Chidicimo, and George Katris .

Congratulations to Emmanuel Bistas and Barbara Siargos on their first performance with the Orpheus Dance Troupe.

Best wishes to the recently-engaged Angie Beltsos and Greg Poulos! The couple plan a July 2000 wedding in Michigan. Congratulations also to Angie who passed her medical board certification! *Kala Stefana.*



Birthday wishes to: Valerie Pontikis, 1/6; Christina Rigas, 1/17; Emmanuel Bistas, 1/19; Niki Rigas, 1/30; Eleni Liberis, 1/31; George Logothetis, 2/3. Sophia Tsiplanitis, 2/15; Victoria Arvanitis, 2/19; Amanda Stamelos,

2/28; Kiki Kakavas, 3/14; Bia Adams, 3/19; and Eleni Nikols, 3/29. *Na ta ekatostisete!*



Namesday greetings to Kiki Kakavas, Bessie Grosso, William Pierce on January 1; Fani Daskalakis on January 6, John Economou on January 7; Antonis Giannopoulos on January 17; Athanasios Arvanitis, Athanasia

Dagrizikos, and Athanasia Kyriakakos on January 18; Angie Beltsos on March 25. *Hronia Polla!*

Kiki Kakavas has accepted a managerial position at National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago. Congratulations Kiki and good luck! ☐

performance schedule

Lincolnwood Millenium Festival
Lincoln Hall Middle School
Lincolnwood, IL
Sunday, January 16
2:00 p.m.

Kalavrytinon Society Dinner Dance
Crystal Palace Banquet Hall
Des Plaines, IL
Saturday, March 25
8:30 pm

Orpheus Youth Group
Sts. Peter and Paul Greek Orthodox Church
Glenview, IL
Friday, February 25
8:00 pm

Greek Parade
Greek Town/Halsted Steet,
Chicago, IL
Sunday, March 26
2:00 p.m.

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 (Chicago and Glenview locations).

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 Spring issue of *Lyra* will be accepted until March 15, 2000. 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.

Wilmette, IL 60091
350 Skokie Ct.

