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## Orpheus Youth Group Celebrates End of the Year

On May 19th, the Orpheus Youth Group presented their first-ever end-of-the-year program. There was music, song, dance, excitement, anticipation and, most importantly, an audience full of parents, grandparents, family and friends anxiously waiting to see the results of a year's worth of effort.

As usual, the program consisted of songs and dances from all over Greece, presenting the audience with the wide variety of dances our youth learned this past year. With almost all of our youth members performing, we were able to showcase several of the Orpheus costumes, which included both island and mainland styles.

Also featured in the program were selections based on the theme of Easter celebrations and the coming of spring, which may perhaps be some of our most ambitious material ever presented in a performance! Since March, the youth members were taught two songs, *Tora Maya* and *Tsintsiro*, which come from the Lazarines tradition from the region of Kozani. Both songs are performed by girls only, and combine song and dance elements that certainly make for an interesting presentation. Let's not forget the talents of Dimitri Dallas who accompanied the girls' steps and singing with his ever-present *toubeleki* (hand drum).

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HELLENIC FOLKLORE SOCIETY

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Orpheus Youth members performing the dance "Tsakonikos" from the Peloponnese.

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From the simple Kalamatiano *syrtó*, which opened the program, to the modern *hasapiko* and *hasaposeviko*, which made for an enthusiastic conclusion, the program was a great way to end what was certainly a year full of progress and accomplishment! Other highlights of the past year included performances at the Museum of Science and Industry in December of 2001 and most notably the performance at the concert of the Festival of Greek Music and Dance that took place last March. In that event, ten renowned folk musicians from Greece presented songs and music from the Greek Islands and both adult and youth groups performed dances accompanied by those artists. It was a memorable and unique experience that we hope will become an annual tradition here in Chicago and something that all Orpheus members along with the Greek American community will be looking forward to.

The 2002-2003 program for the Orpheus Youth Group will begin on Thursday, September 12, 2002 at the Northbrook branch and on Saturday, September 14, 2002 at the Glenview branch. Practice time at the Northbrook Branch is 5:30-6:30 p.m. at St. John Lutheran Church, 3020



Youth members sing "To Sperveri", a song from the island of Rhodes.

Milwaukee Ave., while at the Glenview branch practice time is 1:30-2:30 p.m. at New Church, 74 Park Drive (one block west of the intersection of Glenview and Shermer Rds). Registration will take place during the first instructional sessions on a first come basis. Since there is limited space, we encourage parents to register their children early. For more information, call 847-729-3406 or any of the numbers listed on the cover of this newsletter.

The Orpheus Youth Group has enjoyed tremendous growth, which can be attributed to the quality of this program. It is very exciting to incorporate the first generations of youth members into the adult group. The future of the Orpheus Dance Troupe is indeed bright as its members not only possess dance skills but have demonstrated a great deal of commitment, enthusiasm and respect toward preserving Hellenic folk culture and traditions. ☐



Orpheus Youth members attending the 2002 Summer session pose for a group picture after practice.

# The Custom of *Yianitsari* and *Boules* in the city of Naoussa

Three typical features characterize the Carnival in the city of Naoussa (located in Macedonia, Northern Greece), namely: its inhabitants' adherence to tradition, customary Greek hospitality and the spontaneity and enthusiasm that accompany the beginning of the feasts.

Groups of people in disguise who indiscriminately satirize everything, including even the representations of customs, form part of the celebration of the Carnival. The highlight of the Carnival is the appearance of people disguised as *Yianitsari* and *Boules* (Brides).

In an effort to trace the stages of evolution of the custom of *Yianitsari* and *Boules*, it is inevitable that we mention its close relationship with the rites of Dionysus. As it has been argued, not only for the custom under discussion, but also for similar ones celebrated in other regions of Macedonia (Kali Vrisi, Drama), the distant predecessor of all these customs must have been the grand festivities (called *Anthestiria*) with which people welcomed spring in antiquity; Dionysus was closely connected with the spring season and, therefore, worshipped by the people in the belief that in this way they would be favored and would reap a good harvest.

No documents have been found referring to the history of the custom dating from earlier than the middle of the period of the Turkish occupation. The oldest known event connected with the custom is the violent recruitment of Christian boys for



*Yianitsari* and *Boula*.

the Turkish army in 1705 where the Sultan sent Achmet Tselebi to proceed with the first recruitment in the city of Naoussa. The inhabitants of Naoussa not only refused to give up their children, but also killed Achmet Tselebi. The event took place during the Carnival period. As a consequence, many men in Naoussa left the city and found shelter at Mount Vermion where they formed rebel troops under the leadership of Zisis Karadimos.

Closely connected with the custom of *Yianitsari* and *Boules* are significant events of the history of Greece, such as the organization and preparation for the Greek Revolution of 1821, the consecutive War of Independence and the destruction of Naoussa in 1822. These historical events along with other contemporary social events are echoed in the songs that gradually became part of the custom. The custom of *Yianitsari* and *Boules* reached its peak between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. By that time, the troupes of *Yianitsari* and *Boules*, called *Mpouloukia*, reached the number of twelve. It was during this time that the most gifted musicians made their appearance with the *Mpouloukia*. It should be stressed that the members of a troupe paid the musicians, while the leader of the troupe was expected to extend hospitality to them. The Carnival period was the only time of the year during which one could hear the sound of a *zournas* (a clarinet-shaped instrument with a shrill sound) and a *daouli* (a big drum). The custom of *Yianitsari* and *Boules* has been performed uninterruptedly during the 19th and 20th century, with the exception of the period from the beginning of World War II to about 1954.

The custom of *Yianitsari* and *Boules* is held to strict guidelines. The performance of this ritual requires disciplined obedience to certain rules. Only young, unmarried men are allowed to participate. Special care is required



A *Yianitsaros*.

when donning the traditional disguises. The strict execution of the performance with traditional music and dance is expected. The troupe (*Mpoulouki*) must follow a specific itinerary as they travel throughout the city and the only instruments that accompany the troupe are the *zournas* and the *daouli* which are referred to as a couple (*zygia*).

Today the costume of *Yianitsaros* consists of the following items: a *condela* (white shirt with wide sleeves), *foustanela* (white kilt consisting of 250-400 pleats), *pisli* (type of waistcoat made of velvet or imported woolen fabric), *moraitiko zounari* (belt worn around the waist, made of silk and colored with a natural dye extracted from violets), *seliahi* (worn over the belt, made of embroidered leather and is embroidered), *betsfes* (white tights which cover the legs up to the thighs), *skoufounia* (white socks), *tsarouhia* (leather shoes with black tassel at the front), *taramboulo zounari* (large headscarf consisting of three separate pieces sewn together that is made of pure silk and bears motifs of eastern origin).

The costume of *Yianitsaros* is augmented with a wide variety of jewels, which bear different names according to their shapes, motifs, and way of manufacture. On the front of the costume coins dating from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries are attached. The silver ones are of Turkish, French or Austrian

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origin. They are suspended from chains, the end of which is decorated with a cross or an amulet. Today, for simplification, these coins are sewn onto the waistcoat.

The most impressive item in the costume of *Yianitsaros* and *Boula* is the mask (*prosopos*). It is of special importance and one of the indispensable parts of the costume. The mask is made from a thick cloth covered by a layer of plaster. It is then lined with beeswax in order to keep the face of the wearer cool. The moustache is made of horsehair and tar. The colors used to render the characteristics of the face are mixed with egg yolks. It is worth mentioning that the openings in the mask corresponding to the eyes and the mouth of the wearer are so small that *Yianitsaros* and *Boula* can only, with great difficulty, breathe and see. The reason for this is that big eyes and a big mouth are considered to be ugly. The color of the mask is white with cheeks painted red.

The costume of *Boula* differs in many respects from that of *Yanitsaros*. It should be made clear that in keeping with tradition, a *Boula* is a man disguised as a woman. *Boula's* head is decorated with

flowers, tulle and ribbons and her mask is painted white with red cheeks and a golden spot on the forehead.

The preparation for the performance begins on the eve of the Carnival period. On Sunday morning the dressing of the *Yianitsaros* is completed and he is ready to join the troupe. The melancholic sounds of the *zournas* come from a distance accompanied by the drumming of the *daouli*. They play a tune to a free rhythmic pattern known as *Zalistos* or *Proskinima* (the homage or pilgrimage). The *Yianitsaros* will cross himself three times when he comes to the threshold of his home and then he will salute the members of the troupe who had come to fetch him. After the troupe has assembled, the procession moves to the Town Hall. The permission to proceed with the procession is nowadays granted by the mayor of the city. It is at that time that the *zourna* player starts playing the *Rhoido*, a song to which the *Yianitsari* dance and flourish the handkerchiefs tied to their hands before they draw their swords. Other dances and songs performed include *Patinada*, *Thourios*, *Papadia*, *Makrinitisa*, *Nizamikos*, *Tsiamikos*, *Sarantapende*, *Melekes*, *Pouliana*, *Tou Ypsilanti*, *Tou Ypatrou*, and *O Milis o Perofanos*.



Yianistari performing the dance "Proskinima".

The custom of *Yianitsari* and *Boules* has survived until today because it carries with it old memories which, presented anew, express the worries and needs of our own time. ☐

Source: Takis Baitsis, "Yianitsaroi and Boula of Niaoustas", 2nd Edition, Thessaloniki 2001

## spotlight on Orpheus dancer...



Kostas Dovas

**Name:**

Kostas Dovas

**Home Town:**

Plainfield, Illinois

**Parents/Family from:**

My father is from Athens and my mother is from Tripoli.

**Occupation:**

Nuclear Operator for Exelon Nuclear in Braidwood Illinois.

**Time dancing with Orpheus:**

A year and a half.

**Thoughts on dancing:**

It's a lot of fun and a great escape from the outside world. There is definitely some work involved with being in a troupe, but it's all worth it.

# Hellenic Museum Celebrates 10th Year Anniversary

One of the local cultural organizations with which the Orpheus Dance Troupe has established a strong relationship throughout the years is the Hellenic Museum and Cultural Center. The Museum recently celebrated its 10-year anniversary with a special event at which the Orpheus Dance Troupe was honored to participate. The elegant gala took place at the Intercontinental Hotel in downtown Chicago. This celebration offered an opportunity for museum supporters to reflect on the Museum's past as well as its future. Construction plans for the Museum's new building in the heart of Chicago's Greek Town are underway.

The relationship between OHFS and the Hellenic Museum has been maintained through their cooperation in a number of events during the last ten years.

In 1994, one of the Museum's most notable exhibits was that of the Dora Stratou folk

costume collection. The unique collection was first exhibited at the Chicago Historical Society. Members of the Orpheus Dance Troupe worked with the exhibit committee by offering their knowledge of folk costumes and assisting in cataloguing and translating text concerning the history and origin of these costumes. The Orpheus Dance Troupe performed at the Opening Reception and also co-sponsored satellite events at the Hellenic Museum showcasing Greece's rich folk tradition in relation to the costumes exhibited.

In 1998 the Orpheus Dance Troupe co-sponsored the exhibit "Marika's Koukles" which featured a rare collection of miniature dolls in Greek folk costumes. Again, Orpheus members participated actively in the presentation and organization of the exhibit with the Museum's curators. Throughout the years the Orpheus Dance Troupe, in cooperation with the Hellenic Museum, has participated in the annual ethnic fashion show at Daley Plaza celebrating the anniversary of the United Nations. Recently, the Troupe performed at the Swedish Museum at an event where Swedish and Greek customs were exhibited. The Field

Museum of Chicago sponsored this event as part of its "Spring 2002: Cultural Connections" program that encourages partnerships among Chicago's museums and cultural centers.

We look forward to a continued collaboration with the Hellenic Museum and Cultural Center and we wish the Board of Directors the best in the ambitious mission of establishing a permanent home for the Museum. ☐



Orpheus members at the Hellenic Museum's 10th Year Anniversary Gala.

#### **Favorite dance:**

*Patima* from the island of Limnos. The crowd always seems to love it too...

#### **Most vivid Orpheus memory:**

The Winter Dance Conference in Tarpon Springs, Florida in January of this year. We probably danced more than we slept!! I made some really great friendships there.

#### **Favorite Greek dish:**

Oh, where do I start. Oven baked lamb and potatoes, *avgolemono* soup, octopus.

#### **Favorite place in Greece:**

Plaka and Monastiraki in Athens. Santorini and Rhodes were awesome as well.

#### **Hobbies/Sports/other interests:**

I recently started playing the *bouzouki* and the *doumbek*. I jet-ski a lot in the summer. I also enjoy reading, traveling, movies, playing *tavli* (backgammon) and most of all spending time with friends.

#### **Nobody knows I:**

Used to teach Taekwondo. I also hosted a couple of radio shows for a year and a half in college.

#### **Best childhood memory:**

Any one of my random Saturdays spending the day with my father...

#### **Dream vacation/the perfect weekend:**

My dream vacation would be to take a trip around the world. To do nothing else but see new places for 6 months.

#### **Someone I'd like to meet:**

Bruce Lee.

#### **Favorite building/spot in Chicago:**

It's a toss up between Navy Pier and the John Hancock Building.

#### **I'm currently looking for/forward to:**

The Winter Dance conference next January in Atlanta!

#### **I stay home to watch:**

Just pay per view fights or DVDs... I don't watch much TV.

#### **Prized possession:**

My new home that I built last year.

#### **Where I heard about Orpheus Dance Troupe:**

I came across the Orpheus web page while surfing the internet looking at Greek sites. I've been hooked ever since the first session. ☐

# Orpheus Performs at the Illinois Executive Mansion

The Orpheus Dance Troupe had the distinguished honor to perform at the Illinois Executive Mansion in Springfield, Illinois. Governor George Ryan and his wife Lynn hosted a reception at their official residence in honor of the Hellenic Community of Illinois.

The Governor's mansion is located in downtown Springfield, a few blocks from the state's Capitol building. It was built more than 150 years ago and consists of several structures. Construction of the Executive Mansion began in 1853 and was completed in 1855. John Murry Van Odsel, a Chicago architect, designed the basic structure of the Mansion in a modified Georgian style. The interior is pure Greek Revival. The Illinois Executive Mansion is the oldest historic residence in Illinois and the third oldest Executive mansion in the country. This red brick Italianate mansion has been the home of Illinois governors since 1855, when Joel A. Matteson and his family moved in. William Bissell, who received the Lincolns at several large parties before they left for the White House, followed him. Carefully restored in 1971, the building houses many treasures. When you enter the mansion, you immediately see the exquisite elliptical stairway, which leads to spacious rooms decorated in the British Regency style.

Once upstairs you can see portraits of the Lincolns and their friend Edward Baker, White House china from the Lincoln administration, a bust of Lincoln modeled from life by Thomas D. Jones, and a table presented to President Lincoln that contains more than 20,000 pieces of inlaid wood.

The not-for-profit Illinois Executive Mansion Association was formed and incorporated in 1972 to promote and preserve the historical integrity of the Executive Mansion for its 30,000 annual visitors. The Mansion was added to the National Register of Historic places in 1976.

The evening's official host was Ms. Judy Bar Topinka, the Illinois State treasurer. A major part of the reception's planning was organized by the local Greek community in Springfield, which was represented in part by the parish of St. Anthony.

The event began with cocktails and a dinner. Later, Governor Ryan made his welcome remarks and thanked the Hellenic Community for its contributions to the state of Illinois. Among those mentioned was State Senator Angeline Geokaris who attended the reception. Her tenure in the Illinois political scene spans several decades and, as Governor Ryan stated, her integrity and dedication to public service have been an inspiration to many. He pointed out that a reception recognizing the Hellenic Community at the Executive Mansion was long over due as Governor Thompson hosted the last one. The Governor then recognized the efforts and achievements of various Greek American organizations such as the Hellenic Museum and Cultural Center and the Greek American Nursing Home. He took the members of the Orpheus Dance

Troupe by surprise by presenting them with a plaque honoring the Troupe's contribution toward the preservation of Hellenic culture and traditions.

Following the Governor's presentations, the Troupe performed a selection of Greek folk dances and then led guests to the dance floor accompanied by the music of the Hellenic Five Orchestra.

We would like to extend our gratitude to one person in particular with whom we have had the honor to work since the founding of the Orpheus Dance Troupe. That person is Mrs. Pat Michalski, the governor's representative for Ethnic Affairs. She has served with unparalleled dedication and passion under several governors who have considered her to be irreplaceable. Throughout the many years we have known Pat, she has always kept in touch, despite her hectic schedule, and has been able to attend many OHFS functions. We wish her continued years of contribution to the ethnic communities of Illinois! ☐



Members of the Orpheus Dance Group and the Hellenic Five with Governor George H. Ryan and First Lady Lura Lynn Ryan.



Performing the dance "Dimitroula" during the Skokie Festival of Cultures.



Orpheus members joined by members of the "Kyklos" dance group at the Assumption Greek Orthodox Church Festival in St. Louis, Missouri.



Performing the dance "Zonaradikos" at the Holy Cross Greek Church Festival in Justice, Illinois.



Pictured with Museum Curator, Allison Heller at the Hellenic Museum 10th Anniversary Gala.

# personals

Welcome aboard to new Orpheus members: Youth Group: **Dimitrios Burikas, Penelope Burikas, Photios Frangos, Dean Karahalios, Connie Leberis, Christos Tsekos, Adrienne Wicklund, and Jeremy Wicklund.**

Adult group: **Irene Chiotis, Joy Economos, Pamela Economos, Amanda Frangos and Alexes Wicklund.**

Congratulations to **Konstantinos Liolios, Pinelopi Logotheti, and Stephanie Lialios** on their first performance with Orpheus.



Happy Birthday to **Phoebos Bolaris, and Jim Thanopoulos** July 3; **Vasiliki Kourkouvis**, July 10; **Kathy Tomaras**, July 14; **Barbara Dallas**, July 18; **Vivian Danaskos, and Tasso Giannopoulos**, July 22; **Katerina Skondos**, July 24; **Elias**

**Papadakis**, July 27; **Anna Salapatas**, July 31; **Alexis Arvanitis**, August 1; **Christina Kakavas**, August 15; **Renee Papageorgiou**, August 20; **Melpo Katsaros**, August 21; **Genevieve Theodorakakis**, August 25; **Joanna Chiotis**, August 26; **Maria Karras**, August 27; **John Revis**, September 12; **Alexander Kapotas**, September 29. *Na ta ekatostisete!*

Nameday wishes to **Elias Papadakis** on July 20; **Marianna Damianides, Maria Daskalakis, Patty Droulias, Pat Tomaras, Peter Panagakis, Peter Papageorgiou, Peter Vass, Panagiota Gikas, and Panagiota Trakas** on August 15th; **Alexis Arvanitis, Alex Pavlos and Alexander Kapotas** on August 30th; **Stavros Alexopoulos** on September 14th; **Sophia Radlowski, Sophia Tsiplanitis and Sofia Sianis** on September 17th. *Chronia polla!* 🎉



# performance schedule

## Annunciation Greek Festival

Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church  
Chicago, IL  
Sunday, July 21  
8:00 p.m.

## Greek Town Festival

Halsted Street  
Chicago, IL  
Sunday, August 25  
8:00 p.m.

## Winter Dance Conference 2003

Atlanta, Georgia  
January 16-20, 2003

## SS. Peter and Paul Greek Festival

SS. Peter and Paul Greek Orthodox Church  
1401 Wagner Road  
Glenview, IL  
Friday, August 23  
8:00 p.m.

## Christmas Around the World

Museum of Science and Industry  
57th and Lake Shore Drive  
Chicago, IL  
Saturday, December 14  
4:00 p.m.

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

# practice schedule

## Orpheus Adult Group

### Beginner/Intermediate:

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

### Intermediate/Advanced:

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

### Every Thursday at:

St. John Lutheran Church  
3020 Milwaukee Ave.  
Northbrook, IL  
*(one mile north from the  
intersection of Lake/Euclid  
and Milwaukee Ave.)*

## Orpheus Youth Group:

### Every Thursday at:

5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.  
St. John Lutheran Church  
3020 Milwaukee Ave.  
Northbrook, IL

### Every Saturday at:

1:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.  
New Church  
Multipurpose Room  
74 Park Dr., Glenview, IL  
*(one block west of Shermer/Glenview Rds)*

**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 Fall issue of *Lyra* will be accepted until September 15, 2002. 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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