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The Newsletter for friends and members of OHFS
Vol. 6, Issue No. 2, Spring 2000

Chicago Celebrates Greek Independence Day

The last ten days of March was a very busy but exciting period for the Orpheus Dance Troupe, which participated in four community events commemorating Greek Independence Day in Chicago. The first took place at St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church in Des Plaines and was sponsored by the Hellenic Link, HPSI and other Greek American organizations. The Troupe performed a suite of dances from the Greek islands, and this marked the tenth consecutive year that Orpheus has participated in this annual event!

Next came the annual reception hosted by the General Consulate of Greece. Honorable Gabriel Kopsidis recently took over this post and was very excited to see the Orpheus Dance Troupe perform at the elegant Bradley Hall in Chicago's Cultural Center. The Troupe has performed previously for this particular

affair under General Consuls Mr. Zepos and Mr. Zafiroopoulos.

The costumes were barely hanging for 24 hours when they were once again employed for the Kalavrytinon Society Dinner Dance. Kalavryta, a town located at the northern end of the Peloponnese peninsula, is believed to be one of the starting areas of the Greek Revolution of the 1800's against the Ottoman occupation. Approximately 30 troupe members performed a memorable program that brought the guests to their feet! Congratulations for a job well done to the four Youth Group members who complemented their senior counterparts with their enthusiastic participation in this event.

In less than ten hours after the conclusion of the last performance, costumes were once again being loaded up for the annual Greek American Parade. Senior and Youth members, along with family and friends, manned the Atlantic Bank float and paraded along Halsted Street in Chicago's Greek Town. The ideal weather conditions contributed to a pleasant afternoon that brought out a spirited crowd of patriotic Greeks and flag-waving friends and onlookers.

Many thanks to all participating Orpheus members for another successful Greek Independence Day celebration period! ☐



Orpheus members Kiki Kakavas, Marianna Damianides, and Niko Paras pose with the Honorable Gabriel Kopsidis, General Consul of Greece.



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picture gallery



Sophia Tsiplanitis and Niko Paras dancing a *Ballos* at the 2000 YAL Conference.



Orpheus aboard the Atlantic Bank float in the parade.



Orpheus members before the parade.



Niki Rigas dancing the *Sousta from Simi* at the 2000 YAL Conference.



Orpheus at the Kalavrytinon Society Dinner Dance.

Village of Pyrgi, Chios

The village of Pyrgi on the island of Chios has a long and rich history which dates back to the year 1392. Today, the journey from the city of Chios to the village of Pyrgi is an exciting one to behold. Following the main road as one leaves the main city and its urban environment, one sees a sight that energizes him but at the same time has a calming effect. And indeed, the sight is striking! Along a narrow field, mountaintops that reach the sky create a harmonious and magical composition of colors.

One can enter the village of Pyrgi through different gates. Today the most common ones are the Lower and Upper gates. The stone laid streets and narrow alleys with big arches are very characteristic of the area. One of the most intriguing architectural elements of Pyrgi is the decoration of the houses with the "xysta", a technique that traces its origins to the period during which the island was under the occupation of the Genoans.

This technique is preserved even today and decorates the fronts of homes with either beautiful geometric shapes or with various animal and natural patterns. Today this technique includes thin beach sand mixed with cement, but the pattern design and materials used in the past went through three major periods, when various

designs and materials were utilized during each time period. The occupation of most of the island's inhabitants is the production of mastic, a pasty material produced by mastic trees, which is also the primary source of the island's economy.

Another element that underlines the history of the region is the traditional costumes, which are known for their impressive embroideries, especially the ones worn by the women. These costumes are still worn daily by certain elder locals. In addition, the folk dances of the area complement the local traditions and reveal another dimension of the people. The most characteristic dance is called *Pyrgousikos*. Three people, two men and a woman, perform this dance. The first man is holding a handkerchief and is positioned to the right side of the woman while the other man is on her left holding her hand from underneath. The woman remains in the same position throughout the dance, but the male escorts will most likely change. The rhythm of the dance is upbeat and there is constant movement to the front, back as well as sideways.

Among all of Pyrgi's historical and traditional treasures, its most important monument is the "Pyrgos" which in Greek means castle. This most impressive building had both defensive and civil functions. It was heavily built out of stone, was rectangular in shape and consisted of a ground level and two more floors. It was located close to the Village Square and each side had three big windows on the upper levels. There were no openings on the ground floor, which was indicative of the building's function as a defensive shelter. Today, hardly any of the original features have survived intact. Since the Ottoman occupation, the building has been deserted, and the devastating earthquake of 1881 caused extensive damage to the east and west ends of the structure. It was not until 1892 that a few houses were built in the interior. ☐

Sources: Society of Pyrgi, Athens.



Island of Chios, Eastern Aegean Sea.



Example of the male and female Chian costumes.

From the Peloponnesian Folklore Society book, *Greek Costumes*, by Ioanna Papantoniou, 1981

Orpheus Dances for the 2000 Chicago YAL Conference at Newberry Library

On February 19, the Orpheus Dance Troupe presented a suite of island dances at the Saturday night event of the 2000 Chicago Diocese Young Adult League Conference. The performance took place at the historical Newberry Library in Chicago's Gold Coast and was part of one of the most successful events in the conference's 17-year history.

The Troupe entered the library's main hall with an energetic island Syrto to the applause of over 350 young adults who gathered together from all over the country. In addition to the island classics such as Pentozalis and Pidihtos, the group offered the audience some new selections from the islands of Thassos and Chios. The group also performed the acapella song *Ola Ta Poulakia* from Thassos, led by troupe member Sophia Tsiplanitis. The love song, which tells the story of a young girl who looks forward to the moment when a young man will ask for her hand in marriage, complemented the new costumes from Thassos, which were showcased that evening.

The crowd of young people energized the dancers

with their applause and warm smiles, and helped make the evening's performance a very lively presentation!

This year's conference was co-chaired by Patty Angelos and Elias Zimianitis (who doubled as the evening's photographer). Both young adults have been members of the dance troupe in previous years.

Many thanks to the evening's chairperson Eleni Koulogeorge for her help in organizing the event and to Nick Hatzopoulos, who donated his DJ talents and equipment for the evening. In addition to this year's conference, Orpheus has performed for the 1997 Chicago YAL Diocese Conference and the 1994 Archdiocesan YAL Conference held in Chicago. ☐



Orpheus members performing *Pentozalis* from the island of Crete.

spotlight on Orpheus dancer...

Panagiota Pappas



Name:
Panagiota Pappas

Hometown:
Tinley Park, Illinois

Parents/Family From:
Father: Kopanaki, Messinias
Mother: Tripila, Messinias

Occupation:
Legal Assistant

Time Dancing with Orpheus:
Three years

Mark Your Calendars For Upcoming Orpheus Events!!



Skokie 10th Annual Festival of Cultures

The Orpheus Dance troupe will participate for the 9th consecutive year at the Skokie Festival of Cultures to be held on Saturday, May 20 and Sunday, May 21, 2000. Again this year, both the Orpheus Dance Troupe and Youth Dance Group will perform at this popular summer festival. Orpheus stage time is Saturday, May 20, at 4:00 p.m.

This is a special year for the Skokie Festival because it marks the 10th year of its existence! More than 15,000 people are expected to gather at Oakton Park (corner of Oakton and Skokie Blvd.) to celebrate the community's rich diversity and enjoy ethnic cuisine, arts and crafts, continuous music and dance performances, and a variety of other activities for children and adults.

Join Orpheus and usher in the summer at the first of many ethnic summer fests coming up this year!

Orpheus Youth End of Year Celebration

May 20 is shaping up to be a busy day for Orpheus! After performing at the Skokie Festival of Cultures, the OHFS will host an End of the Year celebration later that evening at the Golden Flame Restaurant, 6417 W. Higgins, Chicago. Organized by the Youth Group parents, the event promises to be a fun evening of food, music and lots of – you guessed it – dancing!

For more information and to order tickets, please call Barbara Dallas (847) 998-6344 or Alexandra Pontikis (847) 998-4752. Tickets are \$30 for adults, \$15 for children.

Youth Group Summer Session

Again this year, the OHFS is offering a Summer Session for the Youth Group! The session will run from June 10 - July 29 for a cost of \$60 (8 sessions). The tentative location is St. Isaac Jogues Church, 8101 W. Golf Rd., Niles (1/4 mile east of Golf Rd. and Milwaukee Ave.). The practices will be held every Saturday from 1:15 - 2:15 p.m. For more information, please call Bessie Kouchoukos-Grosso, Youth Group Coordinator, at (773) 286-5132. ☐



Orpheus Youth Group at practice.

Thoughts on Dancing:

It's a lot fun and a good source for meeting many different types of people.

Favorite Dance:

Kori Eleni (women's dance from Macedonia)

Most Vivid Orpheus Memory:

There are just too many to tell. I could honestly say that each time the group gets together there are new memories made.

Favorite Greek Dish:

Spanakopita

Favorite Place in Greece:

Two places, depending on the mood I'm in: Patra, for a fun time and Tripila for a relaxing environment.

Hobbies/sports/other interests:

I have a job on the side as a stylist, which keeps me pretty busy, and I enjoy it!

Where I Heard About Orpheus Dance Troupe:

I had seen the group perform many times and I love to dance and thought it would be interesting to try it out – I've been hooked ever since! ☐

Orpheus Youth Performs for Millennium Glendi

The Orpheus Youth Group turned in another top-notch performance at the Sts. Peter & Paul Greek Orthodox Church Millennium Glendi. The family-oriented affair was held on February 19 in the church's community center, and drew a capacity crowd of families and children.

Along with their instructors, the Youth Group members from both the Chicago and Glenview branches gathered together for their second performance of the year and performed a mixed set of mainland and island dances to a very appreciative audience! The dressing rooms were a flurry of activity as the instructors and some of the Youth Group parents helped the close to 30 dancers dress in costume, making sure all skirts were straight, belts were correctly tied in place and headpieces were securely fastened. A brief practice session was held to put final touches on the program, and the kids were ready to go!

The dance suite began with Arhontogios, a syrtos from the island of Thassos, and continued with *Palamakia* from Epirus, *Issios* from the island of Kalymnos, and *Pyrgousikos*, a lively dance from the island of Chios, performed in sets of three dancers. The

Youth Group boys also performed the *Tsamikos*, (to the delight of the crowd), and the evening ended with *Zonarathikos*, a popular dance from Thrace.

After the performance, the Youth Group received many compliments and words of praise from members of the audience, who were surprised and very enthusiastic to see this group of young people performing a variety of Greek folk dances in authentic costumes with such poise and presence! Congratulations to the members of the Youth Group for a job well done!

The OHFS strives to expose its Youth Group to a comprehensive repertoire of dances from both the Greek mainland and the islands to give the young people a broad range of experience in dances from the various regions of Greece, and provide them with quality instruction on the different dance styles inherent in each particular region.

Many thanks to the Sts. Peter & Paul community for their assistance behind the scenes and cooperation with the OHFS in making the evening's performance a big success! ☐

top 10 list

Top Ten Things You Would Never Hear an Orpheus Member Say

From the home office in Moustokoulourohoro, Greece

10. "What a great "ER" episode last night!"
9. "Your Karagouna costume is very figure flattering."
8. "Do you think Marianna will notice if I chew gum during practice?"
7. "George and Nancy who?"
6. "Please, Yianni, can't we practice *Maleviziotis* just one more time?"
5. "No, Sophia, let me sing the solo this time!"
4. "You guys go ahead and enjoy yourselves, I'll put away the costumes all by myself"
3. "The article I wrote for the *Lyra* is ready a month in advance!"
2. "I WANT to wash the slippers!"

and the number one thing you will never hear an Orpheus member say...

1. "Practice is canceled."



Orpheus Youth members performing *Zonarathikos*.



Girls cheering the boys during *Tsamikos*.

Orpheus Appears on Channel 20 "Absolute Artistry" Program

On Tuesday, February 29 members of the Orpheus Dance Troupe gathered at the Psistaria Restaurant in suburban Lincolnwood to tape a segment for "Absolute Artistry" - Chicago's Art Scene, a local television program dedicated to providing educational and cultural programming for the Chicagoland area. This particular segment showcased various ethnic dance troupes from the local area.

Upon arrival at the restaurant, the Orpheus dancers helped each other change into costume in the makeshift dressing rooms, and while they waited at the restaurant's entrance for the cameras to roll, they greeted some of the patrons who entered the restaurant, to the delight of some young children, who were quite taken with the colorful costumes!

After a sound check to prepare the sound system, the station's camera crew set up their equipment in the large dining area and patrons of the popular restaurant were treated to a performance of dances from the Greek mainland and selected islands. The troupe members wore different costumes representing various regions of Greece and entertained the diners and restaurant employees with the popular men's dance *Tsamikos*; *Kori Eleni*, a

women's dance from Macedonia; *Arhontogios* a syrtos from the island of Thassos; the lively *Pyrgousikos* from Chios and *Mihanikos* from Kalymnos, among others.

The cameraman wove in and around the dancers as they performed the different dances, making sure to capture the intricate footwork and camera-ready smiles of the Orpheans! A detailed expla-

nation of the history of the dances and significance of the various costumes and particular pieces were provided by a couple of the OHFS members to round out the presentation.

Orpheus appeared on "Absolute Artistry" on two nights: Friday, March 31 at 7:00 p.m. and again on Sunday, April 2 at 7:00 p.m. We hope you tuned in for an evening of ethnic dance and music! ☐



Orpheus at the Psistaria restaurant after taping the segment for "Absolute Artistry".

personals



Birthday wishes to: Rebecca Moraris, April 4; Paul Grosso, April 7; Elisseos Sianis, April 24; Chris Vadevoulis, April 29; Dana Gatzliolis, May 1; Christina Minarakis, May 3; Katerina Economou and Elena Kekatos, May 11; Patricia Minarakis, May 12; Tom

Mihalopoulos, June 4; George Pontikis June 23; Catherine Grosso, June 26. *Na ta ekatostisete!*

Namesday greetings to George Horbas, George Karahalios, George Logothetis and George Pontikis, April 23rd; Helen Antonopoulos, Kostas Economou, Kostas Giannopoulos, and Elena Kekatos on May 21st. *Chronia polla!*

Welcome to Orpheus: Caroline Bellios, George Horbas, Andreas Iskos, George and Christos Karahalios, and Themis Raftis.

Keep on dancing! Congratulations to Zaphiro Papastratakos and Elizabeth Rossmiller on their first performance with Orpheus.

Congratulations to our graduates this year: Antoni Giannopoulos from Fenwick High School and Kathy Tomaras from Hersey High School. Also, congratulations to Pat Tomaras, who graduated from DePaul University with a degree in computer science.

Orpheus would like to congratulate former member Patty Angelos on her engagement to Alex Maillis. The happy couple will be married this fall and will reside at his home in the Bahamas. We'll miss you, Patty! *Kala Stefana!*

This summer OHFS member Alexander Kapotas and former member Patty Angelos will be part of a young adult delegation representing the Greek Orthodox Diocese of Chicago at a week-long seminar at the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople, Turkey. The seminar is an international congress of several hundred young adults who will attend workshops and discussions focused on meeting needs of Orthodox Christians in the new millennium. *Kalo Taxiidi!* ☐

performance schedule

Skokie Festival of Cultures
Oakton Park
Skokie, IL
Saturday, May 20
4:00 p.m.

Orpheus Youth Group
End of Year Celebration
Golden Flame Banquet Hall
Chicago, IL
Saturday, May 20
7:30 p.m.

Pan-Arcadian Association Dinner
Dance
Avalon Banquet Hall
Mount Prospect, IL
Sunday, May 21
8:30 p.m.

St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox
Church Festival
Saginaw, Michigan
Friday - Sunday, June 16 - 18

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox
Church Festival
Justice, IL
Sunday, June 25
8:00 p.m.

St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox
Church Festival
Oak Lawn, IL
Saturday, July 15
8:00 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:
River Park Field House
5100 N. Francisco
Chicago, IL
312.742.7516

Orpheus Youth Group:

Every Thursday at:
6:15 p.m. - 7:15 p.m.
River Park Field House
5100 N. Francisco
Chicago, IL
312.742.7516

Every Saturday at:
1:15 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.
New Church
74 Park Drive
Glenview, IL

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 Summer Issue of *Lyra* will be accepted until June 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.

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