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The Newsletter for friends and members of OHFS
Vol. 9, Issue No. 3, Fall 2003



Youth Group kicks off another exciting year for 2003-2004

The beginning of the 2003-2004 year for the Orpheus Youth Group has been the most impressive ever! Registration reached record levels as almost 80 children joined the ranks of the group! It is very heartwarming and encouraging to see so many young faces being excited to learn about their Hellenic culture and history.

The Orpheus Youth Group was established six years ago as one of the many programs supported by the Orpheus Hellenic Folklore Society. It is open for children ages 10-14 and currently two, north suburban, branches operate weekly from September through May. The group's first appearance will be at the Museum of Science and Industry's

annual "Christmas Around the World" festival. They will perform on Saturday, December 13 at 2:45 p.m. Along with the dances to be presented that day, will be two seasonal folk carols from the islands of Astypalea and Patmos. Both islands are located in the Dodecanese island region of southeastern Greece. The Orpheus Adult Group will also perform at the festival.

This year's Youth Group instructors are Alexander Kapotas, Kostas Economou, Bessie Kouchoukos-Grosso, Yannis Economou, Pinelopi Logothetis, and Marianna Damianides-Gudmundsson. Barbara Dallas, along with Youth Group
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HELLENIC FOLKLORE
SOCIETY

606 Greendale Rd.
Glenview, IL 60025
847.657.0958

e-mail: orpheus@ohfs.org
<http://www.ohfs.org>

Tax-exempt Not-for-profit Organization

Yannis Economou
847.657.0958
Director/President

Kostas Economou
847.729.3406
Instructor

Marianna Gudmundsson
847.967.5103
Artistic Director/Vice President

Bessie Kouchoukos-Grosso
773.286.5132
Youth Group Coordinator



Members of the Orpheus Youth group at the Northbrook branch pose for a group picture after practice.

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alumni Joanna Chiotis and Patricia Minakakis will be assisting. This year's instructional material will include a wide variety of folk dances and songs from regions throughout Greece. Our goal is to create an environment in which youth members feel comfortable expressing the steps and style of each dance. In addition, members' understanding of the geographical and cultural history of Greece will be enhanced. Let's all have another great year! ☐



The Orpheus Youth boys performing "Zonaradikos" from Thrace during the SS. Peter and Paul Church Festival.



Members of the Orpheus Youth Summer session pose for a picture before the performance at SS. Peter and Paul.



The Orpheus Youth girls performing "Zonaradikos" from Thrace during the SS. Peter and Paul Church Festival.



Members of the Orpheus Youth group at the Glenview branch pose for a group picture after practice.

The "Kaggelari" Traditions in the village of Papadates, Epirus

By Aggeliki Siargos

I remember sitting on my grandmother's balcony on Easter Sunday in the small village of Papadates, located in the southwest corner of Epirus, Greece. During the early evening, I heard church bells ringing throughout the entire village. These bells signaled to everyone that the time had come to gather in the *plateia* (town square) to begin the annual dancing of the *Kaggelari*. This was the first of six consecutive days that this event would occur.

The *Kaggelari* is the local dance of the village of Papadates. People dance it whenever there is an occasion to celebrate events such as holidays, weddings or festivals. There are approximately 50 different songs for the *Kaggelari* dance, each with the same rhythm and step but different lyrics specific to the particular occasion. There is also the traditional *Kaggelari* song, which is danced at every celebration. This song is believed to have originated in the town of Grevena. It is the only song that differs in rhythm although the step is still the same. The leader of the *Kaggelari* dance, called the *Kaggelari*, must be an older respected member of the village.

He is the only one who can break away from the line and add his own variations to the dance.

It was an amazing sight to see all the people gathered together in the *plateia*. People traveled from neighboring villages just to see the *Kaggelari* danced. The line was nearly 300 people strong and all of them were joined at the hands with their fingers interlocked. The older men of the village led the line wearing the traditional *foustanela* costume. The rest of the men followed, lined up in order from oldest to youngest. Next were the women and at the end of the line were children, some of whom were as young as 2 years old. The older men who sang so loudly that their voices could be heard throughout the entire square initiated the singing. Everyone else in the line then repeated what was just sung. The dancing lasted for about one hour each day. As long as they had a leader, not even the pouring rain would have stopped the people of Papadates from singing and dancing.

I remember walking back to the house feeling overwhelmed by what I had just experienced. I had never seen a group of



Men from the Village of Papadates sing the *Kaggelari* song during Easter festivities.

people put aside all their responsibilities to join together full of pride and ready to celebrate the festive day. I was anxious for the next day to arrive when I would have another opportunity to dance the *Kaggelari*.

Many had the opportunity to see this dance performed earlier this year at the 2003 Festival of Greek Music and Dance – Easter Traditions and Customs. It was an honor to be able to teach the *Kaggelari* to my fellow dancers and to introduce them to a part of our Greek culture that they otherwise would not have known. Being on stage with them, in front of a large audience, while singing and dancing the *Kaggelari* was a proud moment for them, the entire village of Papadates and myself. ☐



People from the village of Papadates fill the Church yard to sing and dance the "Kaggelari" dance during Easter.

Yasoo! 2003 Dance Conference

The Yasoo 2003 dance conference in Seattle was a unique and memorable experience. Two dance groups from Greece, along with musicians and instructors, conducted workshops, performed in traditional attire and offered endless entertainment during the social events. The group Aristotelis from the town of Florina (region of Macedonia) and the dance group from the village of Asvestades (region of Thrace) offered sights, sounds and special moments that will stay with the participants for a long time.

The group from Asvestades included members whose ages ranged from 50-75 years old! Their energy, enthusiasm and talent were impossible to match. Their pure and spontaneous ways won everyone's heart and their experience is a true treasure. The group from Florina was led by their director, Yannis Manos, a lecturer of Balkan studies at the University of Thessaloniki in the Florina area. His impressive resume includes over 20 years of dance and folklore research. The methodical presentation and instruction of the dances from Florina offered insight and detail with regards to the appropriate expression of the local style and form. The conference offered a very good balance between the spontaneity of the group from Asvestades and the academic approach from the group from Florina.



Orpheus members Yannis Economou and Pinelopi Logotheti with members of the Asvestades dance group from Thrace, Greece.

Our gratitude goes to the organizer of the dance conference, Steve Teodosiadis, who needs to be commended for all his hard work in planning and hosting such an event. Many thanks are extended to the volunteers from St. Demetrios Church in Seattle who made their parish so hospitable throughout the conference.

We are looking forward to our next dance conference in New York in January 2004 for more unforgettable moments and the chance to reunite with our friends, through dance, from North America. ☐

spotlight on Orpheus dancer...



Georgia Makris

Name: Georgia Makris

Hometown: Des Plaines, IL

Parents/Family: My mother was born in Ahladokambo, Argolidos and my father was born in Lagadia, Arkadias.

Occupation: Freshman at Loyola University and working as a Pharmacy Technician

Time dancing with Orpheus Group: About a year and a half.

Thoughts on Dancing: Dancing is a form of expression that one can free their spirits. I have found Greek dancing to do just that. It is a way I can experience my heritage first hand and learn how my ancestors expressed their different emotions. Greek dancing is the hidden language of the Greek soul.

Winter Dance Conference 2004

Songs and Dances of the Apokriai (Carnival)

By Spiros Spirou

The custom of "Yennitsaroi and Boules" from the city of Naoussa in Macedonia and Carnival customs from Central Greece and Epiros will be the focus of Winter Dance Conference 2004. The conference will be held in New York City from January 30 to February 1.

Our instructors will be Takis Baitsis and Christos Tsitis from the group "Yiannitsaroi and Boules" of Naoussa, Macedonia; Nikolaos Liondos and Ioannis Koutsoumbas from the Music and Literary Association "Skoufas" of Arta; and Nancy Harmanda and George Kotsos from Athens.

Mr. Baitsis is the president of the Historical and Folklore Museum of Naoussa and president emeritus of the Yennitsaroi and Boules Association. He is the author of several books on the folklore and history of Naoussa, as well as a regular contributor to magazines and newspapers.

Mr. Tsitis joined the Yiannitsaroi and Boules Association and began dancing at the age of 4. In 1989 he became an instructor at "Yiannitsaroi and Boules", as well as the local group of nearby Episkopi.

While teaching in Belgium, he founded the dance group of the Association of Macedonians of Belgium.

Mr. Liondos graduated from the Department of Physical Education of the University of Athens, specializing in traditional dance. Since 1992 he has been the instructor of "Skoufas", as well as other groups around Arta. He has conducted extensive research in Epirus and the villages surrounding Arta, where he led the research team of "Skoufas" to document the "Kaggelaria" customs.

Mr. Koutsoumbas studied at the Academy of Physical Education. A longtime member of "Skoufas", he currently serves as vice-president of "Skoufas" and director of the Historical and Folklore Museums of Skoufas. He is also on the editorial board of the annual journal of "Skoufas".

Ms. Harmanda and Mr. Kotsos are already well known on the East Coast, having previously taught in Montreal, New York and at the Winter Dance Conference 2003 in Atlanta. Both began their careers in Greek folklore in the early 1970s as members of the "Lykeion ton Hellenidon" in Athens. They rose to become instructors



Takis Baitsis dressed in a "Yennitsari" outfit from the city of Naoussa, Macedonia.

while maintaining their positions in the performing group. Together they have directed or co-directed numerous performances to wide acclaim, including at the prestigious Odeon of Herod Atticus by the Acropolis.

For more information concerning the conference, please contact Spiro Spirou at 718-726-8985, spirou@wdc2004.org, or check the conference website at www.wdc2004.org. ☐

Favorite Dance: *Kori Eleni* because of its quick-moving, unique steps

Most vivid OHFS Memory: My most vivid memory would have to be the 2003 Festival because it was my first festival performance with the large group and live band from Greece. That night we made the music become visible. We became the music and showed the audience our passion for Greek dancing.

Favorite Greek dish: *Tiropites*

Favorite Place in Greece: Siro

Hobbies/sports/interests: Soccer, Chanting, Dancing, Theater (Ancient Tragedies)

Nobody Knows I: Have been playing the violin since 3rd grade.

Best childhood memory: When I had gone to Boston one summer to visit family. We took a boat out into the Atlantic

Ocean for whale watching. It was the most fascinating and memorable site to see a whale jump about 30 consecutive times in and out of the water.

Dream Vacation: Australia

I'm currently looking forward to: starting college

I stay home to watch: Antenna Satellite

Prized possession: My family, heritage, and religion

Where I heard about Orpheus Dance Troupe: From my Greek school dance teacher, Mrs. Sianis. Just as Mrs. Sianis encouraged me to join, I too encourage you all to participate. Not only will you learn how to dance but you will also get the chance to meet wonderful people and work with talented teachers. This is what I believe makes Orpheus special. ☐

Travelling in Greece

by Bessie Grosso

This summer my daughter, Catherine Grosso, was selected by the Counsel General of Greek Education affairs to attend a program for children of Greek descent. The program, sponsored by the University of Crete in Rethymnon, invites children to attend classes for three weeks in history, language, arts, music, dance and theater. The purpose of the program is to encourage children to explore their roots and connections with Greece. It also allows them to meet children from all over the world. "I knew Greeks lived all over the world, but I have met friends I will have forever," remarked Catherine. In addition to classes, the children had a chance to visit places of interest throughout Crete.

In conjunction with the program, a Theater Festival was sponsored by the University of Crete and the children of Chicago's Socrates School, under the direction of Takis Theotokatos, were selected to represent the Greek American community. Each evening was spent watching the drama groups that were competing for the top drama production. I am proud to say that Takis won for best original screenplay and Demetra Bounas, from Socrates, won for best supporting actress.

I organized a special event for the children who attended the Cretan program, which was to dance at theater night. I asked the kids what they wanted to dance. They of course chose the Cretan dance *Pentozalis*.

The Cretan *Syrto* was also added to the presentation. We only had two weeks to get ready for the program. We got together every day for one hour and because the kids wanted to do it so badly, they learned the dances in time for the performance. Sixteen children participated including ten Orpheus Youth group members. Those who were not members of the Orpheus Youth group couldn't wait to join this fall. Once you dance, especially in Greece, you are hooked. The best part was that I found a local seamstress who lent us costumes, boots and scarves to use for our performance. My son, Paul Grosso, had a chance to wear an entire Cretan outfit, including his favorite, the *maheri* (knife) tucked in his belt. He proudly walked into town as people stopped to take a quick picture with him. "I feel so proud to be Greek and it makes me so happy to dance," said Paul.

I also taught dance classes to teachers who attended the program, which they really appreciated. I didn't realize how much I knew about dancing and how fortunate I am to know so many Greek dances. At the end of our stay we had a great dinner where we celebrated, danced and ate. The local dance troupe came and danced with us. That was real Cretan dancing!

What a summer! I know I will never forget it. The rest of the summer was great too. It was nice to see our special friends Hara and Rafael in Athens. They send their love to everyone and are looking forward to



Orpheus members Vasiliki Grosso with Lyceum of Ellinidon of Kalamata dance instructor Michales Mixos .

coming to the States again. I spent a lot of time in Kalamata where I met the instructor for the Lyceum Ellinidon in Kalamata, Michales Mixos. It was a special treat for me to practice with them, especially since they were preparing for a performance in Portugal. Orpheus fever! I hope opportunity knocks on my door again. Let's all have a great year. ☐



The Grosso family pictured with Lyceum of Ellinidon of Athens dance instructor Hara Deligiannis and her son Rafael.



Youngsters from the Socrates School perform Cretan dances in Crete.



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Residents of the Greek American Nursing center join the dance line with members of the Orpheus Dance Group.



Orpheus members pose for a picture before the performance at the Holy Cross Church Festival



Orpheus members performing "Bella Olympia" from Macedonia in front of an attentive crowd at the St. Nicholas Church festival.



Orpheus members Mitsos and Christina Dallas found the opportunity to play some zourna tunes while attending the Orpheus booth at the Greek Town Festival.



Orpheus members with members of the St. Demetrios Greek Church dance group in Saginaw, Michigan.

performance schedule

"Christmas Around The World"
Museum of Science and Industry
57th and Lake Shore Drive
Chicago, IL
Saturday, December 13, 2003
2:45 p.m.

"Vasilopita" Celebration
St. John The Baptist Church
Des Plaines, IL
Saturday, January 17, 2004
6:00 p.m.

Winter Dance Conference 2004
New York, New York
January 30-February 1, 2004

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: Members ages 10-14 (Northbrook 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 Yannis or Kostas Economou with a blank cassette tape.

Submissions for the Winter issue of *Lyra* will be accepted until December 20, 2003. 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.

606 Greendale Rd.
Glenview, IL 60025

