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The Newsletter for friends and members of OHFS

Vol. 17, Issue No. 2, Summer 2011

Destination Chios: Orpheus Takes Greece by Storm Part IV

Passport – check!
Sunscreen – check!
Costumes – check!
Ready or not, Chios, here we come!

This summer, the Orpheus Hellenic Folklore Society is preparing for yet another trip to the motherland, this time the target is the beautiful island of Chios.

Chios, located in the Aegean Sea, is the fifth largest of the Greek islands and has a very

colorful and rich history. Over the years, the island has been occupied and influenced by several cultures and civilizations and evidence of this can be witnessed all over the island to this day. The island is known for its strong merchant shipping community, its unique production of mastic and its medieval villages. Chios is also known as the Greek poet Homer's island, who lived and taught there. In addition, there are several museums depicting the island's long-standing history.

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Mastic trees produce mastic, one of the main exports of Chios. Mastic elements can be found in a wide variety of products including, gum, medicinal items, varnishes and lotions.



The ruins at Ephesus are an excellent example of the marvels of the ancient world. The Temple of Artemis at Ephesus, which has since been destroyed, was named one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

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In late July, over 100 Orpheus members and their families will arrive in Chios, specifically the town of Karfas, located a couple of miles from the capital of Chios. Similar to previous trips to Greece, participants can look forward to excursions, workshops, performances and quality fun-in-the sun time at the beach. Orpheus Director, Yannis Economou notes, "The goal of the trip is both educational and performance oriented since Orpheus will be participating in several presentations on the island. In addition, we plan on participating in dance workshops that showcase local traditions and

take tours that highlight many of the island's beauties and history".

This is the fourth time that Orpheus visits Greece. Prior trips have included participation in the 51st Pan-Macedonian Convention of the U.S. and Canada; representing the U.S. at the First Festival of Greek Artists Abroad at the annual Athens Festival; and most recently, a trip to Kalamata in 2007 which featured dance and choral performances, meetings and workshops with local officials and dance groups, as well as several excursions around the Kalamata vicinity. Other highlights from these trips included visiting various museums and archeological sites, a reception at the Governor's mansion in Thessaloniki, and the rare opportunity to perform at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus Theater.

Before the invasion of Chios begins, Orpheus members will have the fantastic opportunity to perform in Athens at the prestigious Deree College (American College of Greece). Deree College is the oldest American academic institution in Europe, with a state-of-the-art campus. This will be a wonderful opportunity for friends and family members, who otherwise would not get a chance to attend a



A sample of the beautiful architecture in the village of Pyrgi.

performance, to see the hard work and dedication of our members, particularly the youth group.

One of the most incredible remnants of Ancient Greek civilization is the ruins at Ephesus, Turkey. The Chios Strait is all that separates Chios from Turkey, making it very easy to travel to Ephesus and see the ruins. And that's exactly what we intend to do! A day trip to Ephesus is planned, which will undoubtedly prove to be one of the top highlights of the trip.

If we learned anything from our trip to Kalamata, it is that performing in Greece gives one an incredible sense of pride and connection to his ancestors. It is something that cannot easily be put into words and must be experienced firsthand. One of the underlying objectives of this trip will be to highlight and celebrate our heritage and demonstrate to our audience in Greece that the Hellenic spirit and pride is most definitely alive and well in Chicago. The Orpheus Hellenic Folklore Society will, once again, do its best to demonstrate this.

Kalo taxidi everyone— see you in Athens and Chios! ☐



Visitors and locals can stop by the Milarakia and enjoy a meal or a drink while savoring the picturesque surroundings.

Orpheus Takes Chicago on “A Greek Journey In the Windy City”

8.6 million visitors a year can't be wrong—a trip to Chicago would not be complete without a visit to Navy Pier! Known as, “Chicago's lakefront playground”, Navy Pier has something for everyone, year round.

Recently, Navy Pier introduced a new and impressive performance series, “Neighborhoods of the World”, on Sundays in Navy Pier's Crystal Gardens. The event, which was free and open to the public, highlighted and celebrated the diverse ethnic neighborhoods of Chicago.

Sunday, March 27, was devoted to celebrating Greece and Orpheus was asked to represent Chicago's Greek American community. The Consulate of Greece in Chicago, specifically, the Deputy Consul, Kostas Daskalopoulos, spearheaded the event and worked tirelessly in collaboration with the National Hellenic Museum, to present a five hour event called, “A Greek Journey in the Windy City”.

The program started with an “intro to Greek dance”. Orpheus members demonstrated some popular Greek dances and broke them down so that audience members could participate

and join the fun. Later, Orpheus members presented dances such as Koulouriasstos, Mantilatos, Hasapia and, the always fun to watch, Tsamikos. The Orpheus Music Group played an incredible live set, throughout the afternoon, and the crowd loved it! A variety of instruments were featured, including the violin, clarinet, santouri, toumbeleki and guitar. Presvytera Stephanie Malamis and Nina Katsinis on vocals wowed the crowd with selections that included, “Itia”, “Dimitroula Mou”, “Ela Na Pame Se Ena Meros” and several other popular island and mainland pieces.

Also present was the Chicago Hellenic Choir, under the direction of Eftihia Papageorgiou. Orpheus collaborated, once again, with the Chicago Hellenic Choir to present a medley of popular Greek songs such as, “Marmaromenos Vasilias”, “Ena to Xelidoni”, and “Ta Paidia tou Peiraia”. The Crystal Gardens has to be, by far, one of the most impressive venues that Orpheus has performed at. Dancing and singing in a six-story glass atrium, with a 50-foot arched ceiling and a beautiful indoor, one-acre botanical garden is not something that we have the chance to do often! The more than

80 live palm trees, gorgeous flowers and dancing “leapfrog” fountains definitely made the experience that much more spectacular!

Toula Georgakopoulos, Operations & Programs Director, at the National Hellenic Museum was the master of ceremonies. Ms. Georgakopoulos did a wonderful job of keeping the fun going, while introducing little known facts and trivia about the strong Greek influence that helped make Chicago the incredible city that it is.

During the short breaks between performances, everyone had a chance to sample delicious Greek cuisine, wine and olive oil from a variety of Chicago restaurants and businesses. Screen projectors featured video clips from the National Tourist Organization, presenting popular attractions such as the new Acropolis Museum in Athens. Additionally, the National Hellenic Museum presented a pictorial illustrating the history of Chicago's Greeks, as well as Greeks in the United States. Furthermore, kids got to enjoy some arts and crafts projects and were supplied with scissors, cardboard and plenty of crayons and glue to create their own shields, straight out of Greek mythology.

The feedback from audience participants and Orpheus members was overwhelmingly positive. After the event, Dylan Drice, Production Coordinator at Navy Pier, and co-host of the event, commented that this was by far the most successful ethnic event, as part of this festival, in regards to audience attendance, quality of presentations and booth presence. “That is very high praise, considering that ethnic groups from Poland, Italy, Mexico, India, China had already hosted their events prior to ours”, noted Yannis Economou, Director of the OHFS “It goes without saying that when the Greek American community puts their resources together in a constructive way, miracles happen”.

To see pictures from this event, please visit us on Facebook. 



Orpheus performing at the ‘Neighborhoods of the World’ event at Chicago ‘s Navy Pier.

Orpheus Honored at Mayor's Reception

On Tuesday, March 22, the Orpheus Hellenic Folklore Society was prominently featured during a reception, hosted by the Mayor's Office in Chicago, to honor Greek Independence Day. The event was hosted along with the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs at the Chicago Cultural Center. Members of the Orpheus Youth Dance Group performed Greek folk dances and the OHFS received a certificate of appreciation for its contributions to the City of Chicago on behalf of its Mayor, Richard Daley.

In what has become an annual tradition, four members of the Greek American community are chosen to be honored by the Mayor's office during this reception. The awards were presented by Maria Georges who is Chicago's longest serving Corporation Counsel and the highest ranked Greek American in the Daley administration.



Members of the Orpheus youth group during the opening remarks at the Greek Independence Day reception at the Chicago Cultural Center.

Chicago Mayor, Richard Daley, was out of town during the original ceremony, but arranged to receive the honorees personally a few weeks later in his office at City Hall. Yannis Economou, Director of the OHFS, was one of the certificate recipients and he had the chance to give the Mayor an Orpheus sweat shirt as a gift. The Mayor was very pleased with the gesture and mentioned that his brother just came back from a trip to Greece and that his

children were planning a trip to the Greek islands this summer.

We are very proud for the recognition that the OHFS has received and for the excellent performances given by the Orpheus Youth Group that evening. Orpheus has also been honored in the past by the Governor of Illinois for its contributions to the State at the Governor's Mansion in Springfield, Illinois. 📷

spotlight on Orpheus dancer...



Maria

Hometown: Arlington Heights, Illinois.

Parents/Family From: My yiayia Maria is from Nestani, Tripoli and my pappou Antoni is from Gargalianous, Kalamata.

Time Dancing with Orpheus Group: I have been dancing with Orpheus for 4 years and am loving every second of it!

Thoughts on Dancing: Dancing is so important to me! It is a way of expressing yourself through music. I have been dancing since I was three years old (ballet, tap, jazz, modern and hip-hop are some types of dances I enjoy). And of course, I love Greek dancing! I am so proud to be part of Orpheus and learning so many types of Greek dances from all over Greece.

Orpheus Judges HDF Competition

HDF, or otherwise known as the Hellenic Dance Festival, was held in Greenville, South Carolina last February. HDF is hosted by the Metropolis of Atlanta and is a Greek Folk Dance and Choral competition.

This year, Orpheus director, Yannis Economou, was invited to be a judge for the dance competition. This is the third time that Yannis has been a judge at HDF. The festival was held in scenic downtown Greenville,

very close to the impressive site of St. George Greek Orthodox Church.

Dance and Choral groups from the southeastern states participated in this competition, which was established 11 years ago. Yannis had the chance to interact with the other judges that included friends and folk enthusiasts like John Peppes of Detroit, Demetri Tashie and Areti Tsiola of New York and Lazaros Hatzipanagiotou of Athens, Greece. The HDF hosts included John Lulias and Eleni Hopes, who have also served as judges in many competitions in the west coast as well as in Chicago. The HDF weekend, apart from the competition, included evening events with music and dancing and a visit to a local Children's Museum.



The panel of judges for the HDF competition included among others (from left to right): Demetri Tashie of New York, John Peppes of Detroit, Michigan and Lazaros Hatzipanagiotou of Athens, Greece. All of the judges are acquaintances from previous dance conferences and performances.

HDF, like FDF in the west coast, has been instrumental in elevating interest in Greek folk traditions among the younger generations as they provide a different platform to get involved with that medium. It is always very encouraging to see that level of interest in today's Greek American youth. ☐

Favorite Dance: I love them all, but one of my favorites has to be Ikariotikos! I love this dance because it makes me feel lively!

Most Vivid OHFS Memory: AGDC!! I was lucky to be a part of the 2010 America's Greek Dance Competition. It was a time where my friends from Orpheus and I got to meet many other Greek kids that shared the same passion as us. I will never forget how we placed second in our division! I am looking forward to this year's competition and hopefully bring home the gold!!

Favorite Greek Dish: My yiayia's pastichio... yum!!!

Favorite Place in Greece: I would love to one day vacation in Santorini.

Nobody knows I: used to play the cello.

Best childhood memory: When I was four, I had my first dance recital. I remember our cute, frilly, sparkly blue tutus and the song we danced to, *Three Little Fishies*. Even though we hardly knew the dance, it was still exciting to be on stage with the spotlight on us. I think that was the moment I realized I loved dancing and being on stage.

The perfect weekend would be: Spending time with my friends and family.

Someone I'd like to meet: Mixalis Xatzigiannis.

Prized possession: One of my mom's rings that she gave me when I was little. I still wear it and will always treasure it.

Where I heard about Orpheus Dance Troupe: My mom thought it would be lots of fun and something I might enjoy. She was right...I love Orpheus! ☐

Orpheus Youth Group Celebrates the Close of the 2010-2011 Year

On Sunday, May 15, friends and family of the Orpheus Hellenic Folklore Society's youth group gathered at St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church in Des Plaines to celebrate yet another successful End of the Year event. Highlights included island and mainland dances and songs; live music courtesy of the Orpheus Music Ensemble; presentation of graduation certificates and the Dina Sianis merit awards; and speeches by graduating members of the Youth Group. After the performances, everyone lingered in the church hall, mixing and mingling and enjoying the large buffet of treats and refreshments.

The performers, dressed in traditional folk costumes, representing various regions of Greece, gave animated, energetic performances, accompanied by the Orpheus Music Group. Throughout the year, the youth dancers and musicians perform at various venues such as the Greek American Rehabilitation and Nursing Centre, parades and

the annual "Christmas Around the World" festival at the Museum of Science and Industry. The End of the Year event is a culmination and demonstration of the kids' hard work and dedication, and is perhaps, the most anticipated performance by children and parents alike.

Demi Dimopoulos, Spiro Angelos and Katerina Economou were this year's recipients of the Dina Sianis Merit Award. The award recognizes the recipients' achievements and dedication in perpetuating the folk song and dance traditions of their ancestors. Additionally, graduation certificates were presented to several members of the Youth Group who are ready to move forward and transition into the Adult Group.

Throughout the event, four of the graduating Youth Members had the opportunity to give short speeches, recounting their experience with the dance troupe and to offer their thoughts on what it meant for them to participate in the Orpheus Youth

Group. A common theme among the sentiments expressed was the kids' gratefulness and fulfillment in being able to learn more about their heritage and background and furthermore, being able to perpetuate our rich Greek culture and traditions through their singing and dancing. We are very proud to have these young members continue their participation and learn as they grow with the Adult Group.

The goal of the OHFS youth group program is to expose and promote the Greek folk song and dance tradition to the younger generations. Practice is held Thursday evenings at St. John Lutheran Church in Northbrook and Saturday afternoons at New Church in Glenview. The youth program is open to youngsters between the ages of 10 and 15, and no prior dance experience is necessary. For more information about the Orpheus Youth Group, Music Group, or other inquiries, please visit our website at www.ohfs.org. ☐



Yannis Economou and Bessie Grosso with the 2011 Orpheus Youth group graduates.



Youth group members performing the girls' dance, "Trata" from Megara.



Orpheus members, Elena, Zoe and Jillian proudly posing with the Orpheus banner at the Greek American parade.



Greek pride and enthusiasm were abundant as Orpheus parade participants marched down Halsted street.



Youth group members performing for the residents of the Greek American Nursing and Rehabilitation Centre.



After the performance, Orpheus members had the chance to meet some of the residents of the Centre and present them with flowers.



Members of the Greek dance troupe, Parthenon, and the Serbian dance troupe, Mladost visited Orpheus all the way from Paris, France! The visiting dance groups were in Chicago to present a special dance performance entitled, "All That Folk".



Orpheus members dancing with their new French friends at the Orpheus practice location in Northbrook.

performance schedule

Greece 2011-Athens

Saturday, July 23
Irene Bailey Open Theatre
American College of Greece -Deree
Agia Paraskevi, **Athens**
9:00 p.m.

Greece 2011-Chios

Saint Paraskevi Festival
Tuesday, July 26
Parparia, **Chios**
9:00 p.m.

Thursday, July 28
Mesta, **Chios**
7:30 p.m.

Friday, July 29
Chios Town, **Chios**
9:00 p.m.

Greeks Abroad reception
Saturday, July 30
Golden Sand Hotel
Karfa, **Chios**
10:00 p.m.

Taste of Greece

Sunday, August 28
Halsted Street
Chicago, IL
8:00 p.m.
Come visit the Orpheus Booth
Sat-Sun, 5:00 - 11:00 p.m.

Northshore Greek Festival

Saturday, September 3
Hellenic American Academy
1085 Lake Cook Road
Deerfield, IL
8:00 p.m.

Chicago McDonald's Thanksgiving Parade

Thursday, November 24
State Street
Chicago, IL
7:00 a.m.

Christmas Around the World

Sunday, December 11
Museum of Science & Industry
5700 S. Lake shore Drive
Chicago, IL
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: (September through May)

Every Thursday at:

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

Every Saturday at:

2:00 p.m. - 3:00 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 CD 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 CD.

Submissions for the Spring issue of *Lyrta* will be accepted until September 15, 2011. 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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