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The Newsletter for friends and members of OHFS

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Orpheus Participates in AGDC Competition

It's one thing to get up in front of a crowd and dance, but when you know your every step, arm movement and general body language is being scrutinized and evaluated, it becomes a whole different situation! Your energy level rises (along with your adrenaline), there is an extra bounce in your step, and you find yourself dancing like you've never danced before!

Such was the case this past October, as members of the Orpheus Advanced Youth Group took part in an exciting, three day dynamic display of Greek song and dance at America's Greek Dance and Choral Competition (AGDC). AGDC, which was established in 2009, hosts a nationwide competition, open to all Greek American youth and adults, eager to display their talents and love of Greek music and dance.

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Members of the OHFS Advanced Youth Group pose for photos, after presenting a suite of dances from Anatoliki Romilia, during day two of the AGDC competition.

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This is the second time that Orpheus has participated in a folk dance competition. In 2006, Orpheus members travelled to San Diego, California to take part in the Greek Orthodox Folk Dance Festival (FDF), where the adult group received the Founders Special Achievement Award in the Advanced Senior Division. Orpheus also participated in the choral competition and won first place, under choral director, Eftihia Papageorgiou. In addition, Eftihia received the Choral Director's Award.

The second annual AGDC competition was held at the Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles, Illinois, during the weekend of October 8 – 10, and included participants representing several different states from across the nation. The judge's panel included seasoned professionals from all over the United States, evaluating the authenticity and quality of the performances. At the opening ceremony, Greek American youth marched in carrying Greek and American flags, as well as banners representing their respective organizations. Orpheus member, Paul Grosso, had the honor of singing the United States National Anthem at the start of the program. Each group selected their own background music and went on stage to introduce themselves. Other entertainment included

a performer who awed the crowd with her aerial acrobatics, twisting and turning in mid air while suspended from long panels of fabric.

During the Semifinals round, the troupe performed a suite of dances from the island of Corfu. The girls took the stage first and performed the dance, "Ai Giorgis", as the boys looked on and cheered. Orpheus music group members, George Lawler on guitar and Angelo Angelos on violin, accompanied the dancers during the suite. The energy definitely picked up during the lively and expressive couples dances, "Balletes" and "Fourolana", rousing the audience as they clapped and cheered the dancers on.

Before the start of the Finals round, the boys waited patiently, decked out in their Thracian costumes, while the girls were putting the final touches on their costumes. Then it was off to pose for multiple photos, as they had done the day before, for the parents, AGDC organizers and other "paparazzi".

Boyialiki, Anatoliki Romilia, was the chosen area of Greece to be represented in the Finals round, giving the dancers the opportunity to represent both the Greek islands and mainland during the course of the weekend. The suite opened with the spirited, "Sarantata" dance and continued with other upbeat dances, such as, "Troirou",




Girls performing "Ai Giorgis", wearing the Corfu costume which won the Costume Award at the AGDC competition.

"Baedouska" and "Inzikiotikos". The energy and enthusiasm of the dancers spilled out into the audience as was evidenced by all the applause, encouraging exclamations and cheering aimed back at the dancers.

Sunday night, the awards ceremony marked the end to the three day festivities. Orpheus member, Nicole Mitroussis, had the honor of kicking off the program by singing the United States National Anthem. Soon, the eagerly anticipated awards presentation began and Orpheus was awarded second place in the Junior Category. Nicole and Paul, who have been studying at the Odeion School of Music, under Eftihia Papageorgiou, competed in the Choral portion of the competition and did an excellent job, with Nicole winning first place and Paul receiving the Choral Special Achievement Award. Furthermore, Orpheus won the Costume Award for the colorful, richly decorated Corfu costumes. After all the awards were presented, it was time for the party to start! Two guest singers from Greece entertained the crowd, keeping the energy up and the crowd dancing for hours, bringing a thrilling, whirlwind weekend to a wonderful end.

We are very proud of the dedication, time and effort that everyone put into this competition, especially the youth group members. Congratulations and many thanks to everyone who took part in this competition!

To view photos and video from this event, please visit our website, www.ohfs.org, or visit us on Facebook. 



AGDC participants and instructors smile for the paparazzi after completing the Finals round.

Orpheus Participates in Annual Christmas Around the World Tradition

It was a bitterly cold and snowy Sunday afternoon in Chicago, but inside the Museum of Science and Industry, things were heating up as Orpheus members were preparing to take the stage at the 69th annual, "Christmas Around the World" celebration. It was standing room only at the Holiday Stage area, where Orpheus friends and family members, as well as audience members who never had the opportunity to experience

an "Orpheus performance" before, gathered to enjoy the colorful costumes and energetic show.

This was the 18th year that the Orpheus Hellenic Folklore Society participated in the long-running holiday event. What started as a salute to American allies during World War II, showcasing 12 Christmas trees representing 12 different countries, has evolved into a spectacular, mesmerizing annual

holiday tradition, featuring over 50 magnificent, richly decorated ethnic trees, including a tree representing Greece. Many performers and their families could not resist posing for a shot in front of the giant tree, which was decorated with colorful garland, bright lights, and the tell-tale Hellenic accents: mini-tsarouchia, and petite "Amalia" and "Tsolia" dolls.

All three of the Youth groups and the Adult group, showcasing a variety of traditional costumes, took part in this familiar holiday performance. The hour-long show featured songs and dances from the Greek islands and mainland. Youth group members took turns announcing the dances, in Greek and English, providing the audience with some information and background. The Youth group performed dances such as, "Berthe" and "Loulouvikos", both from the region of Megara, while the Adult group concentrated on dances from the island of Paros, including, "Hasapikos", "Ageranos" and "Ballos".

Another exciting element to this performance was the Orpheus music group, under the direction of instructors Eve Monzingo and George Lawler, accompanying the dancers with live music. The Orpheus singing group, led by instructor Presvytera Stefanie Malamis, provided the lyrics and melody to several songs, lending energy and "kefi" to the Youth and Adult groups as they executed the dances. This is one of the few events where all three of the Youth groups and the Adult group have the opportunity to showcase their skills and love of Greek dance, while performing as an "Orpheus family unit". The popular "Christmas Around the World" event reaches a large, diverse audience, and Orpheus was proud to have had the opportunity to represent the Greek community, demonstrating our strong sense of Greek spirit, culture and pride.

To view and order photos and video of the event, please visit our website, www.ohfs.org or visit us on Facebook. 📷



The OHFS Music Group and singers provided live music for the dancers at the Museum of Science and Industry's, "Christmas Around the World" event.



Youth group members pose in front of the Hellenic Christmas tree, which featured decorations such as mini tsarouchia and petit "Amalia" and "Tsolia" dolls.

KYKLOS 5th Anniversary Dinner Dance

By Angelo Angelos

In January, members of the Orpheus Music Ensemble went on a road trip to Detroit, Michigan for a special performance. John Peppes, a guest participant in the OHFS 20th Anniversary Celebration, saw the talent of the music group and decided to showcase it as inspiration for others to take initiative and learn to play Greek folk music. He invited the music group to perform at the 5th Anniversary Dinner Dance of the KYKLOS Hellenic Society, based in Detroit. Members who performed included the music group instructors, Eve Monzingo and George Lawler, Angelo, Spiro, and Andrew Angelos, Izaki Metropoulos, Paul and Christina Grosso, Adam Papadolias, and guest guitarist from Chicago's premier Greek band, "Grecian Formula", Pete Angelos.

The event was attended by 300 people, including His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas Of Detroit. Following dinner the KYKLOS dance



Members of the OHFS Music Ensemble, doing what they do best, at the KYKLOS anniversary dinner dance.

troupe put on a show where they showcased the dances of Epirus, centering the performance around the traditional Epirotan wedding. After the great dancing by KYKLOS, we got on stage and played our hearts out with everything from "Yianni Mou to Mantili Sou" of Epirus to "Giala" of Kalymnos. While the OHFS band was not playing, we showcased OUR dancing skills by partying it up Greek style to the traditional Kalamatiana,

Tsamika, and Zeibekika of Oneiro, one of Detroit's Greek bands! The event went almost all night, with us arriving back at our hotel at 1:00 in the morning from the fantastic glendi we had taken part in. The experience was a fantastic one. Not only did we get to showcase our musical abilities, we also made musical connections outside our city and got to show people a side of Greek dancing that normally isn't shown. I'd really like to go back soon! ☐

spotlight on Orpheus dancer...



Ethel Angelos

Hometown: Chicago

Parents/Family From: My father is from Distomo, Levadeia and my mother is from Glina, Argyrokastro in Voreio Epiros

Time Dancing with Orpheus Group: This is my 4th year dancing with the group and my 3rd year as an assistant instructor.

Thoughts on Dancing: Do it as often and as long as possible!

Favorite Dance: Troirou from Anatoliki Roumelia; I tend to favor the Northern Dances!

Orpheus Marches in Thanksgiving Parade

A giant turkey balloon hovering in the sky. Hundreds of bundled-up spectators lining the sidewalks of Chicago's State street. A multitude of musicians, dancers, actors, animals and floats lining up at the south end of the Loop. Put these clues together and it can only mean one thing: The McDonald's Thanksgiving Parade is underway!

2010 marked the fourth year in a row that Orpheus has participated in this traditional event. The 77th annual parade was broadcast live nationwide. Spectators enjoyed watching elaborately decorated floats, giant helium balloons, equestrian units, award-winning marching bands and hundreds of other talented individuals march down Chicago's historic State street. Also known as, "Chicago's Grand Holiday Tradition", the parade featured local and national celebrities, among them, Jennifer Beals, actress and native Chicagoan, serving as this year's Grand Marshall.

Luckily the weather cooperated since the parade's motto is "the show will go on, regardless of the weather!", but it was a cold November morning,

nonetheless. Orpheus members bundled up as best they could, taking care not to cover up their costumes. Before the parade began, there was a short warm up session as the performers danced a few rounds of "Kalamatianos", getting everyone pumped up and excited, anxious to start the marching. Soon, Orpheus was on the parade route, with a few of the youth group members carrying the Orpheus banner, introducing the troupe to the crowd. The music was blaring, as youth and adult members danced and marched down the street, while proudly waving Greek flags.

Orpheus members also got the chance to meet new friends during the course of the parade. Fellow dance group members, cheerleaders and famous movie characters, such as Star Wars' Darth Vader, were just some of the interesting people we mingled and posed for photos with.

In a few hours, the parade was over and Orpheus members headed home to enjoy the holiday feast with their families, and no doubt, watch some of the parade highlights reliving the morning's excitement! ☒



Orpheus members woke up extra early and braved the cold weather on Thanksgiving morning to participate in the 77th annual McDonald's Thanksgiving Parade.

Most Vivid OHFS Memory:

The 20th Anniversary performance.

Favorite Greek Dish:

My mother's Kotopita, with homemade filo.

Favorite Place in Greece: Parga, Epiros

Hobbies/Sports/Other Interests:

Cubs, Bears and Rembetika

Nobody knows I: Play piano and draw

Best childhood memory: Our family trip to Greece the entire summer of 1972.

The perfect weekend would be:

Lazing with my family on any beach.

Someone I'd like to meet: I'm content with the people that I have already met in my life and know, and will be happy to meet those that God sends my way in the future.

Favorite spot in Chicago: Anywhere along the lakefront

I am currently looking forward to:

Hopefully spending the summer in Greece!

I stay home to watch: Mad Men

Prized possession: "The wise man carries his possessions within him." Nothing material that I possess has any REAL importance, as it can be replaced.

Where I heard about Orpheus Dance Troupe:

My cousin's daughter was a member and told us about the group. ☒

Orpheus Ushers in the New Year with Vasilopita Event

Each year, the Orpheus Hellenic Folklore Society participates in several performances and sponsors various events around the Chicago area, attracting hundreds of people. But without a doubt, the annual Vasilopita celebration is by far the most anticipated and well attended of these events, and this year's celebration was certainly no exception! This year's gathering was one of the most successful ever as over 350 Orpheus members, their families and friends gathered at St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church in Des Plaines for a night of great food, great music and lots of non-stop dancing and fun.

This year's Vasilopita was combined with a benefit to assist the dance troupe in its efforts to keep the Hellenic culture and traditions alive within the Greek American community and beyond. Some new attractions this year included a wide assortment of gift baskets that were auctioned/raffled off to several lucky guests. The baskets contained a huge variety of special items such as clothing, jewelry, spa services, restaurant gift certificates and much more. This year's event also featured an ad book highlighting special moments from the past year, in

addition to expressions of well-wishes and demonstrations of support from Orpheus friends, family and the Greek American community as a whole.

After the blessing of the Vasilopitas, by Father Rallis, guests enjoyed the abundant buffet, courtesy of Jimmy's Restaurant. Eventually, guests made their way to the dessert table, indulging in an enormous variety of delicious and tempting sweets. Each table also had its own Vasilopita cake, providing numerous chances for the guests to find the coveted lucky coin!

Soon, the eagerly awaited video segment began. This year's theme took the audience on a trip down memory lane, focusing on the events of 2010, and highlighted Orpheus' participation at America's Greek Dance Competition (AGDC) this past October. (For more information about the AGDC competition, please see the article entitled, "Orpheus Participates in AGDC Competition"). Furthermore, Orpheus had the pleasure of welcoming a surprise guest that evening: Olympic gold medalist, Nikolaos Siranidis, direct from Greece. Siranidis, along with fellow athlete, Thomas Bimis, competed in the 2004 Olympic



With a Vasilopita at each table, there were several lucky coin winners that night.

Games in Athens, winning the gold medal in the men's synchronized diving 3 meter springboard event.

The night continued with the 20 plus talented musicians and singers that make up the Orpheus music group, filling up the stage area at St. John's. The music group, joined once again by clarinet virtuoso, Jim Stoyanoff, and guest musician Ilker Capoglu on violin and *kemenche* (Pontian lyra) did a fantastic job playing an energetic, non-stop 3 hour set. Selections included songs and medleys from mainland Greece and the islands. Epirus, Pontos, Macedonia, Chios and other areas were well represented as sounds of the violin, daouli, clarinet and various other instruments filled the church hall. The dance floor was hopping the entire night as young and old dancers showed off their moves with dances such as "Tsamikos", "Baedouska", "Mantilatos", "Pidihtos" and "Pyrgousikos".

It is always wonderful to see Orpheus members, friends and family coming together and enjoying themselves at events such as this. It is encouraging and inspiring to know that members of Chicago's Greek American community are passing down the rich culture and traditions of Greece to future generations. This has always been part of Orpheus' mission statement, and it is events like this that keep inspiring us to do what we do. See you next year! ☐



Orpheus members showing off their moves and having fun with dances from Pontos.



Even though some were too little to participate, Orpheus members and their families had a chance to get together for an afternoon of bowling, pizza, dancing and fun during the Christmas break.



Orpheus youth group members got a surprise visit from Santa Claus at the Glenview and Northbrook practice locations. In addition to getting everyone in the Christmas spirit, Santa passed out candy, posed for photos and showed off his dance moves!



Youth Group III members performing island dances at the popular "Christmas Around the World" event at the Museum of Science and Industry.



Youth Group I members started the presentation at the "Christmas Around the World" event at the Museum of Science and Industry.



Yannis Economou welcomes 2004 Olympic gold medalist, Nikolaos Siranidis and his family, to the OHFS Vasilopita event.



Guests enjoying themselves at the OHFS Vasilopita event.

performance schedule

Orpheus Youth Group

Sunday, March 6
Greek American Rehabilitation & Care Center
220 North 1st Street
Wheeling, IL
2:00 p.m.

Neighborhoods of the World

Sunday, March 27
Crystal Gardens at Navy Pier
600 E. Grand Ave.
Chicago, IL
12:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Chiotan Society "Karies" Dinner Dance

Saturday, February 26
Chateau Ritz Banquet Hall
9100 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Niles, IL
8:00 p.m.

Orpheus Youth End of the Year Event

Sunday, May 15
St. John The Baptist
Greek Orthodox Church
2350 Dempster St.
Des Plaines, IL
3:00 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 *Lyra* will be accepted until April 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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