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HDF Part Two: Highlights From a Weekend Full of Great Memories, Experiences and Fun

The four-day weekend in Florida this past January turned out to be more exciting than any Orpheus members had ever anticipated! Orpheus Adult group, Nea Genia and music group members gathered their costumes, instruments and some crucial stage props and made their way to sunny Orlando, Florida, leaving behind a very snowy and cold Chicago, to participate in the 2014 Hellenic Dance Festival (HDF). The Hellenic Dance Festival is an annual Greek folk dance competition that takes place during Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend. It was established in January, 2000 under the direction of His Eminence, Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta. Today it is the Metropolis of Atlanta's largest event, with its mission being to promote Orthodox Christian fellowship, primarily among its young members.



The Orpheus Adult group performed a suite of dances from the island of Mykonos during the HDF competition in Florida

This year's event was held at the Rosen Shingle Creek Resort and was packed with activities and excitement. Opening Ceremonies were held Friday night, beginning with an Agiasmo and blessing from the priests of the Holy Trinity parish in Orlando. The evening continued with a dance party where the participating dance groups got to meet and mingle.

Day one of the competition started early on Saturday morning and lasted through the afternoon. Orpheus was among several talented Greek folk dance groups that represented such states as North Carolina, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina and Virginia. Each group presented a 12-15 minute folk dance suite in front of a panel of judges and a large, enthusiastic audience. The Nea Genia group presented

a suite of songs and dances from the island of Ikaria, accompanied by live music courtesy of the Orpheus Music group and other guest musicians. Soon after, the Orpheus Adult group took the stage and presented songs and dances from the island of Paros, also accompanied by live music.

After a short rest, it was time to head to the Hard Rock Live! venue in Orlando to party with the fantastic folk music group, Dromeno. Guests feasted on a huge buffet and then made their way to the impossibly packed dance floor to get their Greek groove on.

Back at the resort, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated Sunday morning in front of a full house of HDF continued on page 2



The Orpheus Nea Genia Group performed two suites from the islands of Ikaria and Chios at HDF.

HDF continued from page 1
faithful Orthodox Christians. The Liturgy was followed by a delicious brunch and, immediately afterwards, day two of the competition began. On this day, the Nea Genia group performed songs and dances from the island of Chios, while the Adult group performed a song and dance suite from the island of Mykonos. After the performances, some participants took the opportunity to explore the massive resort which included restaurants, gift shops and swimming pools and golf course, while others rested up for the upcoming Awards Banquet, later that evening. The first surprise announcement that night came when Nea Genia was awarded the "Superior" (2nd place) award in the Advanced Senior category. Surprise number two came when Nea Genia's name was called again to receive the "Folk Music Expression" award for their seamless integration

of music and song in their suites. The third exciting announcement of the evening occurred when the Orpheus Adult group was awarded the "Platinum" award (1st place) in the Adult category. All of the evening's winners received medals and took group photos with Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta and HDF organizers. The evening (as well as the weekend) concluded with a glendi celebrating dance styles from all over Greece that lasted way into the night.

Preparing for a competition is an immense undertaking, requiring much planning and endless attention to detail and a serious commitment from the participants. To say that the competition participants are pleased with the results of their efforts is most definitely an understatement. Orpheus Director, Anthony Platis observed, "Participation at HDF evolved around our commitment to one another and to this troupe.

Our hard work finally came to fruition as we not only performed well but like a big family. That's what Orpheus is about....creating memories and relationships through our love for dance, culture and heritage".

It was certainly an honor and a pleasure to have represented the Chicagoland omogenia in Florida and we look forward to many more such opportunities in the future. Congratulations to all of this year's HDF winners and thank you to the HDF Committee for their great work and tireless efforts.

Hope to see everybody again at HDF 2015 in Charlotte, North Carolina.

For pictures and video of this event and for more information on the Orpheus Hellenic Folklore Society, please visit our website, www.ohfs.org or find us on Facebook. 

Celebrating the Past, Dancing Into the Future

25 years...a quarter of a century. Twenty five years of performances, conferences, workshops, parades, competitions, various celebrations and travel throughout the US and abroad. Seems like quite a long time, but at the same time, twenty five years can fly by in the blink of an eye.

This year, the Orpheus Hellenic Folklore Society is proudly celebrating its 25th anniversary with a unique event that will take place on Sunday, November 23, 2014 at Castle Multi-Venue in downtown Chicago. The program for this momentous event will include dance and music performances, one of a kind live Greek traditional music as well as Greek pop music featuring a well-known DJ in the Greek community. Castle is a multi-level venue which will afford Orpheus the opportunity to present a grand cultural display of the many different talents of its members. Also included will be a full dinner buffet and amazing visuals for all to enjoy.

This event will serve not only as a memorable celebration of the accomplishments and contributions of Orpheus to the Greek-American community, but will also be a major fundraising effort to keep the dance, singing, and music programs sustained for many years to come.

During the 25th anniversary event, a significant portion of the proceeds will result from sponsorships from organizations, businesses and individual donors.

The OHFS continues to fulfill its mission created 25 years ago by establishing a cultural program that is known for its quality and professionalism. Our programs include:

Orpheus Dance Troupe: Strives to provide its 70 adult members, 30 Nea Genia members and 100 youth members with opportunities to broaden their Greek folk experience through dance instruction, performances, workshops and conferences.

Apprentice Instructor Program: Designed to train dance instructors to meet the needs of our expanding youth membership. There are currently 12 instructors that support the youth and adult programs. All instructors attend workshops in the US, Canada and Greece and guest instructors from these regions have been featured at the groups' practices.

Orpheus Music Ensemble: Features folk and popular musical instruments. It is a group of musicians taught by professional music instructors. The music ensemble accompanies the Orpheus dance troupe at performances, but also makes independent appearances. The group has made excellent progress in the past few years, and is a dynamic, integral part of the dance troupe. This is one of the few programs, outside of Greece, that affords young adults the opportunity to connect with their heritage via studying and performing traditional Greek folk music.

Singing/Choral Program: Utilizes a professional singing instructor to further develop the singing/choral abilities of the entire group.

We hope that you will join us on November 23 to celebrate this meaningful milestone with us. We also hope that you will consider sponsoring the worthwhile programs of the Orpheus Hellenic Folklore Society with a contribution of your choice. All donations are tax deductible. Sponsorship forms, tickets and additional information can be found on our website, www.ohfs.org. ☐

**ORPHEUS
HELLENIC
FOLKLORE
SOCIETY**

**ORPHEUS
1989-2014**

**SUNDAY
NOVEMBER 23, 2014
Castle - Chicago**

**Celebrating the past
Dancing into the future**

ohfs.org

Banners announcing the 25th anniversary will be displayed along Halsted street in Chicago's Greektown neighborhood.



The Orpheus Adult group performed at the Neighborhoods of the World event at Navy Pier. Also participating was the Orpheus Nea Genia group and Orpheus Music group.

Orpheus Around Town

This spring was a very busy one for Orpheus members! In addition to planning our 25th anniversary this year (more info on this can be found on our website www.ohfs.org), we made our way through the city and suburbs spreading the traditions and culture of Greece to a vast and diverse audience.

First on our list of performances was the Arlington Heights Library, where a sold-out audience was anxiously awaiting Orpheus' presentation. The Library staff had to bring extra chairs to accommodate the standing room only crowd! The presentation included live music and songs, courtesy of the Orpheus Music Group, dances by Orpheus Adult and Nea Genia members as well as background information about the cultural elements presented.

The presentation was received with lots of enthusiasm based on the many

compliments received by the Library from the audience. Here are some of them:

I am Greek, therefore it had a great impact on me, but this program is universal in its popularity. A very uplifting afternoon. The costumes brought even more authenticity to this program. More programs like this would be welcome.

I heard about the importance of connection in community dancing. Everyone dances. Everyone is connected through the joining of hands or handkerchiefs.

I have visited Greece many times and I love the country and the culture and so it was a pleasure to see something of that country here in Arlington Heights. It reminded me of many pleasant vacations I have had there and good to learn something new as well.

Excellent program. I thought the dancing and history of the Greek folk dancing combined was great, a great visual and history.

Enjoyed all of it. Dancing and explanations by Speaker was very informative and did a great job.

Chicago is known for, among other things, its wide and varied ethnic diversity. For the past few years, Navy Pier has been celebrating the various cultures that can be found throughout our city. Every year during the spring, Navy Pier presents a performance series called, "Neighborhoods of the World". The program is free and open to the public and takes place over a series of several weeks. Each week features highlights from different countries such as Italy, India, Africa, Philippines, Lithuania, Mexico and China. Sunday, March 16, was devoted to celebrating Greece and Chicago's Greek American community.

The event took place in the beautiful Crystal Gardens, with its six story glass atrium, 50-foot arched ceiling, live plants and foliage including palm trees, exotic flowers and dancing "leapfrog" fountains. Guests enjoyed an afternoon of great music, dancing, food and parea in one of the city's most magnificent venues. Among the participants was the Orpheus Adult group, Nea Genia group and Music group. Orpheus members, dressed in colorful traditional Greek costumes, presented a variety of dances from the islands and mainland Greece. Dances included, Mantilatos, Dendritsi, Kalamatianos, Kritiki Lemonia and Stis Orias to Kastro, Karsilamas and Sta Duo all performed to live music courtesy of the Orpheus Music group. At the end of the program, audience members had the opportunity to join the dancers on the floor.

Next was the Greek American parade along Halsted street in Chicago's Greektown. Sunny skies and warmer weather (for a change) greeted parade participants and spec-

tators on Sunday, March 30. Orpheus members helped man the floats of the Pan Hellenic Scholarship Association, Parthenon Restaurant and the Greektown Association. Parade spectators, young and old, came out in strong numbers to support the Greek American community and show their pride by waving Greek flags and shouting, “OPA” and “Zito.”

Several lucky students at Concordia University in River Forest got a crash course in Greek culture and traditions as they relate to folk dancing during their “World Music and Cultures”

class. The dance group gave a presentation on Greek folk music with Orpheus director, Yannis Economou, describing the different types of Greek folk dance, including a brief historical outline and key elements and characteristics of dancing. Several Orpheus members, assisted in the presentation by demonstrating a variety of dances representing different regions in Greece. Music group members were also present and talked a little about some of the instruments they played, including the violin, laouto and santouri. Throughout the presentation, there was a ques-

tion and answer section where those students who were brave enough to either ask a question or answer one posed to them were rewarded with an Orpheus souvenir. The night ended with a group Hasaposerviko, where many of the students seemed to be naturals at Greek dancing.

For photos and video of these events, please visit our website www.ohfs.org or find us on facebook. 📷



spotlight on **PAULINE CRUZ**

Parents/Family From: *My mother is from a village outside of Pylos, called Kalithea and my father is from Leontari, near Megalopolis in Arcadia. I recently found out that I have Cretan lineage too from my maternal grandmother’s side.*

Time Dancing with Orpheus Group: *I think seven years.*

Thoughts on Dancing: *As long as I can remember I have always loved to dance. I remember my mother teaching my sister and I how to Greek dance in our living room. In high school I was in a Modern Dance troupe and took many different types of dance lessons through school. A couple of years ago I started taking Zumba classes. At the beginning I stayed towards the back of the class because everyone was so good.*

My instructor kept saying “stick with it Pauline, you’re doing great!” Now I look at the new people that start and I know that the instructor was definitely lying to me.

Favorite Dance: *I like all the island dances. I’m not crazy about dances from Epirus, they are so slow. I think I have made everyone in the group aware of how feel about that...*

Most Vivid OHFS Memory: *This would have to be the recent HDF competition in Orlando, Florida. We were so surprised and excited when we won in the adult division. Everyone was screaming and cheering... it was great. This was a team effort and everyone worked very hard, but it was so worth it.*

Favorite Greek Dish: *My favorite is Gemista, but I also love lamb on the spit during Easter. We all stand there looking over it waiting for it to be done.*

Favorite Place in Greece: *It’s very hard to pick just one, but I remember going to Santorini and thinking there is no other place like this. It is so picturesque and beautiful.*

Hobbies/Sports/Other Interests: *I love to travel. My goal is to travel to every country in Europe (I’m very behind on that goal). I also love to read, listen to any type of live music and go shopping with my daughter when she’s home from college. I also started a book club with some neighborhood friends 11 years ago and we’re still going strong.*

Nobody knows I: *I am a substitute teacher and recently had a two month assignment working with severely autistic children. Even though it was a very difficult job, it makes you grateful for what you have.*

Someone I’d like to meet: *Sonia Sotomayor. Her biography was so impressive. Her accomplishments and her journey to the United States Supreme Court are inspiring. She is someone to look up to and a true mentor for all young women. 📷*

Mykonos – The Other Side

By: Anthony Platis

Overshadowed by tourism and other mainstream popular attractions, Mykonos boasts a significant repertoire of songs, dances, and a rich history of cultural identity within Greek dancing. It has placed itself on the map amongst other native Greeks through traditional music festivals, recent popularity of music recordings, and musicians that have been recognized amongst other respectable peers. Mykonos has seldom been researched and documented within the field of Greek dance academia. It is not included in any current literature or publications describing its dances, musicology or its impact in the preservation of Greek dance within respected institutions like The Dora Stratou Theatre and Lykeion Ellinidon. However, it has been an interest to me for quite some time. Through several research trips, I gained an appreciation of this wonderful island.

The traditional musical instruments include a two member zia (or zigia) of a tsabouna (bagpipe) and toubaki (drum). The tsabouna's sound can be described as slightly tinny and primitive. Unlike the gaida, it does not have an accompanying drone. The toubaki is a small cylindrical hollow wood drum covered at each end with goat skin and played with drumsticks.

The following are only some of the songs and dances performed by the adult group this year at HDF.

Irthen o Kalos Mou: Considered a genuine Mykonian song, the subject matter of the song is marriage without means. Prior to the advent of tourism in the late 60's, limited resources were a way of life for most Mykonians. While this tune is played in a syrtos rhythm it is usually sung and not danced.



Scene from a festive occasion at the island of Mykonos in the 1950's.

O Zeppos: A popular island tune that has also been known as “Capetan Andrea Zeppo”. It was customary for the dancing to begin with a small group or “parea” of men at the request of the leader. At many panigiria I attended, the festivities often started with music and singing. When dance was involved, it was usually a few men who would initiate it with a syrto.

Ballos tou Gerasimara – Ballos: The ballos dance is performed by male and female couples only, partners facing each other with little or no touching of the hands, resembling the way they do it in Naxos. A basic crossover flat-footed step for the woman is very common, as well as turns and the occasional shoulder-hold with the man. In Mykonos, the shoulder hold is a staple that separates itself from other islands in the Cyclades.

Ta Kefallonitika - Mykoniatikos Ballaristos: This dance is particular to the island of Mykonos. It is danced with a slow and fast part in a 2/4 rhythm. Two melodies are heard. The first being that of the most well-known ballaristos, the Kefallonitika, which I have been told were pirate ships from Kefallonia. Its musical phrasing is in 5/4 time. This dance is usually danced in small circles, typically requested by a particular dancer who identifies it as being “his” dance.

There is usually a man in the front and at the end of the line with other women and men in the middle of it. The leader does variations within the line and even with the person next to him. The types of variations can include syncopated hops, tsakismata, squats and turns.

Horepste Sousta Sousta – Mykoniatiki Sousta: There is no concrete explanation as to the origins of the dance itself, but has roots that date back many years with an inconclusive connection to Crete. During the 17th century Mykonos received many Cretans who came as refugees from the Turkish occupation of their island. The dance is fast in a 2/4 rhythm. The style is quick, small steps and opens up to many different variations which, only the leader and the end leader can do. Only the best dancers usually do this dance. Furthermore, when the line is in place, the dancers usually change their hand-hold to a shoulder-hold.

Like other Greek islands, Mykonos has a rich history of tradition and culture. It is my hope to disseminate what I've learned with the OHFS. As we embark on the 2014-15 season toward the HDF in Charlotte, NC, I look forward to another wonderful year of collaboration with the Orpheus adult group! ☐



Orpheus members, friends and family kept the action on the dance floor going all night at this year's OHFS Vasilopita celebration.



In celebration of Greek Independence Day at the Arlington Heights Library members of the Orpheus dance group, accompanied by the Orpheus music group, presented a suite of Greek folk dances. The presentation also included a short history of Greek folk customs.



Members of the Orpheus Youth group entertained the residents of the Greek American Nursing and Care Center in Wheeling.



Concordia University students got a crash course in Greek folk dancing and music during Professor Hauser's "World Music and Cultures" class.



It was a beautiful sunny day during the Greek American Parade. Orpheus members helped man the floats of the PanHellenic Scholarship Association, Parthenon Restaurant and the Greek Town Association.



Dina Sianis Merit Award recipients Jordan Alexander and Christina Harisiadis at the End of the Year Youth Event, presented by Dr. George Sianis (third from left). Registration is open for the Orpheus Youth group for 2014-15, visit our web site for more information.

performance schedule

SAINT HARALAMBOS CHURCH - GREEK FEST

7373 N. Caldwell Ave., Niles, IL
Saturday, July 19, 2014 8:00 p.m.

GREEK TOWN FESTIVAL Come visit our booth!

On Halsted St. from Monroe to Van Buren, Chicago, IL
August 23-24, 2014 Performances: Sat. & Sun. 8:00 p.m.

CULTURE OF GREECE: TRADITIONAL MUSIC AND DANCE

Des Plaines Public Library
1501 Ellinwood St., Des Plaines, IL
Sunday, October 26, 2014 2:00 p.m.

CHICAGO THANKSGIVING PARADE

On State St. from Congress to Lake, Chicago, IL
Thursday, November 27, 2014 8:00 a.m.

ORPHEUS 25 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Castle Multi Venue
632 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, IL
Sunday, November 23, 2014 5-11:00 p.m.

CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD

Museum of Science and Industry
5700 S. Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL
Sunday, December 14, 2014 4:00 p.m.

HELLENIC DANCE FESTIVAL (HDF)

Charlotte Sheraton
555 S. McDowell St., Charlotte, North Carolina
January 16-18, 2015

practice schedule

ORPHEUS YOUTH GROUP:

5:30 - 6:30 p.m. (ages 9-15)

ORPHEUS NEA GENIA GROUP:

6:30 - 7:30 p.m. (ages 16-18)

ORPHEUS ADULT GROUP

Beginner/Intermediate: 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Intermediate/Advanced: 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.

ORPHEUS MUSIC & SINGING GROUP:

Junior: 6:30-7:30 p.m.
Senior: 7:30-9:00 p.m.

ORPHEUS YOUTH GROUP:

2:00 - 3:00 p.m. (ages 9-15)

THURSDAYS:

St. Isaac Church
8149 Golf Road
Niles, IL 60714

NEW
THURSDAY
LOCATION!



SATURDAYS:

New Church
(Multipurpose Room)
74 Park Dr., Glenview, IL

Schedules and times are subject to change. For the latest information please visit www.ohfs.org

Yannis Economou, Director/President

Kostas Economou, Instructor

Marianna Gudmundsson, Artistic Director/Vice President

Bessie Kouchoukos-Grosso, Youth Group Coordinator

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*The OHFS is a tax-exempt
not-for-profit organization.*

Submissions for the Fall issue of Lyra will be accepted until February 15, 2015. 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 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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