

IOFA GREEK SECTION

Presentation

The Greek Section of the International Organization of Folk Art is an independent non-profit cultural association. It was established in 1987 and is based in Athens-Plaka, within the building of the Greek Dances Theater "Dora Stratou".

It is administered by a 5-member Board of Directors elected by the General Assembly. Membership is open to every individual who has an active interest in folk culture.

Most members of the Organization hold simultaneously offices of some local association or another. However, instead of isolating themselves into their primary association, they stay in touch with all areas of dance and culture, through the I.O.F.A.

Among the 3.000 members there are dozens of university professors, hundreds of teachers and other educators, scientists of all disciplines, as well as hundreds of directors of dance companies. Practitioners of art are also present, such as dancers, musicians, craftsmen etc.

The Greek Section is responsible for the representation of I.O.F.A. in Greece, as well as for contacts between members in and outside Greece.

Activities:

- Providing its members with information on what takes place within Greece and abroad in the area of dance and folk culture, through the publication of its review "Tradition and art". This is a bi-monthly 36-page colour publication in Greek language.
- Representation in international conferences, meetings, festivals, exhibitions etc. organized by the IOFA, CID and other organizations.
- Organizing the annual International Conference on Dance Research since 1987. The 17th conference attracted 400 scientists from 40 countries of the 5 continents.
- Organizing - together with other agencies - conferences, festivals, exhibitions, lectures, meetings etc. Dozens of such events around the country have been realized so far.
- Publishing books and records on dance, music, costumes and art in general. 18 books and 3 records have been published so far, as well as several videocassettes.
- Promoting the exchange of visits and performances between Greek dance groups and groups from other countries.

Goals:

- To cover all areas of Greece through its members, with emphasis to neighbourhoods and villages, which must once again become producers of cultural wealth.
- To remain open to all approaches and all trends pertaining dance and culture.
- To equally care for the study, the preservation and the dissemination of the values and the achievements of all local traditional cultures.
- To serve its members free of charge.
- To keep a light and flexible structure, giving an example of decentralization. Every single one of its activities is co-organized with another agency.
- To extend its membership to all parts of the country, giving particular emphasis to villages.
- To keep open to all currents and tendencies in approaching traditional culture.
- To equally stress the study, the promotion and the practice of all values and aspects of the traditional ways of life.

Objectives:

- To expand membership above 5.000 members, given that hundreds of thousands of individuals are actively involved with folk culture in Greece.
- To help upgrade the quality of folk culture, given that there are great deficiencies and the average level of the related events is low.

Beliefs:

- We believe in the preservation of dances, the music and the costumes in their traditional form by the dance companies.
- We believe that the teaching and stage presentation of the dances must be based on ethnographic research in villages and not on mere imitation of one troupe by the other.
- We believe that the State so far has not shown the required interest in folk culture, with the result that local peculiarities have been leveled and that most youth have become indifferent to the values of their grandfathers.
- We believe that folk culture has equal value with ancient civilizations and must be studied and maintained as a means of education for the generations of today and those to come.

What is IOFA Greece

IOFA Greece is an association established in Athens in 1988. It is governed by a 5-member Board elected by its General Assembly every 5 years.

1. It has more than 3500 members, out of which approximately 1500 are considered "active" (they have paid their annual fee of 20 euros in 2003).
2. It publishes a 32-page magazine every two months. So far 75 issues have been published. This color magazine is mailed free of charge to members.
3. It holds every year the prestigious World Congress on Dance Research, where only active members can take part. Last year it had 400 registered participants from 40 countries, being the largest of its kind in the world, with the most strict specifications.
4. It maintains a full-time secretariat with an Executive Secretary (Mr. Dimitris Tsokantas) and several volunteer part-time secretaries. The secretariat replies to all messages (letters, phone calls, fax, emails, personal visits) within 24 hours.
5. It informs members on scholarships, grants, invitations for groups, festivals and other opportunities. Every year about 30 groups are sent to perform in other countries under the DanceMobility program of CID.
6. It has published dozens of books, CDs and other material of the highest scientific standards.
7. Among its members are dozens of university professors, doctors of science, folklorists, researchers, and the great majority of folk dance teachers in Greece.
8. Since 1987 it has been the major force behind the development of folk dance, and for this it is known by hundreds of thousands of people.
9. It cooperates closely with the national Greek Dances Theater "Dora Stratou", with the IOV organizations of many countries and with the International Dance Council CID, UNESCO, Paris, the official umbrella organization for all forms of dance.