

Folk Dancer

The Magazine of World Dance and Culture



Monastiraki Square in Athens. Photo: Kevin Budd, 2010.

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The Tip of the Opinci

By Kevin Budd



With the OFDA's upcoming First Nations dance and music café in January, we might think about the dance and music that will be shared during that event. For folklore, for traditional dance, we might ask ourselves various questions, bearing in mind that what we will experience will be literally worlds away from the usual Balkan and European smorgasbord with a tiny taste of African and Asian dance.

What will that mean to the experience? We are mostly "recreational" dancers, and the OFDA is an association of recreational dancers. Our familiarity with the steps and step patterns, and to some degree, the costumes, food and customs of a dozen or more countries may lead us to compare what we have done for years with what we may do at this particular event. We are used to complex step patterns, and the need for some level of "technique" - that is, the ability to manipulate, (pedipulate with feet?) our bodies and extremities around, in front of and past each other, in time to music. A "better" dancer is one who embodies skill and some kind of artistry too, some expression that reflects the tradition from which we draw our dances.

Each dance is also a text, a document of a physically expressed and coded form of communication that encapsulates, perhaps thousands of years of movement and a changing culture or combination of cultures.

So what happens if we encounter a kind of dance that either has a radically different technique, style form, rhythm and music? What if there seems to be no technique as we know it, no gender role, no music or one that is very "other"? And what if the meaning of the dance within the originating culture is something we are not used to?

We might simply observe, and be aware of how the dance is centred in our bodies, how individuality and group move. Is there an emphasis on feet? Stomach, hips, head and upper body? Arms? Note relationships within the structure, between ourselves and others, and the greater whole. Is there a shape and direction to the movement? Our recreational dances are almost always done outside of the original context, removed from a time and place that gave them meaning, and yet they do, in their own way, create their own context.

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The OFDA has established an e-mail list in order to communicate timely information of interest to folk dancers. If you would like to add your name to the list, send an e-mail request to: ontariofolkdancers@gmail.com



Please do let us know about special events!

In “other” cultures, is there a change in the importance of skill itself? Does such a thing as skill even have meaning? Is participation more important? Can the meaning of a good dancer shift from dance technique to something that implies cooperation? Community? Leadership? Follower-ship?

I bring to your attention some fascinating work by scholars Elizabeth B. Coleman Rosemary Coombe, and Fiona MacArait. From their discussion about music and “cultural rights” in an article entitled, “A Broken Record: Subjecting ‘Music’ to Cultural Rights”, we can learn much about the meaning of certain traditions, and how recordings of Canadian First Nations songs specifically came to be recorded by a Vienna-born Canadian musicologist Ida Halpern. Over 400 traditional songs were “collected” by Halpern, and over decades, these songs largely disappeared from their original context as the singers who knew them died out. However the question has since arisen: “To whom do these songs belong? Can they be a way to facilitate a recovery of their own lost past in the cultures in question?” According to Coleman et al, “...the recordings were made for purposes that made their performances means for the ends of others.



They were recorded so that their songs could be preserved and subjected to scrutiny by scholars with a disinterested curiosity about the human past.” However, the meaning of the songs, not just musically, within the culture they came from suggests a vast difference between most of what we are exposed to as folk dancers. The songs, according to the article, were a presentation “demonstrating and enacting - indeed constituting - the transfer and possession of the rights which define the central bonds of the society.” This is rather more significant than entertainment, or accompaniment for dancing.

So folk music and dance, often very ancient traditions, contain and signify meaning in ways that normally escape us almost totally. Typically when learning a dance, if we are lucky, a teacher may be able to tell us, “This was done at weddings.” or, “This was a man’s dance used to recruit young men for the army.” etc. As recreational dancers, this is sufficient for our needs, and certainly better than nothing, but it only hints at the tip of the iceberg that is any dance or song that has been passed down over uncountable generations.

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Mediterranean Adventure - Part 2

By Mirdza Jaunzemis

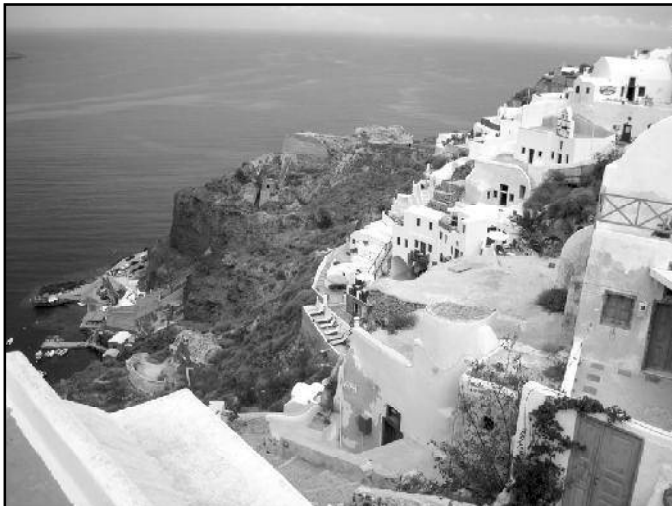
And then on to Kusadasi, Turkey, originally settled by the Ionian Greeks; many of the earliest Greek philosophers and thinkers lived here along the coast, thus, the mythical gods and goddesses were worshipped and glorified here as well. (And both the Greeks and Turks use the “blue eye” amulet to ward off the “evil eye”.) Since I had been to Ephesus in October, 2009, I went to visit two other sets of ruins this time. One was the ancient theatre (4thC. B.C.) in Miletus which could accommodate 15,000 people. In this region we also explored the well-preserved Bath of Faustina, wife of Marcus Aurelius and the ruins of the city with a small mosque and other structures dating back to Ottoman times (13th C.). In Didyma there stands a colossal Temple of Apollo, with a grand staircase leading to 103 very tall Ionian columns; they show very little deterioration despite their being built over 2000 years ago. One marvels at the feats of construction these ancient people achieved, without the use of sophisticated tools and machinery. A Turkish lunch was laid on for us with excellent food, but far too much of it! Mara went to Ephesus and marveled at all the amazing ruins of this ancient city.



Temple of Apollo

The island of Rhodes, the easternmost island, was previously controlled by Greece, then Turkey, for a while Italy and now Greece again. In mythology Rhodes was created by Helios/Apollo the sun god and a sea nymph, Rhode. It is probably best known for the huge bronze Colossus built to Helios, standing 110 feet high at the entrance to the harbour and deemed to be another of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. It stood for only 56 years before an earthquake in 224 B.C. brought it down into the water. It lay there in pieces for over 800 years when a scrap dealer finally took it away – he needed 900 camels to do it! Because of its occupations the old town is surrounded by walls and a moat (which has never had water in it). It is also a UNESCO World Heritage site. Upon entering the Amboise Gate we visited the Palace of the Grand Masters, rich with beautiful floor mosaics made by artisans from the island of Kos. It was once a fortress; now it is a museum. During the Crusades a group of knights – “The Knights of St. John” helped to care for the sick and infirm among the pilgrims. Although they were expelled for a time they returned in the 14th century and rebuilt the town and its fortifications. Today there is a “Street of the Knights” where there is a chain of inns, or residences where they lived in communities based on their “language” / country – France, Italy, England, Germany. Cobbled streets, panoramic views, lots of greenery. (one sad note – we saw several children around 6-8 years of age, sitting or standing around town, playing a miniature accordion, hoping for a donation). We were taken by trolley to see the island’s interesting sites; there was a pleasing blend of Arab and western architectural styles.

Our last Greek island was Santorini, named after Santa Rini, the patroness who died here in 304. It is also known as Thira, or Thera, and is a volcanic

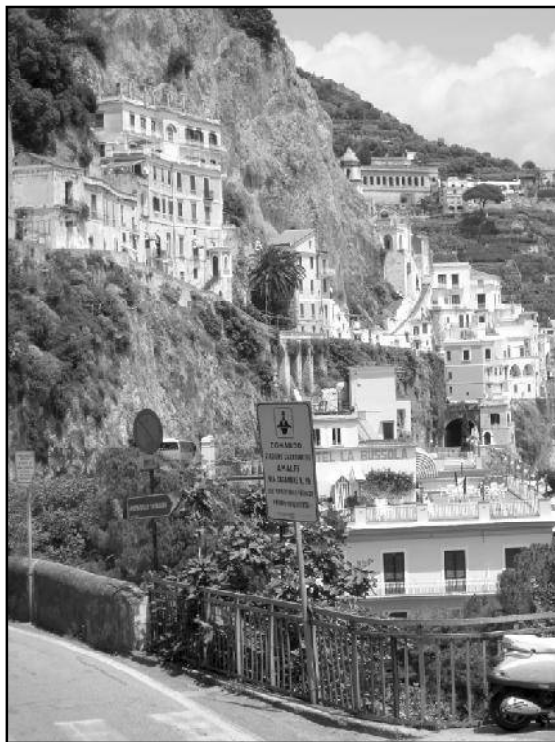


View from Santorini

island that had a huge eruption around 1600 B.C., causing it to form a very large caldera surrounded by the large island and two smaller ones. Some archeologists ponder whether this was the site of the lost continent of Atlantis. On approaching Santorini one sees only a high forbidding cliff and wonders why anyone would want to go to the top to see what is there. After a bus-ride snaking along up the side of the cliff we came upon some spectacular scenery: whitewashed stone houses, clinging precariously to volcanic hillsides, villages where no cars can be found because the roads are too narrow, lovely shops. Because of the Venetian influence there are more Roman Catholic churches than Greek Orthodox on the island. The Egyptians and Turks also spent time here. It has a famous black sand beach, which we visited, the only one of its kind in the Greek islands. Its highest point is the Monastery of the Prophet Elijah from which one has a great view of the island. A three-bell tower is found here, and similar arrangements of church bells can be seen throughout Greece. We also visited panagia Episkopi church, the oldest Byzantine church in this area (11th C.) and had another delicious Greek lunch at Pyrgos taverna. On this island and on Mykonos (as on probably others) grapes are grown for wine harvesting, but because of the dryness and the winds the vines are not staked and upright as one sees in the west. They are left to coil

around themselves and hug the ground: in this way they can use the morning dew for moisture, and are protected from destruction by the winds. The most picturesque village on this island was Oia (pronounced “e-ah”) which is said to have the most spectacular sunsets. I wondered how builders managed to secure these buildings, and how construction was carried out without anyone falling down a cliff. We took a cable car down to the base of the island; one could also hire a donkey for the trip, if he was adventurous.

After a pleasant and relaxing day at sea we arrived in Naples and took a tour along the Amalfi coast, first stopping in Sorrento, enjoying views of Mount Vesuvius along the way. We did not go to Pompeii or Capri (decisions had to be made – next time!) It is thought



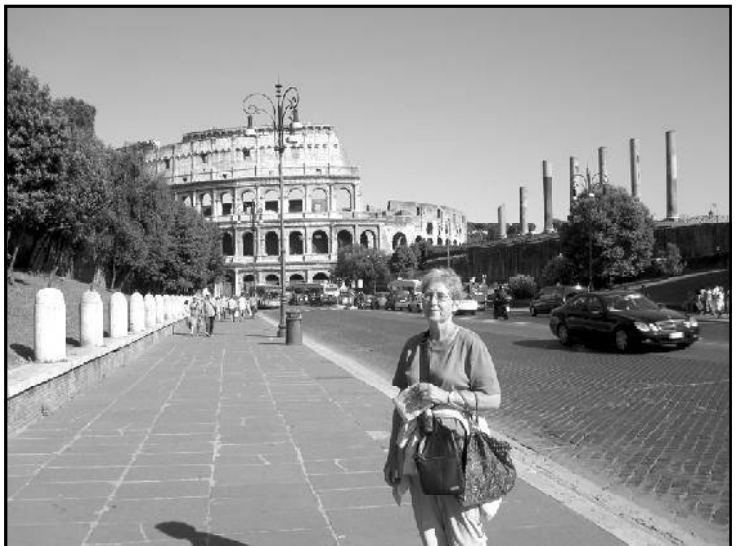
Photos by Mirdza Jaunzemis

The Amalfi Coast

that Vesuvius will erupt again in about 10-12 years, and contingency and evacuation plans have been made and practised, but the farmers living nearest to the volcano are the least willing to move, because the land is so rich there, because of the previous eruptions – ironic... The drive along the Amalfi coast was stunning and breathtaking: wild cliffs tumbling down to the sea, houses, villas and hotels perched precariously on hillsides (once again), a narrow winding road, where sometimes one had to wait for oncoming traffic to pass. This was once a very prosperous trading area (also a stopping point for pilgrims on their way to the Holy Land) and was ruled in the past by many kings: French, German, Spanish and finally Italian. It has become a popular tourist destination, not just for the “regulars” (like us), but also for the rich and famous who have secluded villas or yachts tied up in the waters. People like Roger Moore, Sophia Loren, Franco Zeffirelli, and Harrison Ford have spent time here. We also stopped in Positano, featured in the movie “Under the Tuscan Sun”, and the place where Mick Jagger and Keith Richards wrote “Midnight Rambler”. Here we had an Italian lunch and enjoyed the view of the sea and the surrounding area. Then on to Salerno, for some shopping and free time. We returned by a different route and stopped at a cameo-making factory and store – where cameos are made by carving layers of the conch shell. This was our last night on the ship.

We arrived in Civitavecchia, the port closest to Rome in the morning and took the train to our hotel, again in an excellent location, walking distance to the Trevi Fountain. Again, very trusting staff: we got keys to our room, the reception area and the front door of the hotel. It was a very small hotel (a pensione) in a building that housed another hotel as well. I found Old Rome to be a very compact area, and if one was to stay there for about a week, one could see pretty well all of the big attractions by walking to them. Since we had two

days we purchased tickets for the “Hop on hop off” bus which allowed you to get on and then off, explore a site, and hop on to go to the next one, and so on. We went to see the Trevi Fountain by day and night. It is the end-point of an aqueduct (which was the Roman way of situating aqueducts and fountains) and is almost 26 metres (85 feet) high with statues and figures in the baroque style. The idea is to throw a coin into the fountain over your shoulder, ensuring your return to Rome (the money is used to subsidize food for the needy). The Roman Forum used to be the square where the buildings and offices dealing with government, the judiciary, religion and later the economy were found; in other words, the empire was run from here. Much of it is now in ruins. It is on the way to the Colosseum, home to centuries of gladiatorial and animal combats, public spectacles, mock naval battles (the area could be flooded) and martyrdom of Christians (although this last theory is being disputed). It was the largest arena in the Roman Empire and is an example of the greatest achievements in Roman architecture and engineering. It was built during the first century A.D. and could seat 50,000 people during its heyday, but throughout the ensuing years the two thirds of its stone blocks were stolen to be used in other



“.....on the way to the Colosseum”

buildings. Thus, the seats are gone, but one has an excellent view of the hypogeum – the underground system of tunnels and cages. I could not block out the images in my mind of all the blood that had been spilled here, of all the violent acts that had taken place.

Nearby was the Arch of Constantine (who issued a decree for religious liberty in 313 A.D.) and further along was the Circus Maximus, of “Ben Hur” fame, now a grassy oval. On all sides were beautiful buildings, dramatic and ornate. We crossed the Tiber River to Vatican City, the spiritual and administrative centre of Roman Catholicism and one of the smallest independent states in the world. It prints its own stamps, mints its own coins and has its own army of Swiss Guards. We visited the Vatican Museums housing over 1,000 galleries of art, tapestry work and sculpture collected from all epochs. The Sistine Chapel is the “gem” in this complex, named after Pope Sixtus IV whose nephew commissioned Michelangelo to decorate the ceiling with his famous “Creation” work; twenty years later he painted the panel behind the altar: “The Last Judgment”. Very impressive and awe-inspiring. We then went on to St. Peter’s Square (named after the Apostle Peter who was executed by Nero around 67 A.D. Its interior is enormous, but the proportions are so cleverly arranged that one does not feel dwarfed or overwhelmed. Its central altar is under the dome designed by Michelangelo, and to one side

is the famous “La Pieta”, a sculpture of the body of Jesus in the lap of his mother Mary, also by Michelangelo, done when he was about 20 years old. The beauty of the carving and the proportions of the sculpture indicate that this man had exceptional talent at a very early age.

In the morning before leaving Rome we went to stroll through the grounds of the Villa Borghese, a beautiful park with a small lagoon having a small Ionic temple at one side dedicated to Aesculapius, the god of healing, and harbouring ducks, turtles and other flora and fauna. From the Terrace of Pincio one had a great view of Ancient Rome.

Our last stop was Barcelona, Spain, but more precisely Catalunya, home of the Catalans. This area of Spain is autonomous but not an independent state: it has its own language (Catalan) and is influenced more by the rest of Europe than by Castile. (One does not dance the fiery Flamenco here; one holds hands and dances the sedate Sardana.) This time our hotel was in the middle of Old Barcelona, across the square from an old church, where on our last night we attended an excellent guitar concert. We were able to walk to La Rambla, (meaning ‘dry river bed’ in Arabic) the most famous street in Barcelona, where one could see flowers and birds for sale, lots of tourist kiosks, and what seems to be the latest “busker” idea: people paint themselves and their clothes all in one colour depicting often a certain fairy-tale character (e.g. Cinderella, Goldilocks, etc.) stand like a statue, put a tin can in front of themselves and hope they will collect money.



Swiss Guards at The Vatican

Here again we used a “Hop on Hop off” bus to see the sights of the city that we had time for. First stop: Antoni Gaudi’s famous Sagrada Familia, the world’s most enigmatic church. It was begun in 1882, and the Catalans hope it will be completed by 2026. Gaudi, a very devout man, wanted it to have 18 towers: 12 for the apostles, 4 for the evangelists, and one each for Mary and Jesus, and the interior would seat 13,000 people. He built an “upside-down” model of it with small bags of lead hanging down, indicating



Detail from Gaudí's "La Sagrada Família"

how the towers should be located; after taking a picture of this model and turning it around one could see his idea of what the finished building should look like. He was hit by a tram and died in 1926 at the age of 73, and unfortunately was unable to finish his project. During the Spanish Civil War his plans for the church were destroyed; as a result, the current architects are unsure of what his future and final plans were; thus one sees different styles incorporated in the newer parts of the building. However, it is all very remarkable: he was also a lover of nature, so one sees natural themes and shapes incorporated in his work: there are snails, vines, tortoises, birds, fruit, etc. imbedded in the concrete, also sculptures of religious figures.

We later visited Casa Battlo, also by Gaudí, built in his modernist style, but again including themes from nature: one hardly ever sees straight lines, and the spine of the roof represents a dragon. His famous mosaics made of broken tiles are showcased on the

first floor, but the entire building is a delight with its interior courtyards and sense of fun in the construction. There were other Gaudí structures one could explore as well, but ... next time. We walked to Plaça d' Espanya behind which is found Parc Montjuic, site of the 1992 Olympics. By the waterfront there is a statue to Christopher Columbus, built as a reminder that after his first voyage to the Americas he reported to Queen Isabella and Ferdinand of Spain.

The next day we were to fly from Barcelona to Paris to catch our connecting flight to Toronto. However, one more adventure took place. The plane we were to take was found to have one of its three hydraulic systems malfunctioning; fortunately it was able to be repaired, but we missed our flight to Toronto, and had to stay in an airport hotel near Paris, before flying home the next day. But all went well in the end.

Travelling through Italy, Greece and Turkey as we did caused me to realize how closely the history and cultures of this part of the world have been intertwined since Biblical times and before. All these peoples have impacted on each other in various ways, and it behooves us to respect each others' traditions and viewpoints, as we are all "brothers" under the skin.



Detail from Gaudí's "Casa Batlló"

Dancing in Salento

By Judith Cohen

More news from the Mediterranean; this is a brief note on dancing in Salento (the “heel” of Italy)

In Italy for a couple of weeks, to both speak and sing at conferences in the north and centre, I headed down south for a few days to check out the tamburello scene. Here’s a scene from a late-night concert and dance in the village of Taurisano, about an hour south of the Salentine capital, the little Baroque city of Lecce. The Salentorquestra was playing and in the photo one can see my (new) friend Franca Tarantino is dancing, along with hundreds of people in the fantastically illuminated main square. Little groups of people were playing their own tamburellos here and there, including children seriously imitating the rhythm patterns and styles. In the mosaic (from the north, though, from Ravenna) one can see the four seasons dancing, with a panpiper - these are from Ravenna’s fabulous Byzantine mosaics, which I hadn’t seen since 1971... (but they haven’t changed.)



traditionally it was not a public event. Rather, it was performed in domestic settings - weddings and other celebrations. Also, one sees the younger women and girls doing all kinds of neat things with brightly coloured scarves. But in fact this is a recent invention: traditionally only a rather small handkerchief was used, mostly to avoid men and women actually touching hands, as in some other traditions.

I had only a brief tamburello lesson from the wonderful Davide Conte during my few hours in Rome - hopefully, will get to learn more in the not-too-distant future.



Anyway, Franca and others explained to me that the Tarantella (see spider drawing on the tamburellos) is the more general term, and in Salento, the tradition within that is the pizzica-pizzica (pronounced PITSika-PITSika). Today it’s done in the main squares, in concerts, festivals etc., but



OFDA's Stepdance Café



comes from a dancing family and has been stepdancing and competing, successfully, from a very young age.

Having “stepped” in at the last minute, she was nevertheless, poised, and a competent, patient teacher to our neophytes. She did a great job introducing us to the complex toe tapping activity that is stepdancing, but at the end of the session it was clear that there’s a long way to go, for most of us.

On October 2, OFDA held a “Stepdance Café”. Due to sudden health problems, our intended guest teacher, Sherry Johnson, found herself unable to participate, the day before the event. Not wanting to disappoint us, she kindly found a substitute in the person of Heather Norris. A first year student at Ryerson University, Heather

While the Stepdance Café went on without Sherry Johnson’s presence, (due to some fast footwork on her part), from the time that we invited her to guest teach at our café, Sherry had been enthusiastically looking forward to the event, so, hopefully, we’ll be able to invite her again sometime in the future, to do a follow-up session.



Photos by B. Sidney

Toronto Country
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Visit www.tcdance.org/thaw for complete event info.

Summer School - Welsh Style

By Dale Hyde



This past August, 5 Canadians (Dale Hyde, Anita Millman, Marion Newlands, Ian and Gayle Tucker) decided to experience a dance camp in another country, on another continent. Off they went to the University of Wales in Swansea, Wales where the Society of International Folk Dance (SIFD) was holding their Summer School.

The teachers were Hennie Konings (Russian), Cristina Casarini (General), and Ibrahim Rizevski (Macedonian). Each teacher taught 2 classes each morning (Hennie and Ibrahim repeated their first class each time while Cristina taught 2 separate international classes – the 1st was non-partner dances and the 2nd class was partner dances). Each participant had to choose 2 of the 4 types of classes offered. We all attended Hennie's classes, while Marion and Anita attended Cristina's non-partner class and Ian, Gayle and Dale attended Cristina's partner dance classes. The dances that were taught were all very useable for us to be able to teach when we came back to our classes in Canada

Hennie's dances were from many regions of Russia. He shared a lot of cultural information with us pertaining to the dances. Other surprises were when he would teach us a dance, then a few classes later when we would hear the music and think we were about to review a dance, we would find out that, no, it was a completely different dance. The music was the melody we use in North America to dance Karapyet. Apparently this is a very common melody in Russia and each region has its own dance to accompany the tune. Hennie is an excellent teacher. He obviously cares a great deal about his dances being done correctly and spends time with students to

help them do the steps and dances with the proper styling. At the end of the week it was apparent that we all knew these dances very well and would be taking them back to teach to our groups.

Cristina taught dances from many different countries – Romania, Serbia, France, Slovenia, Croatia, Peru, Mexico, Spain, the Netherlands and Italy. She is a high calibre teacher with a sense of humour that helps her students to get through the most seemingly difficult dances. I remember very well the comments going through my head as she taught us a Spanish "Jota". ("You want me to do what with my feet? You've got to be kidding. A turn? There? Impossible! I'll never get this dance!! NO! Not arms too! Castanets?") I couldn't believe that after a few review sessions that this dance was not really that complicated and was actually a lot of fun to dance. I guess I'm just not used to multi-tasking all the body parts. Cristina often began to teach her dances without speaking, only needing to say anything when it was time to work on styling. Quite amazing!

In the afternoons we had choices to attend 2 more classes. These were a 1-shot event that was taught only once. Over the week we had classes that included dances from Norway, Mallorca, Serbia,



Evening Dancers Engulfing Musicians



Scotland, dances for Seniors and music classes. These were all taught by specialists who were attending the Summer school and had been asked if they would teach a special afternoon class. The music classes were attended by those who had brought their musical instruments with them. By the end of the week they were able to play a wonderful 30 minute set for us to dance to in the evening.

If anyone wanted to skip a class there was a beach only a 10 minute walk from the university. Buses in Swansea have several of their routes go through the university so it was easy to get to the city centre to do any shopping.

Meals were not what I expected at a university. The kitchen staff was obviously putting their hard-learned culinary skills to work. The food was beautifully arranged and presented on cloth covered tables. There was always a choice from 3 or 4 different salads, fresh cut vegetables, cooked vegetables, the hot choices were always a vegetarian dish, a meat dish, a fish dish and a casserole. Desserts were beautifully decorated (and scrumptious) cakes, cheese-cakes, puddings etc.

Accommodations, likewise, were very impressive. We had a choice of a single or double ensuite room. It was very nice to have all facilities contained within our own room. The university supplied a daily change of towels. The room had a tea kettle and cup. Each morning while we were off to class a new supply of tea bags, instant coffee, milk and biscuits were placed in our rooms. Not a service I expected!

The evening "socials" were a lot of fun. Each evening was lead by a folk dance teacher from a different part of Britain. All dances were preceded by a quick walk-through. A good thing because I would estimate that in an evening of dance we Canadians might have known 5 dances! Quite different from dancing at a camp in North America where we know almost every dance that is put on the evening's programme!

There were 97 attendees at this year's Summer School. I came away from the week in

Swansea having met many delightful people. The group was exceptionally friendly and newcomers were looked after by the Summer School committee from the moment we arrived at the registration desk. I thank the committee, under the guidance of Dorien Bates, very much for that, for from that moment on it didn't take long for us to be completely immersed into the Summer School. I am still in communication via e-mail with many of the people I met that week.



Afternoon class, learning dance from Mallorca

When I reflect back over the week in Swansea I have to say that there was nothing negative that I could say about the week. It was one of the most

positive experiences that I have had at any dance camp that I have ever attended over the past 40 years of dancing! I can highly recommend the SIFD Summer School to anyone willing to make the trip to Wales. Unfortunately, the Summer School is held only every 2 years. The next one will be July 28 – August 4, 2012 and I am already beginning to save my money for that trip!!

Photos are reproduced with the permission of the Society for International Folk Dancing. See their website at www.SIFDsummerschool.org

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Tours for 2012

ISRAEL ! . . . March 11-23, 2012 Led by Joe Freedman

Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Galilee. Meet Israeli, Arab, Druze, Balkan, Yemenite, Bedouin, and Kurdish groups. Jordan ext. March 23-28. Amman, Petra, Wadi Rum, and Jerash.

NORTHERN GREECE ! April 9-23, 2012 Led by Jim Gold and Lee Otterholt

Greek Easter celebration ! Athens, Thessaloniki, Kalambaka, Ionnina, Island of Corfu ! Mt. Athos Monastery. 4-day Greek Island Cruise ext. April 23-27.

EASTERN TURKEY ! . . . October 7-20, 2012. Led by Jim Gold and Lee Otterholt.

Kurdish, Pontic/Black Sea, Georgian, former Armenian regions! Istanbul, Diyarbakir, Urfa, Mardin, Van, Dogubeyazit, Kars, Ani, Erzurum, Trabzon. Istanbul ext. Oct. 20-24

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Notes from Madrid

By Judith Cohen

....some notes on summer street life in Madrid, from the roving ethnomusicologist, Dr. Judith Cohen....

“This evening there was an outdoor concert by a group of enthusiastic (if not terribly aesthetically satisfying) young musicians playing - sort of - Balkan and pseudo-Gypsy stuff in the large park-plaza-patio between the royal palace and the opera house. They had actually brought someone along to lead dancing and get the public to dance but he turned out to be - though a very good dancer - rather hopeless at bringing people in; he would immediately start doing complicated steps and people just watched. Finally he asked if I would help a bit, and within a short time I had at least 50 or 60 snaking around in a basic pravo.... things continued for well over an hour. Spanish TV was there, and seemed to be focusing on me a lot, so I suppose a clip will show up on the news Then I took the subway to dash over to the Arabic Culture centre which is having Iraq week, with free concerts - tonight was an experiment combining a very high level Iraqi oud player with a fine Spanish flamenco guitarist.”



“Also from Madrid, shortly afterwards, was a street festival in an old neighbourhood of Madrid. Neighbourhoods in Spain have their own patron saints, besides the main patron saint of each village, town, city, province... and these secular (mostly) days use saints’ days as an excuse to party - or to party yet again. In this neighbourhood, the streets are narrow and eccentric, and, as so many people were dancing and/or walking up and down, people kept jostling each other and so wine kept getting spilled, though no one seemed to mind. At the end of the street, just around the corner, an entirely different neighbourhood begins, where quite a lot of recent immigrants from North Africa live, and they were playing electrified belly dance music which was quite a contrast to the 1970s type pasodobles of the saint’s day celebrations....”

Bulgarian Dance Workshops

with Yves Moreau

By Rachel Gottesman



Yves Moreau continued to weave his magic when he presented a workshop in Hamilton on Friday night, October 29 and in Toronto on Saturday afternoon and evening, October 30. This was born out by the turnout of folk dancers in numbers not seen for a long time: about sixty on Friday night and eighty on Saturday. Some faces we have missed recently, such as Jane Aronovitch, Riffat Uzunovic and George Brody, came out to see this popular teacher. I heard people commenting about Yve's clear teaching methods: good breakdown of steps and good pacing. An indication of this was the almost 100% participation during the teaching, despite creaky joints and back pains of many of the dancers. Of the thirteen dances taught in the two days, some were lively, some contemplative, and some are sure to be keepers.

For me the venue was a revelation (although Olga and people who danced with her 40 years ago were familiar with it). Sts Cyril and Methody Macedono-Bulgarian Church, at 237 Sackville Street (corner of Dundas St., east of Parliament), is a location I hope to dance in again. The room was bright,

and spacious, with smooth wood floors and a stage for performance (more about this later). And there was an adjoining kitchen where the evening's meal was prepared and from which it was served. Our large group was perfectly accommodated.

Not everyone stayed for the dinner and party, but new people joined, keeping the numbers steady. Dinner, cooked and served by the church's Bulgarian caterer, consisted of a tasty salad appetizer and main course of kebabs with beans and coleslaw. The vegetarian option was fried and breaded fish with veggies and slaw. Dessert was crème brulee. It gave us the opportunity to sample ethnic home cooking.

The party was festive. Many people dressed up, among them, Karen Bennett, resplendent in a complete antique Bulgarian costume. There was a lively and enthusiastic



Hamilton's group (leader Stefania S. Miller in foreground) was joined by out-of-towners from London, Ont., Toronto and Nova Scotia

performance by Ned and Katya Tilevi and their Bulgarian performance group, Igranka. Some of them were performing for the first time, but we were hard-pressed to tell which. And, perhaps a surprise for many of our folkdancers was to see Toronto folk dancer Leon Balaban on stage, as part of the performing group.

Thanks to Hamilton and OFDA for co-sponsoring and organizing the events, and thanks to all the volunteers who helped make sure everything ran smoothly.



Gary McIntosh and volunteer help in the kitchen, preparing snacks



Photos by Alan Katz (AK), and Bev Sidney



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AK

Yves with members of Toronto's Bulgarian Performance Ensemble, Igranka

The Back Page...

Condolences to Dale Hyde, whose mother (June Hyde) passed away in November.



To those who celebrate holidays in December, the OFDA wishes you a Happy Chanuka / Merry Christmas, and much good feasting around family tables!



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CONGRATULATIONS TO OLGA SANDOLOWICH!

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presented to

Olga Veloff Sandolowich
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Further Details to be announced.....



Thank You to the OFDA for
the donation made in memory
of my brother-in-law,
and as well, to everyone
who expressed their
sympathy - it was
all greatly appreciated
....Bev Sidney

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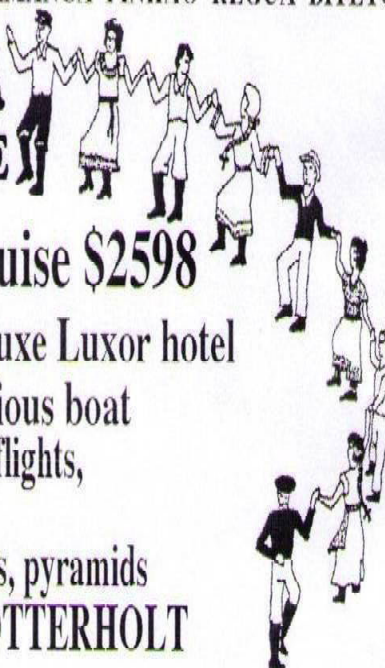
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