

Traditional dances of Polydendri Attica, Greece



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Introduction

- A lot of researchers, artists, sociologists, educators and generally everyone who is interested to obtain information on cultural and physiological-biological elements and about the rhythmic movements of the whole body and its parts, focus and make research on dances, and especially on traditional dances.

The importance of dance

- Participation in the activity of dance, covers all aspects that were and are important at all ages, including: music, costumes, customs, sexual codes, etc. All these emphasize at the pleasure derived from this participation in dance. Also, dancing with family members can strengthen family relationships, while dancing with friends can widen your social circle.

- It is scientifically documented that participation in physical activity is an important factor that contributes to emotional balance, promotes psychological status of trainees and is the best preventive tool for many diseases. Regular aerobic exercise, such as dancing and other physical activities are beneficial to the overall physical and mental health of adults, children, and the elderly people.

- In related studies it is indicated that dancing improves morale, reduces the feeling of loneliness and can help restore certain diseases or psychiatric and mental conditions. On an emotional level, dance helps people feel happier and overcome the anger, frustration and loss, while at an intellectual level, it seeks to enhance cognitive skills, motivation and memory. Dancing also provides an opportunity for social interaction.

- In conclusion, Greek Traditional Dances classified as an aerobic activity, other than pleasure, entertainment and education they offer, can be used as an alternative form of exercise. Dance is a powerful vector of psychological changes, a unique catalyst emotional and physical expression and improves quality of life.

- Moreover greatly improves communication and interaction of individuals, it offers satisfaction and positive emotions. As a result, it should be integrated into the lives of all people, to become a way of life and move on to our consciousness as something positive and feasible.
- The Directorate of Primary Education of East Attica organizes every year the school dance festival, where almost fifty schools present traditional dances from all regions of Greece, as well as modern dances.

Attica Folklore & Cultural of Women Association Polydendri

- The Attica Folklore & Cultural of Women Association Polydendri moves at this context about dancing. It has many activities concerning culture, tradition and healthy life. Among all, the Association maintains a lot of dance groups of all ages, but with a special focus on children. In children's dance classes participate preschoolers, primary, secondary and tertiary education ages. The main aim of the Association is not limited to sports, social and educational, but captures and preserves the rich traditions of the place at all levels of the folklore, history, customs, songs, music, etc. and teaches the younger generations.

- Polydendri belongs to the prefecture of Attica. Someone taking a close look disregarding the narrow historical context would notice the coexistence of multicultural elements with the prevalence of a great popular culture.
- The conditions creating the regional dances are more social and economic than historical, and they control the introduction of any innovation.

Map of Attica



- In Polydendri innovation is important, but the region respects and maintains the tradition and considers it, as an integral part of its culture.
- Moreover, the musical and dancing tradition of the area follows the social environment established in the region of Attica. That was inevitable because Polydendri is located at only a few kilometres from Greece's capital, Athens.
- Most of the dances are danced in a circle moving to the right with the dancers holding each other by the hand or shoulder.

- The dance group of the Association has attended various events within and outside Greece, for instance in Cagliari in Sardinia, the French Riviera: Nice, Cannes, Monaco, Sharm el Sheikh and Cairo, Egypt, in Porto, Portugal, Prague, Czech Republic, international dance conference in Malaga, Spain, in Poznan Poland.
- The Association is organizing every year the international dance festival in September with a presentation of traditional dances from all the regions of Greece and abroad. Moreover, the Association has presented its work in the Greek TV.

Conclusion

- Polydendri was and continues to be an inclusive area shaped by the historical influence of the antiquity of the region and the conditions prevailing in Greece since the establishment of the modern Greek state until today.
- This created a local culture that has prevailed in all, who arrived in the region to stay and grow.
- Dance, as a part of local culture, survived in its own way and belongs to the general philosophy of the value of folk art.
- This is evidenced by the fact that both young and old residents, even in our days, enjoy and dance at feasts and festivals in the same expressive way as old.

- So we believe that we offer the best possible education to the youth of our society through the teaching of Greek dances and traditions. Because without memory of the past cannot be a creative future.

Photo Gallery



*Polydendri, Attica,
Greece*



A sample from our performances







Schools' dance festival



The Associations dance festival in Polydendri





Activities concerning dance



Our women costumes



Teaching Greek dances in Poland

**Thank you for your
attention!!**

Yiannis Gantzias