

FESTIVAL AND DANCE SEMINAR & WORKSHOP: THE CYCLADS AND NAXOS!

Organized by the non profit Franco-Greek cultural association Nisiotis

DANCE, MUSIC, CULTURE, TRADITION, HISTORY AND MEMORIES OF THE CYCLADS

from 19 July to 1 August 2010

This exceptional 12-day seminar is aiming at you, who are passionate about Greece and Greek music and dance.

More than just a seminar: a **real festival**, a total immersion in the extraordinary island of Naxos, one of the most musical and dance-oriented islands in the whole Greece. 12 days and nights of celebration with our Naxian friends!

A unique opportunity for a once in a lifetime experience amongst an island community which has an **exceptional tradition of welcome and hospitality**.

The seminar we offer you is **very friendly, musical and cultural**, and takes place in Naxos, the living, vibrant heart of music and dance in this unique archipelago, made up of more than 30 islands.

The seminar is open to all who love dance, tradition, culture, life and history of the Cyclads, of the Aegean Sea and Greece.

A lot more than just a dance seminar... a **voyage into the history, the tradition, the culture and the soul of the islands and the Aegean Sea...**with the Naxians themselves!!

A seminar in the very-heart of Greek tradition: 12 exceptional days, with the rhythm of the "nisiotika", the violin, the laouto and the swaying, undulating music of the Greek islands.

A 12-day seminar organized with the Naxians : for the first time in Naxos, and very different from "the usual thing": **a dance seminar in the heart of the villages, with the dance teachers, the musicians and the inhabitants of each village, in every village!**

For what good is a dance seminar in Greece if the seminar takes place ...in the hotel? Our seminar takes place in the villages that are part of the Naxian tradition, in complete collaboration with each village. That's the best and only way to run a traditional seminar in Greece!

A year of intense preparation, in partnership with the dancers and musicians of the island, the Town Hall of Naxos Drymalias, the villages and their cultural associations, allows us to offer you a rich and unprecedented and unrivalled program : a new, rare and unique experience : getting to know the Naxians and the very rich and vibrant cultural heritage of Naxos, the island with the greatest music and dance tradition in the Cyclades.

12 days in contact with Greece as it used to be, ancestral, forgotten and magic, sharing rare, joyous and warm moments with an outstanding community of islanders.

Getting to know the inhabitants of Naxos, there where the tradition was born, where it sprang from, where it is still thrives, is shared and passed on, with energy, passion and authenticity.



Welcome to Naxos!

Welcome to "paradise..."

Νίκος Καζαντζακης



NISOS NAXOS 2010

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ON THE PROGRAMM

- 5 hours of dance each day (2 hours in the morning, 3 hours in the afternoon), with a **visit to a different village every other day**
- A guided tour of each village, so that you can learn all about its historical and cultural tradition
- A dinner and celebration in the evening with a group of musicians from the village, in the traditional family taverns serving the famous local delicious cuisine
- Concerts with masters of Naxian music
- A day trip by boat to the Little Cyclades, with connections to Naxos: Irakleia, Schinoussa, Koufounisia, Keros, Donoussa
- A day exploring the island, with a visit to locations with links to tradition: a maker and player of the tsambouna, a weaver's workshop, a local distillery, an olive oil press, farms and vineyards, etc.
- Accommodation in a family hotel in Apollonas, a small fishing port, with an extremely charming atmosphere.



THE ISLAND OF DIONYSUS, OF CELEBRATION, MUSIC, DANCE, WINE AND THE JOY OF LIVING!

It was at Naxos that Dionysus was born, the god of the vine, of wine and its excess. Διονύσος the “twice born”, from the womb of Semele and the thigh of Zeus, he gave men the vine, wine, drunkenness and therefore celebration, ecstasy and trance. He also married Ariane “on Naxos” where he lived happy and in love. His songs and music were called “dionysiac”.

A complete program... your complete program, now !!

So it's on Naxos that you will celebrate and share the pleasures of the Aegean over a 12-day period.

Naxos is the largest and the most verdant of the Cyclads, with many fertile and cultivated valleys, and more than 40 traditional typical villages.

At the highest point of the island and the Cyclads rises Mount Zeus, more than 1,000 meters high.

Down below, a succession of beaches that grow more and more beautiful towards the south, make Naxos the island with the most extended coastline of the Cyclads, with more than 148 kilometers in all.

Chora, the capital of the island, with more than 5,000 years of history, bears witness to the Cycladic, Classical, Hellenistic, Byzantine and Venetian eras.

The island has more than 500 churches, more than 40 castles and more than 130 windmills and watermills...

Naxos is the true **heart of the music and dance life of the Cyclades**, and has managed to preserve a very rich and living heritage. It is far and away the island with the strongest music and dance tradition in the Cyclads, a tradition which has spread throughout the Aegean and the whole of Greece, so much so that “**nissiotika**” is often synonymous for “**naxiotika**” and vice-versa...

The aim of this seminar is not to “parachute” onto the island of Naxos a programme that is foreign to Naxos, nor do we wish to have dancers and teachers who are not from Naxos. That would be a real non-sense. For the aim of a seminar on Naxos is for people to learn the dances and traditions of Naxos with the Naxians and not to learn the dances of Asia Minor, Epirus, Thrace or Macedonia. To learn the dances of Epirus or Thrace you need to go to Epirus or Thrace, to learn in the country of origin, to observe, listen and immerse yourself in the local culture.

For the right place to learn or improve your knowledge of the dances of any

region is actually in that region itself, and that is the only real reason for basing the seminar there !

Our aim is to enable you to **discover, meet and interact with the Naxians**, who everyday create the life, the richness and the tradition of the island.

The dancers, the musicians, the dance teachers: our partners, friends and brothers in dance for this seminar will be **the islanders, the Nisiotes...the Naxiotes!**

FOR 12 DAYS AND... 12 NIGHTS... BECOME A NAXIOTIS ! BECOME A NISIOTIS !

Here is an invitation to **νισιωτικά**, to “nisiotika”, the dances of the Greek Islands, the dances of the Aegean Sea.

In the Aegean Sea one of the greatest civilisations was born, thousands of years ago.

The word “Aegean” first originated with Homer and came from the ancient Greek “aisso”, or “jump”.

“Aix”, [the goat], is another word which came from it, as the goat, the symbolic animal of Greece, is an animal that jumps.

Speaking metaphorically, the Ancient Greeks called the large waves of their sea “aigues”, as the Etesian winds made them appear to jump. “Aegean” is therefore their sea, meaning “with waves”.

The Aegean Sea, which makes a watery connection between three continents, Europe, Asia and Africa, was the place where many cultures were born, developed and met.

The main archipelago of the Aegean Sea, the Cyclades, made up of 30 islands, was and is the melting pot of a popular culture, a tradition both rich and vibrant, and of a **unique musical and dance heritage**. And its **dances, beautiful, fluid and undulating**, just like the waves of the surrounding and omnipresent sea, never fail to seduce and captivate all those who have seen them, attempted or danced them at least once. These dances, the **νισιωτικά**, were mostly born on Naxos, before being passed on to the rest of the archipelago.

Today, for the first time on Naxos, we offer you the chance to learn them on Naxos, in the villages where they were born, with the dancers, and dance teachers who come from these villages.

It will also be an opportunity for you to meet the Naxians and the villagers, to experience contact with the **ancestral, forgotten and magic Greece of the past**, and to share in **rare, joyous and cordial** moments with a community of islanders with whom we have prepared this seminar, the first of its kind, with great pleasure on both sides.

Naxos welcomes you with its marble gate of more than five meters, the remains of the unfinished temple of Apollo, planned in Ancient Greece to be the largest temple in the country. As soon as you arrive, this symbol tells you of the richness and grandeur of the “Naxian” or “Naxiote” culture.

Nikos Kazantzakis, who lived for a year in the Naxian village of Eggares, in 1896, and where he wrote “Letter to El Greco”, another famous Cretan, wrote about Naxos:

« Αν ο παραδεισος ηταν στην γη, θα ηταν εδω »

“If paradise was on the earth, it would be here, at Naxos”

“This island was a very gentle, tranquil place; the faces of the people were kindly, the melons, the peaches and the figs abundant, and the sea calm. I looked at the men: these men were never frightened by an earthquake or a Turk, and their eyes were not burning. Here, freedom itself had extinguished the frenzy for freedom, and life took its course, the waters having subsided; and if sometimes they were a little troubled, this never turned into a storm. The serenity I experienced as I strolled around Naxos was the island's first gift to me”

Nikos Kazantzakis





A UNIQUE, ORIGINAL AND AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCE

For the first time, you are being offered a seminar on Naxos, designed, prepared, led and organized with the Naxiotes.

We invite you to share with the Naxiotes their tradition and their attachment to it over a 12-day period.

We want, with you, to get **closer to their culture, their everyday life, their history, their music and their dance.**

We therefore included them in the project in advance, by drawing up the programme with them, step by step.

Getting to know the habitants of Naxos, there where the tradition was born, where it springs from, where it is still alive, where it is shared and passed on, with energy, passion and authenticity.

So it will be in the villages that we will be dancing, in the morning, afternoon and evening, and not in a hotel room, far removed from the everyday life of the Naxians.

Our seminars and our celebrations will take place in the heart of the villages : in the squares, in front of the café or the church, or in the schoolyard, etc : there where the Naxiotes dance, there where the young Naxians also learn to dance : a step towards the Naxiotes, on our part, and an invitation on their part at the same time.

Our dance teachers, of which we have several, are leading dancers and teachers, commanding respect in their own village of course and on the island, but also in Greece and abroad. Each one has come from a different village, and it is these villages, where the Naxiote and Nisiote tradition is rooted, that will welcome us.

The dances of the islands, the Nisiotikas, were born on Naxos, from the extraordinary alchemy which occurred when the violin and the lute arrived from Asia Minor, when the Greek refugees fleeing the Turkish yoke arrived there. A unique fusion then occurred between the local and ancestral instruments : the flute, the tsambouna, and the tambour.

This entrancing music then spread to the other islands and the rest of Greece, then to the rest of the world, taken by Greek emigrants into all countries, and thus becoming the symbol of the much loved Aegean.

Because Naxos was the thus starting point for music in many of the islands, and in particular the rest of the Cyclads, we will also be dancing several very beautiful dances, sometimes neglected or forgotten, but all equally captivating, from **Amorgos, Andros, Kythnos, Mykonos, Paros, Seriphos, Sikinos, Siphnos**, etc.

THE NISIOTE ΨΟΦΟΣ THE NAXIOTE ΨΟΦΟΣ

Dance cannot be reduced to a series of steps; dance is not summed up by a rhythm or a series of movements.

Steps and movements in rhythm are to dance what breathing is to life: the minimum, a starting point.

But breathing does not mean “living”, and “knowing” and “doing” does not mean dancing.

Dance is **a vibration inside you, an expression of feelings and emotion**, translated into movements of the body.

It's the “Nissioté” spirit which is expressed through the Nissiotika, and it is because this spirit is particular to them that a non-Nissioté does not dance with the island style, character or spirit.

But there are also differences between the islands, between the different villages in an island, and between families in the same village, etc.

For example, each village has its “vlaha”, its carnival dance, and there are therefore 7 on Naxos, and not just one or two as you might think !

And then, according to whether the dancer is amorous, drunk, tired or melancholic, or even all of those things at the same time, he dances differently.

A good musician, a good player of the **βιολη** or the **λαουτο** will know how to catch all the nuances, and play along with the first dancer, who responds in kind.

You may for example, during a festival at Korniki, a village on Naxos, hear a dancer tell a musician to stop playing the “apeiranthitika”, that's to say the same music, but with a rhythm that belongs more to Apeiranthos than to Korniki, even though the villages are hardly 10 km apart!

This seminar also offers you the chance to immerse yourself in this very particular **ψοφος** of the islands.

When you dance the **nissiotikas**, they make more sense to you, and you get more out of them because you experience them from within, and perform them with **greater strength, energy and authenticity**. It is without doubt this profound and important work that brings the dancer closer to the **essence of the dance**, and helps him to become immersed in it, so that he can put all his heart into it and remain faithful to the **spirit and soul of the dance**. He no longer dances it on a superficial level, but from within and becomes radiant. The dance transports him as he leads the dance, and his freedom gives the impression that he is taking off and flying like a bird.

It was on Naxos that Zeus grew up, in a cave that is still visible, and it was on the summit of Mount Zas, which today still bears his name, that an eagle one day offered him thunder and lightning, the magic which allowed him to reign on Mount Olympus...

Come in your turn to Naxos to find the magic of the island, and immerse yourself in a culture, a tradition and a life which will make dance and song part of your daily existence.



“I had met a rich Naxian, the Lord Lazaros, who had a magnificent orchard, one hour away from Naxos : he invited us and we stayed two weeks ; such abundance, so many trees loaded with fruit, such blessedness ! Crete became a fiction, a far off troublesome cloud, no more fear, blood or fighting for freedom ; it all melted away in the blissful drowsiness of Naxos” . Nikos Kazantzakis





AN EXCITING PROGRAMM, BOTH OF DANCE AND MUSIC !

We will dance for eight days : two days in each of the main villages of the Naxiote tradition: Apeiranthos, Kinidaros, Komiaki, Koronos, etc.

Each evening we will have a celebration in a village square, with the musicians of the village.

On the last evening, we will have a grand party with the Naxiotes.

In the evening, we will have dinner in different family taverns which serve traditional, delicious Naxian food.

We will also take part in the “panagiri” of a village.

We will also be given a private concert by one of the local masters of Naxian music.

We will be transported in a coach which will be reserved for us.

A young, completely bilingual Naxiote will be available throughout to interpret.

We will sleep in **a family hotel that is warm and welcoming** in a little fishing village near to the villages we will be visiting during the day, and whose owner is also passionate about dance, music and tradition.

The bedrooms of the quiet and convivial hotel have all the comfort you will need: your own bathroom, television, air conditioning, refrigerator and balcony with view of the sea 20 metres away, or of the wonderful countryside.

We will have two days of rest.

On the first rest day, we will explore other aspects of Naxian tradition: the everyday life that is expressed in dance and song in the nissiotikas:

- Visit to a maker, player and teacher of the Tsambouna, Vaggelis, with magic fingers, who is reviving the instrument and teaches it to children of 5 or 6 years old. He makes them for all the islands, and will show you the differences between the Tsambounas of all the Greek islands.
- Visit to an old olive oil press.
- Visit to a weaver’s workshop, making the Naxian fabric which all clothing used to be made of, including the costumes of the dancers, and all the fabric for the home. It is said that the women of Naxos weave with so much love and passion that when you get near to their cloth, many years later, you can still hear their songs...
- Visit to a farmer who makes cheese, wine and raki where you can sample and also buy some provisions!
- Visit to a kitron distillery, the famous liqueur of Naxos, made from the leaves of the citron tree.
- Visit to an emery mine, the precious metal which the prosperity of the island was based on in the old days, but which also made the everyday lives of the miners very harsh, a fact commemorated in hundreds of songs and dances.
- etc.

On the second rest day, if the weather is good, (the meltem blows strongly in the Cyclades in summer) we will go in a rowing boat to explore the nearby little Cyclades islands: Irakleia, Shinousa, Koufounisi, Donousa, Keros, etc.

A PROGRAMM THAT IS OPEN TO ALL WITHOUT EXCEPTION : FOR ADVANCED DANCERS AS WELL AS BEGINNERS, BUT ALSO TO PARTNERS AND COMPANIONS

The non-dancing companions will of course be able to plan their own activities every day (not included in the seminar):

- Walks with a multilingual photographer, a fine expert on the island and its hidden treasures. A guide-book of walking trails on Naxos is available.
- Days on the sea in a sailing boat with a completely independent skipper, a great sailor from the Cyclads (depart from Chora)
- Visit to neighbouring islands, with many daily connections from Chora : Delos, Paros, Antiparos, Mykonos, etc (depart from Chora)
- Visit to museums, to Byzantine churches (more than 400 on Naxos !), to castles and small villages
- Hire of scooters, motorbikes, mountain bikes or cars (in Chora)
- Windsurfing (in Agios Georgios and Mikri Vigla)
- Water skiing
- Horse riding
- Deep sea diving
- Fishing (if you have brought equipment, or bought some on arrival in Chora)
- Taking it easy...

This seminar is of course not run for profit.

For more information, please do reach us at:

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OUR TEACHERS, DANCERS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS

Five leading dancers will assist us during this seminar:

- **Apostolis**, for all the dances of Koronos, and for all the Cyclades. Apostolis lives in Athens during the winter, but like every Naxiote, he is deeply attached to his island and his village and returns every summer. In Athens he founded a student dance troupe which he leads, and all the students of Athens who are passionate about traditional dance have joined his group. In summer, with the Naxiote members of his troupe who also come back to the island for their holidays, he organises a tour around the small hamlets of the island.
- **Sophia**, assisted by Katerina, for the dances of Komiaki. Sophia is a great lady of the Naxian tradition, and has been interviewed several times by the press, the radio and the television. She learnt music with her father, a violinist, at the age of 2. It is said on Naxos that children learn to dance before birth, in their mother’s womb, by sensing the vibrations and that of the music around them. It is true that the natural beauty and fluidity of their dances has a certain innate quality.
- **Vicky**, for the dances of Kinidaros. Kinidaros is undoubtedly the most vibrant, most dance oriented village of the Naxian tradition. Vicky has already lived abroad, where she created her own centre for traditional Greek dance. She has now returned, and teaches the young children of the village. Every year she organises many cultural events based on tradition, of which she is an expert.
- **Stephanos**, for the dances of Apeiranthos. Stephanos is also passionate about dance, music and tradition. He plays the lyre and the violin. As a primary school teacher, he has a unique gift for teaching. Every day in summer, he gathers together all the children of the village and organizes cultural, sporting or fun activities for them.
- **Maria**, also from Apeiranthos. She leads her village’s association in Athens. For each village in Naxos has its own cultural association, both in the village and in Athens, for the “former inhabitants” of the village, who come back to the island during the summer period.

