

RETURN TO OUR ROOTS PERFORMING TOUR TO GREECE 2001

29 Minoans traveled to Greece in August on the "Return to Our Roots" performing tour. With all the parents, grandparents and siblings, we were 46 people!

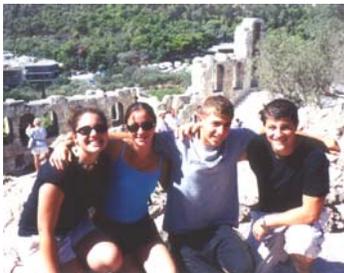


In front of the Royal Olympic Hotel, Athens

On Sunday August 5th we visited the Acropolis in Athens together. That evening we all went to see the Dora Stratou performance at the theater, to prepare us for our own show at the theater the next evening.



Minoans at the Parthenon



Minoans II at the Acropolis

We performed at the Dora Stratou Theater in Athens on Monday August 6th. We began with a rehearsal at 4:30 in the afternoon, in full sun!



Tsakonikos rehearsal

The parents couldn't keep up supplying us with bottles of water so some of the boys simply used a garden hose!



Tsakonikos at the Dora Stratou Theater, Athens

Our performance began at 9:30 pm and we performed 26 dances from 5 regions of Greece, changing costumes twice.



Kotsari

The temperature was about 110°! We were fortunate to be accompanied by the musicians of the Dora Stratou Theater and in our excitement I'm not so sure we realized how hot we really were (except maybe when Diana almost fainted...she was OK after the Dora Stratou costume mistress gave her a few drops of a "mystery" flower extract...).



Odysseas & Elektra



Fezodervenaghos

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During our costume changes we showed slides of past performances, former dancers and Minoans who were not able to travel to Greece.



Syrtos Syngathistos

I believe the audience was shocked at the quality of our dancing. I know my relatives were, even though they knew Vasilis and I have been dancing and teaching all these years. They were surprised at how professional the group looked!



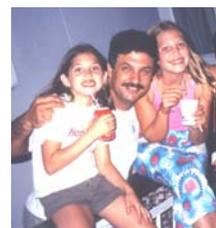
Issios

At each performance the first dance we did was Tsakonikos, with Gabrielle, Odysseas and Elektra at the end of the line. Everytime the three of them came on stage, the audience went especially wild! At Dora Stratou we started our Thracian suite with Xesyrtos. Just imagine 26 dancers coming on stage with that dance! It was quite an impressive thing to see.... almost as though the line was never going to end!



Kristen, Alexandra, Gabrielle and the "Smart Car"

The day after our Dora Stratou performance we traveled by ship to Hania, Crete. The dancers stayed up all night dancing in the disco on the boat. I went to bed but I understand Achilleas and Nicholas Papadakis danced a pretty mean Zeimbekikos!



We had a couple days off to relax at the pool and sandy beach near our hotel before performing three nights in a row. We celebrated Nicholas's 10th birthday with cake and ice cream at his uncle's restaurant nearby.



Happy Birthday, Nicholas!

On Friday morning August 10th we traveled by bus to Heraklion for a tour of the Ancient Minoan ruins at Knossos. This was a thrilling experience for us all: we got to take our picture in front of the "real" Minoan prince fresco!



At Knossos, Crete

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Minoan Dancers I



Minoan Dancers II



Minoan Dancers III

That afternoon we were treated to lunch by His Eminence Metropolitan Anthony before we went to his village of Avgeniki. When he had heard of our plans to perform in Greece this summer, he immediately invited us to his village and set into motion the preparations for a performance and paneyiri.

At the Avgeniki show we only did 3 suites (Pontian, Thracian and Cretan) and only one costume change. It was still hot though! We presented His Eminence with an official Minoans "Return to Our Roots" t-shirt and hat, true to FDF tradition. We returned to Hania at 4 am!



Claire presenting Metropolitan Anthony with his Minoans hat & t-shirt



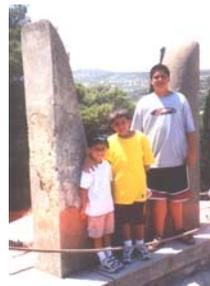
Zonaradikos at Avgeniki



Nico & Hugh dancing Kotsari at Avgeniki



Getting ready in Avgeniki



Knossos



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The next evening we danced in the village of Rodopou (Kolymbari) at the invitation of the mayor of that village and together with the Laographicos Omilos Hanion directed by Yiannis Agiasmenakis. The people of that village were so kind to us and prepared a delicious dinner for after the performance of boiled meat, pilafi and salad. The only drawback was that we had to change costumes in the room where they were boiling broth for the pilafi... in a huge pot that looked like a witch's cauldron on top of a huge burner. Now that was hot (but worth it!).



Getting ready in Rodopou



Claire & Elektra

On our final evening we performed in Hania at the Peace and Friendship Theater. This time we got to change on our bus! And do our costume change half way through the show on the bus! Our busdriver Andoni was a really nice guy. After the performance we were hosted by the mayor of Hania at a dinner that just wouldn't stop... They kept bringing more and more food (fish, kalamari, salad). This would have been fine except it was midnight when we got there! True to FDF tradition, we even presented our new friend Andoni with an official Minoans t-shirt!



The Minoans & Andoni's bus



Pontic in Rodopou



Yiassou Andoni & George!

And the next day most Minoans moved on with their vacations, to Santorini, Athens, Germany or home. The "Return to Our Roots" tour was a great success. Thanks to everyone for being so cooperative! We hope we'll be able to do it again, soon! (like 2003, 2004 or 2005?)



Our biggest fan in Rodopou



Our friends from Iceland



Fanta?