

A SEMINAR IN THE HEART OF THE TRADITION FROM THE GREEK ISLANDS

From July 21st to July 31st, 2009

TRADITION, DANCE, MUSIC, HISTORY & CULTURE FROM THE CYCLADES

Nikos Kazantzakis, who once lived for a year in the village of Eggares, and where he wrote "Anafora sto Greko", "Report to El Greco", wrote the following about Naxos :

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

"If paradise were on earth, it would be here, in Naxos"

In July 2009, we propose a festive, musical and cultural seminar in Naxos, the living and vibrating heart of the Cyclades, the very center of the the Greek archipelago, and also the center of the musical and choreographic life for the 30 Cycladic Islands.

After a whole year of intense preparation, & with the strong partnership of the Naxos community, the Council of Drymalias, and the Cultural Associations of the villages, we propose a unique 11-day seminar, in the rhythm of the "nisiotika", in the rhythm of the waving, flowing and swaying music from those unique Greek islands.

Naxos welcomes you with its huge marble portal, the "portara", vestige from the unfinished Apollon temple, which was supposed to be the biggest temple, ever, in antique Greece.

This symbol tells you, at your arrival, the richness, depth and greatness of the Naxian or Naxiote culture.

It is in Naxos, in Nyssa, that Dionysos, God of vine and wine, was born. ΔΙΟΝΥΣΟΣ, the twice-born God, once from his mother Semele, once from his father's thigh, Zeus, gave to mankind the vine, wine, drunkenness, ecstasy, trance and rapture. Dionysos married Adriane "in Naxos", and they both lived very happy in the island. The songs, the music and the dances were "dionysiac" ! A whole program... and soon *your* program !

It is in Naxos that you will celebrate, enjoy and share the Aegean life and pleasures, during 11 days and... 11 nights !

Naxos is the greatest and the greenest island in the Cyclades, with many fertile and cultivated valleys, and more than 40 traditional, typical villages. At the top of the island, the Mount Zas dominates, being the highest mountain in all of the Cycladic Islands.

On the seaside, many endless, beautiful beaches lead Naxos to be the Cycladic Island with the longest coast, with 148 kilometers. Chora, the main city, has an impressive 5,000-year history, with traces from all the periods : Cycladic, Classic, Hellenistic, Byzantine, and Venetian. The island has more than 500 churches, 40 towers & castles, 130 windmills & watermills.

Naxos is the real heart of the musical and choreographic life of the Cyclades,

and succeeded in preserving a very rich, very lively and very unique patrimony. Naxos is the Cycladic Island with the strongest dance and music tradition, and this extraordinary heritage radiates within the whole Aegean Sea and within Greece, making "nissiotika" synonymous with "naxiotika" and vice-versa.

This seminar has the objective to enable you to discover, share, live and deepen the Naxian life and culture. Therefore, our partners for this seminar will be true "Naxiotes", with deep, long and strong Naxian roots. We will not "land", drop or "parachute" in Naxos a program being foreign to Naxos.



ΝΗΣΟΣ ΝΑΞΟΣ 2009

NISOS NAXOS 2009



Welcome to Naxos !
Welcome to paradise !

Νίκος Καζαντζακης





DURING 11 DAYS, BE A "NISIOTIS", BE A "NAXIOTIS"

This is a unique invitation to the **ΒΙΣΙΩΤΙΚΑ**, to the "nisiotika", these unique dances from the Aegean Sea.

One of the greatest civilizations was born in the Aegean Sea, long ago.

Thanks to the antique writer Homere, we have an explanation to the word "Aegean". In old Greek, "aisso" was meaning "jumping". "aix", the goat, is a close word, because it is the "jumping" animal, and the Greek animal, too.

Metaphorically, the Greeks name "aiges" the big, large waves of their sea, their "jumping" sea, teased and fiddled by the meltem, this legendary Greek wind.

Therefore, the sea became "Aegean"...

This sea is the liquid link between between 3 continents : Europe, Africa, and Asia. It has been the place of birth for many cultures & civilizations.

The main archipelago in the Aegean Sea is the Kyklades, with more than 30 islands, from the biggest (Naxos) to the smaller ones : Andros, Tinos, Syros, Mykonos, Naxos, Paros, AntiParos, Ios, Thira/Santorini, Milos, Sifnos, Serifos, Kythnos, Kea, Amorgos, Anafi, Folegandros, Thirasia, Iraklia, Kimolos, Schinoussa, Donoussa, Koufounisi, Keros, Poliegos, AntiMilos, Glaros, Rinia, Delos, ...

This archipelago has been and still is the well, the hearth and the melting pot for a popular culture, and for a lively tradition. This exceptional heritage has been preserved in Naxos, thanks to the attachment of the Naxiotes to their island, to their land, to their village, to their roots. And the dances, so beautiful, so fluid, so flowing, are "waving" like the sea, like life...

The Aegean Sea is everywhere : around the islands, but also in the heart, the soul, the blood and the mind of all Aegeans, which is why their dances have this unique style and rhythm. Once you have seen, listened to or danced those dances, you cannot forget them, they are inside you.

Most of those dances were born in Naxos, before being spread to other islands.

Today, for the first time, we suggest a seminar within Naxos, with the Naxiotes, in the villages where they were born, with dancers, teachers and musicians from those villages, too.

It will be for you the unique opportunity to meet with the Naxiotes, to live a rare experience in a Greece still preserved, authentic, ancestral, forgotten, and magical ...

It will be for you the unique way to share moments that will turn out to be rare, warm, joyful, and unforgettable... We will be, you will be every day with the islanders, with a community that has been tightly associated to this seminar, which will be theirs, as much as it will be yours.



NISOS NAXOS 2009 ΝΗΣΟΣ ΝΑΞΟΣ 2009 A UNIQUE, ORIGINAL, AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCE

For the first time in Naxos, a seminar is prepared and organized with the Naxiotes. 11 days to be shared with them, to be spent in the villages, and to be "immersed" in the Naxian tradition, this famous "**παράδοση**".

Our goal consisted in being as close as possible to the islanders, to their daily life, to their history and culture.

Therefore, we started preparing this seminar with them, from the beginning, step by step. All the thinking, all the ideas, all the initiatives & decisions have been made in a close relationship with the Naxiotes, so that we may build with them a really genuine, authentic seminar.

We will meet with many Naxiotes, and we will go to the places where their tradition was born : the villages in the mountains and in the valleys, the small fishing harbours, the places where this tradition is transmitted and shared, with passion, strength and authenticity.

We will dance in the villages : morning, afternoon, evening, night. We will not be in an hotel for the dances, we will not be disconnected from the Naxos daily life. Our teaching will be where the Naxiotes dance, or learn dancing : the squares in the villages, in front of the church, the school or the "kafeneio". This will be a step from us towards the Naxiotes, and a friendly way to have them be with us, and able to react, interact, or simply join us !

Our teachers, our choreographers, will be first rank dancers, having a name, a fame, and a high respect within Naxos, but also within Greece and abroad. Each one is coming from a specific village, and we will have our teaching in the village where each teacher is coming from.

The dances in Naxos, the "nisiotika", were born from a unique alchemy between old instruments from Naxos, and newly-come instruments in the 20s, such as violin and lute, when refugees arrived from Asia Minor, escaping from massacre, torture and extermination. A unique fusion took place with old naxian instruments, such as "tsambouna", flute and drum.

The result was a very attractive and fascinating music, which spread out of the islands to the rest of Greece, and then to the rest of the world, being a companion to all emigrants, and a symbol of the so much loved Aegean Sea.

We will also learn dances from other Kyklades, around Naxos : beautiful, yet unknown or forgotten dances from **Sifnos, Serifos, Kythnos, Amorgos, Mykonos, Paros, Rodos, etc.**



"This island had a great sweetness, and a lot of peacefulness. All men's faces were looking good. Melons, peaches, grapes and figs were countless. The sea was quiet. I look at those people : they have never been worried by an earthquake, nor by a Turk, and their eyes were not burnt. Here, freedom had switched off the fever for freedom, and life was just flowing, like a sleeping and happy water; and if sometime it was a little troubled, it was never facing a storm nor a hurricane. Serenity was the very first gift from the island, and I was feeling it, while dawdling in Naxos..."

Nikos Kazantzakis





“I had met with a rich man from Naxos, Sir Lazaros. He had a magnificent orchard, one hour distant from the city of Naxos. He invited us, and we stayed two weeks. What an abundance, what a beatitude ! Trees were loaded with fruit ! Naxos was the land of plenty. Crete was becoming a tale, a distant and troubled cloud. No more fear, no more cry, no more blood, no more fight for freedom : everything was fading away, melting, and disappearing within the torpor of the Naxian felicity.
Nikos Kazantzakis



THE NISSIOTE **ὄφος** THE NAXIAN **ὄφος**

Dance is not limited to steps, nor reduced to a rhythm, or a combination of moves. Steps and moves are to dance what respiration and breathing are to life : a minimum, a necessity, a basis to start from.

But breathing does not mean living, and moving does not mean dancing.

Dance is an inner vibration, a body language telling feelings and emotions.

It is the “nisiotic” sensitivity which is expressed through the “nisiotika”, and this is because this sensitiveness is unique to the “nisiotes” that no-one from outside the islands can dance the “nisiotika” as a “nisiotis”. The “nisiotes” have their own style, their own character, their **ὄφος**.

Those differences can be seen between islands, between villages from a same island, between families from a same village, etc.

For example, in Naxos, every main village has its own “vlaha”, the dance for Carnival. Therefore, there are at least 7 different “vlahas”, and not only 1, 2 or 3...

Also, if a dancer will be tired, or drunk, or in love, or sad, or all this combined, he will not dance in the same way !

A good musician, playing “violi” or “laouto”, will be able to feel all those slight differences, and to “play” with the first dancer, as well as the lead-dancer will play with the musician...

For example, in Komiaki or Koronida, a village being 5 kilometers distant from Apeiranthos, you may hear a lead-dancer tell a musician, half-joking : “do not play apeiranthitika !”, which means the same music and the same dance, yet with light differences between the two villages. Every village is paying high attention to its genuine tradition and style.

The seminar has been designed to help you absorb this unique **ὄφος**, and be impregnated and permeated with this beautiful and flowing style, so that you may become a real islander, a real “nisiotis” or “nisiotissa”, a real “Naxiotis” or “Naxiotissa”.

Therefore, after the seminar, the “**nisiotika**” will have for you much more sense, much more strength, much **more meaning, much more taste and flavor : you will dance them from inside, with passion, energy and authenticity.**

This is what makes a good dancer, maybe : he or she went through a deep and major work, enabling him or her to dance the dance from inside, with all his feelings, without leaving the meaning, **the soul and the spirit of the dance.** The dance will be sublimated, because the dancer expresses it with pureness, letting people around feel, see, hear and enjoy the real essence of the dance.

It is in Naxos that Zeus, or Zes, **Ζεὺς** or **Ζαὺς**, was raised, in a cave that still can be

seen. It is at the top of “Mount Zas”, that has his name, that Zeus received the thunder and the lightning, and those gifts, given by an eagle, enabled him to reign on Olympus, and on all other Gods.

Now it is your turn to **come to Naxos, and to receive, live and share the magic of the island, so that you may make yours a tradition, a culture, a music and a lifestyle that will make your daily life dance and sing...**

A DENSE PROGRAM, ALL IN PASSION, ALL IN MUSIC

We will dance 8 days : 2 days in each main village for the Naxos tradition : Komiaki / Koronida, Koronos, Kinidaros, Damarionas.

At the end of each mini-seminar in each village, we will have a dinner in the village, followed by a “glenti”, with a group of musicians from Naxos who will be with us during the 11 days. Those musicians are first-rank players, being in the heart of genuine Naxos tradition.

On the very last night, we will have a major “glenti” too, with all our friends.

Every night, we will have dinner within a local taver, serving traditional and delicious typical food from Naxos.

On one night, we will go to a **πανηγυρι** in a village.

Also, another night, we will have a private concert from a master of Naxos music. Loyal and faithful to his island, he has not left it, whereas some others have, to make a wealthy living

from “nisiotika” music in Greece and abroad.

We will have our own bus, to take us to all our places. We will sleep in a nice, calm, family-owned hotel, close to the sea, with a very good standard of comfort : each room has an independent bathroom, a fridge, a safeguard, a balcony with a view on the Aegean sea, plus TV and air conditioning. Rooms will be for 2, 3 or 4 people. Single rooms may be available, with an extra-cost.

We will have two days without dancing and teaching, so that we may take advantage of the beauty of Naxos, and tour in the island with our own bus.

On the first day of rest, we will go and meet with other main figures of the Naxos tradition :

We’ll meet with Vangelis, who makes “tsambouna” for Naxos, and many other Greek islands, including Paros, Mykonos, Kalymnos, Karpathos, etc. He will show them all, telling the differences, playing, and sharing his life-long passion with you. He is a true magician.

We’ll visit an old mill making oil with olives We’ll see an old weaving shed, making this very traditional Naxos cloth, used for clothes and house. A Naxos old say tells that women have so much passion when they weave that, many years later, you may still listen to their songs, if you put your ear close to the cloth...





We'll see an old peasant, who makes his cheese, his wine, his raki, so that you may taste them, but also bring them back home, to face the cold winter days...

We'll visit a very old distillery of Kitron, the old and legendary liqueur of Naxos, made of citron leaves.

We'll see an old mine of emery, this rare stone, which contributed once to the wealth of Naxos, but also to the pain and suffering of many islanders : you will hear them in the words of many traditional songs, if you listen carefully.

On the second day of rest, we'll try to go sailing to small Kyklades, close to Naxos, such as **Ηρακλεια, Σχινουσα, Κουφουνησι, Κερος, κτλ.** This will be possible if the wind is not too strong.



A PROGRAM OPEN TO EACH AND EVERY ONE : WELCOME TO NON-DANCERS, WELCOME TO THEIR FRIENDS AND FAMILY !

People who do not dance will be able to have other activities (not included in the seminar) :

- Walking tours in Naxos, with a photographer knowing many hidden, secret places of the island
- Sailing
- Visit of other Kyklades, by boat : **Δηλο, Παρο, Αντιπαρο, Μυκονο, κτλ.**
- Museums, churches, castles and old villages inside Naxos
- Biking & cycling
- Windsurfing
- Horseriding
- Submarine activities, diving
- Fishing
- Tanning on the beach...



OUR TEACHERS, DANCERS & CHOREOGRAPHERS

Four first-rank masters of the Naxos and Kyklades tradition will be with us :

- **Sofia, helped by Katerina, for the dances from Komiaki.** Sofia is a highly respected expert for tradition. She has been interviewed by the press, the radio, the TV. She learnt dancing with her father, when 2-year old ! An old say in Naxos tells that children start dancing before birth, receiving vibrations from the mother...

• **Apostolis, for the dances from Koronos.** Apostolis lives in Athens, and is heading a group of dancers being students, from all regions and cities of Greece. Yet, he is still very much linked with his village, as all people from Naxos, and he comes back every summer, to be in Koronos, with the rest of his family, and all his friends. He happens to tour from hamlet to hamlet in Naxos, to dance with the inhabitants, and make sure that the small kids start learning and dancing very early.

• **Vicky, for the dances from Kinidaros.** Kinidaros, among all, maybe is the most "dancing" or "danceful" village. The wide "Konitopoulou" family (see all CDs for "nisiotika" in Athens...) are from this place. Vicky started and directed a school in Germany for Greek and traditional dances. She now came back to Greece, and she does a lot for the cultural life of her village.

• **Manolis, for the dances from Damarionas.** Manolis created a group of dancers in Agios Ioannis of Renti, close to Peiraeus (Peiraias), of all ages, in 1990. Almost 20 years later, he has a group of 600 dancers ! He has been invited abroad, and has danced and performed in many countries : China, Russia, North America, Bulgaria, Germany, Africa, etc. In many international festivals, he represented Greece. He has never danced in France, yet, nor with French dancers.

All this seminar, of course, is a non-profit and a non-lucrative event.

All expenses are being re-charged at cost, so that the people from Naxos may be paid for their time and work : hotel, taverns, musicians, dancers, teachers, bus rental, bus driver, etc.

Contact :

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FOR MORE INFORMATIONS :

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