

BIOGRAPHY of YANNIS KONSTANTINOU

Yannis Konstantinou is an internationally recognized teacher and researcher of traditional dance, music and costumes of west Macedonia. He is particularly interested in how local customs, historical events, regional topography and the migration of various ethnic groups have influenced the evolution of dance and music in the region. His most recent research, which resulted in a Master's degree, has been a detailed archival investigation of the types and variations of the costumes in the Florina region. Yannis participates in numerous conferences and seminars in Greece, the Balkans, Europe, and North America, and has served as judge numerous times at the Greek Orthodox Folk Dance Festival (FDF) held annually in California. Yannis regularly teaches at many folk dance groups across the United States and has taught multiple times at the California Kolo Festival, the Chicago Spring Festival and World Camp.

Yannis has been dancing from childhood alongside his parents, family and friends in the villages of Florina in northwest Greece, and to this day, his personal teaching and dance style convey this lifelong experience. He has a deep passion and commitment to preserving and sharing the local traditions and culture of Greek Macedonia, which is evidenced every year at the "Seminar of Traditional Dance" that he organizes in Prespes. Yannis regularly teaches cultural associations of villages of Florina and Amindeo as well as being a master teacher for many dance associations in Greece. In 2013-2014, Yannis organized a series of weekend seminars where teachers like himself, who all their lives have been immersed in the culture, traditions, music and dance of their respective regions, worked with directors of Greek dance associations interested in understanding the cultural, social and historical context of the dances that they are performing. Upon completion, attendees received certificates from the University of West Macedonia.

Yannis is the founder, artistic director and master instructor of the highly respected cultural association, "Lygkistes", with over 200 members dancing in Florina and Athens. Since 1994 "Lygkistes" has performed extensively throughout Europe and the Balkans including taking second place among 120 competitors at the prestigious LLangollen International Dance competition. Yannis was the Artistic Director and instructor of the Florina branch of Lykeion Ellinidon for eight years.

Yannis is married to Hra Koloni, who is a respected dance teacher in her own right and who manages the family-run hotel in Prespes. They live in Florina with their two children, Xenia and Simos, 21 and 15 years old, who represent the third generation of their family's passion for preserving traditional dance and music.