

GRAPEVINE

Volume 18 Number 1

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Grapevine is the newsletter of the Perth International Dancers. The Group meets Monday evenings at St Margaret's Church Hall in Nedlands (Cnr Tyrell & Elizabeth) and Saturday mornings at the John Leckie Music Hall in College Park off Melvista Ave. Monday evenings begin at 7pm with a 75 minute dance lesson, followed by general dancing until late. Saturdays begin at 10am with a 1 hour dance lesson before morning tea and general dancing. For more information please call John (9427 4258 (wk) or Martin (9326 6077 (wk)).

From President Palenque

Welcome everyone to the Winter 2006 Grapevine. This year is panning out to be a busy year for the Perth International Dancers. We performed several times in February, March and April at festivals including Fairbridge and Nannup and community concerts with the Last Five Coins and at the Mundaring Performing Arts Society dance concert. We had a hugely successful Bring a Friend Night at the end of May that was lots of fun. But there is lots more to come! Please take a look further in this Grapevine for details on the next "Bring a Friend Morning" to be followed by a 6 weeks Beginners' course. Please pass the word around to potentially interested friends regarding the Beginners' Course - word of mouth is the best advertising!

By the time you get this Grapevine, Andre may well be here, and we are looking forward to a fantastic weekend of dance - including a fantastic opportunity on the Friday of his visit for potential teachers of children to learn dances and techniques to encourage kids in international folk dance.

Finally, 2006 is our 30th anniversary year, and a big celebration is being planned for the weekend of the 11th November, so please keep your diaries free for that weekend. A committee of members is busy planning and it should be an awesome event.

Dates for your Diary:

Bring a Friend Saturday – 29th July 10am-noon
John Leckie Music Pavilion. A good time to introduce your friends to the joy of dance.

Beginners Course 2006

Commencing Saturday 5th August for 6 weeks, 11.45am, John Leckie Music Pavilion, College Park off Melvista Ave.

NB: Saturday Group will start at 9.30am to accommodate the course from 5th Aug – 9th Sept.

PIFDG 30th anniversary celebrations!

Yes, unbelievable, but true, so get out your diaries and mark down the Saturday 11th November 2006. You're all invited!! Dancers, ex-dancers, partners and potential dancers!

30th Anniversary Party

SAT 11th - SUN 12th November,
Point Peron

next to our old stamping ground!

Fully catered & accommodation

Saturday dance sessions will include
oldies but goodies, Armenian, & easy
party dances.

Further details as they come to light.
Stay tuned!!

Price to be confirmed but likely to be about \$55 ea
If anyone can help us to contact old members,
your help would be greatly appreciated.

Please contact Pam Massey – 'phone 9277 4462



Is it all in the Words?

Have you ever wondered what the words of some of our favourite dances mean? Are they romantic? Are they cryptic? Are they perceptive and inspiring? Meaningless, bizarre and nonsensical perhaps? Or perhaps all of the above?

Well, when we were preparing for our Fairbridge performance in April and needed some words for the flyer we checked on the Internet for a couple of dances, including for Muhtarin Oglu Ali, one of Andre's dances from a couple of years ago.

There's some amazing stuff out on the web and Google soon came up with the answer. So the translation for 'Muhtarin' is shown below. We'll try to include the words from a few of other favourites in future issues.

Muhtarin Oglu Ali

*I wake up early in the morning, look out of my window
[repeat]*

The mayor's Casanova son is charming all the girls

The mayor's Casanova son is charming all the girls

Chorus 1: [Ali the son of the mayor

Your hair is like the branches of a bush

If you are the son of the mayor, I am the crazy dancer

If you are the son of the mayor, I am the crazy dancer]

Chorus 2:[Ali the son of the mayor

Your hair is like the branches of a bush

If you are the son of the mayor, me me me me

I am the crazy dancer, I am the crazy dancer]

What is it a lot of problems

Thousand of troubles

Ok Ok I understand that your father is the mayor

Ok Ok I understand that your father is the mayor

[Repeat Chorus 2]

[Repeat Chorus 1]

And we thought it was all about anchovies!!

So, that'll give you something else to think about while you are dancing!!

Armenia & Beyond – Jenny Currell – May '06

I have recently returned from Tineke van Geel's dance tour to Armenia. Two of us from Perth joined a group of 47 people from countries including Holland, Germany, Norway and Canada. It was a wonderful tour combining Armenian

dance workshops, cultural events and touring the country.

Unfortunately, on the day we arrived, a plane flying out of Armenia crashed killing all 105 people aboard. The entire country went into mourning for two days and all cultural events were cancelled. It was a very sad time. As Tineke says "Things happen in Armenia – it's not all just happy dancing!" Things like the Armenian genocide around the turn of last century, like a massive earthquake that wiped out whole towns in 1988 and like this latest disaster. But the Armenians are survivors, a strong and proud people. Their young women in particular are very attractive, typically with long black hair, lovely big dark eyes and up to the minute fashion including the most amazing footwear – shoes with pointy toes, stiletto heels and often extensive decoration.

We attended dance workshops with choreographer Pajlak Sarkisian and learned five dances from different regions and with different styles. Pajlak was an enthusiastic and very competent teacher and although his English was very limited he had no problem communicating with us. "I am – no dance". It was time for us to try the dance without him to see if we had learned it well. Ovive Yerk is a graceful, slow women's dance with haunting, lilting music. Margarit is another softer dance with many different parts and a wide array of interesting arm movements. Yerezgavor is more lively with much swinging of arms. The very common kotchari step and some snappy claps appear in Msho Kotchari and then there was Gyovard from Sasson in 'western Armenia'.

During and after some of our delicious dinners we were treated to the music of live bands playing the duduk, zorna, kanon and other Armenian instruments. Of course we needed little encouragement to get up and dance and were often joined by locals showing how it is done; the women always using their unique and incredibly expressive hand and arm movements and the men, more macho shoulder movements, jumps, kicks and slaps. We also enjoyed two performances by a local traditional Armenian dance group showing great skill and energy and which showcased many of the dance elements that were incorporated into the dances we were learning.

We spent all but one of our nights in Yerevan, the capital, and had enough free time to do a little exploring of our own. What with walking to a

different restaurant each night, walking to dance classes and generally wandering we all became quite expert at negotiating the streets of Yerevan despite the crazy drivers and apparent lack of road rules and all street signs being in only Armenian and Russian Cyrillic letters. I actually took great delight in learning enough Armenian letters to be able to read a few signs, but it took several days to master and pronounce the Armenian word for thank you, a long and tricky 'shnoakulayun lavem'.

We had three half day excursions to interesting museums and temples in the countryside near Yerevan – Sardarapat, an ethnological and folk art museum, ancient Garni temple, the Geghard monastery, the ruins of Zvartnots cathedral and Echmiadzin cathedral now fully operational after being closed for the 70years of soviet rule. We also went on a two day tour which covered a large part of the country with an overnight stay at a luxury resort on the shores of Lake Sevan, over 1000m above sea level and a popular summer holiday retreat.

One of the highlights of the tour was a picnic lunch with many of the locals in the town of Yeregnadzor. As we disgorged from our coach we had the most incredible welcome from the local dance group who danced with us up the street to a band of musicians to artists, craftspeople and wine and cheese tastings. We were treated to a display of traditional bread-making , huge thin sheets of lavash baked almost instantly in a pit oven and it was absolutely delicious. We ate a simple but wonderful lunch overlooking apricot groves with amazing mountain and valley views amidst much toasting whilst chatting to the local youngsters with the help of my English- Armenian phrase book.

Much of Armenia is fairly barren looking hills – they call their country 'land of stones' and with an average 1000m above sea level we were often within sight of snow-capped mountains.

One area, Dilijan, though is forested with fast flowing rivers reminiscent of Switzerland except perhaps for the domesticated pigs and piglets foraging between the trees. One of the most picturesque monasteries we visited was in this area. Hargatsin monastery is made up of several different churches and temples dating from the 4th century. The history of this ancient land is almost beyond the comprehension of someone brought up

in Australia where we generally consider anything from 200 years ago as old.

The Armenians refer to themselves as the Hay (pronounced Hi) people and call their country Hayastan. Myth has it that they are descended from Hayk, himself a grandson of Noah.

Having traveled all the way from Australia Penny and I extended our trip with some time in eastern Europe. We traveled by train and visited Prague (Czech Republic), Bucharest (Romania), Budapest (Hungary), Innsbruck (Austria) and Zurich (Switzerland). We managed to catch a contemporary dance performance in the exquisitely ornate Prague theatre for a few dollars and treated ourselves to a folkloric dances ensemble performance in Hungary, both of which were very enjoyable as were the rest of our travels.

I arrived home just in time for a weekend Israeli dance workshop and Perth International Folk Dance Group party night where I paraded my newly acquired Armenian costume and performed some of the dances that I had learned. It was a great night and members of the group are keen to learn the dances that I've brought back.

It was a great trip and a credit to Tineke, her co-organizer Satik and Satik's daughter Nayira who was our very informative tour guide. It was fantastic meeting other dance enthusiasts from all over the world and experiencing the rich culture and history of Armenia and its people and all through the love of dance.



Hills Update

from Jenny Currell

The Hills Friday morning group now has four performances under its belt and its own costumes. A few of us spent time designing, buying material and prototyping the costumes and were then joined in several busy-bees by other group members to complete the cutting, sewing and adjusting to fit. It was a constructive and enjoyable time and we are very proud of our new look.

I am very grateful to Jennifer who not only kept the group up and running on Friday mornings but also coordinated a performance while I was away overseas.

Although the group is still small in numbers it is large on enthusiasm and has a steadily growing repertoire of dances. It's cold up here in the hills

in our little hall in winter so hopefully spring will bring a boost in numbers.

Keeping with the PIFDG 'tradition' of 5th of the month parties we will hold another spring morning tea on Friday 29th September. Please come and join us then for dancing and morning tea to make it a special day but you are all welcome any Friday 9:30 – 11ish at the Mundaring Scout Hall, Jacoby St, Mundaring.

And for those of you coming up for Andre's Friday workshop I will be having open-house lunch at my place afterwards.

The following photo shows our Hills Group with their new costumes – very stylish! Well done Jenny.



A Tall Story – a Message from Leone

I play piano in a Jewish band – used to be called JEMS but now changed to GAN EYDEN (meaning Garden of Eden). We have been playing together for about ten years so you would think we'd be pretty good by now – well we do have a lot of fun trying, so we are at your service if you would like to hire us – we are very cheap!!! Anyway the point of all this is that our Clarinet player has an inexhaustible supply of jokes – he's a lovely guy and a very good musician – and in between bouts of music he breaks off and tells us another story. This is one of them: (He says it's true, and I and I believe him).

Several months ago the Pope decreed that all the Jews had to convert or leave Italy. There was a huge outcry from the Jewish community, so the Pope offered a deal. He would have a religious debate with the leader of the Jewish community. If the Jews won they could stay in Italy. If the Pope won they would have to leave.

The Jewish people met and picked an aged but wise Rabbi – Moishe, to represent them in the debate. However, as Moishe spoke no Italian and the Pope spoke no Yiddish, they all agreed that it would be a "silent" debate. On the chosen day the Pope and Rabbi Moishe sat opposite each other for a full minute before the Pope raised his hand and showed three fingers. Rabbi Moishe looked back and raised one finger. Next the Pope waved his finger around his head. Rabbi Moishe pointed to the ground where he sat. The Pope then brought out a communion wafer and a chalice of wine. Rabbi Moishe pulled out an apple.

With that the Pope stood up and declared that he was beaten, that Rabbi Moishe was too clever and that the Jews could stay.

Later the Cardinals met with the Pope, asking what had happened. The Pope said "First I held up three fingers to represent the Holy Trinity. He responded by holding up one finger to remind me that there is still only one God common to both our beliefs. Then I waved my finger to show him that God was all around us. He responded by pointing to the ground to show that God was also right here with us. I pulled out the wine and wafer to show that God absolves us of all our sins. He pulled out an apple to remind me of the original sin. He had me beaten and I could not continue"

Meanwhile the Jewish community gathered around Rabbi Moishe. "What happened" they asked. "Well" said Moishe, "First he said to me that we had three days to get out of Italy, so I said to him 'Up Yours', then he tells me that the whole country would be cleared of Jews and I said to him 'We're staying right here' "And then what?" asked a woman. "Who knows?" said Moishe. "He took out his lunch so I ate mine".



Laurel's

Birthday

Cake !!