

The Hellenic Society Prometheas

Newsletter

October 2001

Prometheas joins the world community at large in remembering the victims of the tragic events of September 11. We pay our respects to the dead and we salute the heroes who fought so hard side by side to save the lives of others by sacrificing their own. God bless them. Long live freedom and democracy.

Prometheas' Kafeneio was held on September 28

On September 28, Prometheas held its traditional kafeneio evening at the Clara Barton Community Center, in Bethesda, MD. The event was very successful; about 100 people attended and enjoyed themselves with delicious mezedakia, wine/ouzo, music and yes, some Greek dancing!

Greek folk singer Stelios Kazantzidis passes away

On September 14th, 2001, singer Stelios Kazantzidis passed away at the age 70 after getting to the top of what Greek music has to offer and making significant contributions to the Greek music and culture during the last half century. Kazantzidis grew up under very difficult circumstances, living in “prospighikes katoikies” (refugee homes) in the 1930s, losing his father at very young age and then facing the German occupation and civil war in the 1940s. So, when he sang songs such as:

«??asa t?? pate?a μ??
p??t?? ?a t?? ?????? ?
?a?a?????st??a s????a
t ?μ?a ??a ?a ??s?
Sp??ta, ts??a?a p??a?a
st??? d??μ??? ?a?e με?a
??at? e??a ade?f ?a p?? μ??a
?a?a????st? μ ?te?a»¹,

he was telling the story of his life. Some critics characterized his songs “crying and misery” (klama kai mizeria”), but his contribution is undisputed. Some of the most noteworthy contributions are:

- Kazantzides kai ta rembetika [1975, EMI]
- Kazantzides No 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 [EMI]
- Kazantzides se dhmotika tragoudia [1977, EMI]
- Kazantzides se Tragoudia ths Anatolhs [1980, EMI]
- Politeia, Mikh Theodorakh [1960, EMI]

¹ Song of G. Mitsakis; lyrics: H. Papasideri

- Kataxnia, X.Leonth-K.Virvou [1964, Minos]
- Sthn Anatolh, Mikh Theodorakh [1974, Minos]
- Tragoudia ths Amerikhs [1991, MBI]
- T'Ahdonia tou Pontou with Xrysantho [1993, MBI]

Short visit to Istanbul

During my recent trip to Turkey (Sept 8-16), I had the opportunity to spend a day in Istanbul, mainly to visit Agia Sophia. The time was very limited and did not have a chance to visit many places, but I want to share with you a few observations. The visit to Agia Sophia ("museum" as the Turks call it) left me with a sense of emptiness and disappointment. What I saw did not meet even my very limited expectations. I was hoping to see at least a few reminders of its glamour days, but...there is nothing there! After visiting St. Mark church in Venice last April and seeing what Dandolo stole from St. Sophia in the 4th Crusade, and what the Ottomans have done to this (once) magnificent building, the only thing you can feel is anger, not only as a Greek and Christian Orthodox, but as a human being with some respect and appreciation for art and culture.

If you still want to visit Istanbul to see the Dolmabache Sarayi, the Topkapi Palace and the Blue Mosque or enjoy the baths of Roxelana or Galata Sarayi, I have a recommendation: stay at Ayasoya Pansion. It is a gorgeous little hotel next to Agia Sophia with 10 rooms and 2 suites. It was restored in 1994 with 15th Century interior decoration. It is close to everything, yet isolated from the noise with a beautiful garden where you may enjoy your coffee or meal. Also, the price is right; rooms go for \$80-110 per night. Contact info: tel +212 513 3660, email ayapans@escortnet.com. S.T.

Mark your calendars:

Modern Greek Studies Association: Symposium Oct 25-27, 2001, at Georgetown University

A symposium by the Modern Greek Studies Association has been planned for Oct. 25-27, 2001, at Georgetown University. Subjects include: Social and Cultural Dimensions of the Occupations and the Civil War, Poets and Poetry, The Greek Civil War, The Changing Face of Anthropology in Greece, Cavafy, Language-Education-Discourse, and Greek Society and the State in the 20th Century. For more information about this event you may call James Alatis at 202-687-5659 or mgsa2001@georgetown.edu.

Oedipus at the Shakespeare Theatre

Oedipus by Sophocles at the Shakespeare Theatre directed by Michael Kahn from August 28 to October 31; tickets: 202-547-1122

Greek Novelist Rhea Galanaki, Oct 28, 2001

Greek Novelist Rhea Galanaki will read at Politics & Prose Bookstore on Sunday, October 28th, 2001; for information call: 202-332-2727

Return to Origins

The next annual performance of the **Return to Origins** program will take place on **March 17, 2002**, at the Performing Arts Center, Montgomery College-Rockville Campus.

Book reviews

Prometheas wired – The hope for democracy in the age of network technology, by D. Barney, published by Chicago University Press, \$28

Dino Siotis (director of the Press Office of the Greek Consulate in Boston, MA and editor of the Mondo Greco magazine) reviews² D. Barney's "Prometheas wired – The hope for democracy in the age of network technology". Barney's book addresses questions such as:

- Is democracy going to spread more as a result of the internet, as its supporters believe?
- Are the changes going to be so drastic that the power of the governments diminishes?

To support his conclusions, Barney uses the myth of Prometheas, as so many other authors have done³, to explain what is going on with the technological revolution. The author concludes that Prometheas' fire lights up the physical world, but also provides hope, which is so important for human beings. He warns that this fire is useful but also dangerous. Siotis, in his critique, adds that while some of the dangers of the technological revolution are real, there are signs that there is happy co-existence between the new technologies and the classic thought. Last year, the Washington Post (article by Valerie Strauss) pointed out the renewed interest in philosophy and the classics in US universities and argued that Socrates', Plato's and Aristotle's philosophy is very useful for the world of informatics.

Crescent and Star: Turkey between two worlds, by Stephen Kinzer, published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux, \$25

The Economist in its August 25th 2001 issue reviews Stephen Kinzer's Crescent and Star: Turkey between two worlds. Kinzer's main two conclusions are: 1. Turkey needs to confront its own history; the average Turk knows nothing about his country's past

² ??µα, 12 ??εµβ????, 2000

³ Olga Panzio documents the uses of Prometheas' myth in her book: "The myth of Prometheus: its survival and metamorphoses up to the 18th century" (1958)

treatment of the Armenians and the Kurdish civil war. 2. Turkey's malady is its inability to accommodate dissent; so tightly did Kemal Ataturk seal his new republic that it has been in danger of suffocating ever since.