



The Hellenic Society Prometheas

Newsletter 16

December 2002

Prometheas' Kafenio, at St. George, Bethesda MD, Friday, November 8

Prometheas' second kafenio of the year took place at St. George, Bethesda on November 8th and the feedback of the participants suggests that it was a big success. Good music by Achilleas and Compania created an environment everybody danced and had fun. The komboloi theme of the kafenio was a good addition to a memorable evening.

Mark your calendars:

Marios Frangoulis and "Visions of Greece" on WETA (Channel 26) on Dec 5th

On Thursday, December 5, WETA (Channel 26) will air two programs of interest to the Greek-American community. Greek singer Mario Frangoulis will be at the WETA studios as special guest.

"MARIO FRANGOULIS: SOMETIMES I DREAM", WETA (Channel 26) - Thursday, December 5th at 8:00 pm.

Everything from a hard-rock anthem to an operatic aria - Mario Frangoulis is the tenor for a new age. As a young boy he studied violin and composed music and he later attended the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London.

Taped on a hot summer night in Thessaloniki, Greece, "MARIO FRANGOULIS: SOMETIMES I DREAM" features the tenor in concert, performing passionately romantic songs that demonstrate the beauty, power and an incredibly expressive range of his extraordinary voice.

"VISIONS OF GREECE"

Thursday, December 5, 2002 at 9:30 pm

Shot in high definition from a helicopter-mounted camera, VISIONS OF GREECE showcases the mainland of Greece and the Greek islands from a vantage point held only by the gods on Mount Olympus. The program airs on PBS as part of the December 2002 pledge drive (check local listings).

VISIONS OF GREECE is a virtual postcard, vivid with a palette of pure white-sand beaches, the essential blue of island coastlines and church domes. The soundtrack of traditional and modern Greek music underscores a poetic narrative that celebrates

Greece's history and mythology. Lifting off from Athens, viewers embark on a modern odyssey as varied and dramatic as Greek history, exploring exotic islands scattered like stones in the Aegean Sea; storied ruins; verdant hills; rocky coastlines; and timeless tradition.

Launched from the port of Piraeus, VISIONS OF GREECE sets off island-hopping in the Aegean through the Cyclades - over Naxos, Santorini and others in that circular cluster, circling over to Crete. Then back to the Greek mainland, to Meteora, the inaccessible monasteries built into the mountains and seem eternally suspended between heaven and earth. The helicopter's flight path marks an itinerary to please world travelers, historians and Greek-Americans alike. It soars around the mainland and islands from Corfu to the Corinth Canal, from Mount Olympus to Mykonos, to Delphi, Rhodes, Thessaloniki, and every glorious destination along the way, until the Aegean beckons again for one last look.

Dr. Veremis at SAIS on Dec 5th

THE EMBASSY OF GREECE, Press Office and
THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY
School of Advanced International Studies
European Studies Department

Invite you to a presentation

by

Dr. THANOS VEREMIS

Professor of Political History, Athens University
and
Karamanlis Professor of Greek and Balkan History,
Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy,
Tufts University

of his New Book

"GREECE: THE MODERN SEQUEL"

co-authored by Yiannis Koliopoulos, University of Thessaloniki

Thursday, December 5, 2002 at 6:00 p.m.

Introduction by Dr. Charles Gati, SAIS

at

The Rome Auditorium

**Johns Hopkins University/SAIS
1619 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC**

Reception will follow

Professor Veremis is a distinguished political historian and a founder of the Athens-based Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP). Dr. Veremis will present his new book, which explores Greece's politics, institutions, society, economy, ideology, geography and culture in a fresh look at Greece and the Greek people.

He will also discuss Greece's domestic and foreign policy priorities and its role in S.E. Europe, as the country prepares to assume the presidency of the European Union in January 2003. For information, please call: 202-332-2727.

THE EMERGENCE OF MODERN GREEK PAINTING, 1830 -1930
from the Collection of the Bank of Greece
September 30 - December 3, 2002

FEDERAL RESERVE BUILDING - VISITORS' CENTER



Nikolaos Gysis
Pallas, Athena, 1887

The Fine Arts Program of the Federal Reserve Board and the Bank of Greece are sponsoring the first survey of modern Greek painting to be presented in Washington, D.C., featuring 39 paintings and prints of some of Greece's most renowned artists of the 19th and 20th centuries.

The term “modern Greek painting” describes art produced after the country won its freedom from Ottoman occupation and established the modern Greek state in 1832. The works tell the Greek story of the emergence and application of formalist principles based on line, perspective, and form practiced in western Europe since the Renaissance but not in Greece until after their war of independence.

*Nikephoros Lytras, Georgios Iakovides, Nikolaos Gyzis,
Ioannis Altamouras, Konstantinos Volanakis,
Konstantinos Parthenis, Yiannis Tsarouchis, Spyros
Vikatos, Konstantinos Maleas, Stratis Axiotis, Hector
Doukas, Thalia Flora-Kavadia, Orestes Kanellis,
Georgios Kosmadopoulos, Periklis Pantazis, Georgios
Moschos, Georgios Oikonomidis, Spyros Papaloukas,
Angelos Theodoropoulos, Theodoros Vryzakis, etc.
.*



Konstantinos Parthenis

*Athanasios
Diakos,
1933-38*



Theodoros Vryzakis, *Karaouli*, 1854

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Monday through Friday

24 hr. advance reservations

202-452-3410

Visitor's Center, Federal Reserve Building

20th Street, off Constitution Avenue, NW

Washington, DC

Other News of Interest

Ancient Greeks Studied Infinity

Contrary to what scholars had thought, the ancient Greeks, who invented mathematics, did explore the concept of infinity.

Mathematicians have long thought that the concept of infinity wasn't studied in any detailed way until the Scientific Revolution.

But Reviel Netz, an assistant professor of classics at Stanford University, recently examined an ancient text called the Archimedes Palimpsest, which was authored by Archimedes and is currently housed at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore.

Netz and some colleagues were shocked to discover a reference to a proof that Archimedes had worked on comparing two infinitely large sets.

"We could hardly believe our eyes," Netz wrote in the Nov. 1 Science. "It has always been thought that modern mathematicians were the first to be able to handle infinitely large sets."

-- Compiled from reports by Rob Stein
November 11, 2002

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“Dark Odyssey” by Dan Georgakas¹

Perhaps the best film featuring Greek American characters ever made has gone virtually unknown for more than four decades. That film is **Dark Odyssey** (1957), a labor of love by Bill Kyriakis, a child of Greek immigrants who grew up in the then heavily Greek area of New York's Chelsea district. Kyriakis did most of the writing of the film (aided by James Vlamos and Radley Metzger), and he co-produced and co-directed with Metzger. His account of how *Dark Odyssey* was made and its exhibition history is as harrowing as the fate of the film's tragic hero.

Rather than a production of a major studio, *Dark Odyssey* was part of the innovative independent film scene of the time. New cameras had made it possible to shoot on

¹ *Dan Georgakas is a long-time editor of Cineaste and his commentary on Greek film has been carried by The Voice of America and Cosmos Hellenic Public Radio.*

location with natural light, making costly studio rentals unnecessary. Much impressed by Italian neorealism and recent Hollywood fare such as Jules Dassin's **The Naked City** (1948) that used location shooting, Kyriakis was determined to make an authentic film about the immigrant culture in which he had been reared.

The plot revolves around Yianni (Athán Karras), a young Greek sailor who illegally leaves his ship to find and slay the man whose sexual indiscretions caused the death of Yianni's sister in Greece. During his efforts to locate the man's apartment, Yianni encounters Niki Vassos (Jeanne Jerrems), a wholesome Greek American who works at a waterfront diner. Not knowing the purpose of his visit, Niki guides Yianni to Washington Heights, then a Greek enclave. Unable to immediately confront his prey, Yianni visits the Vassos home.

Niki's parents, played brilliantly by Ariadne and Nicholas Zepnoukayas, culturally connect with the sailor and are delighted at the bond that they see developing between him and their daughter. Helen (Rosemary Torri), their other daughter, is dating an American, a relationship the parents try to thwart. As the film progresses, we see how the kind parents will eventually accept Helen's suitor as worthy, but it is not certain that even Niki's love will deter Yianni from his rendezvous with murder.

Two major components of the story are outstanding. The first deals with the dynamics inside the Greek family. The parents are affectionate but very old country, struggling hard to understand their American-born daughters. Although Yianni becomes privy to certain of Niki and Helen's secrets, he generally shares the attitudes of the parents. Particularly well done is a low-keyed family party that features Greek dancing casually performed in the manner Greek Americans have experienced in untold numbers of American living rooms. Capping that scene is the most extraordinary Greek dance to appear in any American film. Choreographed and performed by Karras, the dance physically expresses the struggle between the budding love he feels and the abiding hate that has brought him to America.

Just as fascinating are the film's outdoor locations, which give the film a staying power that its melodramatic plot and some awkward scenes cannot. To this day, Kyriakis remains awed by the generosity of strangers in granting him the right to shoot on their property. A Greek ship owner allowed him to use a ship docked in Brooklyn harbor for the opening scenes. A Greek diner owner allowed him to shoot in his premises on a Sunday morning. The owners of a Greek nightclub on Eighth Avenue allowed him to shoot several scenes, some involving their paying customers and a belly dancer. A Washington Heights resident allowed them to use a rooftop. A priest offered his church for a baptismal scene. And a tugboat captain allowed his boat to be in sequences featuring the Hudson River (the shooting was interrupted when the tug assisted in guiding the liner SS United States out to sea). Still other scenes were set around the George Washington Bridge. The result is a remarkable evocation of New York cityscapes and sounds of the 1950s.

The film took nearly five years to move from the first pages of a script to a full-length

feature film. All the actors donated their services, so shooting was done only a few hours a week as the cast was available. Erratic cash flow created other gaps at various stages of filmmaking. Once completed the film faced new problems. Major distributors thought the film was too ethnic to reach a mass audience. On the other hand, distributors dealing with the Greek market felt it must be presented in the Greek language. Thus, the usual pattern of Greek films being dubbed into English for American distribution was reversed.

Dark Odyssey opened at the Cameo Theater on 44th Street with the Greek language version alternating with the English version. The New York Times hailed it as, "Thoughtful, unpretentious and creative. . . . Messers Kyriakis and Metzger rate a warm welcome to the movie fold." Despite similar praise from other American dailies, there was minimal advertising and the film did poorly at the box office. Later, it was shown at the Steinway Theater in Astoria, but again without adequate advertising, the film failed to draw an audience. From that time on, Dark Odyssey remained unseen and unknown. Only in 1999, thanks to First Run Features did the film become available as a modestly priced video. On its release in cassette format, the New York Daily News compared it to the work of John Cassavetes and judged it, ". . . a thoroughly warm and enduring drama that doubles as an evocative time capsule portrait of 1950s Manhattan."

Although his film's voyage to a friendly shore took even longer than the fabled voyage of Ulysses, Vasili Kyriakis never gave up on filmmaking, going on to a long and fruitful career as a maker of documentaries. Co-director Metzger garnered considerable notoriety for a series of erotic films that were financial plums. Karras, after appearing on the Broadway stage, moved to Hollywood where he became a fixture in the dance scene as a teacher and film consultant. Ariadne and Nicholas Zappoukayas continued to perform in Greek theatrical productions until the demise of those acting venues in the 1960s. Laurence Rosenthal who wrote the film's compelling film score went on to Hollywood where he worked on major motion pictures such as *The Miracle Worker* (Arthur Penn, 1962).

Made at the birth of a new American independent film movement, Dark Odyssey offers considerable insights into who the Greeks in America were and how they lived in post-World War II America. The film has begun to be shown at film festivals and cultural events interested in understanding how the values of Greek immigrants, their children, and Greek nationals both entwine and compete. At the turn of the century, a film, which did not immediately find its seat at the ethnic table, has been rediscovered and recognized as a precious family heirloom.

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