

ODYSSEY

ADELAIDE'S HELLENIC CULTURAL FESTIVAL
OCTOBER 1ST - NOVEMBER 2ND 2008

Adelaide. - The 3rd annual "Odyssey" Cultural Festival has begun in Adelaide. Organised by the Greek-Orthodox Community of South Australia this year, the festival is dedicated to young people and the inauguration constituted a revival of the ancient "Agora" – a place to meet and exchange views and ideas, focusing on young people and their interests, music, entertainment, creative expression and dream. A series of cultural, theatrical and educational programs are part of the festival.

A festival for lovers of Hellenic Culture and a celebration of our youth, Adelaide's Hellenic Cultural Festival ODYSSEY enters its third year where it will once again present a series of exciting and entertaining events from October 1st to November 2nd.

Whether you're Greek, Greek-Australian or a lover of Hellenic culture, we invite you to take the 'journey' with us and partake in a combination of high quality ticketed events together with free events that make up ODYSSEY in 2008!

• Art Exhibition:

Tuesday 14 October – Sunday 2 November

Festival Theatre Foyer

Inspired by the theme, 'Odyssey of Youth' ('Journey of Youth'), artists with a passion for Hellenic Culture will present their works in an exciting exhibition that is sure to ignite the Hellenic spirit. Don't miss it!

Admission to exhibition is FREE

• Photo Display:

Tuesday 14 October – Sunday 2 November

Festival Theatre Foyer, North Terrace, Adelaide

This moving exhibition is a 'Odyssey' of postcard style images of Greece as created by YOU – the traveller. We are encouraging contribution of your photos from travels to Greece for your chance to win a digital camera thanks to Diamonds Camera & Video. With images updated throughout the exhibition it's never too late to get 'moving' - Send your hi-res pictures on CD to the Greek Orthodox Community SA Inc. Level 1, 262 Franklin Street, Adelaide for your chance to win!

Admission to exhibition is FREE

• Greek Dance Performance:

Friday 17 October, 7.30pm
Helen Reid Hall, Walford School
316 Unley Road, Hyde Park

Join the Olympic Dance Group for a night of live music, dance and entertainment as they perform traditional

dances of Northern Greece. A night for the whole family!

Tickets \$15

• Short Film Night:

Wednesday 22 October – 8.00pm

Mercury Cinema, 13 Morphett Street, Adelaide

Join Adelaide's own Greek-Australian Filmmaker Anthony Maras for a night of Q & A as he presents two of his award winning short-films including his refugee short drama 'Azadi', which earned numerous accolades on the international festival circuit, and 'Spike Up' which won the "Best Short Fiction Film" category at the AFI Awards in 2007. A great opportunity for aspiring film makers to meet and talk with an accomplished writer director!

Tickets \$10

• Greek Film Festival:

Thursday 30 October – Sunday 2 November

Palace Nova Eastend Cinemas, 274 and 251 Rundle Street, Adelaide

Now in its 7th year, Adelaide's Greek Film Festival is a cinematic event that

provides a forum for showcasing Greek Films, both contemporary and old time classics while attracting a strong and loyal audience from within the Greek and wider community with an interest in contemporary Greek cinema.

Run in partnership with The Greek Film Centre (Athens) and Palace Cinemas Australia, the Festival combines high profile premieres with independent and art house screenings as well as the prestigious and much loved opening night gala.

Orchestral Concert: Sunday 2 November, 7.30pm

Elder Hall, Adelaide University, North Terrace, Adelaide

An up-tempo celebration of Greek music for song and dance! Enjoy a fabulous evening of musical favourites with the Adelaide Art Orchestra and conductor Timothy Sexton. With guest artists including multi-talented tenor Tasso Bouyessis, this concert of Greek music with an occasional Australian touch will make you want to dance in the aisles!

Tickets \$25

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE HELLENIC LANGUAGE IN AUSTRALIA

A few years back, a student from Macquarie University, let's call her Maria, went to Japan to continue her studies. In order to supplement her income she worked in a Japanese restaurant.

One night as she was serving a company of Japanese business people, one of them asked her where she was from. Maria answered that she was from Australia. The Japanese insisted, asking her what her background was, upon which she said that she was Greek, her parents were Greek.

At that moment the Japanese stood up as one, bowed, and told her,

'You are something very important!'

Needless to say that Maria was shocked.

They started talking and she discovered that these gentlemen were studying the Hellenic language and civilization.

The night came to an end, but Maria was still thinking about what had happened, and above all she couldn't understand one thing; why did these people studied the Hellenic language and civilization, what need did they have for both in a country like Japan?

It is a question that we hear quite often here, in Australia, by many Greek-Australians. Why should my child learn Greek, we are in Australia now, what need is there?

I'm sure we have all heard these questions at some point.

It seems to be a special characteristic of the Greek people, to appreciate what is there's only after it has been appreciated by foreigners.

Well then, let us see what is the relation of the Hellenic language and civilization with people around the world.

In Russia the Hellenic language is considered the language of the elite, a lecturer from the Aristoteleion University of Thessaloniki told us in her recent visit to Australia. What this means is that to speak Greek in Russia is a sign of an educated and cultured person.

In Belgium they are introducing schools where citizens can go and Greek.

In the early 90's in France the students took to the streets when the Government wanted to abolish the subject of Ancient Greek from high schools. French students publish a magazine in Ancient Greek.

A few years back the Spaniard MP to the European Union Sagredo, proposed the Hellenic language to become the official language of the EU.

In China and Korea the governments are creating Departments in their Universities for the study of Modern Greek, with thousands of students enrolling every year.

In Britain employers are encouraging their employees to study the Hellenic language as research has shown that it cultivates leadership skills, critical analysis, and a creative way of thinking. The Hellenic language has become something of a prerequisite for people who want to climb the corporate ladder, or ask for a pay rise.

In recent times there are electronic programs created, based on the decoding of Greek Mythology.

We could keep on going referring to how foreigners see their relationship with the Hellenic language, and maybe we will in a future article.

What is important for us to understand now is the following:

To learn the Hellenic language is not just an issue of preserving our cultural and historical identity. It is an investment for the future; ours, our children's, and the future of this country, Australia.

We cannot afford to be left behind in this respect, especially as the applications of the Hellenic language in electronics will be widespread.

I would like to leave you with some verses from the Greek poet Nikeforos Vrettakos:

When I leave this light
I will spiral upwards
like a stream that whispers.
And if by chance amongst the blue corridors
I meet with angels
I will talk to them in Greek
because, they do not understand languages.
They converse amongst them with Music.

John Yiomelakis

