



MESSAGE FROM NANCY PEARLMAN, *Executive Director of Educational Communications*

June 2011



ECOTOURISM OPPORTUNITIES IN THAILAND

The Thai travel industry is encouraging visitors to return to Thailand (it has been over a year since the Red Shirt riots in Bangkok). Hotels and other tourist destinations are offering major discounts and are extremely welcoming to those who want to enjoy the beach and forest resorts, the historic sites, and the incredible shopping. Thailand definitely deserves its reputation as the "Land of Smiles." The friendliness and helpfulness is a delight.

The towns have a pulsating urban energy that is quite enjoyable. Modern malls and stores are great for shopping and the traditional Buddhist temples and royal palace grounds and buildings are gorgeous. Some upscale stores will send a driver to pick you up, then you get measured for your outfit which you choose from an array of designs, and they will deliver the finished outfit straight to your hotel room within a day or two. Discounts are everywhere as store owners want your business. The evening streets are alive with stalls for shopping, eating, and local color. You will have fun even if you are just browsing or looking for souvenirs. There are bazaars everywhere and the products are outstanding. From simple crafts to high art, there is something for everyone.

Nightlife abounds as well. There are lots of clubs to visit with a wide range of music as well as great film and theater events. The theatrical productions are top-notch and worth seeing for the gorgeous costumes, remarkable dance routines with large casts, and lovely music. The new modern influences blend well with the

traditional arts. One production even had a moat in the stage for canoes to paddle across and brought an elephant on stage.

Be prepared to eat. The variety of Thai food is incredible. Unlike the standard dishes in restaurants in the United States, Thai cuisine is remarkable for its flavors and variations on the theme. The fish dishes are distinct for each region and the curries, soups, salads, and other delicacies will fill your stomach. You can dine in spectacular settings at gourmet restaurants or sit down on a stool at a stall along the road. The food is fantastic wherever you eat.

Towns and large cities, especially Bangkok, haven't solved the traffic dilemma so plan on spending time to get to your destination since there are traffic jams in the large metropolitan areas. On the other hand, the beach resorts such as Hua Hin, have great sandy areas for jogging and warm waters for swimming. A leisurely ride in a Thai gondola will take you through the canals and floating markets. Be sure to avail yourself of the inexpensive but high quality massages. You can have private rooms or shared rooms with your travel companions. The body will feel so refreshed after your Thai massage and it gives the mind a chance to calm down and enjoy a different pace of life.

In Bangkok, the main palace and temples are packed with visitors but one of the most stunning collections of gold artifacts, wood carvings, and Thai silks is at the old Legislature building (which is an historical monument in itself).

Of course, the world's largest gold Buddha is a must see. In other parts of

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OPA!



And Yasou! and Ela! Want a user-friendly way to enjoy the culture of Greece? Find your local Greek Orthodox Church and find when they are doing a Festival. The season runs from May to September. You can eat wonderful Greek food (Pastitsio is my favorite entree), listen to more wonderful Greek music, and even dance to the most wonderful Greek dances!

The most popular dance is a line dance called Syrtos, and has a rhythm of slow-quick-quick in a pattern of four such measures. So, at first you can run along with the line without knowing the dance! Just remember, the leader is the person on the far right end of the line!

In L.A. in June/July the festivals are at:

St George in Downey
June 4-5 562-362-6461

St Paul in Irvine
June 24-26 949-733-2366

St Katherine in Redondo Beach
July 8-10 310-540-2434

Definitions:

Opa = yee-ha!

Yasou = Your Health!

Ela = Come on!

Pastitsio = a sort of lasagna



*contributed by
Preston Ashbourne*



WORDS FROM LIANA'S WORLD

Contributed by
Liana Hovhannessian

Down to the Pointe

The beauty, the grace, the elegance Watching a person dance on their toes has captured audiences' attention for many years. To see someone balance, spin, and even jump on a small flat-rounded tip is a wonderful experience for one's eyes. To the observer these shoes may look effortless to dance in, but to the dancer wearing these distinctive shoes, ballerinas deal with painful, deformed, and blistered feet from dancing in the foot armor known as **POINTE SHOES!**

I was fortunate (yes fortunate), to have worn pointe shoes. From eleven to eighteen years of age I danced on my toes for ballet classes, rehearsals and shows. Most people have seen the glamorous side of this style of dance but I'm going to give you the history and the behind-the-curtain look into the art of pointe work and the progression ballet has made to get where it is today.

Back in the 17th century ballet looked much different from today's styling. Women at the time were not allowed to dance; therefore the men would play the male and female roles, using wigs, tall headwear, masks, heels, and intricate suits. Ballet then was merely walking across the floor gracefully and softly. It wasn't even until the 18th century that women could dance as well. At the time women were wearing floor-length dresses and heeled shoes. This did not allow much movement for the women on stage.

France's King Louis XIV was the one who really set the basics of ballet that are still used today. By 1681 a small number of women performed professionally in the ballet *Le Triomphe de l'Amour* (The Triumph of Love). With the corsets and the long skirts, these women could not do very much on the stage, but changes were made over time and the way women danced took a new step into the history of ballet. One of these changes was made by a well-known dancer from the Paris

Opera in 1726 named Marie Camargo, originally from Belgium. Camargo, filled with pride of her astounding dance steps and intricate footwork, wanted to make sure the audience could see her steps. She made the decision to cut her skirts shorter just so just her feet and ankles could be seen. Around this time clothing was transforming more and more to collaborate with the dance itself. Marie Sallé was another to throw out the old ways of dressing and move on to costumes that would make the dance steps look more dramatic.

Finally, in the early nineteenth century the pointe shoe was invented. The world was introduced to dancing on the toes by the ballet *La Sylphide* in 1832. This ballet requires a winged fairy creature that draws the male lead away from his fiancée. The pointe shoe was to create the illusion of zero gravity, to have a floating look. Choreographed by Italian choreographer Fillippo Taglioni, he decided his daughter Maria, play the part



of *Sylphide* because of how she already danced so light and soft-like. Taglioni put his daughter in pointe shoes which made a big impression on the audiences. Back then pointe shoes were not strong like they are today. Maria could not dance on her toes for very long because of how simple the shoes were made (There was really no support or padding like there is today.) But when she did it was a magical sight to see.

You can have all the training in the world to dance on your toes but the pain never leaves. There are treatments and procedures ballerinas take to help with the pain. First off pointe shoes are made today with leather, satin, glue, and canvas. The toe area is like a hard box for support and protection. The ribbons originated from the old days, before elastic. Still today ribbons have stayed with the look of the pointe shoes (elastic is also used in today's toe shoes for security). Professionals get their shoes custom made so the fit and shape are perfect for their feet. If something is even slightly off the dancer will know right away! The tips of the shoes are always flat to make it easy for balancing. A ballerina has about three or more pairs of shoes per show, depending on how badly they will wear out in the dances. If a dancer has a lot of

jumps they will use an older pair of shoes that are worn and softer that will not be so loud on the floor when they land a jump. A newer pair may be used if a dancer has many turns and needs support from the hard box part of the shoes. A single pair costs about \$60 or more depending on what brand you get.

Ballet takes up to 5 to 8, or even 10 hours a day. Rehearsals, classes, or just staying in shape are a part of a dancer's life. The shoes may fit perfectly but putting all your weight on the size of a golf ball takes a toll on your toes, feet, legs and more. To prevent blisters ballerinas will wrap tape around their toes. Lamb's wool, plastic protectors, and gel pads are also preventatives of injury and pain. Most of all you need strength to hold yourself up on pointe. Every muscle in a ballerina's foot is put to work as soon as she goes on her toes. I said before I started pointe work when I was eleven years old. That is the average age a girl gets her first toe shoes. Any younger can be very damaging to the bones and growth process. Ah, but to finally get your first pointe shoes after all the years of hard work is a monumental moment in a young girl's life. (Many start ballet at the age of three to seven years old). A dream come true, it was definitely for me.

Many sports fans think dancing is for wimps. Well that must mean us ballerinas have done our job right! Unlike sport athletes, ballet dancers don't get to run off the stage when they feel they need a break. We put on a smile, take a deep breath, and just dance our feet off. Pain does not exist to the audience, and shouldn't! If our personal pains and problems show on the dancer's floor that means we have failed in luring the audience into the story we are trying to tell. Many dancers have said before that ballet dancers are in better shape than most athletes in a professional field. Not to say however that athletes aren't strong, which they very much are.

Ballet dancers are a part of a big family called artists, who know what it is like to go through agonizing pain just for the love of their art. It takes a lot of devotion and a strong tolerance for pain. Next time you see ballet, appreciate the strength and love the dancers have for their art even if it really is not your thing. They are there to perform for you the audience. And for all the guys out there who think dancing is just for girls, think again weaklings. It is for anyone who has the heart to fly, to spin, to be free inside and out!

ECOTOURISM OPPORTUNITIES IN THAILAND

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the country, the “ecotourism” industry is flourishing, so check out the many green ecolodges and other accommodations and visiting opportunities. There are UNESCO World Heritage sites of the same period and style as Cambodia’s Angkor Wat and other Hindu temples that are unique. A visit to a coconut farm shows you all the ways this plant can be used. One tourist spot is questionable. On the one hand domesticated elephants need to “work” but keeping them chained while they wait for riders or for tourists to watch the young ones “perform” is not very humane. Supporting these types of activities is at your discretion. But generally speaking you will find new sights and sounds to stimulate your senses. You can take it easy and relax or travel around to the wide range of historical monuments and natural areas.

More information from the Tourism Authority of Thailand, 611 N. Larchmont Blvd., 1st Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90004 www.tourismthailand.org/LA (800) THAILAND, info@tat-la.com

Nancy Pearlman, Executive Director
Educational Communications



JOHN BILEZIKJIAN

John Bilezikjian is “America’s Oud Virtuoso”. Mr. Bilezikjian may be the most prominent Oudist of his generation. He is a master Oudist who has elevated this instrument to the concert stage as well as continues to perform as a folk musician. He has performed for some 51 years on this ancient eleven stringed Persian fretless instrument dating back some 2,000 years. The Oud is performed with an eagle’s quill.

<http://dantzrecords.com>

SOME UPCOMING EVENTS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

ANITA AND THE YANKS



Anita and the Yanks broke into the celtic rock music scene in 2008 and have built an impressive fan base in and around the Los Angeles area. They were recently in Ireland touring with the Young Dubliners.

NOVEL CAFE 7-10PM
June 10 & 24 July 8 & 22
August 5 & 19

1713 E. Colorado Blvd
Pasadena, CA 91106 (trio)

THE BIG IRISH FAIR
June 18 & 19

8808 Irvine Center Drive,
Irvine CA 92618

JOXER DALY’S
September 16

11168 Washington Blvd,
Culver City, CA (full band)

www.anitaandtheyanks.com

ASSIEH LAMORA



Assieh was born and raised in Iran. She started her Flamenco dance training at early age in Los Angeles and later in Spain at Amor de Dios Flamenco Dance Academy in Madrid with master teachers like; La Tati, Ciro, Carmela Greco, La Truco, Manolete and in Sevilla at Manolo Marin Dance Academy. She has also studied under private training of Angelita Vargas and Pepa Montes. She dances every **Friday, Saturday and Sunday at:**

El Cid
4212 Sunset Bl, Los Angeles
(323) 668-0318

Coming 3pm, Sunday August 21, 2011 “THE MAGIC OF JOHN BILEZIKJIAN”

La Mirada Theatre & Performing Arts Center

14900 La Mirada Blvd., La Mirada, CA 90638

For more details and to order tickets: <http://friendsofjohnbilezikjian.com/index.html>

John’s weekly performance schedule:

First Tuesday of the Month - Casablanca Restaurant, 6030 Paseo del Norte Carlsbad, CA. 92008 (760) 603-9672 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm
Belly Dancing and Folk Dancing

First, Second and Fourth Wednesday of the Month - Tonya’s Original Belly Dance Showcase, Khoury’s Restaurant, 110 N. Marina Dr., Long Beach, CA. 90803 (in Alamitos Bay Landing) Long Beach Marina 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm
Belly Dancing and Folk Dancing, Tony and Atlantis (562) 598-6800

Third Thursday, Every other Month

Tango Del Rey, 3567 Del Rey St., San Diego, CA. 92109
(858) 794-2687 8:30 pm to 11:30 pm with featured and guest belly dancers and Frank Lazzaro and Dave Dhillon

more upcoming events on next page

UPCOMING EVENTS (continued from previous page)www.gypsyfolkensemble.com**GYPSY FOLK ENSEMBLE**

The Gypsy Folk Ensemble is an ethnic and folk dance performing company based in Los Angeles, California which was formed in 1978 to preserve, perform and teach traditional folk dances from countries around the world.

Summer Reading Program – Library Shows – Free! and open to the public*(dates and times subject to change, check with library to confirm.)*

June 9 “One World, Many Stories”
Grandview Library – 3pm
1535 5th St.
Glendale 91201

June 11 “Polynesian”
Live Oak Library – 3:30pm
4153 E. Live Oak Ave.
Arcadia 91006

June 15 “One World, Many Stories”
Miraleste Library – 11:30 am
29089 Palos Verdes Drive East
Palos Verdes Peninsula 90274

June 15 “Polynesian”
California City Library – 4pm
9507 California City Bl.
California City 93505

June 18 “Polynesian”
Clifton Brakensiek Library – 2pm
9945 E. Flower St.
Bellflower 90706

June 21 “Polynesian”
Wilshire Branch Library – 4pm
149 St. Andrews Pl.
Los Angeles 90004

June 23 “One World, Many Stories”
Malaga Cove Plaza Library – 3pm
2400 Via Campesina
Palos Verdes Estates 90274

June 25 “One World, Many Stories”
Claremont Library – 2pm
208 N. Harvard Ave
Claremont 91711

June 28 “One World, Many Stories”
Peninsula Center Library – 3pm
701 Silver Spur Rd.
Rolling Hills Estates 90274

June 28 “One World, Many Stories”
New Hope Library – 4pm
122 N. Newhope St.
Santa Ana 92703

June 28 “One World, Many Stories”
Santa Ana Main Library – 6:30pm
26 Civic Center Plaza
Santa Ana 92701

June 29 “One World, Many Stories”
La Puente Library – 6pm
15920 E. Central Ave.
La Puente 91744

June 30 “One World, Many Stories”
Woodcrest Library – 4pm
1340 W. 106th St.
Los Angeles 90044

July 6 “One World, Many Stories”
Baldwin Park Library – 6pm
4181 Baldwin Park Blvd.
Baldwin Park 91706

July 7 “Polynesian”
Ladera Ranch Library – 10:30am
29551 Sienna Parkway
Ladera Ranch 92694

July 9 “One World, Many Stories”
Katy Geissert Civic Center Library
3301 W. Torrance Blvd.
Torrance 90503

July 11 “Polynesian”
Victorville City Library – 6pm
15011 Circle Dr.
Victorville 92392

July 12 “One World, Many Stories”
Charter Oak Library – 3pm
20540 E. Arrow Hwy, Suite K
Covina 91724

July 13 “One World, Many Stories”
Lloyd Taber Library – 10:30pm
4533 Admiralty Way
Marina Del Rey 90292

July 13 “Polynesian”
Beverly Hills Library
444 N. Rexford Dr.
Beverly Hills 90210

July 14 “Armenian / Estonian”
Montebello Regional Library – 3pm
1550 W. Beverly Hills Blvd.
Montebello 90640

July 14 “Polynesian”
West Valley Regional Library – 4pm
19036 Vanowen St.
Reseda 91335

July 14 “One World, Many Stories”
Scripps Ranch Library – 3pm
10301 Scripps Lake Dr.
San Diego 92131

July 19 “One World, Many Stories”
View Park Library – 5:30pm
3854 W 54th St.
Los Angeles 90043

July 20 “One World, Many Stories”
South El Monte Library – 2:30pm
1430 N. Central Ave.
South El Monte 91733

July 23 “One World, Many Stories”
Compton Library – 2:30pm
240 W. Compton Blvd.
Compton 90220

July 27 “One World, Many Stories”
South Pasadena Library – 2pm
1100 Oxley St.
South Pasadena 91030

July 27 “One World, Many Stories”
Lennox Library – 4pm
4359 Lennox Blvd.
Lennox 90304

July 28 “Polynesian”
Temple City Library – 2pm
5939 N. Golden West Ave.
Temple City 91780

July 28 “Polynesian”
Lynwood Library – 3:30pm
11320 Bullis Rd.
Lynwood 90262

August 2 “One World, Many Stories”
Baldwin Hills Library – 3:30pm
2906 S. La Brea Ave.
Los Angeles 90016

August 11 “One World, Many Stories”
Rancho Park Library – 4pm
2920 Overland Ave.
Los Angeles 90064

August 25 “One World, Many Stories”
John C. Fremont Library – 6:30pm
6121 Melrose Ave
Los Angeles 90038

You can see the
Gypsy Folk Ensemble
in

Fontana on Saturday, June 18

at the

Art in the Park

Cultural Festival

Festival runs from 11am to 3pm.
Southridge Park, 14501 Live Oak Av.,
Fontana, CA 92337

Festival features music by Iliana Rose
Artist demonstrations, Art vendors,
Food, live Taiko drumming
and dances from Europe by the
Gypsy Folk Ensemble

DONATION AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



Your donation will help bring the arts back to education under the Earth Cultures Project, or help fund other projects of Educational Communications.

Educational Communications always needs volunteers in the office. If you are interested in volunteering please call Nancy at (310) 559-9160.

Visit the Earth Cultures Project website at www.earthculturesproject.org to find easy ways to donate to any of our projects. Use "goodsearch" to search the web as you always do, and a small percentage goes to the non-profit of your choice. Sign up for "eScrip" or "GoodShop." Spend as you would anyway and donate to your cause at the same time. We hope you'll choose Educational Communications in Los Angeles as your non-profit of choice.

Support the Arts & Education!

LINKS OF INTEREST (see below for clickable links if viewing on the webpage)

MUSEUMS

Bowers Museum
<http://www.bowers.org>

Craft & Folk Art Museum
<http://www.cafam.org>

Metropolitan Museum of Art
(search the database for works of art, costumes & more)
http://www.metmuseum.org/works_of_art/

Museum of Latin American Art
<http://www.molaa.org>

Pacific Asia Museum
<http://www.pacificasiamuseum.org>

ONGOING ACTIVITIES IN THE LOS ANGELES AREA

**Current Cultural Happenings
Around Los Angeles**
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/caltechfolkdance>

Olvera Street in Los Angeles
<http://olvera-street.com>

Folkworks (click on "calendar")
<http://www.folkworks.org/>

FOLK DANCE & FOLK MUSIC INFORMATION

Dick Oakes' Folk Dance Pages
<http://www.phantomranch.net/folkdanc/folkdanc.htm>

Folkways (ethnic music)
<http://www.folkways.si.edu/index.aspx>

ARC Music (ethnic music CDs)
<http://www.arcmusic.co.uk>

ABOUT THE EARTH CULTURES PROJECT

Earth Cultures is one of the projects of Educational Communications, a non-profit 501(c)(3), tax-exempt organization founded in 1958, dedicated to improving the quality of life on this planet. The organization produces documentaries and works with several performing groups and individuals through its Earth Cultures Project to promote cultural awareness and provide education through the arts.

ARTS AND CULTURES

**Smithsonian Magazine
Arts & Cultures**
<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture>

**Smithsonian Center for Folklife
and Cultural Heritage**
<http://www.folklife.si.edu/>

**BBC - Holidays Around the
World and so much more!**
http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/humanplanetexplorer/events_and_festivals

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

BYKI
Free language software downloads
<http://www.byki.com/>

FREELANG
Free bilingual dictionary downloads
<http://www.freelang.net/>

(These links are for reference only and are not endorsed by Educational Communications)

CAN'T STOP DANCING!



Educational Communications is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. This is the monthly newsletter of Earth Cultures, one of Educational Communications' many projects which focuses on "Education through the Arts." Volunteers and donations are always appreciated.

EARTH CULTURES PROJECT

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