

Greece, a living museum.

A unique theatre is preserving a nation's folklore.

The Unesco courier, 01/1996, pp 34-35.

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with pride, and feel a renewed interest in keeping it alive at home. At present the company has eighty different villages in its repertoire and each year one or two more are added to the list.

The principle used for dance research is applied to music as well. Special attention is given to the unique style of singing and playing in each village and the particular instruments that are popular there. The theatre has two singers and fifteen permanent folk musicians who play for rehearsals and performances every day. No recorded music is used, in order to maintain the personal rapport between dancers and musicians which is inherent in folk culture.

Great emphasis is also placed on the performers' attire. The theatre houses the country's biggest collection of traditional Greek costumes—2,500 at the last count—half of which are between fifty and a hundred years old. The costumes cannot be bought in shops and are either sold to the theatre by elderly villagers or else the villagers are asked to make them, using traditional weaving, dyeing and embroidery techniques.

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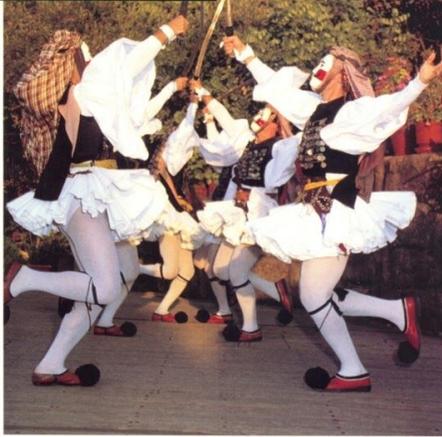
Alkis Raftis is a Greek sociologist who is president of the Dora Stratou Theatre of Greek Dances, in Athens. A member of the International Dance Council, he has published several works on dance, including *The World of Greek Dance* (1987).

tradition and renewal

GREECE

a living museum by Alkis Raftis

*A unique theatre
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A carnival dance from Náoússa, northwestern Greece.

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The International Dance Council (IDC)

"Dance," wrote the French philosopher Roger Garaudy, "is a way of existing." By changing with the times and being receptive to a wide range of cultures, it can express life in all its richness and diversity. Studying dance in other cultures than our own does not involve copying but enriching the vocabulary of dance by asking new questions and giving new answers to prepare the body to translate our relationship with the world into movement.

The International Dance Council, which was founded with UNESCO support in 1973, has taken this concept of dance as a total art and a universal language as the framework of its activities. The Council seeks to promote all forms of dance by safeguarding it as part of the intangible artistic heritage, and by encouraging choreographic and choreological creation and research and their integration into general education. In collaboration with UNESCO, it also encourages the creation of specialized documentation centres, the setting up of national committees, the organization of congresses, festivals and competitions and the training of dancers.

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A carnival dance from Náooua, northwestern Greece.

© The Dora Stratou Theatre of Greek Dances, Athens

ALKIS RAFTIS is a Greek sociologist who is president of the Dora Stratou Theatre of Greek Dances, in Athens. A member of the International Dance Council, he has published several works on dance, including *The World of Greek Dance* (1987).

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