

The logo for the International Dance Teachers' Association (IDTA) is a white semi-circle containing the letters 'IDTA' in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.

IDTA

**DANCE
INTERNATIONAL
MAGAZINE**

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News from the IDTA Greek Area

Elia Galleou



Canceling the 10th IDTA Greek Area Dance Contest & Seminars was the toughest decision we have had to make. This was at the at the beginning of March 2020. We weren't even sure then if what we did was wise because the Greek Government

hadn't at that time taken strong measures against the pandemic. What we had in our minds was that we should never risk our members' & our visitors' from the UK's health. Just a few weeks later our country was in a lockdown and we couldn't believe that the whole of humanity was going through such hard times.

As Greeks we were strictly following the early measures that the Greek Government announced. Fortunately we had only a few cases and deaths so we could go back to our dance studios at the beginning of June.

I and all the Area's committee members had lots and lots of Zoom meetings trying to find ways to inspire our membership and their pupils to keep dancing safely.

I remember hesitating to suggest to the committee members my idea of having an online dance competition with videos. But my colleagues immediately adopted the idea and encouraged me to organize it.

Greek IDTA members absolutely loved the Area's 1st Online Dance Competition and enjoyed very much making their videos and also watching them on our live feed streaming the results. The Area sponsored it's first winners to take part in the IDTA's Global Lockdance Festival which was also an excellent motivation for our members.

At the end of July we managed to organize examination sessions with Greek Examiners changing the procedure to minimize the risk to all involved. Since then we continued organising examination sessions with Greek Examiners and recently our first IDTA Online exams with UK Examiners. We have also announced our 2nd Online Dance Competition for the 6th of December 2020.

I have to admit that the cancellation of all seminars, examination sessions with UK examiners during summer and real competition events for the whole year cost us more than a lot. We strongly believe that we will make it at the end and we will recover from the huge financial losses we have. Being healthy is the most important thing in life. We never give up and we encourage our members to do the same.

On behalf of the IDTA Greek Area I would like to thank the IDTA BOD, the Chief Executive Liz Murphy and the

Operations Manager Elaine Holden for their guidance and advice which is always invaluable to us. Personally I also want to thank the Area Chairperson Ioanna Simeonidou, Vice Chairman George Karalopoulos, Secretary Tania Topouzoglou and Committee members Panos Kormas, Niki Gaki & Gallatia Bouda. Without their contribution and without our Greek members' hard work and dedication the Area wouldn't be so successful.

Let's all take the strength of dealing with the difficult conditions of the pandemic and transform it into inspiration for innovation.

Elia Galleou

Greek Area's Administrator & Treasurer

Hello from Athens, Greece!



Athanasios
Yiannakopoulos

As commonly known, each one of us faces an unprecedented situation which hopefully occurs only once in a lifetime. A new reality has risen, with many more restrictions than the ordinary ones.

However, I prefer to see the glass as half-full instead of half-empty! From the very first time, I tried to encourage my family, friends and students to stay calm and positive, becoming the best example I can, as a citizen, as a dance teacher and as a new IDTA examiner!

Despite the fact that physical contact is one of the basic ingredients of Dance, I soon realized that the covid-era needs a higher sense of responsibility combined with an open-mind and a lot of practical adjustments. Having studied thoroughly the appropriate precautions needed, I introduced a new teaching method based upon open dance positions, keeping a safe distance, but in the same time preserving the fun feeling!

All in all, I highly recommend positive thinking and embracing the idea of "less is more"!! Don't forget that the pandemic is not permanent, trust the scientists, strengthen body and mind and soon we will all get our full life back!! My suggestion to Greek members is to set a goal that after the covid-era they will evolve not only to be better dancers but better human beings as well!

Athanasios Yiannakopoulos
Fellow & Overseas Examiner



Vassilis Skepetaris

It's a great pleasure for me that I have started teaching again and that my students came back to the studio with a bigger desire to dance. We are going through difficult and unprecedented times. Despite this, we will keep on dancing, because dancing is our strongest passion

in life. We were thrilled to take part in the Area's online dance competition and the IDTA's Global one. We are now really excited that we are going to try the online exams system. Our love for dancing will keep us strong and we will go on dancing under any circumstances. Stay safe, stay healthy and keep dancing.

Vassilis Skepetaris
Fellow & Overseas Examiner



Elena Lizardou

It was mid-June when I was notified by the IDTA that I could start examining again in Athens. The truth is that firstly I hesitated, scared and worried that I had to travel from the Crete island where I live to the capital. But aren't the difficulties and obstacles made to be overcome?

I enjoyed it very much at the end. The face masks which have been appropriated made us all feel kind of awkward but at the same time united us all in a silent agreement of acceptance and respect for fellow humans. The exams were conducted in accordance with all the rules and regulations from the Greek Government and the candidates seemed to appreciate more what was suddenly taken from them and not to take anything for granted and never ever give up.

Elena Lizardou
Fellow & Overseas Examiner



George Karalopoulos

In December 2019, we were informed by mainstream media about a new virus called Covid 19 and we were shown images from Wuhan China with police officers and drones advising citizens to wear face masks, arresting people and health care workers trying to take people

violently away from their homes under the suspicion that they were infected with this new virus. Everything looked like science fiction at the time and signaled the beginning of a new way of living on the whole planet. People began to stay at their homes, stopped hugging and were afraid to mingle with each other. Some stopped working or started to work from home in an attempt to stay safe.

Things could not have been more different for dance teachers. Our daily teaching routine has changed dramatically. Instead of teaching in a class, we had to do online classes. I, personally, as a Greek IDTA Examiner tried to keep things going by continuing to examine in Athens, Thessaloniki, Lamia & Patra.

I would like to thank all members of the Greek IDTA Area for their help. Without their strength & assistance we would not be able to do anything.

George Karalopoulos
Fellow & Overseas Examiner

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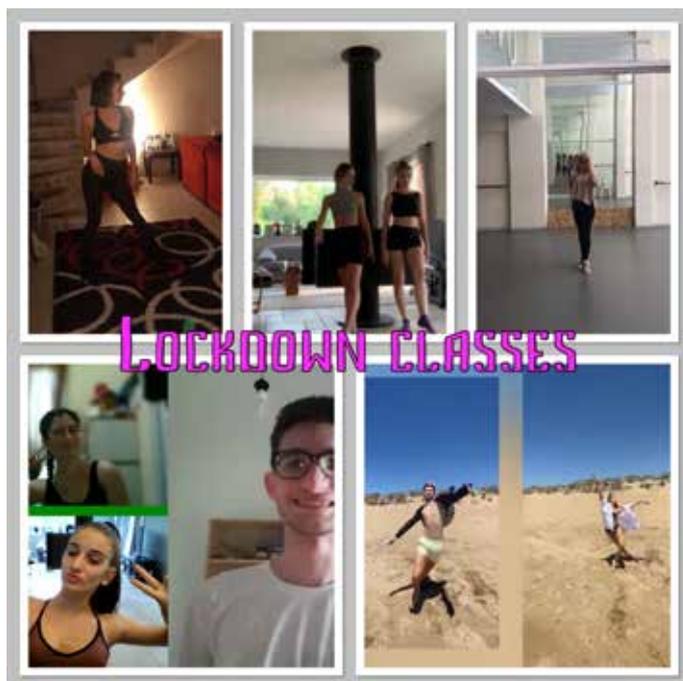


Who tells the best Christmas jokes?
Reindeer. They sleigh every time

What do you call Santa when he takes a break?
Santa Pause

Where do you find reindeer?
It depends on where you leave them!

Summer in Greece 2020



By IDTA Examiner Samantha Brindley-Spirou based in Corfu, who is one of the first teachers to have IDTA examinations by live streaming.

On the 25th of May we were finally given permission to reopen our dance schools in Greece. At first only for senior students and then, in June, also for our juniors. Some schools made the difficult decision not to reopen. Schools here usually close for the summer holidays, in line with public schools, around the 15th of June and as a result very few children wanted to take part in classes for perhaps only 2 weeks. Those of us who decided to open, albeit with reduced numbers, had new laws to follow in order to return to classes.

Social distancing meant we had to restrict numbers in the class, maintain records of the time when people were in the studio, no changing rooms, no waiting in the school, masks to be worn when not dancing, no air conditioning, a strict cleaning regime and of course hand sanitizers everywhere.

I had an examination session booked for May, which would be the last exam session with me for some of my students who had been accepted into colleges abroad. As lockdown continued this session was moved to June and by the end of June it was obvious that it would be unsafe and impractical for an examiner to travel to Greece. It was unclear if the examiner would have to isolate either on entrance to Greece or on return to the UK or in the worst case scenario perhaps both, so we began a conversation with head office to try find a solution. I was so relieved when a live online examination session was suggested. Lockdown had forced me, like many teachers, to turn to online classes on Zoom, Skype and Messenger platforms. Yes it was challenging but we adapted and managed to continue. This was very good training and I felt quite

confident that we could run an exam session using this new found technical knowledge. So started preparations for the session.

Social distancing meant we had to restrict numbers in the class, maintain records of the time when people were in the studio, no changing rooms, no waiting in the school, masks to be worn when not dancing, no air conditioning, a strict cleaning regime and of course hand sanitizers everywhere.

I had a lot of discussions with our appointed examiner Mrs Kirkland, to make sure everything would go well. A major problem was that I didn't have WiFi in the studio, but we found while streaming classes to students preferring to remain at home, that mobile data worked very well and was also very economical. Just to be sure I bought a new SIM card as a spare, but it was never needed. A timetable including PI numbers and dates of birth was sent to Mrs Kirkland and performer and professional report forms filled in and emailed. We then spent some time looking at the lighting in our studio and filming some test videos to see exactly what the examiner would see. We decided to turn our studio around as it greatly improved the lighting and used our usual "examiners" desk to place the large tablet we were using to film with, so the examiner would be "seated" as in a normal exam. As this meant our barres were not visible, we used a music stand as a second placement for the camera when the students were performing their barre exercises. This gave the music operator a second job of moving "the examiner as required"!



**BACK
IN THE**



STUDIO



Picture here, below and opposite: Outdoor events in Corfu in previous years



We also filmed some mock exams with the students so they could see exactly what the examiner would see, and practice with a new “front”. We found it useful to mark on the floor the limits of the camera’s view. We created a new Zoom account specifically for the exam session and a meeting was arranged with Mrs Kirkland to check the camera placements and sound level, which led to us arranging a second speaker so the examiner’s voice was more audible for the students. All that was left was arranging the children.



Seniors celebrating after exams

I have to say all our parents were very happy to help by bringing the children already dressed for the exams and arriving exactly at the time of their exam, rather than an hour before as usually required.



I have to say all our parents were very happy to help by bringing the children already dressed for the exams and arriving exactly at the time of their exam, rather than an hour before as usually required. I'm pleased to say the 3 exam days went very well and it was so much easier than I had originally thought. All the students came out of their exams excited and with the usual stories of everything that went wrong ! And the comments about how nice the examiner was suggested to me that they felt they had the same interaction with the examiner as usual. It was lovely to also receive comments from parents about how pleased their children had been to take part in the session.

In the current climate I would encourage teachers to consider using live streamed examinations when “in person” exams are not available.

In the current climate I would encourage teachers to consider using live streamed examinations when “in person” exams are not available. My thanks to Mrs. Kirkland for her help in organising everything, and we are

hoping to arrange another online examination session soon.

Looking forward to the winter months and spring 2021 here in Greece we are, like most of the world, in uncertain times. Lockdown saw many professional performers who are past students returning to Corfu, some furloughed until their productions reopen and some with their next contracts delayed. It was of course lovely to have them back in the studio, but I would prefer to see them all back on stage. Theatres are closed, social distancing make any sort of live performance unlikely in the near future and of course our school trips to Athens, London and Europe have been cancelled. So we are trying new ways of motivating our students.

Normally we would run open classes for parents at Christmas. This year we are planning to film these classes and send them to the parents. Video projects also are being organised for the senior groups. Along with other Greek dance schools we are hoping to take part in events arranged by the IDTA Greek Area, who have been successful in moving events and competitions online. Hopefully by spring we will be able to arrange outdoor performances although , like all performers , we wait for the day when our theatre is up and running again .

