

LYRIDS FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL: SPECIAL CLASSES & ACTIVITIES

Kathy Sandstrom, Albany, Oregon

Numerous special classes will be offered at the 2025 Lyrids Folk Dance Festival in Pitt Meadows, B.C. (east of Vancouver, B.C.) May 9–11. This is in addition to teaching by our featured teachers—Željko Jergan, who is presenting Croatian dances, and Dimitrios Kontogiannis, who is teaching Greek dances. We are bringing back a music class (drumming), decorating Croatian hearts, learning a little Croatian beading, and having a very special session celebrating many things Greek, called Treasures from Greece. Please join us at our fragrance-free festival!

Please take a moment to tell us about your interest in attending these classes by filling out the survey at lyridsfolkdancefestival.org.

Licitarско Srce (Croatian Hearts)

Nada Dosenovic and Elissa Mladjo will show participants how to decorate these traditional Croatian Hearts, or Licitarско Srce. Learn how to do it and take one home as a souvenir!

Croatian Hearts are also being incorporated into a welcoming dance at the festival's Saturday party.



From the website visit-croatia.co.uk/about-croatia/famous-symbols-of-croatia: “The custom of gifting licitars as tokens of affection, especially in the form of gingerbread hearts, has deep roots in Croatian culture. A famous symbol of Croatia, especially from Zagreb (which actually incorporates them into the tourist logo of the city) and northern Croatia, these heart-shaped biscuits are made from gingerbread or honey dough, painted red, and decorated with colorful icing, little mirrors, and often a little message. Traditionally, they would be given as gifts to a loved one, although nowadays they are a popular souvenir (but don't try to eat the souvenir ones!) that come in a range of sizes.”

From the website tasteofadriatic.com/post/licitarstvo-slavica-sweet-heart-of-zagorje: “A fascinating detail on the gingerbread hearts is a little mirror, which is not just a decoration. It symbolizes the depth of the person's soul giving the heart, making this gift even more special. Giving a gingerbread heart, with which a young man expresses his affection and love to a young woman, is deeply rooted in Croatian traditional culture.”

Wikipedia contributes: “Licitars are nowadays considered traditional Croatian and Slovenian souvenirs, and can be found in all Croatian and Slovenian airports, as well as in many tourist gift shops. They are also used as Christmas tree decorations, wedding gifts for guests, business gifts, and to [sic] other ornamental purposes.”

It has been announced by the Croatian minister of Culture, Božo Biškupić, that next year licitars will be on the UNESCO list of culture goods.

Croatian Beading

By Greta Kos and Kathy Sandstrom

We are offering a Croatian beading class at the festival. Participants will be given the choice of making a beaded choker or beading a wider ribbon, which could be used to cover a head band. Leading us in this art will be Maria Aničić.

Following is a short biography on Maria, provided by Greta Kos. Greta is a leading authority on Croatian costuming in Vancouver, Washington.

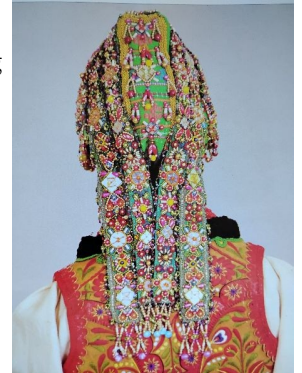


Photo courtesy of Greta Kos

Maria joined Tamburaski Orkestar Kardinal Stepinac (TOKS) in 1990.

There she met her future husband, Zvonimir, and they had three children. After raising these children, who also became performing members of TOKS, she rejoined the group and became Costume Director.

Her duties in this capacity consisted of maintaining and restoring over ten complete sets of male and female costumes from different parts of Croatia. She also oversaw the making of new pieces. This was done with particular attention to technique and authenticity.

In addition to different methods of research and study, Maria also attended costume-making seminars in Croatia to further her knowledge and skills.

Maria has said that the most rewarding part of sharing her knowledge with members of the ensemble is when they realize they have talents and abilities they never knew they had.

At the Lyrids Folk Dance Festival, participants will have an opportunity to see and try traditional Croatian beading styles and methods.

TOKS is a large Croatian performing ensemble that will be performing at the Lyrids Folk Dance Festival's Saturday-evening party. TOKS will also provide the music for the Welcoming Dance—Dance of Hearts, which is explained later in this article. This dance will occur right after the TOKS performance to kick off the evening party. To hear their music now, go to youtube.com/watch?v=b3DqMONQSIY or youtube.com/@tamburicaorchestrakardinal515.

Drumming Class

By Fred Graves

Fred Graves has been dancing to and playing Balkan and international folk-dance music with various Seattle groups (Balkanarama, The Cociks, Zakuska, Dave & the Dalmatians) for nearly 30 years. He divides his time between singing, wind instruments, and percussion. At Lyrids, he plans to teach

basic Balkan rhythms for dombek and tapan that you can play for the singalong right after the drum workshop! So, bring either or both of those drums.



Treasures from Greece

Immerse yourself in a potpourri of Greek lore. Learn unusual and interesting Greek facts. Find out how ancient Greece influenced the modern world. Learn about the Greek alphabet. Write your name with gold and black metallic pens in Greek lettering. Create a wearable Greek flag for your lapel. Want to try your hand at Greek cooking? Take home some Greek recipes. There may be other projects, as well.

We'll have a very special show-and-tell by Erika Gerson of treasures she's brought back from Greece, including musical instruments, jewelry, and some art work. Margarita Zantza, a local Greek, will be bringing her beautiful costume and some embroidery she did. Between Erika and Margarita, they will bring some weavings from Metsovo, a small and charming Vlach village that sits high in the Pindus Mountains in Northern Greece. A travel writer named Alice noted, "The village is characterized by its quaint stone houses and signature red roofs." Learn a little about the Vlach culture.



Photo by Kathy Sandstrom

Kathy Sandstrom will also bring a few pieces of jewelry and help moderate, with a few stories of her own. We might teach you a few fun words to say, like *efharisto* and *parakalo*!

Welcoming Dance Game—Dance of Hearts

By Nada Dosenovic

A member of our festival committee who was born in Croatia and lived there for over 30 years, learned and experienced this party game in the '70s and '80s while dancing in villages around the city of Virovitica.

The parties were called Zabava and always had live music. The bands played a mix of folk and popular music. The Dance of Hearts game ("Ples Srca") was used as a raffle ticket fundraiser, and participants bought one heart. Hearts were numbered in pairs: two number 1s, two number 2s, etc. Music played and numbers were called for people to join the dance floor to start dancing.

When a number was called, two people with that number put up their hand and looked for the other person to start dancing. When all numbers were called, everyone danced for a short time. Then numbers were called again. People

whose number was called left the dance floor. The last couple standing was the winner and got a prize. At Zabava, that was usually a 24-pack of beer.

At Lyrids, each participant will get a numbered heart on a lanyard as part of their festival package. On Saturday after the performances, we will open the evening party by playing the Dance of Hearts. We will modify the party dance from originally being a couple dance to a multi-formation dance. Couples may dance as a couple, form a line, or make a circle with other couples. If you can't find your matching number to dance with when it is called, just go out and dance with the circle or line. The winning couple will get a prize.