

An all-time first for local Macedonian Folkloric Ensemble “Sloboda”

A celebration of traditional Macedonian song and dance at WOMADelaide 2023

The local Adelaide Macedonian Folkloric Ensemble “Sloboda” (AMFE Sloboda) proudly showcased Macedonian music and dance on the world stage at this year’s WOMADelaide in March 2023. The ensemble was invited as a guest to renowned artists and official WOMAD performers who made up ‘Gosti’: Linsey Pollak, Philip Griffin and Tunji Beier, and Macedonian dance extraordinaire Yorgo Kaporis from Sydney.

On each day, the multi-talented musicians of Gosti (meaning ‘guests’ in Macedonian) weaved through Botanic Park along with members of AMFE Sloboda to bring WOMAD audiences together in a giant, spontaneous Macedonian dance circle.

Gosti held its workshop on Day 4 of WOMAD at the Zoo Stage showcasing Macedonian folk instruments – the Gajda (Macedonian bagpipe), Tambura (long necked lute) and Tapan (double headed drum) and exploring the traditional melodies and rhythms from the rich Macedonian folk tradition.

Yorgo Kaporis demonstrated and performed at the Zoo Stage with the dancers of AMFE Sloboda. The audience was captured by the dancers in their beautiful and bright costumes from the region of Skopje. The origins and steps of three traditional Macedonian dances were demonstrated to the audience: ‘Pajdushko’, ‘Maleshevsko’ and ‘Crnogorka’, accompanied by Gosti playing the music. This was followed by inviting the audience to dance and experience the unique Macedonian rhythm.

WOMAD patrons who participated in the daily workshops commented that they felt mesmerised and hypnotised by the rhythm of the music and the steps. Some participants shared that they were also of Macedonian origin and that hearing some of the songs reminded them of their relatives who had since passed. The members of AMFE Sloboda commented on the joy they felt in being able to share their cultural heritage and bring people of all walks of life together through music and dance.

AMFE Sloboda falls under the Macedonian Community of Adelaide & SA Inc, and is run by passionate and talented volunteer choreographers. It consists of a junior group and a casual adult group (both held every Sunday at 4pm at the Macedonian Community Hall in Findon) which are both aimed at immersing the participants in Macedonian folklore and traditions in a fun and engaging manner.

The ensemble also consists of a well-established Performance Group, which is regularly invited to perform at many events. Their next public performance will be at the ‘One Humanity’ concert on Saturday 23 September at Her Majesty’s Theatre. This is a charity event featuring global rhythms and inspiring dance movements, in the name of raising funds to support victims of the Earthquake in Turkey and Syria. Tickets can be purchased through Ticketek online.

Photos below: Left: Yorgo Kaporis and dancers of AMFE Sloboda performing to the audience during Gosti’s workshop. Centre: Adelaide Macedonian Folkloric Ensemble members pictured with members of Gosti: Philip Griffin, Tunji Beier, Linsey Pollak & Yorgo Kaporis (left to right). Right: WOMAD crowd participating in Gosti’s workshop.

