

To celebrate the return of the Olympic Games to Greece, BBC TV has selected a specially commissioned new piece of music to accompany the programme, which reflects the history, spirit and all that the Olympic Games stand for.

The song, *Olympia – Eternal Flame*, is performed and recorded by the celebrated “world’s first opera band”, Amici forever (pictured above). The song was written by Greek musician/writer/producer John Themis, Rick Blaskey, who has previously been involved in the official music for many of the world’s major international sports events, and Greek poet Avraam Demetriou.

The melody is based on a traditional old Greek dance called the Karagouna. The dance originated in Thessaly, just south of Mount Olympus, abode of the Ancient Greek gods. It was danced by people wearing black (Kara) capes (Gouna) made of bear skins (bears are native to this area), hence the name Karagouna. This social dance is still popular and is danced by Greeks everywhere.

The lyrics of the piece encompass what the Games are all about. The opening sentiment is translated as, “O come young people, all join hands, with one heart, resolve your differences”, reflecting that this was, indeed, how the Olympic Games came about. This is followed by the sentiment, in Greek, which expresses that this is a “song of peace, to the people of the world, for a bright future, Greek spirit of immortality, prosperity and completeness of body and mind”. Ancient Greeks were especially focused on the development of these attributes.

The third section reflects the five colours of the Olympic rings (red, green, black, blue and yellow), as well as five symbolising the unity of the five continents. It also translates as “Arch of Heaven”, a rainbow, signifying the unity of all colours, races and creeds; and as “Time you returned home: welcome back to your birthplace, O Olympiad”.

The Olympia chant that runs throughout the song is a ref

Greeks use this in a lot of their traditional music and call it a Santouri.

The band has been nominated for a Classical Brit Award for their album *The Opera Band*,