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FESTIVAL OF GREEK MUSIC & DANCE 2000

NEW YORK

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FESTIVAL OF GREEK MUSIC & DANCE

Music of Epirus:

PETROLOUKAS HALKIAS & COMPANY

Petroloukas Halkias, *clarinet*
Achileas Halkias, *violin*
Haralampos Halkias, *clarinet*
Nikos Kontos, *defi*
Thanasis Markos, *laouto*

EPIRUS POLYPHONIC ENSEMBLE

Vangelis Kotsou, *director*
Angeliki Karagiorgou
Thanasis Georgiou
Veronica Eliopoulou
Anthoula Kotsou
Alexandros Tsimekas
Olga Gleka

Music & Dance of Crete:

VASILIS SKOULAS & COMPANY

Vasilis Skoulas, *lyra*, *vocals*
Kostas Kallergis, *laouto*
Michalis Skoulas, *mandolin*, *mandola*
Grigoris Nikolidakis, *guitar*
Zacharias Mathioudakis, *laouto*

ANOGIA DANCE ENSEMBLE

Dimitris Mavrokostas, *director*
Thanasis Mavrokostas
Manolis Maris
Charalampos Skoulas
Manolis Mavrokostas

Rembetika: From Smyrna to Piraeus:

MARYO & THE TOMBOURLIKA ENSEMBLE

Maryo, *vocal*
Yiannis Alexandris, *oud*, *guitar*, *vocal*
Kiriakos Gouventas, *violin*
Kostas Vomvolos, *qanun*, *accordion*
Andreas Katsigiannis, *santouri*
Thanasis Chalkias, *bouzouki*, *vocal*
Nikos Psofogiorgos, *percussion*



THE ARTISTS

Petroloukas Halkias

Petroloukas Halkias, born in Delvriaki, Epirus in 1934, is a master of the Epirot clarinet. The last of the living legends of the older generation, he is a member of the famous Halkias Family and the eldest son of Pericles Halkias. When he was a young boy the social and economic deprivation during the German occupation of Greece made it extremely difficult to obtain musical instruments. Thus at the age of nine he made his own clarinet using a red hot iron rod to pierce the wooden cylinder and holes. This impromptu instrument impressed everyone he met, including his uncle, who sent him to study with the famous clarinetist Phillipas Roundas. By the age of eleven he was playing at weddings and was so popular, that neighboring villages invited him to play for all their holidays and celebrations. During the '50s he formed a company with which he performed and recorded in Athens. In 1960 he came to New York where he made recordings and played at celebrations in the Epirot community. He stayed in the U.S. until 1979 and brought over his family (father, two brothers, and sister) of musicians. Since returning to Greece he has formed a new company, recorded his own compositions and appeared at festivals throughout the world.



Petroloukas Halkias



The Epirus Polyphonic Ensemble

The Epirus Polyphonic Ensemble focuses on folk songs from the region of the Greek-Albanian frontier. The group keeps alive the tradition of the polyphonic ensembles of Ktismata Pogoniou, the village with the richest tradition of polyphonic music in Epirus. Vangelis Kotsou, the group's director, is a professor of polyphonic music at the Museum of Folk Music Instruments in Greece. His mother, Anthoula Kotsou, is one of the original members of the legendary Ktismata Pogoniou Polyphonic Ensemble. The Epirus Polyphonic Ensemble has performed in many festivals around the world and in the most prestigious venues in Greece, such as the Acropolis Theater and the Athens Concert Hall.

Vasilis Skoulas

Vasilis Skoulas, born in Crete in 1946, is one of the most sought after *lyra* players in Greece and has been inspirational in keeping traditional Cretan music alive. His family played a very important role in the liberation movement of the island from the Turkish occupation, influencing both the political and artistic worlds. His grandfather was one of the most renowned *lyra* players of the time whose contribution to Cretan music and lyrics is undisputed. His uncle Yiannakos Skoulas was a brilliant folk poet and his father was a well known folk painter and wood engraver whose work strongly reflects the history of Crete and Greece. At the age of thirteen, Vasilis played the *lyra* professionally and participated in many important social events including weddings and religious festivals. Since 1969 he has



recorded many albums, including one "gold" recording, and toured the United States, Canada, Europe and Australia. Over the past twenty years he has worked in collaboration with the famous Greek composer Yiannis Markopoulos, performing throughout Greece. He has also participated in many theater productions.

The Anogia Dance Ensemble

The Anogia Dance Ensemble is under the direction of Dimitris Mavrokostas, who was born in Anogia, a famous village on the island of Crete, in 1956. At the age of eighteen he came to Athens where he founded fourteen schools of traditional Cretan dance and formed his folk dance company. His group has performed in various festivals and concerts throughout Greece, appeared on major Greek television networks, and travelled throughout Europe and South Africa. In 1986 Dimitris returned to Crete where he created two new dance schools and collaborated with Kriti Television station. His main goal is to teach Cretan dance to children; so far he has taught 30,000 young people.

Maryo

Maryo is one of the last authentic exponents of a style of music that has all but disappeared. Known in Europe as "the grande dame of Greece," she has also been called "the living legend of *rembetika*." She started performing at the age of thirteen, singing and playing accordion with her father, who was also a musician. She remembers the Cafe Aman period; there had been a Cafe Aman in the area where she lived as a child and she used to peek through its window, risking her father's rage. ("I remember the smoke and the women who were dancing - what beautiful women they were.") Against her father's will, she went on to perform with the most important interpreters of *rembetika* and *laiko* (popular urban folk music). In the 1960s she sang with Marcos Vamvakaris, one of the last great *rembetes*. With Thessaloniki as her base, she has toured Greece and appeared in leading venues in Western Europe. She has made many recordings, including the acclaimed CD *Cafe Aman Songs* with the Tombourlika Ensemble.

The Tombourlika Ensemble

The Tombourlika Ensemble, formed in 1988, has an extensive repertoire of *rembetika* and Cafe Aman songs. It is composed of musicians who have performed with many of Greece's leading folk artists. Since the early '90s the ensemble has toured and recorded with Maryo.



THE MUSIC & DANCE OF GREECE:

Epirus

Epirus, the northwest province of Greece just south of Albania, is a land of rugged mountains and limited natural resources. The people of Epirus have developed one of the most distinctive folk music traditions of mainland Greece. The haunting and soulful nature of the music reflects the harsh land which for centuries has forced its people to emigrate in search of a livelihood.

There is a highly developed instrumental ensemble tradition in Epirus. This tradition can be traced to the merchant class patronage of professional musicians, which began in the 18th century. The professional ensembles consisted of flute, violin, *laouto* (lute), and *defi* (rimmed drum), a combination which was well suited for indoor performance. In the latter half of the 19th century, the European clarinet, because of its greater musical capabilities, eventually replaced the flute as the primary melody instrument. According to the musicologist Despina Mazaraki (*To Laiko Klarino Stin Ellada*), the clarinet was adopted into the musical traditions of Epirus at least 40-60 years prior to its general acceptance in the more southern Greek provinces. Epirot clarinetists are renowned for the excellence of their playing technique and expression; in fact, many of the very finest Greek clarinetists of the past 75 years have been of Epirot origin. Because much of Epirot instrumental music was performed by professional musicians, it developed a greater degree of sophistication, subtlety and variety in performance practice than is found in the other rural areas of Greece.

Much of this sophistication in performance practice paralleled the inherent structural sophistication of Epirot music. Whereas most Greek folk music is monophonic (single-voiced), Epirot music is polyphonic (many-voiced). This polyphonic tradition is strongest in the regions north of the capital city of Yanina and extends well into present-day Albania. The songs were traditionally performed by a group of three to five persons, consisting of the *partis*, who sings the basic melody, the *isokratis*, who holds the low drone, the *yiristis*, who sings the upper harmony, and the *klostis*, who weaves between the melody and the upper harmony with unique vocal ornaments.

Polyphony was also characteristic of the instrumental tradition. The clarinet, which ornaments the melody with glissandi and muted slurs, is supported by the violin, which plays a complementary series of notes with frequent descending slides. With the addition of the low drone of the *laouto* and the rhythmic emphasis of the *defi*, Epirot music resembles a richly woven oriental tapestry.

The favorite and most common dances of Epirus are the *Sta Dio* in 4/4 and the *Sta Tria* in 3/4. (Most Epirot songs are in one of the other of these two meters.) Less commonly performed but of more interesting metrical patterns are the *Zagorisios* in 5/4, *Fissouni* in 9/8, *Beratis* in 8/4, and *Synkathistos* in 5/4. The *Beratis*, *Klephtes*, *Perdika*, and *Samandaka*, primarily men's dances, are similar to Macedonian dances in the slow, deliberate and majestic style of their execution.

Perhaps the most beautiful examples of Epirot music are the free-metered tunes, especially the *Skaros* and *Miryiolo*. The haunting quality of the music is achieved by the liquid tone of the clarinet played in the lower register. *Skaros* melodies were originally improvised tunes played by shepherds on various types of end-blown flutes. Nowadays, however, they are part of



the standard repertoire of the *Kompania*, the name given to the typical clarinet ensemble. During the performance of the *Skaros*, the violin often imitates the sound of birds or shepherd dogs. *Miryioloï* means lament and aptly describes the subdued yet intensely emotional mood created by this type of music. The *Miryioloï* is invariably the opening melody at any celebration or community event. Almost always the beginning of a medley, it is usually followed by a series of increasingly faster dances.

—Joseph Graziosi

Crete

On the south side of the Aegean Basin in the eastern Mediterranean lies a long narrow island, the fifth largest in the Mediterranean. This island was the site of a civilization as ancient and magnificent as those of Mesopotamia and the Nile Valley. The legendary Atlantis, the land of the sea, apparently found its home there. This island is Crete and its great civilization was the Minoan Empire.

Though modern Crete is primarily rural and agricultural, there are also a number of urban centers on the northern shore which are slowly becoming industrialized. As a consequence, Crete is rich in both urban and rural musical traditions.

Rural music is most often performed in the Cretan villages on such special occasions as weddings, baptisms, name days, saints' days, and local festivals. Urban music, in contrast, can be heard in cities such as Irakleion and Hania and is most often performed in supper clubs called *kentra*.

The traditional Cretan musical ensemble consists of one *lyra* player and one or two *laouto* players. Such ensembles are responsible for most of the music heard in Cretan villages

and cities. The *lyra* player is usually the leader of such ensembles and is the creative source for new compositions and improvisation.

The Cretan *lyra* is the primary melodic instrument of Crete. It is also played on a number of other islands in the southern Aegean. The *lyra* is a pear-shaped fretless bowed lute, 45 to 55 centimeters in length, which has three metal strings tuned in fifths: g, d and a. It is played in a vertical position. The strings of the *lyra* are stopped not with the tips of the fingers as the violin is, but rather with the fingernails, which are pressed against the side of the strings.

The *laouto*, popular throughout Greece, is a long-necked plucked lute with moveable frets. Its large pear-shaped body is similar to its Western counterpart, the lute, and its Eastern counterpart, the *oud*. Its neck, however, is longer than those of the latter two instruments. The four double courses of metal strings are tuned in perfect fifths. Whereas on the Greek mainland the *laouto* is used only for chordal accompaniment, in Crete it often doubles the melodic line.

The Cretan repertoire contains two categories that are distinctive: the *rizitiko* and the epic poem-songs. The *rizitiko* is the most famous and, most likely, the oldest Cretan song form. Characteristically sung in *parlando-rubato* style with or without instrumental accompaniment, the *rizitiko* text is often a highly symbolic and allegorical presentation of an episode from the history of Crete.

The performance of epic poem-songs is another archaic Cretan musical tradition. The *Erotokritos*, which was probably written between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the *Daskaloyiannis*, which refers to an eighteenth-century revolt, are the most widely known and performed of this genre. The former consists of over 10,000 lines of verse. Today only short excerpts of the poems are sung to instrumental accompaniment.





Another common Cretan dance is the *Kastrinos* (also known as the *Maleviziotikos*), which is a line dance from the Malevizi district of the Irakleion province. Like the *Pentozalis*, it is a "leaping" dance often characterized by acrobatic movements of the leader. A common couples' dance is the *Sousta*, descriptively named after the Greek word for the spring of a carriage. In performing the *Sousta*, the man and woman perform a number of variations on the basic step, sometimes facing each other and sometimes revolving around each other. In contrast to other Greek couples' dances, there is physical contact between the partners.

Cretan music is best known for its dance songs and dance music. One of the most common dances is the *Sighanos*, a slow Cretan line dance most often accompanied by the singing of *mantinades*. Often composed extemporaneously by the singer, the *mantinades* consist of two 15-syllable lines. Their subject matter ranges from traditional topics such as love and history to current events. A *Sighanos* is traditionally followed by the more spirited *Pentozalis*, which can be roughly translated as "five dizzying steps." The *Pentozalis* is a line dance in which the participants clasp one another's shoulders and perform steps classified as "leaping" by the Greeks.

Undoubtedly the most popular Cretan dance is the *Haniotikos syrtos*, a "shuffling" line dance from the city of Hania. Because of its popularity with composers and musicians, the music to this dance has become the most complex and virtuosic. The noted Greek composer Mikis Theodorakis patterned his "Zorba the Greek" film score theme on the structure of the *Haniotikos syrtos*. *Mantinades* are also sung to this dance-song form.

At a time when Western musical forms and urban popular songs seem to be undermining the strength of traditional folk music in certain areas of Greece, the vitality and vigor of Cretan music remain undiminished. A visit to the *kentra* in the Cretan towns of Hania, Rethymnon and Irakleion will reveal the strong connection that Cretans still have to their music and dance, including even the youngest generation.

—Michael Kaloyanides

Urban Music

Like the Greek village and countryside, Greek urban areas also have a traditional music. There are two urban musical styles that are not Western in origin: *Smyrneika* and *Rembetika*. Throughout Ottoman times Greeks lived in large numbers in the great port cities of Constantinople/Istanbul and Smyrna/Izmir. Here, in a mixed ethnic milieu of Greek, Armenians, Turks and Jews, a distinct urban style of music developed that is usually referred to as *Smyrneika* (of Smyrna) or *Politika* (of Constantinople).



This music was originally based on folk music of the Marmara Sea and East Aegean regions. The favored dance forms were *Zeybekiko*, *Karsilamas*, *Syrto*, *Tsiftedeli*, and *Hasapiko*, most of which are improvised couple or solo dances. With the exception of the *Syrto*, these dances require little space for performance and are appropriate for the closed indoor spaces where urban music was performed. The *Zeybekiko* is a more expansive dance in slow and deliberate 9/4 meter which requires intense concentration on the part of the dancer. The *Tsiftedeli* in 4/4 is a more subtle, sensually erotic dance. The term *tsiftedeli* refers to a technique in which a lyrist or violinist tunes and crosses the strings of his instrument in order to produce a sound similar to that of the island bagpipe. The tradition of making a fiddle sound like the double chanter bagpipe is also prevalent in Crete, Pontos, and the Dodecanese Islands.

In general, urban music shows a greater complexity of melodic range and modal variety and has a more refined character than its rural counterpart. As in the island tradition, Smyrneic musicians favored instruments of a lighter, more delicate sound, hence the preference for string instruments, either bowed or plucked, and the more delicate percussion instruments. The preferred instruments, which were common to much of the Near East, included the *oud* (lute), *kanonaki* (a type of zither) or *santouri* (hammered dulcimer) *lyra* or fiddle, and *darabukka* (hourglass-shaped drum) or *defi* (rimmed drum). The instruments were referred to as *psila organa* or *intzesaz*, meaning "light", as opposed to the *hondra organa*, "heavy" instruments of the countryside.

The music was performed in tavern-like clubs called Cafe Aman. The musicians and singers were usually professionals. Female performers called *noumera* sang and danced to the accompaniment of finger cymbals called *zilia*. At special places called Cafe Santan entertainment included humorous dance and music skits in the manner of a burlesque show.

The musical structure was based on the Arabic/Turkish system of modes or scales called *makam*, or *dromos* in Greek. It is interesting to note that many of the most popular modes, e.g. *rast*, *oushak*, *hidjaz*, *sabah*, correspond to Byzantine ecclesiastical modes called *echoi*. Because of the system of *makam* was the tonal basis for urban music, a musician's ability was judged on how well he could perform a *taxim*, a free-metered improvisation based on one or another specific *makam*. The vocal equivalent to the *taxim* was called the *amane*. It was highly melismatic, and its verses were intensely emotional and often tragic. The Cafe Aman in fact got its name from the popularity of this vocal style.

Smyrneic music was brought to Athens and urban Greece by refugees from Asia Minor in the 1920s. These refugees dominated the musical nightlife in Athens, the musicians' union and the emerging Greek recording industry during the 1930s. Among the most renowned personalities of this time were the composers Panayiotis Toundas and Vangelis Papazoglou, the instrumentalists Mitsos Salonikos (violin) and Agapios Tomboulis (*oud*), and the singers Andonios Diamantides (or Dalgas) and Roza Eskinazi. Smyrneika in Greece flourished until World War II, after which time it severely declined in favor of the emerging popular *bouzouki* music.

A style of music derived from *Smyrneika* had already developed in the growing ports of independent Greece, especially in Piraeus and Syra, by the late nineteenth century. This particular style was created by a group of people called *rembetes* or *manges*. Belonging to the lowest socio-economic stratum, the *rembetes* banded together and evolved into an "outcast" subculture. *Rembetic* society had its own "heavy" type of song, dealing with such topics as unrequited love, prison life, and the pleasures of smoking hashish. The *rembetes* were known by their peculiar dialect, swagger and clothing, and to an extent they externally resembled other colorful urban subcultures such as the cockneys of London. In contrast to





the highly fluid and embellished vocal style of the *Smyrneika* song, the *rembetic* style was rougher and starker in its execution and was characterized by a intensely personal *Zeybekiko* solo dance as well as the geometrically complex *Hasapiko*, danced by two or three men in a straight line. *Rembetic* songs were performed in smaller ensembles composed primarily of the *bouzouki*, a long-necked fretted lute, its miniature relative the *baglama* or *tzoura*, and the guitar.

With the massive influx of displaced Anatolian Greeks to the Athens-Piraeus area in 1922 and the concurrent increase in economic hardship, *Rembetica* songs began to spread beyond their limited society, finding their way into the working class at large. During the 1930s, under the influence of the composer and performer Marcos Vamvakaris, the *bouzouki* came out of the prisons and hashish dens and became the accepted instrument of the taverna-style nightclub.

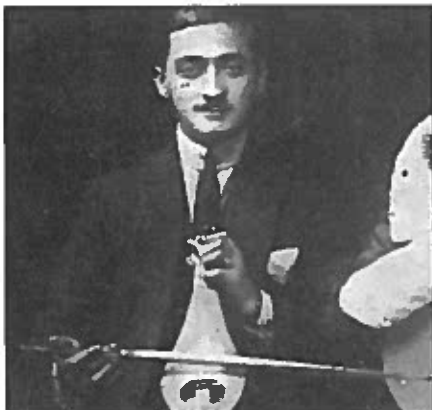
Following the tremendous social disruption caused by World War II and the Civil War, *Rembetica* became the prime musi-

cal form for almost the entire urban population and became known as *Laika*, meaning popular. Its sound was substantially altered under the increasing influence of Western scales and harmonies. Through the efforts of the composer Vassilis Tsitsanis, this "popular" *rembetic* music lost many of the heavy elements of the older style. Lyrics were less despairing and came to include common images of everyday life. Many of the songs from this time have remained popular and have been widely recorded.

Rembetica is still the most popular form of urban music in Greece today. Although *Smyrneika* lost its position at the forefront of urban music after World War II, it has not entirely disappeared. Its exquisite repertoire is in fact enjoying a limited revival among Greek musicians.

—Joseph Graziosi

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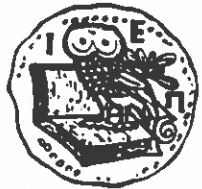
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