



## *Another taste of Greece*

'Grapevine' Winter 2000

An article by Hazel Young

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As we suffer the gales and floods of an exceptionally miserable November climate in the UK, it seems a good time to immerse ourselves in the music and dances of sunny Greece, where (in our imagination at least) the sun is always hot and the cloudless sky is always an incredible blue! So let's explore more flavours in Greek music via some of our favourite dances.

We'll start with three pieces which perhaps represent the more theatrical/classical traditions in Greek music. '*Kore*' is one of the great circle dances, but where does the music come from? The answer is a double CD of Mikis Theodorakis intitled *To Axion Esti* (EMI/MINOS 14C 045 702012/22) and the track is called '*Nai Sto Shima Tou Ouranou*'. The CD is theme music to a theatre piece, and also contains an alternative sung version of the '*Kore*' music with male voice and chorus, which sounds like a group of Gods and Goddesses on Mount Olympus!

What about '*Menousis*'? The music for Anna Barton's meditation dance which we know as '*Perpetual Motion*' comes from a CD collaboration between actress/singer Irene Papas and Vangelis (who creates grandiose epics for the synthesizer) called *Odes* (Polygram 833 8642) which contains some sublime music besides '*O Menousis*' itself. The more recent collaboration between Papas and Vangelis has also inspired a wonderful new choreography, this time from Friedel Kloke. The dance is called '*Garuda (Firebird)*' and the music is called '*O! Glyky Mou Ear*' and comes from the CD *Rhapsodies* (Polydor 829 413-2). Again the whole CD is quite dramatic and other-worldly. Vangelis is a master of composing music for the cinema, and this influence comes through in both *Odes* and *Rhapsodies*.

Being an eclecticist, (I can almost spell it!), I also have a penchant for the distinctive clarinet-dominated folk music of Epirus (which is the north-western corner of Greece, near Albania). A good example of this style may be found in the CD by Tasos Chalkias *Ta Ipeirotika (Folk music of Epirus)* (Alcyon 19009). It's full of the scrunchiest clarinetting you'll ever hear! Track 5 '*To Delvino-Kofto*' may be familiar as the music to the dance '*Pogonissio Kofto*'; Epirus clarinet fans will find it quite delicious. From Epirus to Crete; I must thank Laura Shannon here for introducing me to the dreamy music of Loudovicus Ton Anoyion, via the Cretan dance '*Syrto*'. I have become quite a fan of Loudovicus since dancing to two Syrto tracks from one of his earlier CDs *O Erotas Stin Kriti* (EMI/MINOS 7243 4 80010 2 3) and the lovely '*Syrto Kalamia*' from his CD entitled *To Meintani* (Mylos 002).

Loudovicus plays mandolin like a troubadour and sings in a half-whisper; his style is soft and romantic. A good introduction to his music is an excellent compilation CD produced in Germany called *The Colours of Love* (Network 34.209) which also contains the music for '*Syrto Kalamia*' (entitled '*Piso Apo Ta Kalamia*') amongst 13 of his best tracks.

Finally, while we're in Crete, let's mention Ross Daly. Ross was born in England, of Irish parents, but for the past 20 years at least has been living in Crete, and has steeped himself in Cretan, Greek and Middle Eastern music. He is simply an extraordinary musician and acknowledged as a star in Greek Music (he plays on numerous top albums with all the big names) and his own CDs are quite superb too. He plays long improvisations, often based on folk tunes, and his work is highly danceable if you like free dance or belly dance, and even folk dance: '*Syrtos Haniotikos Kritikos*' for example. Rufus Maychild paired this dance with the 10 minute first track '*Improvisation With Rababa and Sarangi*' from his CD entitled *Selected Works* (Oriente Musik Rien Cd 01) and it's quite an experience to do this long dance to such inspired music!

So I think I'll stay here in the Cretan sunshine (if only!). I still await feedback on this column, so until someone begs me to stop because they now have an overdraft (this music is irresistible!), there'll be more next time ....

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