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Made in Greece

Studies in Popular Music

Edited by Dafni Tragaki

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Chapter 2 deals with the phenomenon of Anna Vissi, a cross-generational diva of the *pista* and one of the best-selling female popular singers in Greece who gained an iconic status during the late 1980s and 1990s. Polychronakis provides an overview of the shifting musical milieus defining Anna Vissi's career, from *entechno to elafro-laiko* (light-popular song) and pop song to the Eurovision stage in 2004, her contribution in setting new trends merging "East" and "West", which are here broadly contextualized in the post-1974 Greek entertainment culture and music industry's developments. The reactions of certain elite musical circles against Vissi's breaking away from the "art-popular" scene was indicative of the polarized discourse defining the post-Junta disapproval of "commercialized" popular song. The "Vissi phenomenon" and its ubiquity in the public sphere from the 1980s up until the mid-2000s is further explored in the framework of Greece's Europeanization politics and the emergence of the local *nouveaux-riches* late capitalist luxurious *pista* entertainment practices, the lifestyle promoted by the private TV channels launched in the early 1990s hosting prime-time shows with musical celebrities. The massive success of *pista* culture associated with Vissi redefined, for Polychronakis, Easterness, while it provided the musical response to the East–West cultural and political merging reflecting Greek "modernization" during the 1990s. Vissi's booming cultural capital not only manifested but also constituted the social dynamics enacted in the *pista* experience. Polychronakis stresses that despite relatively unproductive efforts to internationalize her career, especially through her Eurovision 2004 participation, Vissi remained a national cosmopolitan diva whose "cosmopolitanism is made in and for Greece". By localizing cosmopolitan trends, she resignified Greekness and the national imaginary of contemporary Greece.

Bouzoukia staged performances were the precursors of urban "live music" entertainment discussed by Tsioulakis in Chapter 3. Based on extended ethnographic research, Tsioulakis focuses on the analysis of the shift from the participatory modality of the Athenian nightclub's clientele towards a spectator mentality that is, as he argues, "a complex process entailing cultural politics, economic considerations, labor relationships, embodied subjectivities, and identity claims coming from a variety of competing social actors, including pop-singers, instrumentalists, entrepreneurs, and fans". Whereas up until the 1990s "ola ta mora stin pista!" (all babes on the stage) was often the standard phrase signaling the provocatively sexualized female stage dancing, this reciprocal performative practice that could transform the on-stage power otherwise monopolized by the singer was recently abandoned and limited in the context of the "second program", the side-show supporting the headliner's core program. Stage policing was instrumental, among other changes in the entertainment culture, in the reconfiguration of the performance space, as Tsioulakis shows, further spectacularizing the *pista* (stage) enforcing neoliberal strategies that amplified the singer's authority and marketability in the music industry. Such transformations within the performative event, Tsioulakis concludes, manifested the impact of neoliberal worldviews upon the *pista* experience, producing new forms of idol–fan relationships, privileging distance and mediatized representations over unmediated interactive experience.

1

Sentiment, Memory, and Identity in Greek *Laiko* Music (1945–1967)

Leonidas Economou

The history of Greek popular music after 1945 is virtually unknown territory for scholarly research, and has often been heavily distorted by researchers of *rebetiko*. The myth of *rebetiko* functioned as a mechanism of social distinction and exclusion, which devalued most of the musical forms and practices that coexisted with it, or appeared following its alleged disappearance at the beginning of the 1950s (Economou 2005). I will try to correct this picture and to map this unexplored territory for the period 1945 to 1967. I will begin with a discussion of the emergence of *laiko traghoudi* (popular song), the new genre of *bouzouki* music which succeeded *rebetiko*.[1] Most researchers posit the beginning of *laiko* in the mid-1950s following the periodization of rebetologists. This perspective contradicts the contemporary discourse of musicians and critics as well as other historical evidence showing that the transformation of *rebetiko* into *laiko* took place during the 1940s (Michael 1996). I will begin my narrative at the end of the war in 1945 and I will examine the different styles of *laiko* that developed up until 1967, when the establishment of the dictatorship marked the beginning of a new historical period.

The *laiko* genre is a broad and complex category that should not be conceived of in terms of certain essentialist characteristics, but rather as a kind of scene, which is defined, differentiated and transformed in terms of changing social practices, spaces, and representations. The deciphering of musical tendencies and styles cannot be solely based on aesthetic considerations, but needs to take into account the contextualization, reception, and use of the songs in different social milieus. Musicians and listeners participate in the social and cultural dynamic of their time, and they negotiate in subtle but discernible ways their position in respect to the major social issues and conflicts of their time (Stokes 1997, 2010; Lohman 2010). I will try to describe and understand the major subdivisions of the *laiko* scene by taking into account all the different aspects of musical performances, and especially the major aesthetic, political, and cultural issues that were involved in the experience of music. In this way, I hope to shed some light not only on the persons, the works, and the events of *laiko* music, but also on their complex associations with particular social sentiments and identities.

A Short Introduction to the Postwar Years (1945–1967)

Greek society emerged deeply scarred from the war period. The harsh occupation (1941–1944), the strong resistance movement, the brutal reprisals of the conquerors, and the atrocious civil war that followed (1947–1949) had caused immense catastrophe and pain. Human losses reached 7 to 8 percent of the population, the economy was ruined, and thousands of people had experienced violence, terror, and death. The civil war in particular had devastating effects not only upon human lives and material resources, but also upon the fabric of social life, which was heavily disrupted and blighted.

After the war, the ruling elites and the protective power established an oppressive regime of "limited democracy", which aimed, on the one hand, at the control of the population, and on the other, at the realization of reforms that would lead to the development of the market economy. A configuration of power structures and institutional mechanisms repressed, excluded, or persecuted the enemies of the regime, and intervened at times of crisis. The economy began to grow quickly from the early 1950s. The growth rate of the Greek economy between 1950 and 1961 reached 5.5 percent and was one of the biggest in the world. The distribution of new income, however, was very unequal. The new economic elites, who were heavily dependent on state favors, and some social and professional groups began to benefit from growth. At the same time there was major unemployment and underemployment, and the majority of the lower and middle classes struggled to survive. This provoked the greatest immigration wave in recent Greek history, as between 1955 and 1970 more than 900.000 people moved to other countries for economic reasons.

The first post-civil war years (1950–1955) emerge from many descriptions as a bleak period. The signs of devastation were still visible in the social landscape, and a diffuse melancholy spread through the country. An atmosphere of hatred, fear, and suspicion permeated public life, policing civil society and impelling people to retire into themselves. At the same time, however, a process of rapid urbanization and modernization changed the face of the country. A generalized desire for economic progress and improvement, coupled with an eagerness for hard work and thrift, a disdain for rural and traditional ideas and values, and an eager embracing of many aspects of modernity contributed to the growth of the economy and set in motion powerful processes of social and cultural change.

The accumulated disaffection and distress about the oppressive political and economic regime was actively expressed from the late 1950s, and it created a strong and multifarious political and cultural movement, demanding political democratization, economic equity, and cultural renewal. The government of the center, which was triumphantly elected on this agenda in 1964, was overturned by the king and the deep state. The political instability and conflict that inevitably followed led eventually to the dictatorship of the Colonels (April 1967 to July 1974). At the same time the economy continued to grow quickly and the processes of social and cultural modernization accelerated. The middle classes expanded, and larger sections of the population experienced economic improvement. The level of consumption increased, and modern lifestyles became more widely disseminated. The traditional ideals of family, community, gender, and love were more radically questioned, and modern individualistic practices became more common and accepted.

The Institutional Context of Popular Music

The production, distribution, and consumption of popular music were shaped in new ways following the war. A cultural industry (situated almost exclusively in Athens) was gradually created through the progressive modernization, development, and interconnection of record, radio, film, press, and entertainment industries and networks. The pre-existing record companies were consolidated during the 1940s into two groups (Columbia – His Master's Voice and Odeon – Parlophone), which acted as representatives of international firms and local entrepreneurs of Greek music. The record firms developed and modernized (especially after the introduction of 45 rpm discs in 1959, which was followed by a huge increase in record sales) and became the center of a local musical star system.

The influence of state-controlled radio (established in 1938) increased considerably following the war. The radio network expanded, reaching every part of the country, and differentiated, attempting to address every section of the population. A number of popular channels allotted considerable time to popular music (contributing to its becoming some sort of national music) and played an important role in its overall development and evaluation. From 1955, the record firms were allotted specific time slots to advertise their songs and artists, and created highly influential daily programs. Another important channel for the promotion of popular music was the press, and especially, the very popular weekly magazines, which covered systematically the field of popular music, and devoted many pages, and often their covers, to relevant news, interviews, images, and articles.

The revue theater, which was one of the main sites of production and dissemination of popular music in the interwar years, remained relatively important, but it was superseded in popularity and influence by cinema. A local film industry, which was created during the 1950s and which thrived during the 1960s, managed to produce an impressive number of films and to attract a significant number of film spectators. Popular music is related in many ways to the Greek cinema of the time. Most films included scenes of musical entertainment and performances of popular songs by well-known artists, and they were an important medium for their dissemination. At the same time it formed a new scene of commercial musical entertainment, comprising various kinds of *tavernas* and nightclubs, and various styles of music, commensality, and revelry. The musical nightclubs, which were the main sites for the performance of popular music by famous artists, multiplied, modernized their programs, and attracted large audiences.

The Emergence of *Laiko* Song

The *elaphro* (light) or *evropaiko* (European) song – Western-style song with Greek lyrics – was before the war the only genre of popular music to be accepted by the state and the middle classes. The genre virtually monopolized the space allotted to Greek popular music on the radio, in the revue theater, and in the cinema, and it had a broad audience among all social strata. *Rebetiko*, which became very popular in the 1930s among the refugees and the working classes, was scorned and stigmatized by both the establishment and the Communist Party, which regarded it as a corrupt and decadent product of the urban underworld and an undesirable residue of the Ottoman period (Gauntlett 1991; Zaimakis 2010). The upheavals of the war changed this musical landscape. *Elaphro* lost much of its creative strength and appeal, whereas *rebetiko* (which was transformed during this time into *laiko*) produced some of the most emblematic popular songs of the period and became very popular among wider social strata. The ability of *laiko* to express the turbulent times, and the weakening of social and cultural barriers during the war, contributed to its wider dissemination and helped it acquire a new enhanced social and cultural status (Holst-Warhaft 2002b: 312).

Vasilis Tsitsanis, Yiannis Papaioannou, Apostolos Kaldaras, and other important musicians who appeared on the musical scene in the late 1930s and the 1940s are credited (by contemporary and subsequent commentators and researchers) for detaching *rebetiko* from the underworld of the *manges*[2] (which was its initial point of reference) and transforming it into *laiko*: a broader kind of song expressing the concerns and sensibilities of the people. Tsitsanis had already been praised in the late 1940s for being the protagonist of this transformation, and he gladly accepted the credit for the "ennoblement" and the "Westernization" of *bouzouki*-style music (Gauntlett 1975/1976; Michael 1996). From the early 1940s Tsitsanis used almost exclusively the term *laiko* to designate his music and to advertise his performances. In a 1951 interview he distanced himself from *rebetiko*, called himself a "*laiko* composer", and presented himself as a conscious reformer of popular music, who eliminated the undesirable Eastern elements and gave it musical and poetic depth. The ennoblement of *rebetiko* required its renaming. Contrary to the word *rebetiko*, which still had strong negative connotations, the new term was used in folklore studies and political rhetoric, and gave to the music of *bouzouki* a new credibility and respectability. The musicians, the cultural industry, and the musical press adopted the new term from the mid-1940s and distanced themselves rhetorically from *rebetiko*. Friendly critics and commentators argued for the renaming of the music of *bouzouki*, or used both terms combined or interchangeably. A similar evolution took place in the national press, and within a few years the term *laiko* had completely replaced *rebetiko* as a designation for the music of *bouzouki*.

The transformation and renaming of *rebetiko* was connected with broader changes in social ideology and state policy concerning popular music (Gauntlett 1991; Tragaki 2005; Zaimakis 2010). Compelled by new ideological needs during the civil war, radio and other state institutions relaxed the total prohibition of *bouzouki* and *laiko*. At the same time, a number of influential intellectuals (associated with the bourgeois camp) began to question the rejection of *rebetiko*, and the whole edifice of musical and artistic evaluation. The composer Manos Hadjidakis, in his famous 1949 lecture, attacked both the attachment to an extinct past (represented by the idealization of folk music) and what he saw as the shallow imitation of Western music (represented by *elaphro*). *Rebetiko*, on the other hand, was presented as a form of popular (*laiko*) music associated with Byzantine chant and folk music, and it was regarded as the raw material for the construction of a more authentic and pragmatic version of popular music and national identity. A similar change of view is evident in the Left. The total rejection of *rebetiko* was moderated, due in part to the great popularity of the songs of Tsitsanis among party members and friends, and a heated debate on *rebetiko-laiko* took place between 1945 and 1965 among left-wing intellectuals. The voices defending *rebetiko-laiko* multiplied, and it was gradually recognized as a musical style with deeply traditional and popular (*laiko*) traits and dispositions that could form the basis for the reformation of Greek popular music.

In what follows I propose a classification of the scene of *laiko*, which takes into account all aspects of musical production and performance, and examines carefully the way the major *laiko* creators negotiated their stance towards the turbulent and conflicting world that surrounded them. A number of issues – including the political division between the bourgeois forces and the Left, the response to the trauma of the civil war, the cultural orientation between the West and the East, and the redefinition of the character of *laiko* under the new conditions of greater dissemination and commoditization – were important concerns for both the artists and the audience, and constituted critical points around which musicians and listeners positioned themselves and created the musical styles of the time.

The Tsitsanis Style

Vasilis Tsitsanis (1917–1983) was born in Trikala. Despite the fact that he finished high school, he became a professional musician and made his first record hits in the late 1930s. During the 1940s he composed and recorded a large number of hits that established him as the leading *laiko* musician. Tsitsanis created his own version of *laiko*, and invented a complex way between the East and the West, the Left and the Right, the acknowledgment and the silencing of the wounds of the recent past. The common view that he abandoned the *dromoi*[3] and contributed to the spread of functional harmony is rather simplistic, and obscures the variety of his work and the continuities with the tradition of *rebetiko* (Pennanen 1997: 68). In his own way Tsitsanis blended the tradition of *rebetiko* with Western popular music, avoiding both the daring innovations and the marked Westernization (introduced by composers like Hiotis), and the influences from *smyrneiko*[4] and Middle Eastern music, which were becoming fashionable again. Apart from his Western-style songs, Tsitsanis composed numerous songs with marked oriental features, including some grieving and Indian-style *laika* (Pennanen 1997: 70–71), visited and performed in Istanbul, and included Turkish songs in Turkish in his nightclub performances. Tsitsanis managed to meander within the tensions of turbulent times and civil strife, winning the sympathy (and perhaps the wrath) of all political factions. He composed songs expressing sympathy for the Left, and songs dedicated to the fighters of the national army. More importantly, he composed some of the most emblematic songs of the period, which expressed in an allegorical language the ordeals of the civil war and the plight of the people, and were sung by both sides of the conflict. Tsitsanis rejected the attachment to the traumatic past and the discourse of pain (that prevailed in another part of *laiko*), and articulated a message of patience, courage, and hope that could be read from both political perspectives.

The composer played a leading role in the ennoblement of *rebetiko* without completely losing his references to the popular strata and the world of the *manges*. He performed in the first high-class nightclubs and adapted, to some extent, his performance style to the new trends and audiences. He was the first to include women singers in his orchestra and he allowed the singer Marika Ninou to perform standing (a daring innovation of the time), but, apart from this and a few other exceptions, he never abandoned the traditional arrangement (according to which the whole group performs seated on a small podium called *palko*), and resisted the transformation of performance into some kind of musical show. He never deviated from the traditional three-course *bouzouki*, he never wore a tie, and he continued to compose songs for the *manges*, including a number of hashish songs, which were detested by the Left and adored by some government supporters, and were recorded during a short and inexplicable break of censorship in 1946. During the same period he composed numerous exotic, dreamlike songs, expressing a desire to escape from the depressing reality to an idealized and sexualized Orient, as well as many hits that echoed the carefree and optimistic mood of *archontorebetiko*. The influence of Tsitsanis was immense, and his style prevailed up until the mid-1950s. Many important composers of the time (Yiannis Papaioannou, Apostolos Kaldaras, Giorgos Mitsakis, Kostas Kaplanis) were influenced by him or followed parallel trajectories, and they are viewed as co-founders of the 1940s *laiko*.

Archontorebetiko and Manolis Hiotis

Over the same years it developed a different, more radical trend of ennoblement and modernization of *rebetiko-laiko*, aiming at its transformation into a genre suitable for the general public and the middle classes. One of the most important expressions of this tendency was *archontorebetiko* (gentry or posh *rebetiko*), a new genre created in the musical theater in the late 1940s and which remained popular up until the late 1950s (Tsambras 2005). Michalis *Sogioul* (one of the most important composers of *elaphro*) gave into the insistent suggestions of Alekos

Sakelarios (playwright, scriptwriter, director, and lyricist) and composed a song in *rebetiko* style for a successful 1947 play. The song "To Tram to Telefteo" (The last tramway) was an instant success and initiated a new trend. Over the following years, many important creators of *elaphro*, as well as some *laiko* musicians, contributed to the genre.

The melodies and rhythms of the songs were reminiscent of *rebetiko-laiko*, and the texts were written in the language of the people, but they were performed by orchestras with Western instruments and sung by leading singers of *elaphro*. Most songs are in the dance rhythm of *chasapiko*, which is more compatible with functional harmonization (Pennanen 1997: 96), and reflect a joyful and often humorous mood. Over the following years they were performed by mixed orchestras (including *bouzouki*), or by *laiko* groups. Their success was so great that some *archontorebetika* were included in the performances of *laiko* musicians and were recorded by leading *laiko* orchestras and singers (including Vasilis Tsitsanis, Giorgos Mitsakis, Marika Ninou, and Prodromos Tsaousakis).

Archontorebetiko emerged from a part of the cultural system associated with the political establishment, and expressed the optimistic, forgetful, and acquiescent vision of the winners. The aim of the songs, according to Sakelarios, was to cheer up and infuse optimism into the tormented people of postwar Greece, and to help them forget their traumatic memories. Most *archontorebetika* were love songs and many depicted scenes of revelry and fun. The texts, which were obviously addressed to the working classes, recognize their poverty, their hard life, and their problems, but adopted an attitude of patience, courage, and hope. The diffuse social suffering and the political turmoil were almost completely eliminated, and it articulated a message of oblivion and return to normality which was warmly received by large sections of the public.

The modernization and ennoblement of *rebetiko* – beyond the limits set by Tsitsanis – was also advanced by some *laiko* musicians and especially by the charismatic *bouzouki* player and composer Manolis Hiotis (1921–1970). Hiotis grew up in the world of the *manges* in Thessaloniki and Nafplio. He took lessons in both *rebetiko* and Western music, and showed his musical genius from an early age. He appeared on the Athenian musical scene and made his first recordings in the late 1930s. He continued his musical education in Athens next to Stephanos Spitambelos, one of the first musicians who blended *rebetiko* with Western music, performed for upper-class audiences, and created a hybrid instrument combining the *bouzouki* and the guitar.

From early on in his career, Hiotis conceived of and tried to implement a vision of modernization of *rebetiko*, and he is generally recognized as the musician who contributed more than anyone else to the dissemination of the *bouzouki* music to the bourgeois classes. According to narratives of fellow musicians, Hiotis wanted to be "modern" and to differ from other musicians, and he never ceased to innovate in order to renew and transform the music of *bouzouki* and expand its audience. He began, from at least the mid-1940s, to create different fusions of *rebetiko* with various kinds of Western and international popular music, to cooperate with musicians and lyricists of *elaphro*, and to experiment in order to extend the musical capabilities of *bouzouki*. He became one of the most preferred musicians of radio, and he was one of the first *bouzouki* players to appear in popular cinema (1948). He also organized the program and performed in the first truly high-class nightclubs with *laiko* music (1947–1948), in which he introduced important innovations borrowed from Western-style clubs and orchestras. His 1946 song "O pasatebos" (The pastime) is considered to be an early example of *archontorebetiko*. Numerous other songs from this period may also be seen as belonging to the genre, and we can already discern in some of them his distinctive compositional and performing style (Pennanen 1997: 89, 93–95).

Hiotis continued, during the same period and through the 1950s, to compose songs in all the popular styles of *laiko*, making numerous hits with many leading singers of the time (Takis Binis, Stella Chaskil, Stelios Kazantzidis, Keti Grei), and he was highly respected by *rebetiko* and *laiko* musicians for both his musical talent and his character. One of his most important innovations was the introduction, from the mid-1950s, of the four-course *bouzouki*. Hiotis was not the first to try to create a combination of *bouzouki* and guitar, but he contributed to the perfection of the new instrument and, perhaps more importantly, he managed to impose it upon the scene of *laiko*. The new instrument caused many reactions, partly summarized in the words of the singer Takis Binis, who felt that his manhood was insulted and that he was losing his *mangia* (the quality of being a *mangas*) (Kleiasiou 2004: 239). The four-course *bouzouki* prevailed almost completely over the following years and changed in important ways the sound and the structure of *laiko*.

His career peaked in the period 1958 to 1965 when he formed a duet with his new wife, the singer Meri Linda. They made many hits with his fusion songs in various jazz and Latin rhythms, appeared in dozens of theater productions and films, and performed in aristocratic nightclubs, in which the *bouzouki* entered for the first time. They adopted the standing, theatrical performance of the *elaphro* singers, and embellished the program with comical sketches and dance routines.

Stelios Kazantzidis and the "Heavy" or "Grieving" *Laiko*

During these years (the second half of the 1940s), a new kind of sorrowful song appeared, expressing the harsh experiences and the social suffering of the people and especially the poor. During the 1950s and 1960s most representatives of this genre were thought to belong in the category of *vari laiko* (heavy *laiko*) (Geramanis 2007: 49). The new style was later called "post-civil war" (Georgiadis and Rachmatoulina 2003) or "black" *laiko* (Alexatos 2006), and I will also use the term "grieving" *laiko*, which is sometimes used by Kazantzidis. The repertory of some of the most popular *laiko* singers of the late 1940s (Sotiria Belou, Prodromos Tsaousakis, Takis Binis, Stella Chaskil) includes an important number of sorrowful protesting songs, created by new musicians like Bambis Bakalis, Gerasimos Klouvatos, Stelios Chrysinis, and Theodoros Derveniotis, as well as by composers usually associated with the Tsitsanis-style *laiko*, such as Yiannis Papaioannou, Giorgos Mitsakis, and Apostolos Chatzichristos. The texts (most of which appeared as creations of the composers themselves) focused on the ordeals, the tragedies, and the landscape of catastrophe and fear, provoked by the war and civil strife, and constituted a new poetic language which was developed and enriched by a new generation of professional lyricists (Kostas Virvos, Christos Kolokotronis, Eftichia Papagiannopoulou, and Charalambos Vasiliadis). This poetic genre may be described as an idiom of grief for trauma, oppression, and social injustice, and incorporates elements of Greek and Middle Eastern folk tradition together with popular and modern ideas and themes.

The discourse of pain was musically "dressed" in different ways, but it progressively prevailed a style that was inspired and fertilized by the musical tradition of the East. Most post-civil war *laika* are slow *zeibekika*.[5] Their melodies are based on sorrowful *makam/dromoi* (like *sabah* and *kastigiar*), and they are non-functionally harmonized (Pennanen 1997: 111). According to the composer Theodoros Derveniotis, the musicians of the time chose these melodic formulae because they could express great intensities of pain and were suitable for the sad lyrics (Georgiadis and Rachmatoulina 2003: 103). The first songs in the new style were performed by the above-mentioned popular singers, for whom we can say, in a rather schematic way, that they had unadorned vocal styles which retained some of the roughness and the controlled sentimentality of *rebetiko* (Manuel 1988: 133). The new style, however, found its ideal expression in a new generation of singers (Stelios Kazantzidis, Vangelis Perpiniadis, Manolis Angelopoulos, Keti Grey, Poli Panou, and Yiota Lydia), who became famous during the 1950s by singing the grieving songs with highly expressive and ornamented vocal styles.[6]

The singers became very popular and overshadowed composers who were up until this time the most respected and known artists of *laiko*. Stelios Kazantzidis (1931–2001), in particular, acquired extraordinary popularity after 1955 and became the most influential musician of *laiko* until his early retirement in 1965. He recorded hundreds of songs, performed with spectacular success in nightclubs and at concerts, and acquired the status of a social hero. Kazantzidis managed to strike a deep chord in the hearts of the people. He was extremely popular among the lower strata of the city and the country, was adored by the refugee populations from Turkey, and managed to create a strong emotional and symbolic bond with a large proportion of his listeners. The singer, who had traumatic experiences of political violence and terror during the civil war, and who was tormented and incarcerated during his military service (1953–1954), became the ideal personification of the discourse of grief. The grieving *laiko* became an idiom for the understanding and expression of his experiences, and he contributed to its shaping and success. As his popularity rose, the most important *laiko* composers and lyricists created songs that fitted his preferences for oriental melodies and sad, protesting lyrics, and his style became widely disseminated.

As we approach the end of the 1950s, leaving behind the sinister atmosphere and the extreme deprivation of the first post-civil war years, the character of *laiko* changes again. A new wave of orientalization of Greek popular music began in the late 1950s and for a number of years (1959–1965) the *laiko* scene was dominated by fusions of *laiko* and Indian popular music (Ambatzi and Tasoulas n.d.). This musical trend was an offshoot of the success of Indian musical films in Greece (1954–1965). The melodramatic stories and the cultural universe of these films touched many of the popular classes, who filled the cinemas in order to grieve for their problems and pain. The *laiko* musicians took notice of this new trend and started producing songs influenced by the music, and sometimes the themes, of the Indian films. Some of the original compositions were simply converted into the idiom of *laiko*. In other cases, composers borrowed only certain elements from the initial songs, or created original compositions in the new style. The Greek musicians incorporated and adapted various elements from the Indian songs, and produced many great hits, which are considered part of the classic repertory of *laiko*.[7] During the same period, the *laiko* incorporated new influences from Turkish, Arabic, and Greek gypsy music, as well as from folk songs, and discarded some of the despair and social conservatism of the previous years. Many songs continued to address sociopolitical issues (especially immigration), but romantic themes prevailed, and a new, more gratified, complacent, and reveling mood emerged progressively.

The grieving *laiko* had many different expressions. Stelios Kazantzidis was by far the most commercial and influential singer of the period. Some of his most important rivals (like Manolis Angelopoulos and Vangelis Perpiniadis), and some of the most successful female singers (like Keti Grei and Giota Lydia) shared many of his aesthetic ideas and had similar sensitivities. Kazantzidis defined *laiko* as the song of pain and constructed his style based on an "aesthetics of pain", drawn from ritual lament and oriental ideas of pain and virtue (Vasilikos 1978: 16; Caraveli 1986). The singer created a ritual art of symbolic healing and protest, which responded to the accumulated social suffering of large sections of the Greek people. His songs, and more generally the grieving *laiko*, became the main public outlet for the articulation and recounting of experiences silenced by the official narratives of both the state and the Left. His songs helped his listeners to do the work of pain for past traumas and present sufferings, and offered a language for their understanding.

Stelios Kazantzidis strongly disliked *rebetiko* and the world of the *manges* (for its immorality and violence), as well as the ennoblement of *laiko* and its transformation into a song for the entertainment of the middle classes. He always highlighted his working-class identity, and his songs were aimed almost exclusively at the expression of the experiences, the problems and the ideas of the poor. The singer tried – to some extent at least – to create a cheap, "decent", and "constructive" form of musical entertainment for the working classes, and abandoned nightclub performances when the mode of entertainment and the cravings of the customers changed. Kazantzidis developed a subversive and at the same time traditionalist discourse. He sang for the rights of the poor and tormented at a time of political oppression and fear, and at the same time appeared as a good, traditional lad expressing commonly held views and values.

The singer articulated a critique of contemporary society from a pre-capitalist and semi-religious standpoint and castigated what he saw as the generalized moral and social decay, the prevalence of hatred, injustice, and self-interest, and the disappearance of sensitivity, compassion, and honesty. He was more associated with the Left, but his message had strong moral and metaphysical undertones, and exceeded political divisions. The singer stressed in many ways his adherence to traditional morals and values, his suspicion of many modern ideas and practices, and his disappointment with modern Greeks. Stelios Kazantzidis played a leading role in the orientalization of *laiko* after the war, and stressed in many ways his Eastern cultural and musical roots, and the attraction he felt for Turkish and Arabic music. The singer exerted enormous influence and he is perhaps justifiably regarded as a leading figure of a subaltern cultural movement reacting to Westernization and demanding the retention of the oriental elements of Greek culture (Economou 2005: 379).

On the other hand, during the 1960s, some successful singers of heavy *laiko* developed a repertory and a performance style more attuned to the improved economic conditions and to the growing appeal of *bouzouki* music to the middle classes. Panos Gavalas recorded many hits during the 1960s and formed his own faithful audience. His repertory contained many sorrowful protesting songs, but he mostly became famous for his romantic, sensual, and reveling love songs. Panos Gavalas and Poli Panou (who had a similar profile) represented a more open and optimistic version of popular identity, and a more eager embracement of the changing times and mores. As the decade unfolded, the mood of *laiko* became more cheerful and light-hearted, and nightclub entertainment was transformed into a musical show and a form of frenetic entertainment. The seated performance on the palko was abandoned, and the program (which was carefully arranged by leading musicians and choreographers) as well as the performance of the singers incorporated theatrical elements. The singers performed not only with their voices but also with the construction of their appearance and the movements of their bodies, which became an important aspect of their allure. Whiskey replaced traditional drinks, and a number of practices of competitive consumption (e.g. the blowing of balloons, the breaking of plates, the burning of whisky, the throwing of flowers) became institutionalized.

As the 1960s unfolded, the emergence and great success of the new style of *entechno laiko*,[8] the progressive modernization of ideas and styles, and the fluctuations of the political situation transformed the scene of *laiko* in important ways that can be only mentioned here owing to lack of space. New forms of *laiko*, influenced from the aesthetics of *entechno*, like the work of Giorgos Zabetas and Apostolos Kaldaras, or from *elapho tragoudi* and international popular music, like the work of Giorgos Katsaros and Mimis Plessas, became very popular, and new stars emerged, such as Grigoris Bithikotsis, Viky Moscholiou, Tolis Voskopoulos, and Litsa Diamanti. Most artists of heavy *laiko* were pushed to the margins of the cultural industry wherefrom it appeared in the late 1960s the new and subsequently very successful style of *skyladiko*.

Notes

1 Various references to *laiko* are found in Holst (1983; Holst-Warhaft 2002a), Manuel (1988), and other researchers of *rebetiko*. Gauntlett (1975/1976, 1991), and Michael (1996) focused on the emergence and the semantic history of *laiko*, whereas Pennanen (1997) examined its musicological features. His work is extremely valuable, but its strictly musicological character precludes him from discerning the various sub-genres of *laiko* and exploring their meaning.

2 *Manges* (pl. *mangas*) refers to the style, the concept of manhood, and the worldview of the "bohemian vagrants, petty criminals, addicts, and unemployed or underemployed 'street people'" (Manuel 1988: 127), who were associated with *rebetiko*.

3 *Dromos* (road) (pl. *dromoi*) is the Greek translation of the *makam*: the system of melodic formulae and compositional and performance principles on which Ottoman and Middle Eastern music is based.

4 A style of Greek-Ottoman music which was fashionable in the 1920s and 1930s (Pennanen 2004).

5 *Zeibekiko* is one of the main dances of *rebetiko-laiko*. It is a highly emotional improvisational dance, performed, during these years, almost exclusively by a solo male dancer.

6 Sometimes it is difficult to differentiate between some songs of Vasilis Tsitsanis and the grieving *laiko* of the 1940s. The song "Kapia Mana Anastenazi" (A Mother Sighs), one of the most popular and politically charged songs of the civil war period, is a good example, as it was created by Tsitsanis in collaboration with Bambis Bakalis (one of the most important composers of grieving *laiko*). The musical and poetic specificity of the grieving *laiko* was recognized, however, by the musicians of the time, who distinguished between the School of Tsitsanis and the new style (Virvos 1985; Georgiadis and Rachmatoulina 2003). According to Virvos, Tsitsanis disliked both the Eastern melodies and the pessimistic texts of black *laika*, calling them "death-like" songs, and referred those who gave him sad and tragic texts to Bakalis. Pennanen (1996), based on a strictly musicological analysis, discerns the songs of grieving *laiko* and maintains that they represent one of the three main trends of postwar *laiko*.

7 The oriental songs, which were contemptuously called "Indian", "Indian-style", or "Turkish-gypsy", generated much criticism, and their creators were accused of adulterating Greek popular music and corrupting the taste of the people. Sometimes the critique was extended to the whole production of grieving *laiko*. Some composers (e.g. Theodoros Derveniotis and Apostolos Kaldaras) refuted the accusations and insisted that they were influenced by Byzantine music. Others defended the right to draw elements and inspiration from the East and pointed critically to the sweeping Westernization of Greek music and culture. See Ambatzi and Tasoulas (n.d.: 69); Virvos (1985: 135), and Economou (2005: 375).

8 *Entechno-laiko* was formed by composers with a Western education, especially Manos Hadzidakis and Mikis Theodorakis, who combined elements of high and popular art in order to create a new form of popular music that would contribute to the elevation of the people (Holst-Warhaft 2002a, 2002b; Tragaki 2005). They had many followers who produced different and highly successful versions of it.

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