

Oli i Rembetes :: Tracklist

Sélection / Playlist : Delair (2004 + 2018)

Smyrneiko & Pireotiko - Smyrneïka tragoudia - Laïko tragoudi

- 01 Andonis (Hatzidiamantidis) Dalgas, Lambros Leondaridis - Tis Ksenintias O Ponos (1935)
- 02 Yiannis Papayoanou - Captain Andreas Zepo
- 03 Sotiria Bellou - Ase Me Ase Me
- 04 Rembet inconnu - Unknown
- 05 I.Georgakopoulou & Vasilis Tsitsanis - I Yepakina
- 06 Sotiria Bellou - Kane Ligapi Epomoni
- 07 Markos Vamvakaris - Taximi Zeimbekiko (1937)
- 08 Marika Ninou - Vasilis Tsitsanis - Ta Kabourakia
- 09 Vasilis Tsitsanis - Theodorakis - Gonia Gonia
- 10 Markos Vamvakaris, Grigoris Bithikotsis - Oli i rebetes tou dounia - 28'04
- 11 Agathonas Lakovidis - Pente Mangas Ston Pirea
- 12 Sotiria Bellou - I Used To Live Alone Without Love
- 13 Tsaousakis Prodromos - Opou pato to podi mou
- 14 Marinella & Vasilis Tsitsanis - Mes ti polli skotoura
- 15 Grigoris Bithikotsis, Vasilis Tsitsanis, Voula Gika - Zitisate Ti Gynaika (Serse La Fam)

Rembetika By Marc Dubin and George Pissalidhes

Rembétika began as the music of the Greek urban dispossessed – criminals, refugees, drug-users, defiers of social norms. It had existed in some form in Greece and Constantinople since at least the turn of the century, but it is as difficult to define or get to the origins of as jazz or blues –genres with which (tenuous) comparisons are often made, not so much for the music as for its inspirations, themes and tone. Rembétika songs tell of illicit or frustrated love, drug addiction, police oppression, death – and their delivery tends to be resignation to the singer's lot, coupled with defiance of authority.

Musically, rembétika is bound in with the **bouzoúki** – a long-necked, fretted lute derived, like the Turkish *saz*, from the Byzantine *tambourás*. It has become synonymous with Greek music but early in this century, prior to the popularisation of rembétika, it was used by only a few mainland musicians. As to the term 'rembétika', its derivaton is uncertain, the favoured candidate being the old Turkish word 'harabat,' whose meanings cover both 'shanty town', 'drunkard' and 'bohemian' – all definitely aspects of rembétika culture.

Origins: Café-Aman

At the beginning of the twentieth century, in the Asia Minor cities of Smyrna and Istanbul (Constantinople), music-café became popular. Owned and staffed by Greeks, Jews, Armenians and even a few Gypsies, they featured groups comprising a violinist, a sandouíri player and a (usually female) vocalist, who might also jingle castanets and dance. The songs were improvised and became known as **café-aman** or *amanédhes* for the frequent repetition of the exclamation 'aman aman' (Turkish for 'alas, alas'), used both for its sense and to fill time while the performers searched their imaginations for (often earthily explicit) lyrics.

Despite sparse instrumentation, café-aman was an elegant, riveting art song, and one requiring considerable skill. It harked back to similar vocalisation in the *Ghazals* of Persia and the East. Some of its greatest practitioners included **Andonis 'Dalgas' (Wave) Dhiamantidhis**, so nicknamed for the undulations in his voice; **Rosa Eskenazi**, a Greek Jew who grew up in Istanbul; her contemporary **Rita Abatzi** from Smyrna; **Marika Papagika** from the island of Kós, who emigrated to America where she made her career; **Agapios Tomboulis**, a *tanbur* and oud player of Armenian background; and **Dimitris 'Salonikiyeh' Semsis**, a master fiddler from Strumitsa in northern Macedonia. The spectrum of nationalities for these performers gives a good idea of the range of cosmopolitan influences in the years preceding the emergence of 'real' rembétika.

The 1919–1922 Greco-Turkish war and the resulting 1923 **exchange of populations** were key events in the history of rembétika, resulting in the influx to Greece of over a million Asia Minor Greeks, many of whom settled in shantytowns around Athens, Pireás and Thessaloníki. The café-aman musicians, like most of the other refugees, were, in comparison to the Greeks of the host country, extremely sophisticated; many were highly educated, could read and compose music, and had even been unionised in the towns of Asia Minor. Such men included the Smyrniots **Vangelis Papazoglou**, a noted songwriter, and **Panayiotis Toundas**, a composer who headed the Greek divisions of first Odeon and then Columbia Records. But the less lucky lived on the periphery of the new society: most had lost all they had in the hasty evacuation, and many, from inland Anatolia, could speak only Turkish. In their misery they sought relief in another Ottoman institution, the *tekés* or hashish den.

Vamvakaris and the Tekédhes

In the *tekédhes* of Athens and its port, Piraeus, or the northern city of Thessaloníki, a few men would sit on the floor around a charcoal brazier, passing around a *nargilés* (hookah) filled with hashish. One of them might begin to improvise a tune on the baglamás or the bouzoúki and begin to sing. The words, either his own or those of the other *dervíses* (many rembetic terms were a burlesque of those of mystical Islamic tradition), would be heavily laced with insiders' argot. As the *taxími* (introduction) was completed, one of the smokers might rise and begin to dance a *zeíbékiko*, a slow, intense, introverted performance following an unusual metre (9/8), not for the benefit of others but for himself.

By the early 1930s, several key musicians had emerged from tekédhes culture. Foremost among them was a Piraeus-based quartet comprising **Markos Vamvakaris** and **Artemis** (Anestis Delias) – two great composers and bouzoúki-players – the beguiling-voiced **Stratos Payioumtzis**, and, on baglamás, Yiorgos Tsoros, better known as **Batis**. They were a remarkable group. Stratos, the lead singer, went on to perform with other great rembetika stars, like Tsitsanis and Papiannou. Artemis, the son of a sandoúri player from Smyrna, was a remarkable lyricist and composer, who lived a rembetika life of hard drugs, and died in the street (as his song "The Junkie's Lament" had predicted), aged 29, outside a *tekés* with his bouzouki in his hand.

Vamvakaris, however, was the linchpin of the group. Born on the Aegean island of Syros in 1905, he is often described as the 'grandfather of rembetika'. He had a tough childhood, leaving school at eight and, at fifteen, stowing away on a boat for Piraeus. Within six months of arrival, he had taught himself bouzoúki as a way out of a particularly grim job in a slaughterhouse, and was writing songs and playing in the tekédhes with Stratos, Artemis and Batis.

At first, Vamvakaris did not consider himself a singer, leaving the lead vocals to Stratos, but when Columbia wanted to release a record by him they persuaded him to have a go, and were pleased with his metallic, hash-rasping sound. Subsequently, he went on to sing on nearly all his records and his gravelly style became an archetype for male rembetika singers. His bouzoúki playing also set a standard.

Lyrics about getting stoned, or *mastouriaká*, were a natural outgrowth of the tekédhes. One of the most famous, composed by Batis and first recorded in the mid-1930s by Vamvakaris, commemorated the exploits of the quartet:

*On the sly I went out in a boat
And arrived at the Dhrakou Cave
Where I saw three men stoned on hash
Stretched out on the sand.
It was Batis, and Artemis,
And Stratos the Lazy.
Hey you, Strato! Yeah you, Strato!
Fix us a terrific nargilé,
So old Batis can have a smoke
A "dervish" for years he's been
And Artemis too,
Who brings us "stuff" from wherever he's been.
He sends us hash from Constantinople
And all of us get high;
And pressed tobacco from Persia
The mangas smokes in peace.*

As time went on such lyrics got cleaned up. The most commonly heard version of this song, from the 1950s, for instance, substitutes "Play us a fine bit of bouzoúki" for "Fix us a fine nargilé", and so forth.

Tough Times

This '**Golden Age of Rembetika**' – as indeed it was, despite the unhappy lives of many performers – was short-lived. The association of the music with a drug-laced underworld would prove its undoing. After the imposition of the puritanical Metaxas dictatorship in 1936, *rembetes* with uncompromising lyrics and lifestyles were blackballed by the recording industry; anti-hashish laws were systematically enforced and police harassment of the tekédhes was stepped up. In Athens, even possession of a bouzoúki or baglamás became a criminal offence and several of the big names served time in jail. Others went to Thessaloníki, where the police chief Vassilis Mouskoundis was a big fan of the music and allowed its practitioners to smoke in private.

For a time, such persecution – and the official encouragement of tangos and frothy Italianate love songs (which had a much wider audience) – failed to dim the enthusiasm of the *manges* (wide boys) who frequented the hash dens. Police beatings or prison terms were taken in stride; time behind bars could be used, as it always had been around the Aegean, to make *skaptó* (dug-out) instruments. A *baglamás* could easily be fashioned from a gourd cut in half or even a tortoise shell (the sound box), a piece of wood (the neck), catgut (frets), and wire for strings, and the result would be small enough to hide from the guards. Jail songs were composed and became popular in the underworld.

However, the rembetes suffered from all sides, incurring the disapproval of the puritanical Left as well as the Right. The growing Communist Party of the 1930s considered the music and its habitués hopelessly decadent and politically unevolved. When Vamvakaris was about to join the leftist resistance army ELAS in 1944, he was admonished not to sing his own material. The Left preferred *andártika* (Soviet-style revolutionary anthems).

Like most ideological debates, it was largely academic. World War II with its harsh Axis occupation of Greece, and the subsequent 1946–49 civil war, put everyone's careers on hold, and the turbulent decade erased any lingering fashion for hash songs. When Greece emerged in the 1950s, its public were eager to adopt a softer music and new heroes.

Tsitsanis and Cloudy Sunday

The major figure of post-war *rembétika* was undoubtedly **Vassilis Tsitsanis**. Born in Thessaly, the son of a silver craftsman, he was a very different personality to Vamvakaris, whose mantle he took on as both the most significant composer and bouzoúki master of his generation. A shy man, with sad-looking eyes, he made *rembétika* sound softer and more mellow, and its words more pleading than defiant.

Tsitsanis embarked on his career in Athens, just before the war, cutting his first record for Odeon, at that time directed by rebetic composer Spyros Peristeris, in 1936. After military service, he was released from the army in 1940 and sang through the 1940s in his own ouzo bar in Thessaloníki. The period gave rise to his most famous song, "Synefiazmeni Kyriaki" (Cloudy Sunday):

Cloudy Sunday, you seem like my heart
Which is always overcast, Christ and Holy Virgin!
You're a day like the one I lost my joy.
Cloudy Sunday, you make my heart bleed.
When I see you rainy, I can't rest easy for a moment;
You blacken my life and I sigh deeply.

Although it wasn't recorded until 1948, the song became widely known after its composition in 1943, and became a kind of anthem for the dispossessed, occupied Greeks.

After the war, Tsitsanis obliged a traumatised public with love songs and Neapolitan melodies. This new *rembétika* enjoyed, for the first time, something of a mass following, through top female singers such as **Sotiria Bellou**, **Marika Ninou** and **Ioanna Yiorgakopoulou**. Tsitsanis himself remained a much-loved figure in Greek music until his death in 1984; his funeral in Athens was attended by nearly a quarter of a million people.

If Tsitsanis's 'softening' of *rembétika* was a first key change to the music, a second, perhaps more dramatic, was the innovation in 1953 by Manolis Kmiotis of a fourth pair of strings to the bouzoúki. This allowed it to be tuned tonally rather than modally. In its wake came **electrical amplification**, over-orchestration and maudlin lyrics as a crest of popularity led to the opening of *bouzoúkia* – huge, barn-like clubs, where Athenians paid large sums to break specially provided plates and to dance flashy steps that were a travesty of the simple dignity and precise, synchronised footwork of the old-time *zeibékika*. The music was largely debased: virtuoso bouzoúki players – **Kmiotis**, **Yiorgos Mitsakis** and **Yiorgos Zambetas** – assisted by kewpie-doll-type female vocalists.

Rembétika Revivals

Ironically, the original *rembétika* material was rescued from oblivion by the colonels' junta of 1967–1974. Along with dozens of other features of Greek culture, *rembétika* verses were banned. A generation of students growing up under the dictatorship took a closer look at the forbidden fruit and derived solace, and deeper meanings, from the nominally apolitical lyrics. When the junta fell in 1974 – and even a little before – there was an outpouring of re-issued recordings of the old masters.

Over the next decade live *rembétika* also enjoyed a revival, beginning with a clandestine 1979 club near the old Fix brewery in Athens, whose street credentials were validated when it was raided and closed by the police. These smoky attempts to recapture pre-war atmosphere – which led to dozens of *rembétika* clubs in the early 1980s – saw performances by revival groups such as **Ta Pedhia apo tin Patra**, **Rembetiki Kompania** and **Opisthodhromiki Kompania** (featuring Eleftheria Arvanataki), and the performers **Khondronakos** and **Mario**. In the northern capital of Thessaloniki, a leading figure was **Agathonas Iakovidhis** with his group **Rembétika Synkrotima Thessalonikis**.

Alongside folk and *rembétika*, post-war Greece developed its own forms of 'art' (**éntekhno**) and pop (**laikó**) music, while since the late 1970s the scene has broadened to include roots-minded **rock and fusion** experiments, and even new explorations of **Byzantine** forms.

The Éntekhno Revolution

The 'Westernisation' of *rembétika* that had begun with Tsitsanis and escalated with the electric bouzoúki craze paved the way for the **éntekhno music** of the late 1950s. *Éntekhno* (literally 'artistic') encompassed an orchestral genre where folk instruments, rhythms and melodies, where present, would be interwoven into a symphonic fabric, still recognisably Greek to a greater or lesser extent. Its first, and most famous, practitioners were **Manos Hatzidakis** and **Mikis Theodorakis**, both classically trained musicians and admirers of *rembétika*.

Already in 1948, Hatzidakis defended *rembétika* in a lecture, suggesting that Greek composers be inspired by it, rather than bow to the prevailing left-wing/middle-class prejudice against it. In a period when most Greek tunes imitated Western light popular music, he had transcribed *rembétika* for piano and orchestra, keeping only the spirit and nostalgic mood of the original. Theodorakis, a disciple of Tsitsanis, included *zeibékika* tunes on his earliest albums, with Grigoris Bithikotsis or Stelios Kazantzidis on vocals and Manolis Kmiotis as bouzoúki soloist.

The *éntekhno* of Theodorakis and Hatzidakis combined rebetic and Byzantine influences with Western ones, but – more memorably – fused Greek music with the country's rich poetic tradition. Among Theodorakis' early albums were *Epitafios* (1963), based on poems by Yiannis Ritsos, and *To Axion Esti* (1964), a folk-flavoured oratorio incorporating poetry by Odysseas Elytis. Hatzidakis countered in 1965 with a recording of *Matomenos Gamos*, a version of García Lorca's "Blood Wedding" translated into Greek by poet-lyricist Nikos Gatsos, and also tried his hand at rendering Elytis in song.

Together, these works changed Greek perceptions of bouzoúki-based music, popularised Greek poetry for a mass audience and elevated lyricists such as Gatsos and Manos Eleftheriou to the status of bards. The downside was that the sophistication and Western classical orchestral arrangements distanced the music from its indigenous roots, and in particular, the modal scale which had served Greece so well since antiquity. The genre suffered, too, from the demands of the film industry, who commissioned many *éntekhno* works as soundtracks. At its worst, it was muzak.

Theodorakis and Hatzidakis paved the way for successors who were generally less classicising and more pop-leaning, such

as **Stavros Xarhakos**, most famous abroad for his soundtrack to the film *Rembetiko*; **Manos Loizos**, who gave George Dalaras his start in 1968; the Cretan **Yiannis Markopoulos**, the most folk-based, and most accessible to foreign audiences; and **Stavros Kouyoumtzis** and **Dimos Moutsis**, who collaborated with a galaxy of stellar vocalists during the early-to-mid-1970s – in retrospect, the Indian summer of *éntekhno*.

Laikó: Son of Rembétika

Diametrically opposed to *éntekhno* was the authentic **laikó** or 'popular' music of the 1950s and '60s, its gritty, tough style a direct heir to *rembétika*, undiluted by Western influences. *Laikó* used not only *zeimbékika* and *hasápika* time signatures but also the *tsiftetéli* – another age-old rhythm from Asia Minor mistakenly labelled as 'belly-dance' music abroad. Once again, 'debased' oriental influences dominated Greek pop, to the chagrin of the bourgeois classes and Greek Left, who also objected to the apolitical, decadent, escapist song content. This orientalisering reached its high – or low – point during the brief mid-1960s craze for *indoyíftika*, Indian film music lifted straight from Bollywood and reset to Greek lyrics; chief culprit was the Gypsy singer **Manolis Angelopoulos**.

The most influential *laikó* performer in the 1960s was **Stelios Kazantzidis**, whose volcanic, mournful style was often imitated but never matched. His work, frequently in duets with Marinella (Kyriaki Papadhopoulou) and Yiota Lidhia, immortalised the joys and sorrows of the post-war Greek working class which faced a choice of life under the restrictive regimes of the time, or emigration. A trio of other rising stars in this period were (George) **Yiorgos Dalaras**, still the top-selling Greek pop singer, who had already attained gold sales status by 1971; and **Yiannis Parios** and **Haris Alexiou**, both of whom emerged on albums by the composer **Apostolos Kaldharas**.

Two other major *laikó* composers, in recent decades, have been **Christos Nikolopoulos** and **Akis Panou**. **Christos Nikolopoulos**, a young bouzouki virtuoso, worked with Kazantzidis in the early 1970s, and went on to mega-selling co-efforts with Dalaras and Alexiou. **Akis Panou** has been less prolific and commercially successful, but he too has made noteworthy albums with Dalaras, Bithikotsis and Stratos Dhionysiou as well as Kazantzidis.

Although *laikó* and *éntekhno* represented opposite poles of the Greek music world, the extremes sometimes met. *Éntekhno* composers such as Yiannis Markoulos hired *laikó* singers for dates, or tried their hand at writing in *laikó* style. A good example of the latter was Dimos Moutsis' and Manos Eleftheriou's 1971 album *Ayios Fevrouarios*, which made singer **Dimitris Mitropanos** a star overnight. But these syntheses were increasingly exceptional; after the success of *Epitafios* and *Axion Esti*, Greek record labels tried to marginalize *laikó*, a trend accelerated under the military junta, when the greater portion of *laikó* was banned from the radio as being too 'oriental' and 'defeatist'. In these conditions, the genre turned into **elafrolaikó** (light popular), in which more honeyed voices were preferred. However, the stage was set for the emergence of singer-songwriters – many of them from Thessaloníki – and groups of folk-rockers, who together arrested the descent of Greek music into anodyne pop.

Singer-Songwriters and Folk-Rock

The first significant musician to break out of the bouzouki mould was Thessaloníki-based **Dhionysis Savvopoulos**, who burst on the scene in 1966 with a maniacal, rasping voice and elliptical, angst-ridden lyrics, his persona rounded out by shoulder-length hair and outsized glasses. Initially linked with the short-lived **néo kyma** (new wave) movement – a blend of watered-down *éntekhno* and French chanson performed in Athenian boites soon closed down by the colonels – Savvopoulos's work soon became impossible to pigeonhole: equal parts twisted Macedonian folk, Bob Dylan and Frank Zappa at his jazziest is a useful approximation. Though briefly detained and tortured, he was able to continue performing under the junta and was a symbol of opposition for many.

Out of Savvopoulos' 'Balkan rock' experiments sprung a short-lived movement whose artists alternated electric versions of traditional songs with original material. Few left much trace, except for the folk updater **Mariza Koch**, the Gypsy protest guitarist-singer **Kostas Hatzis**, and folk-*éntekhno* performer **Arietta**, all of whom are still active to various degrees. During the 1980s and '90s other singer-songwriters emerged under the influence of Savvopoulos, the most outstanding of whom is **Nikos Portokaloglou** who started his career with *laikó*-rock group Fatmé.

As an independent producer and (briefly) head of Lyra records, Savvopoulos gave breaks to numerous younger artists, many of them also from northern Greece. The first of his protégés were **Nikos Xydhakis** and **Manolis Rasoulis**, whose landmark 1978 pressing, *Iy Ekdhikisis tis Yiftias* (The Revenge of Gypsydom), actually embodied the backlash of *laikó* culture against the pretentiousness of 1960s and '70s *éntekhno*. Its spirited, defiant lyrics – with **Nikos Papazoglou** handling many of the vocals – and *tsiftetéli* rhythms were both homage to and send-up of the music beloved by Greek truck-drivers.

As with mainland folk instrumental music, Gypsies have been disproportionately important in *laikó*, both as performers and composers, though some go to considerable lengths to conceal the fact. For every assimilated personality, however, there are others, such as Eleni Vitali, Makis Khristodhouloupoulos and Vassilis Païteris who make no bones about their identity.

New Laikó

During the 1980s, **Xydhakis** went on to pursue a successful independent career, creating a style that hard-core *laikó* fans dismiss as *koultouriárika* (high-brow stuff), for its orientalisised instrumentation and melody. His most successful venture in this vein was the 1987 *Konda sti Dhoxa mia Stigma* with **Eleftheria Arvanitaki** guesting on vocals. Arvanitaki, who is currently the leading Greek woman singer, went on to participate in a host of *éntekhno* and *laikó* sessions.

Other performers to emerge from the Thessaloníki scene included the group **Khimerini Kolymvites**; *laikó* composer **Yiorgos Zikas** and most recently Papazoglou disciple **Sokratis Malamas**.

Back in Athens *éntekhno* and other Westernising trends took longer to relax their grip, under the aegis of composers such as classically trained **Thanos Mikroutsikos**, briefly Minister of Culture after Melina Mercouri's death, who worked with Alexiou, Dalaras and top *laikó*/*éntekhno* vocalist **Dhimitra Galani**. The composer **Stamatis Kraounakis**, lyricist and producer **Lina Nikolakopoulou** and female singer **Alkistis Protopsalti** made a splash with a number of hit albums stretching into the 1990s, exploring the boundaries between rock, jazz-cabaret and *éntekhno*.

On the more committedly laïkó side, Khristos Nikolopoulos, Kostas Soukas and Takis Mousafiris ignited the 1980s, writing dozens of hits for a range of singers including **Eleni Vitali**, **Stratos Dionysiou**, **Dimitris Mitropanos** and **Pitsa Papadopoulou**. Younger promising laïkó names to watch out for include the vocalists **Eleni Tsaligopoulou**, **Melina Kana**, **Yerasimos Andreatos**, **Manolis Lidhakis**, **Andreas Louridhas** and the singer-songwriter **Orfeas Peridhes**.

Eleftheria Arvanitaki

There's no doubt about it, the hot name internationally on the Greek music scene is Eleftheria Arvanitaki. Her voice has a clarity and emotional depth that registers whether or not you understand the words, and the music she sings has a lyricism and instrumental sophistication that sets it apart. Her performances at WOMAD festivals in 1998 marked a transition from performing to Greek communities round the world to a new audience of World Music fans. They weren't disappointed.

Of course Eleftheria had long been a familiar figure in Greece. She was 'discovered' in 1979 by a couple of rembétika revivalists when she was singing for friends in a taverna, and joined the group Opisthohromiki Kompania. Since then, she's followed a career embracing rembétika, many of the leading names in Greek music, and notably the New York/Armenian musician Ara Dinkjian who, with Mihalís Ganas, composed the songs for her most beautiful and successful album *The Bodies and the Knives (Ta Kormia keh ta Maheiria)*. It's a recording that thrillingly exemplifies one of her musical ambitions to create a real Mediterranean sound and Greece's crucial location between two worlds.

"Greece is one of the few countries in Europe that has kept its own traditional music," she says. "Perhaps because we have very deep roots in music and in history, of course. Because we are between the West and East we know very well the music of Europe and America, but we know the music of Asia as well. We are well-positioned to take the best from both worlds, but we keep doing our music in our own way."

That meeting of two worlds also lies behind rembétika, whose 1980s revival gave Eleftheria her break. "After the fall of the Colonels, this music came out through the students and people started to take notice of it. Rembétika is an important part of our history. It describes how the people lived when they came from Asia Minor and what they had to face. It was a very important time in my life when I re-discovered our music. Like many Greeks, I was a big fan of Dylan and the Rolling Stones, but suddenly we found our own music."

Eleftheria is always keen to renew her contacts with her musical roots and her latest recording (*Ektos Programmatos*) returns to rembétika repertoire: "I play with my band some traditional songs and classic rembétika – not the big hits of rembétika, but great songs, by Vamvakaris, Tsitsanis and others, with something deeper behind them. Songs from the 1920s up to the '60s, plus traditional songs from the mountains. Through this music we can understand the history of our country."

Byzantine and Folk Revivals *By : Simon Broughton*

An offshoot of éntekhno during the late 1970s and early 1980s involved combining **folk** and **Byzantine traditions**. Influential in this was the musicologist and arranger **Khristodhoulos Khalaris**, who produced a version of the Cretan epic *Erotokritos*, showcasing Nikos Xylouris and Tania Tsanaklidou, and followed it with the riveting *Dhrossoulites*, which featured Khrysanthos, a high-voiced male singer of Pontic descent, on alternate tracks with Dhimitra Galani. He has gone on to more speculative and less musically successful ventures in Byzantine song.

Ottoman rather than Byzantine Constantinople was the inspiration for **Vosporos**, a group co-ordinated in Istanbul from 1986 to 1992 by *psáltis* (church-chanter) and *kanonáki*-player **Nikiforos Metaxas** to explore Ottoman classical, devotional and popular music. In the late 1990s, the group reformed as **Fanari tis Anatolis**, with Greek and Turkish singers alternating Greek folk material with Anatolian songs or mystical Alevi ballads.

Ross Daly, whose interests and style overlap slightly with Vosporos, also merits catching on disc, live in Athens clubs or touring abroad. English-born but Irish by background, Daly has updated both Greek and Turkish folk material. He plays a dozen traditional instruments and has absorbed influences not only from Crete, where he was long resident, but from throughout the Near East; his groups have featured sitar and Egyptian ney. Other Cretans reworking folk material include mandolinist **Loudhovichos Ton Anoyion**, and the six-member group **Hainidhes**, both of whom produce accessible and exciting music. A dryer, more scholarly approach is undertaken by **Domna Samiou**, who has collected and performed material from every corner of the Greek world.

Other, newer performers attempting to explore neighbouring influences on Greek music include **Notios Ikhos**, led by Ahilleas Persidhis; the innovative young clarinettist **Manos Akhhalinotopoulos**; Armenian oud player **Haig Yagdjian**; and the versatile vocalist **Savina Yiannatou**.

A feature film by Kostas Ferris, *Rembétiko* (1983), attempted to trace the music from Asia Minor of the 1920s to Greece of the 1950s, and garnered wide acclaim in Greece and abroad. These days, however, the fashion has long since peaked, and only a handful of clubs and bands remain from the 1980s revival heyday.

Greece: The Rough Guide © Mark Ellingham, Marc Dubin, Natania Jansz and John Fisher. Written and researched by Mark Ellingham, Marc Dubin, Natania Jansz and John Fisher with additional contributions by Lance Chilton, Nick Edwards, Geoff Garvey and Chris Nicholas