**Interview with Giorgos Stratakis**

**How did you start and what was it that made you want to transfer the Cretan tradition to the younger generation?**

We started when we were young children. I was 9 years old, and Nikos started at the age of 11 at the request of our father, in order to keep me “music company”! We lived and grew up in a semi-mountainous village of Heraklion, Rodia. Since we were very young children, we had musical sounds from local artists and other artists from all over Crete, who came from time to time to our village. In addition, from very young children, we played traditional musical instruments, so what attracted us to Cretan music was the music of Crete itself. Nikos, until reaching his adulthood, lived beside the great Psarantonis, where he obtained important musical and non-musical elements, useful for his subsequent development. Through this collaboration, special musical sounds and information “was recorded”. We started so, simply, without a plan and without a compass, expressing ourselves, as it came from within, and we believe that we are transferring our musical view to those who feel and believe this view, and not only to the new generation. Music, moreover, is an international language that can be spoken by all generations irrespective of age!

**Are your concerts always so long as 4-5 hours? Is this common for Cretan concerts? For Greek concerts?**

Usually, the duration of our concerts varies from 5 to 6 hours, and this depends on each case. If our musical appearance is in such a place that people want to dance, then the concert lasts longer, because our program includes traditional dance pieces. When the venue is a concert-type music scene, then we play mainly our own musical pieces and less dancing music, and the duration is shorter. Generally, Greek concerts of mainly “artistic” musicians are much shorter than the Cretan concerts. In other words, long concerts are mostly customary in Crete.

**Can you briefly tell me what your songs are about?**

Our songs are about all human emotions ... but mostly about romance, love, joy, pain, death ... !

**Are people interested in Cretan music? Much traditional music tends to die. What about Cretan?**

Generally, for many years, the world (and not only Crete) has been interested in and has been loving Cretan music. Cretan music, as opposed to the folk tradition of other regions of Greece, is still alive and enriched, and, like every "living organism" that grows and changes, so Cretan music does not stop to live and breathe ... and is constantly growing. An important and catalytic role in particular of Cretan music is played by the lyrics (mantinades – songs), and usually in our songs we choose heavy verse and make use of the Cretan dialect. Cretan music has been influenced by many ancient traditions and cultures that have either developed throughout the centuries, i.e. by cultures that have come and stayed for years in Crete in the form of conquerors and even by Byzantine music. Gradually over the years these influences have shaped and evolved and will continue to be shaped, enriched and evolved. We believe that Cretan music is a very lively "living organism" ... keeps whatever fits it and progresses.

**How would you describe the rhythm and melodies of Cretan music?**

Cretan music is not limited to metric systems ... it is a "marriage" between the artist's psychosynthesis and the people whom he “addresses” each time. During the music performance of every dance or song, the musician is not confined to the typical reproduction of the basic melody and rhythm, but improvises and influences it. That is why improvisation is an integral part of Cretan music, as is the lyrics, as we mentioned earlier.

**Let me ask you about the important helpers in your appearances – your musicians and collaborators!!**

Surely, what is “reaching” the ears of the listeners is a collective result, and our collaborators - fellow travelers in this route - certainly play a significant role: The dauli (twoheaded drum) is played by our brother Manolis Stratakis, the guitar by Matzarakis Dimitris, the bass by Hatzakis Alexandros, the bagpipes and other winds by Giorgos Makris.

**Do you think you are looking at Cretan music with a contemporary look? How is this reflected in your compositions?**

Whether our look is modern or not, we cannot say, because, in any case, contemporaneity has a broad meaning. We simply see Cretan music with the look of creativity and not with the look of struggle. If this emits a modern approach to Cretan music, and at the same time this is reflected in our compositions, the only one to judge it is the people.

**These days it seems that many musicians have doubts about whether to make cd’s or not, because cd’s do not sell. It also appears that you and Nikos use online media. It seems that you use technology and make some very well photographed and sophisticated videos. They look expensive. How can you support this financially, and what are the thoughts behind these actions?**

So far, we have three group albums, “7 tou Marti” (“March the 7th”), “To kopeli kai o drako” (“The Boy and the Dragon”) and “Diktamo kai neratzi” (“Diktamos and Nerantzi”), and Nikos has two albums of his own, “Anasa” (“Breath”) and “Nero ki alati” (“Water and Salt”). We are among those who believe that regardless of whether cd’s today are sold or not, a musician needs to lock his opinions somewhere (cd, tablets, etc), because in essence this is the oxygen of the musician-creator. But surely, because technology is advancing, mass information networks have become an integral part of our lives, and, depending on how you use them, do good or bad. Our aim is for people all over the world to get to know and listen to our music, and one way is this one.

**If we think there is a secret of success, what do you think is the secret of your success?**

The secret of success is a common secret that everyone knows and everyone can use (in other words, there is no secret). First, we should love and respect ourselves and our fellowmen. Anyone who is trying to create something is called creative, and anyone who is trying to compete, competitive ... When you are creative, you are only competing against yourself, and this means that you are externalizing something which is your own, your own identity. It might have or not have some value, it might be liked or not liked, but what is of importance is that it is true. However, when you are competitive and try to do what another person does, then you do not really work and you do not use the powers of your soul, but the forces of external factors, and this does not help you communicate with the world. We try to do with our soul what we like, we look at and take care of our work, we try to constantly improve what we do, and in particular we love and respect ourselves and our fellow humans as much as we can!!!!

**You and Nikos play often together, but Nikos also does other stuff. Can you tell me what role you have between the two of you, and what role does Nikos play? Is there competition between the two of you???**

We started being together when we were children. Our musical streets were parallel to each others and eventually came together when the time was right. Some 7 years ago, and at the instigation of Nikos, we started, and later our brother Manolis with daouli and our sister Voula with vocals joined us. At the same time, however, there are other musical concerns that through the individual personality of each one of us try to find a way out, but that does not mean that we are competing with each other. The roles of both of us are important and have different gravity. Nikos has said in the past that he is a much better musician than me. We are essentially two different musicians, with different concerns and different musical aspects. But there are many common elements that marry beautifully with each other and help us coexist.

**How do you imagine yourself in 10 years from now? How and where would you like to be on an individual and professional level?**

How do we imagine ourselves in 10 years we prefer to keep it to ourselves and discuss it again in 10 years ... All that we really want and wish is for us to remain loved and tied as brothers and sisters ... and all the rest can be created, reborn and expanded to the extent we want!