**Interview with Andreas Aerakis**

*It is obvious that some of the Cretan music has a special power and a special beauty, and I have read that if you like to listen to Greek music these years you should listen to music from Crete, because there they are ahead of the rest of Greece. Psarantonis is something special and has been that for decades with his deep voice and his wildness. But what are the rest of you doing right? What are you doing right that Sokratis Malamas and Pandelis Thalassinos are not doing? You are allowed to give me a long answer (!) ...*

”Oh, this will become a long conversation! Each singer has his dynamic and the people feel it! It's not something that you can explain! For example, many people say that they can't listen to Psarantonis and they don't like to see him in his concerts. On the other side there are so many people that adore him! Psarantonis is a specialist in his way of playing and singing. He has his own style. This is an important thing for a singer: Not to copy someone else! To find his style! Malamas and Thalassinos are also so talented and so beloved from the people! But they represent another kind of music, not Cretan, so we can't compare them! It will be unfair for those! They have so beautiful voices! Psarantonis for example many times has made me cry ... and Thalassinos also!”

*Apart from Giorgos & Nikos Stratakis, from different members of the Xylouris family and from Vasilis Skoulas and a few others – can you mention names of important Cretan musicians/singers we ought to be aware of?*

”There are so many more remarkable singers: Antonis Martsakis from Chania that plays mandolin, Charalabos Garganourakis, Paris Perysinakis, Iakovos Paterakis, Vasilis Stavrakakis, Michalis Stavrakakis, Stelios Petrakis, Nikiforos Aerakis, Giannis Paximadakis, Stelios Vasilakis – and so many that are not alive anymore ... Skordalos, Mountakis, Foustalieris, Rodinos, Manias, Markogiannis and so many others!!!”

*It seems that many musicians are in doubt these years: Shall they put out records or not? Because records (cd’s) don’t sell well. It also seems that some artists are using other means. I.e. very well photographed and advanced videos. They look expensive. What are your thoughts of these changes?*

”Indeed the sales of the cd's are decreasing ... But! A singer or a composer if he is serious and loves his ”job” has/must have discography! He likes to have something nice to give to the people that follow him and listen to him for so many years! The serious artists want to have cd’s and vinyl also! They want to stay in people’s minds and not to be like a ”balloon that is popping up”. The singers that don’t want to have cd’s but only to be on YouTube and videos are the pop singers that have songs in production companies of Athens that don’t care about a good production with a booklet inside etc. They choose the easy way: YouTube! Because those kind of songs are consumable. They are not written to stay for a long time! This is the difference! Here we love our job! We love the procedure of producing a cd! And the composers, singers etc. see it, feel it! That’s why they choose our company! We are thankful for that!”

*What are the advantages and disadvantages of being a Cretan company making all these Cretan products (=music) instead of having some of it done by major companies in Athens?*

”We are specialist in Cretan music because we were born here, we grow up with this music, we are human, we are not a multinational company! We are more close to the composers/musicians and we are not impersonal as the big companies in Athens. On the other side, we don’t have the visibility of the big companies that are in the capital of Greece, in Athens, but we know that we love what we do and this is so important for us! Our father started this company in 1973 and we don’t want only to continue it! We want to evolve it!”

*The Stratakis brothers are mostly playing together, but Nikos is also doing other things. Is there any competition between the two of them? Will there come more solo works?*

”No, there is not any competition! They play together but Nikos writes music and Giorgos not. They are very tied as all the brothers are! Nikos maybe will do some solo work in 2018. They are beloved!”

*Which important Cretan artists have records on the way – for 2018-2019?*

”Various artists prepare new productions! We have many schedules on the way! Vasilis Skoulas and Psarantonis and Antonis Martsakis are in the studio now and many others also! We are very happy about this!”

*Can you explain why so many excellent and expressful musicians come from the very same village – Anogia?*

”Our opinion is that this village has had a strange dynamic for a lot of years now! My father is from there so I grew up with strong pictures! Many people to sing, to write music, to play cretan lyra, lute and mandolin and to write lyrics! I have heard some people say that something is magic in the wind of this village! They have passed through difficult periods ... Germans burned the village twice ... they killed many people (men, women, children), so after this the people that were left behind needed something to catch on to ... and I think that this thing was the music! All the people there have many talents from many years ago and they still do! They grew up with this way of life! They become poets, musicians, painters! Music, mantinades (Cretan lyrics) and dance! A lot of dance! All of Crete says that this village gives birth to many talented people!”