

Song Translations

Θάλασσα πλατιά (Vast Sea)

Oh vast sea
I love you because you resemble me
Oh deep sea
you don't calm down a single moment
as if you have a heart
like my own little heart

Crazy dreams
that ride on the waves
they reach our hearts
and awaken our youth
crazy deams
with passion that flutters like birds

I have a desire
that eats away at me and melts me
I have a desire that I will come to tell you
oh sea, my sister, that I love

Waves, birds
on the journeys that you take
the distant ones
take away my hidden grief
and from far yonder
also bring me joy

Ξημερώνει (The Dawn Rises)

The cloud brought rain
And we are left alone
The rain turned into hail
It doesn't matter, it doesn't matter

What does the poor man have to fear
His home is the sky, wherever he stands
His sack on his shoulder
For the road, for the road

Come on, let's spread our sails
In our dreams and into oblivion
Life dries tears
Dawn is breaking, dawn is breaking

Έλα πάρε μου τη λύπη (Come Take Away My Sorrow)

You are a dove
who's flying in the sky
let's go find a star
in a faraway land

Come, let's find a star
that flies high in the sky

You are a heartbeat
you have clipped my wings
come take away my sorrow
come bring me joy

You are a heartbeat
you have clipped my wings

Your carnations count
I love you as no one else does
I turn my heart to stone
and I await for you to appear

Come for I am waiting for you
at the street corner for
you to appear

About

There's so much about "Hellenic Song: A Musical Migration" that embodies the concept of migration. The composers featured come from different parts of Greece, and all of them lived abroad for some period of time. Yannis Constantinidis went to Berlin to flee the Greco-Turkish War and study composition, while Joseph Benakis studied musicology in Paris. Both Manos Hadjidakis and Mikis Theodorakis lived in exile (New York and Paris, respectively) during the Greek military junta of the 1960s and 70s. In fact, Vasily Kalafati was of Greek descent, but spent his whole life in Russia. Mary Voutsas and I are also among the Greek diaspora, coming from families who emigrated from Greece to set up roots in the United States, bringing with us the traditions and cultures of our homeland.

Several months before recording this album, I ventured out on my own migration, driving 3,000-miles for 10 days across the U.S. from the Washington, D.C. area to San Francisco. This was such a transformative experience for me as an individual and as an artist, and I can only imagine how the migrations of each of the composers made an impact on their music.

This recording includes several favorite popular songs of Manos Hadjidakis, but with a twist: Mary Voutsas and Anna Hennessy incorporated their own diverse influences to interpret these songs in a fresh way. These arrangements are both a nod to Hadjidakis and his cherished songs of the past, as well as an outlet to propel the Greek musical tradition forward.

We hope you enjoy "Hellenic Song: A Musical Migration." Happy listening!

– *Ellie Falaris Ganelin*
Greek Chamber Music Project founder

The **Greek Chamber Music Project** (GCMP) is devoted to playing chamber music by Greek composers, shedding light on little-known works, as well as visiting familiar songs in a new way. GCMP's programs of all-Greek works are so unique, that similar programs are rarely performed even within Greece. Each concert presents a mix of Western classical works, as well as Greek folk and popular (laïká) songs, evoking both nostalgia for the familiar and excitement for the new. But no work purely fits into a particular style – the popular songs are lyrical with a stylized, art song feel, while the classical selections are influenced by distinctly Greek scales, modes, and dance rhythms.

This recording marks the debut release under the Greek Chamber Music Project record label. The goal of this label is two-fold: to give world-wide exposure to the music of Greek composers, and to support the young artists who perform and record this wonderful music coming out of Greece and the Greek diaspora.

About the Composers

Joseph Benakis (*Cypriot Rhapsody*) was born in Livadia in 1924 and grew up in Athens. He holds a law degree from Athens University, diplomas in counterpoint and fugue from the National Conservatory, as well as a musicology degree from the Sorbonne in Paris. He has served as chairman of the Artistic Association of Athens, vice president of the Association of Greek Composers, and is a member of the Greek Composers Union. Benakis has written works for symphony orchestra, string orchestra, chamber music, a piano concerto, six oratorios, four operas, as well as a number of songs. In 1984, he received an award in the cantata category at the International Composition Competition “Cuidad Ibagué” in Colombia and has also received an award by the Athens Academy. As a conductor, he has led various orchestras, including the Symphony Orchestra of the Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation, the Orchestra of the Society of Scientists, and the Olympic Airways Choir. He has released seven CDs of his compositions, and is the author of ten music books.

Yannis Constantinidis (*Suite on Popular Dodecanese Melodies*) was born in Smyrna, Asia Minor (now Izmir, Turkey) in 1903. Despite growing up during a turbulent time at the height of the Greco-Turkish War (1919-22), he was able to flee the region to study music in Berlin, counting Kurt Weill among his teachers. Constantinidis based his compositional style almost entirely on Greek folk songs and dance. He was active in the Athenian musical theatre during its golden years writing more than 50 operettas, revues, and musical comedies. Constantinidis composed approximately 200 compositions, ranging from stage works, song cycles, individual songs, choral works, numerous orchestral and chamber works to his significant contribution in piano repertoire, including 44 Children’s Pieces on Greek Melodies. He died in 1984 in Athens.

Manos Hadjidakis (*Ionian Suite, Θάλασσα πλατιά, Ήμερώνει, Έλα πάρε μου τη λύπη*), who was born in Xanthi in 1925, is considered one of modern Greece’s greatest composers. He transformed the seemingly lower-class rebetika and popular music into a respected art form by combining folk and classical styles. In Greece, he was well-known as a pop songwriter, with countless tunes that are considered classics. Hadjidakis gained recognition abroad for his movie soundtracks, winning an Oscar in 1960 for the title song from *Never on Sunday*. He composed extensively for theater, ballet, as well as classical works for large and small ensembles. A proponent of newly composed works, he founded and conducted several orchestras throughout his career to promote this mission, including the Athens Experimental Orchestra (est. 1963) and Orchestra of Colours (est. 1989). He remained a highly respected intellectual and cultural figure in Greece up until his death in 1994.

Vasily Kalafati (*Five Preludes*) was of Greek origin, but spent his life in Russia (born in 1869 in Crimea). He studied with Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory and went on to become a faculty member there, teaching composition, theory, and counterpoint. Some of his most notable students included Alexander Scriabin, Igor Stravinsky, and Heino Eller. He died in 1942 during the German siege of Leningrad in World War II. While mostly unknown after his death, he was a significant composer in Russia during his lifetime. His music was similar to that of Rimsky-Korsakov in style and included the opera *Cygan* (based on Pushkin), as well as orchestral music, chamber music, solo piano works, art songs, and four-hand piano reductions of Russian symphonic works.

Mikis Theodorakis (*Choros Asikikos*) was born in 1925 (the same year as Manos Hadjidakis) on the island of Chios. Well-known internationally for his film score for *Zorba the Greek* (1964), *Z* (1969) and *State of Siege* (1972), he has also composed a great deal of concert music, including symphonies, operas, ballets, oratorios such as “To Axion Esti,” as well as more than 1,000 songs and song cycles that have become part of the cultural fabric of the Greek musical tradition. A member of the wartime resistance, he remained active in politics, serving several times in the Greek parliament. As a Communist Party member, he was arrested during the 1967 military coup and only released in 1970 under international pressure. He is esteemed in Greece as a national hero.

About the Artists

Mary-Victoria Voutsas is a “powerful,” and “enthraling pianist” (*The Tower*, Catholic University). She has performed master classes and recitals for several acclaimed pianists, including Yuri Didenko, Dr. Joseph Banowetz, and Christopher O’Reilly. Ms. Voutsas performed for the Thai King Bhumibol Adulyadej’s birthday celebration, and the inaugural concert of the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center in Washington, D.C. She was praised that her “performance enthralled the listeners making the evening a wonderful tribute.” Ms. Voutsas holds several awards including the Watkins Prize (2011) and Director’s Musician of Achievement (2013) at American University. She has performed as soloist for the Rob Kapilow “What Makes It Great?” program in 2013 accompanied by the Peabody Chamber Orchestra, as well as with the American University Orchestra (2014) conducted by Yaniv Dinur. She earned her degree with a concentration in Piano Performance from American University and is completing her master’s from Catholic University. She resides in the Washington, D.C. area where she teaches piano and theory.

Ellie Falaris Ganelin is a flutist with an engaging stage presence and a unique array of influences. Classically trained, she is also versed in jazz, Latin, Brazilian music, rock, and experimental music. She received double degrees in music and journalism from the University of Maryland, where she studied with William Montgomery and Kathleen Trahan. She has performed and recorded with indie pop band 1959 Hat Company and appears on their *Hearts Intersect* EP. She has also been a member of *Opera on Tap* and *Classical Revolution*, bringing classical music to fun, informal settings. Ms. Ganelin is the founder of the Greek Chamber Music Project (GCMP). She is currently based in San Francisco, where she lives with her husband, Ilya.

Anna Matijasic Hennessy, MM, is an eclectic violinist. She has performed and recorded extensively with numerous classical, Americana, jazz and rock ensembles in the United States, Europe and South America. Anna studied violin and music education at the University of Virginia and James Madison University. She regularly performs with regional chamber music ensembles and teaches orchestra in Fairfax County, Virginia.