

Greek Music In U.S. and Intro to Hi-Fi

By Steve Frangos

TNH Staff Writer

CHICAGO- The spring of 1948 marks one of the most significant moments, in the history of Greek music in North America. No sooner had the technology to produce long-playing record albums become available than a host of Greek promoters and musicians based in the United States began to release a flood of new music.

These long-playing albums, soon dubbed simply "LPs," covered the full gamut of Greek music from the most traditional songs and melodies to the very borders of, what was then, modern music.

Continued on page 7

Greek Music in the United States an

Continued from page 1

With no published discographies to guide us the dates of 1948 to 1965 will provide a temporary frame in which to base this musical review. For it was in 1965, that the last 78-rpm record was pressed and released. After this date all records produced were of the long-playing album variety. And massive changes took place rapidly.

Living memory has it that the first Greek-owned company in North America to release a long-playing album was Nina Record Company of New York City. Nicos Tseperis (1923-2010), an Athenian who had arrived no more than 2 or 3 years before founding Nina Records initially specializing in recording the latest musicians from Greece who were then just beginning to be heard in the Greek clubs along New York's 8th Avenue.

Nina Record's rival and soon to be musical opposite was Liberty Records also of New York City. Liberty Records quickly conceded the recording of new style Athenian music to Nina Records and instead, focused on the more traditional musicians and their forms of Greek music. Unquestionably, in the genre of hi-fidelity long-playing records Greek music producers immediately accepted the American notion of the concept album. The, then, radical idea of a concept album was to issue a single long-playing record as a collection of twelve songs tied together by a single theme.

These innovations in musical technology were matched a sudden surge in Greek-American demographics. With the end of World War II, and the close of the Greek Civil War, a new flood of Greek immigration to North America began. Known as the Second Wave of Greek Immigration it is estimated that between 1947 and 1965 some 75,000 legal Greek immigrants arrived on American shores along with yet another 75,000 Greek sailors who literally jumped ship. In 1965, with the passage of the Hart-Cellar Act an additional 160,000 Greeks immigrated between 1965 through 1979. The tensions within the community between these new comers and

monolithic the new long-playing records became the new venue for the differing musical tastes-always present in Greek American music-to see full expression.

This being the case a simple two-sided opposition between the New Greek club scene and old-style genres did not remain exclusive to the Nina and Liberty record companies. All the American-based independent Greek record labels as well as all the international record companies were following suit. And in point of fact, business always remained business among the smaller record label companies. In time, both Nina and Liberty Records were releasing whatever genres and artists they thought would have a buying public.

The 1948 to 1965 period has further significance within Greek-American history given that this was the time when the 1880 to 1920 immigrant generation of Greek musicians passed on their musical arts to the next generation. This bridge generation of musicians is made up not only of musicians born of Greek parents in North America but also those Greek-born musicians who arrived on this continent in the very late 1940s. As in other walks of life this meeting between American-born Greek musicians and their compatriots from Greece has examples of positive and negative encounters. Among the bridge-generation musicians and vocalists we can note Georgia Drake, John Katsikas, Chris Kalogerson, James Stoyloff, Gus Vali and many, many others. The newly arrived musicians of the late 1940s included (but is certainly not limited to) Yorgios Anastopoulos, Nikos Gounaris, Trio Bel Canto, Trio Kitara, Eva Styl, Nicos Tseperis and a host of others.

Older musicians who had resided in North America for decades did not disappear in the post war era. Many of these musicians and vocalists played in



Nicos Tseperis, "the man with the golden voice," was an Athenian who shortly after arriving to the U.S. founded Nina Records, featuring songs from the latest Greek musicians.

POLYDISC & NINA RECORDS

Present Their
...Latest Releases...

PLS-190 KRITIKA
CRETAN SONGS AND DANCES



TO KATHITO SYRTAKI
TO ABBANI
TA MAVERA BOUMA
SMASHI IAGHINI STI KARDIA
MALYVIZIOTIKOS SYRTOS
SANTIRIS AMANIS

HAMOTIKO PENTAZALI
MAI PHELOMLAKHIMI
KREASANTIKOS SYRTOS
KERTI ME TA OREA SOU
HAMOTIKOS SYRTOS
MEOS SPILAKHOS SYRTOS

Compatible Stereo — Available also in 8 Track

Sold by

many others.

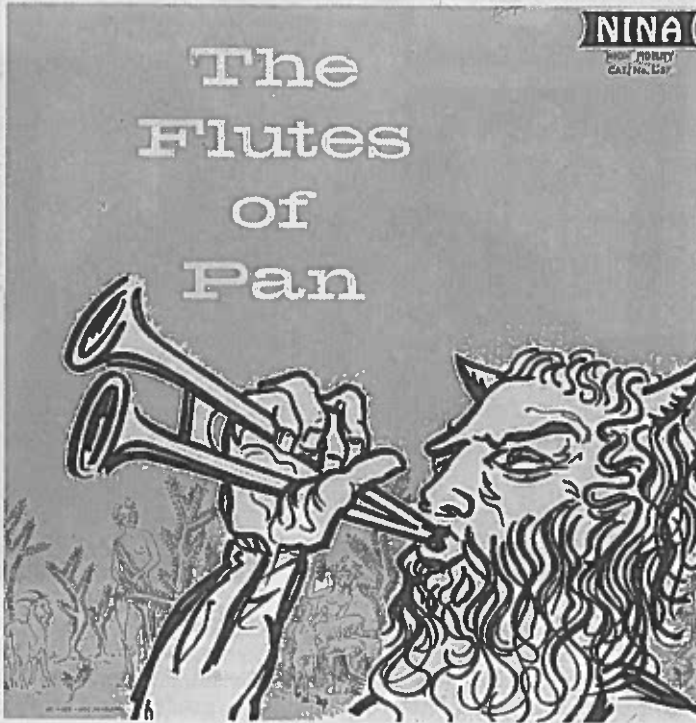
The appearance of the new long-playing albums also marked the occasion for groundbreaking innovations in the packaging and presentation of music. Striking album covers could often make a bland record

those already established in America can be heard on these records. While the musical tastes of Greeks residing in North America had never been night clubs and recorded throughout this era such as Mme. Coula, Tetos Demetriades, Yorgios Katsaros, Marika Papagika, Spyro Stamos as well as a best seller while a poorly designed cover could send an outstanding music collection into oblivion. At the moment, the album liner notes, another inno-

GREEK AMERICAN STORIES

Advertisements!

and the Intro of Hi-Fidelity Records



Nicholas Roubanis' international hit-song Misirlou. This song is one of the true world phenomenon's in music. In the 1948 to 1965 era, aside from Greek recording artists Misirlou was also a featured favorite on a vast number of what are now called Exotica and Space Age Pop albums. Misirlou was a showcased instrumental on best-selling albums such as Taboo by Arthur Lyman, Exotic Percussion by Stanley Black, Wild Percussion and Horns a' Plenty by Dick Schory and many, many others.

It must be recalled that the post-War era saw an incredible resurgence of the Greektown club scene all across the United States. Of enormous help to this new interest in Greektown food and music were the three hit motion pictures New On Sunday (1960), Zorba the Greek (1964) and Z (1969). While the new stereo-systems found in these Greek night clubs brought unmatched audio fidelity to customers they also prompted a much-expanded interest in Greek music outside the Greek community itself.

As a case in point we need only quote a short section from the liner notes of the internationally popular best-selling 1961 album, "Connie Francis Sings 'Never On Sunday' and Other Title Songs From Motion Pictures":

"When pretty Connie Francis turns her vocal spotlight on the music from great films, it's an event to really get excited about. And the favorites are all here... well, as many as she could fit on one record. There's the title song, Never On Sunday, from the Greek film of the same name, which Connie sang at the Academy Award Show. This infectious melody has had America humming for well over a year. But in Connie's hands, it appears headed for a new round of popularity. Connie's version bursts with life right from the opening bars. And her interpolation of a few lines of Greek in the rendition gives it added flavor (MGM E3965)."

All this cross-fertilization needs to be recognized and studied. Misirlou and Never on Sunday just to name two songs were as much of 1960s Ameri-

NINA RECORDS

Announce Their Latest Release

Ο ΝΙΚΟΣ ΤΣΕΠΕΡΗΣ ΣΑΤΥΡΙΖΕΙ

— ΕΝΑΣ ΔΙΣΚΟΣ ΠΡΟΤΟΤΥΠΟΣ —

"Ένας δίσκος με τραγούδια που μέχρι χθές δέν τολμούσε κανείς να τραγουδήσει. Ένας δίσκος ΑΠΙΘΑΝΟΣ!!!

N-469 Ο ΝΙΚΟΣ ΤΣΕΠΕΡΗΣ ΣΑΤΙΡΙΖΙ

SONGS OF HUMOR AND SATIRE

STEREO



PROLOGOS
Ο ΤΟΤΟΣ
Ε ΔΙΑΘΙΚΗ ΤΟΥ ΠΑΝΑΕ
Ε ΗΡΑ ΚΕ ΤΟ ΚΤΙΜΑ ΤΙΣ
Ο ΣΙΡΤΙΣ
ΜΑΗΕΡΙΑ ΨΑΛΙΔΙΑ

ΤΙΣ ΛΙΛΙΚΑΣ ΤΟ ΒΑΤΑΚΙ
Ο ΜΑΝΟΛΙΟΣ
Ε ΝΑΝΑ
ΣΑΤΙΡΙΚΕΣ ΜΑΝΤΙΝΑΔΕΣ
ΜΙΚΡΟΥΛΑ ΜΟΥ ΑΦΡΟΠΛΑΣΤΙ

A "DOUBLE ENTENTE" RECORD. The first of its kind, filled with satire and humorous songs, sung by NIKOS TSEPERIS as only he can sing them. It will liven up any party or social gathering. You will want to play it over and over again and again. It is truly entertaining—A MASTERPIECE!

AVAILABLE ALSO IN 8 TRACK AND CASSETTE

— Sold by —