

Bucuvalas, Tina, ed. *Greek Music in America*. Jackson, MI: University Press of Mississippi, 2019.

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Book Review

Tina Bucuvalas' impressive, edited collection is a significant exploration of the development of Greek music in America. Drawing on a diverse range of contributors, the volume delves into the varied Greek musical traditions in the United States, spanning genres, communities, recording industry evolution, and the lives of individual musicians. The book is structured into four parts, each featuring several chapters, some of which have been previously published, and ends with an appendix written by Stavros K. Frangos, who has compiled a list of Greek music collections and resources in the United States.

In their collaborative opening chapter, Bucuvalas and Frangos provide a comprehensive historical overview. Between 1880 and 1918, Greek immigrants arriving in America brought with them the Byzantine chant of the Greek Orthodox liturgy and traditional folk music. Early singers and musicians performed in a range of venues, from work camps and coffeehouses to celebratory religious ceremonies and picnics. Alongside these early Greek immigrant musicians were instrument makers, including one of the earliest luthiers, Anastasios Stathopoulos (1863-1915), who established a workshop in Manhattan in 1903. Early record companies capitalized on the production and sale of both traditional and popular Greek music, furnishing immigrants a connection to their homeland and providing solace amidst the challenges of migration.

By the 1930s, the rebetika genre surged in popularity, embracing themes such as *xenitia* (living in foreign lands) and societal struggles. Greek Hour radio programs proliferated, alongside musical performances at popular Greek-owned family resorts, such as those in the Catskills Mountains of New York State. The post war period witnessed an expansion of the traditional Greek and European styles, made readily available through Greek LPs. Bucuvalas and Frangos point to the popularity of "variety shows with music and dancing," (29) known as *horoesperides*, hosted by cultural and fraternal organizations, while Greek radio programs flourished in major cities. The musical landscape saw the appearance of Greek nightclubs featuring bouzouki-based music.

During the 1950s and 1960s, *laiko*, described as “a type of urban traditional music with an orientalized style” (33) gained prominence and dominated the music scene. The bouzouki-based musical style was popularized by Manos Hadjidakis and Mikis Theodorakis, particularly through mainstream films that featured their music such as *Never on Sunday* (1960) and *Zorba the Greek* (1964).

From the mid-1970s to the 1990s, Bucuvalas and Frangos note a revival of rebetika music, alongside the enduring popularity of traditional music among community organizations. Greek church festivals gradually supplanted the picnic outings of earlier years, while smaller, more intimate nightclubs called *boites*, emerged in New York City alongside the bouzouki-based Greek nightclubs.

Between 1990 and 2015, Bucuvalas and Frangos observe demographic shifts, evolving musical tastes, and the rise of various digital technologies, leading to a decreased demand for live Greek musicians and bands. Despite these shifts, the interest and appreciation for the Greek music tradition have remained steadfast. In fact, scholars and collectors have actively worked to preserve older forms, while traditional Greek musical styles are experiencing a revival across different parts of the US. Additionally, the proliferation of folk-dance groups continues to uphold these traditions.

The heart of this edited collection lies in its individual chapters, which deepen our understanding of specific musical genres, contexts and communities, and key figures. These chapters, comprising the next three sections, constitute the core of this volume, with each author expanding upon the groundwork laid by Bucuvalas and Frangos in their overview chapter.

The first part, dedicated to “Musical Genre, Style, and Content,” opens with Frank Desby’s (1922-1991) chapter that outlines some of the changes that occurred in liturgical music as Greek Orthodox churches in the US proliferated. One change was the introduction of choral music and the choir, which included girls and women. Choir schools for training choirs and music directors were supported and expanded under Archbishop Iakovos (1959-1996).

Roderick Conway Morris unravels the complex origins of Greek cafés, exploring how the entertainment (music, instruments, and dance) evolved over time to embody Greek and European influences. Gail Holst-Warhaft draws connections between the vocal improvisations known as *amanedes* to Greek folk traditions such as lullabies and laments. She focuses on the revival of Asia Minor music in the US during the 1940s, drawing attention to significant “modernized” (98) recordings by musicians such as Marika Papagika and Tetos Demetriades two decades earlier. Touching on the history of rebetika, from its antiestablishment roots to its mainstream appeal, Stathis Gauntlett illustrates its enduring popularity among the Greek diaspora of Australia. Stavros K. Frangos examines the Greek music recording industry through the lens of musician and composer George Katsaros’ career. Michael G. Kaloyanides analyzes the use of spoken interjections known as *tsakismata* in Greek urban musical traditions, highlighting differences between recorded works and live performances. Lastly, Joseph Graziosi surveys the influence of Turkish songs on the musical landscape of Greek America.

The second part of the volume features “Places”; the diasporic communities and contexts in which Greek music in America found expression. Contributors include Sotirios (Sam) Chianis, Anna Caraveli, Anna Lomax Wood, and Panayotis League. Chianis focuses on the establishment of the music scene in New York City, where he traces the significance of Greek folk music and

dancing in the early Greek immigrants' social settings as well as the recording studios that captured the variety of music traditions. He notes that the style of music and instruments used reflected mainland Greece because most immigrants emigrated from those areas. Additionally, he shows that the rise of bouzouki music in the post war period displaced the folk ensembles of earlier times. Anna Caraveli's ethnographic study brings into sharp focus the intertwined cultural and musical traditions of Olymbos, a traditional Karpathian village, and their embodiment in the *glendi*, the "ritual celebration" (80) which she also studied among the Olymbos diaspora community of Baltimore, Maryland.

Wood and League turn to an examination of another Dodecanese diaspora community, namely the Kalymnians who settled in Tarpon Springs, Florida. While Wood documents the musical practices of the Tarpon Springs Kalymnian community through the music of Nikitas Tsimouris (1924-2001), a tsambouna (bagpipe) player who settled in the United States in 1967, League explores the ways Kalymnian identity in Tarpon Springs has been shaped through traditional music and dance practices. Although not Kalymnian himself, League's position as an insider, member of the Tarpon Springs community, and a player of Kalymnian music, puts him in a unique position to reflect on the multitude of ways that Kalymnian identity is performed.

The third section comprises concise, yet impactful chapters centered on "Recording Companies and Performance Venues." Dick Spottswood provides an overview of Greek music recording activities from 1896 to 1937, while Meletios Pouliopoulos traces the history of Greek piano rolls (continuous rolls of paper with perforations) for player pianos (self-playing pianos) using available material from the manufacturer, QRS. Anthony Shay, a choreographer and folk dancer, shares intimate reflections of his encounters with Greek music and dance at family gatherings, church events, and Greek nightclubs in Los Angeles. Journalist Nick Pappas directs sheds light on the Greek nightclub scene in Astoria and Manhattan during the early 1980s.

The final section highlights twenty-one musical artists, comprising seventeen men and four women, who played pivotal roles in the Greek American music scene spanning from the early twentieth century to the present day. While not exhaustive, this segment sheds light on the lives and lasting impact of key figures.

The book offers valuable insights into the development and influence of Greek music in America. This volume would appeal to music specialists as well as to a broader audience interested in both music and the Greek American cultural landscape.