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# *Amalia!*

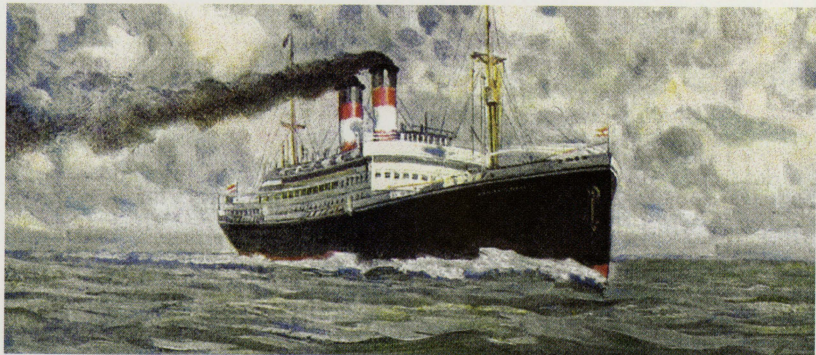
Old Greek Songs  
 In The New Land  
 1923 ~ 1950



In Foreign Lands Since My Childhood







GRIMANI

*The Kaiser Franz Josef I on the high sea, 1912*

Three days after her 15th birthday, traveling by herself on the largest ship ever to fly the Austrian flag, Mazaltov (Mally) Matsa of Janina, Turkey, steamed toward the new land. Two weeks shy of a year later she married Jack Saretta, a fellow from her hometown, and set up housekeeping on Rivington Street in New York's Lower East Side, a short walk from the New York Janina Synagogue. She had work as a seamstress and he made silk flowers for lady's hats.

The Janina she left in 1912 was diverse, fractious, complicated, multinational and multicultural, in many ways

similar to New York. Romaniote Jews had lived in Janina for about 1,800 years. Life for Mally had been strictly defined by that tradition. In the Romaniote community, girls were born to a servile position in a male-dominated world, their births not recorded, their early education limited to that which would best serve their future husbands, and their worth reckoned in the end by the number of male children they might bear. A Romaniote girl was kept at home until her father chose a husband for her. When she married, she was sent to live in the home of her new husband.

Mally's marriage was certainly arranged before she left Janina. The

home she made in the new land was intended to continue the old ways. The enumerator for the 1920 census found Mally and Jack with two daughters, Diamond and Esther Cleoniki, named after their grandmothers in the Romaniote tradition.

The old ways had a good foothold on New York's Lower East Side, although for Mally the pressures and freedoms to be found on foreign shores had shaped changes even before she landed. She had traveled by herself on the Kaiser Franz Josef I, an immense modern ocean liner, only months from its own maiden voyage. At Ellis Island she was detained because she did not have the \$50 in cash required of new immigrants; after a phone call she was sponsored by her Aunt Rachel. Life in New York took money, so Mally got a job sewing in a factory. Circumstance had forced her to accept a level of responsibility and independence forbidden Romaniote girls in Janina, and with it came opportunities that were also customarily denied.

In Janina, Mally lived within Jewish, Greek, and Turkish cultures, and threads of each are woven through her songs. About the only public or semi-public activity that Romaniote women could engage in was the keening of laments at the time of death. Romaniote religious

ceremony is conducted in demotic, that is, everyday spoken Greek, instead of Hebrew, and Romaniote singing also borrowed traditional Greek melodies. The memory of these songs and laments was deeply instilled, and they would always be an important part of Mally's repertoire.

Mally sang all her life. Her talent for singing was "discovered" when she sang



*Mazaltov and her mother Esther in Janina, c 1907*

in the factory where she sewed, or when she sang while hanging up her laundry. Both stories are probably true. She sang in Greek and Turkish, and by the early 1920s had begun singing professionally as Amalia in Greek café-amanes and Turkish clubs. Her first recordings were eight Turkish songs for the M. G.



## ΕΛΑΤΕ ΝΑ ΑΠΟΛΑΥΣΕΤΕ

Μίαν από τῶν λαμπροτέρων διασκεδάσεων εἰς τὸ Καφέ Ἀμάν τῆς Κυρίας Ἀμαλίας τῆ συνδείξ τῆς μερμένης Ἀναστασίας, διὰ τὰ ἐκλεκτότατα Τούρκικα καὶ Τραπεζιτικὰ μετὰ τῶν ὀργανοποικῶν Γαβριέλου Κασάρου Μακεδόνα, τοῦ Γαβριήλ Κανουντζή τοῦ ἐξοκουστοῦ Παναγιώτου Πηλιδίου, σαντουριέρου καὶ τοῦ Γεωργίου Αὐγερινού λαουτοῦ.



Ἐκεῖ θὰ ἀκούσετε τοὺς ἀρχαίους μανέδες τῆς Κυρίας Ἀμαλίας. Παριστῶν καὶ εἰσπρατὴν παριστῶν.

Τρέψατε εἰς τὸ

**ΚΑΦΕ-ΑΜΑΝ ΠΑΥΣΙΛΙΠΟΝ**

τῆς Κυρίας Ἀμαλίας.

**466 - 8TH AVE. BET. 33 & 34TH STS.**

Ἀπὸ τὴν ἐπόμενην Δευτέραν θὰ εἶναι ἀνεκτὸν 1 ὥρα 1

## Come to Enjoy

*One of the most brilliant entertainments at the Café-Aman of Madame Amalia with the accompaniment of the famous Anastasia, for her most select Turkish songs with the instrumentalists George Kasaras the Macedonian, of Gabriel the Kanunist, of the renowned Panayotis Peliotis, santouri player and Old Ayverinos, the laouto player.*

*There you will hear the Manedhes of Madame Amalia. It is superfluous for us to say more. Run to the*

**CAFÉ-AMAN PAVSILIPON**  
of Madame Amalia

**466 8th AVE. Bet. 33 & 34th STS.**  
From next Monday it will be open from 1 until 1

*A flyer from Amalia's café-amán, ca. 1930, left, and a translation*

Parsekian Record Company, across the Hudson River in Hoboken, New Jersey; then in Chicago, she recorded six Greek and Turkish songs for the Greek Record Company of George Gretsiss and Spiros Stamos.

Amalia's independent spirit and

emerging career caused trouble at home. In the old country, women who sang in clubs were considered prostitutes—fallen women at best. Jack divorced her, and Cleoniki was sent to live in Greece ("kidnapped," Diamond says).

In 1926 Mally converted to the Greek

Othodox Church in order to marry Gus Bakas, and continued recording as Amalia Bakas from 1927 to 1929. Gus worked in the restaurant business, and Amalia was herself involved in clubs and restaurants, both as owner and as headline entertainment.

Live performances in Turkish clubs, café-amánes and restaurants were the mainstay of Amalia's singing career.



*Singer Rina Dalia and Amalia in Chicago, 1950s*

She was always working, according to her daughter, Diamond, who from the beginning was with her at recording

sessions and on stage, playing doumbek, encouraging her with "Ya sou, Mitera!" ("your health, mother!") and sometimes singing duets with her. Café-amánes were lively and numerous in Prohibition-era New York. Entertainment, atmosphere and booze were a magic combination, and dozens flourished around Eighth and Ninth Avenues at 33rd and 34th Streets, packed with people from all parts of the city. Amalia opened her own club, the Café-Amán Pavsilipon, with, as Diamond remembers, "a few tables and a bottle of bootleg booze...little by little they were coming in...the priest came in, too."

Amalia did not record in the 1930s, but traveled quite a bit, often with singer George Katsaros, and sang at clubs, restaurants, and resorts in an informal circuit that included New York, the Catskills and Finger Lakes areas of New York, and cities with large Greek populations such as Detroit, Chicago, Gary (Indiana) and Philadelphia.

By 1940 Amalia and Diamond were living in Chicago, and Amalia was involved with a club/restaurant, the Pantheon, near Halsted Street in the heart of "the Delta," Chicago's old Greektown.



Chicago Greek restaurants were also bars and nightclubs, social watering holes with live entertainment, cadres of regulars and many stories. Amalia was a spirited and memorable participant who helped lead the charge for about two decades and is still remembered with fondness and awe. "If she didn't like you, chairs would fly", recalled John Katsikas, a cymbalum and santouri player who accompanied Amalia. Her performance of "Bahaiotiko," a slow dirge, is remembered still, as is her prowess at poker and barbuti dice. To a patron who needed money to get married she gave a gold ring from her own finger, "- and she would swear like a man."

In the early 1940s Amalia was recording again, this time for Ajdin Asllan's MeRe/ Balkan/ Gadinis/ Kalaphone/ Metropolitan family of labels in New York, in which she also had part ownership. Her recording sessions in New York were with luminaries such as clarinetists Gus Gadinis, John Pappas and John Dalas, kanounists Garbis Bakirgian and Theodore Kappas, and violinists Alexis Zervas and Nick Doneff.

During World War II Greek music in the United States saw a revival of songs and styles that had originated or were popular in the late 1910s and early 1920s, the time of the influx of ethnic



Nick Doneff, with Amalia

Greek refugees from Turkey into Greece as part of the the 1922 League of Nations relocations. Over a third of Amalia's recordings from this period were old songs from her own or from pioneer Greek vocalist Coula Antonopoulos's early recorded repertoire. Mostly laments or songs that expressed resilience in the face of troubles, they offered some solace to expatriates horrified at the fate of Greece and their families and friends there during World War II.

Amalia retired in the early 1960s. Chicago's redevelopment efforts had removed the heart of Greektown to make way for the University of Illinois Chicago campus, and Amalia's home and the restaurants and clubs she sang in were destroyed.

Diamond had moved to Florida in 1960 and opened the New Hellas restaurant in Tarpon Springs, close to where the sponge boats docked. Amalia followed in 1974, moving to New Port Richie, just north of the docks.

Amalia died in 1979. Her obituary did not mention that she was a singer, that one of the most fluid and evocative of Greek voices had been stilled.

Amalia lived and sang with great passion. Though her repertoire was very traditional she made her songs her own by comments and ad libs while singing, by changing words, and by using songs to show what was happening in her life. She wrote "Elenitsa Mou" when she was baptized, taking the baptismal name Eleni, and she wrote and sang "Diamontoula Mou" for her daughter Diamond. Unlike her contemporaries Marika Papagika and Coula Antonopoulos, she did not sing much of the world of hash, manges and rebetes—most of her recorded songs are about

love.

In her long experience singing for live audiences in the small clubs she developed a very personal and intimate style. She understood and exploited the subtleties of the electric microphone from its first years in the recording medium to bring a palpable closeness and immediacy to her recordings.

Remarkable within ordinary circumstances, her story is almost incredible when her own background is considered. Uprooted and cast to sea on a floating skyscraper to make her way in a boisterous and challenging world, she responded with an indomitable, creative and generous spirit that is still felt in her songs.

*David Soffa, Berkeley, 2002*



# The Songs

1. **Αλη Πασας, Ali Pasha/ The Leibadia. Kleftiko/ Leibadia.** Ali Pasha, onetime governor of Janina, is remembered for civic reforms, creative cruelty, and an over-reaching ambition that culminated in a botched coup attempt against the Turkish Sultan Mahmud II. For that he was beheaded in his island citidel at Janina in 1822. Recorded in New York around 1943, with violin and cymbalum.

Ωχ! Ωρεν εμορφη που 'ναι,  
Ωρε, η Λειβαδια, ωρε.  
Που κειται μεσ' στο ρεμα

Παν τα κοριτσια, ωρε,  
Για νερο, αιντε,  
Γυριζουν φιλημενα

Αρβανιτες παινεμενοι  
Που ειν' ο Αλη Πασας, καημενοι  
Μεσα ειναι και κοιμαται  
Και κανεναν δε φοβαται

Βρε αναθεματισμενη  
Και τζαναμπετισσα.  
Κρασι, ρακι δεν ηπια,  
Σ'ειδα και μεθησα

2. **Kala Kalaya Bakar, Fortress Faces Fortress.** Amalia's first recording, cut at M. G. Parsekian Studios in Hoboken, New Jersey. In Turkish. Marko Melkon, oud, unk., violin, ca.1923.

Kale Kaleye bakar  
Yavrum kaleden bir kız bakar  
Delikanlı var iken  
Sakallıya kim bakar

Sevedim ben çoktan beri  
Hoppa hoppa hoppadır bebegim  
Sarıl sarıl sarıllı da geliyor  
Sol yanında benleri

Oh, say how beautiful Leibadia  
Is, say!  
It lies by the stream.

The girls go for water  
Say, and  
Return having been kissed

Proud Albanian Greeks  
Where is Ali Pasha, for goodness sake?  
He is inside sleeping,  
And he fears no one

Hey, accursed and  
Ill-tempered woman,  
I drank neither wine nor raki,  
I saw you and became intoxicated

Fortress faces fortress  
My dear, a girl looks out from the fortress  
If there is a youngster  
Who would look at a bearded man?

I have not been able to fall in love for long  
Flighty flighty flighty is my babe  
She comes and holds me tightly  
With that mole on her left cheek



From: The life of Ali Pasha of Janina, London, 1823.

3. **Το Αστερι Το Λαμπρο. T'Asteri To Lambro. The Bright Star. Kleftiko.** Recorded in New York in 1927 with violin and cymbalum.

Κεινο τ'αστερι το λαμπρο  
Που παει κοντα στην πουλια  
Κεινο μου φεγγει,  
Βλαχα μ' κι ερχομαι.

Κεινο μου φεγγει κι ερχομαι  
Τη νυχτα στην αυλη σου  
Βρισκω την πορτα σφαλιχτη  
Και τα κλειδια χαμενα

Κοιτω, φιλω την κλειδωνια  
Σαν παραπονεμενα  
Με πηρε, Βλαχα μ',  
το παραπενο

That bright star  
Near the Pleiades  
That one lights my way  
My Vlach girl, as I come.

That one lights my way and I come  
At night to your courtyard.  
I find the door closed  
And the keys missing.

I look at the lock and kiss it  
Somewhat plaintively,  
I was overcome, my Vlach girl,  
By my tears

4. **Ι Θαλασσα. I Thalassa. The Sea. Yaniotiko.** Recorded in New York in 1927, with oud, violin and santouri, d. Alfred Cibelli. A song from Janina.

Αμαν, αμαν  
Η θαλασσα ειναι ταπεινη  
Κι ο αερας την ταραζει  
Η μανα κανει το παιδι  
Κι ο ξενος τ'αγκαλιαζει

Αχ, αλιμονο σε μενα.  
Ωχ, γλυκο σεβντα με σενα.

Αμαν, αμαν  
Η θαλασσα και τα βουνα  
... εγω τα ειδα  
Χαρειτε νιοι τα νιατα σας  
Δεν τα 'χει καψ' η μοιρα

Αχ θαλασσα μου, θαλασσα μου.  
Ζωντανη εισαι φορεσια μου

Αμαν, αμαν  
Τη θαλασσα την αρμυρη  
Θα την ποτησω μελι

Mercy, mercy  
The sea is calm  
And the wind stirs it up.  
The mother bears the child  
And the stranger embraces it.

Ah, woe is me.  
Oh, sweet passion with you.

Mercy, mercy  
The sea and the mountains  
... I have seen them.  
Young people, enjoy your youth.  
Fate has not yet burned it

Ah, my sea, my sea  
You are my living garment

Mercy, mercy  
Into the salty sea  
I shall pour honey



Γιατι στιν ακρη στεκονται  
Κορμακια σαν αγγελοι

Αχ, τι θα κανω, πως να γενω  
Π'αγαπω και δεν κερδαινω

Αμαν. αμαν  
Ο κοσμος να με κερνα φαρμακι  
Και μενα με φαρμακωσε  
Η ερημη η αγαπη

Αχ, τι θα κανω, πως να γενω  
Π' αγαπω, και δεν κερδαινω

5. Απο Μικρος Στην Ξενητεια.. **Apo Mikros Stin Xenitya. In a Foreign Land Since I Was Little. Zeibekiko.** Recorded in New York in the mid 1940s with violin, santouri and doubbek.

Απο μικρος στην ξενητεια  
Τον κοσμο ελερνούσα  
Και φραγκο μεσ' στην τσεπη μου  
Ποτες δεν αποκτουσα

Τωρα απεφασισα κι εγω  
Λιγο να ησυχαιπω  
Τις τρελες της νεοτης μου  
Ολες να της ξεχασω

Τωρα παντρευτικα κι εγω  
Και πηρα μια τσαχπινα  
Την αγαπω και μ'αγαπα  
Και τα περνουμε φινα

6. Παραμανα Κουνα Κουνα. **Paramana Cuna Cuna. Nurse, Rock, Rock. Zeibekiko.** Recorded in New York in April, 1927, with violin, oud and santouri, d. Alfred Cibelli.

Αχ, μπουφετζης θα πα να γινω  
Σε Σμυρνεικο τεκε  
Αντε, να 'ρχονται τα χανουμακια  
Αχ, να φουμαρουν αργιλε

Αντε, παραμανα, κουνα, κουνα  
Το παιδι που 'ναι στην κουνια  
Αντε το κουνω και κεινο κλαιγει,

For at the edge stand girls  
with angelic bodies

Ah, what will I do, what will I become,  
For I love and do not win.

Mercy, mercy  
The world treats me to poison  
And I've been poisoned by  
Lonely love

Ah, what will I do, what will I become  
For I love and do not win.

Since I was little, I've lived in foreign lands,  
All around the world  
And I never kept a dime  
In my pocket

Now I've decided  
To calm down  
The madness of my youth,  
To forget it all.

Now I've gotten married  
To a coquette.  
I love her and she loves me  
And we have a great time.

Ah, I'm going to be a buffet man  
In a Smyrna hash house.  
And the Turkish girls will come,  
Ah, to smoke the water pipe.

And so, nurse, rock, rock  
The child in the cradle.  
I rock it and it cries.

Αχ, τη μανουλα του γυρευει.

Αχ, μαυρα ματια, μαυρα φρυδια,  
Μαυρα εμορφα μαλλια.  
Αντε ας το φιλαγα το μαυρο  
Αχ, και δεν ηθελ' αλλο πια.

Αντε παραμανα, κουνα, κουνα  
Το παιδι που 'ναι στην κουνια.  
Αντε, το κουνω και κεινο σκουζει  
Αχ, θα το σκασω σαν καρπουζι.

Αχ, δε μου λετε τι να κανω,  
Να πεθανω η να ζω,  
Αντε για να παρω το μαχαιρι  
Αχ, κι απ' τον κοσμο να χαθω.

Αντε, παραμανα, κουνα, κουνα  
Το παιδι που 'ναι στην κουνια.  
Αντε, το κουνω και κεινο κλαιγει  
Αχ, τη μανουλα του γυρευει.

7. Η Χαιδω. **E Haido. Haido. Syrtos.** Recorded in New York in February, 1927, with violin, clarinet, santouri, tambourine and cello.

Χαιδω μου, τα δυο σου ματια  
Μου ραγησαν την καρδια.  
Και την εκαναν κομματια  
Χαιδω μου πολυ γλυκια.  
Πω, πω, πω, τι'ν'αυτο  
Με τα ματια σου τα δυο.  
Χαιδω μου θα τρελαθω  
Συ μου πηρες το μυαλο

Χαιδω μου, οταν σε ειδω  
Γινομαι τρελος  
Με την τοση εμορφια σου  
Συ μου πηρες το μυαλο  
Πω, πω, πω, τ'ειν'αυτο  
Με τα ματια σου τα δυο  
Χαιδω μου, θα τρελαθω  
Μ'εχεις κανει πια τρελο.

Ah, it wants its mother.

Ah, black eyes, black brows,  
Beautiful black hair.  
Ah, if only I could kiss it,  
I wouldn't want anything more.

And so, nurse, rock, rock  
The child in the cradle.  
I rock it and it squeals,  
Ah, I'll smash it like a watermelon!

Ah, won't you tell me what to do,  
To live or to die?  
Or should I take the knife  
Ah, and be lost from the world?

And so, nurse, rock, rock  
The child in the cradle  
I rock it and it cries,  
Ah, it wants its mother.

My Haido, your two eyes  
Have broken my heart  
And left it in pieces,  
My very sweet Haido.  
My, my, my, what is this  
With your two eyes.  
My Haido, I'll go mad.  
You have taken away my mind.

My Haido, when I see you  
I go mad.  
With your great beauty  
You have taken away my mind.  
My, my, my, what is this  
With your two eyes,  
My Haido, I'll go mad.  
You've already driven me mad.



Με τα ματια σου τα μαυρα  
Και ο ασπρος σου λαιμος  
Με εκανανε, το μαυρο,  
Για να περπατω τρελος  
Πω, πω, πω, τι 'ν' αυτο  
Με τα ματια σου τα δυο  
Χαιδω μου, θα τρελαθω  
Συ μου πηρες το μυαλο.

8. Πες μου τι θα καταλαβεις. **Pes Mou Ti Ta Katalavis. Tell Me What You Will Gain.**  
Recorded in New York in February, 1927. With violin, clarinet, santouri and tambourine.

Αχ, πες μου τι θα καταλαβεις  
Αν με δεις στη γης νεκρο  
Κλαψε μενα πεθαμενον  
Κλαψε με και ζωντανο  
Αχ, δεν μπορω να καταλαβω  
Τα δικα σου φυσικα  
Στους γιατρους θε να με ριξεις  
Να με φαν τα γιατρικα

Αχ, δεν μπορω πλεον να ζμσω  
Κι'αν δε ζησουμε μαζι  
Δυο κορμια να γινουν ενα  
Ενα σωμα , μια ψυχη

9. Η Βλαχα η Εμορφη. **E Vlaha E Emofi. The Beautiful Vlach Girl.** Recorded in New York in February, 1929, with Gus Gadinis, Clarinet and Louis Rassias, Cymbalum.

Εγω ειμ'η Βλαχα η εμορφη,  
Η Βλαχα παινεμενη  
Πουχω τα χιλια προβατα  
Τα πεντακοσια γιδια.  
Λυκος να φαιε τα προβατα  
Λυκος να φαιε τα γιδια  
Και 'γω παω στα Γιαννενα  
Στου Μπεη τα παλατια  
- Καλησπερα σου, Μπεη μου.  
- Καλως τη Βλαχοπουλα,  
- Καλως τη Βλαχα εμορφη.

With your black eyes  
—and that white neck of yours—  
They've made me, poor wretch,  
To walk about insane.  
My, my, my, what is this  
With your two eyes.  
My Haido, I'll go mad.  
You've taken my mind.

Ah, tell me what will you gain  
If you see me in the ground, dead  
Mourn me as a dead man  
Mourn me also alive

Ah, I can't understand  
Your ways  
You'll send me to the doctors  
To be eaten up by the medicines

Ah, I can no longer live  
If we don't live together.  
Two bodies becoming one,  
One body, one soul.

I am the beautiful Vlach girl.  
The proud Vlach girl,  
Who has the thousand sheep,  
The five hundred goats.  
Let a wolf eat the sheep!  
Let a wolf eat the goats!  
And I'm going to Janina  
To the Bey's palaces.  
"Good evening to you, my Bey."  
"Welcome, Vlach girl,  
Welcome, beautiful Vlach girl."

10. Θελω Να Σ'αλησμονισω. **Thelo Na S'Alismoniso. I Want To Forget You. Karsilamas.**  
Recorded in New York in February, 1929. Louis Rassias, Cymbalum and Nishan Sedefjian, violin.

Θελω να σ'αλησμονισω  
Μα η καρδια μ'αδυνατει  
Συ 'σαι πρωτη αγαπη  
Εισαι και παντοτινη

Δεν μπορω πλεον να ζησω  
Εαν δεν ζησουμε μαζι  
Δυο καρδιες να γινουν ενα,  
Ενα σωμα, μια ψυχη.

Δε μου λετε, τι να κανω  
Να πεθανω, αχ, η να ζω,  
Για να παρω, αχ, το μαχαيري  
Κι απ' τον κοσμο να χαθω;

I want to forget you  
But my heart finds it impossible  
You are my first love,  
You are my eternal love.

I can no longer live  
If we dont live together  
Two bodies to become one  
One body, one soul.

Won't you tell me what to do!  
Should I die, ah, or should I live  
Or should I take the knife, ah,  
And be lost from the world

11. Αγριλαμας και Ψαραδες. **Agrilamas Ke Psarades. The Good host and the and Fishermen.** Recorded in New York in 1929 with Gus Gadinis, clarinet and Louis Rassias, cymbalum.

Εχετε, ψαραδες, ψαρια;  
Οιμε, οιμε,  
Εχετε ψαραδες, ψαρια;  
Αστακους και καλαμαρια

Εχουμε καλη σαρδελλα  
Οημε, οημε.  
Εχουμε καλη' σαρδελλα  
Σαν την εμορφη κοπελλα.

Παρε . . .  
Εμαθα πως πιανεις ψαρια  
Οημε, οημε.  
Εμαθα πως πιανεις ψαρια,  
Αχ, αστακους και καλαμαρια

Fishermen, do you have fish?  
Alas, alas.  
Fishermen, do you have fish;  
Lobsters and squid?

We have good sardines  
Alas, alas.  
We have good sardines  
Like the beautiful girls.

Get . . .  
I've learned that you catch fish,  
alas, alas  
I've learned that you catch fish,  
Ah, lobsters and squid.



12. Χωρίς Ελπίδα Να Ζω. **Horos Elpida Na Zo. To Live Without Hope. Rebetiko.** Recorded in New York in Feb 1929, with Nishan Sedefjian, Violin and Louis Rassias, cymbalum.

Αχ Μελαχροينو,  
Ελα να σου ειπω,  
Να παμε σ' άλλο μερος,  
Πολυ μακρια απο 'δω.  
Αχ, σε αγαπω κιαπο καρδιας ποθω  
Κι αν δε σε παρω, φως μου,  
Απ' τον κοσμο θα χαθω

Κριμα ειναι, τ' ορφανο,  
Χωρις ελπισ να ζω,  
Κι εσυ να με αρνεισαι,  
Μικρο μελαχρino.  
Αχ, σε αγαπω κιαπο καρδιας ποθω,  
Κι αν δε σε παρω φως μου  
Για σενα θα χαθω

Τα ματια σου τα μαυρα  
Και τα σγουρα μαλλια,  
Μ' ανοιζανε, μικρο μου,  
Πληγη μεσ' στην καρδια,  
Αχ, σε αγαπω κι απο καρδιας ποθω,  
Κι αν δε σε παρω, φως μου  
Απ' τον κοσμο θα χαθω.

13. Απο Τα Μικρα Μου Χρονια. **Apo Ta Mikra Mou Hronia. From My Childhood Years. Karsilamas.** Recorded in New York in Oct. 1927 with Alexis Zoumbas, violin, and unk.. cymbalum.

Απο ψα μικρα μου χρονια  
Αχ, στην σγαπηγ τραγησα  
Δεν με ρωτησες, κυρα μου  
Αχ, ποσα πτερτια τραβηξα

Απο τα δυκεμια πεφτω  
Αχ, πεφτω για να σκοτωθω  
Την αγαπη μου γυρευω  
Αχ, δεω μπορε να την ευρω

Ηθελα να' πθω ενα βραδυ

Ah, dark one,  
Come let me tell you,  
Let's go to another place,  
Very far from here.  
Ah, I love you, and from my heart I desire,  
If I can not marry you, my light  
I'll be lost from the world.

It's a pity for me, the poor orphan,  
To live without hope,  
And for you to reject me,  
Little dark one.  
Ah, I love you, and from my heart I desire  
If I cannot marry you, my light,  
I'll be lost because of you.

Your black eyes  
And curly hair  
Have opened, my little one,  
A wound in my heart.  
Ah, I love you, and from my heart I desire  
If I cannot marry you, my light,  
I'll be lost from the world.

From my youth  
Ah, into love I have fallen  
You don't know, my lady  
How much I have suffered

I fall from ...  
Ah, I fall to kill myself  
I'm looking for my love  
Ah, I cannot find her

I wanted to come by one evening

Αχ, μ' επιασε ψιλη βροχη  
Αχ, το Θεο παρακαλουσε  
Αχ, για να σ' ευρω μοναχη

14. Το Μνημα Μου Χορταριασε. **To Mina Mou Hortariase. My Grave Is Overgrown With Grass. Amane.** Recorded in New York in October 1927, with Alexis Zoumbas, Violin.

Το μνημα μου χορταριασε  
Κ' ελα να βοτανησεις

Να χισεις μαυρα δακρια  
Ισως και μ' αναστησεις

15. Μαυροματα. **Mavromata. Dark-eyed Girl.** Recorded in New York in October 1927, with Alexis Zoumbas, violin, and unk., cymbalum.

Αχ, μ' αφα τα ματια  
Γλυκια μου μαυροματα,  
Και με δυο ελιτσες  
Που εχεις στο λεμο,  
Κανεις την καρδια μου  
Να γινεται κοματια.  
Και το αχ στα χειλη μου,  
Καιγετ' η καρδια

Κανω να σ' αλισμονισο,  
Μα η καρδια μ' αδυνατει.  
Κι' οταν πια αποφασησω  
Τοτε σ' αγαπαω  
Ακομα πιο πολυ  
Αχ, μαυροματα μου  
Στ' αληθεια τοτε σ' αγαπαω  
Ακομα πιο πολυ

Δεν μπορω ν' αντεξω,  
Τρελη μου μαυροματα,  
Το χαμογελο σου  
Κε τη γλυκια ματια.  
Κι' οταν τη μετρισω με,  
Πια με μια λαχταρα.  
Κε το αχ στα χειλη μου  
Καιγετ' η καρδια

Ah, and was caught in a light rain  
Ah, I was praying to God  
To find you alone

My grave has grown over with grass,  
Come see that you tend to it.

Make sure you cry bitter tears,  
And maybe that will bring me back.

Ah! With those eyes,  
My sweet dark-eyed girl,  
And with the two beauty marks  
That you have on your neck,  
You make my heart  
Break into pieces.  
And with a sigh on my lips  
My heart is burned.

I try to forget you,  
But my heart is unable.  
And even when I decide to forget  
Then I love you  
Even more.  
Ah! my dark-eyed girl,  
Truly, then I love you  
Even more.

I cannot resist,  
My wild dark-eyed girl,  
Your smile  
And your sweet glance.  
And when I realize  
Finally with yearning,  
And with a sigh on my lips,  
My heart breaks



Κανω να σ'αλισμονησω.  
Μα η καρδια  
Μα η καρδια μ'αδυνατει.  
Κι'οταν πια αποφασησω  
Τοτε σ'αγαπαω, ακομα πιο πολυ  
Αχ, μαυροματα μου  
Στ'αληθεια, τοτε σ'αγαπαω  
Ακομα πιο πολυ

I try to forget you,  
But my heart,  
But my heart is unable.  
And even when I decide to forget  
Then I love you even more.  
Ah! my dark-eyed girl,  
Truly, then I love you  
Even more.

16. Σμυρνεϊκος Μπαλλος. **Smyrneikos Balos. Smyrna Dance. Balos.** Recorded in New York in the early 1940s with the John Pappas Orchestra, John Pappas, clarinet.

Για να σωθω απ' το θανατο  
πρεπει να μ' αγαπησεις  
πρεπει να κλινεις με τα με  
τη φλογα μου να σβησεις

To save me from death  
You must love me  
You must lie with me  
To extinguish my flame

17. Δεν Μου Λετε Τι Να Κανω. **Den Mou Lete Ti Na Kano. Tell Me What I Must Do.** *Syrtos.* Recorded in New York in October 1927, with Alexis Zoumbas, violin, and unknown. santouri, 'cello and castanets.

Δεν μου λετε χθες το βραδυ  
Ο θυμος τι ητανε

Won't you tell me about last night?  
What was that anger?

Δυο σου φιλοι μ'ανταμωσαν  
Κε για σενα μου ειπανε

Two of your friends met me  
And told me about you

Βρυση μου μαλαματενια  
Πως βγαζεις κρυο νερο

My golden fountain  
How is it that you give cold water?

Εκβαθω κι εγω ο καημενος  
Αχ, τις αγαπης τον καιμο

I feel deeply, poor wretch  
Love's unfulfilled longing

18. Μη Με Δερνεις Μανα. **Me Mi Dernas Mana. Don't Beat Me Mama. Sirtos.** Violin, cymbalum, recorded in New York in the early 1940s.

Μη με δερνεις μανα μανουλα μου  
Μη με δερνεις μανα μ' με τ'αργαλιο(?)  
Κι εγω δεν τονε θελω μανουλα  
Κι εγω δεν τονε θελω  
Τον παλιο φουμαρτζη

Don't beat me mama  
Don't beat me mama, with the shuttle  
I don't want him, mama,  
I dont want  
That nasty old chain-smoker

Μη με δερνεις μανα μ'  
Μη με δερνεις με τον κοπανο  
Κι εγω δεν τονε θελω  
Τον παλιοτσοπανο

Μη με δερνεις μανα μου  
Και θε να στο ειπω  
Δυο, τρεις φορες με φιλησε  
Ο νεος π'αγαπω

Μια φορα στ'αμπελι  
Δυο στον αργαλειο  
Τρεις στην καμαριτσα, μανουλα  
Που ημασταν τα δυο

Don't beat me mother  
Don't beat me with the pestle  
I don't want him  
That nasty old shepherd

Don't beat me mother  
And I will tell you that  
Two or three times  
The young man I love kissed me

Once in the vineyard  
Twice at the loom  
And three times in the little room, mama,  
Where the two of us were

19. Εγω Για Σενα Τραγουδω. **Ego Gia Sena Tragouda. I Sing For You. Zeibekiko.** Recorded in New York in the early 1940s with violin, cymbalum and doumbek.

Εγω για σενα τραγουδω  
Και λες δεν σ'αγαπαγω.  
Και λες με τα τραγουδια μου  
Πως τον καιρο περναγω

I sing for you  
And you say I dont love you.  
And you say that with my songs  
I'm just passing my time.

Μηλο μου και μανταρινι  
Κι'ο, τι πεις εσυ, θα γινει

My apple and tangerine,  
And whatever you say will be done

Μεσ' στα γλυκα ματακια σου  
Μεσ' στα γλυκα σου καλλη  
Εξεχασα σιγα - σιγα  
Καθε αγαπη αλλη

In your sweet little eyes  
In your sweet beauty  
I have, little by little, forgotten  
Every other love.

Μηλο μου, χρυσο μου αχλαδι,  
Που 'σουνα εχθες το βραδυ;

My apple and my golden pear,  
Where were you last night?

Οταν στερεψει η θαλασσα  
Και βγει μηλια με μηλα  
Τοτε θα σ'αρνηθω κι εγω  
Γλυκια μου, Αμαλια.

When the sea goes dry  
And grows an apple tree with apples  
Then I will deny you  
My sweet Amalia.

Αλλα λες κι αλλα μου κανεις  
Βαλθηκαν να με τρελανεις

You say one thing and do another  
You've set your mind to drive me mad

Εσυ θαρρεις πως σ'αγαπω

You think I love you



Και τιποτα φοβασαι  
Μεσα στα φυλλα της καρδιας  
Σε εχω και κοιμασαι

Μηλο μου και μανταρινι  
Κι ο, τι πεις εσυ θα γινει.

And you fear nothing.  
In the depths of my heart  
I have you sleeping  
My apple and tangerine  
And whatever you say will be done.

20. Τωρα Τα Πουλια. **Tora Ta Poulia. Now the Birds.** *Laiko Kleftico*. This song is sung at the side of the slain warrior husband. Recorded in New York in the early 1940s with kanoun and doumbek, Gus Gadinis, clarinet.

Τωρα τα πουλια  
Τωρα τα χελιδονια  
Τωρα οι περδικες  
Τωρα οι περδικες  
Συχνα λαλουν και λενε  
Ξυπνα εφε, ορε ξυπνα εφεντη μου  
Ξυπνα εφεντη μου  
Ξυπνα καλε μ' αφεντη  
Ξυπνα αγκα, ορε ξυπνα αγκαλιασε

Now the birds  
Now the swallows  
Now the partridges  
Now the partridges  
Sing out and say  
Awake, my husband.  
Awake, my husband.  
Oh, do awake, my husband  
Awake, oh, awake, hold me.

*Tora Ta Poulia and Smyrniotiko Majore use older song forms traditionally used in expressing deep emotion. Tora Ta Poulia was sung in former times of trouble, like the 1922 relocations, and recalled older reserves of courage in the face of adversity. The familiar form of Smyrniotiko Majore, an Amane, usually embodying an expression of very personal anguish, is here possibly used to lament the atrocities suffered by Greece and Amalia's home town of Janina during World War II.*

21. Σμυρνιωτικο Ματζορε. **Smyrniotiko Majore.** *Amane*. Recorded in New York in the early 1940s with violin and cymbalum.

Ωχ!  
Κοιμουμαι μ'ενα στεναγμο  
Ξυπνω με μαυρα δακρυα

Ωχ!  
Τι εχουν και δε [θαυμαζουν]  
Τα εγκληματα [...]

Oh!  
I go to sleep with a sigh  
I awaken with bitter tears  
Oh!  
What is wrong that they don't wonder  
That the crimes are commonplace.



At the Athens Bar in Detroit ca.1950. Diamond, Amalia, unknown violinist, Garbis Birkajian, kanun, unknown tambourinist, John Pappas, clarinet.



front of the stage, and again the music and again the dance...In other words, those enraptured pay as if they are buying tickets for each and every dance they are going to bounce and dance with.

Like gamblers those who dance once can not hold themselves back ever again. It is not an uncommon scene to see someone who dances a second dance, a third dance and then a fifth and soon empties his pockets and wallets, and even throws his ring to the *saz*. And there is no one who does not get excited and get up to dance. For them they left a small opening in the middle. Sometimes it is so crowded there that people dancing bump into each other.

One fat man passed me by, appeared in the crowd, threw bills that were in the shape of balls all crumpled in his hand. Amalia Hanim and her daughter picked these up. They unfolded them and put them into a basket.

At this, I said with a smile to a local next to me "Here one should be a singer or musician." He answered "Once Iraqis and Syrians came here, 24 of them. They were wearing white tuxedos. Wearing curious *fezzes* on their heads. They would come to the stage rather showily, men and women too. The

Syrians here made a good name for themselves. They spent a lot of money!

I asked whether the fat guy who had since been paying and dancing was rich. They said "he is a worker at the Ford factory. He can speak Turkish well. He is from somewhere around Syria." Then they added, "He got his weekly pay today."

Outside, the sun was rising. The poor guy was worn down by hopping and belly dancing. He was saying "I will drink a cup of tea and then go directly to work."

That is, he was going to go to the factory after his tremendous tiredness. And he would tell his friends "I had so much fun last night!"

(Istanbul, 1950)

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Produced by David Soffa.

Front cover photo: Amalia and Diamond in Chicago, early 1950s. Front cover photo colorized by David Soffa. Back cover photo, L to R: Nishan Sedefjian, Amalia, Diamond, Natan, Romano, Teli Karapaniotis, unknown woman, at a New York restaurant, 1940s. All photos through the courtesy of Diamond Papachristou.



*Amalia in 1927. From the 1930 Victor Record Company Greek Record Catalog.*



# Amalia!



Amalia, Marika Papagika, and Coula Antonopoulos were the most important Greek vocalists in the Americas. This CD presents Amalia in unrivalled performances that carry Greek traditional song to the New World and into modern times with passion and verve. A 24 page booklet includes newly discovered photos, a period review, and translations of the songs.

1. Ali Pasha
2. Kala Kalaya Bakar
3. T' Asteri To Lambro
4. I Thalassa
5. Apo Mikros Stin Xenitia
6. Paramana Cuna Cuna
7. Haido Syrto
8. Pes Mou Ti Tha Katalavis
9. I Vlahi I Emorfi
10. Thelo Na S' Alismoniso
11. Agrilamas ke Psarades

12. Horis Elpida Na Zo
13. Apo Ta Mikra Mou Hronia
14. To Mnima Mou Hortariase
15. Mavromata
16. Smyrneikos Balos
17. Den Mou Lete Ti Na Kamo
18. Mi Me Dernis Mana
19. Ego Yia Sena Tragoudo
20. Tora Ta Poulia
21. Smyrneiko Majore

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File Under: WORLD/GREECE

