

### 3. Aphrodite's dance, jazz meets local music

A flirtation between jazz and Cypriot local music characterizes the music of *Anakreon*. The piano trio consisting of pianist Glafkos Kontemeniotis, bassist Kyriacos Hadjitoffis and drummer Manos Papayiannakis recorded “Music of the Wings,” their first and only album, in New York City, in 2001. A reviewer of the *Sunday Mail* writes,

Most of the tunes have been inspired by Greek songs, such as an old rebetico. At the moment I'm listening to 'Aphrodite's dance' and I'm tapping my foot away to it as I write and actually typing in tune to it too! It's got a really funky feel too, uplifting and rejuvenating.<sup>47</sup>

The final track in the album, ‘Aphrodite's dance,’ forms a jazz reinterpretation of a Greek-Cypriot popular song. It is based on Michalis Violaris's song ‘Halalin tou,’ translated as ‘In vain’ in his greatest hits album. Michalis Kyriakou, known by his stage-name Michalis Violaris, is a popular singer and composer of modern Greek and Cypriot music and responsible for popularizing Cypriot songs sung in the Greek-Cypriot dialect in Greece.<sup>48</sup> ‘Halalin tou’ is one of Violaris' many hits, and was released as part of the album *Τα Κυπριώτικα* in 1970.<sup>49</sup> It is also included in the ‘Complete Guide to the Music of Cyprus by Various Artists’ album released in Dec 4, 2014 by FM records.

‘Aphrodite's dance’ demonstrates the application of jazz rhythms, harmonies and sensibilities on to a Cypriot melody. It exhibits dialogue, call and response, collective synchronizations, as well as semiotic dimensions, enabling sonic symbols to refer

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<sup>47</sup> [http://kth-music.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/anakreon\\_review.jpg](http://kth-music.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/anakreon_review.jpg)

<sup>48</sup> <http://www.e-orfeas.gr/artists/interviews/5114-μιχαλης-βιολαρης-να-προσεξουμε-τον-πολιτισμο-της-χωρας-μας.html>

<sup>49</sup> *Τα Κυπριώτικα* translates to The Cypriot songs.

actively to other parts of the same piece, to other music, or to contextual and extra musical phenomena, such as is associated with the vast genre of jazz (Iyer 2004). It presents vital components of the kind of improvisatory skill associated with jazz, including adaptability, efficiency, fluency, flexibility, and expressiveness (Pressing 1988). Furthermore its execution is in the jazz vein of having a plan, an abstract homomorphism, that represents the essential structure of the performance, and letting the finer details generate and locate themselves during execution (Shaffer 1980).<sup>50</sup>

This chapter focuses on the verse and chorus of ‘Aphrodite’s dance’ and through comparing it with ‘Halalin tou,’ aims for a compelling case study of jazz being employed for the reinterpretation of a non-jazz tune. Thus this investigation should be of interest to the listener of Cypriot music, world music and jazz.

### **3.2 ‘Halalin tou’**

‘Halalin tou’ is a pleasant love song in a major key, sang in the Greek-Cypriot dialect, with the lyrics of the chorus roughly translating as: ‘for your heart and your embrace, by god, all for your sake.’ The classic recording from the Τα Κυπριώτικα album has the composer Violaris himself singing. A transcription of this recording is illustrated below. The recording begins with a violin iterating the chorus with the gentle accompaniment of a guitar strumming chords. Measure six marks the second repeat of the chorus, with the appearance of a second violin, a viola, electric bass and drums with brushes. In measure seven a tenor recorder appears and in measure eight a xylophone. Measure eleven marks the start of the verse with the vocals coming in, lasting four measures before repeating. With the second repeat of the verse at measure

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<sup>50</sup> This has been verified through personal communication with Kyriacos Hadjitoffis.

fifteen, a zither appears performing a repetitive sixteenth-note pattern. Measure twenty marks the return of the chorus.

## Halalin tou

Michalis Violaris

$\text{♩} = 75$

Guitar

4-string Bass Guitar

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

7

T. Rec.

Xyl.

Voice

Gtr.

Bass

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Figure 3.1 .

2  
T. Rec.

Zith.

Xyl.

Voice

Bass



17  
T. Rec.

Zith.

Xyl.

Voice

Bass

Vln. 1

32

pizz.

*mf*

Figure 3.2.

A reduction of 'Halalin tou' appears below, illustrating the melody and harmony at the most fundamental and skeletal level.

Chorus of 'Halalin tou'

The musical notation for the chorus of 'Halalin tou' is presented in two staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 7/8 time signature. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, with some measures containing rests. Below the staff, chord labels are provided: V, IV, I, V. The second staff continues the melody, also with chord labels: I, IV, I, V, I. The notation is a skeletal reduction, focusing on the harmonic structure and basic melodic contour.

Figure 3.3.

A distinctive feature is the 7/8 compound time signature with a rhythmic feel of 3+2+2. Demetriou notes that a variety of compound rhythms, including 5/8, 7/8 and 9/8, are used particularly in Cypriot dances ("Cyprus." *Grove Music Online*). Another feature is the diatonic melody, which consists of two phrases, the first forming measures 2 to 5 and the second from 6 to 9. It should also be noted that the first measure is a pick up and only performed as an introduction to the song; every other iteration of the chorus does not include it.

The melody in the verse also remains diatonic and also consists of two, four-measure phrases.

#### Verse of 'Halalin tou'

The musical notation for the verse of 'Halalin tou' is presented in two staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 7/8 time signature. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, with some measures containing rests. Below the staff, chord labels are provided: I, IV, V, I. The second staff continues the melody, also with chord labels: I, IV, V, I. The notation is a skeletal reduction, focusing on the harmonic structure and basic melodic contour.

Figure 3.4.

### **3.3 ‘Aphrodite’s dance’**

Although the melody is the same in both songs, the images and feelings each piece evokes are poles apart. The sweet sounds of rural Cyprus in ‘Halalin tou’, with multiple instruments evoking images of love and longing, are transformed into a swinging jazz piano trio performing at a smoky bar.

One element that differentiates the pieces is form. ‘Aphrodite’s dance’s form is that of jazz standards as performed at jam sessions, consisting of a largely composed and characteristic melody (the head), played at the beginning, then complemented by a series of solos on the harmonic progression of the head and followed by the repetition of the head at the end (Berliner 1994: 63).

# Verse of 'Aphrodite's dance'

♩ = 136

Piano

Bass Guitar

G major7 C major7 B7 #9 E7 #5 A-11 D9

4

Pno.

Bass

G major7 G major7 C major7 B7 #9 E7 #5

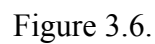
7

Pno.

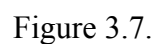
Bass

A-11 D9 35 G major7

At a first glance ‘Aphrodite’s dance’ incorporates a change of rhythm, meter and tempo.<sup>51</sup> An obvious difference is the use of quarter triplets in 4/4 in place of the eight notes in 7/8.



In the verse of ‘Halalin tou’ the bass iterates a 7/8 ostinato figure.



G major7    C major7    B7 #9    E7 #5    A-11    D9

36



I      IV                      III7                      VI7      ii                      V7

Figure 3.8.

Moreover, the harmonic rate of the verse doubles, going from a one chord per m. progression I/IV/V/I, I/IV/V/I to a two chord per measure Imaj7-IVmaj7/ III7-VI7/ ii7-V7/ Imaj7 –Imaj7, Imaj7-IVmaj7/ III7-VI7/ ii7-V7/ Imaj7 –Imaj7. Indeed this elaborated chord progression is itself idiomatic of standard jazz harmony. Prominent features that give the verse a jazz ‘feel’ are the eight note and quarter note triplets in the piano, which have the effect of making the melody sound slightly behind the beat. The dotted eight-note and sixteenth note figures in the bass, have the opposite effect, and sounds slightly ahead of the beat. In addition, two gestures are introduced, the three-note gesture in the fourth measure, which is the so-called Charleston rhythm placed on beat 3, and the seven-note gesture on the last measure.

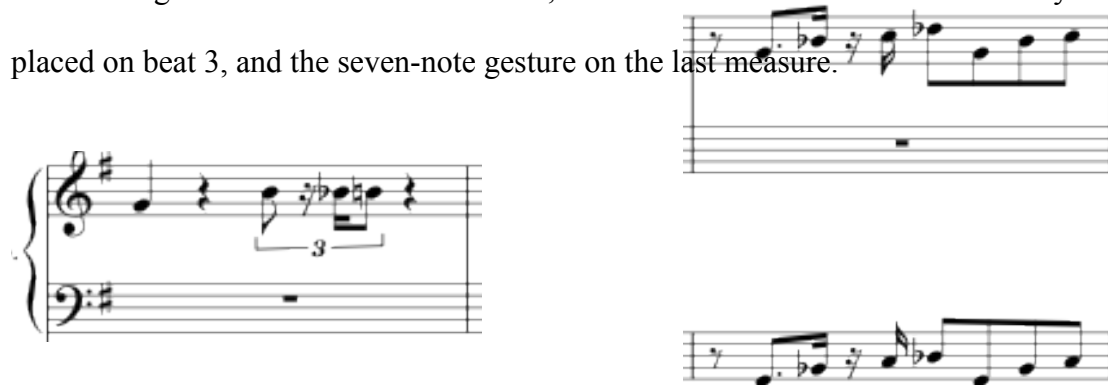


Figure 3.9.

The seven-note gesture in the last measure consists of a chromatic lower (second triplet in beat 1 and 2) and upper neighbor note followed by the target note (first triplet of beat 2, beat 3).