

Songs from Siphnos

Unpublished recordings: 1930-1998

Produced by:

Friends of the Melpo Merlier Music Folklore Archive,
with the support of the Siphnian Studies Society

Production, publishing and booklet editors:
Markos Ph. Dragoumis, Thanassis Moraitis

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- Recordings took place: in Athens, 1930 by Melpo Merlier –in Athens, 1961 by Markos Ph. Dragoumis– at Siphnos, 1971 by Déspina Mazaraki and at Siphnos, 1998 by Thanassis Moraitis
- Texts by: Markos Ph. Dragoumis, Thanassis Moraitis, John Zervoudakis
- Musicological analysis, commentary: Markos Ph. Dragoumis
- Translation into English: Vassilis Mouskouris
- Sound processing, mastering: Christos Hatzistamou / *Athens Mastering*
- Production, publishing and booklet editors: Markos Ph. Dragoumis, Thanassis Moraitis
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INTRODUCTION

by Markos Ph. Dragoumis

Siphnian musicians customarily accompany their singing with the violin and the lute, in a really striking way. Violins cover, with admirable ease, a much wider range than do the voices, emphasizing the general features of the scale used, effectively commenting on every single melodic phrase and inventing specific coloristic effects, especially in lower registers, to make their accompaniment more interesting. Lutes on the other hand, instead of being confined to a passive role, turn themselves into a quasi-independent second part, by systematically underlining the first of the two weak beats in each measure and with occasional and abrupt outbursts into loud tremoli. As for singers, regardless of age, whether consciously or unconsciously, they control their voices in a masterly manner, in their attempt to render perfectly all the nuances of a music, stemming its freshness from a proper use of a non-tempered intervallic system, as formed from individual diatonic and chromatic tetrachords, pentachords, etc. .

Recordings included in this cd date from 1930, 1961, 1971 and 1998. They belong to the Music

Folklore Archive (M.F.A.), except for those of 1971, which were acquired from the Fonds Samuel Baud-Bovy of the Library of the conservatoire in Geneva thanks to Mr. Manuel Baud-Bovy. The 1930 recordings were produced by Melpo Merlier and her associates in Athens at the Alhambra theatre, then located on Chalcocondyli Street. This undertaking involved musicians from all over the country, and the whole collection, consisting of 222 78 rpm's, was originally used only as source material for experts. For information on the 1998 recordings, produced by the M.F.A., see the note by Thanassis Moraitis below. The 1961 recordings were the result of coincidence; three musicians from Siphnos came to Athens to sing New Year's Carols for their fellow islanders living in the capital. My friend Yiannis Anninos, who knew them, gave the M.F.A. the opportunity to record them. In conclusion, the 1971 recording tracks were taped by the ethnomusicologist Déspina Mazaraki (1914-1989) at Chrisopiysi, Siphnos and, were handed over to Samuel Baud-Bovy for his archive along with other material from Siphnos.