



The Hellenic Society Prometheas

Τη γλώσσα μου έδωσαν Ελληνική

Το σπίτι φτωχικό στις αμμουδιές του Ομήρου.

Μονάχη έγνοια η γλώσσα μου στις αμμουδιές του Ομήρου.

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Οδυσσέας Ελύτης

Newsletter

September 2010

Announcement

We are pleased to announce that on September 2nd, 2010 *the Hellenic Center* has successfully finalized a settlement to *purchase a three-story building on Democracy Boulevard (6506 Bells Mill Road, Bethesda, MD) close to Montgomery Mall*. As you may know, the Hellenic Center is an organization comprised of the following (seven) organizations: The AHEPA Chapter 383, the Cretan Association of Greater Washington D.C., the Roumeliotes of Metro Washington, the Epirotic Society of Washington D.C., the Laconian Society of Washington D.C., the Vourvoura Society and the Hellenic Society Prometheas, Inc.

Prometheas Events

- **Friday, September 17, 2010 8:00 pm:** Lecture at St. George Greek Orthodox Church, Bethesda, MD: Dr. Hara Papatheodorou will present “Not set in stone: The lasting force of antiquity in Greek art”. For more information, see flyer.
- **Friday, September 24, 2010 8:00 pm:** Kafeneio at St. Katherine's Greek Orthodox Church in Falls Church, VA. For more information, see flyer.
- **Friday, October 8, 2010:** Greek movie. Announcement coming up.
- **Friday, October 22, 2010** at St. George Greek Orthodox Church, Bethesda, MD: One Woman Show, by Lili Bitá, “The Greek Woman Through the Ages”. Announcement coming up.

Attached please find a thank you letter we received from SOIL, the NGO we supported in Haiti.

Websites of the month

Before listening to these songs, read the article (“For the record...”) below

- Μαρίκα Παπαγκίκα - SMYRNEIKO MINORE (New York, 1919):
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ux_whsihM0
- Μαρίκα Παπαγκίκα - Manaki Mou (New York, 1925)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nWgM6hfdYnk&feature=related>

News Articles

For the record: When record lover Ian Nagoski heard a 90-year-old song by a Greek immigrant, he found his life's calling

By Jason Cherkis
Sunday, August 22, 2010; W24

Five years ago, as often happened, Ian Nagoski was stuck behind the counter of his True Vine record store in Baltimore one afternoon when a set of burly men showed up at his door carting a box of records. The box was not filled with obvious collector's bait. The vinyl did not shimmer like fresh store stock. The discs were just old 78s in wrinkled brown paper sleeves. The box had been marked as trash.

The men were part of Baltimore's eviction economy. They worked hauling out the left-behind junk of the foreclosed, the kicked-out, the newly imprisoned and the dearly departed. If they found old records, they brought them to Nagoski, hoping he'd be enough of a softie to want to save them. He didn't always take everything, but he did have one rule: If the records were not in English, he had to buy them.

This box, Nagoski noticed, contained very old Greek records. He paid \$5 for the box, roughly 10 cents per record. When he put them on his turntable, he didn't know what to think. These were interesting, sure. But maybe he'd paid too much.

Nagoski, then 30, returned to the box every week or so. He started to focus on seven or eight records made by a Greek immigrant who recorded in the 1920s. Her name was Marika Papagika, and her songs were nothing short of entrancing. She hit such sad notes, tones he'd never heard in all his years of listening to music. They seemed like "the sound of the very first cry from human beings." He eventually concluded that her tear-stained ballad "Smyrneiko Minore" was the best song he'd ever heard.

Papagika, he discovered, had been one of the most widely recorded artists in the United States in the 1920s. She'd made well over 225 records and had been successful enough to open up her own New York hotspot, called Marika's. But there wasn't much else he could find out. He could locate only two pictures of her. Her Wikipedia entry ran just three lines. He decided he had to rescue her from obscurity.



Papagika would just be the latest in a string of artists who'd been fuel for a Nagoski salvage operation, though none had seized him as thoroughly as she had. Over the years, he'd become a kind of flea-market scholar, excavating and celebrating vanished music and long-forgotten artists -- from the earliest Afro-Cuban rumbas to the earliest Bollywood soundtracks -- and had made a name for himself as an ethnomusicologist.

A life-long record fiend, he had found his calling in unearthing your great-grandmother's 78s collection -- the songs immigrants made when they first reached America, the songs they craved most from back home. In 2007, he released a compilation of his archival work, "Black Mirror: Reflections in Global Musics," which included "Smyrneiko Minore." The collection received glowing reviews on such taste-making music sites as Pitchfork and the Fader.

The Papagika song garnered more than 17,000 hits after being posted by a friend of Nagoski's on YouTube. Soon David Harrington, a Kronos Quartet violinist and the group's founder, took notice. The group has since included the song in its repertoire. "Nothing really could have prepared me for the entrance of Marika Papagika," Harrington says. "It just wiped me out -- that first note. Even now, I listen to that at least once a week. That particular note raised the bar on what a musician could accomplish. I will always be grateful to Ian for uncovering that performance."

And Nagoski hasn't stopped uncovering lost treasures. In 2009, he released a second compilation, "A String of Pearls," and helped reissue a collection of early Rembetika -- Greek urban folk music popularized in the '30s. He recently began producing a radio show available as

an Internet podcast dedicated to spinning and celebrating his 78s. Called "Fonotopia," it has played selections including a 1947 recording of a D.C. preacher and the earliest psychedelic music, recorded in Central Mexico in the 1940s. This month, Nagoski finally released an entire album of Papagika's work through the Portland-based label, Mississippi Records, and his own Canary Records.

"The more I discovered how little was known, the more I felt compelled, like, 'Okay, this is my job,'" Nagoski says. "That's me. That's what I contribute. I have to go learn this story and tell it. Part of it has to do not with her but with me, with my place in the world, with wanting to do something with my life, wanting to contribute something that I thought a force for good."

Growing up in Wilmington, Del., Nagoski didn't have to travel far to find songs worthy of obsession. He first heard the guitar at his father's knee, listening to him pluck out the house favorite, the gold-rush ballad "Sweet Betsy from Pike." His mother taught piano and voice. He can still remember her Bach and Beethoven, her cathartic renditions of '70s pop hits, and her deep tutorials on the Beatles' "Abbey Road." He and his twin sisters were encouraged to play along. Thrift-store instruments hung on the walls -- a banjo from 1865, an old Martin guitar, violins and recorders -- museum pieces you could touch.

Listening to records or grabbing a guitar proved easier than real life. To make ends meet, Nagoski's parents, Joe and Marcelle, ran a photography business, taking portraits of baby ballerinas and shooting local recitals. The work was unsteady and a grind.

During the first eight years of his life, Nagoski had pneumonia three times, as well as a prolonged bout of tonsillitis. He spent his childhood on the couch, home-schooled by Jim Croce LPs and his father's art books. Although his illnesses eventually went away, his sense of isolation stayed with him. "I really didn't fit in when I went back [to school]," he says. "I was odd. I was not okay. Kids can sniff it out when another kid just doesn't know how to be."

But Nagoski did know how to get to the record store. The closest one was three blocks away: Bert's Tape Factory. In the fourth grade, he asked employees if they had any Ravi Shankar records in stock. His grandfather, who lived two doors down, introduced him to even older records and taught him to play drums. He'd watch the old man crank up Gene Krupa LPs and keep time in his garage on those exuberant breaks.

Nagoski introduced his mother to avant-garde composer John Cage and his sisters to the Velvet Underground. As a teenager, he'd show up for class in cowboy boots with a pair of headphones draped around his neck. "He was not popular in school," recalls Rich Pell, a friend from those days. "He was not thought of at school. Nobody knew what he was."

He started writing his own songs on an acoustic guitar; he named his first homemade tape Pincher Martin, after the William Golding novel. He sent letters to his favorite composers and artists. They all bore the same message: Please tell me how I can get out of Wilmington, Delaware. One artist sent him Christmas cards every year for a while.

Nagoski's therapist recommended to his parents that he drop out of high school -- he was too depressed and wouldn't survive it. His parents agreed. "It was not smooth," his mother recalls. "But he knew that he could not just do what everybody else did. He couldn't settle down, get a job, get a grade. Everything just meant far too much or far more to him."

Nagoski enrolled in the University of Delaware's continuing education program and took a job at Bert's. He developed an almost spiritual love for free-jazz pioneer Ornette Coleman and Javanese gamelan music, and by then had delved headlong into New Zealand indie rock. But after two years in college, Nagoski still couldn't find his place. Too much experimentation with psychedelics, a bad breakup, and a lot of F's caused a breakdown. "So, I came home and sat around in my bathrobe for a couple months," he says.

He wanted to be a modern composer. He decided that if he couldn't go to college, he'd find his own teacher. At 21, he moved to New York to work for the pioneering modernist composer La Monte Young and to live in the artist's "Dream House," a loft space that had been converted into an experimental sound-and-light installation. But he spent most of his time attending to Young-ordered household chores ranging from the mundane (laundry and dish duty) to the ridiculous (shrine scrubbing).

"I was so lonely," Nagoski recalls. "I was living all alone in New York on \$300 a month, and everyone around me was really stoned. And I wanted to, like, make something of myself. ... I had to beg and plead finally in tears to get a music lesson." He lasted six months.

Nagoski moved to Philadelphia and took a job at a Borders bookstore. He later edited internal documents at a health-care company and then programmed databases for a small software firm. In his spare time, he began recording his own albums of dense electronic symphonies made with a CD burner, cassette tapes and a tone generator (an outmoded electronic device that produces single frequencies). For one song, he recorded a shower pouring over an upside down lobster pot. His pieces pulsed with menacing drones and dive bombs of piercing static, and he gave them titles such as "Feather," "Rain" and "A Joy Forever." They sounded like the most brutal New Age music -- incredibly loud, incredibly slow -- and reached very few people.

In 2000, Nagoski moved to Baltimore, lured by the city's receptive experimental music scene. He found friends, a community of like-minded, off-the-grid musicians, and steady shows. No venue was too obscure or too small. He introduced his noise experiments in the back room of a gay bar, and conducted a three-hour dronifest for 40 people in his living room.

With each show, Nagoski's expectations were always impossibly high. "He had this idea that sound could induce an ecstatic state in the listener," says Dan Conrad, a musician and collaborator. "That it didn't happen -- sustained ecstasy -- he would complain bitterly that the performance failed. It was an example of his desperate integrity."

For all his efforts, Nagoski's albums sold in the hundreds. "I've never really found an audience for my music," he admits. "There literally isn't one."

Nagoski found a far more receptive audience for his other love, championing old records, records that could be just as intense and foreign as his own, whether they were his prized prewar gospel sides or bagpipe novelties. "He has this way of talking about the actual item that is the 78 that makes it really important," says friend and guitarist Ben Chasny, who performs under the name Six Organs of Admittance. "It's almost in a mystical way. He's not just talking about: 'Here's this item I own.' When he talks about or writes about these items, they're discs that can really transport you."

That intense connection to old records soon became his route to an adult life. In 2004, a woman he'd been dating became pregnant with his daughter, June. Although the relationship didn't work out, Nagoski was determined to be a committed father. After being fired from another bookstore job, he decided to do what came most naturally: He opened True Vine in the Hampden neighborhood as its principal owner and day-to-day manager.

For the first year, Nagoski worked 80-to-100-hour weeks: running the store, scouring his favorite thrift store LP bins for fresh inventory, and in the evenings, turning his shop into a show space for out-of-town and local bands. A few nights a week, he even pulled out an old mattress and slept at the store. For his 30th birthday, he decided he needed a break and planned a three-city East Coast tour in which he'd perform at other record stores a piece he dubbed "The Baltimore Yowler" in which he simply got in front of a microphone and screamed. The shop owners were friendly enough to let him have his cathartic moment.

"My daughter had just been born," Nagoski says. "I was in a new business that didn't seem like it was going to particularly work out. I had no money. I was single and profoundly unhappy. ... There's me screaming for 20 or 30 minutes in a record store. That was how I celebrated my 30th birthday. Obviously, I was freaking out."

Soon after he returned to Baltimore, the box of Papagikas came into the store.

Just as the Papagika song was becoming a mini-phenomenon on YouTube and beyond, Nagoski was conducting research for extensive liner notes to accompany an album of her recordings. He tracked down translations of her songs, interviewed the granddaughter of one of her contemporaries, rented reel-to-reel tapes of her performances, and even found a woman Papagika had babysat. He took a picture of her old club -- now a jewelry store called Golden Paradise. The notes for the album are exhaustive but not overly academic.

Cornell professor Gail Holst-Warhaft, director of the school's Mediterranean Studies Initiative, assisted Nagoski's research and helped edit his notes on Papagika. She says that Nagoski may face criticism because he's not a traditional academic, and his notes can be "over the top."

Nagoski dedicated five years to his Papagika project. His liner notes ended up running 4,000 words long. He has chosen to begin with a mash note to his muse: "This is the nearly forgotten music of a great singer whose life spanned from the collapsing Ottoman Empire to the emerging American Empire. And it is the story of an early attempt to make a star out of an immigrant

singer, an effort that nearly succeeded, but not quite. It is an introduction to what remains of one life, derived from magically speaking black discs which say as much about the eternal as the white stone of the Parthenon."

His notes may not be ready to be published in any university press, but Holst-Warhaft believes Nagoski has done Papagika justice. "Other people have recognized her great genius as a singer, but nobody thought to do an in-depth study of her as an all-around personality," she says. "There's very little known about her, and he's painstakingly gone about finding everything. I take my hat off to him."

Nagoski's domain is the yard sale, the thrift store, the eBay auction no one else is bidding on. "I like the smell of mold, because I associate it with the euphoria of discovery," he says.

Nagoski's "approach is great, because he has a DJ's ear and he's got this historian's perspective," explains Jace Clayton, a New York artist who performs under the name DJ/rupture. "He's looking at these songs as somewhere between a poem and an autobiography."

Nagoski says the true aim of his ethnomusicology is to simply add to the musical canon -- to build on the efforts of older archivists, and uncover a bit more of our hidden history. This year, he hopes to have released another compilation, "Brass Pins and Match Heads," a study of Armenian and Syrian immigrant music from New York, and a full-length study of an Indian virtuoso singer. He's constantly listening for his next great obsession.

"He's always on a project," says his wife, Amanda Vickers, a conservationist who remembers meeting him at one of his screaming performances, which she found uncomfortable but compelling. "There really isn't any Ian not on a project."

All of the work may not just add to the canon but correct it. African and other non-Western music used to be big business in the United States and England. In the '20s, record labels recorded countless Nigerian, Greek and Iraqi immigrants, selling these works as musical postcards from home. But the mid-century folk revival, which venerated such homegrown figures as Woody Guthrie and the Carter Family and whose version of history echoes throughout the annals of rock-and-roll, helped erase the non-Western material from the American playlist.

Nagoski is comfortable with his status as a DIY scholar-fan boy, a role that has led him all over the world, giving lectures on his 78s in a 100-year-old theater in Montpellier, France, an abandoned hotel-turned-legal-squat in Brussels, an art gallery in Milan and a warehouse space in Boston. "It's scholarship in the service of poetry," he says. "There [is] a part of me that likes being thought of seriously by serious people. But serious people take many, many forms. The academy is not entirely made up of serious people."

The first thing you notice about Nagoski's home is what you don't see. There aren't thousands of records lining the shelves. He will not be leaving behind a trove for any future treasure hunters. "I have virtually no records," he says. "I don't collect. I'm a conduit for records."

A few years ago, he exited True Vine (his partners reopened in a new space), only to end up in one low-wage job after another. Last year, he drove a city cab on the overnight shift for two months. Until recently, he had a job answering phones at a census office. Money is always tight.

In early spring, Nagoski took some records to the African music library in the basement of Voice of America's Washington headquarters. He had an appointment to see Leo Sarkisian, age 89. Sarkisian had spent decades crisscrossing Africa and the Middle East working as a field recorder, archivist and broadcaster for the Voice of America; he'd been hired by Edward R. Murrow. Sarkisian's family had immigrated to Lawrence, Mass., from Armenia at the start of the 20th century. He grew up engrossed in the music of his homeland and later became a fixture on the New York scene just after Papagika's time.

The library, whose walls are lined with dozens and dozens of his reel-to-reel recordings, is named after him. Nagoski hoped the ethnomusicologist could help him translate a batch of Turkish and Armenian records, assist him with research about the old immigrant music circuit in New York and maybe tell him about other recordings he should hunt down.

Nagoski played track after track for him, and Sarkisian started filling in the blanks. Every song came to life with a story, bits of translation, a flood of memories. These songs weren't mysteries or collector bait. They made up the soundtrack of his childhood. Nagoski had picked right. Soon Sarkisian took the hand of his wife, who had joined him for the meeting, and started to dance in a crowded aisle.

Toward the end of their two-hour meeting, Nagoski decided he had to put on his beloved Papagika song. Sarkisian said even he had never heard of the singer. He was curious.

When that first note struck the room, Sarkisian stopped fussing with the piles of old records and reminiscing with his wife about the old days. A big grin creased the man's face, his eyes brightened. And for the first time all day, he fell silent and let the music take hold.

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August 25, 2010

Αίσθηση έχει προκαλέσει η δημοσίευση για την ανακάλυψη του Οδυσσειακού Ανακτόρου

Αίσθηση έχει προκαλέσει η δημοσίευση για την ανακάλυψη του Οδυσσειακού Ανακτόρου, με αποτέλεσμα οι δυο επιστήμονες που φέρονται ως ανασκαφείς της Ακρόπολης στην Ιθάκη να «βομβαρδίζονται» καθημερινά από τον Ελληνικό και διεθνή τύπο.

Οι δυο καθηγητές και ανασκαφείς, ο Θ.Παπαδόπουλος και η Λίτσα Κοντορλή -Παπαδοπούλου κάνουν λόγο για το αποτέλεσμα μιας 16ετους έρευνας και ανασκαφής με σημαντικά ευρήματα, που «επιβεβαιώνουν ότι ο τόπος μας που πασχίζει για καλά και ελπιδοφόρα νέα και ότι ο πολιτισμός αξίζει κάθε ευκαιρία που μπορεί να έχει».

Πρόκειται για

- α) μεγάλο ανακτορικό κτιριακό συγκροτήμα εκτεινόμενο και διαρρυθμισμένο σε δύο επίπεδα (άνδηρα),
- β) λίθινα κλιμακοστασία λαξευμένα στο βράχο, που διευκόλυναν την επικοινωνία των κατοίκων των δύο ανδρήρων,
- γ) κτιστό προϊστορικό φρεατίο
- δ) υπόγεια τεχνητή δεξαμενή νερού-«τυκτής» κρήνης,
- ε) ταφικό περιβόλο,
- στ) μεγάλο κυκλωτερές μνημείο,
- ζ) βοηθητικά δωματία-αποθηκες
- η) εργαστήριο κατεργασίας μετάλλου.

Στη θέση Άγιος Αθανάσιος - Σχολή Ομήρου, στις υπώρειες της Εξωγής Βορείου Ιθάκης, όπου ήταν ορατά κτιριακά κατάλοιπα και είχαν γίνει στο παρελθόν αποσπασματικές έρευνες από έλληνες και ξένους αρχαιολόγους (Volgraff, Heurtley, Wasson, Κυπαρίσσης), εντοπίστηκε και αναγνωρίστηκε η προϊστορική ακρόπολη τειχισμένη με κυκλώπειο τείχος και τέσσερις πύλες.

Η κύρια πύλη συνδέεται με οχυρωμένη διάβαση, όμοια, σε μικρότερο μέγεθος, με του ανακτόρου της Τίρυνθας, προστατευμένη με δύο πύργους (σώζεται μερικώς ο ένας) και αναβάθρα.

Η κύρια πύλη εφάπτεται τοίχου προσεκτικά κτισμένου και τις παραστάδες της αποτελούν επεξεργασμένοι τετραγωνισμένοι ογκόλιθοι. Από την κύρια είσοδο ήταν ορατή η νότια κύρια είσοδος του τριμερούς μεγάρου.

Στο κάτω άνδρηρο του κτιριακού συγκροτήματος εντοπίστηκε τριμερές ορθογώνιο κτίριο-μέγαρο, όμοιο με αντίστοιχα μέγαρα μυκηναϊκών ανακτόρων Μυκηνών, Τίρυνθας και Πύλου.

Στο άνω άνδρηρο αποκαλύφθηκαν προϊστορικά κτίρια αποθηκών, λουτρού, εργαστηρίου κατεργασίας μετάλλων, καθώς και βοηθητικά δωμάτια. Από τα δύο λαξευτά στο βράχο κλιμακοστάσια το μεγάλο δυτικό χωρίζεται με πλατύσκαλα σε δύο τμήματα, μιμούμενο ίσως μινωικά πρότυπα.

Η μυκηναϊκή υπόγεια κρήνη, ανατολικά και σε μικρή απόσταση από το κεντρικό κτιριακό συγκρότημα, διατηρείται σε αρκετά καλή κατάσταση, είναι χτισμένη με τον γνωστό εκφορικό τρόπο και μοιάζει με αντίστοιχες κρήνες των ακροπόλεων Μυκηνών και Τίρυνθας. Χρονολογήθηκε από τον ειδικό επιστήμονα για τα αρχαία υδραυλικά έργα Jost Knauss, καθηγητή του Τεχνικού Πανεπιστημίου του Μονάχου, στην μυκηναϊκή εποχή (1300-1200 π.Χ.) και, όπως οι υπόγειες κρήνες των Μυκηνών και Τίρυνθας, χρησίμευε για την ύδρευση των ενοίκων της ακρόπολης σε περίοδο πολιορκίας και εχθρικών επιδρομών.

Βορειοανατολικά του μεγάρου υπάρχει μικρός τετράγωνος ταφικός περίβολος, συλημένος. Ανατολικότερα της υπόγειας κρήνης, ερευνήθηκε μεγάλο κυκλωτερές προϊστορικό μνημείο με βαθμιδωτή είσοδο στα ανατολικά, από την επίχωση του οποίου προέρχονται δύο τουλάχιστον βουκράνια, οστά πρωτόγονου βοδιού (*bos primigenius*), προϊστορική κεραμική και πήλινες ψημένες πινακίδες γραμμικής γραφής μία από τις οποίες, δημοσιευμένη στο έγκριτο αρχαιολογικό περιοδικό *KADMOS*, έχει εγχάρακτα σύμβολα και παράσταση πλοίου με τον Οδυσσέα, τη Σειρήνα, τη Σκύλλα και τον σύντροφο του Οδυσσέα στην στιγμή της μεταμόρφωσης από άνθρωπο σε χοίρο. Στα κινητά ευρήματα συγκαταλέγονται προϊστορική κεραμική (χειροποίητη και τροχήλατη της 2ης χιλιετίας π.Χ.), σπασμένα λίθινα αγγεία, ένα μολύβδινο μινωικό ειδώλιο, χάλκινες περόνες, λυχνάρι και χρυσό έλασμα με παράσταση του Οδυσσέα και πλοίου, που το έχει τυλίξει με τα πλοκάμια της η Σκύλλα.

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