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## **A Note by Michalis Pashiardis**

I first heard Michalis Tterlikkas at a traditional cafe-restaurant. Letting loose along to cheers of “good health” his stentorian but, more importantly, authentic voice, to Cypriot rhythms and lyrics.

Immediate ascertainment: a Cypriot voice in all its depth and colour; a voice of truth as well as anguish, let loose amid waves of merrymaking; a voice which, without a doubt, is a genuine feature of our land.

The release of this CD, through which Michalis Tterlikkas interprets a series of Cypriot songs, is indeed a significant event; it constitutes a contribution to our culture which, I hope, will continue.

**Contributors:**

Song selection – Compilation – Rendering: Michalis Tterlikkas

Musical supervision: Evagoras Karagiorgis

**Musicians:**

Koullis Fylaktou: Violin, Lute, Percussion.

Sotiris Botsaris: Pithiavlin (Cypriot recorder)

Evagoras Karagiorgis: Lute in the songs “The Shepherd” and “The Maiden and Death”

**Cover:** Evgenia Vasiloudi

**Photographs:** Twins LTD & Pantelis HadjiFrangiskou

Recorded in May 1991 at the “Music Works” studio

Sound Engineer: Pantelis HadjiFrangiskou

## Lyrics

### Side A

#### 1. Red Rose Bush

Oh! My Red Rose Bush, aman! Aman!  
And my soft white bread,  
Come and follow me, my light,  
For to leave you is not right.

Let your hair fall loose, aman! Aman!  
Let it loosely fall  
Covering your breasts, my light,  
For they're peeking through.

Oh! My Red Rose Bush, aman! Aman!  
Come out in the alley  
So I may inhale your scent, my light,  
And heal this hurt inside.

Oh! My Red Rose Bush, aman! Aman!  
Keep the door ajar tonight,  
For I'll come to water you, my light,  
At the stroke of midnight.

## 2. The Bedecking of the Fiddlers

Stand to the side, rich men, and priests, you make a circle  
For I am going for to see the newly-wedded couple

Good morrow to you, dearest groom, good morrow and good health  
With myrrh and rose-water do I daub your beautifully-arched brows

Oh, groom, be happy on this day, and live a life of plenty,  
And if you seek our favours true, then – if you please – bedeck us.

And now goodbye to you, oh groom, I'll take my leave of you  
For I am going to the bride, those honey-coloured eyes.

What have you done to your mother for her to send you from her?  
In coming home, in leaving home, it's you she'll be looking for.

The Lord above, He made some bread and you He used as dough  
And sprinkled did He your body with pearls and gems galore.

Although I want to leave from here, I cannot bring myself to  
For here I see the groom's best man, who's lot it is right now.

Oh, groom's best man, I've come to you, for you to greet as well,  
Bedeck us then, and once you do, in peace then shall we leave you.

And like the water in the trough which heads towards the cistern  
So I will scour the village, to find a bride for you.

So listen well, and listen good, before dark falls I tell you  
That I won't move an inch from here until the light of day,  
And then again until I see this plate with money filled.

**Note:** These couplets used to be sung in my home village of Kapouti by musicians on the newly-wed couple's return from church, right outside the new home's front door. They consisted mostly of couplets containing wishes and praises for the newlyweds and the best man, in exchange for which the musicians would be paid (or bedecked). One of the musicians would hold in one hand a glass plate where coins would be placed, while with the other he'd hit it rhythmically, with the sound of the coins keeping to the rhythm of the music.

### 3. Akathkiotissa - (Foni Akathkiotissa)

Oh! She came out and spent her time  
Amid her basil bushes.  
Up on the first floor did she stand.  
Oh! The very sun was dazzled by  
Her beauty so impressive.  
O damned your family be!

Her bosom's sweet two breasts  
Are white just like pure marble.  
And chasing after her, I have  
My youth, Oh! So forsaken.

Oh! God above please make it so,  
If even in my dream.  
Oh! In between her snow-white breasts  
My very name to write.

The very measure of her cheek  
I keep within my pocket.  
And when remember her I do  
I take it out and kiss it.

Oh! Even when I'm being laid to rest  
In earth so deep and dark.  
Oh! There let me shout out once more  
That I do still love you.

#### 4. The Mouzourou from Morphou

The wall, that old and crumbling wall,  
I'll set upon to whitewash.  
And that old love that once I had  
I'll send it on its way.

Woe is me! Oh, woe is me! You Morphou mouzourou  
You've turned my mind within my head for those two breasts of yours.

And if she goes and spreads the word  
And tells all that I loved her,  
I'll turn around and say 'twas she  
Who'd chase me through the streets.

Come! Come play and laugh with me,  
Wide-open are my arms for when you want to come.

And if she goes and spreads the word,  
What can she do to me?  
If into jail she throws me,  
She'll come and get me out.

Woe is me! Oh, woe is me! You Morphou mouzourou  
You've turned my mind inside my head for those two breasts of yours.

You've turned my mind inside my head  
And still there's more to come,  
As long as I gaze at your cheeks  
With my kisses on them.

Come! Come play and laugh with me,  
Wide-open are my arms for when you want to come

## 5. St George's Song

Oh, listen to the darkest news, the tidings all a-blackened,  
The bitter news the infidels have shown the world asunder.  
Christian men they capture did, and then they did torment them,  
Their body in a burning blaze they'd sear into a cinder.

Saint George, who hailed from Palestine,  
For Christendom did he go and fight.  
For courage and for bravery, the king he did so love him,  
And called on him to hold up high the army's lofty banner.

Saint George he vanquished Decius, who at the time was king,  
And from Rhea's pagan temple, the idols did he banish.  
The king commanded courtiers and generals alike,  
To bring the Saint before him, all tied up and in chains.  
"Oh George, Oh George, a sacrifice I call on you to make,  
Or face such torture as to make your innards scream with pain."  
"Your torture, king, is nothing but a mere trifle and child's play,  
And I will not deny my Christ and pray to wooden boards."

Onto the wheel they hammered planks carefully hewn to shape,  
And in the planks they then did place razors and blades so sharp.  
The wheel they then turn bit by bit, atop the sharpened blades,  
Tearing to pieces that which once had been Saint George's body.  
And then it was that from above an angel did descend,  
And healed the Saint in sight of all those gathered.  
And Decius, so enraged was he that, pacing up and down,  
He ordered a pyre to be built and in threw the Saint.

And from his burning flesh's pain, the Saint he went and fainted  
And prostrate down upon the ground, he voiced a prayer strong:  
"Oh woe is me! Oh woe is me! Dear Christ, dear God of mine,  
Now that they're tormenting me, come now stand by my side.

The gentile he then laughed at George and said in sharp retort:  
"Where is your Christ then, so he may arrive and set you free?"  
A tremor then did shake the earth and everything went dark,  
And the Saint's mortal wounds immediately healed.

The lords and ladies all at once believed in Christ en masse  
So did the soldiers whose numbers were close to two times thousand.  
And all, bar none, at once they did the Christian faith assume,  
The Queen as well was baptized, her name was Alexandra.

I'll take my leave now; may the Saint extend you every help,  
And be ye happy through the years, good health to one and all.

**Note:** This song is quite lengthy, comprising 196 lines. It hails from my home village of Kapouti. The church cantors and other singers would sing it in turn on the feast day of St George, following the litany. According to testimonies offered by older fellow villagers, the song dates back at least 200 years.

## 6. The Shepherd

A humble shepherd was I born  
Next to a sheepfold's manger.  
And this poor body which you see  
In there will pass away.

Farewell, Oh pine and plane trees,  
And myrtles which I envy.  
You know not Death in person  
Nor snowy-white old age.

When I pass on, please bury me  
Next to the watering-hole,  
Where there's a tall and straight  
And mighty cypress tree.

Farewell, Oh pine and plane trees,  
And myrtles which I envy.  
You know not Death in person  
Nor snowy-white old age.

**Side B****1. The Resi**

Oh! Dear Virgin of the mountaintop with your throne in the saddle,  
We bid you come and help us too in grinding our “resi”

The sun is high up in the sky; it's coming close to midday.  
It's time we also set about in grinding our “resi”

On each hand-driven mill, sit ye in pairs together,  
And grind the “resi” well and good, with songs and grace together.

A fortyfive-strong flock of cranes, an eagle in their midst,  
Oh come, my darling maidens sweet to wash and rinse our “resi”

The “resi”, it's been ground and washed to songs and airs a-plenty  
So pass it on now to the cook to pour into the kettles.

### 3. Four and Four - (Tessera tjie tessera)

Four and four, they make you eight, four and four make eight  
And four brave lads, O four brave lads, off to the war they go.

Along the way, along the road, the hunger hits them hard  
They sit, they rest, they eat but then, the thirst comes on them hard.

They look to spy a spring so sweet upon the mountain-side  
And find they do a well so deep, a hundred fathoms deep.

They then draw lots to see which one will go down into the well  
And when they draw they see that the lot falls on the youngest one.

“O tie me well, my brothers dear, and I will enter deep  
Into the well, this desolate well, the water for to bring.”

The brothers they then take the rope and tie him well and strong,  
And in the well, the desolate well, they lower him along.

“O brothers mine, please pull me up! The water I have found,  
But this is dark and red and black, with poison, O! so strong.”

But by the time they pulled the rope and got him out of the well  
The serpents and the vipers so venomous had done their bitter deed.

“O tell my mother, brothers dear, to don her mourning black.  
For her dear son, her youngest son, she'll never see again.”

#### 4. The Mouzourou (Petite dark girl)

Come on let's go, O Mouzourou.. Hey!  
Let's go the Akamas mountains  
Where the sun quickly sets, my dear,  
So we can lie down together.

So, O mouzourou... Hi!  
So, O mouzourou... Ho!  
So, O mouzourou... Hi! Hi! Hi!  
So Ho! Ho! Ho! So Ha! Ha! Ha!  
So, my dear...

I kissed the mouzourou. Hah!  
In the middle of a crossroads.  
And from then on upon my lips  
Is that dear maiden sweet.

So, O mouzourou... Hi!  
.....

Oh were it that I had today  
The whole of Athens to my name  
To her I'd give it willingly  
For one kiss from her once a month.

So, O mouzourou... Hi!  
.....

When she got mad, I sighed... Hey!  
It happened that across from me  
Were seven villages in a row, my dear,  
And all in the dead of heat!

So, O mouzourou... Hi!  
.....

### 5. The Maiden and Death - (I lieri tj' o charos)

From west to east and north to south,  
 And from the ends of the earth I call upon  
 The people to pay heed, so i may sing to you  
 And all of you, both young and old, will weep, I kid you not.  
 A maiden, a fair girl there was, aheading to the orchard  
 To gather roses O so sweet, for a bouquet to make.  
 But Death met her just halfway there, and spoke to her these words:  
 -Good day to you, O maiden fair, O lass who many speak of  
 -Good day to you, O Death, I say; I greet the black-steed rider  
 Who came into my path today, hardly foreboding well.  
 -Let now your horse, O maiden fair, rest and cool down well  
 Go to the well and let it drink, before the evening falls  
 -My mother she did teach me not how animals to tend  
 Instead she has me my dowry, day in, day out a-making.  
 -Embroider me a kerchief then, to wear upon my chest  
 And what your work will cost to me, I'll pay it, and no less.  
 -My Dark Lord Death, I have no time a kerchief to embroider  
 My mother, she waits up for me, until back home I get.  
 He struck her then so hard that she held tight her head in pain;  
 Her mother, weeping terribly, tells her amid her crying:  
 -Embroider him a kerchief, dear, hopefully he'll be happy.  
 Embroider him the deep black sea, the mooring post as well,  
 Embroider him the earth and trees, the sky and stars above us,  
 The fields and rivers also make, the mountains and the forests.  
 But Death, he does not spare the time, he takes her to his mother  
 And says to her: -O mother dear, O mother so respected,  
 The table lay so she may dine, the bed so she may sleep in,  
 And may the maid which I've brought here remember me so fondly.  
 -O Son of mine, do not take maids, do not bring lasses here  
 Do not take babes from cribs - pray not - the mothers you embitter  
 -But if the maids I do not take, to lasses I show pity,  
 And babes as well I do not take, then Death I cannot be.

**Note:** This is a demotic song, some of whose lines I modified for purposes of rhyme. The line is of 15 syllables, and fits the "poiitariki" voice perfectly.