



ALSO WORTH NOTING

What song are you currently grooving to?
A bit of everything really, and although I don't have a particular favorite, to answer your question I would have to pick Pavlos Kiamos' "Apo Deftera".

What's your favorite all time song?
That's easy. "Anoixe Petra" by Marinella.

Which singer – other than yourself - have you ever wanted to be?
Marinella and Glykeria. Marinella because she is such a great performer and singer, and Glykeria for the same reasons. I have learned so much from both of them.

What music do you listen to on a Sunday morning?
That depends on my mood. I could listen to anything, from rock to Greek traditional songs, English, Arabic, everything...



Didn't your family oppose your move to Greece?

On the contrary, they supported me. By the time I was 16, 17 they realized that this is what I wanted to do so they got behind me. In the beginning they urged me to enjoy my childhood and concentrate on my schooling, but I was adamant I was going to be a singer.

When did you realize how the music scene in Greece works?

About a year after I arrived there. One night the head waiter came up to me and said "Maraki, that table over there wants to talk to you". But I didn't know them, so I didn't go. Then my boss pointed out that it's all part of public relations. But I didn't want to play that game. All I wanted to do was sing. His answer was "if you do not want to do any public relations, then go home and wash dishes". I still had the notion of singing being this beautiful thing, so I used to walk out of jobs because of that.

A rude awakening?
Most definitely! And I had to wake up quick. But after that, and what I experienced in the beginning, I was shield from all the negative aspects of the business. I never saw anyone taking drugs, for example. Years later, when I asked some of the people I met then and I am still close to today, they told me that a lot happened behind my back, but they made sure they never did anything in

done it at such an early age. I really missed a big part of my childhood. When other kids were playing, I was working. My choice, of course. In the beginning my parents didn't even want to hear about it but I was very insistent that I wanted to be a singer.

My daughter wants to start singing but I refuse to let her. I keep telling her that she should enjoy herself. She has plenty of time for singing professionally.

I clearly remember people back then calling you the "young Marinella". Was that too much of a burden for someone so young?

Not really, because I was too young to comprehend the full impact of the association. For me it was such a cute thing to hear. When I grew up and went to Greece, yes, the expectations were much higher. As for that being a burden, I would have to say no.

It made me want become better, it was an inspiration to study more, to learn more, to work harder.

And around 17 you upped and left for Greece to chase your dream.

I stayed for about 4 years of Greece, the first two of which were spent trying to get to know the right people. After that I started working with big names like Sfakianaki, Alkaio etc. And four years later, just as I made it I decided to come back and get married!

I wonder how many obstacles you had to overcome though...

Overall, I would say I was very lucky. My mother was with me for the first 2 years, plus I had a strong stomach. The most difficult thing was getting used to the Greek mentality. I was only a pure, little Greek Australian girl, but I had to learn quickly about how people in Greece thought and behaved, their innuendos and all that stuff. But at the same time, because I was so innocent, they liked me. So I never had any problems and many people helped me.

Who helped you the most?

A lot of people did, actually. George Alkaios for example. I sang on his album and he constantly tried to protect me. He kept telling me to "wake up and realize that people in Greece are not that innocent".