



Kostas Karamarkos: Talking about Apodimi Compania and their new album

When the band plays... please sing and dance”, is Apodimi’s eighth album and has been released exactly 30 years after their first album “Rebetika Songs”, which was produced in Melbourne by Brunswick Recordings. In total, the Apodimi Compania - Expatriates Band have released three albums by Brunswick Recordings and another five albums in Greece. Apodimi to many Australians of Greek descent is not just another music band. It is a force of cultural awakening.

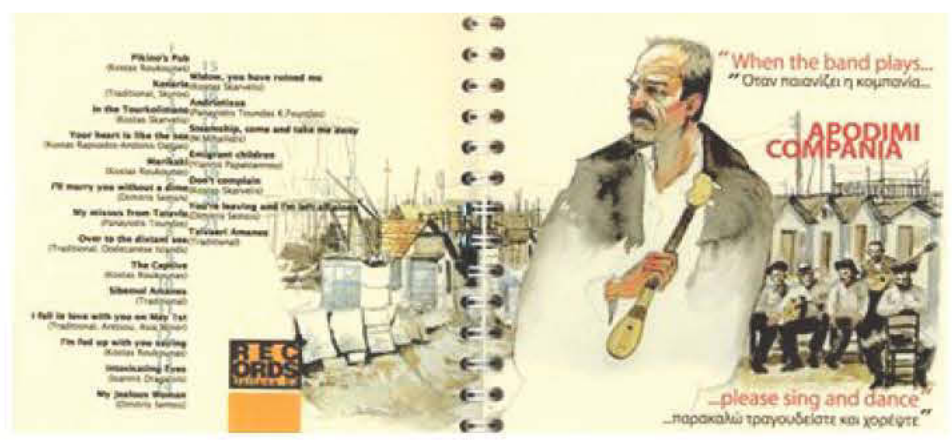
When they were performing at the Retreat Hotel, in Sydney Road Brunswick, in Melbourne, in the late 1980s and up until the mid-1990s, they were the epicentre of initially a weekly and later a biweekly get together of numerous Greek Australians and folk music lovers. The Retreat Hotel in those days was the place to be in Melbourne, if you wanted to listen to great Greek music, if you wanted to dance, to talk, to discover your cultural identity, to meet people, to fall in love. Apodimi Compania’s Retreat and album fans, are people with their own distinctive musical taste and aesthetic priorities.

They are people who might have spread their wings all over the globe in the last thirty or so years, but... Like the members of an exclusive secular or religious group, whoever was marked by those late nights and early mornings in Brunswick and elsewhere in Australia many years

ago and is still around, makes an extra effort to get together every time Apodimi comes back to Melbourne and to Australia.

Something which occurs on average once every three years. This ongoing relationship of the now Athens based band with its audiences, is not exclusively Greek Australian. Apodimi Compania was always a band that was reaching out to wider audiences and folk music lovers through its participation in various folk festivals around Australia. For example, Brunswick Music Festival, National Folk Festival, South Australian Folk Festival, Port Fairy Folk Festival and elsewhere. They were also regulars on the ABC (Music Deli), SBS and various community radio stations around the country. Furthermore their work has also been catalogued by the National Film and Sound Archives in Canberra.

Nowadays, the influence and the



legacy of the band in Melbourne lives on and is also manifested by the lively rebetika and traditional music scene that exists in the Victorian capital. Many off the current leading exponents of this music in Melbourne “grew up” musically and culturally as a result of the contributions of Apodimi Compania.

In March 2012 the band was hit by tragedy when long-standing member Hector Cosmas suddenly passed away.

The remaining members, Manolis Galiatsos, Yiannis Niarchos, George Galiatsos and Chrysoula Kechagioglou decided to soldier on and keep performing, as Hec would have wanted them to do so. Joining them on their latest album and on their 2017 Australian tour is Apodimi’s latest member, fiddle player, Vangeli Votteas.

In an era of increasing musical commercialisation and standardisation, the music of Apodimi is refreshingly authentic, energetic and original. Their latest album “When the band plays... please sing and dance”, includes 21 arrangements of Rebetika (Greek Blues) and Folk songs. All of the songs, except for one, have not been recorder since their first release many decades ago.



P.S. The artwork and sketches of Apodimi’s latest album is by Panagiotis Vasilatos.