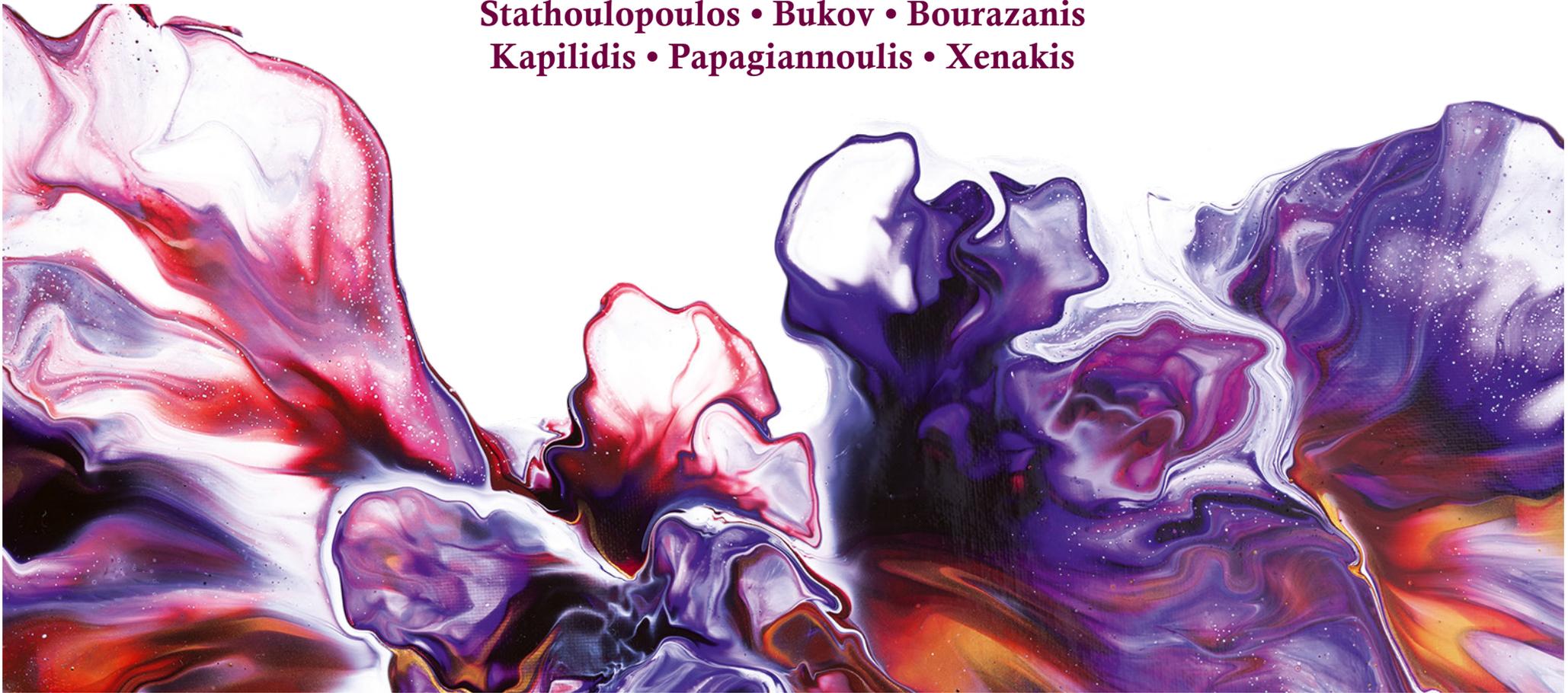




Christos  
**TZIFAKIS**

**Flamenco Odyssey**  
A Mediterranean Guitar Cycle  
*arr. Michail Travlos*

**Christos Tzifakis, Guitars**  
**Stathoulopoulos • Bukov • Bourazanis**  
**Kapilidis • Papagiannoulis • Xenakis**



**Christos  
TZIFAKIS**  
(b. 1969)

**Flamenco Odyssey**  
**A Mediterranean Guitar Cycle**  
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**Flamenco Odyssey (2007–18)**

**54:39**

(arr. for guitar and chamber ensemble by Michael Travlos, b. 1950 **1 3 5–8**)

<b>1</b>	I. Sailing, Fandango con Bulería	8:10
<b>2</b>	II. El Greco's Footsteps	6:59
<b>3</b>	III. Telemachus Tango	4:27
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<b>5</b>	V. Bacchus Soleá	5:37
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<b>7</b>	VII. Nostalgia, Ballad	6:53
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**WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING**

**Christos Tzifakis, Guitar **1–8**, Three Guitars (overdubbed) **9****  
**Evangelos Stathoulopoulos, Flute **1 3 5–8** · Evgeny Bukov, Violin **8****  
**Panagiotis Bourazanis, Electric Bass **1 3 5–8** · Nikos Kapilidis, Drums **1 3 5–8****  
**Giannis Papagiannoulis, Percussion **1 5 6 8 9**, Claps **1 3 5 6 8 9****  
**Christos Xenakis, Virtual string orchestra of recorded samples, Programming **1 3 5–8****

## Christos Tzifakis (b. 1969)

‘Pay attention to Christos Tzifakis, the young guitarist which I conducted in Holland recently. His talent is supported by a remarkable technique ... this young man plays with twenty fingers ...’

– Leo Brouwer, Hollywood, 1994

‘What makes Christos Tzifakis so special, is that he took the big risk to enter the world of flamenco and understand it deeply ... his concerto is an alchemy of feelings and sensations ...’

– Joaquin Grilo, Athens, 2010

Christos Tzifakis was born in Athens, Greece in 1969 into a musical family. His uncles were folk musicians and his grandmother a classical pianist. He chose the guitar as an instrument of musical creation as he believes that it unites these two musical worlds.

In 1988 he was accepted into the Conservatorium Maastricht as an exceptional talent and studied with Kees Dirx. He finished his classical guitar studies in 1994 with distinction and honours *cum laude*.

During his studies in the Netherlands he participated in prestigious guitar festivals across Europe, including in Cologne, Amsterdam, Volos and Córdoba, where he had the chance to interact with masters of the classical guitar such as Hubert Käppel, Thomas Müller-Pehring, Abel Carlevaro, Pepe Romero, Leo Brouwer and Costas Cotsiolis.

Tzifakis was awarded a scholarship in 1991 by the Conservatorium Maastricht and subsequently travelled to Córdoba (Spain) where he studied the flamenco guitar with Manolo Sanlúcar. Returning to Athens, he continued his formal education with Michalis Travlos (theory and composition) and Markos Alexiou (jazz).

He performed as a soloist with the Limburgs Symfonie Orkest under the Cuban composer/conductor Leo Brouwer in 1994. This collaboration deeply influenced him, and he started composing his first pieces for solo guitar soon after that. In 2003 he performed Michalis Travlos’ *Duo Concerti*, a work dedicated to him, with the Orchestra of the Colours, Athens under Miltos Logiades and recorded it with the Sofia Symphony Orchestra.

In 2000, together with the dancer Melina Ioannidou Ivanisheva, he founded the flamenco-jazz group Flamenco Aire, performing his music at jazz/ethno festivals, which gave him the opportunity to share the stage with many folk, jazz and flamenco artists such as Gerardo Núñez and Carmen Cortés.

Among his compositions for solo guitar, flamenco-jazz ensemble and the theatre are his two guitar concertos for guitar and orchestra: *Flamenco Alchemy*, which was performed at the Megaron Athens Concert Hall in 2011 with



Photo:  
Valerios Ioannidis

the Intrarti Orchestra Athens and choreographed and performed by the Spanish flamenco dancer Joaquín Grilo, and *El Greco's Footsteps* which was first presented lived at the Greek National Opera and later recorded by the Greek National Radio Orchestra of Contemporary Music in 2021.

Tzifakis has taught and lectured at guitar festivals, and organised seminars at Panteion University, Athens on topics concerning the combination of the flamenco and classical guitar techniques, as well as the compositional elements of Greek and Spanish composers.

He has been the artistic director of the Anogeia Guitar Festival in Crete since 2015, and in February 2022 was the guitar soloist in Oscar Navarro's work *Hispania* with the Greek Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by the composer.

### **Flamenco Odyssey**

Odyssey is a voyage. Odysseus is me, Odysseus is you, Odysseus is every single person who chooses to go through adventures in order to reach the harbour of self-realisation.

This record is my own odyssey. I walk past the different forms of flamenco, experiencing them from the point of view of a traveller who carries within him the flavours and timbres of both Eastern and Western cultures. The tracks in this record are moments from this walk.

Flamenco dancers and contemporary choreographers have created dances for most of the tracks. Over the course of time, since the conception of the original idea, several elements have been changed and readapted after being tested through interaction with audiences during concerts, eventually resulting the forms in which they were finally recorded. During this adventure I always had in mind the poem *Ithaca* by Greek poet Constantine P. Cavafy (1863–1933):

The moment you set sail for Ithaca,  
wish for your journey to be a long one,  
full of adventure and awareness.

You won't encounter the Laestrygonians or the Cyclops,  
nor will you meet the fierce Poseidon on the way  
as long as you don't bring them along inside your own soul  
as long as your own soul does not summon them before you ...

... Never fail to keep thinking of Ithaca.

Arriving there is your final aim.  
However, you should not hurry your journey,  
you'd better let it last for years and years  
so that you're quite old when you set foot on the island,  
wealthy due to all those things you gained on the way  
without expecting riches to be offered by Ithaca.  
Ithaca has offered you the wondrous journey.

It was because of her you set out on your wandering  
and there is nothing more for her to offer.  
If she appears to be poor and humble  
it's not because Ithaca has deceived you.  
With all that wisdom and experience you have gained  
you will have probably realised by now  
the actual meaning of 'Ithacas'.

*English translation by Sylvia Myssirli*

**1 I. Sailing, Fandango con Bulería**

This track is composed in the form of an *ouverture*. In fact, it is a *fantaisie* on two Spanish dances: the fandango and the *bulería*. The 3/4 rhythmic pattern of the fandango creates a sense of circular movement, reminding listeners of the sea waves, and becomes more intense and adventurous in the *bulería* of the second part where the tempo doubles. It's the beginning of the voyage ...

**2 II. El Greco's Footsteps**

This track for solo guitar is dedicated to the artist El Greco, who, like Odysseus himself, set out in the 16th century from his homeland of Crete and eventually reached Spain, where he created his masterpieces. The composition follows in his footsteps: it starts with improvisations on ancient Cretan songs ('*rizitika*' in Greek, where '*riza*' means 'root') and culminates in a Spanish dance.

**3 III. Telemachus Tango**

Telemachus is Odysseus's son. In the beginning of the *Odyssey* he appears to be a passive young man not taken seriously by anyone. There comes a moment, though, when he is awakened and makes up his mind to take matters in hand. This tango is composed after his awakening ...

**4 IV. Plegaria**

*Plegaria* means 'prayer' in Spanish. The uneasy introduction of this track reflects a restless spirit which is eventually soothed and reaches pure articulation.

**5 V. Bachus Soleá**

Ancient Greeks associated Bacchus with the emergence of drama and ritual. Bacchus rises from the shadows of the underworld and chaos bringing with him unutterable secrets ...

This track attempts to create an image of him dancing a *soleá*, which is one of the archetypal dances of flamenco.

**6 VI. Escobilla**

This *escobilla* follows the *Soleá* that comes before. It is actually the part of the flamenco dance when dancers move faster, showing off their skill.

**7 VII. Nostalgia, Ballad**

Nostalgia is the bittersweet sentiment of yearning for return. Here it takes the form of an instrumental ballad.

**8 VIII. Baghdad, Bulería**

The melody of this song was composed during the bombarding of Baghdad. For some human beings that was the starting point of an anguished odyssey with the sole aim of surviving. The track is dedicated to all these anonymous individuals.

**9 IX. Alter Ego, Tango**

The festive nature and form of this track is a combination of blues/rock influences and the rhythm of tango.

**The story behind *Flamenco Odyssey***

The majority of the work (all the orchestral pieces) was presented in public for the first time in 2011 at the Megaron Athens Concert Hall under the title *Flamenco Alchemy*, performed by a chamber orchestra under conductor Nikos Chaliassas. Famous flamenco dancer and choreographer Joaquín Grilo, a dancer with the Paco de Lucía Sextet and voted best flamenco dancer by the public at the 2006 Premio del Público del X Festival de Jerez, developed the dance for the work.

We worked together both in Greece and Spain. I explained the forms of the compositions, the ideas behind them, and Grilo asked me to adapt some things for the needs of the show. For example: my music is purely orchestral, but there were parts where the participation of flamenco singers was essential. He also needed space within the music to perform. This allowed the singers and the dancer the opportunity to bring a raw flamenco character to the show, but without losing the unity of the compositions.

The premiere was a success. In 2013, Oscar de los Reyes, a flamenco dancer from Seville, and Greek dancer Eleni Giannopoulou created new choreography to accompany the music, and I worked with them in a similar way.

I had the idea of recording the music, as whenever it was performed I always received a very warm response from the public. But due to the financial crisis in Greece it was impossible for me to finance recording with an orchestra, and anyway orchestral recordings were not being made during that time.

So, I decided to record step by step. I recomposed the music in a purely instrumental form, so that it formed a complete work without the live performance element, and recorded the instruments one by one. It was a long process. The editing and the mixing alone (due to the difficult conditions) took almost two years to complete (from 2020 to 2021), as I was always revising the composition in the studio.

When I first came in contact with Naxos, where I initially received encouraging comments from Norbert Kraft, I decided to rename the work from *Flamenco Alchemy* to *Flamenco Odyssey*, because, as can be seen, developing this work was an adventurous odyssey for me. Besides, the music kept changing (on stage, with the dancers, in the studio ...) until it came to be in its final and complete form.

**Christos Tzifakis**

*English translation: Sylvia Myssirli*

## Panagiotis Bourazanis

Panagiotis Bourazanis was born in Athens, Greece in 1983 and began studying the electric bass at the National Conservatory of Athens at the age of 14. He continued further studies on bass with Yiotis Kiourtsoglou at Philippos Nakas Conservatory while simultaneously studying musicology at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. He has attended clinics and private lessons/classes with world class musicians such as Sami Amiris, Ronan Guilfoyle and Ric Fierabracci. He also undertook further studies with Michail Travlos and Tasos Kazaglis and extensively studied music therapy under the guidance of Demetrios Psychas. As a performer and session musician he has shared the stage and studio with many artists and groups across diverse styles such as Joaquín Grilo, Chad Lefkowitz-Brown, Thanasis Papakonstantinou and Night On Earth and Nikos Kapilidis and The Jazz Utopia. He is a co-founder of and composer for the modern jazz group Triplicity, and teaches electric bass at Philippos Nakas Conservatory and the Municipal Conservatory of Peristeri.



## Nikos Kapilidis

Nikos Kapilidis was born in 1955 in Xanthi, Greece. He began playing drums at a very young age, and went on to study with Mickey Earnshaw in Canada, Max Mariash in the US and Julian Vaughan in Spain. He has been a member of various percussion ensembles in Greece, and throughout his career has played with various rock, jazz and fusion bands across Europe. He has also served as the drummer with the house band of the Mantato Jazz Club in Thessaloniki, Greece, performing with great American jazz musicians as Danny Hayes and Manny Boyd. He had played and recorded with jazz musicians from Greece, and has worked with many folk and contemporary Greek composers. In 2005 he produced his first album *Arothymian* (Muse.gr, 2005) as a leader and composer with his band The Jazz Utopia. He also teaches in various music schools around Greece.



## Giannis Papagiannoulis

Greek percussionist Giannis Papagiannoulis was born and raised in Larissa. During his early years of playing, from 1998 to 2004, he studied at the Philippos Nakas Conservatory and attended traditional and Latin percussion classes with Petros Kourtis as well as seminars with Misırlı Ahmet, José Carrasco, Levent Yildirim, Manuel Muñoz 'El Pajaro' and many more. He has performed and recorded albums with Greek artists such as Eleni Vitali, Haroula Alexiou, Vasilis Papakonstantinou and Vasilis Rakopoulos. Since 2002 he has participated in various collaborations within the Latin, jazz-ethno, flamenco and Greek traditional genres. In 2012 Papagiannoulis was awarded a special distinction, coming second out of 98 participants at the Schlagwerk Golden Cajon Award and shortly after, in 2015, became an endorser of Diril Cymbals. In 2013, along with Electra Chrysanthou, he became a founder member of Studio Taconeo – flamenco and percussion.



## **Evangelos Stathoulopoulos**

Evangelos Stathoulopoulos was born in Corfu, Greece, in 1977. He studied in Athens at the Philippos Nakas Conservatory with Thomas Georgiou and earned his Diploma in Flute Performance with honours in 1997. He later studied with Panagiotis Drakos in Athens and Richard Davis in Manchester. He has participated in masterclasses with notable artists such as Philippe Pierlot, Lisa Ruoho, Paul Edmund-Davies, Susan Milan and Peter-Lukas Graf. Stathoulopoulos has appeared as a soloist with orchestras across Greece including the Athens State Orchestra, Thessaloniki State Symphony Orchestra and Camerata Friends of Music Orchestra as well as with the Camerata Stuttgart Orchestra. He has also been a regular member of the Athens State Orchestra since 2000, where he holds the position of Second Flute and Piccolo. As a member of the Aeolos Woodwind Quintet he has given premieres of works by Greek composers, and appears on the album *Greek Wind Quintets* (Naxos 8.579037).



## **Michail Travlos**

Born in 1950 in Piraeus, Greece, Michail Travlos studied at the Hochschule der Künste Berlin. He has been the recipient of numerous awards at international composition competitions including First Prize in the composers' competition of the 1979 Jeunesses Musicales International (JMI) and the Musical Composition Prize of the Prince Pierre de Monaco Foundation in 1981, and also received a nomination in the contemporary music category of the International Classical Music Awards (ICMA) in 2018. In 1978 and 1983 his works were chosen by the Gaudeamus Foundation to be performed as part of Gaudeamus Muziekweek, and the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM) included his award-winning orchestral work *Prisma* in the 1985 World New Music Days festival. His works have been extensively recorded, and appear on albums released by labels such as Ablaze, Lyra and Sarton.



## **Christos Xenakis**

Born in 1966 in Chania, Crete, Christos Xenakis studied piano at the Hellenic Conservatory with Betty Gaetanou, composition at the Athens Conservatory with Pericles Koukos and music and technology at the Philippos Nakas Conservatory. He has been the piano accompanist for the dance groups of The American College of Greece, as well as dancers in Spain and Germany. He has composed music for theatre, audio books, contemporary dance and paint exhibitions, and has orchestrated music for films including the award-winning *Hard Goodbyes: My Father* (2002). His works have been performed at the Athens Concert Hall and the Athenaeum Art Center. In May 2016 he released his first album of solo piano works, *Drops of Time*, and the second, *Circles*, was released in March 2020.



Athens-born Christos Tzifakis has performed internationally as a solo classical guitarist and composed widely for solo guitar, flamenco-jazz groups and for the theatre. *Flamenco Odyssey* is one of his major works in which he allows the listener to experience flamenco from the vantage point of a traveller immersed in the timbres and flavours of both Eastern and Western cultures. The rhythms of the *bulería*, *soleá* and *fandango* offer intoxication as do improvisations on ancient Cretan songs. There are also darker, more melancholic impulses, while the festive nature of this wide-ranging and exhilarating work draws on blues-rock influences.

## Christos TZIFAKIS

(b. 1969)

### Flamenco Odyssey

#### Flamenco Odyssey (2007–18)

54:39

(arr. for guitar and chamber ensemble by Michael Travlos, b. 1950 **1** **3** **5**–**8**)

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Panagiotis Bourazanis, Electric Bass **1** **3** **5**–**8** • Nikos Kapilidis, Drums **1** **3** **5**–**8**

Giannis Papagiannoulis, Percussion **1** **5** **6** **8** **9**, Claps **1** **3** **5** **6** **8** **9**

Christos Xenakis, Virtual string orchestra of recorded samples, Programming **1** **3** **5**–**8**

Recorded: 15 **1** **3**, 16 **4**–**6**, 17 **7**, 18 **8** March and 1 **2** and 2 **9** April 2021 at Unreal Studio, Athens, Greece

Producer: Christos Tzifakis • Engineer: Vassilis Tsovaras

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