

On the origins of Zeibekiko

Of course I am always interested to hear about issues related to Greek music. In this case, the question is if Zeibekiko is Greek or Turkish, or a dance from another country. I will try and provide my poor opinion.

Frankly speaking, my immediate response to the posed question is: Who cares and who knows? But two facts cannot be disputed. First, let us see who is most suitable to dance Zeibekiko. Clearly, not everybody. Ask the Chinese, African, English, American, French, Swedish, Norwegians etc. to dance it; it will be a joke. It is not for them; it just does not suit their character, manners and physical appearance. Zeibekiko is for a tough man (not woman) who has some, or a lot of anger to shake off, a man who wants to show his might, his control, his dominance and his determination to fight. It is like a gorilla who tells the other clan members to stay away from his space or he will bite, and even kill. The music ignites the fire, and the fire can have dare consequences.

Do these claims make the Greeks fit for the dance? Most certainly yes. We are made tough and rough and, when necessary, rude enough (and more recently, even sneaky enough). So, we are fit for the purpose. But are there any close-by nations with similar genetic and environmental characteristics (weather must have something to do with it, for sure) also fit to dance it? Maybe, and as mentioned, I do not care; let them try and see if they can fit to the dance, not the other way around.

Second, we should see who is cultivating this dance the last 50 years. Nobody can order the musician and poet to write a Zeibekiko, and nobody can regulate their success. It is like supply and demand. And from what I could count, at least 20-30% of all Greek songs are Zeibekikos. It seems to suit the life, the feelings, and the needs of the Greeks; I do not know how many Turkish or other folk songs are written to this rhythm. And music is a therapy, is a drug; a powerful drug; if they need it, and works for them, let them have it.

Too be fair, I have no idea on how many, and if, their “Zeibekikos” can talk to their soul and brain. But I do know, for sure, that “my own” Zeibekikos talk to me, and can cure many of my maladies such as anxieties, depressions etc. in a minute. Here are some potent Zeibekikos as a sampler (see list below). I can site thousands of those, among the songs I know. There is simply no space or time to enlist all of them.

And I close with something that I said about Zeibekiko a few years back and I mean it 100%. “One of the great privileges of Greeks is that they can listen, dance and sing to a Zeibekiko song”

So much then, for who discovered it.

A Small List of Favourites (one per artist)

Theodorakis: Ton Pavlo ke ton Nikolio

Hadjidakis: Ime Aetos Horis Ftera

Xarhakos: Savatovrado stin Kessariani

Markopoulos: Paraponemena Logia

Tokas: O Asotos

Tsitsanis: Sinnefiasmeni kiriaki

Papaioannou: Pente Ellines ston Adi

Mitsakis: Barba Thomas

Mikroutsikos: Rosa

Liozos: To Zeibekiko tis Evdokias

Andriopoulos: Ta Spitia Ine Hamila

And so, so..., so many others!