



Summary :

The rebetiko musician Spyros Peristeris (Smyrna 1900 - Athens 1966) wrote songs, played various instruments and was active as an orchestra conductor. He was the director of the record company Odeon for many years.

Date and Place of Birth

1900, Smyrna

Date and Place of Death

1966, Athens

Main Role

Musician

Life and work

Spyros Peristeris, the important composer of [rebetiko](#), was born at 1900 in [Smyrna](#) to a Greek father and an Italian mother. From a young age he showed a great interest for musical instruments, such as the bouzouki, the guitar, the piano and mostly, the mandolin. In 1916, he moved with his family in Constantinople (Istanbul), where, despite the financial difficulties, he managed to attend the night classes of the Italian School and graduate after four years, having learned Italian and German. His educational level was, therefore, clearly higher than most of popular musicians of the time.

Around 1920, Peristeris returned to Smyrna and despite his young age, led the famous Smyrna Estudiantina "Ta Politakia". Himself was the mandolin player.

In 1924, after the [Asia Minor Catastrophe](#), he settled in Athens. He would remain there for the rest of his life and for more than thirty years (1931-1965) he would be leading the recording business in Greece as director of the Odeon-Parlophon company as well as a composer. Peristeris is the one who made a historical decision regarding the popular song: he gave Markos Vamvakaris the opportunity to record, for the first time, popular songs that included bouzouki. These songs are "Karadouzeni", sung by Vamvakaris himself, and the instrumental "Arap Zeibekiko". There are conflicting opinions as to when this took place: Tasos Schorelis dates the recording in 1934,¹ while Dionysis Maniatis in June 1932.²

At the same time, Peristeris began his own great career as a composer, having many hit songs, mostly during the '30s and the '40s: "Of Aman" (1934), "O Antonis o varkaris" (1939), "Minore tis avgis" (1947), and many more. Minos Matsas, founder of the well-known record company, usually wrote the lyrics for his songs.

Spiros Peristeris has been connected with the transition from the [popular urban song of Smyrna](#) (*smyrnaiiko*) to rebetiko. Indeed, he could be characterized as a pioneer of the "urban" popular song, as this was shaped in the beginning of the '30s and later. Most of his songs are similar in style with the songs written by the most important representatives of rebetiko: M. Vamvakaris, V. Tsitsanis, G. Papaioannou, D. Gogos-Bagiaderas, A. Hatzichristos.

He had been married since 1921 and had two sons, Argyris and Dimitris, who were also into the music business. He died in Athens on 1966.



1. Σχορέλης [Schorelis], Τ., *Ρεμπέτικη Ανθολογία, τόμος Γ΄: Παντελίδης - Τούντας*, Plethron publications (Athens 1978), p. 142
2. Μανιάτης [Maniatis], Δ., *Οι φωνογραφητζήδες – Πρακτικών μουσικών εγκώμιον* (Athens 2001), p. 167.

Bibliography :

	Μανιάτης Δ. , <i>Οι φωνογραφητζήδες Πρακτικών μουσικών εγκώμιον</i> , Αθήνα 2001
	Πετρόπουλος Η. , <i>Ρεμπέτικα τραγούδια, 2</i> , Εκδόσεις Κέδρος, Αθήνα 1979
	Σχορέλης Τ. , <i>Ρεμπέτικη Ανθολογία τόμ. Γ΄: Παντελίδης - Τούντας</i> , Εκδόσεις Πλέθρον, Αθήνα 1978

Webliography :

	Ρεμπέτικο
http://www.rebetiko.gr/	

Chronological Table

1900: born in Smyrna by Greek father and Italian mother.

1916: moved to Constantinople and studied at the Italian School.

1920 (approximately): he returned to Smyrna and becomes member of the Smyrne Estoudiantina.

1921: he got married and then had two sons.

1924: he settled in Athens.

1931: he assumes the post of director of Odeon-Parlophon.

1932 or 1934: the first "bouzouki" recording took place.

1966: he died in Athens.

Auxiliary Catalogs

Selected works

"I Boemissa" (1933, sang by R. Eskenazi)

"Of Aman" (1934, sang by Z. Kasimatis)

"O Antonis o Varkaris" (1939, lyrics M. Matsas, sang by M. Vamvakaris – A. Hatzichristos)

"To Minore tis Avgis" (1947, lyrics M. Matsas, sang by M. Vamvakaris – A. Hatzichristos – G. Stamoulis)