

KRISTI STASSINOPOULOU ECHOTROPICA



The successful blend of rhythms and "sound colors" from Greek - and international - traditional music, psychedelic rock and electronica, combined with the internationalist, cosmopolite, "neo-hippie" attitude of Kristi and the group, has become a point of reference in Greece and abroad.

- 1 WE ARE FLYING
- 2 AEOLUS
- 3 DON'T SAY I REGRET
- 4 INTO THE FIRE
- 5 FEVER
- 6 SOL INVICTUS
- 7 ONLY LOVE REMAINS
- 8 TRIGONA
- 9 AT THE EDGE OF THE HORIZON
- 10 MAJNOUN
- 11 DRUMMING FROGS
- 12 RAIN IS FALLING
- 13 BEEHIVES

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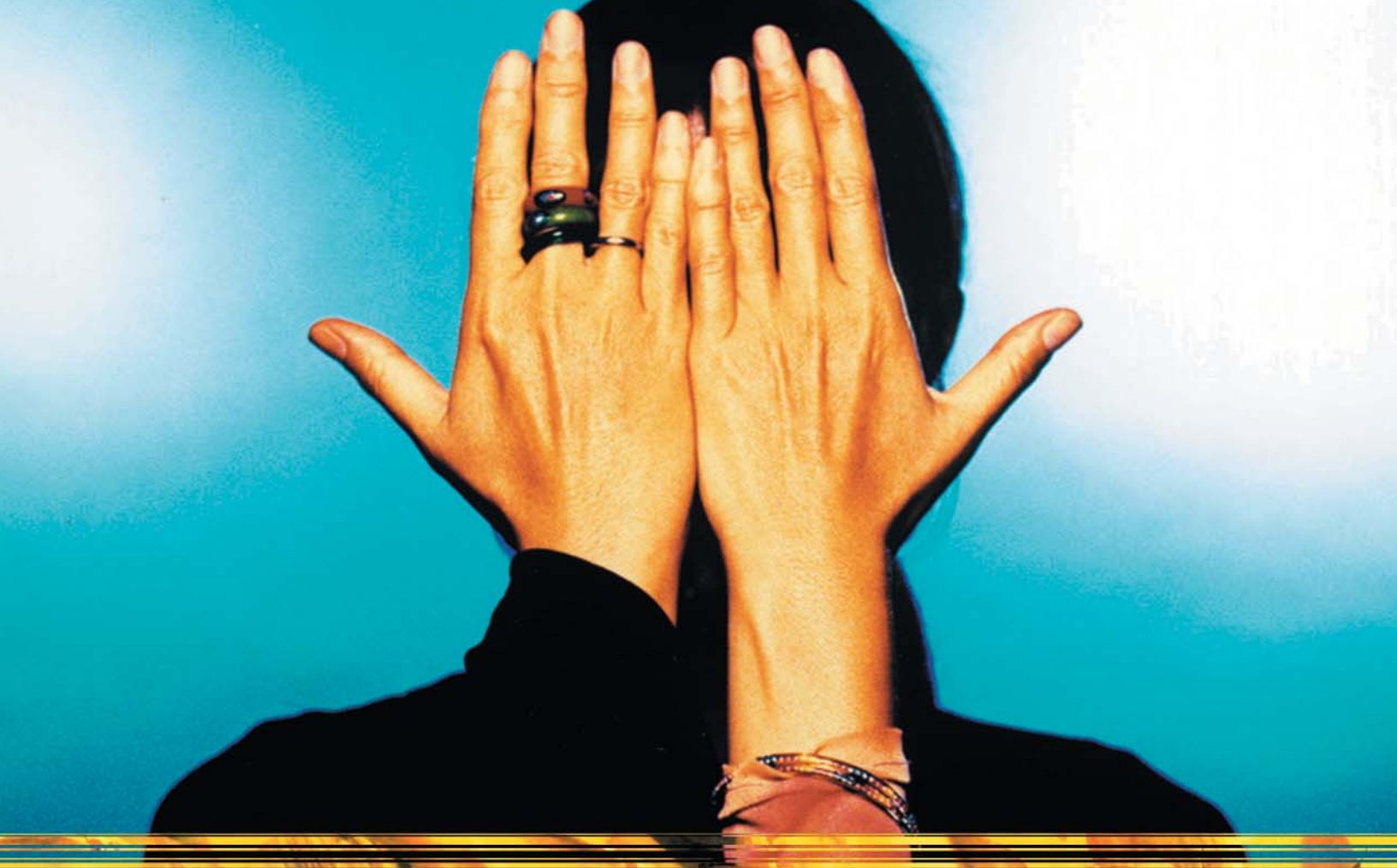


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BIOGRAPHY

If you ask Kristi for a simple classification for the unique musical soundscape of Echotropia, a soundscape that blends folk music and instruments from Greece and Asia Minor, psychedelic rock, Balkan polyrhythms, haunting vocal lines inspired by Byzantine psalmody, and electronica derived beats into a work of timeless beauty, she would say: "Maybe Balkan ethno-trance. Is there such a classification?"

A native Athenian, Kristi's musical voyage started with a variety of high school bands she performed with. The musical fare was mainly imported rock – the likes of Jefferson Airplane and Fairport Convention. Her involvement with the rock scene eventually led to her performance as Mary Magdalene in the Greek production of the rock opera Jesus Christ Superstar shortly after high-school.

But if foreign rock and pop was what most of the young-hip-and-cool were into, Kristi's ears were also tuned to traditional Greek music. The romanticism of Manos Hadjidakis and the innovativeness of Dionyssis Savopoulos' Balkan rock captured her imagination most. When asked about other artists she was most influenced by, Kristi sites Grace Slick and Patti Smith in the same breath as the famous rebetika singer Rosa Eskenazi and the Greek singer-ethnomusicologist Domna Samiou.

"Greece is a crossroads," says Kristi. "Its Africa, it's Asia, it's the Mediterranean Sea. It's the European sensibility. When you have open ears and are sensitive to sound, they all become a part of you."

In 1989 Kristi met the composer and multi-instrumentalist Stathis Kalyviotis at a club where Kristi was performing covers of Blondie, the Pretenders and the like. The club was located in the Exarthia quarter – which in the 80s was the hubbub of Athens' musical, political, and social underground. Soon after, the two got together and have not separated since, resulting in a musical symbiosis to which Kristi brings her voice, her vivid poetry, and her training in opera and theater, and Stathis brings his composition and production talents as well as his skills with a multitude of musical instruments, including guitar, saz, bass, ba_lama, keyboards, and zourna.

The two formed Selana, an underground group that combined garage-rock and traditional Greek music, and cultivated a cult following. Although Selana eventually dispersed, the music of Kristi and Stathis continued to evolve, adding new elements yet solidifying their unique sound. In 1997 they released their first album – "Ifantokosmos". This led to tours that took them outside of Greece as well as representation of their music on internationally released compilations.

ECHOTROPIA is Kristi's second album. Released in Greece in 1999, it soon climbed to the top of the European World Music Chart – a first time feat for a Greek-made record.

The title is a combination of two Greek words – Echos, meaning sound, and Tropia, (from Trepo), which means "turned around". As the music is "turned around", a new language of music, a new soundscape, is born. Kristi likens the process to that of the Sunflower, always turning its face to the sun, following a 360 degrees orbit, finally turning back unto itself.

For Kristi, words are an integral part of the music making process. A published writer ("Seven Times in Amorgos" a book of mystery stories and "The Fiery Sward" – a novel) Kristi describes the making of ECHOTROPIA as "a spontaneous game between words and sounds. Words and sounds that talk about what is hidden behind Nature, forbidden books, ancient myths and journeys in space and time."

The new language of ECHOTROPIA's is simultaneously atmospheric and driving, instrumental and electronic, textured and sparse. Kristi's poetic lyrics evoke primordial mythology, alluding to imaginary landscapes, to sun worship, to bright passions, and to things eternal.

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