

# From Glory to Decline and Back Again: Notes on the Greek Popular Film and Direct-to-Video Musicals of the 1980s

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## ABSTRACT

*While the Greek film musical enjoyed popularity and commercial success in the 1960s, introducing new discourses on tradition, Greekness and modernity, it virtually disappeared from the Greek film charts in the next decade after the fast decline of the Greek popular cinema. During the 1980s, a period of major political, social and cultural changes, the Greek popular cinema and its genres began to regain popularity. Among the films of the era, some film musicals were released, and within the blossoming direct-to-video network older musical filmmakers re-emerged from oblivion. The purpose of this article is to explore the Greek film and VHS musicals of the 1980s on the basis of the bipolar axis of introversion/extroversion or modernism/postmodernism and to describe its various articulations in terms of form and content in the light of MTV and popular American film musicals.*

## KEYWORDS

1980s  
musical  
popular film  
postmodernism  
VHS

The goal of this article is to examine the reappearance in the 1980s of the once popular Greek film musical, within the frame of the popular cinema of the era and the short-lived Greek video-production (1985-1990) of about 1,100 video-movies of various genres and vexed aesthetics that were filmed and distributed for home viewing through video-clubs. The article will explore the ways, in which this popular genre was adapted to the new media environment of the time and how the Greek video-films cultivated a dialogue with older popular film musicals. Furthermore, it will try to explore whether there is some continuity, from the film musicals of the 1960s to the ones of the 1980s, concerning formal or ideological conventions, and if the genre promotes progressive or conservative texts in terms of its representation of youth and women. Taking into account the cultural context of the 1980s, several questions arise: has this Greek genre been influenced, in terms of form and content, by other 1980s foreign musicals in the decade of MTV and of various blossoming popular musical trends? Does it adopt a postmodern character, which can be manifested through various formal articulations? Could we be talking about a genre revival or about its definite end? Before we try to answer these questions, we should note that, in contrast to the study of the Greek film genres of the 1960s (Athanasatou 2001; Delveroudi 2004; Papadimitriou 2005), the study of the Greek popular film genres in the 1970s and 1980s has been neglected by Greek scholars. Therefore, in the light of the 1980s revival in Greece, as explored by various academics (Vamvakas & Panagiotopoulos 2014; Kassaveti 2014) or by exhibitions, such as GR80s (2017), it would be interesting to examine the 1980s film musical under the scope of production, form and content, as we deal with a period when virtually every Greek popular film included some dance numbers in a discotheque or a song performed by a protagonist, but not every film could be tagged as a musical.

The correlation of the Greek film musical to the conventions of the archetypical American version cannot be ignored. Since the early 1930s, American film musical, the “most complex art form ever devised” (Altman 1979: ix), had secured an exceptional place in the American film industry through a variety of articulations (Jarvie 1970: 172). Operating on a dual-focus narrative, the film musical “involves the performance of song/or dance by the main characters” (Grant 2012: 1) that contest principles of opposition in terms of sex and ethos. Being a “mongrel” genre (Neale 2000: 105), it rejects realism and constructs a series of imaginary places, “offering visions of entirely sustainable utopias” (Mundy 1999: 57). Its highly standardized<sup>1</sup> form is comprised of semantic (Format, Length, Characters, Acting,

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<sup>1</sup> Repetition across the musical (Altman 1979: 28) aims at maintaining its pre-arranged formulas, which are based on the dual-focus narrative revolving around male and female

Soundtrack) and structural elements (Narrative strategies, Couple/Plot, Music/Plot, Narrative/number, Image/sound) (Altman 1987: 101-110). The film musical's happy endings, which culminate in a marriage as the splendor of the heterosexual love (Altman 1979: 32), are also taking place within an extravagant and unrealistic space, which serves as a visual remedy for the audience, through the combination of colour, sound, light and movement, while providing some limited, yet important, hints to the issues and dilemmas of the period they were filmed.

Lydia Papadimitriou, whose seminal book *The Greek Film Musical* (2006) is the first academic approach to the subject, argues that, contrary to the American genre, the Greek film musical emerged in the mid-1950s, a period when the local film industry was trying to strengthen the already popular comedy and melodrama genre, seeking ways to adopt their American versions to the Greek production settings, while the Greek audiences were looking for an escapist popular entertainment to identify with. Regarding the formation of the Greek identity, Papadimitriou uses the dichotomy proposed by social anthropologist Michael Herzfeld (1986): Greek identity is composed, on the one hand, by the Hellenic dimension, which is Eurocentric and associated with the Enlightenment, and, on the other, by the *Romeiki* dimension (from *romios*), which relates to neo-orthodox, traditional and fundamentalist aspects. The Greek musical provided the ground for the Herzfeldian conflict between a Westernized *Hellenic* cultural identity and the *Romeiki* one, which was tied to tradition. Even though the Greek film musical's analogies to the American genre are questionable, considering the Greek film industry's inability to finance expensive film productions, Papadimitriou notes that, from the mid-1960s to the early 1970s, the period of the military junta (1967-1974), there was a "conscious project (by the filmmakers) of constructing a 'national musical'" (Papadimitriou 2005: 7) as a typical Greek instance of the American genre, as was the case with director George Skalenakis's works.

Constructing folkloric visions of the Greek identity and avoiding realistic representations of society and culture, the Greek film musical became "a site, in which tensions between tradition and modernity, indigenous and foreign elements, the old and the new, are expressed and negotiated" (ibid.: 1-2) – a condition that is often traced in director Giannis Dalianidis's films. Dominated by barefoot fishermen, smart upper-class girls, 1960s pop music, folkloric *bouzouki* music and *syrtaki* dance, gleaming colours and well-known actors and actresses, the Greek film musical, based on the classical dual-focus narrative, addressed issues of gender and class (ibid.: 105), while emphasizing the differences between different social

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characters. These are characterized by their contesting principles of opposition in terms of sex and ethos.

backgrounds and the contradiction between life in Athens and life in the rural countryside. It should also be stressed that the rise of the Greek musical took place within the 1960s environment of emerging consumerism (Karapostolis 1984: 95-177; Kornetis 2013; Papadogiannis 2015: 27-64) and the gradual emergence of tourism (Nikolakakis 2016) as a means of financial empowerment for Greek society. Within this frame, where the Greek film musical is understood to have played a characteristic role in the entertainment and the representations and the reflections of an era, the examination of the Greek musical in the 1980s, when the resurfacing of older directors of the genre, such as Giannis Dalianidis and George Skalenakis, took place, may echo continuities between various social and cultural trends, while demonstrating the way in which the genre has been adapted to parallel popular production circuits, like the video production one.

### **THE GENRE'S DIFFICULT STEPS FROM THE 1970s TO THE 1980s: IDENTIFYING OUR SELECTION CRITERIA**

Despite its popularity in the 1960s, in the 1970s, musical, together with Greek commercial cinema as a whole, started to decline. At that time Greek cinema gradually lost its popularity, seeing a drop in production numbers and cultural influence, mainly due to the advent of television (Sotiropoulou 1989: 135). The implied change in cultural consumption models, brought by the rising significance of the television set, created new “escapism” rituals, which transformed the collective film viewing experience at a cinema (Tudor 1974: 85-86; Jarvie 1970: 101-102) to an individual home experience. On the other hand, the delayed – in contrast to other European New Waves – rise of the New Greek Cinema (Sotiropoulou 1989: 95-102; Komninos 2001: 143-148) with films like *Anaparastasi/Reconstruction* (Theo Angelopoulos, 1970) and with its more intensive production from 1970 onwards, introduced an artistic turn in filmmaking, and an interest in politics, country life and a renegotiation of established social representations.

As it is easily understood, the Greek film musical followed a corresponding downwards trajectory. It developed a “self-reflexive” and “theatrical” form (Papadimitriou 2005: 7-8) and faced a formal decline, rather reminding a recorded stage play, right before the reinstitution of democracy in 1974 (e.g. *Marijuana, Stop!* [Giannis Dalianidis, 1971]). In 1977, the death of film producer Filopimin Finos, who was responsible for numerous box office successes of the 1960s, was held as the definite end of Greek popular cinema. However, apart from the diminishing Greek film production of the mid-1970s and a temporary decline in the popular Greek film releases, traditional producers still struggled in the arena of popular films. In the meantime, new producers, following the path of the Old Greek Cinema, made their

appearance, such as Michalis Lefakis<sup>2</sup> with his Greca Film Productions, while older producers returned to collaborate with younger scriptwriters, like Giorgos Mylonas. This popular film revival, developing mainly from the early 1980s, was followed by the re-appearance of older popular Greek film scriptwriters-turned-to-filmmakers, like former 1960s comedy scriptwriter, playwright and producer Giorgos Lazaridis, or of older producers and filmmakers (Kostas Karagiannis, Nikos Avrameas, et al.). Within this frame of creative reappearance, many film genres made a comeback, like the film musical. However, this 'second life' of the Greek film musical, in the 1980s, within popular cinema could not be an unproblematic one.

In order to choose, from the entire popular filmography of the 1980s, those films, which can be included or appear to be included in the genre, this article will apply the multilevel categorization proposed by Papadimitriou (2005) as well as other definitions by Greek critics or cinema theorists. To this end, the systematic filmographies compiled by Valoukos (1998) and Rouvas-Stathakopoulos (2005), articles from the *Theamata* magazine (1979-1989) as well as film ads in the press (*Ta Nea*) or the covers of the VHS will be considered (where available), in order to explore the promoting/advertising strategies of these films and their reviews, and to include or exclude them from our corpus. Yet, in order for the content to coincide with genre definition, the necessary six dance numbers, which comprise a minimum average that can help in defining the genre's boundaries (Papadimitriou 2005: 30) will be also applied. Therefore, even if a film 'musical' meets the first conditions (i.e. it is reviewed or advertised as a musical), it cannot be categorized as such, if it does not incorporate in its narrative at least six musical and dancing numbers.

As we try to define the genre inclusion criteria and evaluate the films that, in the 1980s, present themselves as 'film musicals', we face many cases that either deploy the genre's brand name for their promotion or mix-and-match various genres in a combination wherein the musical is a secondary element. At the same time, several generic characteristics, both semantic and structural, proposed by Papadimitriou (ibid.: 328-42) and based on Altman's categorization, are identified by some relativity, as was the case in the 1960s: while there are full-length films, which include realistic and rhythmic scenes, the musical acts are not a part of the narrative structure, neither they focus on the heterosexual couple. Moreover, the aforementioned musical acts are reluctantly replaced by multiple-focus narratives.

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<sup>2</sup> See *Ta Theamata* (20/1/1979; 25/6/1980). Lefakis, as the president of the Greek Film Producers' association, invested his capital believing that "right scheduling, organization, money, and work" were "the producer's duties", as he stated in an interview in the film magazine *Ta Theamata* (20/1/1979).

Also, there are films that, while they have been given a certain genre description and include the respective numbers, they do not actually belong to the genre<sup>3</sup>. Video and personality dissolve, i.e. the overlap of visuals and characters (Altman 1987: 62-89), is essentially absent, while the sound overlap (audio dissolve) fails to reconcile the real with the ideal. Furthermore, there are films and video-films that, while including musical numbers, their basic genre typology is different, e.g. melodrama<sup>4</sup>. Finally, actresses such as Alikì Vougiouklaki and Rena Vlachopoulou delve into a self-referential cosmos in their films, which barely adhere to the criteria posed above.<sup>5</sup> So, after specific popular films and video-films have been excluded according to the above criteria, we end up with three (3) film and six (6) video-film

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<sup>3</sup> A characteristic example of this is the film *Tora thelo... tora!/Now I Want It... Now!* (Nikos Avrameas, 1980). According to Rouvas-Stathakopoulos, it is a “musical comedy” (2005: 288) and for Valoukos it is a “musical social adventure” (1994: 211), while it was advertised by filmmaker Nikos Avrameas’s film production company as “a spectacular super-musical” (*Ta Nea*, 8/01/1980). However, *Now*’s characteristics provide sufficient proof that Greek musical films were ‘musical’ in name only. We should not forget that within the frame of “genre discursivity”, clone producers “seeking to equate their films with the brand names they imitate, typically employ generic terms reducing both originals and clones to the same common denominator” (Altman 1999: 122). Nikos Foskolos, a distinctive scriptwriter and filmmaker of social and courtroom dramas in the 1960s and 1970s, made a huge comeback in the direct-to-video era. Using an older script of his, *To katharma/The Bastard* (Kostas Andritsos, 1963), he shot in 1987 *I markisia tou limaniou/The Marquise of the Port* as a two part video-film – that being, in fact, an alternate title to *The Bastard*. In the cover of the VHS, *The marquise* is labeled as a “dramatic musical”. However, it is nothing more than a drama with an investigative twist, which takes place, mainly, within a studio set up of a cabaret.

<sup>4</sup> In the context of the Greek video-film production of the 1980s, popular singer Floriniotis, collaborating with the record producer and owner of ‘Vasipap Records’, Vassilis Papadopoulos, released a series of Pontic direct-to-video dramas and comedies with all dialogues rendered in the pontic dialect and then subtitled in Greek. Floriniotis’s video-films cannot be perceived as film musicals because, while they use a sufficient number of musical episodes combined with an elementary utilization of dissolve, they tend to be based on melodramatic motifs from the 1960s. Although the first pontic video-film in the old dialect *O tsopanion/The Shepherd* (1989) was labeled in its VHS cover as “a pontic musical”, it could actually be seen as “folk musical” within the melodramatic tradition, with highly folkloric content, traditional dances, cheap aesthetics and poor acting.

<sup>5</sup> Alikì Vougiouklaki’s films *Poniro thiliko, katargara gineka/Cunning Female, Mischievous Woman* (Kostas Karagianis, 1980) and *Kataskopos Nelly/A Spy Called Nelly* (Takis Vougiouklakis, 1981) must be excluded, mainly due to Alikì Vougiouklaki’s self-referential ‘national star’ cinematic statements and their superficial relation to the genre. The collage character of *Nelly* can be easily observed: it is an atypical adaptation of *Cabaret* (Bob Fosse, 1972), enriched by the characteristic typecasting and generic formulas of writer Nikos Foskolos, as well as by scenes from the unreleased film *To koritsi tou kampare/The Girl of the Cabaret* (Takis Vougiouklakis, 1979), a Greek version of the original *Cabaret* in its own right. Taking into account these multiple points of view, adaptations and other weaknesses, it is difficult to categorize the film as a musical. It is more of a pastiche of previous film generic categories as well as Vougiouklaki’s own previous character typology.

musicals made in the 1980-1990 period. This came from a sample of 700 video-films out of a total of 1,110<sup>6</sup>.

## EXPLORING THE 1980s GREEK FILM MUSICAL'S CULTURAL IDENTITY

Although Papadimitriou's (2005) criteria concerning the form of the 1960s Greek film musical seem to be applied conveniently in the 1980s film/video genre, the proposed dichotomy between its *Romeiki* and *Hellenic* cultural identity and corresponding representations of gender and class could be seen as problematic when applied in the 1980s. Firstly, this theoretical pattern received a lot of criticism by academic scholars, such as the folklorist Michalis Meraklis (2003: 75-77), who dismisses Herzfeld's view of the construction of two national "imageries" and the identities they embed, and of the birth of the Greek state after the revolution of 1821. He further develops his thesis by arguing that "this specific peasant lifestyle, which existed, but it was not being realized by its agents, had many things in common with the ancient Greek past. And this happened, not because of a miracle, but this was imposed, as a historical necessity, by the village life's fixation to the same patterns, to the same closed horizons" (Meraklis 2003: 76).

Secondly, it seems to be too restrictive for the study of the 1980s: although there are continuities with the 1960s, the 1980s saw new developments in the American film genre, and in the Greek media industry and society as well. In addition, the social tensions experienced by the Greeks and represented in the contested arena of the film musical's fiction may have been transformed. The application of Herzfeld's viewpoint of the construction of the Greek identity in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is risky if used to talk about the 1960s, let alone the 1980s. I should, therefore, propose an eligible scheme, by which we could address the 1980s Greek film and video-musical: the division between *introverted* and *extroverted* musical (in form and content) seems more inclusive and sees the genre within the context of traditionality and modernity versus postmodernity. The *introverted* film musical usually explores the "Greekness" and the tension between the conservative and the modern, but it is oriented towards an 'archaic' view of the world, although it sometimes deploys a modern approach to cinematography or aesthetics. On the contrary, the *extroverted* film musical seems to operate within the context of postmodernity<sup>7</sup>, especially in terms of form: it represents fragmentary or varied social identities during the Greek 1980s, it is influenced by post-modern artistic forms, such as the video-clip, it

<sup>6</sup> For an analytical overview of the number of the Greek film musicals produced in the 1960s and 1970s, see Papadimitriou (2006: 305).

<sup>7</sup> For the postmodernist film, see Constable (2015) and Degli-Esposti (1998).

embraces self-reflexivity or flirts with pastiche and nostalgia. It should also be stressed that both *introverted/extroverted* articulations could co-exist in one film, as for example a film could deploy an *introverted* content versus an *extroverted* form.

Moreover, the Greek film musical and the video-musical of the 1980s should be considered within the framework of the popularity of the 1980s American film musicals, such as *Fame* (Alan Parker, 1980), *Flashdance* (Adrian Lyne, 1983) and *Footloose* (Herbert Ross, 1984). These films highlight the generic transformation already taking place within the American studio system, which resulted in major changes in the American film musical's original form. As Hischak points out, until the 1970s, the genre was no longer being produced and the studios did not have the right staff for its production. In the 1980s, when the new film musicals re-emerged, the actors did not sing, but they "managed to find a wide audience with their dazzling choreography and propulsive soundtracks" (2017: 343).

One further point is that the music television channel MTV started in 1981 to play a really important role in shaping these new musicals, which were "almost used as film videos to promote their soundtracks" and explored the possibilities of music business and the film industry (Thompson 2007: 127); for example, *Flashdance* appealed to an audience that consumed modern pop music and watched MTV (Prince 2000: 133). In addition, this film also became the prototype in bringing the studios back into the music business, followed by *Footloose*, which became the "trendsetter" of this practice (Denisoff 2009: 247; Denisoff & Romanowski 1991). In this sense, Feuer (2014: 64) characterizes these films as post-classic musicals with an MTV aesthetic. Another interesting aspect of the American 1980s film musicals is their representation of subcultural music and dance style, such as hip-hop and break-dance, mainly practiced by the black youth in the NY borough of Bronx (DeFrantz 2014: 113-134). Documentaries such as *Style Wars* (Tony Silver, 1983), the quasi-docudrama *Wild Style* (Richard Ahearn, 1983) and the musical drama *Breakin'* (Joel Silberg, 1984) are the first to present the flourishing American hip-hop culture of the 1980s in all of its glory: turntablism, b-boys dancing, graffiti and their influence upon all aspects of popular culture, from the punk-rock group *The Clash* to the MTV musicals. Another instance is the focus on the latino/chicano dance culture as in the case of *Salsa* (Boaz Davidson, 1988). Finally, as far as fashion is concerned, what is also really interesting is that such films popularized a fashion trend, already launched with aerobics in the early 1980s by stars, such as Jane Fonda: fitness clothing, leg warmers, visible bra straps, underwear worn as outwear and off-the-shoulder large sweaters (Blanco 2015: 68).



## THE POPULAR FILM MUSICAL OF THE 1980s: GIANNIS DALIANIDIS, *WEST SIDE STORY* “A-LA-GRECA” AND STATHIS PSALTIS

Greek popular cinema of the 1980s flourished in a specific historical and social context, when the socialist government of PASOK and its introduction of the populist slogan of “*Allaghi*” (meaning “Change”) (Spourdalakis 1998; Haralambis 1996; Vamvakas 2006) in 1981 attempted to forward political, financial and social transformations within Greek society (Voulgaris 2002). PASOK’s politics gave rise to consumerism within the context of a “socialist reshaping”, a further result of the ample growth in the public sector (Tsoukalas 1987), while popular culture continued to steer itself towards American mass culture. The popular cinema of all genres turned to themes from the social and political agenda of the time: the emancipation of women, ‘Greek lovers’ (aka *kamakia*), political news and, finally, delinquent youth and its problems – a theme already prevalent in Giannis Dalianidis’s earlier drama films of the 1960s (Paradeisi 2002: 151-166).

Especially, the moral panic associated with the young rebels and the changes that took place in the Greek nuclear family (Gizelis, Kaftantzoglou, Teperoglou & Filias 1984: 86; Kasimati 1998: 38), alongside the widespread use of hard drugs and juvenile delinquency (Panousis 1982; Astrinakis 1991) that involved theft and illegal motorbike racing, became recurrent themes of Dalianidis’s early 1980s social drama films (Kassaveti 2014: 100-110)<sup>8</sup>. Even though he deals with youth in a moralistic way, as he did in his 1960s films – mainly accusing the youth of its corruption – he turns youth into a basic protagonist in every other genre he filmed. So, in the film *Kamikazi, agapi mou/Kamikaze, My Love* (1983) – a “musical comedy” according to Valoukos (1984: 140) and Rouvas-Stathakopoulos (2005: 266), or a “musical super-comedy” according to its director Dalianidis (mentioned on the cover of its VHS release) presents the comical misadventures of the three siblings of the single-parent Sgouros family, Stathis (Stathis Psaltis), Rena (Rena Pagrati) and Alexis (Stamatis Gardelis). Stathis’s main concern is the acquisition of a motorbike and the love of Kitsa (Keti Finou), Rena’s is her successful marriage to Dj Johnny (Zano Ntanas) and Alexis’s is a successful career with his rock band. Their efforts are embellished with eight rhythmic numbers, which are unevenly distributed among the three: Stathis is the protagonist of four, Alexis’s band *Mousikes Dimiries* is the center of two, Alexis is the protagonist of one, while the last number is for Rena alone. An interesting device is the addition of title cards in specific scenes that utilize fast movement and playful music.

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<sup>8</sup> *Ta tsakalia. Ena koinoniko provlima/The Jackals. A Social Problem* (1981), *I strofi /The Turn* (1982), *Oi epikindynoi. Mia diamartyria/The Dangerous. A Protest* (1983).

The film is based mainly on comical episodes and its double-focus narrative is limited, yet the multiple focuses successfully achieve the merging of dream and reality through the combination of diegetic and non-diegetic sound and of a few choreographed numbers by the veteran dancer Nicole Kokkinou, who starred in older Dalianidis's film musicals. Stathis's life revolves around his motorbike – a “dependency supplement” (Karapostolis 1987: 138) of his identity and a distinct attributive characteristic of youth subcultures, as they are portrayed in Dalianidis's social dramas. The three siblings' behavior clearly echoes specific ideological dimensions of the decade, already being experienced in Greece during the 1960s, since they are defined by consumerism and social recognition through material goods (Karapostolis 1984: 236-239). Kitsa wants a man with a motorbike, Johnny tries to convince Rena to buy him one as well, while Alexis believes in his financial success through his band; these attitudes are characteristic of the years the film was produced and flourished especially after “*Allaghi*”.

The mother of the three siblings, Domna Sgourou (Koula Agagiotou), is the agent of reason and conservative values and is regularly contested, through verbal gags, by her children, who want to attain financial and social success. Moreover, modernity is of relative value to the director, since he constantly uses anachronisms in the narrative and iconography (sartorial styles like the punk style, which was in its heyday one decade earlier, theatrical music instead of modern music of the period, etc.). Thus, *Kamikaze* is a rather *introverted* film musical, despite representing some emerging social values. It actually explores and represents conservative ethics that existed in older decades, while the emerging ones are somehow harshly criticized. Nevertheless, Dalianidis's return to the genre was a success: by selling 222,610 tickets the film came first at the domestic box-office (Valoukos 1984: 332) in the 1983-1984 season.

In Dalianidis's second 1980s film musical *Otan oi rodes horevoun/When The Wheels Dance* (1984), the passionate Greek youth of the 1980s is idolized, constituting the missing link between the 1960s film musical and a fresher revision of the genre with lots of intertextual references. Dalianidis tried to modernize the genre by reusing subject-matter he had been interested in in the 1960s and retreated it in the 1980s, and working on a loose adaptation of the well-known film musical *West Side Story* (Robert Wise, 1961). *Wheels* was choreographed by the famous dancer and choreographer Giannis Flery, who had been collaborating with Dalianidis since the 1960s, and tells the story of the juvenile delinquent Giorgos (Stamatis Gardelis), who spends his days playing music with his best friends in their commune, dancing the break-dance, until he falls in love with the youthful, beautiful and religious Eirini

(Vassia Panagopoulou). The film develops within a dual-focus narrative that revolves around six rhythmic numbers between Giorgos and Eirini.

The two protagonists embody antithetical ideological values which they try to impose on one another: religion, faith, and prudence or a traditional way of life can save the individual from a sinful and reckless life where freedom is boundless and always leads to a dreadful accident or the breaking of the law. Eirini is eager to preach her Christian truth in songs, such as “Come to the Light” (“*Ela sto Fos*”) or “Work!” (“*Douleψε*”) At the same time, Giorgos, in a rather dystopian musical number, tries to save his beloved from the clutches of old-aged Christians who surround the commune in protest against the disturbance its members provoke. Time stands still and the two of them continue to interact and relive the first happy moments of their love. Apart from the double-focus narrative revolving around this paradoxical couple, the rest of the rhythmic numbers featuring Giorgos as a rebellious youth (“I do not care for work, I only want a motorbike and death” he sings) are also of interest, as Eirini replies to or makes fun of them. Finally, the secondary protagonists – one of whom appears to be wearing a *CATS* stageplay t-shirt – take part in a popular breakdance competition (with real professional dancers as well) in which the *Breakin’* film song “There’s no stopping us” by Ollie & Jerry is heard. They apologize to the police for their “problematic” behavior (“we are the problem children”) and accompany the protagonists in dream or dystopic scenes in a surgery room or in Heaven. At the very end of the film, a grand finale is reserved for the audience, “a staple of the Greek musical with Dalianidis’ films” (Papadimitriou 2005: 79).

Dalianidis seems to utilize the *West Side Story* model in terms of typecasting and conventions: in both films there are two rival gangs (White vs Puerto Rican and Greek “punks” vs Christian Youth). During their conflicts, a romance is born between the leader or the co-founder of the one gang and the sister of his rival. Both gangs participate in a dance, and, more specifically, in the case of *Wheels*, the dance takes place at a discotheque. Although in both films an attempt to kill the brother of the female protagonist is made by his rival (and her lover), in *West Side Story* it leads to death, while in *Wheels*, Eirini’s brother is saved and he actually becomes the reason for a definite cease in their conflicts. In this respect, the grand finale of *Wheels* is a happy one, as long as the two rival gangs leave their differences behind and accept the love of Eirini and Giorgos.

Dalianidis could also to be influenced by American popular dramas of the decade that based their narratives on modern dance performances, such as *Flashdance* or *Breakin’*. The film’s music by Thanassis Bikos abstains from any sense of

traditionality within the genre's history and uses modern elements, such as electric guitars and synths. Also, the director offers representations that echo youth subcultures of the period, at least in the case of Giorgos, and introduce a rather moralizing version of female characters, like Eirini. The conservative attitude of Eirini, in a period marked by the women's movement and various feminist group activity following the change in family law (1982), is not a newfound one. It can be found in the women representations in the 1960s melodramas, which involved pious, laborious and moral young girls, whose opposite moral side Dalianidis stigmatized in social dramas twenty years prior to Giorgos's and Eirini's story. *Introverted* in its content and *extroverted* in its form, the Greek character of the genre is more directly associated with the Greco-Christian ideal, while the rapid transformation of Giorgos from a 'bad boy' to a repentant 'rock' fan with a Christian faith, dictates a rather moralistic and didactic dimension of the way virtue is acquired and represented. However, the film, a "musical comedy" according to Rouvas & Stathakopoulos (2005: 288), deployed a post-modern form, using video-clip sequences and echoing influence from American film musical trends of the time. It is no surprise that it was advertised as a "hyper spectacle" that contained "breakdance" (*Ta Nea*, 27/12/1984).

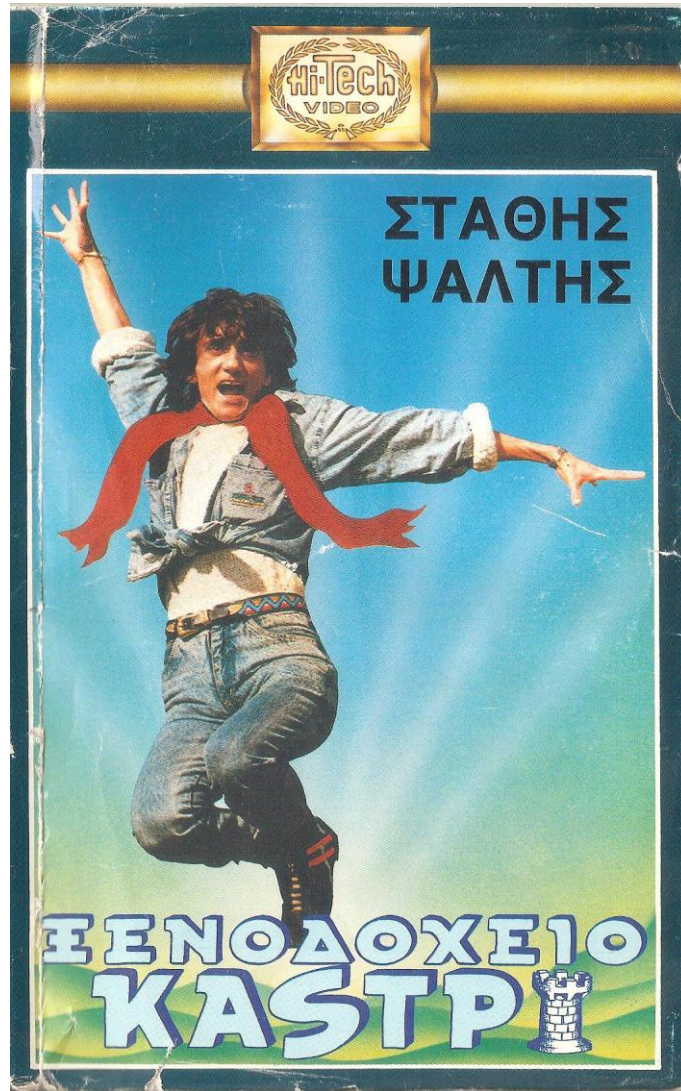
*Ksenodoheio Kastri/Kastri Hotel* (Giannis Chartomatzidis, 1988) is another 1980s film musical and an adaptation of the theatrical play of the same name by Kostas Papapetrou<sup>9</sup>. Its central character is Timolaos (Stathis Psaltis), an unemployed graduate of Pedagogy, who gets a job in a hotel managed by his friend Marios and owned by Marios's uncle Agamemnon. There he meets Elpida the maid (Keti Finou), who dislikes him, and the religious Maria (Teta Ntouzou), Marios's love interest. Meanwhile, Timolaos is in love with a female pen pal, whose true identity is Elpida the maid. Through a series of comical complications, both couples will unite in a basic grand finale. The film is produced with a rudimentary budget, shot within a single house, a situation that does not impede the characters' numbers. The rhythmic scenes take place in that same place, yet Psaltis's and Finou's song and dance, as well as the professional dancers' routines, break the realistic narrative in order to comment on each other's feelings as well as on various failures of Greek society ("Shit, Shit, Shit!" Psaltis sings, referring to his diploma).

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<sup>9</sup> *Ksenodoheio Kastri*, directed by Dimitris Nikolaides, was staged at the *Bourneli Theatre* in the summer of 1985 and 1986 and at *Acropole Theatre* during the winter of 1986.



**Fig. 1:** *When Wheels are Dancing* (1984), press advertisement. It combines selected visual elements (such as a breakdance dancer and actor Stamatis Gardelis playing the guitar and a motocyclist) as well as textual information ("breakdance") in its attempt to address youth audiences.



**Fig. 2:** Popular actor Stathis Psaltis in a dancing scene in *Hotel Kastri* (1988). Although the actor has mainly starred in film comedies and theatrical stage plays, his involvement in musicals seemed to be something he could definitely support.

Indeed, such comments frequently emerge in dialogues and are connected to the Greek political situation and public sphere of the end of the decade, when the Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou made a disclosure about his affair with the much younger air hostess Dimitra Liani. Moreover, the title of the film, not only refers to the famous hotel in the northern suburbs of Athens, but is also an allusion to the



social relations that were developing in the house of the prime minister in *Kastri*<sup>10</sup>. By alternating a double-focus narrative concerning the protagonists and a corresponding one concerning the secondary characters, and by using a rather *introverted* form, the love affair of two antithetical characters, Timolaos and Elpida, is gradually built up and reaches a happy ending, through the juxtaposition of their characters, rather than their values.

## FROM MADONA TO MIAMI: CHARACTERISTIC VIDEO-MUSICAL EXAMPLES

During the 1980s, the empowerment of the upper-middle class Greeks, the “spine of *Allaghi*” (Tsoukalas 1996: 161), marked a shift towards heavy consumption and investment in hard goods that functioned as a symbol of social distinction. The VHS (Video Home System) device especially familiarized Greeks with domestic entertainment: from 1985 onwards, Greek video production companies kept being launched in Athens to provide direct-to-video films to video clubs, while at the same time popular cinema began to decline. Accommodating the entertainment demands for the lower and petit-bourgeois class, these video-films were shot in a few days and featured older and younger actors and actresses of the popular cinema of the period (Kassaveti 2014 & 2016).

Often cheaply made, with explicit flaws in editing and cinematography, video-films operated as an alternative to the dying popular cinema of the era, that saw the closing down of many cinema venues, as well as the manipulated state-run television which, as Papathanassopoulos alleges, was a “suitable example of the dirigiste role of the state” (1997: 359). The transient success of video-films in Greece had been due to their generic variety and their heavy intertextual character: as in the 1960s, comedy and drama dominated video production as the two most popular genres, while sentimental comedies, adventure films, kid flicks and recorded variety shows enriched the generic variety of the Greek direct-to-video production. Furthermore, the video-films were associated with specific preexisting filmic texts and their characters or subject-matter, which they were transformed or used unaltered. It was, therefore, to be expected that the old film musical would resurge in the specific short-lived production. Video-musicals adapted to new, almost lightning-fast, conditions of production and distribution. However, a deceitful genre designation was adopted for several video-films. Typically, these supposed video-musicals were either comedies or dramas and they failed to present

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<sup>10</sup> Papandreou's house, which belonged to his politician father, was located in *Kastri*, in the district of *Nea Erythrea* (North of Athens) and was considered to be the main headquarters of Papandreou and PASOK.

more than two or three numbers. In fact, in the period of Greek video production, video-musicals were few in number.

In these video-musicals, professional choreographers, such as Ivanov,<sup>11</sup> are responsible for the dance numbers, but in most cases, their names, as well as the names of the dancers, are not known. Professional dancers usually dance while the protagonist is singing. Some actors/actresses have skills in dancing, such as Eleni Filini, while others barely can sing or dance. Lots of numbers are shot in small apartments, so the dance movements are restricted to a few, or in discotheques in Athens. However, as we will see below, there are video-musicals that revolve around the theatre world and their numbers are shot on the theatre stage. Finally, under the influence of gym chic trends already evident in American musicals, stage clothing for professional troupes (colourful lycra bodysuits, etc.) is common in ballets or in some female characters, whereas older actresses, like Rena Vlachopoulou, wear formal clothing. Younger characters may be dressed in feathers in a 1920s deco style. However, it should be noted that due to their low budget, these video-musicals lack a sense of style: as no costume or set designer was hired, all clothing were selected according to the (sometimes extravagant) taste of the actors and the actresses. In most cases, with the exception of Rena Vlachopoulou who used to wear conservative but elegant clothing, the fashion choices (as well as the jewelry, make up, hairstyles), as were documented in these VHS films, were rather tacky and kitsch. The same applies to the selection of the places, where the scenes were shot, such as small, distasteful apartments decorated with loads of ornaments and dull furniture, poorly furnished discos or Greek popular music venues.

As far as the representations of women in these video-musicals concerned, they reflect the changes taking place in the Greek public sphere after "*Allaghi*" and are aligned with women's emancipation during the 1980s (Gizelis, Kaftantzoglou, Teperoglou and Filias 1984: 84-86). They depict female characters working either in artistic and therefore precarious jobs (in the music business, as pop stars, or in the theatre) or occupying themselves as private eyes – a possible impact of and influence from the American TV series and serials broadcasted in Greece during the 1980s (e.g. *Charlie's Angels* [1976-81, ABC], *Moonlighting* [1985-89, ABC]). Female characters are daring, as they all want to change their current financial status, hoping to become rich (or even poor, in order to find some excitement in their lives) and moving themselves away from a conservative view to a more extroverted one and more connected to the American popular culture.

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<sup>11</sup> A former Greek professional dancer.

The video-musical *Madonna gia panta/Madonna for Ever* (Kostas Bakodimos, 1986) was mainly inspired by the American singer Madonna's growing international and Greek popularity. It transformed actress and dancer Eleni Filini – whose dancing and acting career began in the late 1970s and reached its heyday in the 1980s – from a drab secretary to a doppelganger of a successful singer. Madonna is a teenager's or a young girl's dream-come-true. Keti, the secretary, falls in love with Kostas (Pavlos Evangelopoulos), the boss of the recording agency she works for. However, he is ecstatic every time he watches a singer, the black-haired Greek Madonna. Keti can sing well and soon she realizes that she could easily switch to a different occupation, so she dyes her hair black and becomes a sweet and good-natured substitute of the real and ill-mannered star Madonna (both roles are played by Filini). Complications naturally arise until the end when Keti marries her boss, who throughout the film has a difficulty coming to terms with the fact that she is his former secretary.

In *Madonna*, Filini imitates the fashion style of the popular singer (lace tops with a bra underneath, a pearl necklace, dozens of fancy jewelry, hair ribbons and leopard or leatherette skirts), although her songs, composed by Vassilis Gakis, have nothing in common with Madonna's vivid pop anthems. Despite its poor choreography and Filini's mediocre singing abilities, *Madonna* could be seen as a "self-referential" (Feuer 2003) direct-to-video-film musical. The main character of Keti performs six onstage acts, in which Filini is singing either in the disco *Station One*, in the Athenian district of Patissia, or in the picturesque scenery of Corfu – an evident tourist attraction image destined for immediate consumption. Her numbers bear the structure of a video-clip, and despite the fact that they do not resemble the ones of Madonna, they feature long and close shots of the impressive Keti, singing live or outdoors. Keti's ideal world and her love for Kostas are manifested through two distinctively rhythmic episodes with non-diegetic music in which she dances and sings outdoors. The musical's dissolve functions remain relatively low, however, the antithetical characters of the two protagonists move towards the final reconciliation and marriage by the end of the video-film. The latter adopts a rather *extroverted* form and content with very few *introverted* instances (e.g.. the marital union of the couple testifies to an assimilation of the female 'rebellious' elements into a conformist reconciliation of the two sexes).





**Fig.3:** Actress and dancer Eleni Filini in the double role of Ketí/Madonna in *Madonna for ever* (1986). In one of her dancing sequences, she performs at *Station One* discotheque in Athens along with a dance troupe. Note her sexy clothing, in her attempt to imitate real Madonna's fashion style.

In addition, filmmaker Vangelis Fournistakis filmed two musicals, *Oi sklires tou Miami/Miami Vice Girls* (1987) and *Oi entimotates skandaliares/The Most Honorable Misfits* (1987), written by journalist/script writer Stamatis Filippoulis, adjusting them to the quick procedures and the small budget of the video circuit. Both musicals include a sufficient number of rhythmic scenes, instances of dissolve between dream and reality, non-diegetic music, singing and scenes with rudimentary dancing. In *Vice Girls*, the protagonists Rita and Bessy (Ketí Finou and Stavrína Prevedorou) are sent from Miami, USA – candid shots of which are used – to Athens, Greece, to investigate and find the nephews of “a mister Papadopoulos”, who left them a fortune in his will.



**Fig.4:** Cover of *The Miami Vice Girls* (1987) VHS (Keti Finou and Starving Prevedorou). Both actresses are accompanied by the Greek popular singer Lefteris Pantazis, who acted as secondary character and whose fame reached its peak during the 1980s. His image in the VHS cover could be hinting at the generic category of this video film, but apparently the protagonists' singing and dancing abilities seem to be representing an instance of mediocrity in the video-musical genre.

In *Honorable Misfits* Luisa and Katerina (Prevedorou and Finou), students of Law and Architecture respectively, are short of money and prone to daydreaming. In order to secure more money to spend away, they accept to help their friend Loukas (Pantelis Stefanopoulos) by working as maids in the house of a German old lady, Mrs. Clementine (Dimitra Seremeti). When the latter starts to show the symptoms of poisoning, the two girls take it on themselves to discover who the murderer is. If the budget was higher and the cast was different, the director would have a charming video-musical in his hands. However, the song and dance are mediocre and the performance rather “natural”, presented as a “non-choreography” (Feuer 1982: 9), while the number, for example, of Luisa and Katerina dreaming of “glitter and light”, singing the song of the same name, is filmed in a sitting room and it is by the movements of the camera alone that the viewer can perceive that it as a non-realistic scene.

In both video-musicals the narratives are multifocal and tend to focus on the life of the two protagonists, while their love stories are introduced towards the middle of the film, free of any ideological consideration. Nevertheless, one of the themes that run throughout both video-musicals is the need for money, since all central characters’ actions revolve around it, echoing the period’s consumption preoccupation. They showcase their intertextual features and deploy the form of the video-clip, exploiting their *extroverted* character, which is also apparent in their content.

### THE ETERNAL RETURN OF GEORGE SKALENAKIS

Papadimitriou has adequately addressed Skalenakis’s contribution to the 1960s Greek film musical, as he articulated a “dynamic visual style and a music, which displayed the artistic potential of the bouzouki” (2005: 99). As a part of this process, he developed a “sense of cultural specificity” (ibid.: 87) of the film’s origins (i.e., Greece). Skalenakis’s role in shaping the Greek film musical and perfecting its visual registry was a major one. Nevertheless, in the following years, it would seem that his career had been stagnant, not being able to repeat the financial success of his older film musicals. Throughout the 1980s he only shot two low-budget popular films, *O Tsitsiolinos/The Cicciolina Man* (1987) and *O pantahou paron/The Ever-Present* (1989). In the meantime, he directed ten video-films for the local direct-to-video market. Some of them can be considered as video-musicals: *Rock Panther* (1987) develops around the love and conflicts of the leaders of two rival rock groups, Eleni’s (Eleni Filini) band, ‘Rock Panther’, and Pavlos’s (Pavlos Evangelopoulos) pop group, ‘The Amazons’ (‘*Oi Amazones*’) – a plot bearing resemblance to Dalianidis’s film musical *Oi Thalassies oi Hantres* (1967).



Skalenakis's infuses narration with diegetic music, fancy dancing and singing acts, aided by choreographer and dancer Vangelis Pappas and the rock group 'Oriones', while employing the dual-function principle. The protagonists, in love but without being able to admit it, are in an increasingly competitive relationship with each other, which is articulated on the basis of their respective musical numbers. Meanwhile, Skalenakis paves the way for the final acceptance of the love they feel: the final stage takes place by the sea while the band 'Oriones' performs and the couple takes turns in singing to each other "I never stopped loving you". The director seems to try to update the genre with modern music, provided by the not-so-trendy at that time group of 'Oriones', and utilize the potential of the fresh protagonist Eleni Filini who was a dancer in the beginning of her career. The times when Skalenakis created his "national musical" (Papadimitriou 2005: 85–107) was already in the past, as *Rock Panther* incorporates no Greek elements, not even on a folkloric level, but rather looks to the West, specifically Europe, since both groups were preparing for their participation in the Eurovision song contest. At the same time, their characters are similar, since both are motivated by the need for fame, which turns one against the other. *Rock Panther* is a rather *extroverted* video musical, featuring video-clip sequences, a catchy soundtrack, and modern iconography.

In his second video-musical, *Floga/Flame* (1987), Skalenakis uses the professional dancer Fotis Metaxopoulos, already famous from his appearances in Greek film musicals of the 1960s, together with Eleni Filini. *Flame* is a dramatic video-musical with a tragic finale, which fits for the love between a Roma woman and a dancer-director. Filini is the fiery gypsy Giolanda, who meets Alexis (Metaxopoulos) due to a stolen costume just when he was looking for a protagonist for an upcoming play. A modern-day Pygmalion, he will try to teach her dancing, acting and 'proper' manners, while Nikitas (Giannis Vasiliou), her Romani ex-partner, seeks her out, along with the rest of his past: Nikitas's drug addict ex-wife, who returned half-mad from a rehab clinic abroad, now hellbent on revenge.

This video-musical revolves around the supposed temperament of the ethnocultural group of the Romani people, a dominant theme in Greek comedy video-films – consider, for example, the popular Tamtakos character played by Michalis Mosios (Kassaveti 2014: 80-91). Giolanda is portrayed as a fiery, uncontrollable and vengeful character, similar to Nikitas, while Alexis stands on the opposite side of the patience spectrum. Both difficulty in adhering to rules and the necessary punishment form a nexus, around which the whole premise of the couple's love affair – as well as all their singing and dancing – revolves. Yet, at the same time, *Flame* is reminiscent of a backstage musical (Feuer 1982: 42-44): Metaxopoulos

dances and directs his troupe or expects it to repeat his choreographies with the help of original theatre music by the well-known theatre and film composer Jacques Iakovidis while he is essentially in 'dialogue' with his protagonist on stage. Giolanda often dreams of her future fame in flash-forward sequences accompanied with music and performing characteristic poses, serving as video-clips to the artist and representing older introverted values.

Skalenakis's third video-musical was *Mia Rena horis frena/A Rena Without Brakes* (1989), in which older Greek film musical actress Rena Vlachopoulou plays the role of a multimillionaire who, bored with her demanding social life, seeks refuge in a makeshift camp of homeless and underdogs. In *Rena*, rhythmic numbers are performed mainly by a professional dance troupe under the guidance of Ivanov, as the presence of Rena makes explicit that, although she has been predominantly associated with the genre, she is now too old to perform. Nevertheless, the video-musical is heavily based on the presence and performance of Vlachopoulou, who tries to shed off the identity of a wealthy woman by singing ironically the song "Money! Money! Money!" ("*Lefta! Lefta! Lefta!*"). The embedded in the plot rhythmic scenes are shared by the secondary characters, while some songs are being repeated, like "Luna Park". *Rena* is more of an atemporal and nonspatial *introverted* musical-dancing comedy, where love is absent and young people and their problems have been replaced by the protagonist's persona.

At the beginning of the 1990s, Skalenakis shot the supposed video-musical *Ston asterismo tou Lambada/In the Constellation of Lambada* (1990)<sup>12</sup>. "Lambada mania" with its fresh and sensual video-clip, aired by MTV and Greek TV as well, provoked the simultaneous release of two American film musicals in 1990, *Lambada: Set the Night on Fire* (Joel Silberg, 1990) and *The Forbidden Dance* (Greydon Clark, 1990), which were box-office failures (Gleibermann 1990; Erbland 2016). Lambada dance became extremely popular in Greece<sup>13</sup> as well, yet Skalenakis's film failed to even

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<sup>12</sup> Lambada, a "fusion of merengue, electric carimbo" (McGowan & Pessanha 1998: 154) mixed with other Caribbean genres, developed in the 1970s in the city of Belem, North of Brazil. In the summer of 1989, the French musical group Kaoma took the international charts by storm with the song of the same name and a video-clip shot on exotic locations in Brazil and in the Mediterranean, which featured professional dancers dancing to Lambada beat. Also, *Worldbeat* (1989), their full-length album, became a point of reference for the development of "World Music"; a practical term that emerged in the mid-1980s to describe "a new aesthetic, form of the global imagination, an emergent way of capturing the present historical moment and the total reconfiguration of space and cultural identity characterizing societies around the globe" (Erlmann 1996: 468).

<sup>13</sup> *Tachydromos* (10/8/1989) features on its cover a Brazilian couple dancing the Lambada and the title: "LAMBADA is coming. Dance with 'T' (*Tachydromos*) in the rhythm of love". Moreover, musical performer and comedian Jimmis Panousis offered his own satirical

match the questionable quality of the two above-mentioned films. The opening credits of his video-comedy *In the Constellation of Lambada* feature couples of professional dancers dancing the Lambada. Besides that, no other mention of Lambada is made throughout the entire video-film. Exactly one year after this video-film, Skalenakis will work in the recently established private television<sup>14</sup>.



**Fig.5:** Stylish and ever-elegant, popular actress and singer Rena Vlahopoulou performs during a singing and dancing sequence in *A Rena without Brakes* (1989). She could be seen as one of the missing links, alongside with filmmaker Giorgos Skalenakis, to connect old film musical with its direct-to-video version.

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version *I afthentiki Lambada/ The Original Lambada* (1990).

<sup>14</sup> Skalenakis's comedy television series *O kanonieris ke I vendetta/The Striker and the Star* was broadcasted by the ANT1 private channel in 1991. "*Striker*" is the football striker Bambis (Stamatis Gardelis) and "*Star*" is Stella (Eleni Filini), an up-and-coming singer. The series focused on their different life aspirations and their competition after Bambis's serious accident. Despite the participation of former professional dance duet of Louisa Melinda and Takis Saylor and Filini's contribution to this television serial, Skalenakis, who based his script on his *Diplopennies/Dancing the Syrtaki* (1967) film musical and its characters, would never approach the quality of his successful film musicals of the 1960s.

## POPULAR FILM AND VIDEO-MUSICAL OF THE 1980s: AN EVALUATION

The 1960s luxurious and expensive Greek film musical suggested, through graphic and folkloric representations, themes that “related to the rapid modernization and westernization that took place after the war” (Papadimitriou 2006: 142) reaching high popularity. *Introverted* by nature and trying to balance between conservatism in spirit and modernity in form, it was succeeded by its 1980s film version. In contrast to the 1960s, the 1980s film musicals adopt gradually an *extroverted* form and content, being influenced by the American genre. Based sometimes on stage plays, they explore, although roughly, issues concerning some major changes taking place in the Greek society after “*Allaghi*”, while representing youth subcultures of the era. Despite focusing on outdated dilemmas concerning the cultural and the social identities of their characters and on *introverted* contrasting patterns, these 1980s film musicals tend to adopt some extrovert formal features, influenced by the 1980s American popular culture.

Devoid of any special explorations of Greekness, bouzouki and Greek folklore, 1980s film and video musicals fell into Westernizing trends: the characters sing modern songs, while rock bands are employed in order to contribute to the original motion picture soundtrack of the films. The popular music of bouzouki is quite absent from the dance sequences and it can only be heard, when the characters seek entertainment in popular venues, playing folk or popular Greek music. Pre-recorded music also accompanies some dance numbers, such as songs from famous American film musicals of the decade. Finally, the function of semantic and structural elements appears to be reduced, apparent though, while parallel focal points are presented. Audio and video dissolve work alternatively while the rhythmic numbers have been simplified compared to the complex stage directions of Dalianidis’s or Skalenakis’s older film musicals and take place both indoors (in a studio) or outdoors.

Made on a small budget and often on a rush, the 1980s kitsch Greek video-musicals reach the high point of extroversion, as they seem to be influenced, not only by the American popular culture of the era, but of its postmodern values as well: the video-clip, as a postmodern television form (Fiske 1999: 254), becomes an explicit component of the video-musical, whose intertextual references can be pinpointed in the American serials and the popular music of their times. Very often, the 1980s video-musical appears to be self-reflexive or becomes an auto-parody of the genre, bearing the attributes of a pastiche, as in the case of *Rock Panther*. It should be noted that no original motion picture soundtrack was released for the Greek films, in contrast to the blueprint of the 1980s American film musical practices. Moreover

the actors/actresses concentrated mainly on singing – irrespective of their performing abilities – instead of dancing, in contrast to the American genre.

In this regard, the 1980s film musical and the direct-to-video musical could be seen as two closely-related steps towards postmodernity: moving away from self-conflicts on identity and Greekness, they try to abstain from the glorification of the past and take advantage of the extrovertedness, the fragmentality, self-sarcasm and intertextuality revolving around the postmodern condition affecting the media of the decade. And although these films and videos mark perhaps a pre-destined conclusion to the genre, the 2001 music comedy *To klama vgike ap' ton paradeiso/Crying... Silicon Tears* by Thanassis Repas and Michalis Papathanassiou bear a testament to the endurance of the genre, even in this postmodern form.

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