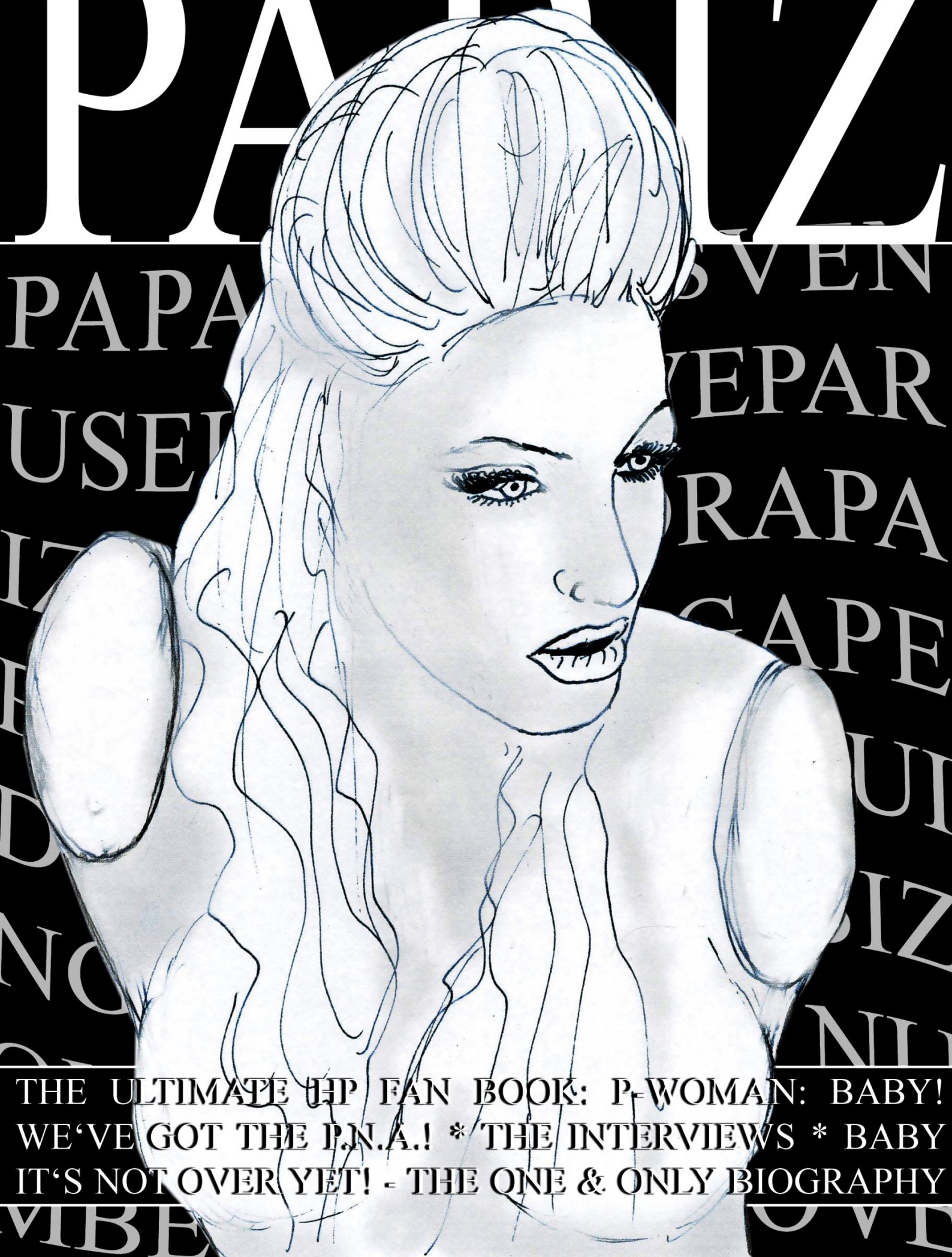
PaparizouForum.com
Survivor Edition, February 2015

PARIZ



THE ULTIMATE HP FAN BOOK: P-WOMAN: BABY! WE'VE GOT THE P.N.A.! * THE INTERVIEWS * BABY IT'S NOT OVER YET! - THE ONE & ONLY BIOGRAPHY

AUGUST 24, 2011

PARZEUM

... memories from the future

TAKE ME BACK TO YESTERDAY...

HELENA
GODDESS OF MUSIC

DAUGHTER OF APOLL AND CALLIOPE
SYMBOLS: MICROPHONE. SHOE AND TIGER

AUGUST 24, 2011

PNA

... the biography

CAPTAIN! P.N.A.SUCCESSFULLY CREATED!

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INTERVIEWS

P.N.A. successfully evolved!

Helena Paparizou is now looking back on quite a long music career. On the 2006 founded Paparizou Forum (former: Paparizou Place) her international fans from all continents found a perfect forum to exchange the latest information about her. Most information on Helena given on websites and magazines was either Greek or Swedish though, and that is how it all started.

This project resulting in the PARIZ fan book began in late 2007 - a few forum members had translated interviews from Greek, Swedish, German, Serbian and Bulgarian to English and out of this material I decided to create a magazine entitled *Paparicious* about Helena only. The first issue came out in early 2008, and was published quarterly on the forum. It included various interviews translated to English and articles written by forum members. In mid of 2008, I decided to compile all these interviews in one book, so people did not have to go through all issues of Paparicious. The interview book, a pdf file, included many photos.

White editing all these interviews and doing the layout - I could not help saving it all in my mind, though not intending it - I got the idea of creating a biography about Helena; compiling biographical information about her was rare back then, while the interviews included plenty of information. So around the new year 2008/2009, I released the first compiling biography about Helena on Paparizou Forum, again a pdf file composed of JPGs.

In 2011, to celebrate Paparizou Forum's 5th anniversary on August 24, I decided to create a complete new version of interview book and biography - the ultimate fan book, a pdf file fully searchable and printer friendly. The interviews have been sorted chronologically and corrected language wise, while the biography was almost completely re-written, this time proving most facts with a quote or citation. Much text also had to be copied “by hand” from JPG files since interview and biography document files were not available anymore in many cases. To make the biography the most enjoyable for you to read I have decided to mention the source there, and only there, where it seems necessary. Usually you will find the name of the source right at the quote or other information. But as all our information comes from external sources (since it is no official biography revised or written by Helena herself) we won’t credit the source for every single sentence, especially if it is information given by Helena more than once.[1] However, be sure that any information given in this document is based by an interview or by a trustworthy website or source. Otherwise we would not have included it.[2]

[1] But if you want to find out where we took the information from, simply enter some keywords of the information to the search option of your PDF reader and you will find connected interviews in another chapter of this book.

[2] Of course we rely on our belief that if Helena has given an interview to a journalist, that the journalist/magazine has printed her answer correctly. Of course we cannot warranty for correctness if the magazine

Credits: The biography has been written and the interview translations have been edited by KyprisAthina, with special thanks to Derek (especially for correcting and for writing parts of the biography for 2011) and to Chris K. (for helping me with the 2012-2014 part of the biography); all of the hand-made illustrations have been created by me.

Thanks to all of you who have contributed! Special thanks for the help with the biography to the websites mentioned above, further to Derek, Giannis, Nikos, George, Anna, Sami-amiditsi, "Swedish", Panos, Miranda, Chris, Alene, Horgu, Pasca, Tsouvli, Stephen, Tina, Rebecca, Ann, Sofia, Aliki, Martina, and everyone else contributing by adding information, translating interviews, providing magazines and for correcting the final edit! It has been hell of a work to create all of this - please respect our efforts by crediting us!

Keep Paparizouing!
KyprisAthina

PS: I want to say a big thank you to my dear friends from Paparizou Forum – I have missed you all! All efforts I have invested in this piece of work I have done for you, for Helena's fans, and for the ones who have supported us always (you know who you are!). We have gone through so many difficulties together – at some point, I could not face them anymore, but after all: We are survivors, and now I am back for good.

Another dawn breaks up
And brings
The best of me.

What a little time can do to you
What a little love
Can make you go through
But it's a fire hard to frame
You live your life
to let it burn you.

Helena Paparizou - it's gone tomorrow

3rd edition

1. 1st edition: 5 Years Paparizou Forum Anniversary Edition, released August 2011 [Goddess cover]
2. 2nd edition: Miss Perfect Edition, released February 2012 [MadWalk cover]
3. 3rd edition: Survivor Edition (15 years of Paparizouing: 1999-2014), released February 2015

Past can never be just past
Wounds truly won't heal that fast.

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did not cite Helena correctly. Still, many things have been mentioned in more than one interview so we had no reason to doubt this kind of information – so far.

A 'Greek-Swedish Cocktail' [3]

"I am unbelievably moved though by how my family`s journey, which is like at cycle, is coming to a close. My family left Greece in search of a better fortune, and I came back here to where it all began, and achieved what I achieved."[4]

Helena Paparizou was born as Eleni Paparizou in Gothenburg, Sweden, January 31st 1982. Helena uses to call herself a "Swedish Born Greek", because her parents, Efrosini and Georgios Paparizos[5], were Greek immigrants, originally from Volos and Karditsa. Helena's mother came to Sweden in the sixties and started to work at a sewing factory in Borås. Her dad came in 1973. How they came together? "That is a kind of a romantic story. My mother comes from a village in Central-Greece. She emigrated to escape from the misery of the civil wars that afflicted the country. Dad was a cabinet-maker. Once he was with the parents of my mother. He saw her picture hanging on the wall and yelled that he had never seen such a beautiful girl. He asked if he could meet her. He could. It was love at first sight and they are still together."[6] They worked in the gastronomy and after they stopped working they stayed in Sweden.

Helena is the youngest of three children, her other siblings being her sister Rita and brother Dino.[7] "We were the 'party family', gave big dinners; the family gatherings we had every weekend. All my 13 cousins used to come home with their parents and they all helped in my father's restaurant. All the kids were at the upper floor and had disco, the grown-ups were sitting and singing."[8]

Helena is named after her grandmother who is called Eleni[9] and so she celebrates her name day on May 21st. Helena told the magazine MusicLife in 2005: "To tell you the truth, no one from my family is [musical][10], except from my grandmother." "My grandma sang unbelievably well. She was the only woman who wasn't in the kitchen; she sat and sung with the men. She died eleven days before I was born and my dad always says that she has been reborn in me."[11]

In her childhood Helena suffered (and still suffers) from asthma so she had to spend much time in Greece because of better climate. She stayed at her aunt's from 1985 to 1987, because her parents and siblings were not able to leave Sweden due to work and school: "I had

[3] Expression copied from Helena's interview to Boston-online
[4] Boston-online 2005
[5] The difference of the names comes from Greek women being named by the Genitive of the name - so if the ending of the male name is -os, the dauther's or wife's surname will end on -ou.
[6] Het Nieuwsblad 2005
[7] "I was born a lot later, a mishap probably", Het Nieuwsblad 2005
[8] Plaza Kvinna 2006/ Madame Figaro/Grazia 2005
[9] in an interview in Spain, Los40.com, Helena mentions that also her older brother asked her mum to give this name to the baby, if it becomes a girl - one of his favorite characters from a book used to have this name
[10] But: "We have always listened to classical Greek music.", Plaza Kvinna 2006
[11] Plaza Kvinna 2006

four mums: my mum, my grandma, my sister, who is ten years older than me, and my aunt, who I lived with for a while when I was three years old. I had asthma and allergies; I was close to dying when I was two. So my mum left me there [in Greece], because the climate was better. I still remember having my arms tight around my aunt's neck and wondering why my mum left me."[12]

Later she was often at home with her grandmother and sister: "When my mum got her allergy and had to change her business, she quit the restaurant and started with a shop for children clothing. Then we got into so many conflicts. Suddenly she was at home in the evenings and told me to be back home at 6 pm, and me, aged 12 or 13, couldn't take that she suddenly made the decisions, 'What? With grandma I can be out until 9!' "[13]

Helena's connection to music showed up early: She started singing in the age of 8[14] (all in despite of the breathing problems – "I've learned to fight!", she says to DownTown in 2008), dancing, took ballet classes (until she was 12[15]) and piano lessons, and acting courses ("The first year the teacher directed and I had a hard time taking direction. I actually wanted to direct myself."[16]), even when she was still at school. "When Helena was with her school psychologist, she said many times that she wanted to be a Greek tragedienne. And the dreams about an artist life weren't just a teenagers fantasies about fame. Helena Paparizou was already on her way. She began at home on the sofa, dressed up, demanding all to look."[17]

Helena was a very good student in the first time, until she got bored by school, as she says herself. She preferred spending her time with her dad in the restaurant than being at school. Still she stayed being good, even if not the best.[18]

To Ihos FM Helena told in 2009: "Many years ago when I was at school, we learned about the internet, how to do a homepage and a teacher asked us to make our own site, our homepage on the internet, but I disagreed. I didn't want someone to enter it and to read who I am, how old I am, who are my parents, what's my dog's name and all that, and they punished me to read two books of Dostoyevsky. So, I did not concern myself with this process from very early. Now because of the work and as I grow, I have to deal more with this, because it is also my job - with emails and all these things."
Aged 13, she founded with three classmates of Latin American origin the group "Soul Funkomatic". The group played R&B inspired music, and saved up money to record songs in the studio.

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[12] Plaza Kvinna 2006
[13] Plaza Kvinna 2006
[14] "When she sang in the choir in the Greek school the teacher said "I hear a voice!" Then she got the main role when the choir sang at the Greek national day." – DN.se 2005
[15] InStyle 2005
[16] Plaza Kvinna 2006
[17] DN.se 2005
[18] Votre Beauté 2006

This period ended in 1998 with a big fire. In several interviews, Helena told of a Halloween party for students in a club on the night of October 29, 1998, where she wanted to go to but wasn't allowed to by her mum. The club burned down in a fire set up by four young men that had been asked to leave the event. 63 people were killed and more than 200 were injured, all of them children or young adults between the ages of 12 and 20. It was the worst fire occurring in modern Sweden in terms of human impact. Although the facility was licensed to hold 150 people, the investigations after the fire estimated that at least 400 people were present. Helena lost many of her friends in the fire, and because of this shock, she also lost her passion for music – fortunately only for a while. Helena has once told the newspaper Kristianstadsbladet (2001) that later on "she had been criticized for talking about the fire, which she lost her friends in. But she stands in for the things she has said because she thinks that it can help kids and youth. 'Then they see that they aren't alone to take part in difficult things and that it is not an obstacle to be a star.'"

Helena successfully applied to the school for stage direction when she was 15. But due to her musical career starting soon after, she was not able to finish it. "A very happy moment was when I had the entrance examination for the school for stage direction. Principally I would have had to wait for six months, but when I had finished and stood up saying thank you, the teacher said to me: "Welcome to your dream!" I went out and jumped into the air, fell down on the marble and hurt my knees and got huge bruises. Finally I didn't finish my studies because I started my career with 17."[19]

Inter-National

Today Helena seems to have found her balance between her two home countries, but that hasn't always been like this. "I have not felt at home for a long time. I felt unhappy. Until I pushed the button. I feel Greek as well as Swedish."[20]

[19] Votre Beauté 2006; compare MusicLife magazine 2005
[20] Het Nieuwsblad 2005

““When I was five I started with the Greek school. When I was seven, with the Swedish one. I went to the Greek school on Saturday and I had mother tongue education in Greek in the Swedish school. I had Greek dancing classes, classical ballet and I took piano lessons. But when I was twelve I didn't have the energy to it anymore and began to truant. Not every child in Gothenburg lived like that. The Chileans or the people from Iran had no Saturday school.” Now Helena was about to enter her teenage, and she needed to gain a foothold also in the Swedish earth, to stand firmly on both legs. It was then she searched up the school psychologist on "Nya Lundenskolan" [school]. “I had long discussions with her, about my grandmother being sick, about friends that "disappeared". About why I wore a mask and tried to be someone else? About why I did everything I could to get some attention?” For years Helena and the school psychologist Sanna Pernheim talked about these issues. Sanna Pernheim remembers that Helena was in a deep "nowhere". Helena fought to get a balance between "Swedish Helena" and "Greek Helena". She felt bad because others perceived her as a "bad girl". Not because she was one, but because she made herself look like one. She had an attitude that could scare and worry, behave in a way that other students would get scared of her. "Don't they see who I am and that I only want good?", she said to Sanna. Sanna Pernheim confronted her and played a scene where she behaved like Helena, arrogant and tough. With a cigarette in her hand. Helena got shocked, when she saw this. After that, the curator took her to a group that fought bullying. Sanna knew that Helena was straight, fearless and brave. She was influential and many listened to her. In the last grade Helena was a chairman in that group and when arguments broke out she went between them and wondered what they were doing. She never backed down and eventually became a role model.”[21]

Asked about her “Greek and Swedish parts”, Helena told the magazine Plaza Kvinna in 2006: "I am a Swedish born Greek. I can never be Swedish, because my parents are Greek. But at the same time I was raised here. When I lived in Sweden I always thought: “I’m such a Greek”, then I went to Greece and felt like “I’m so Swedish”! I have temperament, talk out loud and I have to touch people when I talk to them. If I see a pregnant woman, I must touch her belly! That’s my Greek part. My Swedish part is that I am always on time. I am diplomatic in a good way, so I am honest without hurting someone. And growing up in a social state makes you considerate: I care about old people, children and people in bad situations.” And in another interview: “From Sweden I have taken a sense of formality. It is now almost a joke that I will arrive before everyone else at photo shoots! I also owe a lot to the educational system. As for the Greek contribution I will give you an example: some days ago in Sweden I was invited to Princess Victoria's birthday party and when I found myself standing next to her I dared to say: "Can I give you a hug to wish you a happy Birthday?" She happily agreed. When later I offered my hand in greeting to the king he said: "I want at hug, too!" I think this need to express feelings through physical contact is a Greek habit.[22] As a person, I think I am

[21] DN.se 2005

[22] “I am quite exuberant and quite physical, and that is not always evident in Sweden. When I get angry, I will do it in Greek. But I also use that language for sweet words.” - Het Nieuwsblad 2005

somewhere in the middle. Though people from both countries recognise facets of the other country in me. For good or for bad. There is no such thing as a no man's land for me!”[23]

In 2005 Helena said about her fiancé Toni Mavridis, who also has Greek parents and grew up in Sweden (Rinkeby). “We have the same void in us, we are not belonging to Sweden or Greece. I am different here in Sweden, I look different. If i had a completely Swedish boy-friend he could say: "You and your fat relatives, do you really need to eat that much and be so noisy?" If I was with a completely Greek boyfriend, then there would be many things that he didn't understand either.”[24]

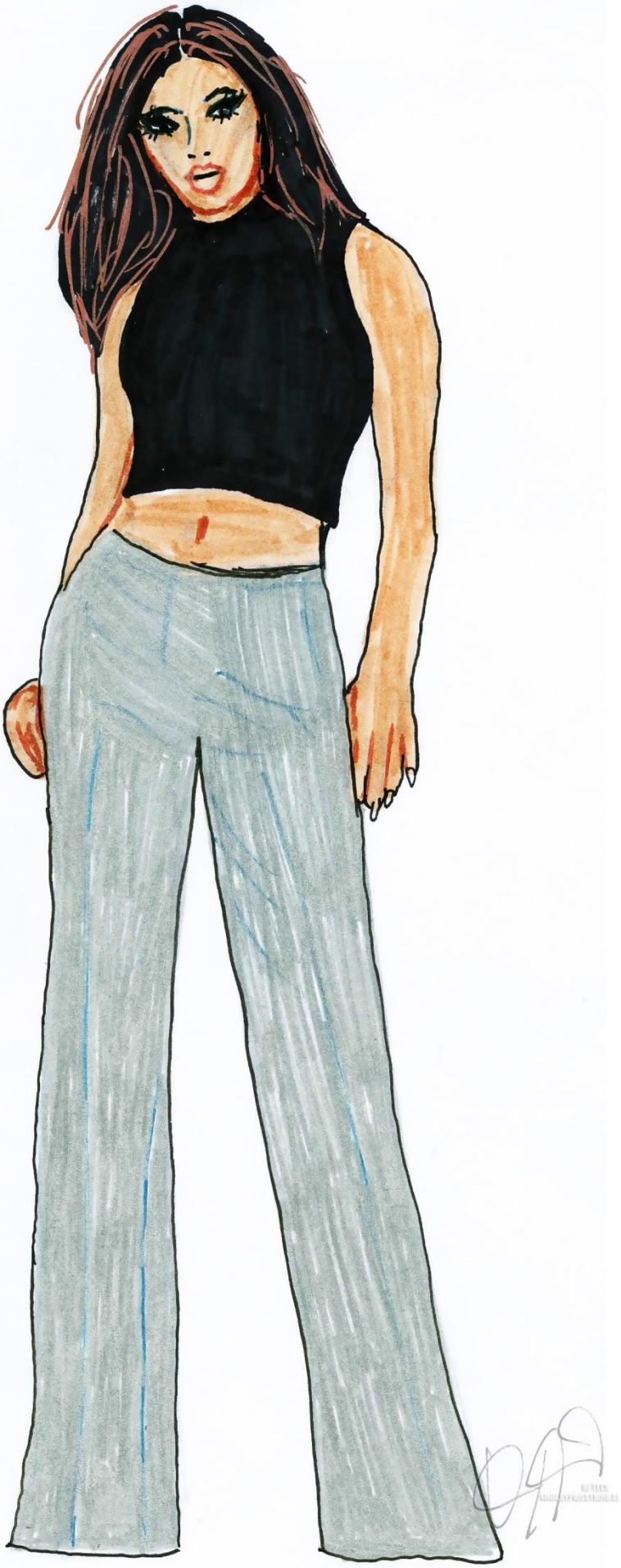
Helena is fluent in Swedish, Greek and English (and has learnt French and Spanish as well). From time to time she makes little mistakes regarding Greek grammar - but by now she has learnt to take it the funny way ("Den Ime Lexiko!" - "I'm no dictionary!", she once said during the Kous-Kous interview backstage at her summer tour in Athens 2008). She once has said[25]: "The biggest problem I had to cope with during my first time in Greece was the language for sure. At first I didn't even dare to speak Greek because I was afraid of getting too much attention by this. Before it was easier and it worked faster for me to assimilate with the Swedish people. The only thing which made a difference between me and the Swedish people was my dark hair colour."

Helena recorded her first songs in Swedish in 2007 for the movie soundtrack for "Riket vid vägens slut", released in 2008. The movie was very successful and topped the Swedish box office charts. Besides Helena released the French song "Le temps des fleurs" on her CD single "Fos" and the Spanish song "Papeles Mojados" on her album "Vrisko to logo na zo". In 2010 she recorded a duet with famous singer and songwriter[26] Albert Hammond - the song had an English ("Tangled Up in Tears") and Spanish ("Enredao") version and was released on Hammond's album "Legend". “My new disc has songs both in Greek and English. Next time maybe it will be in Swedish. I don’t need to make a choice and I don’t want to choose either.”[27]

[23] Boston-online 2005
[24] DN.se 2005
[25] Neafon 2005
[26] for example of Whitney Houston's "one moment in time" and Céline Dion's "just walk away"
[27] DN.se 2005

Sweden insists on asking Helena to represent them in Eurovision each year, as she told in 2005: **"**This year I was confronted with a huge dilemma. The first time the proposal came I was with Nikos [from Antique] and we were in Greece so we couldn't go. The second time, the year after, we were still in Greece. Then I was asked to go alone but I said that I could not leave the group. When Antique did not exist anymore, the proposal came again but it did not seem right to represent Sweden."[28] [**"**So Swedish people ask you every year to represent their country?" - **"**Yes."][29] In 2004/2005 Hélena started to spell her name with an H for getting the right pronunciation everywhere, as the Greek Elena is intonated on the first syllable (unlike Eléni though). Unfortunately in the UK and Sweden the "H" does not work at all, and Helena's name is still spoken as "Heléna" there. Friends often call her "Lena", too.

[28] Neafon 2005: "Also Sweden often wanted me to represent them, which was something I would have also liked to do, too. But I didn't know how Greece would have liked that, if I represented another country."
[29] DownTown 2005



Opa!

1999 brought huge changes to Helena's life: One day Helena received a call – her brother's friend, Jonas Scheldt[30], asked "Helena, will you record "Opa Opa" for me, in Greek? " "I told him that I would do it, but with a man [as the lyrics required it]." So they also called Helena's childhood friend Nikos Panagiotidis. "Nikos was a friend of mine and in 1999 we went to Stockholm and recorded "Opa Opa" and "Dinata Dinata". Three weeks later "Antique" signed a contract with the newly founded record label Bonnier in Sweden.[31]

"I'd like to re-experience that moment again when I was on vacation in Spetses, back in 1999, when "Opa Opa" became a huge hit all of a sudden, and I received many, many phone-calls by journalists from Sweden, saying "Opa Opa? Vad är det för nå?" ["Opa Opa? What's that?"] and I was answering "I am on vacation". I remember I had to go back to Sweden because the song had exploded [in terms of success]."[32] Later on, the song was successfully released in most of Europe, followed by Antique's debut album, "Opa Opa" (Europe)/"Mera Me Ti Mera" (Greece): "Five weeks later the album went gold and then platinum. We made a tour in Scandinavia and then we went to Germany. It was amazing how people were dancing with Greek songs!"[33] Helena herself admitted one: „I had always associated Greek music with my summer holidays in Greece. It had been something of an acquired taste for me. I collected the tunes I liked, which held a nostalgic appeal, and took them back home. Now, I listen to much more Greek music."[34]

„Dinata Dinata" was released as a single in October 1999. „All I remember after that," says Elena, „is being in a car or airplane and travelling around, promoting ourselves. We were in Greece late last year where we appeared in a couple of dance clubs in Athens [August 2001, Astra Thessalonikis with Antonis Remos, Apollon Palace Club, 2001-2002, on the side of Nikos Kourkoulis and Elli Kokkinou] and Thessaloniki [Pyli Aksiou, 2002-2003] and travelled throughout Europe and as far as Canada, Cyprus, Albania and Beirut."[35] Antique also gave a concert in Bulgaria in 2000, performing songs from their first album.
About Antique, not really being aware of their sudden success, a journalist wrote in 2001[36]:

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[30] Swedish DJs Jonas Scheldt and the C&N Project (Niclas Olausson and „Chippe" Carlsson) had the idea of re-mixing popular Greek songs to make them popular to a worldwide audience.
[31] Plaza Kvinna 2006 and MusicLife 2005
[32] Helena in an interview to the Greek Billboard Charts in 2011; "Opa Opa" sold 60,000 copies in Scandinavia and was certified with gold after five weeks.
[33] Plaza Kvinna 2006 and MusicLife 2005
[34] This quote has been taken from Antique's article on Wikipedia, which does not give the name of the interview unfortunately. But Helena says something similar in an interview to Afisorama 2003 magazine, so it seems to be real.
[35] This quote is taken from Antique's article on Wikipedia, unfortunately we do not have any further information about the source. While being in Greece to perform at night clubs, Helena usually stayed in hotels - in 2002 " it's the first time that I don't live in a hotel. I live in Toni's parents' home at Thessaloniki and I feel really nice about that." (Super Magazine)

[36] DownTown 2001

“The first thing I noticed was that Elena Paparizou was as beautiful as she seemed on TV. She wore a simple, one-colored shirt and a pair of trousers. How is a sex symbol dressed? Exactly the opposite. Everyone was watching them [Antique]. They were just laughing, like they couldn't understand what was happening.”

But not only Helena’s career was about to start in 1999: In a Greek restaurant in Sweden Helena sees a Greek man: “I thought he was a Persian because of his skin colour and hair.”[37] [She said once that she “loves Persians because of their language and everything.”] In the first three weeks she and Toni, which was his name, did not talk with each other and made it difficult. To the Swedish magazine Plaza Kvinna Helena told in 2006 how she made the first step then one month later, after a concert by Antique in Stockholm[38], asking Toni: „Where are you going? Home? You Won’t. You’re going to sleep over at my house tonight.”

Helena was 17 when she told her father that she had a relationship with a 28-year-old man[39]: “If he had ben someone else someone else, he could have been scared because of the big age difference. But so, he simply told me: ‘Now you can open your wings and fly’.”

When their relationship became serious, Helena moved from her home in Gothenburg to Stockholm, at Toni‘s place. Helena says: “I wouldn‘t say that I was mature as a child, I just hang out with older people and always felt the need to have responsibilities. Maybe that‘s why I was so young when I moved out. It‘s not usual for a 17-year-old person, raised in a Greek family, to leave home. I didn‘t live on my own, though, I immediately moved in with Toni.“[40] On December 24, 2000 the couple made their relationship official by getting engaged, and they were a couple for 12 years altogether. Toni became her manager and produced many songs for her later on: “In the first year of my career I used to travel alone. Especially those big tours with Antique. But after that I really needed him [Toni]. I asked him to leave his job [“He had a hairdresser’s, he was musician [playing piano at bars] but he ‘locked’ everything and came with me.”], and to come with me. Nikos was also very helpful but he was an adolescent. For example, when we went to Germany, I was the only woman, and 10 men wanted to go out. I couldn’t go, I was a 17-year-old girl and I couldn’t go out with them. I didn’t feel comfortable.”[41]

[37] Omorfos Kosmos to Proi, see also for the following
[38] Obviously after Nikos finally refused to work as their mail box, compare Omikron 2001; actually Nikos also says there that Toni was playing in their band already.
[39] O.K. 2005
[40] L’Officiel 2009
[41] Orange FM 2008

As already mentioned before, Helena always overtook responsibility. Asked about some critics, who wanted Antique to use Helena's sexiness a little bit more, Helena said:[42] "I have got some offers, both from Slitz and Café, but to pose in underwear is nothing i will do[43]. It isn't my job, I am a singer and I want to be a good role-model", she says passionately. On which way? "When you are seen a lot you need to be sensible. I want to say that you should be on school, you should be yourself and that you can do something good."

And more about this subject to DownTown in 2001: "I don't think I am a sex symbol. It's not what you think, but what other people think about you. It's something that I never wanted. Of course, I like being beautiful and sensual, just like every woman wants to be, but I never wanted to be considered as a sex symbol, never and for no reason. I just want to be myself and to be a good example for young people."

[42] Kristianstadsbladet newspaper, 2001

[43] Still, this attitude has changed by the years, although until today Helena has never done nude photo shoots or something similar; DN.se 2005: Recently new pictures have been taken of her, in underwear, of a Swedish man magazine [Café 2005]: "We live in a free country, we have a free sexuality. I am so tired that people pre-tend that it isn't like that. People go on vacation and see girls topless. What happens if grown up peoples see me in a bra?"

Dinata Dinata!

Antique's increasing success world-wide, promoting Greek culture with their music, brought them to the national Greek final for the Eurovision Song Contest 2001 in Copenhagen: "One day Nikos Terzis called us and asked us to do something for Greece: 'Do you guys want to represent Greece in the Eurovision Song Contest?' Nikos and I agreed that it would be the sweetest thing we could do to ourselves. There wasn't a second thought. Amazing idea, amazing song!"[44]

The Greek National Final took place on March 6, 2001 at Rex Nightclub in Athens. 9 songs took part in the competition, one of them performed by Nana Mouskouri's daughter Lenou Petsila[45]. After the performance, a jury voted. The four songs that received the most points were then performed for a second time where the winner was chosen 50%/50% via televoting (50%) and by a second vote of the „expert" jury (50%).[46] Antique and their song "Die for You", selected by the jury to enter the final round, won the second voting procedure with 45% of the votes.[47]

A lot of controversy came up in the media because only half of the lyrics were in Greek and the other part was sung in English - especially Mikis Theodorakis and others raised objections.[48] But "Die for you", composed by Nikos Terzis and written by Antonis Papas, became popular right after its first performance. A few days after already the song became number one of the sales charts of Greece,

[44] MusicLife 2005
[45] Makis Delaportas, Eurovision. The Greek Entries (1974-2006), Athens 2006, p. 279
[46] Wikipedia, Eurovision 2001
[47] Wikipedia, Eurovision 2001 & Makis Delaportas, Eurovision. The Greek Entries (1974-2006), Athens 2006, p. 282
[48] DownTown 2001 & Makis Delaportas, Eurovision. The Greek Entries (1974-2006), Athens 2006, p. 282

Estonia, Romania and Moldova[49]. In Sweden "Die for You" reached number 3, and was included to various European radio and internet play lists, making it a favorite for winning.

A few hours before Antique's performance in the Eurovision song contest in Copenhagen, Helena, "Miss Eurovision" as called by fans, got an allergic shock[50]. She performed after having received a double dosage of cortisone, which could not stop Antique from giving an extraordinary performance: "We were tipped as a winner in Copenhagen. I had no stress, whatsoever, I was perfectly calm. I did what I did for Greece."

"Die for you" got points from all participating countries. At the close of voting, "Die for You" had received 147 points, making it number 3 of 23 entries. Until then it was Greece's highest place in the competition, also promising a great future and a successful career to Antique.

[49] Makis Delaportas, Eurovision. The Greek Entries (1974-2006), Athens 2006, p. 282, see also for the following
[50] Makis Delaportas, Eurovision. The Greek Entries (1974-2006), Athens 2006, p. 284, see also for the following

Time to Say Goodbye

In late 2002, Antique released the very successful single “Moro Mou”, and its English version “My Baby” in Scandinavia in March 2003. The album “Alli Mia Fora” followed[51] and again an English version, “Blue Love”[52], was released in Scandinavia. Antique did a tour through Greece and came to various European countries. They also appeared in Bulgaria and recorded a duet version of “Why?” with the famous host Slavi Trifonov.

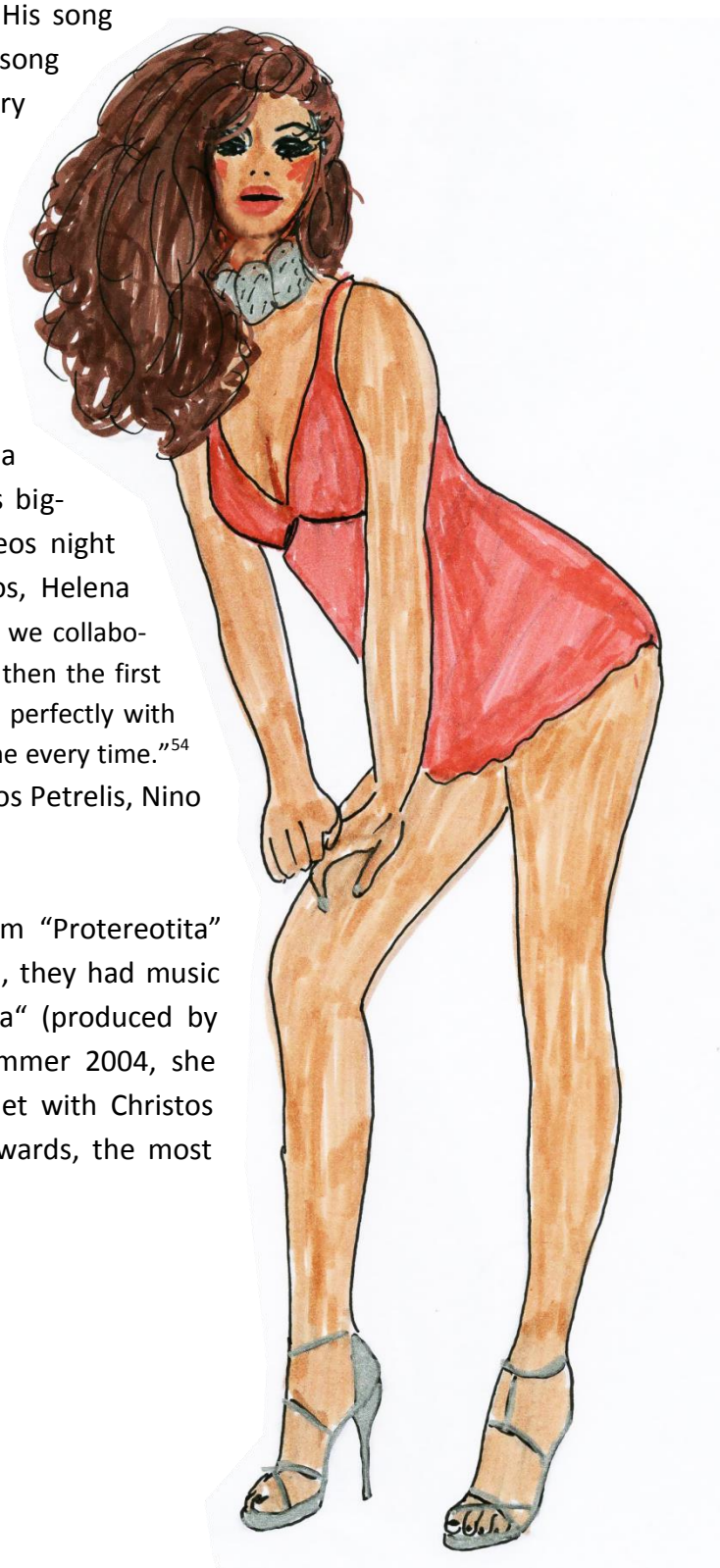
But in summer 2003, Antique decided to separate. To a Serbian newspaper Helena told in 2005: "Now, I am really happy to work alone. When we had just separated, I was depressive sometimes because I was used to be on the right side of the stage and Nikos on the left one. Now it is fine, I like that all things depend on me now. It's very hard to have a band. Two people have different ways to look. In these four and a half years we had a lot of discussions, but we had a great time, too. With every single quarrel we became stronger. Since I work alone I don't compare with Antique, because we are different." Asked in the same year, shortly before Eurovision, by DownTown magazine if she misses Nikos from Antique, Helena answered: “Yes, of course. […] But the fact that I am not with Nikos this time makes me stronger. More prepared, more decisive, more ready. But I am sad for sure because I am not next to him. I have not talked to him for ages, because he is in Sweden and he has changed his phone number. But I need his wishes [for upcoming Eurovision]!”

[51] The photo shoot for the Greek album “Alli Mia Fora” was Helena’s first collaboration with her later friend and stylist Al Giga.

[52] Helena in Afisorama magazine, 2003: “As the recording was done here and as I love Athens a lot, I would like to name the album *City Of Love.*”

Elena Paparizou

Helena signed her first contract as a solo artist with Sony Music. Her first single „Anapandites Klisis“ („Missed Calls“) was released in December 2003. It had been written especially for her by famous singer and composer Christos Dantis. His song “Moro Mou Esi” once was the first modern Greek song Elena listened to when she was 8: “When I was very young, I heard a song on MTV... I saw a man with curly hair and I fell in love with him! That record was amazing, I still listen to it!”[53] „Anapandites Klisis“ became a huge hit and remained at the top of the airplay charts as well as the sales charts for a long time, reaching gold status.



During the winter season of 2003-2004, Helena performed (again) at the side of one of Greece‘s biggest male singers, Antonis Remos, at Studio Pireos night club. About her collaborations with Antos Remos, Helena said in 2010: “Antonis Remos was the first one who we collaborated with as Antique when we came to Greece, and then the first one I collaborated with as a solo artist. I always work perfectly with Antonis, and I say that he marks a new beginning for me every time.”[54] Later on, Helena performed at Thalassa with Thanos Petrelis, Nino and Elli Kokkinou.

In spring 2004, she released her first solo album “Protereotita” („Priorities“) and the singles (no physical releases, they had music videos and airplay only) „Antithesis“, „Katse Kala“ (produced by Toni) and „Stin kardia mou mono thlipsi“.In summer 2004, she performed a remix of Anapandites Klisis in a duet with Christos Dantis at the newly set up MAD Video Music Awards, the most important music awards of Greece.

[53] Radio Sfera 2008
[54] Olympio Vima 2010

Helena's increasing success brought her to FeVeR music night club for the winter season of 2004-2005, where she performed with Sakis Rouvas and Giorgos Mazonakis in quite a big show.[55]

[55] Most of Helena's night club shows until 2005 have been broadcasted on TV and are available on youtube. Unfortunately her night performances after 2006 (including Iera Odos) have not been broadcasted anymore.

Greek Euro-Visions: Go, Helena, Go!

In 2004, Helena Paparizou is asked by ERT (Greek TV channel responsible for Eurovision) to represent her country for the second time, at the 50th Eurovision Song Contest in Kiev. "The young singer combines all those elements which are totally compatible with the new international image of Greece."[56] Helena will not only represent Greece at Eurovision, from now on she will also be the official ambassador for Greek tourism. The Greek ministry for tourism will support her upcoming European tour, to promote Greece and its entry song to Eurovision.

Helena agreed to represent her country, in despite of some friends warning her of the possible negative consequences of not winning at Eurovision: "I remember that before the first place in the Eurovision Song Contest my collaborators used to tell me that I shouldn't risk my great solo career which had just started. I was telling them that this way of thinking is crazy. They couldn't stop me because I already felt like being on stage."[57]

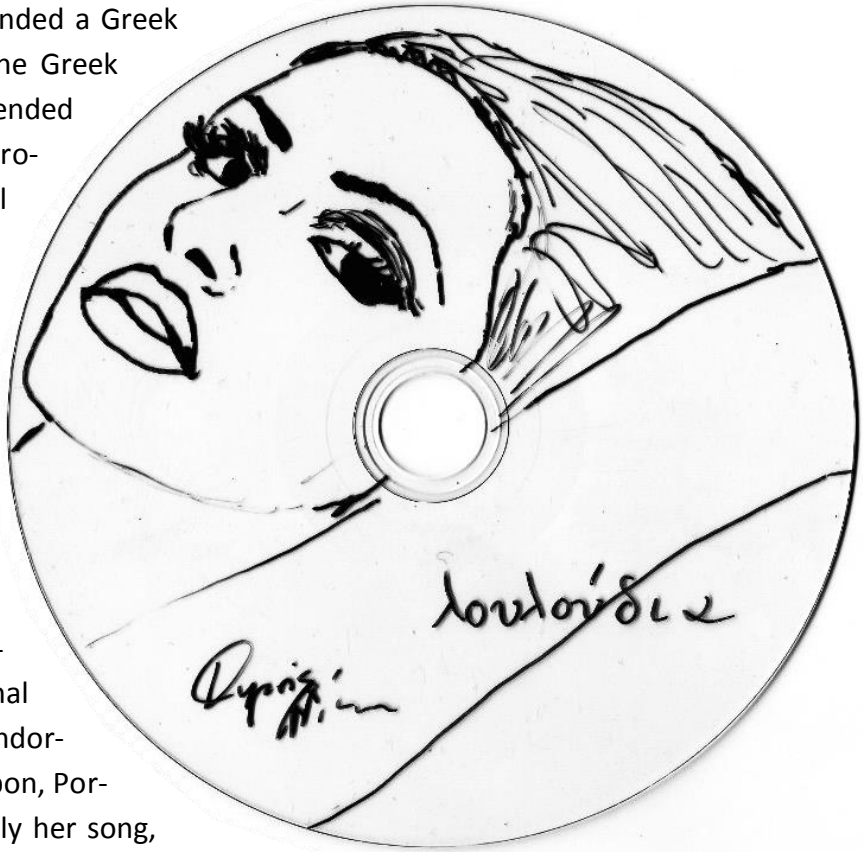
A selection of four songs was presented to the audience on February 21, 2005 during "Euromania", a weekly program on ERT dedicated to Eurovision and presented by Alexandra Pashalidou: „My Number One", composed by Christos Dantis with lyrics by Dantis and Natalia Germanou, „the Light in Our Soul" written by Kostas Bigalis, „OK" composed by Christodoulos Siganos with lyrics by Siganos and Valentino, and „Let's Get Wild" written by Douglas Carr. All four songs should be presented by Helena in the national Greek final. But one day after, it turned out that „the Light in Our Soul" had been released previously already on amazon.de by a band named „Big Alice" in 2004. Since songs for the upcoming Eurovision Song Contest are not supposed to be released before October 1st of the previous year, "the Light in Our Soul" then was disqualified.

The three songs left were presented at FeVeR on March 2, 2005. The winning song was selected by televoting (60%) and a nine member jury (40%). Out of 229,368 televotes received, 152,269 votes went to the song „My Number One" and made it a clear winner.

"For the video, we decided that we wanted to show the modern side of Greece since the first thing that comes to most people's minds when they think of Greece are ancient ruins! Of course we are very proud of our history, but we are also very proud of our present. The video was shot in two days in Thessaloniki, Northern Greece, at the Museum of Science and Technology.[58]

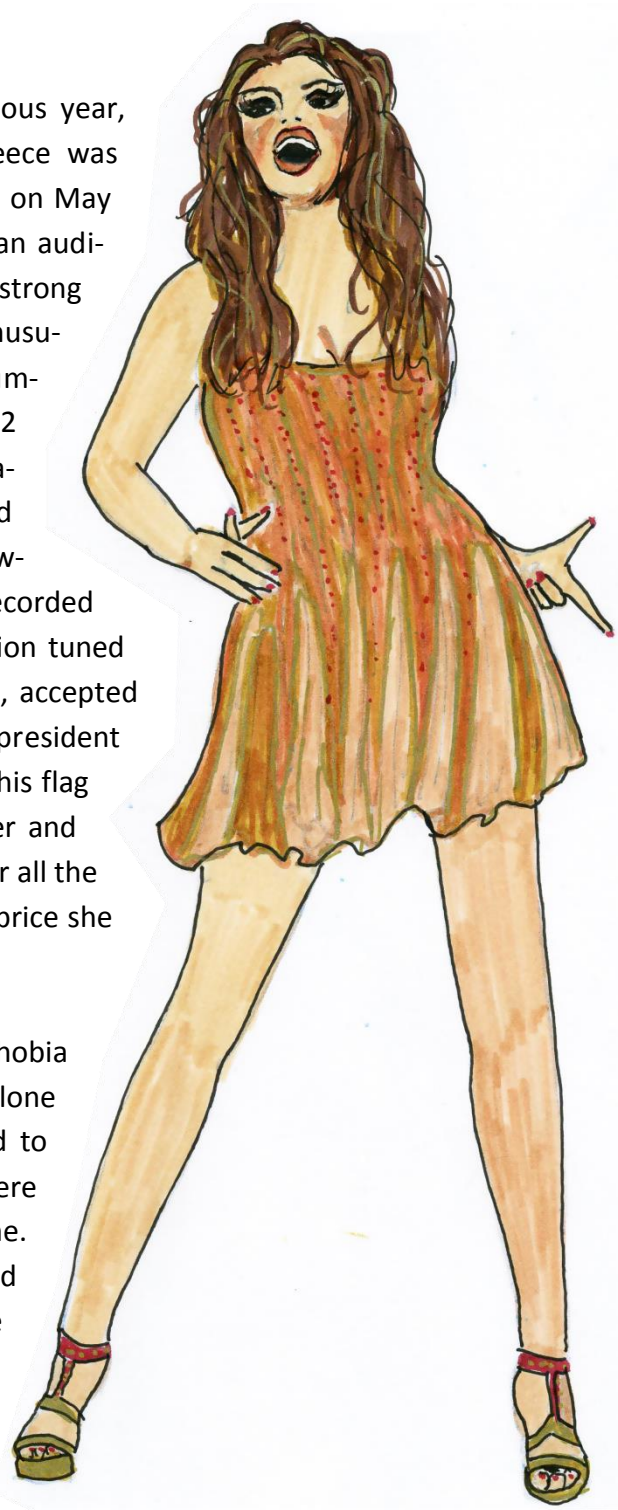
[56] Makis Delaportas, Eurovision. The Greek Entries (1974-2006), Athens 2006, p. 335
[57] Nitro 2008
[58] Esczak.com, Russia 2005

Helena's promotional European tour started off[59] on March 12, 2005 in Berlin, Germany, where she visited the International Tourism Exchange Show and performed „My Number One". The next stop was Moscow, Russia, where Helena taped a show for MTV Russia and then presented the Greek song at the International Tourism Exhibit, the largest tourism exhibit in the world. She also gave several interviews to the press and before leaving, attended a Greek Independence Day reception at the Greek embassy. Back to Greece, she attended the opening ceremony of the European final four for the Volleyball Champions League in Pylaia, where her song was played as she appeared on stage with cheerleaders. On March 29, she arrived in Valletta, Malta where she signed autographs, appeared on television stations, and gave interviews to the local media. Following Malta, she travelled to Serbia and Montenegro where she gave additional interviews before moving on to Andorra on April 10. She was soon in Lisbon, Portugal where she promoted not only her song, but also Greek export products, as she was sponsored by the Greek tourism industry. She attended an international exhibition of food and drink where the song was played for many tourists, while its music video was seen on a large monitor. On April, 20, 2005, Helena arrived in Sweden. She was interviewed by many of the local media outlets and could be heard on radio stations around Stockholm. After her stay in Sweden, Helena flew to Istanbul, Turkey where the Greek delegation met with Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople, who told her that it was good luck that the contest fell on her name-day of May 21. While in Turkey, she also posed for magazines (such as Gala) and was interviewed by the media. She soon returned back to Greece before leaving for a short trip to Kiev, the location of the contest.



[59] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greece_in_the_Eurovision_Song_Contest_2005 - also see for the following; the information taken from wiki is similar to the one given by Helena to esckaz.com in 2005, although we know that she also travelled to Spain, Cyprus, Bulgaria and FYROM;

Number One



Sakis Rouvas having reached the 3rd place the previous year, Helena was pre-qualified for the final in 2005. Greece was drawn to perform at 19 in the final. At her name day on May 21, 2005, a self-confident Helena wowed the European audience with an extravagant and stunning performance, strong vocals, an amazing choreography and an absolutely unusual professionalism compared to other entries. „My Number One“ won with a total of 230 points. It received 12 points from Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Germany, Hungary, Serbia & Montenegro, Sweden, United Kingdom, and, unexpectedly, Turkey. The highest viewing ratings in the history of Greek television were recorded during this contest, with 94.2% of the Greek population tuned in. Helena, now mostly covered by a huge Greek flag, accepted her award for the song contest and the award by the president of the Ukraine, inviting everyone to Athens in 2006. This flag had previously been taken to a church by her mother and had been blessed by the priest.[60] Helena had it with her all the time, and before she entered the stage to accept the price she asked for it and wrapped it around her body.

In later interviews Helena told to suffer from agoraphobia since the contest. After the show she was pulled alone without anyone of her team into a car to be carried to another location: “When we learned the result, there was a chaos. Two bodyguards came and grabbed me. Everyone was pushing me. They put me into a limo and I thought “ok, tomorrow they are gonna find me inside a black bag split into pieces”. I was really scared. I was screaming in the limo and someone from our team came into the car. I didn’t have a cell phone, I didn’t have anything. I wanted to call my parents, people who are close to me. Fortunately I met them at the press conference, I told them “Guys, gimme a hug, I can’t handle it anymore”.

In the final press conference after Helena amazed the worldwide audience not only with greetings in various languages, but also with her “The Girl Next Door” attitude. When Helena

[60] Makis Delaportas, Eurovision. The Greek Entries (1974-2006), Athens 2006, p. 339

came back to her hotel, a big party was started in the big hall.[61]

In Athens a huge video screen had been installed for public viewing. After Helena's victory, the Greek people celebrated their victory on the streets with fireworks like a national celebration – Greece had won for the first time in the contest's history: "The hundreds of cars that swarmed the centre of Athens beeping their horns rhythmically to the tune of 'My Number One' caused a huge traffic jam while enormous sound boxes played the song both at Syntagma and at Omonia squares."[62]

Back to Greece, loads of fans were waiting at Eleftherios Venizelos Airport. The National Fire Brigade created a water-jet archway for the airplane to pass through after the landing, shaped like number „001". "*Hello. This is the 'Number One' flight of Aegean Airlines and we have just landed in Athens. I want us all to be glowing and smiling because the Greek people are waiting for the 'Number One' team. We have arrived in Greece!* That was Helena Paparizou speaking."[63]

On the way to the ERT Headquarters at Agia Paraskevi people were standing on each side of the road, throwing roses along the route of Helena's bus. When they reached ERT Studios, Helena appeared on stage for a special Welcome concert.

[61] Makis Delaportas, Eurovision. The Greek Entries (1974-2006), Athens 2006, p. 339
[62] Makis Delaportas, Eurovision. The Greek Entries (1974-2006), Athens 2006, p. 333
[63] Makis Delaportas, Eurovision. The Greek Entries (1974-2006), Athens 2006, p. 345

Helena Paparizou – The Euro Edition

2005 became a very paparicious year for Greece with Helena appearing all over the media and at least once on almost every magazine's cover. At the Greek MAD VMA 2005 Helena performs "My Number One" and is awarded by Nana Mouskouri for her music video for "Katse Kala". She also becomes "Woman of the Year 2005" (Life&Style awards) and wins many important Greek awards. Besides, Helena becomes the face of the Greek campaign for breast cancer awareness.

The song „My Number One" did very well in the music charts, being certified with Platinum in Greece and Gold in Sweden, while climbing to number one on both charts and charting for an extended number of weeks. The song also reached the charts of Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Romania, the Netherlands, Estonia, Switzerland, Belgium, Hungary and Denmark. "The light in our soul" followed as a very successful single for Scandinavia, also "a brighter day" from the newly released album "my number one", which included Greek original songs and English versions of the songs on her Greek debut album "Protereotita", along with the new Eurovision songs. In Greece "Protereotita" was released in a repackage ("euro edition") along with a new CD including the Eurovision songs and some English versions, reaching double platinum.

In Athens, August 13, 2005, Helena gave a concert at the Olympic beach volleyball venue in Athens (OAKA), marking a year from the Athens Olympic Games. Hundreds of Greeks and tourists attended the celebration with participation of Greek and Chinese musicians. After the concert, official fan merchandise (school girls items) was released, all having live photos from the concert printed on.

Helena gained even more popularity in Sweden as well and performed her songs "My Number One" and "the Light in Our Soul" at Princess Victoria's birthday party, broadcasted by the Swedish national TV and watched by millions of viewers. She also performed "My Number One" at the World Athletics Championships in Helsinki 2005 and gave concerts in the USA, Canada and Australia, where she also appeared on TV (Sunrise).

Besides Helena performed as support act at Anastacia's concert in Malmö. She performed at various music festivals and TV shows throughout Sweden, one of them along with 1990 Swedish winner Carola and other Swedish artists (Allsang). After one of her performances, Helena stated that she will leave Sweden to live in Greece, where she bought a house in Glyfada, Athens. Still, she never stops being thankful to the country she has grown up in: "Swe- "Sweden has offered me many things through education and above all Sweden has made me proud to be Greek. In the Swedish school there was a Greek teacher for Greek lessons. They allowed us to build a church, to create Greek communities..."[64]

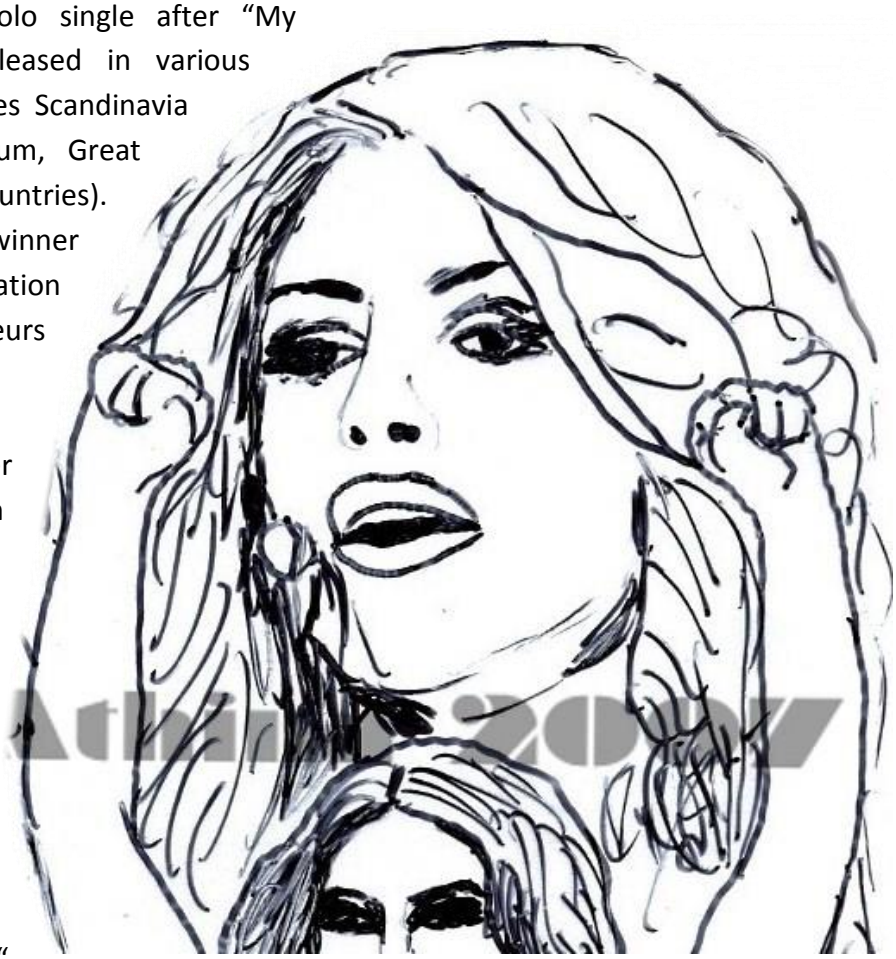
In Greece Helena started again to perform at Club FeVeR, this time on the side of Giorgos Tsalikis. At the end of the year she was the first singer to give one of the newly set up "MAD Secret Concerts", proving her fascinating vocal skills by singing classic English songs. The concert was released on DVD some months later.

[64] MusicLife 2005

Feel the Mambo!

Helena's new single released in Greece, Mambo!, reached platinum, and charted for many weeks becoming Elena's most successful single so far. "Mambo!" was followed by her Greek album "Iparhi Logos", which reached double platinum. Helena had various appearances abroad, so at the Eurovision preselections in Sweden and the UK, where she also gave a special performance at Madame Tusseaud's.

In May, Helena finally gave stunning performances of "My Number One" and "Mambo!" as interval act in the Eurovision Song Contest in Athens 2006, taking place at the OAKA. Mambo! was her first solo single after "My Number One" to be released in various European countries (besides Scandinavia it was released in Belgium, Great Britain, Italy and other countries). The song also became the winner of the 21st OGAE (Organisation Générale des Amateurs d'Eurovision) Song Contest.



As a first preview of her future international album to be released in late 2006, Helena presented her new song Gigolo in a Greek-English version at the Acropolis Raylle. In her hometown Gothenburg she opened the European Athletics Championships with her new song and the official EAC theme „Heroes". Released on single CD, "Heroes" climbed to the first spot on the official Swedish singles charts.

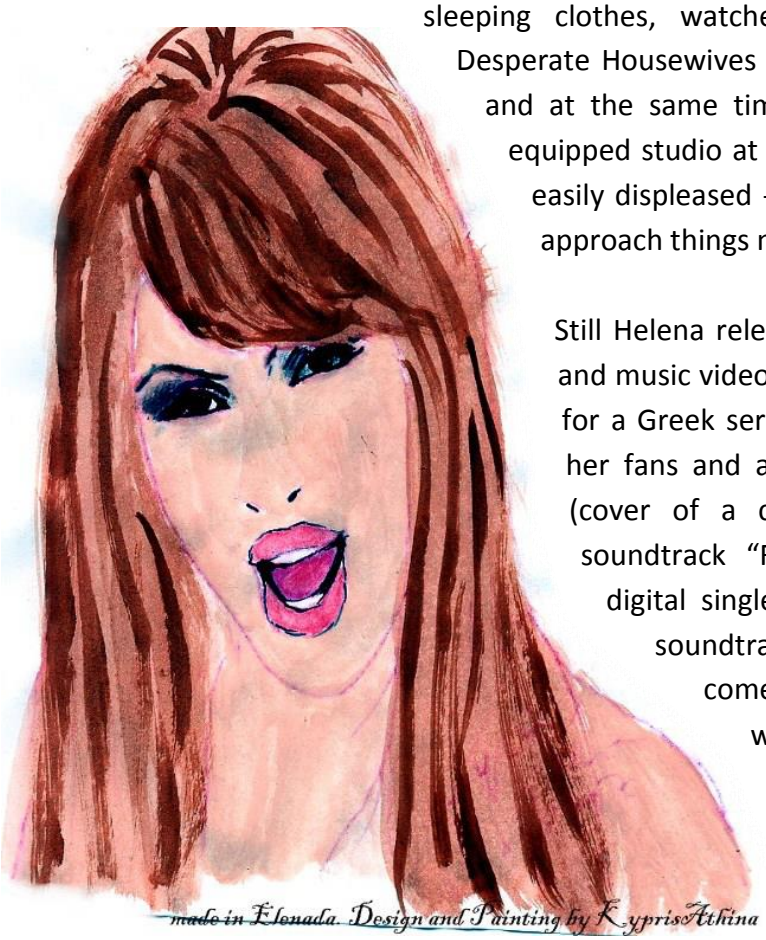
Late 2006, My Number One was released on a remix single in the United States, and so Helena entered the US charts for the first time, reaching number eight on the US Billboard Hot Dance Club Play and charting for eight weeks.

In October Helena released her international album “The Game of Love” in Greece; the album soon reached platinum and was later also released in Scandinavia and Japan (2007). Around the same time Helena gave a concert at Emperor’s palace in South Africa, where the album was released as well. Back to Greece she started to perform at the music night club “Iera Odos” with Nino and the very popular singer Pashalis Terzis for the whole winter season of 2006/2007. In spring 2007, she continued with night club performances at the club “Odeon” in Thessaloniki, again on the side of Terzis and Nino. Her music video “An Ihes Erthi Pio Noris”, the last single from the album “Iparhi Logos” was another huge success for the singer, bringing her another MAD VMA award for the category “Best Dressed”.

PF

The Kiss of Life

Early 2007, Helena was awarded at the EBBA (European Border Breaker Awards) in Cannes for her internationally selling debut album "My Number One". For many months in summer 2007, Helena took some time off. This period after performing for several years in night clubs, until April 2007, was her first big break from work as Elena said herself in an interview. "I had planned to have a year off, for the first time. I went to Toni's parents in Sweden, to my parents, then with friends to London. Walks for food, sleep, I was walking only with curly hair, comfortable clothes, things that I had really missed. And when I returned home (her new home in Ano Glyfada, near to the sea) I did not get out of it for 3 weeks! I wore my sleeping clothes, watched all the X-files, Heroes and Desperate Housewives on DVD. I cooked for my friends, and at the same time I was building up a perfectly equipped studio at home."[65] "In the past years I was easily displeased - in a professional manner. Now I approach things more maturely."[66]



Still Helena released a few very successful tracks and music videos, such as "Mazi Sou" (soundtrack for a Greek serial and very popular track among her fans and audience in general), "Mi Fevgis" (cover of a classic Greek song), the Barbie soundtrack "Fos" and later the first golden digital single of Greece, "To Fili Tis Zois", a soundtrack for the so-called Greek comedy movie. The first three songs were released on a single CD along with two new tracks in a repackage album of "Iparhi Logos". One track of this single CD, "An Esi M'Agapas", the Greek version of Céline Dion's "Pour Que Tu M'Aimes Encore", was performed by Helena at the French show "Vivement Dimanche", to which she had been invited by the bestselling Greek singer of all time, Nana Mouskouri. Elena gave a short interview, sung a short duet with Mouskouri and was presented to the French audience this way. Besides she released a duet with the popular host of the French "Star Academy" show, Nikos Aliagas: "I Zilia Monaksia" (L'Envie D'Aimer).

[65] Nitro 2008
[66] Porto e Mare 2008

Helena's strong comeback were the MAD VMA 2007, which were opened by her as well as the Cyprus Awards a few weeks later. Elena was awarded with 'Best Female' and 'Best Dressed' (An Ihes Erthi Pio Noris). Helena also opened the "Desert Rhythm Festival" in October 2007 in Dubai with a few performances among other performers such as Kanye West, Arash, Mika and Joss Stone. In the same month she gave concerts in Crete and Cyprus with Greek singer Nino, who she already performed with at Iera Odos and Odeon. In November then followed the NOKIA trends lab Greece concert, where Elena performed alongside Mya. The Swedish mobile network operator Tre chose Elena for the face and soundtrack [3 is a magic number] of their advertising campaign. Another disappearance of the public followed, while Elena was recording her new Greek album, which was planned to be released in Spring/Summer 2008.

It was also then when Greek media started to make a big subject of Helena having put on a few kilos more. Helena did not care about it in terms of reacting to it by doing a diet, for example, but spoke out loud against racism. Generally the permanent and repetitive questions about her weight (and about pregnancy and marriage) always seem to bother her more than the actual subject of them, bringing her a lot of sympathy from various sides: "I'm a singer, not a model. I don't want to be skinny, I don't want to have tight abs, but I want to be healthy. I go walking once or twice a week."[67] – "I both work out and dance very much, but I will tell you for once more that this is not important for me. I am a singer. I care for "working out" my vocal chords for and for singing nice songs. I want to improve myself to these two continuously."[68] – "I have never worked as a model. I did it once when I was 13, but it was an attempt. The people from the model agency told me that I had to lose weight, but I told them to go to hell because I felt fine how I was, and I wouldn't advise diets without eating healthy. I have always liked to be in front of a camera. I attracted attention so as to make people to look at me. There's chemistry between the camera and me. Image helps a lot in pop music, but I prefer to be admired for my singing skills than for my outer appearance."[69] – "I always laugh,

[67] L'Officiel 2008
[68] DownTown June 2010
[69] Los40.com 2005

I am sarcastic with myself, breaking my look. I am not afraid of being not attractive. I have fun, I am miming, I do silly things. This is how I am."[70]

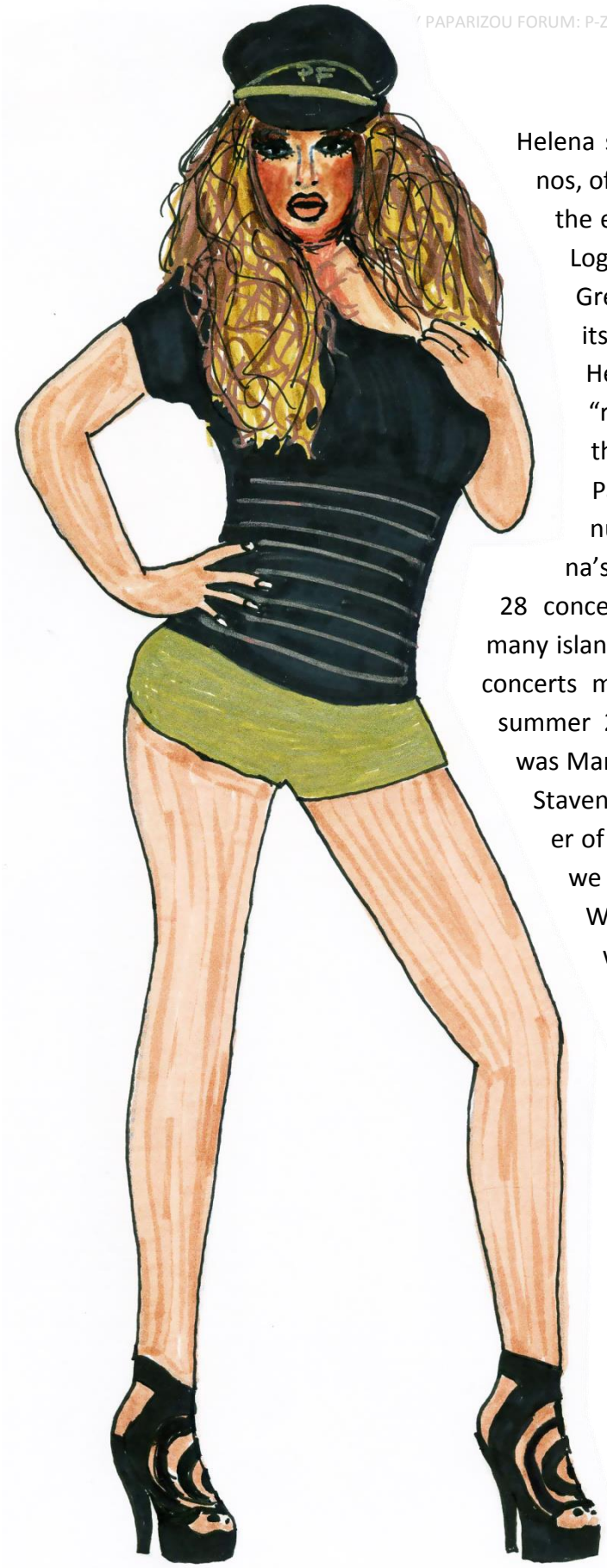
This also shows another difference of today's Helena: "Today, I would not say that I change as a person, more likely that I evolve. For example, previously I would not have accepted anyone saying: "This is who I am, like it or not!" I thought it was too selfish. Now I see it differently, since people have a choice either to be with you or not. I believe there should be no such pressure in relationships, just understanding."[71]

[70] DownTown June 2010
[71] Porto e Mare 2008

Pyrotechnics for Babytiger's Strong & Shiny Comeback

In the beginning of 2008 a few big magazine covers such as Nitro and Madame Figaro were the first signs of Elena's comeback. In summer 2008 Helena performed two songs at the MAD VMA, her newest and very successful digital single "Porta Gia Ton Ourano" in a new remix, and "Mesa Sou", in a collaboration with Stavento, a successful Greek hip hop band. She won two awards for "Best Pop Video Clip" (To Fili Tis Zois), and the most important award "Best Artist of the year" (Mazi Sou). The MAD awards also proved what the more revealing photos for Nitro had already implied in May: Helena's new and more sexy image, which caused a little controversy both for fans and media in the following months: "I think it is very important to mature with our music and not just do surprises. That is we must feel if there is a change in style or that we do it because we feel the same. Although there are many who write the songs and then again different people who write the verse, you represent them, so the song should be you, the artist. You should be able to support it."[72]

[72] Ihos FM 2009



Helena spent her summer holidays 2008 on Mykonos, of course closely watched by the Paparazzi. By the end of June, Helena's Greek album Vrisko To Logo Na Zo had already been released all over Greece and in Cyprus, reaching gold status in its first week of release. The album showed Helena from a new side, being much more "rock" than ever before. 2 1/2 months later the album was certified Platinum during a big Party with collaborators and fans. The platinum ceremony was also the kick-off for Helena's big tour "Arhizi to party" around Greece - 28 concerts took place all over Greece, including many islands. More than 200.000 people attended the concerts making it the most successful tour of the summer 2008 in Greece. The tour's supporting act was Manos Pyrovolakis, with guest performances by Stavento and Giorgos Sampanis (also the composer of some of Helena's recent hits): "With Manos we had a great time in every island we've been. We've been to their traditional parties and we've danced to traditional songs with the people. It was one of my sweetest experiences from the tour so far." Helena said that she got to know people's habits in every city she had been to and she wouldn't have managed to do that if she wasn't on tour, because her schedule wouldn't allow it.[73]

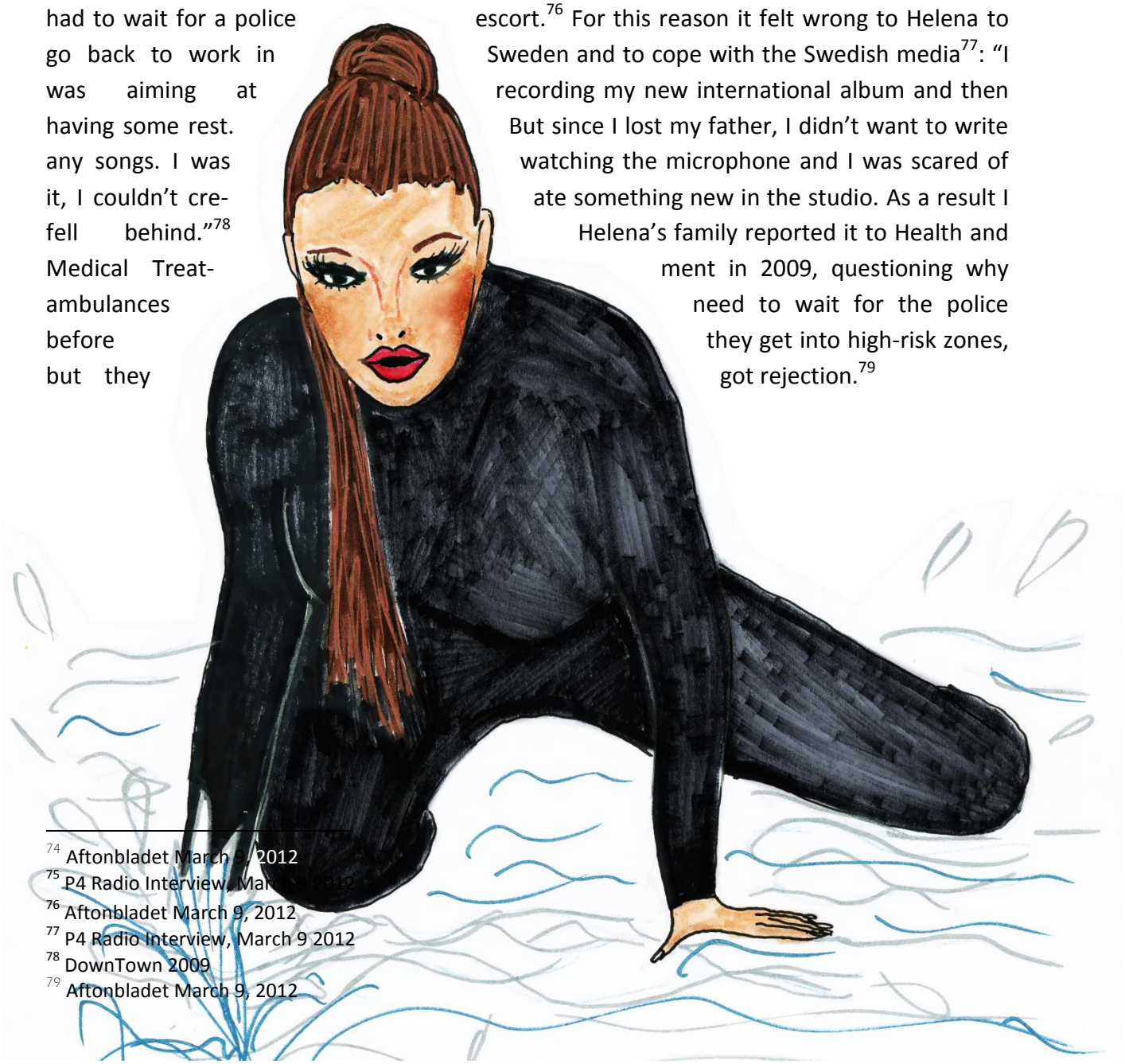
The whole summer period has also been an interview marathon both for Helena and her fans as almost every week another radio interview had been aired. Helena's tour ended in Athens and was released in December on DVD in a repackage of her Platinum Album "Vrisko to logo na zo".

Early October 2008, Helena joined facebook with a pseudonyme as public account, which

[73] Radio Diktyo 2008

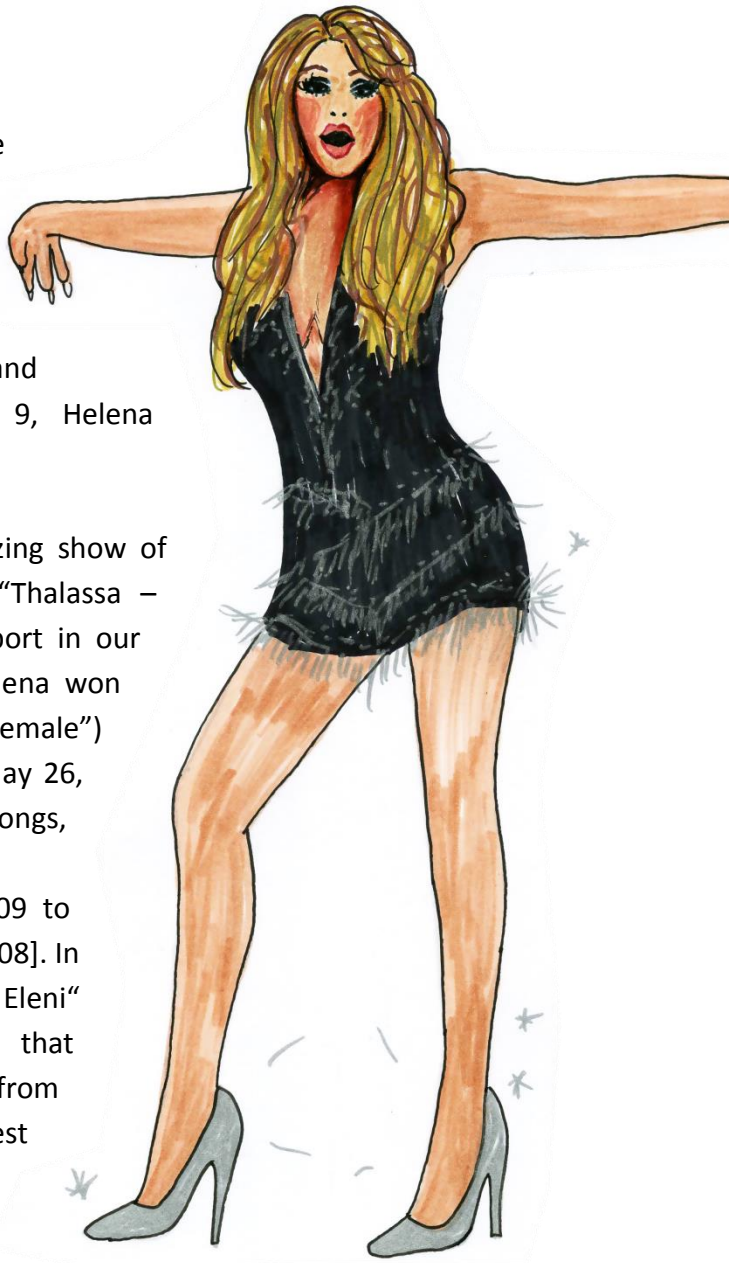
was soon set to private due to heavy fan reactions. On October 23, 2008, Helena gave a concert in Lithuania at the Siemens Arena in Vilnius, which was attended by approximately 10,000 people. She appeared on stage with her band and six dancers, performing both English and popular Greek songs of hers. Another successful music video was released in late 2008: "Pyrotehnimata" later on became "Best Pop Video Clip" at the MAD VMA 2009. Besides Helena covered the fashion magazine L'Officiel and gave stunning performances at a popular Dance show on TV, including a breath-taking Tango performance.

Later on, in a huge and expensive show, Helena performed at the night club "Iera Odos", again on the side of Pashalis Terzis. There she also was performing on Christmas eve, unknowingly that her father had died this night, in the age of 60. She took the airplane to Gothenburg, and was told the truth waiting for her bag.[74] Helena's family in Sweden lives in a so-called "High Risk Zone".[75] When her father got his heart attack during a big celebration on Christmas day in Backa, Gothenburg, the ambulance didn't arrive in time because they had to wait for a police escort.[76] For this reason it felt wrong to Helena to go back to work in Sweden and to cope with the Swedish media[77]: "I was aiming at recording my new international album and then having some rest. But since I lost my father, I didn't want to write any songs. I was watching the microphone and I was scared of it, I couldn't create something new in the studio. As a result I fell behind."[78] Helena's family reported it to Health and Medical Treatment in 2009, questioning why ambulances need to wait for the police before they get into high-risk zones, but they got rejection.[79]



[74] Aftonbladet March 9, 2012
[75] P4 Radio Interview, March 9 2012
[76] Aftonbladet March 9, 2012
[77] P4 Radio Interview, March 9 2012
[78] DownTown 2009
[79] Aftonbladet March 9, 2012

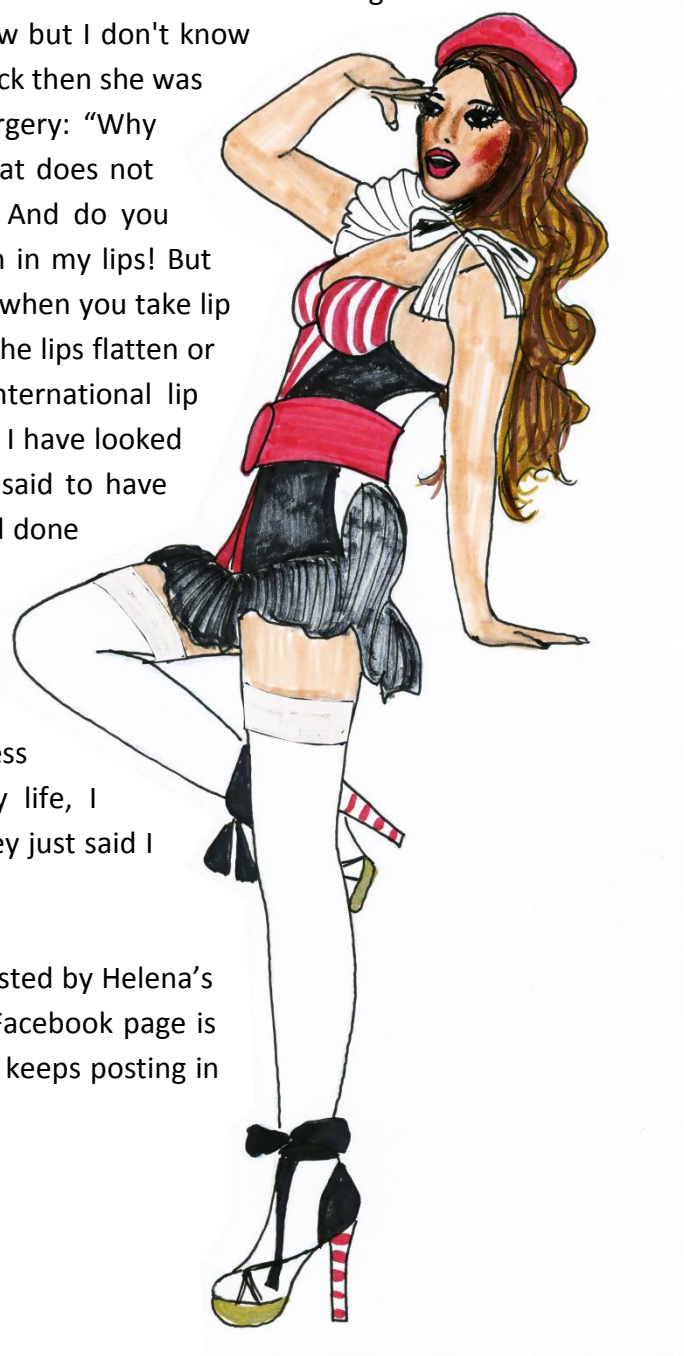
Different



In late spring 2009 Helena released her new single "Tha'me Allios" (I Will Be Different), which was also used for the advertising campaign for the Greek drink "Ivi". Helena became not only the face of this product, but also of the shampoo "Organics", covering Greek buses and stations with her pictures. Besides, on April 9, Helena celebrated her musical career of 10 years.

Late May, Helena started to perform in an amazing show of international dimensions at the renewed Club "Thalassa – People's Stage" (Please see the show review/report in our magazine Paparicious, issue 2/2009). Besides Helena won three more MAD Video Music Awards (also "best female") and gave her second "MAD Secret Concert" on May 26, this time performing mainly classical rock songs, broadcasted on MAD TV one year later.
Helena stated in the magazine Pink Woman 2009 to have done a breast augmentation [most likely in 2008]. In another interview at the TV show „Kafes Me Tin Eleni" 2010, Helena was asked if she was not afraid that admitting a plastic surgery and having suffered from depression could harm her image: "I think the biggest harm I could cause is to myself. And I don't think it's a bad thing to share things… when I talked about a plastic surgery for example, I didn't mention it in order to prove something nor do I think that everyone should start undergoing plastic surgeries. Regarding the plastic surgery, it is something I had been thinking about for 10 years and I am very happy that I never did it when I was 18. I did it when I was mentally ready for it to occur and above all I did it for myself and no one else. Regarding the depression that I suffered, I think it is something that can normally happen when someone loses one of his beloved ones. I just want to say that it is a good thing to share these things because, for example, when my dad passed away, for a long period of time I felt like no one could understand my emotions. I could only communicate with people who had also lost their parents. They are indeed difficult moments and I think it is a human emotion and I don't think it is something that could spoil one's image."

Helena‘s open attitude towards beauty surgeries could already be seen in an interview given to Serbian media in 2005: "I usually say: Whatever you buy, it's yours! If I buy a liter of milk, it's mine. If I buy a new pair of cheekbones by a plastic surgery, they are mine, too. Firstly we have to respect ourselves the way we are. I'm not against someone wanting to undergo an operation. It is good that this possibility exists because of the better feeling. Why not? But about me, I don't need this for now but I don't know how I will think when I am 50 years old."[80] Still, back then she was angry about people having told she had any surgery: “Why should people care about if there is someone that does not want to have wrinkles and needs some botox? And do you know, people ask me all the time if I have silicon in my lips! But there is a trick to recognize it [if there is silicon] – when you take lip stick and smear it out like this, then it is visible if the lips flatten or not…” [Helena Paparizou says and does the “international lip stick smearing test”.] “This is how I look, and how I have looked like this since I was ten.”[81] In 2006 Helena also said to have thought about this operation for a while: “[If I had done a surgery] I would have bought me a new pair of boobs, it is my thing, my decision. I would tell it. I'm not saying people should do a plastic surgery, but it is people's own choices. Maybe they needed it, to feel good. It is their own business in this case. Naturally, I thought, earlier in my life, I wanted to do it and talked to several doctors. They just said I wasn't ready for it. So I never did anything.”[82]



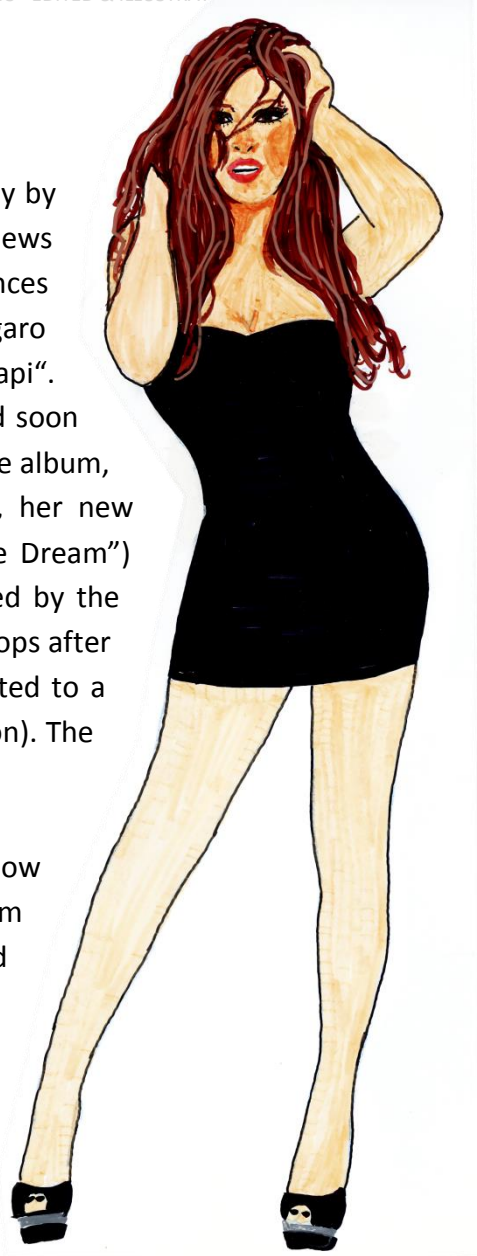
An official facebook page was created in 2009, hosted by Helena’s management and a few fan club members. The Facebook page is usually more up-to-date than her official site, but keeps posting in Greek only.[83]

[80] Compare also Madame Figaro 2005: “My problem is that I’m afraid of anesthetic. What if I don’t wake up?” (Madame Figaro 2005)
[81] DN.se 2005
[82] GP newspaper 2006
[83] Looks like this is about to change in 2015.

Autumn 2009 brought another success for Helena, winning the national voting for the MTV European Music Awards nomination „Best European Act“. Due to high fan support she came 6th in the final European voting. Helena travelled to Berlin, where MTV made a footage about her trip. This TV special had been aired at Christmas 2009 on Greek MTV. Later, shortly after the beginning of the new year, Helena‘s make-up artist Yiannis Marketakis released the book „kingdom of beauty“, including two[84] photo shoots of Helena and showing her on the cover.

[84] One of them actually was the album shoot for “Vrisko to Logo Na Zo”, but with photos taken by Katerina Tsatsani (and not Kostas Avgoulis), which had been unseen so far.

Looking for the Truth



Spring 2010 Helena made her fans happy by joining twitter and posting recent news about her upcoming performances (Life&Style Awards, Madame Figaro Awards) and new single „An Isouna Agapi“. Unfortunately her activity there stopped soon after releasing the second single from the album, „Psachno tin Alithia“. March 28, 2010, her new album „Giro Apo T‘Oniro“ (“Around the Dream”) was released along with the newspaper „RealNews“, followed by the Deluxe Version (incl. DVD and hidden track) available in the shops after March 29. Shortly before the release, the album was presented to a VIP audience in an exclusive event by Dromos FM (radio station). The CD was also physically released in Bulgaria, without the DVD.

At the MAD Video Music Awards 2010, Helena opened the show once again, performing her hidden album track, „Dancing without Music“, introduced by a futuristic screen projection in the style of her performance. “An Isouna Agapi“ won the award for „sexiest music video“, while „Tha‘me allios“ brought Helena the award for „music video of the year“, before Helena also closed the show by a fabulous collaboration with the group Onirama: Their cover of „Together Forever“, „Fysika Mazi“, became a big summer hit on the airplay, and was finally released (eagerly awaited by fans) on Helena’s “Greatest Hits & More” in 2011.

The song also became the theme of Helena‘s big summer tour, again together with Onirama and her sponsor “Ivi”. The tour started in Athens and was filmed for TV broadcast in one of the last shows in Patras. During the tour, Helena also performed at the GAY pride festival in Athens. After the tour, a planned concert in Albania unfortunately had to be cancelled due to bad weather.

The last single from her album became „Girna Me Sto Htes“ in a very upbeat, newly recorded remix ("all around the dream version"). The song had also been performed by Helena on TV in a piano version, along with a few others, at „Kafes Me Tin Eleni“, showing Helena‘s fabulous vocal abilities once again.

In November 2010 Helena started performing until Easter 2011 at „Diogenis Studio“, along with Antonis Remos. Her choreographer was her dancer Chali Jennings again, just like at Thalassa.

Baby It's Over

On February 2, Helena presented her new single "Baby it's over" at the music-fashion event "MadWalk", performing for the Greek Designer Apostolos Mitropoulos (along with a studio record of "Free Your Mind"), and at the Greek X-Factor, along with a bunch of other songs. The song, being the lead single for Helena's upcoming "Greatest Hits & More" album, became highly popular on the internet within a few days, reaching amazing critics by websites such as popjustice.com mumuse.com and scandipop.co.uk among others - without having been promoted internationally. The song then was released internationally for digital download on February 21/March 4.

Helena later on made her fans happy by finally announcing a number of concerts to take place abroad during her first concert in Sofia, Bulgaria on February 8, 2011. So far Germany and Romania have been confirmed. However as of today the planned concerts seem to have been postponed for later (if not cancelled).

The video for "Baby It's Over" (directed by Konstantinos Rigos) was released shortly after and made a big impact, receiving another MAD Video Music Award for "Fashion Icon in a Music Video". The song received further international recognition by being added in music playlists of all H&M stores world-wide while it topped the Greek airplay charts and as of today it has spent its 9th week in a row at the no.1 spot which set up a new record for Helena!

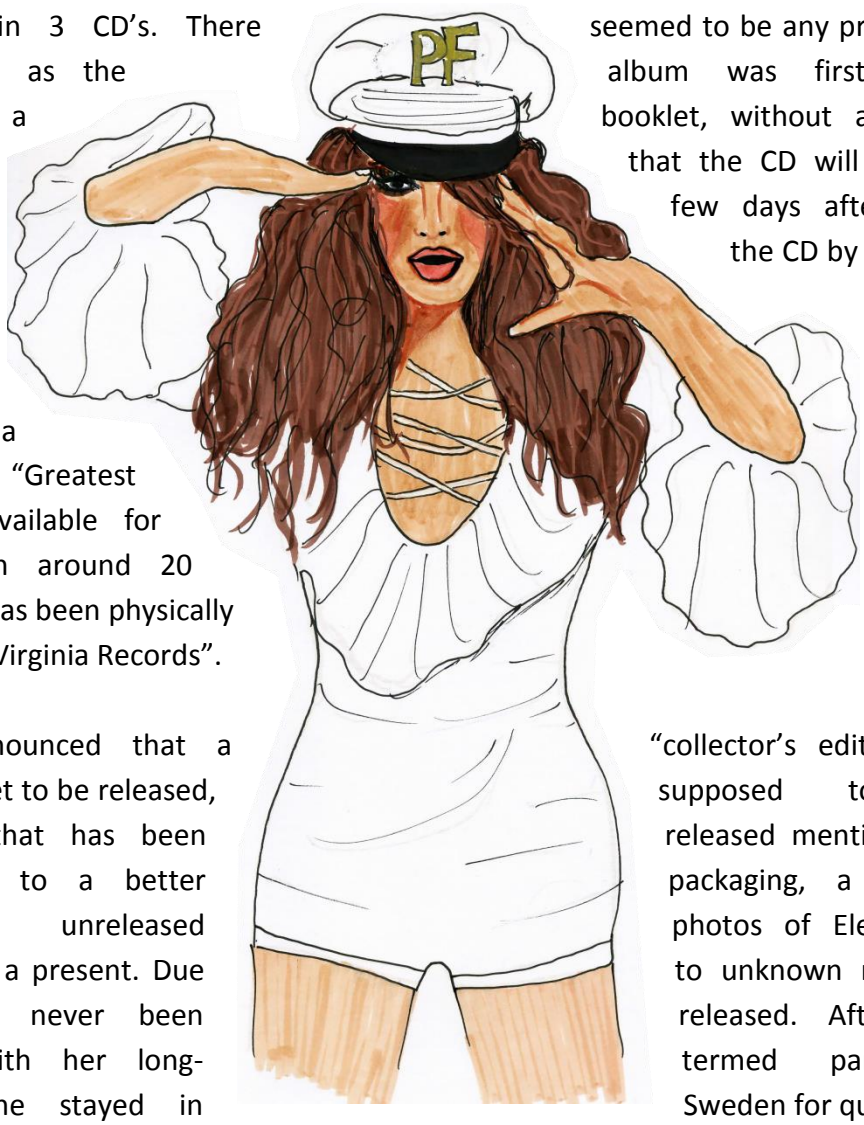
In the following months Helena appeared on Greek TV's number one most popular talk show "Vrady – Me Ton Petro Kostopoulo", gave interviews to Greek and Cypriot media, did a gorgeous photoshoot for Cypriot magazine "MAN", made some public appearances (in colleague/friends' presentations, parties or live shows), visited the children of the "Elpida association" and also participated in a charity event organized by "Ego! Weekly" where the signed T-shirt she offered for bidding was the highest bid and most viewed T-shirt among all the female celebrities' T-shirts.

It was soon announced that she would win the award for "Best Greek song in the Balkans for 2010" with "An Isouna Agapi" and was also nominated for "Best Music Video in the Balkans with "An Isouna Agapi" at the Balkan Music Awards (an internet voting was conducted to determine the winners), even though she didn't manage to make it at the awards show, possibly because of her stay in Sweden.

Very soon an official promotional internet application would be launched by Sony Music where fans could vote amongst 3 options to "unlock" the upcoming song by Elena they would like to hear first. A few other songs (the Greek version to "Baby It's Over", titled "Irthe To Telos", "Tis Agapis Ta Thymata"/"Murderous") were in fact expected to be included on

“Greatest Hits & More” as it had been announced by Helena’s executive producer and songwriter, but finally they were not released - either because they were intentionally postponed for a later release or because they were given to other artists such as in the case of “Tis Agapis Ta Thymata” (Ivi Adamou). As of our latest information however, “Murderous” (which is most likely the English version of “Tis Agapis Ta Thymata”) will eventually not be released by any artist.

“Greatest Hits & More” showcased the most successful body of Helena’s work as a solo singer, as well as previously unreleased songs, fan favorites, her international hits, duets, covers, remixes of the smash hit “Baby It’s Over” and very importantly 3 brand new songs all distributed in 3 CD’s. There seemed to be any problem about the release, as the album was firstly released without a booklet, without any previous advertising that the CD will be out this date. But a few days after fans had discovered the CD by accident, the first copies were removed from the stores and were replaced by a version with booklet. “Greatest Hits & More” is available for digital download in around 20 countries in Europe and has been physically released in Bulgaria by “Virginia Records”.

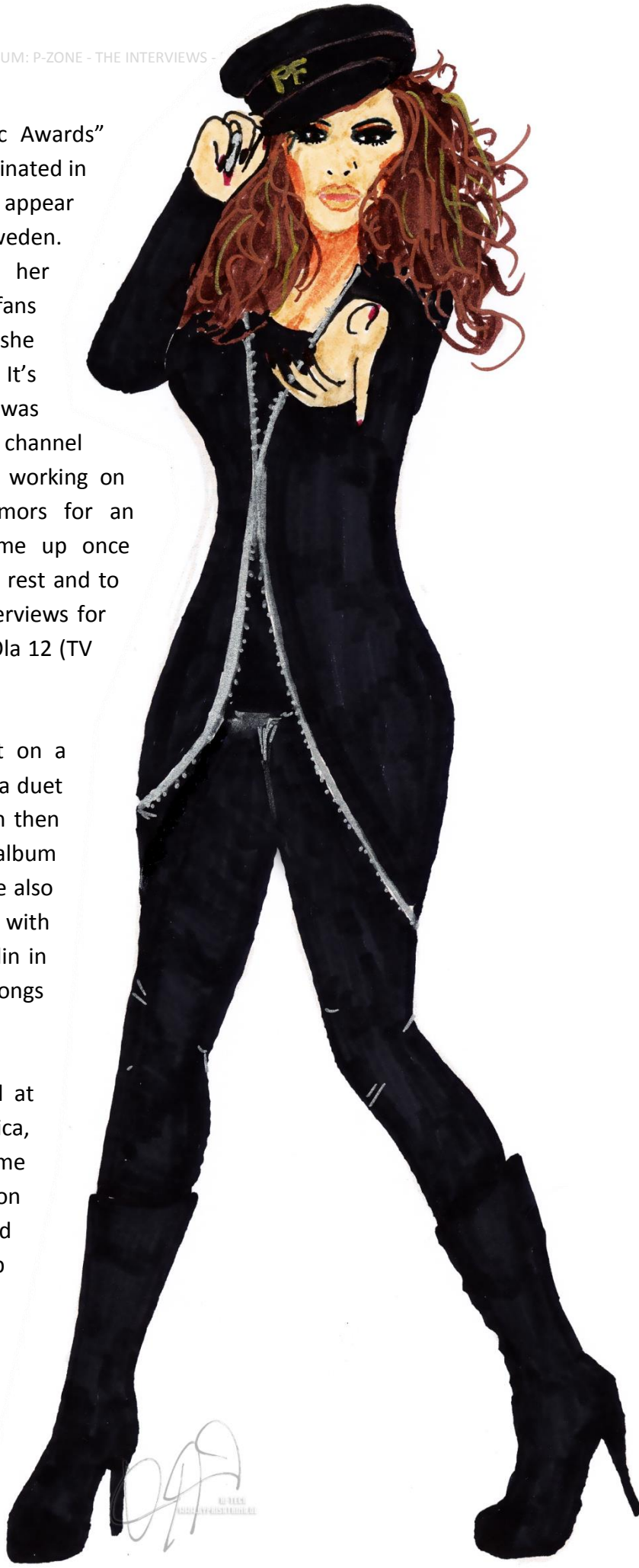


It was announced that a “collector’s edition” of the album was set to be released, supposed to feature everything that has been released mentioned before in addition to a better packaging, a book with previously unreleased photos of Elena, a DVD, posters, and a present. Due to unknown reasons, this edition has never been released. After Helena’s break-up with her long-termed partner Toni Mavridis, she stayed in Sweden for quite a while.

In early summer the “Mad Video Music Awards” were held and Helena was once again nominated in plenty of categories. This time she did not appear at the award ceremony as she was in Sweden. Still she sent video messages from her hometown Gothenburg and thanked the fans and all her colleagues for the two awards she won (Fashion Icon in a Video for “Baby It’s Over” & Female artist of the year). She was also interviewed for Swedish national channel “SVT” where she announced that she is working on new things in Sweden, while new rumors for an Eurovision performance for Sweden came up once again. Helena stayed in Sweden to have a rest and to think about her future – according to interviews for Nitro Magazine (December 2011) and by Ola 12 (TV Show), things had changed a lot for her.

Late summer/early autumn Helena went on a mini-tour in Cyprus. Besides she recorded a duet with music legend Nana Mouskouri, which then was released on the legendary artist’s album record “songs from the Greek islands”. She also performed the duet “Dari Dari” together with Nana Mouskouri at Nana’s concert in Berlin in November 2011, along with a few other songs including “Amazing Grace”.

During the winter season Helena worked at the night club “Pyli Aksiou” in Salonica, alongside Giannis Parios. Besides she became a judge at the Greek version of “Dancing on Ice”, broadcasted on Ant1 once a week, and attracted much attention and gossip caused by a few quite revealing dresses. In December she also performed at a few Christmas and Charity events.



Popular! - Back to Sweden[85]

During one of the shows of "Dancing on Ice", Helena firstly presented her new single "Mr. Perfect". The song was also included into her set list at "Pyli Aksiou". Both her music video for the new song and her performance at "Pyli Aksiou" let many fans unsatisfied, though.

A remix by Playmen of the new song was performed on February 7, 2012, combined with a cover of "I hate myself for loving you", at the 2nd music-fashion event "MAD Walk". Helena opened the show, this time dressed by "Deux Hommes" (2011 by Apostolos Mitropoulos).

March 10, 2012, Helena amazed her fans by starting her Swedish comeback, giving an awesome live performance at Melodifestivalen, the Swedish preselections for Eurovision: a burlesque rock version of Eric Saade's "Popular". She was joined by 23 dancers on stage. The song was released digitally later on.

[85] many thanks to Chris for his help with 2012 - 2014, and also to Derek, George and Kostas!

Soon after, she started with the rehearsals for the Swedish version of the international show format "Let's Dance". In the first show, Helena made it to the second, in the second show to the first place, amazing all viewers and becoming a worldwide twitter trend for 13 minutes. Still incredibly to everyone, she was eliminated by public voting in the third show already.

In June of 2012, Helena appeared at P. Kostopoulos' show performing a ballad version of *baby it's over* (feat. 48 hours). At the MAD Video music awards one year later she performed an unplugged version of her song *Pios* from her album *Vrisko to logo na zo* and her new single *party all the time*, a duet with her background singer Courtney Parker. (One year later Helena appeared kissing Courtney on the cover of Lifo, a free Greek magazine – a kiss supposed to promote tolerance towards LGTB people.)

These were followed by a summer tour around Greece with the group *Melisses* and a short concert for Amita Motion in September, along with *Playmen*. In October, Helena appeared on Natassa Theodoridou's album *stigmes* with the duet *lathos agapes*. Besides, Helena announced her new relationship with Andreas, a civil engineer. One month later she performed *Imagine* (John Lennon) at the Athens Classic Marathon. The year ended with her performance at a Christmas concert in Trikala and another *bouzoukia* club season, this time at Votanikos, until end of February, alongside Natassa Theordoridou, Lefteris Pantazis and Kostas Martakis.

Survivor –back for good in Greece AND Sweden!

Helena was featured in a music video by her make-up artist Giannis Marketakis, to the sound of George Michael's *freedom*, released in February 2013. February 18, 2013, Helena appeared at the MAD Eurovision Show, performing *My Number One* (feat. *Vegas*) in the new *Panzer Musik Version* and a cover of *Après Toi – Mono Esí* with Vicky Leandros. March 19, Helena's new single *Poso m'aresei* was released, followed by a provocative music video on April 15, alongside with the new (radio airplay) single *ena lepto.*
March 17 Helena performed once again at the MadWalk, dressed by Alexandros Melis by Laskos, the *Lunatic Remix* of *Poso m'aresei* and *ena lepto.*

May 25 Helena performed at the GABBY (Greek America's Best and Brightest Stars) Awards Gala of the Greek America Foundation in Hollywood, California, *Agapi mou feggari mou* and ta *pedia tou pirea* by Melina Mercouri; besides she performed most of her hits in an after show concert in the *Paramount Picture Studios*, including *save me* as first live performance ever. *Save me (this is an s.o.s.)* was then released in Sweden (only) on May 30, followed by the new Greek album *Ti Ora Na Vroume?,* June 3, 2013. The single was firstly performed live in Sweden at *Lotta på Liseberg* on June 17.

At the Mad Video Music Awards 2013 on June 25 Helena received three awards - *best duet* and *best music video - dance* for *party all the time* plus best female for *poso m'aresei*. She performed a mix of *save me* vs. a cover of *freed from desire* (*save my desire*) and a very short

version of the upcoming single *den thello allon iroa,* together with a children chorus. The video for *den thello allon iroa* was released on Christmas day 2013.

Helena gave concerts in Glyfada (Athens) and in London at the Cyprus Wine festival (June 29 and 30). July 28, Helena's duet with *Stavento*, *stin akri tou kosmou*, part of *Stavento*'s new, so-called album, was released. In July, August and September various concerts, performances and interviews in Greece (for example festivals in Kavala and on the island Tinos, besides the North Stage festival Thessaloniki plus a concert at the McArthur Glen's designer outlet in Athens) and Sweden followed, such as Stockholm Pride, Nickelodeondagen, Nyhetsmorgon, Sveriges Radio; she also gave a concert in Albania at the *Tropical Resort*.

October 23 Helena released *enough*, a duet with Jill Johnson, and appeared once again on the TV show *Bingolotto* (October 27) performing save me (and forgetting her lyrics.) She gave interviews in Sweden and announced the release of her upcoming album *one life*.

Big news on November 26: Helena will compete in the Swedish preselections for Eurovision, Melodifestivalen, with a song called *survivor*! Helena, who had always said she won't participate in the contest again, was not able to resist this song when listening to it by accident working in the studio. Many appearances on Swedish media followed.

In November a big promotion campaign started in Greece, called #HelenaChange. It turned out to be not as spectacular as it seemed firstly – the point was, after all, that Helena died her hair with a red blonde shade by Wella Kolleston. A hair color she always wanted to have, according to herself. The new color didn't differ much from her honey blond (breast cancer campaign, megalicious interview) and later red hair colors (eurovision) in 2006 though.

December 18, Helena performed at the *Super Christmas Concert* in Cyprus, followed by a concert in Levkosia (Cyprus) on December 27. At the 7th edition of the Eurostar Award 2013 (oikotimes) on December 25, Helena won the public voting with almost a third of the votes. She was among the 10 nominees because of her upcoming *melodifestivalen* (eurovision) comeback with *survivor*.

In January 2014, Helena gave a concert in Munich, Germany, and appeared for the second time on the *Så ska det låta* TV show in Sweden. February, she performed in the first Semi-final of Melodifestivalen, the Swedish preselections for Eurovision. Helena didn't make it straight away to the final, but into the second chance show (andra chansen) in March, by which she succeeded to reach the final. Finally, *survivor* placed second after Sanna Nielsen's song *undo*. *Survivor* became a hit in Sweden though and was certified with gold. March was filled with TV appearances by Helena in Sweden, followed by many more in the next months, and on March 26, the new album *one life* was released in Sweden (also in Greece one month later). In April, a music video for Helena's collaboration with Stavento, *Stin Akri Tou Kosmou*, was released in Greece.

In May, Helena appeared as a guest in the Greek edition of the talent show *The Voice of Greece*: She performed her new single *Don't hold back on love* and her Antique era's hit *Kenurgia Agapi* feat. Yuri Melikov, a song which was also released for digital download later on. Once again, Helena supported the Greek campaign for breast cancer awareness (fashion targets against breast cancer). The music video for *Don't Hold Back on Love*, Helena's second

single from “one life”, was released in July. In August, she performed again at the RIX FM festivals in Sweden.

In November and December, Helena went on a Christmas festival tour (*Julgalan*) in Sweden, and performed two songs (*gläns över sjö och strand* and *away in a manger)* live in a church in Gothenburg for *Luciamorgon,* broadcasted by SVT.

2015 started with two new songs in February, a Greek version of her new English song *Angel* to be released in April (*Otan angeli klaine)*, and a featuring in HouseTwins new single *Love till it's over*.

To be continued...

Me Logia Elenika

She has been thought to search for the truth - honestly, not any of the songs is more like Helena: “I want to be authentic, real, I don’t want to pretend that I am someone else. I wouldn’t feel good if I would do so. Besides I think that this is what we owe to other people who choose us and approve us” (DownTown June 2010)

"I am not pretending on stage, but it is just a role. On stage, I am Paparizou, I am not Elena. I may have been through a difficult day in personal, but at night, Paparizou will eventually save Elena psychological. It is a psychological treatment. I also believe that if I ever feel that my career is declining, it will be Elena that will save Paparizou." (L’Officiel 2009)

“I haven’t moved to other planet just because I won Eurovision. I still face my family’s problems and have to deal with them. The big change in my life came when I realized that nothing really changes, people always feel happy or suffer and it’s normal for every human being.” (Madame Figaro 2005)

"Because I had some success, that doesn't mean that I am a better or worse person. My character did not become golder, the only thing which has changed is that my cabinet was filled with awards and golden CDs. You only need to look at my background, where my parents come from. I am not new rich, ego tripped snob, but there is a whole tram of people behind me who have got a part in my success. The most important thing is to think what you have done so far and what you want to do next."(Close Up 2007)

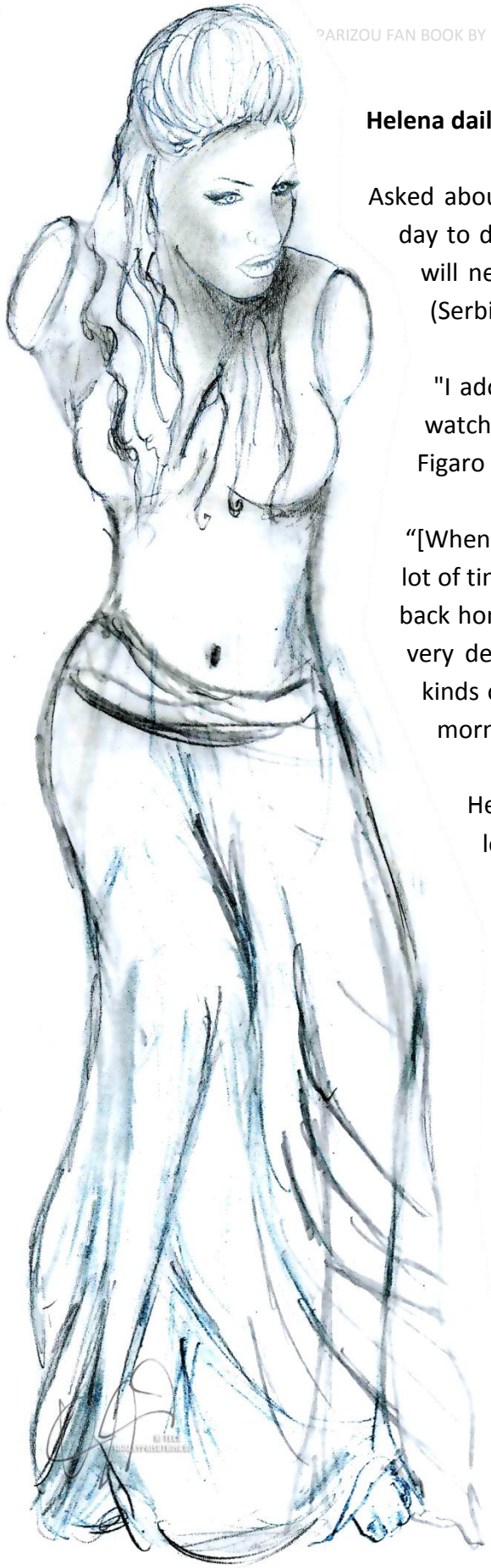
“I have worked very hard for the last years and have made big steps indeed. But my opinion is that there’s still a long way to go and that I have to do and to learn a lot. I’m not that kind of people who lay down on their success. What counts is to keep on working continuously, to stay above in the long term.” (Neafon 2005)

“Everyone has problems. The rich people have problems; the poor people have problems... everyone. It’s not true that I don’t have problems because I am an artist. Life is difficult for everyone." (Santorini FM 2008)

Asked to be a judge on Greek Idol, Helena answered: "I am very honored with this proposal, but I think I am too young to judge others," replied Helena.[86] In 2010 She became a judge in the program “Dancing on Ice” though.

“I like to cry to feel what laughter means; to hurt to understand how it is to love again; to go hungry to enjoy food...” (Boston on-line 2005)

[86] http://www.yupi.gr/gossip/c21002/Elena_Paparizoy.html



Helena daily

Asked about her plans for the next 20 years Helena said: "I live from day to day, and from plan to plan. I promised a lot to myself and I will never be tired of life. I love to live and I plan even details." (Serbia 2005)

"I adore to prepare myself a delicious breakfast and eat it while watching the adventures of Pipi Longsock on DVD!" (Madame Figaro 2005)

“[When I have a day off,] I usually go to the supermarket. I spend a lot of time at the cheese and salami section. Then I have a coffee, go back home and invite my friends for dinner. I cook a big diversity of very delicious meals, because the most I like a table full with all kinds of food and wine, where you can eat and drink till the early morning.” (Madame Figaro 2005)

Helena's passion is cooking, especially Mexican food, and she loves to cook for friends. "Sometimes, when I have worked during the night, I come home and cook, in order to have something for the next day." (Close Up 2007) She enjoys the everyday cooking as well as inventing new recipes (DownTown 2009).

“At Eurovision night, nobody can disturb me, nobody can. Even if they call me, I am not going to answer the phone. […] Of course I can always go and see the show again, but I love to stay at home, to cook with all my friends, and we stay and we eat and we always have... you know, a small piece of paper and we write ... "who do you believe is gon-gonna win, who do you believe is gonna win,..." So, I love Eurovision. I will always be a Eurovision fan. Always.” (ESC Today 2012)

“I enjoy living in Greece. I like the fact that it’s now 2:00 in the morning of Monday and I know that I could still go out and eat somewhere or have fun. In Sweden there’s nothing to do on Sundays. It’s like a dead day, the sun sets early, too. Even the video clubs close at 20:00! I’ve

always wanted to be here. Even when I was a little girl, every time I came back to Sweden from our vacation in Greece I cried. I was waiting for the winter to end in order to go back to Greece." (DownTown 2009)

"If I don't occupy myself with something "artistic" each day, it's like I don't live, like that day didn't exist for me." (Billboard Charts 2011)

About Relationships

Asked about the housework, Helena laughs and says: "He [Toni] does everything at home, except cooking and washing. It's forbidden to him to do that! I'm so fastidious with my clothing so I want to wash it myself. He would just throw it all into the dry cleaner and then my heart would be broken!" (Plaza Kvinna 2006)

"Sex is not something we should talk about with others, sex is something we do! Although if I have to be completely honest, I love to tell dirty jokes, I'm very good at that." (Madame Figaro 2005)

"Relationship-wise it would be funny to get kids now, but I still think that I'm too young. Probably we get kids when I am around 28. And for sure we are getting married. I don't want to be unmarried when we gets kids." (Passage.se 2005)

"I don't want to make the impression of a modern woman but in Sweden everybody makes children without being married so I could make children without being married, too. I don't really think that something would change if I marry Tony. And I don't feel insecure without being married because I know that with Tony I will never have any problem. And if a child comes, I know that he would recognize it so I don't find the marriage necessary." (Orange FM 2008)

Would you have the cheek to do it [give birth to a baby] without getting married? "Easily! Marriage does not define family. A family is defined when there are two parents who understand each other and who keep a healthy balance for their children. We need to cast away the egos when we bring up children. It is of course easy to say because I do not have any children...But my brother has a child outside marriage. Now he is married to a woman who also had a child and they have formed a wonderful family where four children grow up together, my nieces and nephews." (Real News 2010)

"Taking an oath in front of God's eyes is nice, even if you look at it just as a romantic procedure. But you have to remain faith to that oath you gave. I prefer not to get married and be right rather than getting married with every part of it being a mistake. […]In order for the marriage to be romantic, it has to be held during the first five years maximum." (DownTown 2009)

“We do live in the same house, but I like it if someone has his own life as well. We are different and at the same time we complete one another. Otherwise we wouldn’t have managed to stay together for so many years. We don’t press one another; we are relaxed instead. […] Surely we don’t have that blind passion of our first two years. But the most important thing is the normal development of a relationship. You can be love-struck once or twice in a lifetime, Nikos. If you reach a certain age, you’re not on the lookout for the big love, but for the right person. Even if you don’t get immediately the love you need. Your soul mate is not necessarily the perfect lover or your big love, but the person who has gained your respect. Sex cannot be taught, you can just discuss it with your partner in order to improve it.” (DownTown 2009)

Outer Appearance & Health

Helena started using cosmetics in the age of 12: "I remember buying myself a red lipgloss with the first money my father gave to me. But my mother didn't like it so I replaced it by a transparent one." (InStyle 2005)

"My everyday make up? Nothing special, a cream which protects my skin from the sun, concealer, a bit of rouge and lip balm." (InStyle 2005) - "I'm crazy about nails, every product related to it attracts my attention." (InStyle 2005)

"The clothes I wear on stage maybe somewhat revealing, but my personal style is simple and a bit conservative. I mean, I'd rather pick a simple pair of jeans, wear my boots, my coat, hold an odd purse. I've definitively created a style of my own, which is not extreme at all." (L’Officiel 2009)

“I didn’t have a breast augmentation done in order to show off. I hadn’t planned to say it. It just happened. We all notice some imperfections in our body. I wanted to do it for many years. I discussed the possibility of having a plastic surgery with many doctors, before I made the final decision to do it. The relationship between the doctor and the patient is similar to the relationship between the parent and the child. You need to feel secure in order to trust him. So I didn’t do it until I found a person that made me feel this way.” *Asked about the influence this may have on her fans, she replied:* “First of all I didn’t undergo more than one plastic surgery. It was a wish of mine, in order for me to feel more female. In addition, I didn’t have the surgery when I was 18, but when I was 27. The point is that we should not exaggerate and butcher ourselves. Last year I put on 10 kilos. The easy way out for me would have been to undergo a liposuction. No. Whoever wants to lose weight, he/she should work out and stop eating too much. I eat whatever I want, but I serve it in a smaller dish. I lost those kilos the healthy way, with jogging. […] But I didn’t have the surgery for Tony, or anyone else. I didn’t have a breast augmentation done in order to show off. I want it to look natural. There are limits in everything. Drink, but don’t get drunk. Put some make-up on, but

don't look like a tranny show! I hate to see young girls putting on double layers of make-up and powder as well. They just don't have to." (DownTown 2009)

About Eurovision 2001: "I was 53 kg back then. I wasn't anorexic, nor bulimic; I just couldn't eat because of the stress. But after my first allergic reaction I was down to 49 kg. I was afraid of eating even bread. I was just drinking water. I have a photo from this period and each time I look at it I get scared. I wasn't feeling good when I was so skinny. Do you remember that white dress from the 2001 Eurovision? It was supposed to be a slim fit and in the end it looked more like a bag. I had lost four kilos in two and a half weeks. Nowadays I control my stress. No matter how nervous I am, I always say to myself that I deserve five minutes to eat some food." (DownTown 2009)

Half a year after her father Giorgios' death she got trouble with Struma, with other words, enlarged thyroid. „Damn, what I gained weight. I went up ten kilos in a month. I was constantly tired, had problems with sleeping and a hell of a temper. It is like having PMS 24 hours a day." *Since 2010 Elena has got medicine and if she is lucky she doesn't need to get operated.* "I have two lumps in my throat that maybe need to get away, sometimes they are a little swollen and they are fluid-filled." *She never felt as good as today*. "I love my body and enjoy being older. I don't care about weight. I still hear that I should lose weight, but I don't. (Aftonbladet, March 9, 2012)

Family & Friends

"I do not consider my parents as old. I see them as my friends, I hang out with them. Most of my friends are in their 40ies and I feel like it is easier to socialize with people older than me." (L'Officiel 2009)

"My aunts, my father's sisters, still live in our village, Mouzaki in Karditsa, and are traditional, wearing black scarfs and clothes and have animals... They make sour milk and I love drinking it right from the plastic bottle they put it in. When I'm there, I'm relaxed with my slippers and I run to see my favorite uncle, my dad's brother. The first thing that I'll do is to sit on his knees, although I'm a grown up woman. I'm their little Paparizaki, that's how they call me... I enjoy these things." (Life&Style 2010)

"Last summer I did the tour and then I really wanted to work again with Paschalis Terzis. Then I was aiming at recording my new international album and then having some rest. But since I lost my father, I didn't want to write any songs. I was watching the microphone and I was scared of it, I couldn't create something new in the studio. As a result I fell behind." (DownTown 2009)

"I don't think that this is something that you can get used to. Some of my friends have also lost their parents, some only one, some both of them, and they say to me that it's like

wound that keeps bleeding forever. It's like having a bone broken. We will move on, the bone is going to be cured, but when a south wind blows, it's gonna hurt again. But maybe it will hurt less." (DownTown June 2010)

"The funeral was held on a Thursday, and during the same day I had to perform on stage. This was the hardest thing I ever did in my life. But it was my own decision. And I made it. Many wondered how I managed to pull it off. But I knew that my father would have wanted me to do what I did. I remember my mother always telling me «that father of yours was always saying that his little girl would make his name famous». It happened because he wanted it so much." (DownTown 2009)

"We used to be a big family and from being all together in Sweden we (meaning: the kids) left and they were alone. They retired and suddenly they realized that they shouldn't have worked that much the past years, having no time left for their children. Then (meaning: when Helena and her brothers/sisters left the house) my mother was 53 years old and my father 58 years old. So they started English lessons. Then my father started computer lessons. Till then I only knew how to get my e-mails and browsing Facebook. A few months before he passed away he called me: «Hey. Father calling. Grab a pen and a paper. Write down my e-mail address. Next week you will have installed Skype, in order for us to talk via the computer because I am now retired and I don't have that much money to spend on our phone bills». «Dad, what is Skype?», I replied. «It is a program that allows you to make video calls». He was very up-to-date." (DownTown 2009)

Fears

"I'm afraid of technique. I don't understand anything of computers nor cell phones. I rarely send messages, but I love to have pictures on my phone. But I definitely have to learn how to use them, because I know my kids will have fun with my ignorance one day." (Madame Figaro 2005)

"I need to be careful when I go out. I don't go out with no one else so often. If I do I can't be alone. Sometimes I have been a little bit hysterical. But I don't want to exaggerate the problem, I'm not Madonna." (Passagen.se 2005)

"After my relationship ended I did go to Sweden and began with cognitive therapy. I got stuck in an evil circle, got panic attacks and a lot of phobias like Agoraphobia, Claustrophobia and Acrophobia. For a while I almost couldn't go out and throw away the waste." (Aftonbladet, March 9, 2012)

… and more

"I've never been interested or curious about drugs. Drugs are 100% out of my life." (Madame Figaro 2005)

"Generally I don't like lies, so I don't use them frequently. When I lie it is usually because I don't want to hurt someone's feelings, and the last time was a week ago. It must have been about something related to my job. Generally I can't tell lies, I can't behave myself and the others always understand that I am lying when I do so!" (Orange FM 2008)

The song Pirotechnimata, which became one of her biggest hits, was a last-minute addition to the album: "In terms of instrumentation, this song really gave us a hard time in the studio. I recorded this particular song all alone in the studio. I kicked everyone out of it, at 3:00 in the morning *(Helena and Tony have installed a professional recording studio in their house in Glyfada)* and it was only the machinery and I left! But Doxas' lyrics are amazing as well: I broke down mountains for your love; I wanted you to see me; like your God, like an angel; like a dream you live in and love." (DownTown 2009)

"I started my career at a very young age and I couldn't even graduate high-school. I feel that as a loss. I'm one of those people who hardly open a book. I cannot concentrate, I get so nervous. I prefer listening, instead of reading." (Madame Figaro 2005)

Helena's favorite painting? Dali's "Burning Giraffe": "It represents a woman with lots of drawers who likes to give a lot and even in flames keeps on giving herself to the others." (Madame Figaro 2005)

"I have come to this world with one and only mission: to give love. Nothing more." (DownTown June 2010)

… and a few last “paparicious” facts:

Helena has written/co-written the lyrics for the songs "Rhythmos", "I Zoi Ine Tora", "Se Thello", "Tell Me", "Kardia Mou", "Why?" (Elena’s lyrics in English were the original ones while the Greek version "Anihti Pligi" has been the second version), "Where Are You" (original lyrics were Greek), "Time To Say Goodbye", "Something About You", "Treli Kardia", "Carpe Diem" and "Teardrops". She has also worked on her songs "Mathe Prota N’Agapas" and "De Tha’me Edo". The music for“Filarakia“ has been composed by herself.

According to DownTown 2009, Helena is acrophobic and allergic to nuts. She sleeps a maximum of five hours per day, in order not to waste it.

Helena's nick name is "Baby Tiger".[87] She loves shoes and has more than 400 pairs.[88] Her fragrance is “Flower” by KENZO.[89] Helena smokes but until a few years ago she tried to hide it to avoid having a bad influence on young people. She admires Angelina Jolie, Céline Dion, Madonna, and, among many other Greek singers, Haris Alexiou.

[87] Nitro 2008
[88] Interview with her stylist Al Giga for our magazine "Paparicious", 3-2009
[89] InStyle 2005/Close Up 2007

OH MY GUCCINESS!

An interview by KyprisAthina with Helena's Stylist Al Giga from April, 2009

Helena Paparizou is not only famous for her amazing voice and music, but also for her fabulous and unique style. I now had the great chance to get to know the man behind Helena's style, Al Giga, who has been working with Helena as her friend, Stylist and Image Maker for seven years now. I met Al in Frankfurt to have an exclusive interview with him for the forum's magazine *Paparicious*.

Born in Tanzania, Al Giga raised up in Canada, where he studied fashion and marketing. About 15 years ago he decided to move to Greece, after having worked there for several periods of time. Besides his work with Helena, he is responsible as Fashion Director/Editor for various magazine shootings (Elle, Votre Beauté, L'Officiel, …) and fashion shows. Who he would like to style if he had the opportunity to style a big star? Madonna or Nicole (Scherzinger)! His personal favourite designer is YSL.

Asked by her label Al Giga started working with Helena in 2002, firstly for the Photo shooting for Antique's last studio album "Alli Mia Fora" (Photographer Katerina Tsatsani). Helena's first video clip he worked on was "Moro Mou". His personal favourites? "Katse Kala", and from the more recent ones, "An Ihes Erthi Pio Noris". Many special memories he combines with the last sequence of the music video for "My Number One", which was shot in the Planetarium of Thessaloniki: The amazing Cavalli dress arrived about thirty minutes before the Planetarium had to be left, which means the wonderful scene has been shot within half an hour! Asked for his funniest time with Helena, he mentions a night of missing the plane after a fashion show in Milano, with all hotels in the town being booked up.

As Helena's Image Maker Al Giga is responsible for Helena's look at music videos, photo shootings and performances. His favourite Helena photo shooting so far? The shooting from Nitro Magazine (January 2007, Katerina Tsatsani).

Both Al Giga and Helena work on Helena's styling, but due to Helena's lack of time it is mostly his responsibility only. He works on all of Helena's performances, also on those outside Greece. If he doesn't attend any of her performances, he prepares the clothing before. He likes to combine various designers and doesn't go for big names only: Helena wears the clothing which suits her.

One last question: How many shoes does Helena have? "She has so many!!!!! She must have around 400 pairs! And all very exclusive! Many are collectors and limited edition, many have been special orders just for her and some have limited edition numbers on the bottom! She has a shoe fetish just like me! I think she got it from me!"

Paparizou Place hopes for many, many more years of the dream team Giga-Paparizou.
Thank you very much for the interview, in the name of all members and readers!

AUGUST 24, 2011

PZONE

... the interviews

BABY IT'S NOT OVER YET!

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Aftonbladet, Sweden 1999: “It's impossible to dance to *opa opa*!”

[Interview: Kristian Borglund - Translation: Swedish]

With "opa opa", the Swedish dance project Antique conquered the party floors this summer. But the singer Elena, 17, reacted to the contrary, when she heard the song first time. “I dance every day, even when I do my make up!”, she says. Hip Hop, Greek folk dance, African belly dance - most rhythms get her whole body to vibrate - "opa opa” was the exception. The song, which is now number six on the sales list and four on the P3's Sommartoppen, is in Notis original version a dance in terms of sleeping pills: Quiet, bordering on melancholy.

So when the men from the producer team C & N Project, known for their dance mixes, played the new version of the Greek song for her, she was completely flabbergasted by their track selection. “I thought the song was not possible to dance to!”, she says. After just a few seconds, she changed her opinion: “It sounded cool. The melody sticks and swings. I heard the song played publicly for the first time at my friend's engagement party four weeks ago, and I saw how everyone started to dance uncontrollably. It was a wonderful feeling!”

The sequel "dinata dinata" is recorded these days and in the autumn, the album will follow. Also a tour?
“I'd love, but I go to school, too, and it will be busy this fall late night. Besides I work in a restaurant, the Ale restaurant in Nödinge. I serve food, counters and sweep floors.”

Sweep the floor? Shouldn’t you invest in a glamourous life as a singer instead?
“No, I like the restaurant business. You meet so many different people, get to talk to those who feel bad and laugh with the many funny people.”

Antique’s second part, Nikos Panagiotidis, 21, has also a full schedule packed with jobs in the hospitality industry. In addition, he plays in a Greek band. The idea to record a dance version of "opa opa", C & N Project had for years: “I was inspired by all my summer jobs as a DJ on the Greek island world. Elena and Nikos we found through a friend who knew them”, said the producer "Chipper" Carlsson.

Frida Magazine, Sweden 2000: They believe that I have silicon lips!

[Interview: Pernilla Ericson - Translation: Swedish]

Antique-Elena is just 18 years old. How much does she know about love? A lot it turns out to be. Here she reveals what pick-up tricks turn her off. What boys think is sexy about her and when she made a fool of herself with a boyfriend.
Elena is sparkling gorgeous there as she is going around with red love makeup. But all compliments flow away like rain on an umbrella. Me and the record label-girl tried for a while anyhow: **What a nice mouth you have! -** *Miss modest: And that should come from you two. Both of you have pout mouths!* **- Oh, you are so good at pictures! -** *Bah, you should see me on the morning!* I give up and push down Greece's cockiest answer on Marilyn Monroe and start the tape recorder.

How are you when you're in love?
I EAT, I mean: I just gormandize the food. Because all food is so good when you're in love. Then I maybe care a little bit more about my appearance. You notice it on me when I am in love. Because the extra twinkle in the eye is there.

How is your relation to boys?
I have always spent more time with boys than girls. Because after I have been betrayed by "girl-friends" several times there are a few only that I can trust: My mother, my sister and my cousins. It is just so much bullshit-talk with girls. Boys are more honest. If I have been mean to a girl it goes through five people before it finally comes up what she actually thinks about me.

What do the boys look at first at, when they look at you?
My mouth, I heard that they had talked about my lips on a TV-show in Greece, if I had silicon lips or not. I do absolutely not, but there are many who thinks so. But a thing that is a little funny is that there have been guys that have come to me and said that they think it is very nice that I have hairy arms. Girl friends have told me that I should shave me, forgot that! What different does that make, I think it is cute.

How should he be to get you stuck?
He should be himself and charming, stand out. And I have seen it! *Wistful whimpering.* I have seen it… Oh! Ah! Ih! He should be very special. I can't talk more about this…

Have you ever made a fool of yourself, when it comes to love?
I happened to call my boyfriend of that time by another boy's name. We sat and cuddled and then it just slipped out of me. I was really embarrassed and he probably got a little sad about it. But it was at least not a thing like when you are in love with the other guy, because I wasn't. But except that it is most the boys that have done embarrassing things for me. One boy climbed upon the water spout to my window. That kind of stuff is a little bit cheesy but still also cute somehow.

What is the worst way you have ended a relationship on?
I am pretty kind, so I haven't ended a relationship on a bad way. But a boy ended a relationship with me by do the relationship as boring as possible. It was not fun. It was like this, "Shall we meet?" "No..." "Should we not find anything to do" "No, not right now". You un-

derstand at the end that he is not interested, but it is much more nicer to put the relationship to an end immediately. Give me five and let's be pals instead.

What pick-up line got you most turned-off?
It was when I was around 12-13 years old and walked on a beach in Greece, I had an t-shirt on me with a net top over me. Then a man came, I guess he thought I was older then I really was, and asked me "Can't I entangle me into your love net". I just snorted, because it was so bad.

You are a belly dance professional, how does it work like seduction?
It comes from harem, strippers that danced it. Not all girls in Greece are allowed to belly dance to their parents. Real belly dancing is beautiful, it should look like you are caressing silk around your body and radiate "Look but not touch". I have danced a long time, but I don't know how it works in the pants for the boy. I haven't tried.

How do you get your relationship to work?
You need to spice it all the time, find new ways to flirt with him and to enjoy things together: travel and jump around like kids on Liseberg *[Swedish Amusement Park].* Be sexy, sensual and funny. And do not reveal everything about you at once. Just give him a glimpse now and then. And you shouldn't invest everything on a relationship when you are a teen. Because these relationships do usually not last for a long time. I have friends that were engaged when they were 15 and now they are pregnant and do not have any boyfriend. There is nothing wrong with being in love with a boy and having sex with him just because you are young, but still you need to remember that you have all your life to make a family.

We asked boys to "pick up" Elena:

Thomas, 20 years old, student: Call your mom that you are not sleeping at home tonight!
Elena: It sounds a little bit cute, but still it is a little bad. I go back ten steps when guys are too self-assured!

Markoolio, 25 years old, artist: Do you want a present? It is hard and wrapped into skin.
Elena: Where is the toilet, I want to puke. Yuk, Marko. That is something you say to your girlfriend, jokingly after you have been together for a while.

Calle, 25 years old, art director: I WANT YOU!
Elena: Go home and sleep - it was too desperate!

DownTown Magazine, Greece 2001: It's an Antique's World...

[Interview: Nasos Sideris - Translation: Nikos R.]

Elena and Nikos, Greek pop music's heroes, insist on being optimistic. I was trying to remember, before i met them, when did Antique enter our lives. I think it was a year ago with the Swedish MTV awards. Till then we had only a vague idea on what Antique is. A Danish group? A Swedish group? Greeks who live there or Swedish people who sing in Greek? In less than a year, we all did not only learn who Antique are, but they were also named as Greek pop music's national heroes. I was to meet them at Hyatt Regency Casino, where the Macedonian Radio and TV Awards were held, and Antique were the official guests. The night before their performance they were in the news because some of their fans were injured when they went to ask for autographs. Antique were on time for our appointment. The first thing I noticed was that Elena Paparizou was as beautiful as she seemed on TV. She wore a simple, one-colored shirt and a pair of trousers. How is a sex symbol dressed? Exactly the opposite.

Everyone was watching them. They were just laughing, like they couldn't understand what was happening. And that exactly was the first question:

Have they understood how big is the success that they enjoy today?
Elena: The day we managed to end 3rd on the Eurovision I hadn't understood anything. Ok, we had fun that night, but the next day, when I saw the Swedish newspapers and saw that we were in all front covers and they were writing "Antique, you are the best!" I cried. As the time went by, we started to realize people's love. It's weird making a nation proud. Especially when you are an artist and not an athlete. Nikos: Sure, but except for the Greeks, I think that Swedish people were also very proud of us, because they love us very much!

What has changed your everyday life?
Elena: Our program is always full. We get very tired, but this has many good results, so we don't care about getting tired. Nikos: People are more excited about us, now.

People can easily destroy you… just as easily they loved you!
Elena: Yes, that's definitely true. Nikos: I don't know that, but what I know is that now our fan base has changed. Elena: Before Eurovision the maximum age for a fan was 35… Now it's 55!

Elena have you understood that you're a sex symbol?
Elena: I don't think I am a sex symbol. It's not what you think… but what other people think about you... It's something that I never wanted to be in my life...I mean being a sex symbol. Of course, I like being beautiful and sensual, just like every woman wants to be, but I never wanted to be considered as a sex symbol... never and for no reason. I just want to be myself and to be a good example for young people. Nikos: People will tell if she is a sex symbol. Elena: There are people who like it and they try to become. I don't want it.

Your styling is not sexy...I would say it's exactly the opposite…
Elena: I am always dressed simply. I also have a ring on my bellybutton, but you've never seen it, and I don't want to show it because it's something personal. Even if I ever had a tattoo, I wouldn't show it either.

Usually, behind every success, there's a sad story. Is that true for you?
Elena: People usually see what they want to see and don't know what someone has been through to become what he has become. We had some problems, but we never had any serious difficulty.

After Eurovision people started arguing on whether it was good or not that you participated with a song with English lyrics etc. …
Nikos: I just want to say that two months before Eurovision no one said anything. Nobody was talking about Eurovision. Why did everyone wait until after we came third on the Eurovision? If we didn't succeed, nobody would talk.

Did the Dionisis Savopoulos's and Mikis Theodorakis's statements bother you?
Elena: I haven't read what Savopoulos said. But I respect Mikis Theodorakis. He is a man who has done so many things for Greece. I agree with Theodorakis. In a song contest we have to represent our country with our music and our language, but Eurovision is nothing more than a TV show. Nikos: Whole Europe does the same thing. I can't understand why we have to be an exception. The best thing is that the juries decide what they want and if something has to change, then it will change for all Europe and not just for us. Elena: I also want to believe that Mr. Kavathas has regretted for saying what he said. I don't believe that anyone can think something bad for another person.

Really, did you have any job offers from night clubs?
Elena: Yes we have many offers and we are thinking what to do. Nikos: Our job is to make people have fun. Elena: We will perform with Antonis Remos at “Astra Thessalonikis” [night club] during August.

Since the beginning of the interview I want to ask Elena how old is she, because some said she was 19 and some she was 25 - "19" she said. As most of the answers in the interview were conventional, I would have been bored if I hadn't got the impression that both Elena and Nikos are very good people. At the end, Nikos's mobile rang and he had "Die for you" as a ringtone. I asked him: "Isn't it ironic, you having this ringtone?" "What do you have as a ringtone?", I was asked by Toni, Elena's manager and fiancé. I replied: "A nokia tune. You?" "I have a song from Vissi", he said and laughed.

Omikron magazine, Cyprus 2001: It's great to be Greek!

[Interview: Tasos Trifonos - Translation: Panos Th.]

How did you meet for the first time?
E: How did we meet, Nikos?
N: It has been 18 years and it's a bit difficult to remember. Helena was still a little girl.
E: I was no baby! I have been able to walk. I already had shoes. I was 2-years-old, and we had just moved from Boros to Gothenburg with my family. My family met Nikos' in the Greek community of the town. I used to be more with Nikos' siblings, who were younger, and Nikos with my older siblings.

How were 'Antique' set up?
E: Antique was set up 2 years ago. It was an idea of two Swedish producers, who used to be DJ's in Greece. They were back to Sweden with good ideas. They asked me and another girl if we make a remake a song of Giorgos Alkaios. The girl was not suitable, so they asked me if I was aware of any boy, and I told them about Nikos. That's how it started, and we had our first successful song, which was "Opa Opa" of Giorgos Alkaios.

Many people thought that you were either a couple or siblings.
E: That's ok. If we don't inform people how can they know?
N: I believe that if you work with someone together as a couple, it doesn't last for long because you won't always agree at business matters.
E: I don't agree, because I work with my fiancé Toni. Business is business and personal things are personal. You must make two out of those.

How are you doing in Stockholm?
E: Nikos stays at Gothenburg and not at Stockholm.
N: Now I spend almost half of my time in Stockholm, because we have been preparing our new CD Album. We hang out at a Greek tavern called "I Mikonos" and every Saturday at Bouzoukia. In fact we don't stay at a specific place. We are looking for new things.

What irritates you the most on Helena?
N: Nothing

What do you like the most on her?
N: Should I say? Isn't it obvious? [laughing]. She is a quality character. She can get along with anyone. She is honest and she will say whatever she thinks.
E: All this for me Nikos?
N: Yes.
E: Thanks. But, can I say my flaw? When I am getting pissed, I am really pissed. But you can stand it Nikos, right?
N: As long as you do so (laughing).
E: The only thing that makes me sad is that we fight some times.
N: This is part of our job. It's impossible not to fight with your partner
E: Since there is understanding, there can't be problems, unless someone else causes it. To answer your question about Nikos, he is kind-hearted.

Nikos, didn't Swedish people acted strangely when you started learning the bouzouki?

N: At the beginning everything seems odd to them. Even "Zorbas" sounded odd to them. Since I was an eight-year-old boy, I liked bouzouki. I grew up listening to Greek music. My older brother is a musician, too. So it was matter of fate to learn playing the bouzouki. It's something I wanted from the beginning.

Do you feel Swedish or Greek?
N: Our identity is "written on our foreheads". The sign we will be given by others is another matter. There are people that consider us as Swedish's because we were born in Sweden. In Greece there are some people who consider as us Greeks and others who consider us as "half-Greeks". That can be set by no one but us. How we feel, what we would give and how we would die for Greece, that is our thing. We judge that ourselves because no one knows how hard our parents raised us so the keep us as much Greek as possible.

Did Mr. Theodorakis' and Mr. Kavathas' statements hurt you?
N: It was a misunderstanding with Mr. Theodorakis. We were told other things than the ones he told.
E: We are singers, and as long as we have chosen this job, we can't cancel other's opinions.
N: It was only 2 out of the world.
E: Swedish people were irritated by Mr. Kavathas statement. Not only Greeks but Swedish people too, who love Greeks.

Weren't you affected by the fact that you were raised in a Swedish culture?
E: No. We, the people who live in Sweden, care more about Greece that those who live in Greece.

Which aspects of yourselves do you think are Swedish and which do you think are Greek?
E: I believe in the equality of the two genders, and that's where I possibly think in the Swedish way. My strongest Greek aspect is my faith in the institution of family, which is very important for me. It's were the life starts and ends at.
N: The Greek aspect of mine is my blood. I don't feel Swedish at the least bit. Our parents – mine and Helena's- are Greeks, born in Greece by Greek parents. The appearant Greek thing of mine is the color of my hair. In Sweden they call us "black-heads" [laughing]. My only Swedish thing is maybe the fact that, in the queue of the bank, I wait patiently with no intention of getting others' bank number.

How did you feel before getting on Eurovision's stage?
E: Most of all, we felt Greek, because we did that as Greeks and not as Antique. We brought Greece at 3rd place and not Antique. So we got out very proud.

What did you say to yourself on your way to stage?
E: I said "Helena, show them what Greece has to offer" and I believe that, that was what I showed to them [laughing].

Were you stressed?
E: Not at all.
N: We weren't stressed because we have been doing this job for two years, we have toured in Europe in front of bigger audiences. We had had rehearsals in Denmark before, so everything was under control [laughing].

Were you more stressed about Helena, who had to sing and dance at the same time?
E: I wore heels! [laughing]
N: I wasn't stressed about Helena, because I was sure that she would do great what she was meant to do.

As you are older than her, are you protective with Helena?
N: Yes. I can't let anyone say anything bad about Helena. The only ones who can criticize her, it's me and Toni.
E: We are like siblings.

Before the night of Eurovision, how did you imagine it?
E: Fantastic and Magic.
N: After the event was over I said "We had been busy all days this week for three minutes, and now everything is over". It is only 3 minutes on stage. It's an awesome experience though, and you feel you are doing something for your country. We wish that next year, Greece comes first.

During the voting, was there any time that you believed that you would win the first place?
N: It was obvious from the first moment who would be the winner. There was a time that we were at the first place. But it was obvious that Estonia and Denmark were in the first places.
E: I believe that the most important thing was that Greece got points from all the contestant countries. Bosnia for example had never given a point to Greece, but they did now.

Would you like to participate to the Eurovision concert again, to get the first place?
E: I would go. What about you Niko?
N: I would go again, but not too soon. Maybe after some years.

What's the most important thing for you after Eurovision? The success and the sales the song will make in Europe?
N: We don't care about the sales. What we care for is bringing Greek music outside of Greece.
E: From now on, our goal is to make Europe listen to Greek music. Greece deserves that because we have the richest language and the most beautiful music in the world. We should show that outside of Greece.

Did the Swedish people have a hard time singing in Greek?
E: No, they made it with "Opa Opa" and the same happened with "Dinata Dinata" and "Mera me ti Mera". Now they like a lot "Die for you". They also dance to Greek songs. Every time we end a concert, we play "Zorbas" at the speakers and they dance [laughing].

Helena, who would you say to "I would die for you"?
E: That's already known. I love one person, Toni, who happens to be our tour manager.
How did you meet Toni?
E: Ask Nikos, who helped us to meet [laughing].
N: It was me who helped them to meet. We were in a concert in Sweden, and Toni was in our band. Then we went to a club and Toni asked me about Helena, and Helena about Toni. I

wanted to have fun, but they didn't let me enjoy it. So, I got tired, I brought them closer and I left [laughing]. Then, they told me "would you like to engage us?", and I did.

Did you find a Greek man by chance, or you wanted to?
E: Being engaged or married is not something you think about. It's coming by chance. Love can be in your life plan. If it is real, it's coming on its own. I didn't believe I would be engaged that young. But it happened and I am so happy. Another reason I am happy is that I am in love with a Greek man living in Sweden. Only a Greek person can understand how I feel about Greece.

When will you get married?
E: We don't really know yet, but it will be soon. [laughing]

I believe you will get married in Greece?
E: Yes, I believe so (laughing), and Nikos will marry us.

Will you go on vacation now?
E: I can't understand why people asking that, because we haven't started working yet. When will we go on vacation Nikos?
N: In 2008… [laughing]
E: Maybe later this summer. Now we want to make some concerts, so people who have been waiting for a long time, can watch us. In 2 weeks, our album will be out, so there will be a lot of work for us.

Could you move to Athens forever sometime in the future?
N: It would be better in Thessaloniki
E: I believe so, too. But I like Athens too. It's magic at night.

We heard that you will be in a night club this summer?
We haven't arranged anything yet.

After Eurovision, did you take more money for your appearances?
N: No comments.
E: It would be a lie to say that we are not more recognizable after Eurovision.

Do you like singing at Bouzoukia?
E: Yes, we have no problem. We like Bouzoukia.

Do you have any plans for an international career?
N: Europe is in our plans. We already gave some concerts in several countries. After that, our goal is Australia and America.
E: For now, our new album is out, with the title…
E&N: "I Would Die for You"!

Kristianstadsbladet Newspaper, Sweden 2001: Antique dreams of playing with the gods

[Interview: Birgitta Nilsson, August 3 – Translation: “Swedish”]

Stockholm - Bromölla - Visby. That is how the scheme looks for the duo Antique and their musicians in the first days of August. In autumn, there is emphasis for a launch abroad. USA and Greece are waiting. The clock is 16.30 and it's time for sound check. In “Folkets Hus” wine and water are waiting for thirsty artists. On stage are Elena Paparizou and Nikos Panagiotidis, tonight in the group Antique. There are not many free moments they have got since Eurovision when they participated for Greece with ""Die for You".
“Between the performances we travel the most of the time. We had two free days when we were in Greece. Then we slept a lot”, says Elena Paparizou. But she says that it isn't unusual that they want to go back to the tour life when it is over. “You yearn after that you got through, that you laughed at and the things that have been tough.”

“The best thing at a tour is to socialize with all the band and to have fun - and when you see that the audience has fun”, Nikos Panagiotidis adds. The band is the same as last year; the difference is that this year they play completely live.

Earlier they had some instruments on a hard drive. “Many of the fans want it to sound exactly as it does on the disc”, Nikos Panagiotidis says. But to make it sound the same they need around 30 peoples, that plays the different instruments - and then buses, and a scene, too! “We have only done one gig like that this summer. It was in Bulgaria on a promotional performance for a TV channel”, he says. Bulgaria?

“Yes, we are really big there. In fall there will be more promotion, we need to surf on the wave of success.” The Eurovision entry song became platinum in Greece and it will be there where Antique will travel to and where they are going to stay until March next year. But firstly, it's time for a small trip to USA, which they going to do in September. We are going to do eight promotional performances at the radios there”, Elena Paparizou says. “In the USA it is all of the package on the same time. Also the hits from 1999: "Opa opa" and "Dinata Dinata".” Until April they have plans. After Greece Austria. But actually, Elena Paparizou does not like to plan too long in advance. “I preferably only look one day forward”, she says.

Nikos Panagiotidis has no problems to talk about the time when he will be about 60 years old: “Then I want a family, kids and grandchildren, and to be with them and to have fun. But I can't think to be on a tour then, maybe one gig a year”, he thinks loudly.

In the newspaper’s list of Swedish pop stars 1999 Elena Paparizou took place 16. Some critics wanted that Antique would play with Elena’s sexiness a little bit more. What does she thinks about that? “I have got some offers, both from Slitz and Café, but to pose in underwear is nothing i will do. It isn't my job, I am a singer and I want to be a good role-model”, she says passionately. On which way do you want to be a good role-model? “When you are seen a lot you need to be sensible. I want to say that you should be on school, you should be yourself and you can do something good.”

Elena Paparizou says that she had been criticized for talking about the fire, which she lost her friends in. But she stands in for the things she has said because she thinks that it can help kids and youth. “Then they see that they aren't alone to take part in difficult things and that it is not an obstacle to be a star”, she says.

Anyway the critics are not always correct: In "Musikjournalens" flip or flop, Friday the 13 of April this year, it was predicted that "Die for You" would be a flop. That prophecy was not correct at all. So what does they think about reviews in fact? “We are pleased to read them, both good and bad. But you wonder sometimes, when the newspapers let those, who usually review hardrock, then review our music next time”, does Nikos Panagiotidis says.

Elena Paparizou agrees and states, “those, who write about our music, do not always look on the circumstances about the concert, before they reviews”. She gives an example: “A girl wrote that there were only kids around 7 and 12 years in the public and commented that probably these are the ones that Antique addresses to. But it wasn't so strange that there were only kids in the audience, as it was graduation time when we performed and the concert was for them”, she says.

Now it's time to operate seriously with the sound check for tonight’s concert, but the duo has time for one last question: Is there any special scene that you would like to be on? “Acropolis! But not everyone is allowed to perform there, not even Jean-Michael Jarre, that is big in Greece, got the permission to play there”, Nikos Panagiotidis says. “Yes, Acropolis, definitely! But they are afraid of that in Greece, maybe they want to let the gods in peace”, Elena Paparizou agrees.

Super Magazine, Greece 2002: Once again… Antique!

[Interview: Anastasia Reizoglou - Translation: Nikos R.]

You are coming right from the airport. You seem to know very well the journey from Athens to Thessaloniki!
Elena: Yes, I know the journey very well, not only because we are performing at Thessaloniki this season and we have to come to Athens for many reasons, but also because since I was very young, my parents and I have travelled through the North of Greece. Nikos: I don't really like airplanes, so imagine how I feel...

How are things in Thessaloniki?
Elena: Great! People there show us every night how much they love us. Nikos: I come from Thessaloniki, so I feel like home.

Do you find any differences between people in Athens and people in Thessaloniki?
Elena: I think that women in Thessaloniki dance more on the tables! And I really love that!

Where do you live when you are in Greece?
Elena: Most of the times in hotels...Now, it's the first time that I don't live in a hotel. I live in Toni's parents' home at Thessaloniki and I feel really nice about that. I wake up in the morning, and I am making the coffee as I want it... Nikos: As long as we are at Thessaloniki, I stay at my aunt's house...

Elena, talk to us about your future plans.
Elena: Our new album, entitled "Alli mia fora" is already out in Greece. It's a great collaboration between our Greek and our Swedish companies. It's a mature album with many different songs, but always with our usual Antique-sound. Unfortunately, when we end our performances in Thessaloniki in March, we will have to go back to Sweden. We have to start over again our work there because we have many things we have to do - a new contract in Germany and in Spain etc. We are starting over the promo again.

Niko, are you nervous for your new start?
Nikos: The first things we have to do in Scandinavia, don’t make me worry, because people there love us very much. What really makes me nervous is our work in Germany...It's really difficult to go to a place that no one knows you...

Elena - by the way of the photo shoot - do you believe in fairytales?
Elena: I like fairytales. Every fairytale is a hidden meaning. My idol is Pippi Longstocking... I like the fact that she is strong and crazy: she wears an orange sock and a green one…

Do you like romance when you're in a relationship?
Elena: if there's no romance, then everything is ruined. There is nothing better than your husband offering you a rose... Nikos: I can't tell that I am romantic...I mean I will not go home and light candles so as to drink a glass of wine…

Yes, but you will open the door for you girlfriend...
Nikos: Of course...

And you will pay the bill...
Nikos: Always!

Which is the first thing that you do when you are going to Sweden?
Elena: Before going home, I always visit my mom... If, by chance, I go firstly to my home... I sleep. Nikos: I am going to see my friends and my parents...

Tell me three things that you have combined with Christmas in Sweden.
Elena: White Christmas, calmness in Stockholm and big, blonde women... Nikos: Snow, cold, rain!

I am surprised, that despite your success, you are down to earth.
Elena: I believe that how your parents have raised you up is very important. Nikos: I totally agree! Everyone was born and raised up with some principles that neither fame nor money can change them. After all... it's just a job like every other people do.

Could you imagine going solo?
Elena: We are friends for 19 years. We are like brother and sister. If we were at a point that we couldn't continue being a group… then yes. We would end the group and each one continues his life. For the time being, we want the same things and people wants us together. Nikos: For the next 4 or 5 years I think that we will be together. As long as we have fun and sell records, there's no reason for breaking up. If we can't continue, then we might end it...

Nikos, you have told many times that when you were 17 years old you got engaged and that this relationship lasted for 6 years! I can't believe that a 17-years-old boy wants to be in such a relationship!
Nikos: I don't know if it sounds crazy, but it seemed that we had a great time with my girlfriend and we were very close to each other...

Are you single now?
Nikos: Yes...

Elena, you are 20 years old and engaged. Don't you feel that it's too early?
Elena: Many people could say that it's early. But, if I feel that this man was my "lucky" one, why should I let him go? Anyway, since I was a little girl, I felt like a grown-up woman. I left home at 17, went to Stockholm without knowing anyone and lived alone. I felt ready to do that.

When do you plan to get married with Toni?
Elena: We will see...The truth is that, firstly, we want to live together. We haven't decided when will we get married, but I can see this happening in the next 2 or 3 years...

Let's talk about mistakes. Everyone makes mistakes. Could you share one mistake that you have made, with us?
Elena: I will tell you one: Once I dared to steal a pencil for the lips from my aunt, when I was 11 years old. I felt awful and I learned my lesson from it. Nikos: As my ex-girlfriend has told me when we got engaged "I am not glad that you are getting engaged now. I would be so happy if you met each other at 24..."

Saint Valentine's Day is not away and we all celebrate love that day. How will you pass that day?
Elena: I want that day to be just every other day: full with love.

Nikos, now that you don't have a relationship, would you like something magical to happen that day?
Nikos: I don't want anything to happen, because I don't want my girlfriend to suffer what my ex suffered... staying at home and waiting for me to get back from my trips and my job...

Any message for the readers?
Nikos: Be careful with your relationships... In that age, you get excited very easily, but don't forget you have still many things to do in your life... Elena: Many kisses and to whoever has listened to our album: Thank you!! I wish you a happy new year and take care of yourselves!

Afisorama Magazine, Greece 2003: Helena, Nikos and the “Baby”

[Interview: Liza Fergadi - Translation: George G.]

In the same time that all the Greek stars are fighting for the famous "international career", two Greek people from Sweden are coming to make the difference. Antique firstly found their success abroad and then in their homeland! After the big BAM two years ago, Helena Paparizou and Nikos Panagiotidis are coming to catch us “Alli Mia Fora” [for "One More Time"] with a brand new album and a baby full of beat!

Helena, Niko, now you're having ... a baby?
Yeah, our band new single "Moro Mou" [“My Baby”]! We should mention that the real parents are Dimitris Stamatiou and Nikos Sarris, as me and Nikos are the parents in law! We love this song very much and personally I believe that it has good lyrics. How about you?

I agree! Why did you call the album *Alli Mia Fora* [one more time]?
Because this is our 2nd Greek album. There were many who didn't believe that we could stand any of this. They told that the night will eat us, but we love Greece very much and we gave our best in this album for which V2 and Bonnier Music have collaborated. March 16, 2003 the single "Moro Mou" is going to be released with English lyrics for Europe and then the album will follow.

Which is going to be the English title?
It's not sure yet. As the recording was done here and as I love Athens a lot, I would like to name it "City Of Love" [final name: "Blue Love"]. We will keep 7 songs that will have Greeklish lyrics, but there will be new songs, because some are difficult to listen to for a foreign audience. Greek elements will not be absent, because these are the elements that made our music popular in Scandinavia.

Which are your favourite tracks from this album?
Alli Mia Fora, Kardia Mou, a song that we wrote together with Toni, he the music and me the lyrics. I also like "Why" from the previews album which we have a Greek version of on this album, called "Anichti Pligi” [Open Wound]. Generally, a song in Greek seems to be the best for me!

Do you include a song written by you in every album?
Yeah! There is one song written by us in each album that we release. Generally, I like to write songs. When I'm OK or when I feel upset, I write my thoughts in a notebook. I keep the dates always, because after many years I turn back and watch what I have overtaken and to understand what happened to me. As usual this is the way that lyrics are coming out for a track...

Helena, if you fight with Nikos, who makes the first step to become friends again?
Both of us have made the first step, many times. The good is that we are not selfish and we apologize to each other. Fighting is never very intense for us. He will tell, I will tell, I will shout, she will scream... but we stop it there. I will go out of the dressing-room, I will calm down, I will get inside after 5 minutes and we will speak each other normally, nothing goes wrong. We do not have "I don't speak to you" and these...

What do you believe that made you famous and well-known between those groups?
At first our sound. When one track of ours is in the radio, the fans understand it immediately. The 3rd place at Eurovision helped us a lot, too. Maybe we wouldn't have this career for these three years now if there hadn't been Eurovision. We're lucky!

Let's suppose that you have a good song in your hands like "Die For You". Would you go to Eurovision again?
Nikos: Why not? Helena: There are too many thoughts as for Eurovision, but I don't want to tell more...

How seem the things in the Greek Show Biz and in the night to you in general? Is there much competition and such things?
Nikos: We haven't seen something like this so far. Generally they told us: "Watch out for Greece", "Greece will eat you, don't come". But everything is OK. Stelios Rokkos, who we are collaborating with at Pili Aksiou [night club], told us to be careful. But Stelios had no connection with those things that many people told us about. He helped us to have a good relationship and company! Helena: It's not so good to have bad relationships between each other and one artist should be happy about the other artist's the success!

You will be in Pili Aksiou till when?
Helena: Till the end of February. Then we are going to Sweden to promote our single "Moro Mou", and we will be back soon!

Discography has a crisis in our days. Why?
Helena: Because of the piracy! Nikos: If it wouldn't exist the artists would have made more sales than they do now. So the music companies would have a better budget to make the artist's next album better, to give it a better production, better music videos. The more the pirate albums are spread, the less the next album's quality will be. But it's not the fault of the people who sell these CD's, but the people's fault who buy them! I understand that there are many people with financial problems but there are not only them, everyone buys pirate CD's...

What kind of music do you listen to, in your home?
Helena: Very different music... Before coming to Greece, I didn't listen too much Greek music. Now, the things have changed. I like black music like Craig David or Alicia Keys... Nikos: I like Craig David too, but I listen only to Greek music!

Which international artist would you like to collaborate with?
Helena: With Craig David, and when I was younger I was dreaming of a duet with Aaliyah... I like her very much because she started her career very early! In the age of 16 she released one track called "Age Ain't Nothing But A Number". I was 11 or 12 this time and I felt that this song was written especially for me! Nikos: I would like to collaborate with an artist from Arabia, with a completely different sound...

As I know you receive many letters from your fans, do you reply by yourselves?
Nikos: We reply by ourselves as much as we can. We have many fans who are also surfing in our website on the Internet. Helena: Yeah! There is also one girl, Nadia, who has made her

personal website with our photos, lyrics, personal photos from the clubs that she came to see us in. When we see such moves from our fans, we understand how much they love us and this is very important for us!

Which artist is the hot-thing this time in the international pop category?
Nikos: We all know – Britney Spears.

If you see her live...
We also met her face to face because we recorded in the same studio in Sweden. She is great, very simple, but on stage she becomes another person. You see her and you stay speechless!

Let's move on with more personal questions. Helena will we eat almonds in 2003?
I don't know! I'm still waiting from Toni to kneel and to ask me!

What is the thing that made you to fall in love with Toni?
He was honest with me. Despite the fact that we had a big difference in age (when I met him, he was 28, but I was 17!), I feel that, as the time passes by, Toni becomes older and comes closer to my age!

This shine from your smile, where does it come from?
Helena: From a little strass that I have upon my teeth.

Did it hurt you?
Not at all! It's the latest fashion in Sweden and it is stuck with a silicon from a dentist...

Would you make a tattoo?
If you had asked me one year before the answer would have been "NEVER", but now that I'm thinking of it... I would like to make one, but in a place that it wouldn't be easily seen. I consider it as something very personal.

Nikos, what is the first thing you watch in a woman?
The appearance is the thing that gives you the first impression. If she has blond or black hair, I don’t care. She should have a nice ... ass!!! (he laughs)

Which woman artist do you prefer?
Jennifer Lopez!

Finally, what would you like to tell to your fans?
Helena: First of all, we would like to say a big thank you to the fans for all their love! We love them and we will give our best to give them better songs and to give them a break from their lessons, so they will have to get up and dance in front of their mirror to our songs!

Klik! Magazine, Greece 2004

[translation: George G.]

TIME OUT: According to Helena, Antique band takes time out to do other things. Helena has already made many things and she is now on the front.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT : These days, Helena's name appears constantly on the news, afternoon shows and newspapers. Does she take them all serious? Because 99% from all of these are not true.

COOL KID One of the advantages of Helena, is that she is cool, that was also shown during the photoshoot in the gas station in Attiki Odos. She liked the concept from the first time she heared about it.

BETWEEN TWO WORLDS: In the last years, Helena shares her time between her two countries, Greece and Sweden, in which she goes often for mini vacations and rest with the first chance.

HOLIDAYS NOW! Helena now misses the holidays most, because she is working for years. So, now she has arranged holidays that she will make them next year, because that summer will be full of singing.

Helena recently decided to make the big step. She gave a time out on "Antique" and she left V2 Records label, for "Sony" for bigger steps. Today, things are getting better and better for her and we wish her even better things, becuase she has the willing, and when you want something, there is always a way to succeed! This is also shown in the photoshoot for KLIK Magazine, in the EKO Gas Station on Attiki Odos and she made us anything we asked her to do. You can see that in the following pages of the magazine, watching her morphing.

Why did "Antique" break up?
They haven't broke up, they just made a little break. It was a desicion taken by both of us, because we wanted to do something different from what we have made so far.

How do you feel now, that you are on your own?
In the beggining I was a little bit depressed. I was getting on stage, I was covering the right side of the stage and when my eye was getting on the left side I was seeing an empty space. I was feeling a little bit alone, our every-day life with Nikos, the trips, experience, all these I miss them... I have many memories!

People accuse you. What do you answer to those who tell that Antique broke up, because of your own ambitions?
Antique was a pop duo band, which was 50% english and 50% greek. We had producers who were selecting our songs and they were responsible for that different sound. Breaking up doeasn't mean that we want to compete Antique's success. I wish people to understand the difference in the sound, without deleting the history of Antique.

Coming from Sweden, how is the Greek reality that you are living in, on those years?
However it is, I will always love Greece. Of course I feel differences between these 2 countries but I don't make comparisons, because I embarrass myself. I have 2 homelands.

Do you prefer speaking Greek, Swedish or English?
It depends to whom I am talking to. I want to feel comfortable. With Greek languange I keep on making cute mistakes. But I prefer to be corrected from the others, in spite of making fun of me, because I am used to another sence of humour and I feel like beeing insulted. This is my mistake.

When you get angry, in which language are you swearing?
In all of them! But If I get really angry, I say everything!

Tell me the advantages and the disadvantages of a Greek person...
I like it very much that a Greek person has his own character and none can question him. We are hospitable and very warm. The disadvantages maybe others have to tell us, because I feel very Greek to judge us.

How did you decide to deal with the song and how did you start?
Whenever I think of myself, I am singing, and I am the clown of the company. On Greek school, on national celebrations with Theodorakis', Hadjidakis', Vempos' songs etc. I made my first band on my 13, one R&B-funk band with 3 Latin-American boys, in which we were writting our own music and lyrics. 2 years later one big fire took place in Gothenburg and many of our musicians passed away. So, the inspiration stopped and I kept on alone... In the beginning soul, jazz and then pop. On my 16 I decided to deal with the theater and direction, but I never stopped singing. I was making demos for my friends and this is how Antique came up.

Is there in your mind any standard of a Greek star or show-woman?
Many names. I am a devoted fan of Haris Aleksiou and Marinella. Also, Anna Vissi and Despoina Vandi. Male singers Antonis Remos, who is a great man and collaborator and also Nikos Kourkoulis, whith whom I have great momeries. I cannot forget the big composers with whom I have grown up: Theodorakis, Chadjidakis, Plessas, Loizos and many others.

Is there any Greek artist that you admire most?
Anna Vissi. She never gives up and she keeps on surpising us!

Any other out of Greece?
Where to start from? Most of my early listenings were from other countries. Aritha Fanklin, Burry White, Alia, Bruddy, Monika, Chukka Kan, Dave Holister, Billy Osian, Michael Jackson, George Michael, Sting, Celine Dion, NWA, Public Enemie, Madonna, Paula Abdool, Roxette, Abba Beatles, Salt & Peppa, Snap... And the list goes on.

What kind of music were you listening when you were younger?
All these I told you before. But I have been through many levels... At home, the Greek repertoire was the traditional music. Tsitsanis, Vamvakaris, Aleksiou, Plessas, Spanos, Chadjis, Marinella, Poli Panou. I have been through many different kinds of music, punk, hard rock, classical rock, with the relevant look always. I also was in Metallica era once, with a black

lipstick, till breaking down my brother's guitar, like I also was on Paula Abdool with high heels shoes of my sister.

What kind of music you are listening right now?
Songs that inspire me and express my daily life.

How it seems to you the Greek bouzoukia style?
I believe that here in Greece the connection between the fans and the artists is great! This is not happening anywhere else. It's like been addicted in a drug, both for fans and artists. It's a great connection without words.

Do you find anything bad on it?
Every night club, has its own style and it doesn't have to change it. It's the artist's decision to perform on nightclubs or not, and it's on everyone's decision if he will go on those nightclub or not.

Do you mind, when they are writing lies about you?
So far, they have never written something so serious, and I don't even mind about it. In 2001, when we first appeared with Nikos in Greece, they were writing about the band's break-up. That was when we discussed about it for the first time...

Do you believe in the talent?
Of course. Everyone is talented in something. Some may need more time and space to express it. Everyone is talented and I believe that everyone wants to see people with talent around him.

From what thing the talent can be ruined?
From the many "I want" that our life has been filled with. Success needs control. Of course, talent is in danger from the much usage. It also needs to rest sometimes.

Do you believe that you are famous?
I didn't start singing to become famous. My hobby is now my job and I am very happy for it.

What do you believe about piracy?
No matter how many efforts the big labels are making to protect the cd's, the pirates will always find a solution. I strongly believe that we have to own an original cd collection with original albums. As the piracy exists, the artists will become less and the quality will become more less. I am very happy that I have heritaged an original collection of old vinyls from my father that you can never find anywhere nowadays. The most important is to make the people not want to buy piracy CD's.

What's your opinion about the reality talent shows?
It's a way for the people to decide about the future of the Greek music. There are many big talents

How much important is the appearance for a singer?
In pop music is the basic role, but for the entechno kind, is not so important. It that kind of music the basic role is the song. Pop music means popular, means that you are selling your

image and you are becoming a standard for kids that are buying your albums. Every artist does that with his/her own way he/she wants. Some with his make-up, clothes, simple caring of himself and so on...

What do you appreciate in a woman and in a man?
I appreciate the determination on men and the power of soul on the women, I read a book of John Grey with the title "Women from Venus, Men from Mars".

Which is your weakness?
Everything! I am stubborn and it's difficult for someone to change my mind sometimes for something, because I don't want to get myself down. It happens occasionally for me to be wrong, but then I am not so shy and I apologize.

Which is the biggest luxury that you allow to yourself?
To be loved and for me to return that love to others. You can never get enough love. Luxury contains many things. I prefer the luxury that nature gives us, and not that luxury that money give us. One lux gift that I will give to myself is to go to a spa on weekend, because resting is also a luxury.

When are you telling lies?
I am not used to tell lies, I hate them. But it happened. I often tell white lies, so as not to hurt anyone. Sometimes, even better, I never speak, so as not to tell any lie and then to apologize my lies, because I feel stupid.

Any thought that relaxes you?
An abandoned beach, with a gentle wind and waves crashing on the coast. The only sound to hear beeing the wave... And then love. You know what I mean? Love that chucks your belly and paralises your soul and body.

One job that you could never do?
Lifeguard, I am afraid of deep waters. But all the jobs exist for us, to survive. No job is a shame.

Narcissism, is an artist's ingredient?
No, but I think that you can be in that trap too easy. I believe that we have to fear for the worsts from ourselves, without being suckers, because always will be someone better than us. We have to learn comparing ourselves with ourselves, so as to be a continuous development and improvement.

Are you making risky things?
Many, for my age, but after crashing with a go kart, I never let my adrenaline reaching its' highest point. I have many signs in my mind and in my body, and that's the reason I am thinking more now, before doing something.

Are you making plans for the future?
Every day, for the next day, every week for the next week, every year for the next year, till the day I die. Don't forget that I am an Aquarius and I cannot ever stop making dreams, and my horoscope flattens me and that's why I don't make the risky things.

Do you have bad habits?
Many, but I can't reveal you, If I start them I will never stop. Do you want to go for a coffee??? (laughs)...

What makes you laugh?
One good open-minded company without limits and looks like a comedy.

Is there anything that changed in your life?
Some companies that didn't last long, that I gave a lot on them and I ended up to be alone. Since then I started no to be so paned. It's rare for me now to tell my secrets. Also something that has changed is the relationship things, I never imagine myself to pledge with someone for so long.

What is that, that you hate the most?
Lies, fake and wicked people and hypocrisy. All of these are one for me. I cannot show to someone what I am as a person for those things I told yopu before.

Describe yourself with 3 words.
Sensitive, because I can cry with the most stupid movie, crazy because I never give limits to myself. For me there is only a "MUST" and "MUSTN'T", but there are no limits. Also, I am warm, because I always try to solve the other people’s problems.

Homme Magazine, Greece 2004: Hon Talari Sitt Eget Språk

[Interview: Giannis Papaioannos - Translation: George G.]

Rumors were coming out, but when her first solo track started to bomb the radio playlists and charts, things went clearer! In her 22 years, Helena leaves her Antique past back and answers to more than one missed challenges. In Swedish!

Which is the most usual question that your friends ask you, every time you're coming back from Sweden?
They usually ask me why I have so much stress! But, I think that this kind of stress doesn't have to do with Greece, but with Athens, in general! Swedish people don't know what stress is, they arrange everything so well... Because when you see that the bus will be at the station at 12.05' it means that you MUST BE there at 12 o' clock to reach it. They don't have stress in this country. There's not a reason to turn up their voice. They're calm! In a very exasperating range... The most important reason to turn up their voice is because of the murderer of the minister of foreign affairs of Sweden, who didn't go into jail for the rest of his life but got only 5 years of psychological attending. Once, they killed Palme and the whole Sweden stayed only in the melancholy of his missing. And in that time, none turned up his voice. You see, they didn't consider anyone as a strong suspect. Neither the wife of the prime minister, who was with him at the time of the murder!

Except the whole severe schedule, what do you miss of this country when you're in Greece?
Of course I miss many things, but I cannot tell which country is the best! Especially the progress and the development that I see in Greece in the last 5 years, which I haven't seen it in any other country. If there's something that I miss from Sweden, it is the calmness. And the safety, meaning that if I was an unmarried mother with a child, I would know that I could have a help from my country, for sure! And financial help, which means that I could have a job and social help. In Greece, although having a good private security, things are still unsafe!

Where do you have better times?
In Greece, of course! Swedish people do the same! Greece is a beautiful country and here you feel the real beauty when you go out for a walk. Despite the fact that Sweden is a country that everything is open-minded in, you cannot go out for a walk on Saturday night in such a cold climate - going where? The thing that I like most in Greece is that here you can understand that each person has his own personality! Every person goes as he/she is! You will never hear that this person is better than the other because he is brunet or because he is stranger.

Have you ever heard racist comments?
No, but you know, it's a very strange population. When they face one open-minded and positive person, they keep a distance like being afraid of him/her.

Afraid of him, or of his personality?
Maybe, that's it!

You're travelling a lot upside down. Would you feel upset if you should leave Sweden?
Yeah, very much! It's a country that gave me many things! My schools, that university that was too difficult to walk through its door and in the end they left me to choose the lessons by myself, my education, my first music company, which gave me a contract by a Swedish manager. He must have seen something in Antique, to give them the sign to start recording in the studio.

Well! We reach the point! When is the next Antique album going to be released?
I don't know yet! Nikos hasn't released any single yet, not even an album. When we told to make a break, both of us, and that we follow a solo career each other, we meant that both of us would do the same thing. If my solo career goes down, I should go back in Antique?

How is your relationship now?
As it was before. With Nikos, we ate from the same spoon. We slept in the same chair during the studio recordings! We have done so many tours and trips together. Of course, our communication now is not so usual, but our relationship hasn't changed at all!

What do you miss most of Antique?
The trips, the experience, the fights, cries, laughs... We have shared many things with each other!

How would you comment your first solo album?
More Helena! You see, I started singing from my 8, songs of Hatzidaki and Theodorakis, in my Greek School of Gothenburg at the Greek celebrations! From there I discovered my voice. Later, because I raised up in the centre, I started learning the rap music thanks to my black friends, raised up in a more ghetto neighborhood of the town. Folklore situation. Latin-Americans, London-man, Africans, Persians. With some of them we made our 1st group, "Soul Och Funkomatic", in 1996. Then I met Nikos, "Opa Opa", "Dinata Dinata", tour in Europe (except from Greece) till 2000 when we came to Greece. Everything else, Greek people knows very well! Now, in 2004 with my first solo album, the piece of mine which once died, which was more R'n'B, has now come to life in a record which is the pop side of Helena!

Had you felt like being 13 when you made it?
Yes! Like going back to those days when I was discovering new music, it was very nice!

The pop street is what you prefer...
I'm a lover of music, not of the titles and for that reason I don't want to think with what kind of music I will work with. Even if it is a ballad, or pop, or euro-trance, or zeimbekiko - if I like it, I'm gonna sing it!

The collaboration with Christos Dantis and "Anapandites Klisis (Missed Calls)": Which collaboration could you imagine?
I'm Aquarius! Anna Vissi and Despina Vandi. I would like to collaborate with Haroula [Haris Aleksiou], too, who is a goddess for me!

Have you ever sang in any of the Greek music clubs in Sweden?
No, never! Bouzoukia in Greece was a great experience for me! I remember my first collabo-

ration with Antonis Remos in Thessaloniki - I felt the people so close to me, under my nose, under my dress. That didn't scare me but I didn't know how to find a way to control myself in how should I be. When I'm far away from Greece for a long period I lose that balance! But the next two days I regain the control!

When you're changing between these 2 countries what tricks have you found to adjust yourself so easy to those different mentalities of these countries?
The language helps me a lot. With Greek I've still got some problems, but with the Swedish I don't have any! Because, I am born in Sweden, and Swedish is always somewhere in my mind, and I can talk, talk, talk so much I can. But when I come back here to Greece... I have some problems when a Greek word is up to 3 syllables. Recently, I learnt the word: “Prosanatolismos” [orientation]. I think it is a miracle that I know this!

InStyle Magazine, Greece 2005: Making Up

[Interview: Vaso Argyrea - Translation: Giannis R.]

I really liked your hair at Eurovision [2001]. Talk to me about it!
My hair cut was planned to be really good quality. My Arab hair dresser had ordered it. And he was the only one who could make it correctly. In Denmark no one knew how to make it right. So after many fails in various hair dressers there, I trusted the guys who were working backstage at Eurovision. But unfortunately they did not make it the way it should be.

Which are the first things you do after waking up in the morning?
I use a pharmaceutical product for cleaning, and a gel by La Roche Posay. Then I put on some rose water. I also use a cream for the face and another one for my eyes. All products from my beautician's studio, recommended by her.

What is your everyday make-up?
No special stuff. A cream which protects my skin from the sun, concealer, a bit of rouge and a lip balm because I have the bad habit to bite my lips.

I guess that your make up on stage is different.
Yes, Giannis Marketakis is my make-up artist and he also takes care of the products I use myself: La Prairie, concealer by Dior, and other products by MAC and Nars, mainly in earthy nuances.

What are your favourite products?
La Prairie products and "Hypnose" [Mascara] by Lancôme.

Which product would you never forget to bring with you?
My fragrance, "Flower" by Kenzo, the red one with ethereal oils which leaves a velvet sensation on your skin.

Have you got many cosmetics at home?
I think I have everything which a make-up artist has, too!

How often do you buy cosmetics?
Quarterly. Usually from MAC.

Which products attract your attention?
I am crazy about my nails so everything related to this attracts my attention. Until now I am satisfied with Opis and Creative's nail polish.

Which one was the first cosmetic you tried?
I remember that when I was 10 years old I bought a red lip gloss, with the first money my father gave to me. But my mother did not like it so I replaced it by a transparent one.

When did you start using cosmetics?
When I was 12. Maybe because my friends were older than me.

Have you ever done any radical changes to your hair?
When I was 16 my hair had the colour of honey. Even brighter than right now. The shortest time it ended at my shoulders and the longest time at my waist. I love long hair. I used to have extensions, too.

Have you got any beauty tips?
I think it is good to take care of your skin as much as possible so we can keep it in a good condition for many years.

What did your mother advise you to?
My mother prefers the natural look. She used to tell me: “Lena, do not dye your hair, you will torture them without any serious reason!”

Do you support the healthy diet?
I spend much effort in order to eat healthy. I like salads and fish. I do not really eat sweets – if I prepare a home-made sweet I will try not to include too much sugar.

Do you exercise?
I had ballet classes until I was 12. Since then I have not paid too much attention to athletic activities but I know that I should.

So which are your usual products?
Lip glaze by Stila, concealer by La Prairie, MAC powder blush, MAC Studio Fix NC 30, Hypnose Mascara by Lancôme, a nail file, a face product, my fragrance, “Flower” by Kenzo, and Elizabeth Arden’s Eight Hour Cream, which I use for my lips and nails.

DownTown Magazine, Greece 2005: 12 points!

[Interview: Nikos Georgiadis - Translation: Giannis R.]

Many people said that it would be better for us if we had chosen the Swedish song because we would have had the support of the countries in Scandinavia.
My opinion is that we should participate with a Greek song to show who we are. On the other hand it would be great to show that we are international by choosing a song without Greek elements. But I don't want to influence anyone's opinion. I want people to vote cleverly and to support Greece.

Which song required most time in the studio?
"The Light in our Soul" and "Let's Get Wild". With the last one we tried to make it not too hard but also not too soft. "The light in our Soul" was difficult.

In December you used to say that you didn't know yet what to do because you had a proposal from Sweden, too.
I am still a little girl who needs time to understand things. This year I was confronted with a huge dilemma. The first time the proposal came I was with Nikos [from Antique] and we were in Greece so we couldn't go. The second time, the year after, we were still in Greece. Then I was asked to go alone but I said that I could not leave the group. When Antique did not exist anymore, the proposal came again but it did not seem right to represent Sweden.

So Swedish people ask you every year to represent their country?
Yes.

Is Eurovision as important as we make it look like?
That night we represent our country. Whole Europe will notice the word "Greece".

Is it true that you are going to marry Toni after Eurovision?
No, I cannot get married after Eurovision!

Can't you?
I won't have time to book a church! We will see...

Do you think you are too young to get married?
Aliyah used to say that "age ain't nothing but a number". Marriage is not something I need immediately. I love my husband, we are together for six years and I feel like we were married. When I am talking to my father, he asks me "How is your husband?". What I live with him is something special, and I do not want to advertise it. It is something personal. Many people ask me for the reason why I do not get married, others how I can stay with the same man for six years. Fortunately, I have not thought of any of these things. I am happy.

Do you want to become a mother?
Very much, but not now.

Have you scheduled this, too?
No. Someday, I was kidding with a friend of mine. We were drinking coffee and she asked me if I want to have children and I told her: "You did not understand, I wanna have four sons

fighting for being the one to sleep in my bed tonight!" Then she told me: "No, you did not understand, I am very happy because all my five sons sleep in my bed every night!"

Aren't you afraid of being with the same person for the rest of your life?
No, I am very happy. I want to be with someone I trust forever, because I don't trust people easily. I may be happy as a person, I may have much positive energy, I may gabble away but in order to be really free I need people next to me who know me very well.

What has been your last disagreement with Toni?
Last night, when he wanted to sleep but I wanted to watch TV in our bedroom.

Who gives away usually?
Last time, I did. These things happen to every couple.

When did you cry for the last time?
Last week. I was very tired but it wasn't bad - it wasn't happiness neither sadness. I had only reached my limit.

What is missing in your life?
The first place for Greece [in Eurovision]!

Have you missed Nikos from Antique?
Yes, of course. Especially when my solo career started, I was very sad. But the fact that I am not with Nikos this time makes me stronger. More prepared, more decisive, more ready. But I am sad for sure because I am not next to him. I have not talked to him for ages, because he is in Sweden and he has changed his phone number. But I need his wishes.

Have you thought only of the positive aspect of Eurovision?
I am prepared for the positive and the negative consequences.

What are you dreaming of while sleeping?
I am not dreaming of anything lately. I don't know why. But in this Eurovision period I cannot sleep anyway.

Who is the first person you lash out when you are angry?
My mother. It is unbelievable, she is so far away from me but she is the first person I will call and tell "I am not good". My mother is in my soul because we are thinking of the same thing.

Was there a moment you thought "I will leave everything and go back home"?
No, I have learned how to fight.

Some people who are against you say that you are using Eurovision for promoting your international career which is about to start.
Not at all! Actually it is the opposite. The contest is on May 21, and two days later my international album gets released in Scandinavia.

Are you afraid of going back and to live in Sweden again?
No, I still live there. It is just that I have been in Greece for the last one and half a year. Sweden is a country I will not leave easily, since my whole family lives there.

Which is the best lesson life has given to you?
When I was 15 years old a really sad event happened, which made me understand many things and helped me to become who I am today. Even though it happened 8 years ago, I am still thinking of that night- It was a night many of my friends died in, a relationship was stopped and another one gave me power and brought me closer to my family.

Music Life Magazine, Greece 2005: Our Number One

[Interview: Marinos Vythoulkas - Translation: Giannis R.]

Helena is very busy these days. After a couple of unanswered calls, we managed to talk to her: about her family, Antique, Sakis advice, and the reason why she is going to remove all her furniture (including TV) from her house.

Tell me about your childhood.
I was born In Boras, Sweden. When I was 3 years old I visited Greece for first time. I went to Volos, where we own a house. We were staying there for 5 weeks and we were visiting many places. I remember, apart from Volos, Pilio, Spetses and Korinthos. Then Peloponnese.

Where are your parents from?
They come from small mountainous villages of Karditsa. When we were in Greece we used to visit my parents' brothers.

Have you got any brothers or sisters?
Yes, Rita and Dinos. Both of them are married and they live in Sweden. My sister's husband is from Iran, and my brother has a child whose mother is from Sweden and Thailand.

He must be beautiful!
He is very beautiful!

Are your brothers related to music?
To tell you the truth, no one from my family is, except from my grandmother.

Helena, I think voice is a talent that people were born with.
Yes. The only person who was so active and powerful is my grandmother. A loud voice which was starting all the celebrations.

How was your childhood In Sweden?
My childhood was beautiful. Everything was calm and safe, I used to have my own keys when I was going to the primary school.

What did you use to listen to when you were young?
I was sitting on my sofa and I was watching TV. There was a broadcast and Stratos Dionisiou was singing there. Amazing voice. I was looking at him and was thinking “Oh my God, how great it is!". As a teen I was listening to R&B and hip-hop. My first group was a hip-hop one.

How old were you?
I was 13. I recorded my very first songs with that group.

What was its name?
“Soul Funkomatic"!

What does it mean?
A machine which produces soul and funk! When I was 14 or 15, at a hip-hop party, some people, who didn't manage to get in, were angry and burned the place. We lost many friends that night.

Unbelievable story...
We lost any interest we used to have about singing. We lost two really important people from our group.

What did you do after that?
I started jazz voice lessons, I recorded a couple of songs but then I gave up and tried theatre.

You left everything and tried theatre?
Direction actually. Unfortunately I didn't manage to finish school because my career started when I was 17.

And how did you decide to become a singer?
When I was going to school I recorded some demos for some friends who were musicians. Then a friend, Jonas Scheldt, told me: "HeIena, will you record Opa Opa for me, in Greek?" I told him that I would do it but with a man. Nikos was a friend of mine and in 1999 we went to Stockholm and we recorded Opa-Opa and Dinata-Dinata. In three weeks we signed a contract and five weeks later the album went gold and then platinum. We made a tour in Scandinavia and then we went to Germany. It was amazing how people were dancing with Greek songs.

What company did you sign the contract with?
Bonnier Music.

What kind of songs did that album include?
Mainly covers. "Opa Opa" by Giorgos Alkeos, 'Dinata Dinata' by Nikolakopoulou and 'Mou Lipis' by Giorgos Mazonakis. The last one was written by Nikos Terzis, and that's how we came in contact with him.

How did the proposal tor Eurovision 2001 come?
First of all we came to Greece in 2000 with the album "Mera Me ti Mera". This album included the songs I mentioned before. One day Nikos Terzis called us and asked us to do something for Greece: "Do you guys want to represent Greece in the Eurovision Song Contest?" Nikos [Panagiotidis] and I agreed that it would be the sweetest thing we could do to ourselves. There wasn't a second thought. Amazing idea, amazing song!

What were your feelings about Eurovision 2001?
It was a song I really loved. There was not even a part which would make me ashamed of it. I was happy when I went there. The day after the contest, when I woke up and went to the airport, I cried, because I realized that Antique brought the 3rd place to Greece.

After your success all the media were talking about you.
That was nice! [She laughs]

What was your next step?
After "Die for you" we recorded two more albums with Nikos, "Me Logia Ellinika" and "Alli Mia Fora". These albums were translated to English, too.

After Eurovision 2001, did you think you would stay and live in Greece permanently or was there a possibility of going back?
Look, I am still trying to find an answer to this question. Sweden has offered me many things through education and above all Sweden has made me proud to be Greek. In the Swedish school there was a Greek teacher for Greek lessons. They allowed us to build a church, to create Greek communities...

So you weren't so sure that you would come back...
It is very easy for me to come and to live in Greece. But it is also difficult to let Sweden of my life. Maybe because of my parents, my brothers and generally because my relatives live there. This is one of the reasons why I can't leave-Sweden. If everyone was here I might feel differently.

From 2001 till today, don't you actually live permanently in Greece?
No. I used to stay in a hotel. I rent a house for the first time in April!

How was your separation with Nikos?
We decided that the group does not have any further development and each one of us wanted to try something new.

So everyone would be able to do whatever he wanted to.
Exactly. And we didn't want to have any kind of competition between the solo artist and Antique.

Antique made history anyway.
I also think so. Antique used to have a very special sound. I remember that many Swedish people wanted to do the same but they couldn't.

Was 2004 a year full of changes?
At first it wasn't easy for me to be on stage alone. I used to have Nikos next to me and suddenly all the decisions were mine.

Where do you live?
In Glyfada. It is a suburb which makes you relax. Fresh air and sea.

You are right, when you are in a bad mood you could take your car and go to Vouliagmeni...
I don't drive a car.

And how do you go where you want?
I take a taxi, I ask Toni or some of my friends to help me out.

How long have you been together with Toni?
Six years.

Is he you manager, too?
Firstly he was my tour manager. When we came to Greece he kept doing that job but now Nikos Manolias took over. We still work together, he always supports me.

What does he think about your popularity?
He knows how the game works. He doesn't have any problem, he never complains and he supports my effort.

So he is not jealous at all?
No, he is not. There is no reason why he should be. I think he understands my love for my hobby which is also my job. Generally I do not cause trouble between us.

Is he a musician too?
Yes. He used to play the piano in various clubs in Sweden.

Are you nervous because of the fact that 'My Number One' is at the first place of every online Eurovision chart?
It makes me feel good. ERT thought I was the right person. People could disagree. So we decided that the best way we could do it is to have a competition between three songs. 64% of the Greek people chose "My Number One". This means that this song represents the Greeks. Considering this, I feel I have support from Greece. It is the only thing which keeps me calm. I would prefer to be at 10 on the pre—charts and finish first, than being first and finish at 10!

From the three songs, which one do you prefer?
I like all of them. They belong to my discography now too and they are all very special without any common elements.

The Swedish one was also good.
It was very nice. Different rhythm. I think it was a bit latin without the Greek folk element in it. I was dancing
rhumba while we were recording!

Which countries do you think are the most dangerous this year?
I believe in Ciara's voice from Malta — really a voice of an angel. I also like Russia, England & Iceland very much. Norway is very special too.

What has been Sakis' [Rouvas, Greek entry and 2nd place in Eurovision 2004] advice for Eurovision?
To be myself. Actually what I already do. It is important to take advice from another singer. The fact that he looked into my eyes and told me, "Lena, I am very happy and I wanna go again!",
was very nice. Sakis was one of the first people I got advice from. He was amazing last year.

But now things are more difficult. You are Helena, not Antique. It is different this time, am I wrong?
The stage presence is going to be totally different from what we did in 2001. "My Number One" wants power and dancing. "Die For You" was just a stand even if it had a beat.

What do your parents say about all the things that happened to you lately?
My parents are very happy. They encourage me because I am very tired My mother always asks me "Shall I visit you?" but I don't allow her to do so because she will not be able to see me because I am really busy.

Who is the first person you will call in the good and bad moments of your life?
My parents. No matter if am in a good or a bad mood I will call them even if it is late night. And the person whom I Iive with of course. He is the first one who notices my mood.

What does your busy schedule til the contest contain?
In the evening I'll go to the club and then immediately to the airport for Portugal, Spain, Andorra, Cyprus, Bulgaria and Scandinavia.

When will you return to Greece?
I will be back by the end of April. Then I will make a short trip to Ukraine. I will come back, I will switch off my cell phones, I will close my tetevision, I will remove all the funiture from my house and I will be with Fokas Evangelinos all day long, practicing my choreography. I won't even be able to come in contact with my friends or Toni. The performance contains lots of dancing and the combination of singing and dancing at the same time is not easy at all. Fokas is one at my basic collaborators and I fully trust him.

Helena, whats your "number one"?
My family. I want them to be healthy and happy. That's the only thing I want.

Neafon Magazine, Germany 2005: Eurovisions

[Interview: Neafon - Translation: KyprisAthina]

Born in Swedish Boros, Elena has grown up in Gothenburg. She has one older sister and one older brother, Rita and Dinos. Her sister is married with a man from Iran, her brother with a woman from Thailand. Both got children. Elena's parents worked in gastronomy and after they stopped working they stayed in Sweden. Their hobby is Pilates and Elena loves it, too. Elena's passion is cooking and she loves to cook for friends. She lives in Glyfada. Elena loves travelling, especially to travel to Barcelona and Spain in general. Another passion of her is cinema. She has no driver license yet but will get one as soon as possible. She's intelligent, beautiful and has got an extraordinary voice. But she has also got a lot of patience, the will to keep things going and professionalism. Everything seems to show that the girl with the cute smile will win the Eurovision Song Contest 2005.

Will you enter the final of Eurovision to represent Greece or are your motives more personal ones?
I will go to the contest to represent Greece with a really good song. ERT worked really hard and I am sure that Greece will make a good place. I promised all to do my best. I think that Greece has shown again that it is ready to make big things. In despite of all criticism of Europe Eurovision is a huge event for Europe. I believe it was a great thing if we can have the contest in Athens next year and me, I want to do whatever I can do for this.

Would you ever have been able to imagine that until you're 23 you would be the Number One Pop Idol of Greece?
I have worked very hard for the last years and have made big steps indeed. But my opinion is that there's still a long way to go and that I have to do and to learn a lot. I'm not that kind of people who lay down on their success. What counts is to keep on working continuously, to stay above in the long term.

What did you think when ERT proposed to enter the contest?
I was already part of it in 2001 and of course I was happy. Also Sweden often wanted me to represent them, which was something I would have also liked to do, too. But I didn't know how Greece would have liked that, if I represented another country.

Have you ever thought of if the result of Kiev can have any important influence on your future career – no matter if a positive or negative one?
I really got the feeling of entering a risk. And I really hope that my participation won't have a negative influence on me. Like my friend Panagiotidis said, the ESC is in some way comparable to a stock exchange – you never know if you will win or lose money. The political interests between some countries which support each other are well known. But in despite of that we get a very good result in 2001 and also we did last year (with Sakis). I will do my best to give Greece a good result.

How it is to live in Sweden? What do you think of the life in Greece compared to it?
Within the last years I have been changing all the time between Greece and Sweden. The biggest dream of a migrant is to return in his home country anytime. At the beginning I had some problems to assimilate because the ways of life are very different, but I've always loved Greece. Swedish people have a wrong image of Greece. They think that the rhythm of

life is not of this time. That's why they wonder when they see me return to Sweden with my arms full of clothing from big fashion labels and accessories I bought in Greece, as they think that you can't find things like that in our country. The biggest problem I had to cope with during my first time in Greece was the language for sure. At first I even didn't dared to speak Greek because I was afraid of getting too much attention by this. Before it was easier and worked faster for me to assimilate with the Swedish people. The only thing which made a difference between me and Swedish people was my dark hair colour.

Some have said you want to use Eurovision for your European career?
Much more the opposite is true. The competition is at May 21 and the international album will firstly be released in Scandinavia 2 days later.

Last year the live emission on ERT TV of the Final was seen by 84% of the TV watching people. Do you think this year it will be the same?
Usually it is a good sign if Greece gets the possibility to present itself to an international audience, no matter if on TV or on any other way. People happily watch the ESC as much as they do with every other big event Greece participate in. It's a great feeling to know that so many hearts beat for the same thing. Yes, I do believe that we will reach a high number of people again in this year.

Is there any artist in Greece you especially admire?
I'm a big fan of Haris Alexiou.

Please describe your relation to your parents!
I feel very thankful to my parents because they gave me big possibilities to realize my dreams. Never they tried to force me to do anything that they thought of it might be good for me or to do anything they had missed in their own lives.

When did you cry for the last time?
It wasn't long ago, but only because I was terribly tired. Fortunately there was no serious reason for it, I didn't cry because I had sorrows.

What are you missing in your life and what in the personal level?
The first place for Greece and nothing on the personal level. I don't claim so much to my life.

You are living in a long termed relationship. How do you feel about this?
I love my partner. We have been together for six years now and feel like a married couple. One example for this is when my parents ask me while calling: "how is your husband?"

What was the biggest lesson life has taught you up to now?
When I was 15 there was a tragic moment which influenced me a lot. It was a year many of my friends died, a relation ended, another overtook its place and gave new energy to me. I succeeded in getting closer to my family.

Elena, much success in Kiev!

Esckaz.com, Russia 2005: Eurovisions

Helena Paparizou was born to Greek parents, Volos and Karditsa, in Sweden where she grew up. Helena's artistic talents and eagerness to excel became apparent from an early age, and she began her training in singing, dancing and acting while she was still at school. A significant turning point in Helena's life was the creation of Antique, a group she set up with her childhood friend Nikos at the age of 17. Almost immediately, Antique signed their first record contract with the then newly founded record label Bonnier in Sweden. Their debut single "Opa Opa" became a huge hit. It reached number one in the singles charts and gained gold status. Following that success, Antique released their debut album, and later in 2001 came the first major step in their career – their participation in the Eurovision Song Contest. They performed the beautiful song "I Would Die For You" and made such a big impression, that after the voting, they had scooped third place! Antique's success in the Eurovision contest promised a bright future and led to a successful career which has included several platinum albums, a European tour, and collaborations with many highly successful artists from Greece and abroad. Despite Antique's great success, the group's journey came to an end in 2003. Making one of her most difficult decisions ever, Helena decided to pursue a solo musical career. This brought her into contact with the dynamic team of Sony Music with whom she signed her first contract as a solo artist. In December 2003, Helena Paparizou released her first solo single, "Anapantites Klisis", a song that was written especially for her by famous singer-songwriter Christos Dantis. The song became a major hit and remained at the top of airplay charts as well as the sales charts for a very long time, reaching gold status. During the winter of 2003-2004, Helena appeared alongside one of Greece's biggest male singing stars, Antonis Remos, at Studio Pireos night club. In spring 2004, Helena released her first solo album "Protereotita" from which "Antithesis", "Katse Kala", "Stin Kardia Mou Mono Thlipsi" became major hits. Her success brought her to Fever Music night club where she performed the winter season 2004-2005 alongside Sakis Rouvas and Giorgos Mazonakis.

Hello, dear Helena! Congratulations for being chosen Greek representative in Eurovision 2005! How do you feel now, returning to the contest?
Thank you! I feel fantastic and am very excited about returning to the contest! The last time was such a great experience!

How did you get the suggestion from ERT to represent country in Eurovision 2005? If this was an open preselection, would you also participate in it?
ERT simply asked me if I would like to represent Greece this year and I accepted! I am not sure whether or not I would be included in a preselection process, but I don't see why not!

Which of 3 songs you've performed at the National selection was your personal favourite?
I loved all three of them equally! Otherwise I don't think I would be able to go through with the selection. ERT, my record label Sony Music, as well as myself wanted to make sure that we loved all three of them and would be equally proud if any of the three were selected. We definitely achieved our goal!

How can you describe "My Number One" in one sentence?
"You're my lover, undercover!"

What will be your aim in the Eurovision contest, are you looking for victory?
My aim at the Eurovision contest is to do the best possible I can, and even more! Of course I cannot hide that I would love to be "Number One!", but it's the challenge and experience that counts above all.

What as do you think can make your song stand different from the other competitors? How you are planning to make your song one to remember?
I definitely believe that my on stage appearance will play a very big role in differentiating my song from the others. If we didn't have television then the contest would be clearly concentrated on the music. But the contest is an optic-audio experience and the combination of both is what stimulates the audience! I have a great team of people working on my stage appearance, including choreographers, dancers, musicians, my record label Sony Music and many more! I trust that we will all do the best possible for the best possible appearance!

Have you already heard other participating songs and what is your opinion on them?
Yes I have and I love them all! I find that each one is unique in its own beautiful way!

What are your preparations plans? Which countries are you touring with promotion?
Already I have visited Germany, Russia, and at the moment that I am answering these questions I am in Malta! (Thank God for the Internet!) Next stops are in Spain, Cyprus, Bulgaria and a few more Balkan countries, Sweden, Turkey, Kiev, and last but not least, England.

What is your impression with Russia and Russian contestant Natalia Podolskaya?
I was just recently in Russia and it was my first time there! I was very impressed by how similar and close the Russian culture is to the Greek one, and other than our religion that is common and connects us I was amazed by how our language has the same roots and moreover I was amazed by how many Russians spoke Greek! Unfortunately, I had a very tight program and didn't have time to see as much as I wanted to, but I admired the architecture is Moscow and you can tell by its appearance and "aura" if you know what I mean, that it's a city with great history and glory. Overall however, the love I received from the people left the greatest and sweetest impression on me, their love really touched me.
Now for Natalia: First of all I think she is absolutely beautiful and she has a fantastic voice! I love the sensitivity of her song and the peaceful/anti-war message it reveals. I dedicate this song to everyone around the world, and believe it is a dynamic song that should be heard everywhere, and not only for the Eurovision. I would also like to wish Natalia the best of luck! Good luck Natalia!

Will you be adding some changes into the arrangement before the contest?
Unless something comes up, I doubt it. We want to make sure that the final set up is perfect!

May be you can already reveal some information about how your stage presentation in Kiev will look like or you will be keeping everything secret till the last moment?
Exactly! I want it to be a surprise!

You have prepared very nice preview video, can you tell us more about its idea and how the filming was made?
For this video, we decided that we wanted to show the modern side of Greece since the first thing that comes to most people's minds when they think of Greece are ancient ruins! Of

course we are very proud of our history, but we are also very proud of our present. The video was shot in two days in Thessaloniki, Northern Greece, at the Museum of Science and Technology.

Are you planning any new releases this year?
I just recently released my debut album in a selector repackaged version, which also includes "My Number One" and the other two songs that were included in the preselection. The repackaged album also includes a few of my songs in English, and "My Number One" in a karaoke version.

Can you name us your favorite world singers you are mostly inspired with?
From a very young age I always loved and was inspired by great music, and not necessarily the artists. But I have many favorites! So to mention a few from my long list: Céline Dion, Mariah Carey (her early career), Michael Jackson, Aretha Franklin, Paula Abdul, Janet Jackson, Mary J Blidge, Lauren Hill, Prince... I was even a huge fan of New Kids on The Block (who wasn't?) and Metallica and the Prodigy!

And our usual question usually asked by our visitors - can you name us any singers you know coming from ex-USSR, Russia, Ukraine?
Unfortunately I don't know of many, or at least not many come to mind right now. However I know Tattoo, and a group called Viagra if I'm not mistaken, and last but definitely not least… Tchaikovsky!!

If you wish to leave any message to the visitors of our site you can do it now.
I hope everyone enjoys themselves at Eurovision 2005, I wish for everyone to vote for whatever brings happiness to their heart! Thank you for the support!

Thank you very much for the interview and see you in Kiev! Good luck!
THANK YOU!!!

Times of Malta, Malta 2005, March: Greek singer tight-lipped on final night plans

[Interview: Cynthia Busuttil]

Greek singer Helena Paparizou may acknowledge that in a contest one can win or lose, but she has promised herself and her people that she will do her utmost at this May's Eurovision Song Festival in the Ukraine. Her song – " My Number One" - garnered more than 60 per cent of the votes in the Greek contest for the Eurovision Song Festival. "It is traditional but not in the way many people expect a Greek song to be. We do not use the bouzouki but the Crete lyre. And while traditional, it also has a modern streak," she explains animatedly.

Like Malta's own Chiara, the Greek singer has already competed in the Eurovision Song Festival. She represented Greece in 2001 as part of the group Antique, which she and her childhood friend Nikos Panagiotidis formed a couple of years before. Their song – "I Would Die For You" - brought Greece its first ever third placing in the festival. Things are different this time around and she will sing on her own after deciding to go solo 18 months ago. However, she is not apprehensive. Maybe, she says, it is because she has grown up - she was only 19 when Antique took part in the Eurovision Song Festival and feels "more ready for stuff" now at the age of 23: "If you had asked me about all this 18 months ago I would not have been too sure. It was very hard for me in the beginning because I really missed Nikos. When I went on stage, I was always expecting him to be by my side," she said.

But today the young singer is confident and no longer harbors any fears. "I have done this my whole life and will struggle for my country, because I love Greece."

Although she is Greek, the singer was born and bred in Sweden. Although she moved to Greece when she started her solo career, she still has a base, and a following, in Scandinavia and is expected to release an album there in May. The young singer has some insightful beliefs despite being just 23 years old. "None of the participants has anything to fear. We all love music. Anyone who participates in the Eurovision Song Festival loves one's country, loves music and everybody does the job. But somebody has to come first, somebody has to come second and somebody has to come last. So if you're not ready to participate in such a contest, then you shouldn't go," she says.

Since Antique had earned such a good placing, people have high expectations now and she is promising to do her best. The singer is tight lipped about what Greece is preparing for the final night in the Ukraine, although she says discussions are in full swing with her choreographer and her team all working on the final night.

"I don't want to tell too much. The dancers are not even accompanying me on the promotional tour. I want to keep everything secret so it will be a big surprise on that night."

She left Malta yesterday evening after a whirlwind two-day promotional tour to the island which, she said, she loved: "Malta is beautiful. I went sightseeing and I loved it. The people are very proud of their heritage and I like seeing people being proud of who they are. I hope all the other 16 or 17 countries I am going to visit are like Malta. "It was my first time here but it surely will not be the last," she promised herself.

Unknown magazine, Serbia 2005: Whatever I buy, it's mine!

[Interview: K. Obradović - Translation: Ivona K.]

Helena Paparizou, Greek representer at Eurovision 2005, talks about her career, her former band Antique and its separation, her hopes for the contest and... plastic surgery!

Helena Paparizou will represent Greece at the 50th Eurovision Song Contest in Kiev. During her promotion tour she visited Belgrade, introducing her song "My Number One". The Greek ambassador in Serbia and Montenegro, Mihalis Spinelis, gave a cocktail party to her honor. After the party Helena had lunch with Zeljko Joksimovic, a member of the jury of the Greek preselections. Unfortunately beautiful Helena couldn't see much of Belgrade. On her experience with Serbian men she said: "They are really tall, have a characteristic face look and they are brave. Real real men!"

The Eurovision song contest will take place at May 21, Helena's name day. Is this a good sign for her and what does she expect from this? "I wish that the best may win, with a good sound and a good promotion. That's all I expect. In any case, somebody must win and someone most lose."

For Helena this is not the first time at Eurovision. For the first time she participated in 2001 with her former band "Antique", reaching the 3rd place and giving Greece its best position ever up to this date. Four and a half year after the creation of this band, who was famous in Serbia for their hit song "Opa Opa", Helena started her solo career: "Now, I am really happy to work alone. When we had just separated, I was depressive sometimes because I was used to be on the right side of the stage and Nikos on the left one. Now it is fine, I like that all things depend on me now. It's very hard to have a band. Two people have different ways to look. In these four and a half years we had a lot of discussions, but we had a great time, too. With every single quarrel we became stronger. Since I work alone I don't compare with Antique, because we are different."

In Greece Helena is a pop singer since 2004. She performed with Sakis Rouvas at Club FeVeR and he told her to participate herself in Eurovision and to go on and on.

Helena was born by Greek parents in Sweden. "Swedish girls are open and Greek ones are hot. I'm a mixture. I couldn't run away from the Swedish influence. I behave like a Swede, but have got the Greek temperament."

For six years she has been in love with the same man. Asked about her plans for the next 20 years she said: "I live from day to day, and from plan to plan. I promised a lot to myself and I will never be tired of life. I love to live and I plan even details."

Do you plan to have some plastic operations on yourself? "I usually say: Whatever you buy, it's yours! If I buy a liter of milk, it's mine. If I buy a new pair of cheekbones by a plastic surgery, they are mine, too. Firstly we have to respect ourselves the way we are. I'm not against someone wanting to undergo an operation. It is good that this possibility exists because of the better feeling. Why not? But about me, I don't need this for now but I don't know how I will think when I am 50 years old."

Antenna 5 Radio, FYROM 2005: Her song says what she wants!

[Thanks to Antenna 5 and Martina P. for sending the interview and the photos to us]

Why are you going to try to conquer Eurovision again? You've already reached 3rd place in 2001 with the song "Die for you", that became a huge hit in Europe after the contest?
This year, the Greek national television ERT asked me if I wanted to compete again, which was a great honor for me. I am a big enthusiast, but my company Sony BMG Greece also supported me, so we followed the rules that ERT had previously announced and accomplished all their requires.

How comfortable do you feel with the fact that the first composition, out of three that you performed on the national contest, was voted by the audience with 66% of the votes?
I feel very comfortable with that, considering that the Greek auditorium chose that song. It is very important that the song is supported by the public.

You have become the official ambassador of the Greek Ministry of Tourism recently. Tell me, what does it mean to promote Greek tourism during the Eurovision days?
Being the official ambassador of EOT is a very big honor to me. Speaking in general, I have been an unofficial Greek ambassador previously. Everywhere I go, I always represent Greece, so that's why I don't feel like this was a new duty for me. Foreigners are always fascinated by the way I describe Greece, especially the culture and customs. I've been living in Greece for the past three years, but I was only a tourist there before.

39 countries in Kyiv…what are you mostly afraid of? You heard all of the songs, so which one are you afraid of?
I cannot say that I'm afraid of the other contestants, because I've already had that experience. You can say that I'm crazy, but for me, Eurovision is just a big party above everything. I'm always excited when I have to hear Eurovision songs. I consider it positive that all of the contestants are working hard in order to make the best result for their countries.

Sakis Rouvas had a fantastic performance of his song in this contest last year. What do you expect from this contest in 2005?
The title says everything: "Number One"!

At the end of the show in Fever Night Club, you strongly embraced your mother…
I am very close to my mother, I love her, I adore her. She is always there for me and supports me in everything I do. Actually both of my parents support me throughout my career. Unfortunately, she lives in Sweden so I rarely see her. I have a lot of duties and obligations.

Tony Mavridis is a very special person in your life. Media has been announcing rumors about a wedding recently. When are we going to see Elena as a bride?
Let me just correct you. Media announces every day that I was getting married! Tony and I are very happy, but we don't hurry…Don't forget that I'm only 23, and still young, so at this moment I'm only concentrated on my career as much as I can.

What do you think about the organization of this year's competition?
I think it is wonderful! The Swedish music company always finishes its work fantastically, the Ukrainians are very kind…I think they have done everything well. I'm very happy to be here and very excited also. I'm here to represent Greece so I'm supposed to be happy, not to complain!

In your opinion, how has the contest changed since 2001? Did you need anybody's help before you decided to compete again?
Eurovision has changed a lot since 2001. The contest was more simple, with less participating countries. I was working during the winter with Sakis Rouvas, so he was the first person I consulted. I asked him if I really had to compete, because I was very nervous. He was trying to calm me down all the time telling me that I would enjoy the contest and that he would also like to be there with me. I respected his advice and asked him to listen to the songs, because I needed his opinion very much. Now, I'm very sad because he is not here with me. He is in America at the moment, where he is going to learn acting. I wish him all the best, because I like him very much and he is one of the best people I've ever met.

Could you make a comparison between "Die for you" and "My number one", the two songs that you performed in front of the European audience?
"Die for you" was a duet with Nikos Panagiotidis. It was a very passionate love song, strongly influenced by bouzouki, a typical Antique song. I cannot say that this song is typical for Elena, because I'm working on a much more clear pop sound in my solo career. Even though, I'm very happy because of "My Number One". Instead of bouzouki, we decided to use the lyra [a three wire instrument which comes from Northern Greece and Crete]. I constantly say that "My Number One" is a song that reflects the whole map of Greece, and of course, it is also very traditional.

How are you going to concentrate on your performance? Who is working with you?
I have a team of people that work with me: the best choreographer, the best music company, the best stylist! The preparations are very difficult, because a lot of elements are included and also many details that have to be dynamically accomplished. Anything else…Let it be a surprise!

What about your clothes on stage?
We still haven't decided about the color, but I was told that the clothes are going to be extravagant.

Do you believe that your European career is going to be more successful after the Eurovision?
Many singers have made a big career and became famous after Eurovision. History proves that, and I won't exclude it. Of course, I hope the same happens to me.

EURO 2004, Olympic Games 2004! Does it mean that Elena is getting ready for Eurovision 2006 in Athens?
Ask me again on May 21st!

Passagen.se, Sweden 2005: ”Sex är viktigt för mig!”

[Interview: Ola Lagerström – Translation: „Swedish“]

Name: Elena Paparizou – **Astrological sign:** Aquarius – **Family:** Fiance Toni Mavridis, 34 – **Lives…** in Stockholm – **Good attribute:** Kind – **Bad attribute:** Can be really angry – **Loves to…** eat – **Hates…** lies – **Strange merit:** Has talked to Naomi Campbell

Elena Paparizou, 23, had her breakthrough in 1999 with the group “Antique”. They got big hits such as “Opa Opa”, “Die for you” and “Time to Say Goodbye”. Now she invests in a solo career. On Saturday she is going to participate for Greece in Eurovision, in the Ukraine with “My Number One”.

Hello Elena, what’s up? Are you nervous for the performance on Saturday?
Yes, of course! In 2001 Antique had a great performance, so people expect something amazing now.

You are born and growth in Gothenburg. How was your childhood?
Happy, I was a frisky, crazy girl and always wanted to stand at the center. When I was a teen I truant some people from my school and lied to my parents.

In Greece you are a pop goddess. A while ago you “jumped into” a famous Greek TV-series in the role of yourself, as a super diva. How does the celebrity life affect your weekdays there?
I need to be careful when I go out. I don’t go out with no one else so often. If I do I can’t be alone. Sometimes I have been a little bit hysterical. But I don’t want to exaggerate the problem, I’m not Madonna.

Name three celebrities, who are your idols!
Rickard Engfors, Lill-babs and Alexandra Pascalidou. Alexandra isn’t only my idol. I also love her as a friend.

If you could save Rickard, Lill-babs and Alexandra from a sinking ship, except one, who would you let stay?
Myself, I have actually saved Alexandra once. She was stuck in an elevator and sat there in one and a half hour. We were an artist team with 70 persons in the same house. The only one she shouted after was me.

Do Alexandra and you go around on the streets in Greece and looking at hot Greeks?
No, I believe she is with someone else. I already have my fiancé.

Why is Toni worth you?
Because I are worth him. We are good together. Many Greek women wonder how I can have the same boyfriend for six years. But the relation is just getting better. Our love blooms and grows and is in ecstasy. I would be unhappy if I was without him.

What did he write in the last SMS to you?
“LU”. Stands for “love you”. He writes it 20 times a day.

How important is sex for you?
Important. Sex is a big part in a relationship. But if it's bad between each other, of course the sex becomes bad. But on the other side, sex can be great when you have fought!

What does Toni and you quarrel about?
Shit, as who it was that forget the keys at home in the I.

Will you get married and have kids?
Relationship-wise it would be funny to get kids now, but I still thinks that I'm too young. Probably we get kids when I am around 28. And for sure we are getting married. I don't want to be unmarried when we gets kids.

Your weight has changed a lot recently. Some years ago your weight was 52 kg. Then you were up to 72 and now you are down to 60. What does it depend on?
I don't know. I have got up and down in weight all my life – and still I have eaten well. I am not appearance stated. The only time I have starved myself was when I was 15 years and got my first allergic shock. After that I got so afraid that I would get another one. So after that I lived from cheese, ham and water. Then my weight was only 49 kg.

What future dreams do you have?
Of course I want to win Eurovision this year. I don't go there to come last. Another dream is to get kids. And I also want to be a child psychologist

One last thing, Elena. What would you choose: To go on a deserted island and only having Bert Karlssons underpants as fishing net, to seduce Clark Olofsson and try to choke a banan him with, or to open your Eurovision-performance and to go down in splits and roar "The prime minister is dead and the king is gay"?
Oh my God, sure I can go down in split, but I don't want to say that the king is gay. He is handsome and nice. And I don't want to have future problems with that bank robber, I don't want to fish with Berts underwear either... Cannot choose. I prefer to be home and to clean!

Gala Magazine, Turkey 2005: Girl Next Door

[Interview: Gala – Translation: Irem D.]

READY FOR THE FESTIVAL OF 50 YEARS

Helena Paparizou, who will represent Greece in the 50th Eurovision Song Contest with her song ,,My Number One", was in Turkey. The beautiful singer was invited to Istanbul by Serhat Hacipasaoglu. She met with Gala Magazine during a touristic tour. Paparizou said that she brought ,,peace" with her to Istanbul, as a Greek singer. She also recorded that she will make the most of the contest whether she wins or loses. She also wished Gllilseren [the singer of Turkish entry] good luck for the contest.

FIRST ALBUM AT AGE 17

I started singing when I was 8. I was 13, when I formed my first band "Soulfunkomatic". Back then we used to sing R & B and soul. I began theater and TV-education to learn directing. On the other hand I was recording demos for other students. All those work must have been useful — we released our first album as Antique when I was 17. Then I started my solo career; I released my first album, I performed at some big music clubs and concert halls. Then ERT asked me to represent Greece on Eurovision. Now I present you my past and my song "My Number One"

I WILL MAKE THE MOST OF THE EUROVISION

Art and music always managed to gather people. Eurovision is a big feast, a big festival, that has been held for 50 years. Representing your country with the job you love is an honor. You can win or lose, but both ways you still experience something, so you have to make the most of it! Talking about winning, I always think that the best song should win. With the music, lyrics, sung in the way it has been represented and with the show – the best should win. Let the Europeans decide and all Europe dance on the same festival for another 50 years!

A LIFETIME WITH LOVE

My biggest goal is to sing, all my life! Really, this is my most long-termed goal. I'm in love with music and dancing. I just want to spend a life time with my love, like anybody else would. And considering this, I set my goals. But for now, representing my country in the best way I can, introducing myself and Greek music are my primary goals. I add a little bit of Greek culture in everything I do.

SERHAT IS NUMBER ONE IN GREECE

Music is the best way to represent a culture. Serhat, who's invited me here, is number one at a lot of charts in Greece as a Turkish singer. In night clubs a lot of Greeks are singing along with ‚Total Disguise' and ‚Sen de sev beni' . This is an example of Turkey being represented with a high qualified song. I aim to represent myself and Greece with a qualified song.

A COLLECTIVE PROJECT IS READY

Every human is born and dies with love. Weren't we born as a result of love anyway? Love is a necessity. I, a Greek singer, came to Istanbul as a guest of a Turkish artist. Is there anything greater than this? Serhat's support is very valuable for me. Throughout history these two cultures had influenced each other . Despite all other facts, a friendship and a cultural unity was built and these were strengthen by art. Serhat and I are an alive part of this unity. We support each other in this job, even though one of us is Greek and the other is Turkish. After

the Eurovision we are going to do something together. It‘s going to be a special project both for Turkey and Greece. And I believe, that it‘s going to be a great work. It will be worthy for both beautiful countries and also for me and Serhat.

NO PLACE FOR DOUBTS

If I have a tiny-teeny doubt about something, I won‘t do it. That‘s the primary philosophy of my life. My secondary philosophy is to respect everyone. I know this is a short answer for a question like “What is your philosophy of life?”, but don‘t you think that philosophies and principles should be short and simple?

Café Magazine, Sweden 2005: A Swedish Christmas at Greek IKEA

[translation: Miranda]

The Greek ambassador Nikolaos Couniniotis, announces via his door phone that he's not dressed: “You have got the wrong time. Come back in half an hour.” Exactly when I have mumbled a polite excuse, someone puts a hand on my shoulder. It's a woman with a long white coat and a Fendi bag. “Typically”, she says. “I'm Bulgarian and I have never met a Greek that's on time. Do you want to follow me to the car or wait here or go and have a drink?” Five minutes later I'm sitting on a gloomy Irish block pub and sharing on a big beer with the Fendi woman, which happens to work as a journalist. She shows me her compact camera. Eventually, she explains, she will get a picture of herself and the main star of the evening: 23-year old Helena Paparizou. Paparizou isn't just a performer, she's also a newly appointed Greek tourist ambassador - on a short Sweden visit before the coming Eurovision Song Contest final in Kiev, and, not at least, her release of her solo album *My Number One*.

Ambassador Couniniotis has taken the moment to hold a luxurious cocktail party in Helena's honour in his private residence - of course located in the heart of Östermalm in Stockholm - completed with specially invtied dignitaries and journalists: “I apoligize for the planning miss”, Couniniotis says when we are welcomed later into his huge apartment. "Greeks!", the Bulgarian journalist hisses quietly to me. The she takes the courage to forward to Helena to ask devotionally for both a picture and an interview.

In the ocean of costume dressed men and thick cigarette smoke, Paparizou lights up the room as a spotlight, with her sparkling smile, her flowy brown hair and Angelina Jolie sassy lips: “Of course we are going to talk”, Helena says to the Bulgarian woman. “Call me after the final in Kiev and we can meet up. Or any time you feel like it of course.” The Fendi woman barely gets a word out, she looking more confused than ever. Alexandra Paschalidou, who is also invited to the party, explains why: “Helena is a a superstar in southern Europe. You have to remember that. Because to many southern European people the meeting with her is very special, because she's so "ordinary". Do you think anyone can call Hrsito Stoitjkov or Konstantinos Kenteris on their cell just to chit chat? Rarely. It's completely new for these people and that's why so many gets paralysed by Helena and her Swedish humbleness.”

Paschalidou is the host of the Greek show Euromania, and will accompany Helena on the whole European PR tour. Alexandra was also the host of the Greek national final for ESC, where Paparizou (who changed her name from Elena to the more international Helena for her solo album) was the only participant. She performed three different songs in a live broadcast on tv and the tv-viewers voted My Number one as their favourite.

“I'm daily in the media”, Helena says talking about her popularity in her home country. “Daily magazines, gossip mags, tv-shows, magazine covers. In both good and bad. The Greek paparazzi photographers are wilder than the Swedish ones. They literally hunt me.” - A hunt which recently got a result. Big time: “The Greek tabloids first pages were during a couple of days conclusively pictures of my naked butt”, Helena laughs. “I love going out in really short skirts and dresses. This time I was standing on a staircase, and then someone took the liberty to shoot a picture of my... yeah, you know. The media storm about wether I used underwear or not got pretty intense. That discussion was mostly fun, but the pictures were retouched so that my butt looked wider. That's my limit, I do not have a wide butt!”

How do Greek celeb parties look like?
Pretty bizarre. Just recently Greece's most famous party planner hosted a party to celebrate his new face. He's 50 years old and had done a huge plastic surgery. He invited the media along with the country celeb and party top with the motivation: "Welcome to the party where I'm showing off my new face!" The party was even sponsored by one of the country's biggest mobile operators.

That sounds like a very non-Swedish way on plastic surgeries?
You think in a different way. And I agree. Relax damn it: What you pay, you own. And what you own, you should show. If I buy a new pair of boobs, just say: "Congratulations Helena, you have just bough new pair of boobs!" It's nothing more than that. But I haven't had a plastic surgery - yet, haha.

Which other differences do you notice while working in Sweden?
Now everyone seems to want to know if I'm a feminist, for example. It usually ends in a debate, when I reveal: No, I'm absolutely not a feminist. I'm a very dominant and strong woman who wants to be able to take care of everything myself, make a hell of a lot of money and so on. But despite all of those feelings in the end of the day I just want to be taken care of and cuddle up in the arms of a strong man. I like the difference between the sexes and I think they ought to be left as they are.

Wasn't Greek press recently assuming that you were cuddling up with a bunch of different men?
Yes, exactly. I have been together with my Toni for six years now, and out of those six years, we have been engaged in five. They wrote that the only reason I could stand living with one man, was because I had amazing lovers. That of course wasn't true. But I don't care, because it was the funniest things they had made a lie of in a long time.

The clock strikes 07.53 and TV4's Nyhetsmorgon cuts away from the zoo near outside of Gävle, and goes back to the studio couch in Stockholm. The screen fills up with a close up of the My Number one cover. The video to the single is shown, and a couple pf minutes interview follows. The hosts Linda Nyberg and Jonas Gummesson wish Helena good luck, and the Greek entourage of stylists and make up artists make themselves ready to leave the TV4 building. In the stairs outside the studio, right behind a steel door, a female middle aged janitor stands in white slippers and waits. She's Greek and a huge fan of Helena Paparizou, who gives her both autographs and chit-chat. She is, as it's called, in a great mood. Other it was two years ago:

In the summer of 2003 Helena Paparizou and her childhood friend Nikos Panagiotis's, more known as Antique, topped the lists in both Greece and Sweden with single Opa Opa. Years of labour had finally got fruit, but later that year, the group split.
It got too much Greece in the end. Antique was with their Greek touch something fun and unique in Sweden, and it was the Swedish market who was the main goal. Greece was just a step to a bigger international release. But it got chaotic there. I had to rent an apartment in Athens, and it just ended up with me staying there. And finally I felt completely drained out, both with Antique and Greece.

Why?
In the bottom of my heart I'm just that Gothenburg girl who's biggest moment ever was when Ikea opened in Athens. Then i could as often as I wanted go there to eat Swedish meatballs, lingonberries and crisp bread. I celebrated the Swedish Christmas on Ikea with gingerbread cakes and mulled vine.

How did you feel after the split of Antique?
I came into a deep depression. When I started to do club gigs on my own, it often happened that I went up on stage and positioned myself on the right, just to realize the second after that I had to fill the stage alone, and that Nikos wasn't there. It was tough. Besides we were both disappointed and accused each other of what had happened. I understand now that a change between Monday and Tuesday isn't always the best in life. We should had taken it slower.

How is your relationship today?
I have received the distance I needed. Before all of this happened me and Nikos had a sibling relation, and it's on its way back now again.

And is your self-confidence back?
Absolutely! I am so pleased with the album - and I can't wait to meet a Swedish concert audience again. On "a visit to Sweden" I will never be. It is in Greece where I feel like a tourist, not here. I'm only looking foward to long cozy Swedish summer now. The summer of 2005 will be the return of really short skirts for me.

DN.se, Sweden 2005, May 20: DN met the favorite

[Interview: Andreas Ekström – Translation: "Swedish"]

Norway went to the final, as everyone thought, and also Moldavia's debut, with grandmother and everything… But not many think that the winner is among the ten that qualified to the final yesterday. DN met the real favorite, the Swede Helena Paparizou, who competes for Greece.

Helena Paparizou, 23, was angry, upset and irritable. But still on a good mood, but most of all: angry. "I hate all this double standards", she snorts. It isn't DN that took up the subject, plastic surgery, sexiness and digressions. She does it herself. Recently new pictures have been taken of her, in underwear, of a Swedish man magazine [Café]: "We live in a free country, we have a free sexuality. I am so tired that people pretend that it isn't like that. People go on vacation and see girls topless. What happens if grown up peoples see me in a bra?" - "Why should people care about if there is someone that does not want to have wrinkles and needs some botox? And do you know, people ask me all the time if I have silicon in my lips! But there is a trick to recognize it [if there is silicon] – when you take lip stick and smear it out like this, then it is visible if the lips flatten or not", Helena Paparizou says and does the "international lip stick smearing test". "This is how I look, and I have looked like this since I was ten." She suddenly laughs, a little bit calmed down, and does not protest when I suggest that we should talk about music and the festival for a while. "I thrive in Kiev. I have my dream team around me, my make-up artist and my hairdresser, and my vocal coach and my personal assistant, and my choreographer. Makes me relax."

It is now four years ago that Helena represented Greece in the festival for the last time, then in the duo Antique. They came at third place that time in Copenhagen with "Die for You". Helena Paparizou has grown up in Gothenburg as kid to Greek parents. She talks at low frequency, vivid and spavived göteborgska: "Mum Paparizou came to Borås once upon a time to work at "Algots textilindustri"." Nowadays Helena spells her name with an H so the name gets the right pronunciation everywhere. The career is a little bit riven by this: "My new disc has songs both in Greek and English. Next time maybe it will be in Swedish. I don't need to make a choice and I don't want to choose either."

Radio City, Bulgaria 2005: Number One

[Translation: "NiniaFresa"]

Elena, how do you feel to be number one with your song "My Number One"?
Well, I am very happy to win ESC and especially with a song called "My Number One". It would be actually very bad if I was 2nd or 3rd with a song called "My Number One"!

Yes, I was thinking about that…
Yeah, so, actually everything went really good and I have to thank Bulgaria for the 12 points of the game to "My Number One".

Do you like any other song of that contest, I mean, have you got a personal favorite maybe?
It was actually...really...the most hardest competition this year. I could start with UK, Romania, Hungary, Norway, Switzerland, … Well a lot of great songs from the final but there were even better ones in the semifinal, too.

Bulgaria gave you 12 points and the song is big here in our country. What would you wish to the people who listen to radio City and like your song?
OK, to all the lovers of "My Number One", thank you for loving that song so much, thank you for the 12 points and I promise you that I will be here very, very soon, in Bulgaria!

So Greece is the host of the next Eurovision Song Contest as it is by a rule. Can you give us an advice or share a secret maybe, what a song should be like, to the Bulgarian participants. What kind of a song we need?
It doesn't matter actually as long as that song is very strong. It doesn't matter if it's a ballad or a pop song. The only thing is that people should vote correctly for the song thinking about how to show the best side of Bulgaria. Also to the one who's going to participate to the show, just be yourself!

OK, good luck, Greece next year and maybe Bulgaria 2007!
I hope to see Bulgaria's participation next year and I want to see a lot of Bulgarians 2006 in Athens for Eurovision!

Elena, by the way, congratulations, you just reached our number one position in our airplay chart!
Oh you are kidding me! That's wonderful!

No, I'm not kidding you! It means that your song is the most aired. You are also number one on our wish list chart.
Oh thanks to all the people!

So people love the song, I think it is getting bigger and bigger, day after day.
Thank you very much! Thank you Radio City!

Madame Figaro Magazine, Greece 2005: So Capricious

[Interview: Melina Spathari – Translation from Grazia Bulgaria 2005: "NiniaFresa"]

This year Elena Paparizou blew Europe up with her talent. But behind the glory, there is a woman who loves to cook, to tell jokes and to watch Pipi!

Elena, what had you done right before you went on the stage at Eurovision?
I remember that a little bit earlier, right after the massage I had, I went to my room and burst in tears. I thought about my mom and wished to have her next to me. I called her on the phone and she helped me to calm down.

What about after the victory?
I wanted to go straight back to Greece very much, to sit in a taverna and to order fish and fresh tomatoes.

Now you are a world known star. How will you convince me that you are the same girl as before?
Not long time ago, at my nieces birthday in Sweden, a little girl came to me and asked: "Elena, how much money you won? Are you happier now than before?" I said to her: "Do you know when I'm the most happy? It's when I'm here with kids just like you." I haven't moved to other planet just because I won Eurovision. I still face my family's problems and have to deal with them. The big change in my life came when I realized that nothing really changes, people always feel happy or suffer and it's normal for every human being.

Lately the showbiz world is being very sensitive about the charity issue. How would you like to save the world?
My first step was to sell on auction the Cavalli dress I wore at the ESC and to give the money to people whom have AIDS or to women with breast cancer. It was decision I took with my stylist. I know lot of children who need care and I'm very strongly attached to them. I would really like things in Greece to be as they are in Sweden strong society, which helps disabled people and tries to socialize them.

What is the thing you are not proud of?
That I started my career at a very young age and I couldn't even graduate high-school. I feel that as a loss. I'm one of those people who hardly open a book. I cannot concentrate, I get so nervous. I prefer listening, instead of reading.

Do you remember what you wore for your first stage appearance ever?
Jeans, boots, kerchief around my head and a long cardigan with 1 button. It was in Sweden, I was 16 and performed with my first band, a hip hop band.

Which was the first CD you bought yourself?
A single entitled "You got me going crazy" and "The Bodyguard" soundtrack album of Whitney Houston. At that time I used to like bands like Guns and Roses, Public Enemy, Metallica. But I also enjoyed listening to traditional Greek songs.

What about these days? What do you listen to on your own HI FI?
Nordman, a musician, who combines rock with traditional north-western folklore elements.

What do you do when you have at least one free day?
I usually go to the supermarket. I spend a lot of time at the cheese and salami section. Then I have a coffee, go back home and invite my friends for dinner. I cook a big diversity of very delicious meals, because the most I like a table full with all kinds of food and wine, where you can eat and drink till the early morning.

What you usually break your diet with?
I've never been on a diet. Recently I have put 5 kilos on, but I'm not worried at all. I feel great the way I am and I don't think that kilos show what Elena really is. The biggest difference is only that you need new clothes, bigger size and nothing else. If I really have to lose weight, I simply eat less chips and chocolates.

What do you keep close to your pillow at night?
My cell phone. Just in case my parents want to hear me.

If you urgently need to travel somewhere, what would you take with you?
Sleepers, because I need to feel comfortable, a bathing suit, my HI FI and CDs, my medications for all the allergies I've got, a few icons and the man I love. I would go to a distant island in the Pacific Ocean.

Imagine a high society dinner. Who would you like to share a table with?
With the ex-king Constantine, because I want to know how the royal family lived before in Greece and how they are now. And with Lady Diana, not because I want to analyze her, but because I need to hear her point of view. I like royal families, their lives are like fairy-tales.

Which big star influenced your style?
Jennifer Lopez. Not that she influenced me that much, but because I admire her. Because she is extremely sexy, but she's not afraid of looking less attractive when it's a part of her role. I like the way she feels about herself, not taking herself too seriously.

Which is your most favorite childhood memory?
The family gatherings we had every weekend. All my 13 cousins used to come home with their parents and they all helped in my father's restaurant. While the grown-ups were at the restaurant we were rocking the house.

Which childhood memory you would like to forget?
When I was 4 a dog bit me. I just can't get over it.

Which part of your body you like the most?
My mind, because it never takes anything nor anyone in the wrong way.

Would you undergo plastic surgery yourself?
I think that if there is something bothering people about the way they look and they want to change it, it's perfectly OK. I do not plan plastic surgery for myself any time soon, but maybe in a couple of years. My problem is that I'm afraid of anesthetic. What if I don't wake up?

What is your biggest fear?
What I mentioned already, death, the end, even when we talk about my career. I'm terrified of this thought that when I'm dead I won't feel what a great thing life is any more.

If you had the chance to test the time machine, where would you go?
Ancient Greece, but when the Persians ruled, because I'm curious what they thought about us. And because I would like to meet Alexander the Great. Also, I would like to know how the black people lived in the centuries of slavery. I hate racism!

Imagine that you have a short meeting with the prime minister. What would you tell him?
Well, I've already met him. We talked about how my victory at Eurovision could help to develop the Greek tourism.

What is the thing that impresses you at a man?
His charm, his character. But the same is important for women, too. About men, there are some details that always attract my attention, like the hands. Male hands are my fetish.

What is the thing you like less in the way men get dressed nowadays?
Only the fact that they get dressed [laughter]. To be honest, I really like nowadays fashion.

Why do men not understand women?
Because they come from other planet. But I looooooove men! I think that we should respect the differences between the sexes. Men don't like to get too involved in certain things. But we need to go deeper, to analyze, to discuss, to cry even over the most insignificant reason.

Have you ever done crazy things out of love?
Many times, but I can't tell you about them. I'll keep them to me only. But I was very modest before I met Toni, unlike now.

What exactly is Toni to you a fiancé, a friend or a partner?
Toni and I have been living together for 6 years. We are engaged, but I take him as my man, my husband. I want him to be the father of my children and I'm ready to give him children, but before that I would like for both of us to live all the things which every 23 year-old dreams of: to travel, to have fun, to enjoy our hobbies. Together!

What will you advise our female readers for perfect sex?
Never be afraid to fantasize and to share your fantasies. Let your partner do the same. And talk less about sex when you are having coffee. Sex is not something we should talk about with others, sex is something we do! Although if I have to be completely honest, I love to tell dirty jokes, I'm very good at that.

What are you ashamed of but you enjoy doing?
That I'm hypnotized while watching Pipi, the original Swedish version. I adore to prepare myself delicious breakfast and eat while watching the adventures of Pipi. She has always been and will remain my favorite character.

Which is your favorite piece of art?
Salvador Dali's "Giraffe en feu" [Burning giraffe]. It represents a woman with lots of drawers who likes to give a lot and even in flames keeps on giving herself to the others. Do you know that Dali's biggest inspiration were his moustaches?

How can someone win your trust?
Only by being honest with me. Lying won't work, neither to have me as a friend, neither as a lover. But I would give second chance. As for example the Michael Jackson case: I don't know if he's guilty or not, but I would give him second chance.

Have you ever taken drugs?
No, never. I've never been interested or curious about drugs. Drugs are 100% out of my life.

Is there anything that could surprise me about your personality?
I'm afraid of technique. I don't understand anything of computers nor cell phones. I rarely send messages, but I love to have pictures on my phone. But I definitely have to learn how to use them, because I know my kids will have fun with my ignorance one day.

What would you tell to all the girls, who dream to be just like you?
To trust themselves and to stay who they are. When a girl is very young, she tries to impress the others by playing a game of who she is not and hiding what she really likes. But women should never be afraid of being natural, spontaneous and different.

Elena's Top 5:
Man: Toni **Designer:** Cavalli, Gucci, Versace **Pet:** a pitbull **Song:** Ex-factor by Lorinne Hil
Meal: everything her mom cooks

If you were an animal, what would you be: a nightingale **… a flower, which you would be:** a poppy **… a traditional dish, which you would be:** Chinese spaghetti, fresh Greek vegetables, Sushi **… a thing, which thing you would be:** a mirror **… a country, which country you would be:** Greece**… a cartoon character, which character you would be:** Pipi

DN.se, Sweden 2005: Milk and Glamour in one beautiful package

[Interview: Christina Kellberg - Translation by “Swedish”]

She is dressed in a cyclamen colored chiffon top and the sandals have a matching color. In her hand she holds a big glass of milk, red milk. Just look at her, a young woman who can look like a diva and an advertisement for ARLA [Danish/Swedish company for milk products] at once! Helena Paparizou stays stable, well anchored in both the Greek world and in the Swedish one. No one should think it had been easy. Despite her youth she has worked hard for it. And above all her parents have fought for it. She says “fought” with a strong emphasis at the verb so you can hear how much they have fought: “They have fought. You don't get a free house in Sävedalen [Eastern Gothenburg].” Nothing had been for free. “But I have also had luck, been on the right place the right time and met the right persons. I am not Paris Hilton, I am not born rich.” Now she begins to talk about the poverty and about fighting, loud - so everyone at the restaurant, where we sit, can hear it. She talks with pride in her voice. She talks about her parents, her parents who came to Sweden as immigrants, from poor places: Mountains, farmers, shepherds, beauty. Her mother’s village is named Vatsounia. Five hundred residents. Helena’s dad’s village is named Oxia, both villages are in the mid of Greece. In the beginning of the 60's, Helena’s mother came to Sweden, aged ten, with her family and relatives. Sweden was building welfare helped by the labor of immigrants. After a while Helena’s mother began to sew clothes at Algots factories in Borås. They lived with aunt Gerd, that had an big house in Borås, who was very helpful to Helena’s grandmother (“My grandmother was always near me when i grew up. She lived many years at home. Me and my grandmother shared rooms. We got to sleep the same time and I couldn't fall asleep before I saw that she had her eyes closed.”) and was there when they needed help, when they did not understand the Swedish language. “My parents and my relatives came here when they were very poor. They did not even go to the primary school. They came to Sweden to build up a life, to work, to get a family and to see after the children so they got an education.” In the summers Helena’s mother and all the relatives went home to Greece and once to a festival in the village. There her father saw Helena’s mother. He went to the young girl father, asked for her hand. This father said that he looked like a good guy, but the daughter could decide. “And my parents are there, still, always. They support me and fight with me.” Fight? “Yes, they give me resistance, so that I do not fly away. They tell me that I must fight: "We are not born rich. We must keep fighting." It's so easy to be trampled to death, whether one is known or not. And for those who are known, they might go down much faster than up. Her parents wanted to give to her daughter a strong anchor in the Greek language and culture. And Helena Paparizou has felt her parents’ ambitions: “When I was five I started with the Greek school. When I was seven, with the Swedish one. I went to the Greek school on Saturday and I had mother tongue education in Greek in the Swedish school. I had Greek dancing classes, classical ballet and I took piano lessons. But when I was twelve I didn't have the energy to it anymore and began to truant. Not every child in Gothenburg lived like that. The Chileans or the people from Iran had no Saturday school.” Now Helena was about to enter her teenage, and she needed to gain a foothold also in the Swedish earth, to stand firmly on both legs. It was then she searched up a curator on "Nya Lundenskolan" [school]. “I had long discussions with her, about my grandmother being sick, about friends that "disappeared". About why I wore a mask and tried to be someone else? About why I did everything I could to get some attention?” For years Helena and the curator Sanna Pernheim talked about these issues. Sanna Pernheim remembers that Helena was in a deep "nowhere". Helena fought to get a balance between "Swedish Helena"

and "Greek Helena". She felt bad because others perceived her as a "bad girl". Not because she was one, but because she made herself look like one. She had an attitude that could scare and worry, behave in a way that other students would get scared of her. "Don't they see who I am and that I only want good?", she said to Sanna. Sanna Pernheim confronted her and played a scene where she behaved like Helena, arrogant and tough. With a cigarette in her hand. Helena got shocked, when she saw this. After that, the curator took her to a group that fought bullying. Sanna knew that Helena was straight, fearless and brave. She was influential and many listened to her. In the last grade Helena was a chairman in that group and when arguments broke out she went between them and wondered what they were doing. She never backed down and eventually became a role model. When Helena was with her curator, she said many times that she wanted to be an Greek tragedienne. And the dreams about an artist life wasn't just a teenagers fantasies about fame. Helena Paparizou was already on her way. She began at home on the sofa, dressed up, demanded all to look. When she sang in the choir in the Greek school the teacher said "I hear a voice!" Then she got the main role when the choir sang at the Greek national day. She created an group with three Latin Americans, when she was 13 - "This I want to do all of my life!" And then one day came Antique, the duo she created with Nikos Panagiotidis, when she was 17 years old. The feeling grew. It was her life. Why? “No, it was not about the success. It had actually been enough for me to sing in a piano bar. It is the music, that music can make people enjoy and feel good.” But it was no piano bar- Helena became a star in Greece and Sweden. And also she won Eurovision in 2005. It was recently she actually understood for the first time what happened – and soon she is going to Madrid. To perform at a festival in front of 500 000 people. All the spring she has performed in Greece. A country that loves its stars and treats them like stars. With hysterical delight. But the Greeks are also a people who cherish its history. Helena Paparizou says that the past year, she realized the importance of history and religion for the Greeks and that she feels gratitude for how much she has learned during the years of wear from the Greek school at home in Gothenburg. “I understand why Greeks are proud to be Greeks, are proud that Greece is still there. They've really struggled to keep their country and they have succeeded. Although they were slaves to the Turks for 400 years. My hero is Athanasios Diakonia”, she says as if he were an obvious historical name for us non-Greeks. For her and many Greeks, he is a historical fixed star. A man who fought against the Turks and who was murdered by them in 1821, becoming a historic martyr. But Helena has a another hero in his heart: Pippi Longstocking! “Perhaps they do not fit to each other”, she says. Or do they do. A Greek and a Swedish. Two legs. Helena Paparizou today seems to stand firm in her two cultures, but in Greece she knows she is Swedish and in Sweden she knows that she is Greek. Therefore, she is happy to share her life with someone who made similar experiences, her fiancé Toni Mavridis. He also has Greek parents and grew up in Rinkeby. “We have the same void in us, we are not belonging to Sweden or Greece. I am different here in Sweden, I look different. If i would have a completely Swedish boyfriend he could say: "You and your fat relatives, do you really need to eat that much and be so noisy?" If I would be with a completely Greek boyfriend then there would be many things that he didn't understand.”

Los 40 Principales Radio, Spain 2005, July 1st: Encuentros

[Translation: Alene]

The beautiful winner of the last Eurovision Song Contest 2005 has been to Los40.com. This is what she said!

Hello! I'd like to know how it was going in the later weeks after the festival and which projects you have in mind. Good luck beauty!
Just after arriving in Greece, I met the Prime Minister and Greece's Tourism Minister. They congratulated me. Then, I went to Sweden and came back to Greece to work. I went back to Sweden to do three performances and now I'm here, in Spain.

Do you know any Spanish singer other than the group Son de Sol?
Julio and Enrique Iglesias… Also Chenoa. I also know Latin artists such as Shakira, Christina Aguilera, Ricky Martin and Jennifer López.

What are your dreams and goals to achieve?
One of my goals is to keep on being healthy and loving the music more than I do now. My biggest dream is to see whole Europe dancing to my song "My Number One".

Which are your immediate projects? Are you going to do a tour around Europe?
The first thing I'm going to do is to continue promoting the album in Europe, and of course, I'll make a tour throughout Europe. I'm going to be Anastacia's support singer August 10 in Sweden. October 22nd I'll be in the 50th anniversary of Eurovision in Copenhagen. I am one of the contestants together with ABBA, Celine Dion, etc.

Is it true that before the contest you were putting yourself make-up on in a corridor of the pavilion's stands? Do you have any amulet which gives you luck in Eurovision? The thing is that you always get a good position!
No, I wasn't making up in a corridor. I got out of the make-up area because it was a little oppressive with so much spray. My mother gave me my nephew's pacifier, a pendant which belonged to my brother… The record label gave me an icon with figures of Constantin and Virgin Eleni, who is a saint. Besides, that day was my name day. The 21st of May.

How did you get to Eurovision? Did you think you were going to win? Kisses.
I've been watching the contest since I was a little girl. The composer and singer of the song, Nikos Terzis, was who asked me if I wanted to perform. I wanted to win, but it's a contest and you never know. It depended on the votes. Thanks Spain for the 12 points you gave me in 2001!

Hi! I love your song and I'd like to know who you thought about when you composed this song and who's your favorite artist or group. A lot of kisses and I hope everything will go well in your - hopefully - long music career.
Thanks for your wishes. When the songwriter composed it, he thought of love and I loved it when I listened to it for the first time, that kind of "lover undercover", because although people who love each other sometimes hassle, deep down they love.

You would have won with any of your three songs launched in the Greek Choice Show. You were the favorite. Were you aware that you were the favorite before the contest?
Many fan clubs and websites chose the song as the winner. But you never know what's going to happen during the night. Being one of the best is a very nice compliment, but I was ready for anything to happen.

Hi Helena! You have worked as a model, do you think this might be a prejudice in your career as a singer?
I have never worked as a model. I did it once when I was 13, but it was an attempt. The people from the Model Agency told me that I had to lose weight, but I told them to go to hell because I felt fine how I was, and I wouldn't advise diets without eating healthy. I have always liked to be in front of a camera. I attracted attention so as to make people to look at me. There's chemistry between the camera and me. Image helps a lot in pop music, but I prefer to be admired for my singing skills than for my outer appearance.

Do you think that singing in English has been fundamental in order to get your country's triumph?
We sang a mixture of English and Greek as Antique. Greek language sounds very strong and is not as soft as Spanish language. It's an advantage to be able to sing in English because everyone can understand what you're talking about.

I'm your fan since your previous project, Antique. After three excellent albums, why do you decide to move on and start a new stage alone?
We worked for four years as a group, but the music wasn't developing and I had the feeling of doing the same thing over and over again. We needed time for each other so as to develop individually. Nikos, my producer, decided to focus on Greek music and I on pop music and continue what had already been done. I wanted to have the chance to know Europe.

Hello! I'm a Greek girl from Patras and I live with my Spanish boyfriend in France! We watched Eurovision with many Greek and French people, and we voted you, of course! How do you feel winning the ESC for the first time?
Thanks for voting. A lot of kisses to your Spanish boyfriend and your French and Greek friends. Winning was a wonderful sensation. Previously, the music was a hobby and now it is my profession. Although I had to work very hard before the show, the performance itself was doing what I like most, so winning was like a prize for doing something I love.

Hi Helena! Are you having a good time in Spain? I'd like to know if "The Light in Our Soul" is going to be a single. It's a smash. I'd also like to ask you if it is true that you are going to do a tour with Anastacia. Good luck beauty!
Thanks for your wishes. I'll be in one concert of Anastacia. Regarding the song, it will be the next single in Sweden and Scandinavia. I know Spanish fans like this song very much. I hope it will be a single. I hope Spanish people draw their own conclusions about my album, "My Number One".

Who designed your Eurovision's dress? It was gorgeous!
It was chosen by my stylist Al Giga, who had a very creative meeting with designer Roberto Cavalli. Roberto designed the dress himself and seemingly it's exclusive.

Would you dare to sing "Zise", from your first solo album "Proteraiotita", in Spanish? I hope you release your album in Spain with good promotion. People would like it. Which memories do you have from Antique? Hasn't it be a bit drastic change of style?
I would love to sing it in Spanish, but I'd need a good teacher. It would be very embarrassing for me not to express myself well in such a beautiful language. When they showed me the song, I loved it and I immediately saw that we had to do it in Greek. "Zise" means "to be alive" in Greek. [Later on, Helena actually recorded two songs in Spanish, "Papeles Mojados" in 2008 and "Enredao", a duet with Albert Hammond, in 2010.] With the group everything went very fast because we went to places such as Australia, America, Germany,… As we were very young, we loved each other very much, but we also fought a lot, though that made us very good friends.

Can you tell us any anecdote about when you were in Kiev in the ESC?
I do not know if the Spanish press or fans learnt that the zipper of the dress I wore broke and it had to be sewed. Then, I had to take it off in order to be comfortable and to be able to move. Regarding the dress, we are currently weighing up the chance of auctioning it or donating to the charity.

Have you ever thought about taking the leap to the big screen, although music is your strong point? It's just that I'd like to see you playing a character, or something different. I'm sure you'd do it very well.
I've studied a bit of scenery and interpretation, but I'm very concentrated in my music career right now, though you never know what will happen in the future. I may do musicals or sing and act at the same time.

Where did you put that special trophy that Ukraine's President, Victor Yúshchenko, gave to you the same night you won Eurovision?
That night I left it on a table near to my bed. I took it in my hands on our way back to Greece in the plane. When I got home, my mother advised me to put it in the highest place so that it would keep on bringing me luck. Apart from that award, I was also given five trophies more, such as 'Best Singer'. Even Kiev's Mayor gave me a figure of the city's patron saint.

What was the hardest thing to carry out in the choreography of the song 'My Number One'?
Singing and dancing at that rate at the same time. I danced as much or more than the dancers and I finished exhausted.

Do you have in mind to do a world tour?
I'd like to, but I would already be happy if I can start with a European one. It takes time to prepare a world tour and first of all I have to be known internationally. Eurovision, as it is something so different, makes you known by people in other continents. Even Billboard or CNN. This channel said which 13th Greek God had been born.*

Is Helena a common name in Greece? Does it come from your family or was chosen for you for any other reason?
Both Elena and Eleni are very common names in Greece. My grandmother was called Eleni and one of my cousins, too. One of the characters that my brother most loved from a book

was also called this way and he asked my mother to give me that name if she had a baby girl.

What do you think about so much Greek talent being exported lately: Despina Vandi, Sakis, you…? I love your song 'Anapantites Klisis'. Regards.
EP: Despina and Sakis are great Greek artists. They've achieved to have careers all over Europe. A secret of Sakis is that he's in the USA right now studying interpretation so as to become an actor. Despina is a great pop singer and I'm glad that her new Greek pop aspect is being successful and not only the classic pop. Both sing in English although their teams, producers and musicians are Greek.

Hi Helena. I watched your video clip and your song in Eurovision and I was impressed. What do you do in order to dance and to keep your body in such good condition? Give me the recipe! Regards.
EP: I practice a lot so as to dance and in order to be fit. I eat healthy and drink two liters of water a day. I love fast food, but I prefer eating at home and cooking my own food.

Which representatives from other countries did you get on with when you went to Eurovision?
With Cyprus, because we started our careers together and that's why we know each other. I had a good friendship with the Swiss boy, Martin. Also Marian from Andorra, Chiara from Malta, the Serbian group, the crazy guys from Norway, Angelica from Belarus, Natasha from Russia, Glanis from The Netherlands… And many more!!!

How does it feel on being nominated for the best song in Eurovision's History? (The 50th anniversary will take place in Copenhagen in October). What's your favorite song of the ones that are chosen for the time being? (Among them are ABBA, Celine Dion, Cliff Richard, Mocedades…)
I follow the contest since 1985. I remember ABBA and Céline Dion and, undoubtedly, they're my favorites. I'm very glad that people had chosen me to perform in this 50th anniversary contest. I hope that people vote for the songs, since many years have gone by for many artists.

You are Greek tourism's image. We could see you in some European media promoting Greece with your song "My Number One" before Eurovision. Do you think it benefited you in order to win the song contest?
I'm still the ambassador of the Greek Tourism Office. They've helped me to teach me how I had to promote my song. When I say that all the Greek people supported me, I also mean the whole Greek Government. What has started as a national promotional campaign turned out to become international. For example Malta works very much with Eurovision for many years so as to make the country known.

You were watched by almost 100% of share of Greek TV. How do you feel knowing that a whole country, yours, is watching and supporting you? It is really amazing.
It's fundamental that the country supports its representative every year. In the subsequent press conference to the contest, I said that my smile wasn't only mine, but all Greek people's. Not only of the ones who were at home supporting me, but also of the ones who came to Kiev.

Hello Helena. Is your album in the Spanish market? Bye beauty. Lots of kisses and hugs from Tenerife. Natalia.
Hi Natalia. The album will come out the 15th of July in Spain. I hope you like it and buy it.

Congratulations, you are fantastic! Is there any kind of gala or concert planned in our country? Kisses from Seville.
I'll perform tomorrow in Madrid's MADO* Festival. I hope it will be successful. I hope to have the chance to come to other places of Spain later.

Do you think that the triumph in Eurovision will be a milestone in your career?
What happened in Eurovision is very important and I'll never forget it. It will be useful as a lure for many people who didn't know that I sang. What will happen from now on depends on my work and on the fans and their response, since after all people are the ones who want to listen and know what albums to buy.

Thanks a lot everyone for your hospitality and taking care of me so warmly. I already miss Spain. I hope I can see you all at the concert in Madrid and if not, I hope to see you very soon. Lots of kisses and hugs! Helena.

*There is a little problem with the translation as the person who wrote down the interview might have made a mistake.

Het Nieuwsblad, Belgium 2005, July 20: "My second single has to be better"

[Interview: Marc Coppens – Translation: Christina P.]

“If I didn't make music, I would now be a child psychologist." Song contest winner Elena Paparizou, 23, born by Greek parents but grown up in Sweden, gives us answers to questions we didn't even ask. She is on stage at „Tien om te zien“ with „My Number One” tonight.

„My Number One” is included to many European charts, but not a top quotation. Are you happy nevertheless?

In most countries the song was well treated, but I realize that a European career is gonna be difficult. The second single has to become better than the first one. Otherwise it wouldn't work. Of course I would like it, but I also know that I do not sing half as good as Céline Dion. I consider her as my big example. She is indeed ambassador of tourism in Canada and I am ambassador of tourism in Greece.

And that for someone who was born in Sweden and also grew up there. How did mum and dad land in the land of ABBA?

That is a kind of a romantic story. My mother comes from a village in Central-Greece. She emigrated to escape from the misery of the civil wars that afflicted the country. Dad was a cabinet-maker. Once, he was with the parents of my mother. He saw her picture hanging on the wall and yelled that he had never seen such a beautiful girl. He asked if he could meet her. He could. It was love at first sight and they are still together. I have an elder sister, 33, and a brother, 31. I was born a lot later, a mishap probably.

You're a child of two cultures. How is this expressed?

I have not felt at home for a long time. I felt unhappy. Until I pushed the button. I feel Greek as well as Swedish. I am quite exuberant and quite physical, and that is not always evident in Sweden. When I get angry, I will do it in Greek. But I also use that language for sweet words. I am really Swedish if it depends on timing. I will never arrive somewhere too late.

Boston on-line, USA 2005: “In short I want to become a Tina Turner!”

How would you react if someone was listening to "My Number One" really loudly next to you while you were trying to enjoy the sunset on an island?
I would turn around to see the expression on his face, if he was having a good time! "My Number One" is a song which made the majority of Greeks feel good, and for this reason I don't think I would have the right to get upset because he was spoiling my romantic moment. But really relaxing moments for me are only those at home with close friends and family.

Do you try and separate the private Helena from the public one?
On stage somehow I give a performance. This image of me comes along as the result of the work of many people, while the image of me off-stage is my own creation. That does not necessarily mean that there are no times of both images being combined. For example I don't dance or do crazy things behind the closed doors of my home, or, on the other hand, that I don't go out incognito. While I was in Stockholm, my friends and I would go in and out of bars as nowadays in Stockholm you cannot smoke in any bar, and I felt as if I was reliving my teenage years.

Are you now as recognised in Sweden as you are in Greece?
The Swedish people are undoubtedly totally different people from the Greeks, more introverted. Many are too shy to approach me and those who do, do it in a much less demonstrative way than Greek people.

What has each country contributed to the "Greek-Swedish cocktail"?
From Sweden I have taken a sense of formality. It is now almost a joke that I will arrive before everyone else at photo shoots! I also owe a lot to the educational system. As for the Greek contribution I will give you an example: some days ago in Sweden I was invited to Princess Victoria's birthday party and when I found myself standing next to her I dared to say: "Can I give you a hug to wish you a happy Birthday?" She happily agreed. When later I offered my hand in greeting to the king he said: "I want at hug, too!" I think this need to express feelings through physical contact is a Greek habit. As a person, I think I am somewhere in the middle. Though people from both countries recognise facets in me of the other country. For good or for bad. There is no such thing as a no man's land for me!

Which of the two female singers of ABBA did you identify with when you were young?
With Agnetha.

If you were to meet her what would you ask in order to learn something from her experience?
One of the first questions which I was asked when I came to Greece was "career or family?" For me there was no such dilemma because I come from Sweden, a country which is famous for the equality of the sexes. I think that feminism is so widespread there that soon the male gender will be wiped out completely! (She laughs). Agnetha managed everything fine even though things were difficult. But I don't think life should necessarily be easy for any of us. For this reason Agnetha is an example to be followed. However, I would ask her how she reached the point where she needed to retreat so much from the world. What was it that frightened her? I admit that I am afraid, too, to go around alone at night, and I think that this

fear grows worse with time. I am not afraid of something bad happening to me, but perhaps I still cannot get used to the contradiction of being among so many people yet feeling so totally alone.

Where did you put your award?
Next to the Eurovision award and the one given to me by the president of the country. The mayor of Kiev gave me an award that is something like a key to the city. This award was very heavy and when I got home I went to put it in a corner on the flour. My mum told me: "Don't put it here. All awards must be put up high for good luck!", she told me. So I put them all somewhere up high to be seen.

Will you wear the notorious dress again?
We are discussing to give it to a charitable cause. When I know for sure, I will tell.

Were you ready to manage the triumph of victory?
When I cried. I cried for my parents, but also for the pride that I brought to the Greeks and the Swedish because the Swedish consider me as their child. I am unbelievably moved though by how my family`s journey - which is like at cycle- is coming to a close. My family left Greece in search of a better fortune and I came back here to where it all began and achieved what I achieved. I think more of the award in emotional terms than in professional ramifications. Besides a Eurovision award is an award for a very specific song, it doesn't ensure permanent success for a singer or an international career necessarily. I have a long road ahead to become truly recognised and to show my true worth. One award is not enough to touch the mythical worth of the likes of Haris Alesiou. A singer who tried, who changed, who... who... You need years to discover what kind of person you are and you need years to discover what kind of singer you want to be in the end.

Have you become more cautious now?
I was always cautious and I have not become more so now. One thing is for certain, that I don't want to get hurt. Perhaps like everyone. However, if it happens I say, ok, that's life. I am usually asked what is "the number one" in my life and I answer "my own life of course". I like to cry to feel what laughter means; to hurt to understand how it is to love again; to go hungry to enjoy food...

In other words after your success... you would like failure?
Nobody wants to fail. What I want for things is to calm down and for me to take stock until I reach my eighty years still holding a microphone. In short I want to become a Tina Turner!

OK Magazine, Greece 2005: “I do not want to leave Greece!”

[Interview: Nikos Georgiadis - Translation: George G.]

Saturday night at Club FeVeR. Helena's dressing-room has 3 rooms inside it - a simple flat in other words. Toni is sitting on the sofa of the living room. When he is talking about his Lena, you understand immediately how much he cares about her. "I must protect her. Even if she has many proposals, this summer I'll let her take a rest." Many years before Helena wanted to go back in Sweden. Now she wants to buy a house here. In April and May (2006) she will make a tour through Scandinavia and in the summer she wants to give a few concerts for the North of Greece. Also, she is going to release two albums – one in Greek and one in English. Offstage, Helena is the girl next door, really. She will hug you hard when she will see you, she will grab you with her hand to show you some photos with her nephews from Sweden, she will invite you to come to her home, cooking herself. She will tell you by complaining how much she misses going out for a drink with her friends and she will also ask you insistently if there was something that you didn't like in her program. In the summer she went to America for some concerts and she not only saw the show of Céline Dion in Las Vegas, but she had the chance to meet her, face to face. Also, Céline congratulated her for her victory in Eurovision. But, did Celine remember Eurovision? "Of course she did," Helena tells me. "Being in America doesn't mean that she forgot from where she started. She was very friendly with me and she congratulated me, encouraging me".

Are big stars normal people?
I think that all women have the same feeling when they watch themselves in the mirror, during the morning. We don't wake up with the ringlets ready for the photo shoot.

Do you have the time to realize everything that happened to you?
This year, I wanted to be in Greece very much, more than any other time before. It's my pleasure to sing every song of my program, from "Diamonds Are Forever" (from Shirley Bassey) to "Mpaglamadaki" of Papazoglou.

You dedicate this song to your father, don't you?
It's a song that has marked my life. It reminds me of my childhood, because we used to sing it when we had family meetings.

Do you ever feel loneliness, Helena?
Do you know when I feel like this? When the others cannot understand me. You can feel loneliness when you have so much love to give to your friends and they are not ready to accept it.

I expected you to tell me that you NEVER feel lonely, as you have Toni with you.
Of course I have never felt abandoned. I know that every time that I need my people, who are in Sweden, they will take the first plane to come here.

On the other hand, haven’t you ever wanted to tell "Today I will sit alone at home and I won't see anyone?"
That we work and live together doesn't mean that we don't have our personal room for each other. We're not together by oppression. When I see that he wants to be alone, I leave him. I'm with him so many years so I understand his needs. When he wants to shout at me, I

know that I have to let him. Of course I keep my pride, but when you live with someone else you have to share everything with him.

It was a full week for you.
Of course. Even if we have just started at FeVeR, we're trying for the best result, so as everyone to be thankful.

Some days ago there was an article in a Swedish newspaper telling that you were very sick! Do you believe that exactly this day I was sleeping till 5 o' clock in the afternoon and I couldn't watch what was going on? Nothing is right, so there's not a reason to discuss it. I only saw a reportage in which the "chief editor" of the Swedish newspaper persisted in having talked with my mother. That never happened.

I imagine that your family was upset about it. Of course they did, because they thought that I didn't tell them anything. I want to believe that it was a journalistic mistake.

They also tell that Swedish people got angry with you, as you preferred Greece.
No way. Every Swedish artist works abroad in winter. Besides that, I don't feel like I had left Sweden. Never!

Toni told me that you have Greece for your home and you want to leave.
I love Greece so much. When you want to make a career abroad you can't perform in Greek night clubs at the same time. You have to do the one or the other one. But the international obligations have gone for March and after.

You don't need vacation?
I don't have the time for this! Two weeks ago, I took three days off and I was very happy! Do you know what happened? I caught a flu and for the first time after three years I stayed in my bed! The only thing that I wanted to do was to go the super market and make a dinner for my friends.

Is there something that you miss in your life?
My brothers and my nephews. These are the people that I see for just two hours and who I take the energy for one month from.

How do you feel as an ambassador of Greek tourism?
I was a tourist for many years in Greece. As the years are passing I fell in love with Greece even more! Every time that I give interviews to magazines I tell them to come here. I have travelled almost all over the world, but I didn't take experiences like here in Greece.

Do Greeks dare to flirt at you, or they afraid of Toni?
Flirt is a nice compliment for me which makes you feel better. If someone tells you "You're very beautiful, you have beautiful eyes" you are getting flattered. And Toni also loves to see that the others love whatever he loves about me.

Toni is not the classic type of Greek man.
No, he isn't. But this doesn't have to do with the Swedish culture. But with life experience.

What had you thought the first time that you ever met Toni? The only thing I thought was: "Oh my God, I found him!"! To continue with your life you never have to make comparisons. Every single relationship is a new beginning. Because I was hurt from my previous relationship, it doesn't mean that I will get hurt in my next one. So what if it happens again? I will make another step. We should be cooler to our life. All the men are not the same!

Do you feel embarrassed when they always write that you're getting married? The thing that I have understood is that the others want to learn more about Toni. It doesn't matter for me, I like talking about him, because is the man I love. He had shaped me as a person. I feel happy and I feel serenity inside me, as I have a balanced personal life. But many times they overdo it.

That happens everywhere. Madonna talks about Guy Ritchie every time. No, not every time! The thing is, that I haven't given even one interview without mentioning Toni's name! Don't think that I have a problem about it.

You never tried to hide your relationship. There's no reason about it. If I hide it, it would be like hiding me. And I would never do that.

Your marriage will take place in Greece? I believe so! We never know when. We leave it to come on its' time. When we got engaged we hadn't planned it. We called our parents in Greece and the next day they all came to Sweden. It was clearly our decision, not our parents' one. That’s how I always act. In my 17 I told my father that I had a relationship with a 28-year-old man. If it was someone else, he could have been scared because of the big age difference. But so, he simply told me: "Now you can open your wings and fly". In Sweden, children use to stay with their parents till finishing their school. After that, they leave home, or they will pay a rent. In Greece they don't leave their family till they got married. On the other side, if you get angry with a Swedish man and you'll swear his mother, he will smile! But a Greek man will take it personally! It's a mentality issue!

Toni is 34 years old. His parents... Do they push him to a marriage? No! The only thing that parents should care about is about their children’s happiness, not about when they will get married.

When it was the last time that you felt happy? Right now! Really! It's very hard to feel sadness. I only watch the positive side of life. If I did not do the job that I love, I would find another way to be happy again. I was like that from my very early age!

Do you know how much money you have in your bank account? No, but I know how much I pay! The more money we earn from our job, the bigger expenses we will have.

Are you wasteful? Yes, a little bit!

But you have the time to go for shopping?
The others do the shopping for me. Ask my stylist, Al Giga!

At least, you were the first who wore the Dolce dress, even before Madonna did it in Star Academy.
What do you want me to say now? When Madonna was buying Dolce, I wasn't even born! Seriously now, did you see her body? I think that she got pregnant in a very old age!

Would you like to be a mother in your 40's?
No, I wouldn't like to have my 1st child in such an old age!

So, you want to have more than one.
Absolutely!

Would you ever leave your career for the family?
For a short period, I should do so! But I should work by choices then!

Is it embarrassing for you, if someone compares you to another female artist?
You cannot compare two artists. I hear them telling: "Helena is the new Anna Vissi". But is that possible? I haven't done even the half of those things that she has done. I respect her a lot, she has a great voice and all the people who are next to her, at the same time.

For many people your victory in Eurovision is important.
But, that does not mean that I have the same experience as her. I feel upset when they are writing that I'm better than other artists. Because, I admire them, I buy their CD's and I listen to them with the same enthusiasm like 14-year-old girls.

Have you seen another collaboration in any club this year?
No, I didn't have time. But, I believe that the surprise of this year was the collaboration Papakonstantinou - Vitali. I remember when I saw the poster, it was speaking itself! Two friends were meeting again, after so many years. I want to see them, I love them as artists!

There are some rumours, that it's the last time you're attending a night club this year. The only sure thing is that I'm going abroad after the end of this year. I don't know when I will come back again; I don't even know what I'm going to do the following year. But I'm not leaving Greece. I stay here!

Votre Beauté Magazine, Greece 2006: Number One

[Interview: Christiana Stamatelou – Translation: Horgu & KyprisAthina]

Where are you one year after your success in Kiev?
After Eurovision I felt the need to return and to look again at my roots, to get to know what I will miss when I am not there. In general I won't leave Greece, it will always be my headquarter. Although I earlier called Sweden my headquarter, I now changed my mind. What I love about Greece is, and that's why I could never leave it in my whole life, is that I feel good there. We have got eight months of summer and that gets up my mood. I feel very good in Greece, not as in Sweden where it is always very cold, we always wear thick clothing and enclose us in our homes. I love that we Greeks want to be different and that we are respected for this.

What do you think about your future?
I've often been asked where I see myself in 10 years. I'm afraid to think about it. The only certain thing is that I want to have at least one child in 10 years! Regarding my career, I'm very afraid what will happen. Not that I doubt myself, but nothing is self-understanding. A career in the show biz consists of various things, it's like a Russian roulette. […] I'll try to explain to you what I believe. Life is predetermined by God and we all are blessed. But sometimes if the devil wants to come in, he will come in without knocking at your door before.[…]

What are you doing when you are not working?
I go to the super market and buy incredibly many things! After I am sitting in the kitchen for hours and cook. I invite friends for eating, I take a nice movie DVD, I like to spend time on my home.

How do you wish your home to be?
I want a home which reflects my soul. It shouldn't be "Super Lux" because I don't deserve that yet, I have to work harder to get this! But I don't want that anyone feels uncomfortable in. I want you to feel comfortable and not to apologize. If you want to put your feet on the sofa then do it! I want it to be my home and not a design exhibition.

What are you wearing in your daily life?
I buy a large lot of clothing, but I always come back to my jeans. I have unworn clothing at home, the labels still attached. In my daily life I want to feel comfortable, I avoid high heels. I prefer nice cowboy boots, my comfortable jeans which I want of that it is low waist. so it's not too tight, and a nice, cushy top.

[… **What music are you listening to these days?**]
My favourite CD in the last three months which I can't stop listening to is by Vincente Amigo [vicente-amigo.com – editor's remark], a classical Flamenco guitarist, even if his music got no relation to what I am doing. I believe that I have to live my age right now and develop by the years. I think that the heavy and serious songs are for those who have lived much. That doesn't mean that I didn't live much, but if I said so, no one would believe me! So many ugly things I have seen in my life…

How was your life in Sweden?
My childhood was a bit strange. I began the Greek school in the age of 5, aged 7 I went to the Swedish school in the morning and to the Greek one in the afternoon. I was such a good student that I bored the teacher because I knew everything. Until the age of 11, 12, then I found the school boring. I preferred to work in the Cafeteria washing dishes, and of course I did so. I didn't do it because of the work, or because of money. I did it because I wanted to be together with my dad. 15 I started again to read books and became a good student again. Not the best one, but a very good one. My dad's restaurant was 100 metres away from my school. The lessons started at 8.45 am, and me I stood up at 5 am and went with him to the restaurant. We drank coffee, gossiped, listened to music I helped him and after I went to school. I spent the breaks with my friends, but the other time I went to my dad.

Are you a "Daddy's child"? Are you his favourite daughter?
I am 8 years younger than my brother and 10 years younger than my sister. I was the child who came after many years and they all had forgotten how it is to have a little child. Maybe we are really close together because he did not have much time to spend with my siblings, but when I was born there were no problems and he could spend much more time with me. My family has been my big support and it still is.

Which is your worst and which is your best memory of your life?
I don't know where to start and to end. I think of my best friend who betrayed me in a very bad way, and I think of the day when my parents let me (they had to because of my health) in Greece. My dad had already started to work, my siblings went to school, it was easier for me to go to stay in Greece, but I was very young and didn't want to be separated from my family. I moved to my aunt, and in her house I got two other brothers, my cousins, Kostas and Ilias, who I love like crazy. The time I had at my aunt's was amazing. I've been the daughter who they never had. And I am her daughter until today. But for me it has been a bit tragic in this situation at this time. I was three years old! Imagine how it would be if someone took away your mum and dad in that in this age! We called every day, and they sent parcels every week with clothing, dolls, but for a child it's still hard… In the age of 8 I started with the music, aged 13 I started to write my own music with three Americans. At a big fire I lost many of my friends. The fire started half an hour before I wanted to meet them. Many of my good friends were burned. I've never found out how many exactly. Still today, when I go in my town, which I have grown up in, and see a friend, it can happen that I ask: "How is Tsigo?" and they tell me: "Tsigo died!". Because of this shock also my passion for music died and so I decided to start with the theatre. I was 15 years old. A very happy moment was when I had the entrance examination for the school for stage direction. Principally I would have had to wait for six months, but when I had finished and stood up saying thank you, the teacher said to me: "Welcome to your dream!" I went out and jumped into the air, fell down on the marble and hurt my knees and got huge bruises. Finally I didn't finish my studies because I started my career with 17.

How would you describe today's Elena?
Spontaneous and happy. What else? Honest. I can't lie. It's not possible to hide, it will be seen. I'm egoistic, and if the egoism got me, it's a crazy egoism. A, there is something else also: I am crazy, crazy!

GP newspaper, Sweden/Greece 2006: The world is waiting for last year's winner

[Interview: Johan Rylander – Translation: "Swedish"]

It had been one year. We found the reason why the Greek Eurovision danced at the sea. "I have got what i needed. Now I want to have a stable career", Helena Paparizou, 24, says.

It is afternoon, but the sun rays still burn nasty to unprotected Swedes. We have driven five miles on a freeway outside the city, to the wonderful and little part Anavissos and the beach Agiou Nikolau. Here the Aegean Sea waves into the wind.

It is also here that we find last year's winner Helena Paparizou from Gothenburg. Around 15 models, cool boys with six packs and beautiful girls that probably never had eaten food, dances to Helena's new single Mambo. The international video recording is on the way. GP is the only paper that has been invited - by Helena and her boyfriend, manager Toni Mavridis. "Hello Götet! I will be there soon, when the team is changing the light", she says as soon as she sees us.

One year has passed quickly. But don't think that Elena has become cocky. Sunburnt and with the shortest white dress you can think of she dances under the shots and arrives directly when the director has got the things he want. Hug and kisses on the cheeks as always in southern Europe. "It is fun that you came here. It is an amazing day!" Yes, to say the least. After her victory in Kiev with "My Number One" there have been a lot of new things for Helena. For example she has moved from Sweden and bought a house with sea view in Glyfada, outside Athens. "Yes. It was not possible to live on two places on the long term. I have been in Greece for three last years and had two sets of clothes and everything possible, it was too much trouble. I know that I am always welcome at home to a nice villa in Sävedalen when I want to. Mum is even going to remake my room. With double bed and all. Now as I have a husband." The smile is close and in one of the recording pauses, we sit down on the wonderful beach cafe and get invited to a frappe, ice-cold strong coffee, with milk and almost no sugar. Fantastically good. "Just don't drink too fast. If you do, it gives you a caffeine shock", says Helena and takes a cigarette. "I'll stop!" Seconds later, her stylist Al Giga pops up and wants to put a straw cowboy hat on her when he discovered GP's reporters. "Never! Then it destroys my beautiful hair", Elena grins. So, what have you got out of your victory in the Eurovision Song Contest? "I got what I needed." But not what you wanted? "I want a stable career. And a great career. The fault last year was that we did not have a perfect English album when victory came. We have it for this launch. So there will be no holiday for me this summer either", she says with a sigh. The world is waiting, that is it. This Saturday Helena is the interval act between the competing contributions. She will perform both the winning song "My Number One" and the new single "Mambo!" in the giant basketball stadium, where the Olympics final was held a few years ago. "It's pretty cool to know that I am the cause of this party, that the Greeks have a party in Athens these two weeks. Then I feel proud."

Her new English-language album from Sony BMG International will be available in stores in August and the single Mambo is already high on the lists - at least in Greece. And in Sweden. "It feels like a World Cup-hit. It has the chorus for it anyway", Helena says laughing during a

break. Winning Eurovision had not only its good sides - Helena has changed her phone number after the Kiev adventure. And a lot of rumors came up about the pop girl number one: Cancer, silicone in the lips, cancelled jobs in Sweden, while she stood on stage in Greece ... "It's no fun to hear. So I turned off my phone. The press was at home with my mother and wanted to take pictures. Sure that a celebrity may take some paparazzi consequences, but in terms of health, you have to show respect. Sweden has no law that will protect you there. How many times have you read Marie Fredriksson speak out about her disease?" Elena continues. A bit upset. "About the surgery, anyone having silicone inside can't do this with their lips", she says, making lip gymnastics. "And I would have bought me a new pair of boobs, it is my thing, my decision. I would tell it. I'm not saying people should do a plastic surgery, but it is people's own choices. Maybe they needed it, to feel good. It is their own business in this case. Naturally, I thought, earlier in my life, I wanted to do it and talked to several doctors. They just said I wasn't ready for it. So I never did anything."

On the small beach at the Aegean Sea are some holiday celebrations and curious kids. And it turns out that many have come from Sweden - Swedes like to watch when a music video comes to life. Helena's make-up is being fixed. Now, the video recording has moved out to the beach and it takes a few hours before the director can say "that's it". However this may sound in Greek." Just do me a favor! Greet everyone in Gothenburg and say that I love them!"

Plaza Kvinna Magazine, Sweden 2006: Beautiful Helena

[Interview: Anna Matzinger – Translation: Rebecca M.]

What you didn't know about Helena?

"I can't sleep if my pair of Pyjamas doesn't match!" – "You don't want to be near me when I am really angry! I usually don't use bad words but then they are just falling out of my mouth!" – "How I seduced Toni? 'Where are you going? Home? You won't! You are going to sleep over at my house!'" She is our own Greek goddess and was once a singer with Antique. But in May last year Helena Paparizou won the Eurovision song contest for Greece and since then we have barely seen her. Now, more than one year later, she is back with a new CD to tell us about everything that happened. Helena is sitting in front of the mirror in the Studio in Stureby, Stockholm. The Make-Up artist Mia has just started with her make-up but we are already talking. Subject?

Kids. And lazy fathers.

"I would love to have children. I mean, I am 24 and my boyfriend and me have been together for seven years so there wouldn't be anything strange about it", Helena says. Her boyfriend is Toni Mavridis, who is also her carrier in Greece. "He would be a great father. He is used to overtake responsibility, although he is Greek", Helena laughs. "His sister started working when her baby was two weeks old – they both lived at home so he has grown up with children. He does everything at home, except cooking and washing. It's forbidden to him to do so! I'm so fastidious with my clothing so I want to wash them myself. He would just throw it all into the dry cleaner and then my heart would be broken!" Aren't you worried that children would ruin your career? "It's not something that I have planned. I'm not in a hurry. But if I was pregnant tomorrow I would keep it for myself. Honestly, it's the biggest miracle that something grows up within a woman's body! And I surely believe that you can have a career and kids at the same time. It's an attitude which I got from Sweden; Marie Fredriksson did so. And Abba-Agneta. But I would love to spend a lot of time with my kids."

Greece vs. Sweden

She is not hard to talk to, Helena Paparizou. In a strong Gothenburg dialect salted with English expressions she is discussing, gesticulating, associating, … The conversation jumps fast from one thing to another. From elder care to Roberto Cavalli, to ugly bicycle baskets and Paparazzi in Athens, were she now lives permanently: **"**I had to deal with my life. I was never here, it only became a lot of paper and bureaucracy and trouble." What do you like most about Athens? "That it is hot. If I had time I would sit at cafés for eight months a year." Helena laughs. "I love the pulse of the town; five millions of people are living there. And the place is historical." Do you miss anything from Sweden? "The calm. My friends, my family. I have to call my mother every day. We may not say much, we can sit quiet at the phone, 'no, there wasn't anything else today', but still I have to do it." Do you see yourself as a Swede or a Greek? "I am a Swedish born Greek. I can never be Swedish, because my parents are Greek. But at the same time I was raised here. The time I lived in Sweden I always thought: 'I'm such a Greek', then I went to Greece and felt like 'I'm so Swedish'!" Which part of you is typical Greek, can you generalize a bit? "I have temperament, talk out loud and, I have to touch people when I talk to them. If I see a pregnant woman, I must pat her belly." And what is your Swedish part? "I am always on time; I am diplomatic in a good way, so I am honest without hurting someone. And growing up in a social state makes you considerate: I care about old, children and people in bad situations."

My Big Fat Greek Wedding

Helena's mother came to Sweden in the 60ies and started to work at a sewing factory in Boras. Her dad came in 1973. They got married, settled down in Olskroken near Gothenburg, got three children and moved to a house in Vallhamra. The whole of it sounds very ordinary. But when Elena tells us about her growth, you can't help thinking of 'My big fat Greek wedding', how worn out that picture may be. "My mother had a strong relation to her sisters, so I never felt like having two siblings but like having fourteen of them. My cousins always were at our house and my sister's husband lived with us. I use to say that I had four mums: my mum, my grandma, my sister, who is ten years older than me, and my aunt, who I lived with for a while when I was three years old." Why? "I had asthma and allergies, I was close to dying when I was two; so my mum left me there, because the climate was better. I still remember having my arms tight around my aunt's neck and wondering why my mum left me." That sounds terrible. It must have shaped you a lot. "No, I don't think so. In this case I was more affected by my mum, who was a strong woman and worked much. I was often at home with my aunt or my sister. When my mum got her allergy and had to change her business, she quit at the restaurant and started with a shop for children clothing. Then we got into so many conflicts. Suddenly she was at home in the evenings and 'Now you should be back home at 18.00!' and me, being 12 or 13, I couldn't take that she suddenly made the decisions: 'What? With grandma I can be out until 21.00!'." Do your interests in music come from your family? "We have always listened to classical Greek music. We were the 'party family', gave big dinners; all the kids were at the upper floor and had disco, the grown-ups were sitting and singing. My grandma sang unbelievably well. She was the only woman who wasn't in the kitchen; she sat and sung with the men. She died eleven days before I was born and my dad always says that she has been reborn in me.

The Summer Torture

Helena sang in a choir and had a band for a while, including three guys from her class. They wrote and played R'n'B inspired songs and recorded them in a studio at the Studiefrämjandet. At the gymnasium she went into the theatre and TV production line. Now the acting was important. "We were doing the properties, write synopsis direct and stuff like that. The first year our teacher would direct and I had a hard time taking direction. I wanted to direct myself actually." Have you got problems with letting anyone else decide? "No, not really. It's just that I have a lot of opinions, I think so much." So one day the phone was ringing and Helena's brother's friend, Jonas Scheldt, asked if she was able to come and to sing 'Opa Opa'. "Sure, I can do that", Helena said and went to the studio. They lay on the songs and Helena said they needed a man's voice. So they also called Helena's childhood friend Nikos Panagiotidis. Elena and Nikos, now Antique, signed a contract with Bonnier and released the single "Opa-Opa", which became the torture of the summer. In 2003, Antique split up. Both Helena and Nikos felt that they wanted to move on. Helena signed a contract with the Greek Sony and started her career in Greece. Suddenly, she was a big star. In January 2005 the Greek television asked Helena to participate for Greece in the Eurovision song contest. She recorded and performed three songs to be voted for by the viewers. "My Number One" got the majority of the votes in the Greek final, as it did in the big final in Kiev, three months later. Your career has been built on approximately three hits. Aren't you tired of performing them? "It's not really like I would sing them under the shower. But I love to sing songs that people recognize and can sing along to. I am still singing the old Antique medley on stage." We haven't seen you so often in Sweden for the recent days. Are you fo-

cussing completely onto your career in Greece now? “I don’t know, but there much more is going on. The papers write about me going shopping; paparazzi are trying to take pictures from under my skirt; I can’t go out alone to the street like I do here. It’s unbelievably nice when I am to Stockholm: I can go to the pub myself, be out and move around alone. That wouldn’t work in Greece.” But Swedish papers have also written a lot recently, like that you got cancer? “For that I must say no comments. It’s not that everyone has to know what you are going through.” … and that you are pregnant? Helena laughs: “I would love to be. But I came to Sweden because I missed the Estrella crisps and GB’s ice cream. I weighted 67 kilos and the papers wrote that I was pregnant, oh my God. But some journalists don’t have any sense…”

Girl Next Door & Glamorous Pop Star

We have talked for about an hour and soon the make-up artist will finish. It’s time to shoot. Helena was already hot when she came into the studio, without make-up, wearing a pair of jeans and a top. But when she gets into the front of a camera, something happens. The ‘girl next door’ disappears and changes into the star. The magazine cover has been taken and Helena is posing like she had done it all of her life. After a while the photographer drags out the whole team, and a Helena with gala make-up and high heels, out on the street in the small Stureby. Helena stands in the refuge of a tunnel, and the photographer goes behind her. The people on their way home stop and don’t believe their eyes – is it really Helena Paparizou, here on their small street? It seems like there is a big difference between private and stage Helena? “When I get up on stage, it feels like I am pressing an ‘on’-button. There is an inner energy coming up. To me, singing pop is making people forget all their problems and have fun. Before going on the stage I am nervous, for the whole day, and backstage it is chaos and the hands are wet from the sweat. But when I get up to stage, I get into a rush. That weighs up everything!” At the same time, you seem so close to earth, even though you live the life of a glamorous pop star. How do you handle this? “The only thing you have to do is to look at my background, where my parents are from. I am not a new rich, ego tripped snob, but there is a whole tram behind me who has got a part in my success. I am so glad that I make much money but it is also important for me to share the honour and the money with the ones who are close to me. All of this we have done together.”

Omorfos Kosmos To Proi (TV Show), Greece 2006: Helena described by her songs

[Interview: Grigoris Arnaoutoglou – Translation: Pasca]

Asked about the pregnancy rumours Helena says that she would love to be pregnant but not this time and that she wants a lot of children, but also not this time. These rumours always start during the summer because she loves to eat and always puts on weight then. Once she had 70 kg but she's at 64 kg now. A lot of famous women, who always wanted children, never had children because of their work - Isn't Helena scared that this could happen to her too? "Children stay forever, but careers not."

Where did she meet Toni for the first time? The first time she met him at a restaurant - if he worked there? She smiles and says: "No, of course not, he was only eating!", while Helena was there with Nikos (Antique), her sister and a friend.

If she knew that he was a Greek because of dark hair? No, she thought he is Persian because of his skin colour and hair. She loves Persians because of their language and everything. The first three weeks she and Toni didn't really talk and made it difficult for each other. But then one night she was singing with Antique. She loved the night and didn't want to go home. So she asked him where he wants to go and he answered: home. She said "no, 'cause this night we'll sleep together!"

My Number One – What's number one in her life? Not only healthy but also to love and to feel love!

Mambo! - When she started dancing? She started dancing the day she was born.

Iparhi Logos - When is she really getting angry? She never gets angry easily but if so, there's a reason.

Anapandites Klisis - Does she ever not answer to people? Often, but never to Toni!

Stin Kardia Mou Mono Thlipsi (only sorrow in my heart) - did she ever feel like that before? Yes, for a whole year!

Katse Kala [Behave yourself!] – Did she ever say this to someone? For sure!

The Light in Our Soul - If she sleeps with the light turned on? No. She can't sleep then. She has never been afraid of the dark - because god is shining.

She is still the sweet and nice girl after all her success. If she has ever been scared to change? No, because of her father.

We are so proud of her because she is number 22 in America! ["My Number One", Remix EP from Moda Records, reached this position in the US Dance single charts without promotion.] "It is more important to be more than once in the charts there", and she won't become crazy of that. But she hopes that everything will continue to be great.

Afisorama Magazine, Greece 2006/2007: "Nothing in life is easy"

[Interview: Loukas Fotopoulos – Translation: Pasca]

Elena, how does it feel to have another album in your hands?
Actually 'The Game of Love' is my first international album. 'My Number One' has been the European version of 'Protereotita' only, including only English versions of the Greek songs. My feelings are mixed and intense. What I have to tell you about 'The 'Game of Love' is that for sure I am enthusiastic and that I hope that it will be more successful than we think it will.

What does 'international career' mean to you?
To me it means that Greek producers and Greek music in general can go outside the borders of our country. And it is really important that foreign producers choose a Greek singer to express them through a song. Of course I am talking about Greek pop business, not to be misunderstood.

You've started your career in Sweden, which means that you know what it means to have a career in Europe. How easy is it?
Nothing in life seems easy to me. The easiest thing is to make our lives unhappy and miserable. It needs fighting, trying, sweat, good collaborators, a good mood and of course luck.

Eurovision was a reason to spread your wings abroad. Are you still a fan of Eurovision?
I have always been a fan of Eurovision and I believe that I will be for even more years. Do you remember when we made a show on the radio when Sakis went to Istanbul? It was only one year before 'My Number One'!

What do you think, which singer should represent Greece in Finland?
I believe ERT won't make a wrong decision. Three years in a row we did very well at Eurovision. The point is that people choose the song which they like most. In a few words: The song which is loved by the majority of the people voting.

Along with your international career you are working in Greece and this year together with Pashalis Terzis and Nino. How are the things at Iera Odos?
We have a great time at Iera Odos! We have an amazing cooperation and the doors to our changing rooms are always open. Besides that it is a collaboration which gives me a lot of things. Pashalis is a very important singer and he teaches me that every note which I am singing is important.

You also sing Laika songs in your program. Which ones do you love most?
I adore 'Mi Rotate' by Giorgos Theofanous (which Peggy Zina sings). These days I really like the songs by Rita Sakellariou and that's why I took one of her songs into my program.

Which singers are your idols?
I have many! Very much I love Haris Alexiou, I like a lot her deep and warm voice. I go crazy for Glykeria's one, no one could do it like her. I also like Pashalis Terzis, Dimitris Mitropanos and Stelios Kasandsidis. From the Greek pop scene I like very much Anna Vissi and Despina Vandi. Peggy Zina, too, she is amazing and everytime I come across her I like her even more. Ah! Also Kostas Karafotis is very good. Out of the foreigners I have an addiction to the Black Eyed Peas. Very much I like Shakira, but her rock personality. And for sure the absolute god-

dess, Madonna! And I must also mention Céline Dion's extraordinary voice, which can always make me happy even if I feel terrible. And talking about important voices, let's mention Whitney Houston, who I adore!

What are you doing in your free time?
I try to see my beloved friends and laugh as much as I can!

One question everyone is asking you: When will you marry?
Let's go to the next question, please!

What your relation to fashion is like?
I really like to follow the fashion. But I only wear stuff that I like and that fits me. Always with the help of my good friend and stylist Al Giga.

The music of your album's last song is by Manos Hatzidakis and the lyrics by Eleana Vrachali, and it has got the title 'O'ti Axisi Ine I Stigmes' (Cover of "Le Bonheur"). It was a surprise. How came out the idea to put it on the album?
The idea was the one of Thymios Papadopoulos from Sony BMG and indeed it was a surprise. Dalida sings 'Le Bonheur'. And I would like to use this moment to thank Thymios Papadopoulos for this idea and of course to say a big Bravo! to Eleana Vrachali for her great lyrics.

Finally, what kind of singer are you, Elena? Can you describe yourself?
At this state of my life I am a pop singer. But as my voice develops I believe that I will be able to do more things. In the past I've sung even more Laika songs.

Which question you hear most of the time from everyone?
You already asked it! (Laughter)

Which is the thing about your work which you can't get used to?
To be exhausted from all the work.

How are your fans? Do they give you presents? Which of them impressed you most?
I get many, many presents and I thank everyone for the love. The most impressive was a present by a fan from Chios, she gave me an incredible puzzle with photos and it was an amazing game!

What is the best wish given to you?
To be healthy! You know, I believe that we should not ask for much. It is good that we work hard to get what life is giving us, but not ask for too much.

Which people you trust most of all and why?
I am scared to tell you! You will steal them from me! (Laughter) Those who I absolutely trust in know who they are.

What do your parents say about your success? Are they happy?
Like every parents, also mine are happy about my success and worry at the same time if I take care of myself. We are a very close family. I care for them and so they do for me.

What do you expect from your future career?
I expect that I will work even harder to choose even better songs and to come even closer with the people. And the most important thing? I want to make the people forget their everyday's problems while singing my song for 3 or 5 minutes.
Which collaboration would you like do in the future?
A duet with Madonna! Maybe I ask for too much, but why not?

What do you want to wish to the readers of Afisorama, also for the upcoming year?
I wish them health, love, piece in their souls and on earth, and of course that they stay with Afisorama! Many wishes for a beautiful new year 2007 and I wish to see you all very soon!

Close Up Magazine, Greece 2007: The Girl Next Door

[Interview: Aris Kavatzikis - Translation: Pasca]

Four years ago I met Helena Paparizou, member of the group “Antique”, a beautiful, spontaneous girl, who was fresh in the music industry. I thought that now, as she had succeeded so much, she would be a diva. But I was really wrong. I met a wonderful, nice young woman without any make-up, who is only 25 years old! “I’m 10 kilos heavier than the last time we met!” And? She’s still the same beauty!

While I was coming I thought you are a little girl...
I’m a woman now.

Ok. A woman 25 years old. I was thinking, how is it to carry all this myth about your name?
Everyone is telling me that I haven’t seen it, and I don’t act like it, somehow. But how should I act? Because I had some success, it doesn’t mean that I’m a better or worse person. My character didn’t get golder, the only thing which changed is that my cabinet is filled with awards and golden CDs. My success seduces me and I want it to continue, but i don’t think to make this happen you must act snobbishly. The most important thing is to think what you have done so far and what you want to do next.

So that means your popularity doesn't stop your spontaneity?
No. Only, as a popular person, I just need to be careful when people approach. But that's also your honour. But of course, not every day is the same. I could be in a good or a bad mood.

Doesn’t it come to your mind that you succeed mostly everything?
I haven’t done anything yet. What should the people say who have in their career a 40 year old discography, like Haris Aleksiou? Could someone, from us young artists, reach something like that? Forget it, today everyone is stealing music. Honestly, I don’t know what’s the future for the industry. I sometimes hear that people are saying it is better when a Nigerian sells illegally pirate CDs than stealing or selling drugs. But, if he sells those pirate CDs he already stole them!

Do you sometimes think that everything you are living now won’t last forever?
Everything is stopping at some moment. I remember when I came to live in Greece for the first time I was already engaged with Toni. Everyone then told me: "Now we will see how long this will last, cause career and family doesn’t fit." I told them that it fits very well, because in my mind I had the Swedish model, where women have families and a career.

Would you sacrifice your career for your own family?
Yes, because my children will be forever and my career will stop one day. We would talk about the career I once made, but I will be a mother forever.

Would you stop, when your first child will be born?
That’s no subject. Why should I stop music, which is my rescue, for my children? I would just pick which work I would do. It cannot be that when you have children you will work seven years non-stop without any vacation in like I did the last seven years. When I will have a child I must find time for the child and for me. If I am not fine how will I cater for a child?

Do you really have a picture in your mind about yourself being a mother?
I could never live with a men or marry him if I didn't want to have children with him. All women want this in their lives, some girls really early, some later. Even if we don't have children ourselves we go and help our family members or friends with their children. And every time you have a child with you, you take the responsibility for the child.

So, you get into that role?
Always.

Are you always that spontaneously?
When I feel bad, I prefer to be alone, because I know that my negative energy blocks the energy of the people around me. There are days when I am bored and lazy to death. I don´t want to take off my pyjama, I want to close my mobile to cook for myself and just lay down and watch TV the whole day.

How do you get over that?
It goes away from alone. When you don't have really serious problems you get over this feeling.

Your work is hard. How much happiness do you need to take from this work, to make there nights a day?
Sometimes I think that every artist is walking around thirsty because there can't be enough applause. When the season (Odeon) ended I hurt my foot. I didn't stop. I thought that I can't change the whole program and audience the last three days. God, what an egoistic thing was that? I felt like i couldn't be away from them (from the audience, fans) - especially me, I am an pop singer and my job is to make an good clime. I need to make the people to forget, to listen to an beautiful rhythm, not to deep lyrics.

You made this year a great surprise with your songs for the serial "Mazi Sou". Now even people are talking about you who haven't done in the past.
I think music has his time and place. If you would hear what CDs I have got you would be astonished. Do not forget that I have two years old children in my audience. I don't think that when I'm 35- 40 years old I would sing songs with the title "Gigolo"! I do that now!

Does these nights exhaust you?
I'm exhausted but on the other hand, it makes me stronger. If you are working for seven years at night, you can't get the time for your sleeping back. Now that I am thinking of it, I have always liked the night. When I was younger in school, I remember, I never went to sleep until three in the morning. I was sitting next to the window, watched the moon, wrote a poem, and heard music.

You're a romantic person?
Really romantic person I would say. I researched a lot in my life, all religions, and science. When I was 14-15 I researched everything. I even read the Koran.
Why?
Because I think of it as my own special fortune.

Is it easy for you to make new friends?
It is not easy. Do you know what happens? The choice by me and Toni to move to Greece was really hard. We let back our whole lives. In Greece, I always changed people who worked with me, musicians, clubs and at the end it was always us two who stayed together. That made me believe that your best friends are your family. Only, with the time who past I realize who are my real friends. I don't know if I have the need to make more good friends. I have a few good friends. I believe that you can't share secrets with three people, only with two. When three people know it, it is not a secret anymore.

Do you get angry easily? Do you lose your patience?
I hardly get angry, but when it happens, it’s is really ugly, and I don't like myself then.

In your job I am sure you are self-confident. Are you self-confident in your personal life also?
It doesn't give people without insecurities. I always let people help me and make a decision with me, I don’t have any aggressiveness because of my self- confidence. If it is for a private decision I get really insecure and have the need to talk about it.

So, the self- confidence of your work doesn't across your personal relations?
No. Self- confidence I get because of the fact that i was 17 when I left my home, because I wanted to discover Stockholm. I think no Greek child of foreigners who live in another country than Greece would do that.

Popularity is a weird thing, tell me, don't you think sometimes: "this most happen, cause I am Paparizou!"?
Never! I'm not a diva! I'm the Girl next Door. Marinella is a diva! If I succeed and can be like Marinella, we will see. To be a mother, to be a diva is a title and you have to earn it. Maybe I have a ‚Pop Diva´ style on stage and I wear sexy short dresses, but that's a role, I am not like that in my private live.

You are engaged since you were 18, now you are 25. Don't you ever get scared because of the fact that you are together with one person without making other experiences?
Nobody knows what I was going through and they shouldn't care. Toni is the best relationship I have made in my life. If I wouldn't be happy, I would stay in this relationship. I wouldn't mind if I had met him earlier.

You had a rough time?
No, never. Everything who doesn't kill us makes us stronger.

What happen this year with your kilos? Why do you want to put on weight?
In the club, which I work in, a man in the front tables said really rude and mean words about a robust woman. This made me sad. I got sad and asked myself why does this criticism exist? If a bad person got those bad words, okay, but for a women, who only got 5- 10 kilos more? Why? Let us just watch in the mirror and let us start from ourselves and let the people alone. I am against every kind of racism. I love every kind of people, every skin colour and religion. I want good people and the bad people can be sure that one day bad things will come back to them.

Did you get weight for support?
I told that I will put on weight, because I want them to talk about me and let the other people alone. I don't say we have to become really overweighted. It is always our health we should have in mind at first place. I think that all persons who have more weight don't have conscience about their situation. And we don't have one reason to make them think of it again!

TOP 10 - Helena's Number Ones

1: Favourite designers: Roberto Cavalli, Tom Ford, D&G, Balenciaga.

2: In her fridge there are always milk products and vegetables.

3: She says really often: "I come back to tell ya!"

4: She loves steaks.

5: She cooks really great Mexican food.

6: She calms down while she is making her own bread.

7: She's Aquarius.

8: Her fragrance is by KENZO.

9: She loves her spontaneity.

10: She hates naked foot toes.

Super Star (TV Interview), Greece 2007/2008: Marriage and Pregnancy… anything else?

[Interview: Katerina Soulioti – Translation: Derek]

Photo: Kostas Avgoulis

[An introductory note for fans, who are new to the "Paparizou business": Greek Media, especially Star channel and Katerina Soulioti, usually has three big topics to ask Helena about in interviews: When she will marry/if she has broken up with Toni, if she is pregnant, and what happened to her body (putting on weight) – Just to give you a chance to recognize the irony in Helena's words without getting a wrong impression of her:]

We met Helena Paparizou during her photo shoot for her new album and she told us why she stayed away from everyone and why she withdrew herself at home.
I "locked" myself at home and did nothing at all [laughing]! I watched movies, we travelled a lot, I cooked, I was with my friends and I finally saw some daylight and it was amazing to wake up in the mornings! Fantastic!

Did you perhaps lost your keys and you couldn't find the master key?
Basically it's good to let people rest a bit, on the other hand I also needed that break a lot, as I had been working constantly for 7 years - morning, afternoon and night, so I got really tired! Especially this period I had told myself "Elena you must forget that you are a singer", namely I just wanted to be Elena and I liked that, but of course later I got bored and said "Why don`t you return, Elena?" [laughing out loud]

Did you break up with Toni?
Well I don't want to.....to be honest I don´t want to answer all these comments but the answer is no. That´s it.

Nor you are pregnant, as I can't see anything...
No. Full stop and let´s move to the next question.

This thing about you being pregnant has been circulated, you know all these years...
Even I wait for this. The moment it happens, everyone will be pleased! [:-P]

When are you getting married?
[laughing out even louder this time:] I will invite you, Katerina, I promise....

Are you gonna have an open wedding?
I don´t know. I have just started to regret this idea [laughing]!

Helena Paparizou sends her wishes to Kalomira:
Kalomira will do a great job! She is very sweet and tender and, by the way, can I tell her something? Of course. Kalomira, if you lose this good that you have, you`ll stop being Kalomira, therefore continue to be the way you are!

And you, don´t disappear again and make us look for you another 6 months!

Nitro Magazine, Greece 2008: Baby Tiger

[Interview: Sonia Kazoni - Translation: Giannis A.]

This girl with the long bronze hair, who goes into the lobby of “Asteras" at Vouliagmeni, wears Capri trousers, sneakers and big sunglasses. She has a ring in her nose, which is linked by a little chain with the ring in her ear and she walks in talking with her mobile phone, when all the people turn around to look at her with surprise, the surprise which makes you turn for a second time to look at someone, because you have just realized who he is. This is the shock that everyone has, until Helena arrives at the coach, where we will spend the next 50 minutes drinking espresso loungo with sugar. I haven’t seen Helena for one year and a half, at the last photo shooting for Nitro’s cover at Great Britain. The only chance to see her, could be out of a sudden, maybe at ‘Ache" at Glyfada, which is lately her favourite place. In the last months, you could see that Helena had stopped her live performances, the interviews, the TV appearances: “I had planned to have a year off, for the first time. I went to Toni’s parents in Sweden, to my parents, then with friends to London. Walks for food, sleep, I was walking only with curly hair, comfortable clothes, things that I had really missed. And when I returned home (her new home in Ano Glyfada, near to the sea) I did not get out of it for 3 weeks! I wore my sleeping clothes, watched all the X-files, Heroes and Desperate Housewives on DVD. I cooked for my friends (“She cooks a great beef with Gorgonzola and the best apple pie I have ever eaten”, says her make-up artist Giannis Marketakis), and at the same time I was building up a perfectly equipped studio at home.” Of course, Helena had daily contact with her whole team, who are her friends, and a second family for her. “We discuss many ideas, we send emails to each other, also at midnight”, says her PR Giannis Koutrakis, because they work on the new album since January. “Porta Gia Ton Ourano” is the name of the new single, which is more rock than ever, influenced by English pop. Sony BMG told me that Toni and Nicolas Olaussen had produced the music for all album tracks – “Don K” as Helena called them.

So, you have not broken your relationship with Toni? She laughs, and plays with her trademark lips: “I have no idea why this journalist wrote these notes. But I do not want to explain again and again. Why? Can a couple not go out one without the other? At first, we had gone out, Toni, my friend Roxane, Nino and two or three others and went to Glykeria and Hatzigiannis [singers performing in a night club]. Before going out, Toni had started to compose a song, and he suddenly said “Lena, I am going home to continue.” So I went out with the others, to Ploutarchos, where we met Natasa [Theodoridou]. The journalists had not seen me for a long time, they saw me without Toni, and they made a gossip conclusion. What can I tell?”

These words come out from her honey lips, which they are even without any make-up, like a moving artwork. How can she be in love for nine years with the same man, after that night in Stockholm when she had gone out with Nicolas and Nopi, her sister’s best friend, then, when she showed Helena to Toni? Has this relationship not been something usual? “The bad usual things are bad, the good usual ones not!” And doesn’t sex become boring after such a long time? “The opposite, it has more passion, more feelings, you become more open-minded. Sex is not just the thing you do, but it is a brain thing. When it becomes brainier, it is sexier.”

That night became sticky – since then, Nopi is together with Nicolas, and Helena with Toni. A meeting very different from the one of Helena’s parents: “My father had seen a photo of

her, and said: "I want her." My grandfather, who did not want his daughters to marry like this, said to my mother: "You are going to drunk a coffee with him, and if you like him, do anything you want.""

Even if Helena is only 26 years old, she has lived "very hard circumstances. And there have been a lot of them, I would not want anyone to go through them." Such as when she was at the 6th class of the Primary School, when someone raped her best friend. "It happened at a party. My friend was afraid of telling it to her parents, so she told me. I called my mother, who immediately called the psychologist we had at school, and my friend's family, and planned to take her to the hospital. This is my mum. She helps a lot of people." And she has future sight feelings. One evening in 1998, at the family's house in Gothenburg, little Helena was crying in her bed, making her hair wet with tears. She wanted to go to a hip-hop party with her friends, but Mrs Efrosini Paparizou did not want to let her go. The next morning, her mum comes into Helena's room, hugs her and says: "What a good girl I have, she always listens to us." "A fire had broken out at the party, and 63 children had been burned alive. 13 of them were my best friends. That was when I stopped singing and went to theatre school. I always wanted to do something with theatre, I did musical since I have been very young. Until some DJs, friends of my brother, told me to make a demo. "You will record "Opa-Opa", they told me. "Yes", but I said that a part of the lyrics sound a bit mad to be sung by a woman, so they must be song by a man." That's how Nikos Panagiotidis appeared, a boy who Helena knew from her childhood, and who was working with folk music. Antique were born, they went to Eurovision 2001, took the third place, and in 2005 Helena became our "Number One", at her name day. It was a success, even if some of her friends had told her before: "You have just started your solo career, why do you want to destroy everything?" But she felt like it and she made it. "When we had not so many points in the beginning, me and Toni looked at each other and broke into tears. Had it been a big mistake of us?" But then the success came, Giannis Marketakis remembers. The best success of Greece in an international competition!
Her international career could have been her next move, but Helena wanted to stay here in Greece. "A lot of people ask me what I am doing here in Greece – do you know what I answer to them? You pay, I go! Things can't be done all together. Sony BMG wanted me to release a new album in autumn. I told them: "Guys, I can't, I have to relax." Everyone once has the right to say "I'm tired!"" Now she is back. A new album and her first tour in Greece, from July to September. Manos Pyrovolakis will be with her. "I owe this tour", she says. Isn't she anxious? "A comeback is always risky, especially now as the style of the album has changed, and it might not be accepted by the people. The rejection is the worst thing that can happen to a singer." Of course, she has not taken something like this, until today. "This is why I am double stressed!" Christos Lyritzis, her vocal teacher, mentions that he is amazed with Helena. "Her voice is like a deep cave, filled with gold. When you are thinking you reached the end of it, you have just begun. She could sing everything!"

Because we are in times of Eurovision, I want to hear your opinion about "My Secret Combination"! [Greek entry song to Eurovision 2008] "I like Kalomira, I love her! And because sometimes we have drunk a coffee together, I can understand her. I think that she is so alone in reece, just like me in the beginning. When we meet each other, I tell her "I cannot be your sister, because we don't know each other since we are young, but I am your cousin!" That's how I feel for Kalomiraki! I think she will do well. She will do a great show, because kalomira is more a showwoman than a singer. I remember that one day she tried to explain

something to me. She started to speak American, she could not take a breath, stood up and started to play with me. She's perfect!"

Helena looks like an open book. She answers anything you ask her, without stopping, everything on her a smile, her eyes, her lips. "Yeah, she's like that. A good creature, who never loses her humor, her optimism, even in bad personal moments. I adore her for that, I love her", says the song writer Giannis Doxas. However, she chooses her people, not many will go at her home. "She immediately realizes the forthright thing, and the deficiency of it", Hara Safarika confirms, the other half of Helena's PR team. "I do not invite any people I don't know to my house. It is not that I have a castle-house. The journalists have taken photos of me on the balcony. But my place is my sanctuary. I cannot become locked in it, to feel oppressed." Generally she cannot stand oppression. "Toni, even when I was young [he is 11 years older than her], has never told me "You will not go out", "You will not go out", "You will not leave". We only say: "I want to do this"." Helena likes democratic approaches. That is the thing she has learned from her father. Even when Greece was divided into places in political war, he told her to have an own opinion. "Nowadays it is out of fashion to spend your time with politics, but I am very interested in it. But, I am not going to discuss about them when I am out", she says to me. "So, would you ever announce a candidacy for membership of the parliament?" "I would like to be minister of education, when I become older, without being paid. I want to change the Greek understanding of education. Nowadays, children are depressed, they are into the books all day, in the morning they go to school, and in the evening again. I have easily learnt English in my school. But it was an all-day school. There was a meal, too. I had time to do some music subjects, too, to know Barry White, to read a lot of different things, too. She's like that at everything. She can, for example, designing to be deep religious, and before her live performances, Giannis Marketakis says the Lord's Prayer and they pray all together – but in school, she has learnt about all the religions and she respects them all. "Al [Giga, her stylist], for example, is Muslim.When he comes home, I won't cook pork. It is very important not to divide the others because they are from another country and don't believe in the same religion as you do. I say that, because I have experienced a bit of racism myself." She remembers when she was five years old, and a boy of her school was laughing at her: ""You are a blackhead", he said to me, and I answered him "and you look like white cabbage!" You see, he was blond. He got angry and slapped me. 4 years later I hit him back because I was much stronger then." A logical move for the girl which her best friend and boyfriend call "baby tiger". "I can sound like it, too!", she tells me and makes it. Every man I know would like to hear that. Like hearing her telling "mystikoidis tipos" instead of "mystikopathis" and "apothanatisa ti skilitsa mou" and not "ekana evthanasia", little, cute, wrong words which boost her sexy personality.

The night is coming, Helena has an appointment with her physiotherapist, as she has a little problem with her health for many years, and her personal taxi driver has just arrived! "Don't you drive?" "I don't have a car. Our cars are all Toni's. But I am a very good fellow passenger. I know how to drive, but I have no license. I just have no time", she says, playing with her lips.

Eikones Magazine, Greece 2008: Beautiful Helena

[Interview: Giannis Panagopoulos - Translation: Giannis R.]

Helena's big comeback. Helena Paparizou knows what she wants. The third (and best) period of the Greek star. Why she enjoys sex, why she has faith to God and why she does not care about the critics.

There have been three years since Helena Paparizou managed to do what seemed to be impossible for decades. She got the first place for Greece in the Eurovision Song Contest. Today, Helena comes back more mature than never. There is no need to ask twice it she thinks that her make-up artist who she trusts in is part of her family. She does. She will tell it to you immediately. The same happens with her hairdresser who is now looking with satisfaction at the curl that he has just set up to her hair. There are about two things which Helena does not negotiate. The second one are her collaborators. The first one is her relationship. She is with the same person since we got to know her. She is just 26 years old and she wants to live with Toni Mavridis forever.

How are you going to spend today?
There is my new album "Vrisko to logo na zo" which I must support with all my power. Its title [I find the reason to live] is actually a huge "Thank you" to all my fans. All those who make me feel good with their existance in my career. I spent the last weeks recording in Greece and Sweden. l am tired, but l love the result. It's the music that l could listen to while i am driving my car going to Cap Sounio [Athens], to the temple of Poseidon. This album is what i am. This time i want you to see the real Helena.

Sorry, but what have we been watching up to today?
Me but with big doses of sauciness. I think you had fun with it. Now it is time for maturation. There is no need to
sing pop songs forever. Time goes by and it would be a fault to refuse that. You know, if you really want to understand me you have to know that the only sure thing about me is what l am not. I am no Laika [Greek music genre] singer for example. I cannot become a Laika singer.

Do you think that you are an artist?
What I feel doen't count. What I believe doesn't count, too. Everyone has a sense of artistry. Cooking is also artistry. The fact that there were people, who were very passionate with their artistry but could not enjoy it, scares me. The fact that they died being miserable without any reward from the public. I don't want to be like this.

All of us want to know what is going to happen in the future. Let's say that your relationship with Toni is going to be rewarded with a real marriage. With a child...
Everyone has something to ask about it... First of all l don't define family with the birth of one child only. I want to have many children with Toni. And l would like to be the woman who is going to be with him till the day that he will see his grandchildren. l love the idea of a family. And when our first child comes, be sure that l won't think of my career. I am sorry but the freedom of my choices is something which I don't negotiate.

Talk to us about your choices that you do not negotiate. Which are your opinions which you do not dare to change?
I cannot negotiate the respect to everyone who really cares about me. I am working hard. So I am no easy person. When I take decisions l do it without thinking of what are the others going to say about them. I remember that before the first place in the Eurovision Song Contest my collaborators used to tell me that l shouldn't risk my great solo career which had just started. I was telling them that this way of thinking is crazy. They couldn't stop me because I already felt like being on stage. I appreciate the fact that all collaborators, in despite of their different opinion, finally wanted to participate in this process, risking it with me.

The fact that you put on some kilos was freedom of choice, too? Because I saw that now you have lost them. There were people who wanted to be your scale just to know how many kilos you put on and then they wanted to make it public.
If something makes me feel good, I won't care if it is normal or not. l am healthy, l have money, I eat as much as I want, that's all. There were moments that my grandmother was telling me that we do not have bread to eat and she meant it. Listen to me, kilos are no criterion to a persons' evaluation. And when l put them on, l don't stay inside just not be seen by somebody. In my family I have seen many. My cousin suffering from anorexia. Me suffering from allergic shocks. l put my health over everything and l want to keep a balance with my wishes.

Do you believe in God?
Yes, very much. Religion is something which l care about. There was a period of time which I used to think in that religion is a science. I was watching me and the people around me. I was thinking that it would be impossible to be part of an experiment which failed. We are something deeper. The human who created us was not a scientist for sure. D.N.A. is divine. [Oh, and just wait until you realize what is P.N.A.! - the editor]

Religion is associated with miracles and often with fear or respect...
I love God. I am grateful and I thank Him for the good and bad he sent me. And I am doing it because that's the only way for me to understand the value of simplicity. Nothing would have a point if I was afraid of him. I think that God is so bright that we cannot see him. Until today no one managed to portray him.

And what about all these portraits of him? People pray when they watch them.
lt is artistry. I don't have faith in images. Giannis Marketakis, my make-up artist, has studied hagiography in Agio Oros [Holy Mountain, close to Halkidiki]. He has given one of his images to me. I have it with me because it reminds me of him. Not more than that. It is exactly like watching a picture from my holidays and rememer the
good moments I had there. I have never felt the need to love or to pray to a piece of wood. Of course I respect people who are doing this. It's just that personally I don't.

Do you feel lucky?
Unimaginably. I appreciate the luck and the help that I had in my life. I have scaled it. I have not exploited it. People know that. That's why they let me be free.They let me not to be afraid of something which is
going to change the image of myself.

How does Toni show his love to you?
Often by having a different opinion. Even this way I can see the love in his eyes. Sometimes I think that love comes exactly after a moment of tension we had and we both are trying to understand each other even better.

Women say that men are afraid of them. That men changed since women became independent. What's your opinion about it?
We should better shut up and have more sex. I cannot tolerate women's complaints. This world is full of men. Women who say that they cannot find the one who is suitable for them are losing moments of their lives and are going to regret that they did not enjoy them just like they really wanted to.

Madame Figaro Magazine, Greece 2008: 3 Years After

[Interview: Dimitris Vrachnos - Translation: Giannis R.]

Stopped at Vouliagmenis Street, I am looking at my notes I had from the previous day. Paparizou: Immigrant parents from Sweden – It has affected for sure the way she manages her success today. Magazines want her away from her lover and producer. His name is Toni. I saw the music video of her new song – a bit rock. Does she want to change her sound? And what about bouzoukia? Is she really as likeable as she looks like? I was late. I found her talking to her cell phone in Swedish, eating a salad. What impressed me is that she asked me to meet her at a calm but trendy cafeteria of Glyfada and not at her house for example. Usually a pop singer tries not to be with many people when she is not on stage.

Three years after her first place at the Eurovision Song Contest, the 26-year-old pop star returns with a new rock album. She wants to mature through her music, but she worries about people who might want only the Helena of "gigolo". She didn't care about the people around us who were trying to hear what you are going to read. Like for example the fact that she thinks she got the syndrome of agoraphobia after Eurovision and she wants to get over it. When we started, Helena broke the ice immediately and made me feel like meeting my cousin from Sweden while I am trying to put my eyes off her strange piercing at her nose.

You know that even people who don't like your songs like you.
Really? I've never thought of that. It is very flattering!

What do you have which makes everyone love you?
I'm just honest. You do not win anything if you are not.

That's the image you have created for the media.
I like having people close to me, but not very close. I do not go to many celebrity parties; I do not hung out with famous people. I am trying to keep my life normal, because I know that everything will end sooner or later.

You do care about it.
Since I want to have a family in the future, I really want to give my children a normal life. I like the fact that I can go out in Glyfada freely, have fun or even go shopping. If I lose that daily contact with the people I am going to lose Helena, too.

Do you think that was caused because you have immigrant parents? Or it depends on the person?
It depends on the person, on the way the parents have taught their child.

That sounded really psychological. Have you ever been to a psychologist?
Yes, when I was a little girl.

What happened then?
Many teenage problems.

Did you make your own revolution?
Hmm… yes. But the psychologist helped me a lot.

Were you too aggressive?
Yes but I didn't have that aggressive attitude at people. I was fighting with myself, trying to understand what is right and what is wrong.

Have you kept something from that period that you still believe in nowadays?
No. I decided that I don't want to let anything stress me and I don't want to make the others stressful. I got over that revolution I used to have. If a problem occurs, I want to solve it. I am not just looking at it just to feel sorry for myself. I call friends, parents, Toni, someone to unblock me. I want to solve it now.

I guess that's the way you cope with your job, too.
We are very well-organized.

Strange for Greece.
That's my Swedish part then. We are organizing my summer tour all over Greece with Manos Pirovolakis since October. The same with Iera Odos and Paschalis Terzis…

Hold on, I wanna complain about it.
I know. Why am I working at bouzoukia, huh? [laughing]

Yeah.
Do you think that Paschalis Terzis is only bouzoukia?

Apart from that. When you won Eurovision, I hoped that you would have an international pop career abroad. And then I learned that you would be singing at Fever.
Look, I believe that if you do not praise your house it is going to fall and crash you. In Greece bouzoukia is the way of entertainment, I can't change that. I have to get used to it. People forgot something. Winning Eurovision doesn't mean that you are going to have an international career. Because that contest does not have anything to do with international career.

But you had some proposals after Eurovision, from many countries.
Yeah, with "My Number One". But nothing more than that. Things happened really fast and we hadn't planned an international album.

The conversation was paused because of a kind barman who asked her if she had finished eating her salad. "Yes. I'm fine."

Helena gave her salad back, without having touched it. Won't you eat more?
I am eating many things but I am not allowed to eat too much yet. After two months I will be able to eat more.

Do you keep the food that is left on your dish?
Yes, I put it in the fridge and I eat it later.

Does your mother do this, too?
Yes. I do not trash anything. Not even my clothes for example. I give them to people or to the church.

What have you kept from your parents?
The energy from my dad and I think my character gets similar to my mother's one as the years go by. I admire her. I think she is very conscious, she understands everything.

What job did they want you to do?
Whatever I wanted.

So what?
I wanted to be a psychologist for children. Then I went to a school for actors. But I realized that I wanted to have the last word, so I also wanted to be a director.

Are you afraid of death?
No.

Do you feel grateful for what has happened to you or you feel that you 've worked a lot and you fully deserve what you have?
I've worked a lot, and we always take what we deserve. Luck is always important though. Every one of us worth the best. Money also. What matters is not to cross the borders.

Did money make you want even more than what you have?
No, I respect money and I help people around me.

If you were ugly, do you think you would be able to do the same job?
I don't really care about my outfit. The most important for me is my voice. In order to be happy as a person and as an artist, I want to get better every day and my voice also. That's why I am still having vocal lessons, twice a week.

Have you noticed improvement since the Number One period?
Yes, huge improvement.

Do you watch the video from that night again?
Not really. For six months I was at home and I had switched everything off. I used to say to myself "You are Helena. You are not Paparizou". But it was February when I went on YouTube and watched many videos from my appearances in Belgium, Sweden, just in order to go back to my job. All the preparations have made me feel too nervous because my image and my sound are getting more rock.

Are you affected from Onirama's success this year?
Not really. I believe I have to start getting mature through my music. I don't want to be 50 and people keep saying that Paparizou is singing silly pop songs.

You seem to be really impressed from your new album.
Yes. But it makes me wonder if people want the "Gigolo" Helena only (singing the chorus a capella). It was ok, but now I want to leave it.

What has changed after the success of Eurovision?
That was a strange period of my life, other people had to think for me. It was a lost year, maybe the most successful of my career but I don't remember anything from the stress I had.

Do you feel you have grown up after that experience?
I grew up early. All my friends who are over 30 say to me "Helena, you are thinking like you are 40 years old". Since I was 17 I had to take care of myself. I was helping my dad, I was doing everything. Even packing pizzas. I love working!

Tell us something which happened that night in Kiev and we don't know.
When we learned the result, there was a chaos. Two bodyguards came and grabbed me. Everyone was pushing me. They put me into a limo and I thought "ok, tomorrow they are gonna find me inside a black bag splitted into pieces". I was really scared. I was screaming in the limo and someone from our team came into the car. I didn't have a cell phone, I didn't have anything. I wanted to call my parents, people who are close to me. Fortunately I met them at the press conference, I told them "Guys, gimme a hug, I can't handle it anymore".

What's your biggest fear?
After Eurovision I have something like agoraphobia. I am afraid of being in contact with too many people. It is tiring. Because of that I have to make a cognitive therapy. Find a friend and walk with him to a place where many people are. I need to practice in order to get over it.

You do not give up.
No. You have to fight your fears.

Do you love children?
Very much.

Do you want to have children?
I feel I should have already.

Why do they write that you and Tony are not together anymore?
I don't know… [laughing] It's a game of the media. I feel sorry for my parents because they are far away and they are reading those reports.

Why are you still not married with Tony?
I don't know! A marriage does not mean getting into the church with koumparo and wedding dress. That's not the point. The point is how you feel. And I already feel married.

Have you ever thought of signing a living-together-contract?
I can't see the point of it since I know what would happen if we would not be together anymore.

What would happen?
We would separate everything. There is no other option.

Do you remember anything which made you feel uncomfortable?
Yeah, someone touched my banned areas.

I guess you were dancing with the people.
I cannot be on stage and just look at the tables. I am dancing with the people, I want to have fun with them. I couldn't sing folk songs at first, I learned a lot while I was with Antonis Remos.

Have you been in love many times?
Not many times. I believe that a person cannot be in love for more than two times in his life.

Are you currently at your first time or your second one?
I think the first one. Hmm… Yes. The second one will be really difficult I think. A person can be impressed with many things in his life. But being in love is something different for sure…

Can you imagine yourself in 10 years?
I will have at least 2 children for sure. I will also have given a big try to go abroad and start an international career. The new international album will be ready by 2009. I am very optimistic. I would be ungrateful if I said that I am not satisfied with what I already have. There are so many people out there with brilliant voices but unlucky because they were not with the right person at the right time in order to have a career.

Orange FM Radio, Greece 2008: Vrisko To Logo Na Zo – Album Presentation

[Interview: Manos Mayatis, Eva Antonopoulou - Translation: Giannis R.]

MANOS: Tell me how happy you are!
EVA: I'm very very happy because today we have the best company whose name is Helena Paparizou! I want a huge applause because we have many people here with us today!
HELENA: I'm very happy, too, for being here. There've been enough years since my last visit in Orange FM and generally I haven't been to radio stations too much lately. But this year there should be many radio interviews.
MANOS: I think we are will give you luck because this is your first radio interview…
EVA: We are going to hear all the new songs aren't we?
MANOS: Yeah right!
HELENA: Yes, and I'm very happy for this.
MANOS: 13 brand new songs…
HELENA: No, 12! The track number 13 is 'To Fili Tis Zois', which is the bonus track.
MANOS: Okay then, no problem! Well, good evening, welcome here…
HELENA: Good evening Manos and Eva and good evening to everyone who is listening to us now.
EVA: I would like to tell you that since last week there are too many messages for you, we have questions from your fanclub and our questions of course! Let's talk about your career, new album, new beginning, 'Porta Gia Ton Ourano' has already been a successful song people are in love with it!
MANOS: I like it very much!
HELENA: Actually it was my desire to release this song as the first single from my new album because this song was made for concerts. And because of the fact that this summer I will make many concerts with Manos Pirovolakis in Greece, I wanted the first song to be the one which would make me feel like being in a concert.
EVA: Your new album is a bit rock isn't it? The photoshooting proves it, too I think.
HELENA: Yeah, it's a bit different from what I have done since now. I am personally very satisfied with the result but what I think does not count. What counts is what people are going to say about my new job. I hope they will enjoy it because I had a really great time while I was recording the songs.
MANOS: When did you start the preparations for the new album?
HELENA: The first appointment was in January, in my house with Giannis Doxas and Giorgos Sabanis. I cooked some delicious filets! But in the second appointment I cooked Mexican food, pretty difficult!
EVA: Someone who knows you very well has said that you are a great cook and when you have time you cook amazingly, is it true?
HELENA: Yes and sometimes when I worked during the night, after I came home I used to cook in order to have food for the next day.
EVA: Are you courageous enough after all the things you did (dancing, singing etc.) to do such a thing?
HELENA: Yeah I do so sometimes because I like very much cooking for myself and I know very well what I eat.
EVA: Great and we want you to cook for us, too not only for Sabanis!
HELENA: I have promised to cook for many people but I couldn't do so yet!
MANOS: Okay, one day you will invite us all and you are going to cook for 150 people! LAUGHING

HELENA: Great!
MANOS: Don't you think that number 13 is not a lucky number?
HELENA: Not at all! I think that numbers like one, three, five are luckier than others and I prefer them!
MANOS: We will now start listening to Helena's brand new songs! We will listen to them in the album's order.
HELENA: Okay.
MANOS: "I Kardia Sou Petra"
HELENA: Written by Giorgos Sabanis, lyrics by Giannis Doxas. This song has a lot of fun. They came home and Sabanis – who is a young and talented artist – told me: "Lena, I have a new song, I want to show it to you in order to hear your opinion about it". He showed it to me and I told him "I am sorry but which do you think my opinion is? This is mine, thank you!" We went downstairs to the studio and we recorded it! This is the new single from my new album and the video clip will be ready in 5-10 days.
MANOS: Okay let's start!

EVA: We are always tuned to Orange 93.2 and today Helena Paparizou is with us!
HELENA: And I have you with me, too! We are having a great time here!
MANOS: Yes of course!
EVA: I want Helena to tell us what makes this album different.
HELENA: This album is much more rock, there are many songs which require vocal abilities but there are dance songs, too, but not as many as there used to be. I didn't want to disappoint a fan of my dance songs. At least I tried not to! We will see the results soon!
EVA: Is this your 6th solo album?
HELENA: No, actually this is my third solo album but I have repackaged many albums.
EVA: Yeah, so that's why I thought that you had more albums!
HELENA: Yes, we repackaged many albums. And there were 'Mazi Sou', 'To Fili Tis Zois'… Even if I had a break there was always something new.
EVA: Let's talk about Eurovision. You are the only Greek woman who managed to bring the first place for Greece.
HELENA: Until now.
EVA: Until now. But there have been many years since our first entry to the contest. I want to learn the secret that you have. How could you do this?
HELENA: I think it was the team work. Press conference was really helpful, too. We got closer to the journalists. I think there are many things that count. I don't have something special. If there wasn't our great team, if the organization wasn't as great as it was I wouldn't achieve anything. This year, I cannot say that Greece didn't take a good place. I love Kalomira very much but the winner of this Eurovision is Fokas Evangelinos. A big applause for Fokas Evangelinos, he is one of my beloved collaborators and I love him very much!
MANOS: I want you to tell me how did you spend the Eurovision evening…
HELENA: I was in Elounda with Marketakis, Al Giga, Filippos Lahanas and all my collaborators plus my new ones, PIARISTA. There were some friends, too!
EVA: Which performance was your favorite?
HELENA: I liked Ani Lorak very much! I like Dima Bilan as an artist but I can't say that this was the best song I've ever heard from him. To be honest, he has much better songs. I also like very much the UK entry. Unfortunately the United Kingdom is always first from the bottom.
EVA: I believe that British people are not so interested in that contest.

HELENA: I had an appointment in the past, with some people from the United Kingdom and one of them told me: 'Why did you go to Eurovision?' I told her: 'What's the matter, I came first!' and she answered: 'What a shit!'. I mean, they are not interested in Eurovision at all! The same happens with French and German people.
MANOS: All the big countries…
HELENA: Sweden is mad for Eurovision. We have four semi-finals and a final.
EVA: Many people said that Kalomira's performance was similar to your performance. Did you notice any similarities?
HELENA: I have to say that Kalomira is one of a kind. We have many things in common because we were born in other countries, our behavior has similarities. But Kalomira is from America, we have not the same mentality because I am a European after all. But the fact that Kalomira has the American mentality is not bad at all! Kalomira is Kalomira.
EVA: So, don't you think that her performance had similarities?
HELENA: No. It didn't. Not even in the choreography. Juliano made a funky choreography. They had a street style.
MANOS: Would you go again to the Eurovision Song Contest, Helena?
HELENA: No! I don't know if I would ever write a song but generally all this process was very tiring and I don't remember many things from that period because I was stressed. I don't even remember my parents there. This year I relaxed and while I was watching the show some moments came into my mind.
EVA: When you went to the contest for first time, you were very young. How old were you? 18?
HELENA: No, I was 19. And oh my god, I was very slim, 50 kilos only! I remember that when we went to Copenhagen I was 54 kilos and after a week I lost 4 kilos because I was stressed. Stress is not good guys!
MANOS: Now we are going to listen to "Kita Brosta".
HELENA: This is one of the first songs we chose for the album. In our first appointment with Giannis Doxas, Tony and Olausson. Written by Tony Mavridis, Niclas Olausson and Sofie Lindblom who is from a small village in Sweden, 18 years old!
EVA: Where did you find her?
HELENA: Niclas has found them! Sofie Lindblom and Niclas' father are from the same village! Lyrics by Giannis Doxas. I have collaborated with many young and talented guys like Per Liden, Sofie Lindblom, Matilda Ekevik and Giorgos Sabanis.
EVA: Manos, I want you to pronounce these names too!
MANOS: I can!

EVA: Back to Orange 93.2 but today we are not alone, we have cameras, ALTER…
MANOS: Every channel is here today for Helena Paparizou! We have many messages and Helena is soon going to hear and reply to some of them!
EVA: Manos, would you like to start by telling us questions?
MANOS: Yes! 'Hi Helena, I'm a big fan from Antique, I would like to ask you when the dates will be announced and if you are going to come in Rhodes or Karpathos'.
HELENA: I will go to Rhodes. You will learn the dates very soon! Soon my site will be online, helenapaparizou.com, plus my Facebook group where Giannis Koutrakis informs you for everything new. I have also asked my fans to tell me via my Facebook group which song(s) do they want to listen to in my concerts. There is a little girl [Eh! I'm not so "little"! – the editor] who has made the whole program for my concert, including an Encore! It is very nice to have contact with your fans!

EVA: Do you generally use Facebook? Do you chat with other people?
HELENA: There is the group, Giannis Koutrakis is always online and informs people, but I reply too sometimes! And I want people to know that Giannis never replies for me. [Indeed.] When he is at my home and we are working on the computer or when I am at his home, I reply.
MANOS: So all the information are reliable.
HELENA: Yes.
EVA: I would like to close the Eurovision topic by asking you about Kalomira's birthday. Kalomira and you have the same birthday?
HELENA: Yeah, it's unbelievable!
EVA: What's your zodiac sign?
HELENA: Aquarius!
EVA: Are you spontaneous…?
HELENA: Yes I'm spontaneous, abstracted but because of my horoscope I am balanced and I think that as I grow up I become even more balanced.
MANOS: Did you speak with Kalomira?
HELENA: Yes we did, the previous day of the first semi-final.
MANOS: Tell me, what advice did you give to her?
HELENA: No, I don't want to tell it, Kalomira can tell it if she wants to. I believe that these moments are very personal and we – artists – have personal moments, too.
EVA: You mentioned that you feel like being Kalomira's cousin…
HELENA: We went someday to record a song with many artists for a charity show and when I finished the recording I went out and there were Maro Litra and Kalomira. I'm really sad because there weren't any cameras! We were like three small cousins who haven't met each other for years! We feel that we have common experiences. Our relationship has something special because we are immigrants' children.
MANOS: A fan asks you: 'Which football team do you support and if you don't support a football team tell me about Tony's favorite team.'
HELENA: We both support the national team of Greece. I think I am a very lucky woman because my husband is not interested in football.
MANOS: Me, too!

EVA: I want to say that Helena is an amazing and very sweet person…
HELENA: Thank you! You are also very beautiful!
EVA: Helena, they are always writing that you and Tony are not together anymore, that you are pregnant and that a marriage is coming soon.
HELENA: I really don't know how those two (separation and pregnancy) can be connected!
EVA: In this period of time I am reading about your separation.
HELENA: All these are not true.
EVA: How many years are you with Tony?
HELENA: Nine years. Our anniversary is in September.
EVA: How did you meet each other?
HELENA: In a restaurant in Sweden. Nopy, my sister's friend knew Tony and she wanted us to become friends. I wanted the same for her and Olausson. They are still together! But me and Tony are more years together because I couldn't wait! However she did.
MANOS: We 'grab' the good material immediately!

HELENA: Yeah! Niclas is also good but Nopy was a woman who had lived her life and she didn't want to make wrong choices, that's why she didn't react immediately. When we are young we dare to do things that older people don't.
MANOS: Did he come closer to you?
HELENA: Actually I did so! But I can't tell you what did I say to him!
EVA: Is marriage included in your future ambitions?
HELENA: I already feel married.
MANOS: Marriage is associated with a child…
HELENA: Not necessarily. I don't want to make the impression of a modern woman but in Sweden everybody makes children without being married so I could make children without being married, too. I don't really think that something would change if I marry Tony. And I don't feel insecure without being married because I know that with Tony I will never have any problem. And if a child comes, I know that he would recognize it so I don't find the marriage necessary.
EVA: I read somewhere that Tony is not your first lover but your last one.
HELENA: Indeed!
EVA: That's a pretty important statement.
HELENA: Yes it is. I don't feel that I risked something. Some people got disturbed by that.
EVA: Why?
HELENA: Not my collaborators but people who I find out there and I talk with. They tell me how can you be so absolute? I'm not absolute, that's what I feel.
EVA: How many children do you want?
HELENA: Many! Definitely more than two. Three, four! Although I think that it's difficult to look after your children. I can't imagine any other father for my children apart from Tony. I want Tony to be the father of my children.
MANOS: So why don't you start?
HELENA: Whenever it comes!
MANOS: Would you forgive unfaithfulness?
HELENA: It depends. But I can't answer to you because I don't know how would I react in this case. But I would definitely not tolerate a parallel relationship. That exceeds the limits of my patience.
EVA: Let's say that your boyfriend has a parallel relationship. Would you prefer to know it or not?
HELENA: I would prefer not to know it. But I would also prefer my friends not to know it, too. Sometimes I smoke a bit and I remember that when I was a child, my mother had found my cigarettes. And she told me: 'Now you will see what Paparizos (her father) is going to tell you!' And I was trembling, I thought that my father would hit me! He came home and my mother told me not to go to sleep or hide myself…
EVA: How old were you?
HELENA: 14. My mother had put the cigarettes on the table and she said to my father: 'Look Giorgo, your daughter smokes.' Then my father was angry to me he said me not to smoke because it isn't good for my health and I stopped it for two months but then sometimes I smoked again. When I was 16, my mother found again my cigarettes and my father told me: 'Damn, I told you that it is not good for your health…' I told him: 'Dad, I have to tell you something. I am smoking. But would you prefer not to know it and everyone else to know it?' It would be a mockery.
MANOS: After 9 years are you jealous?

HELENA: Yes I am. He is, too. But not as much as we used to be. Now we trust each other and we need some freedom. I respect that.
EVA: When you are jealous, do you show it?
HELENA: Yes. I talk to him about it. And I think that he likes that. Every man likes knowing that his woman is jealous of him. But we must control our jealousy because it can ruin our relationship.
EVA: You are working many years together, right? 9 years?
HELENA: In the first year of my career I used to travel alone. Especially those big tours with Antique. But after that I really needed him. I told him to leave his job, and come with me. Nikos was also very helpful but he was an adolescent he couldn't have me with him. For example when we went to Germany I was the only woman, 10 men wanted to go out. I couldn't go, I was a 17-year-old girl I couldn't go out with them. I didn't feel comfortable. And I respect what Toni did for me.
EVA: Did he (Toni) have other jobs in the past?
HELENA: He had a hairdresser's, he was musician but he 'locked' everything and came with me. I doubt that anyone else could do that for me.
EVA: Yeah, that's impressive!
HELENA: He was always with me. When we bought our new house, two years ago we took care of every detail and he told me: 'Lena, I was with you all these years, now I cannot do anything, you have new collaborators but I will always be here for you if you need something. But now, my job is to write songs for you.'
MANOS: That's real love!
HELENA: He gave me the time I needed, he didn't tell me not to do something in my career. Many times he used to wake up - when I was working during the night – in the morning and prepare my breakfast and my clothes. I generally feel that this person does care for me very much.
MANOS: You women are all searching for such a man!
EVA: You should be this way!
MANOS: Another brand new song from Helena Paparizou, "Pios".
HELENA: I want to tell you an interesting fact which has to do with this song: I met Moukidis at Hara Safarika's (PIARISTA team) birthday and we like each other very much. And suddenly a message came: 'It is 3:17 and waiting for you'. He meant 3:17 minutes. I understood that he was talking about a new song. By the way, I'm a big fan of Giorgos Moukidis. I went to his home and I listened to the song for the first time. I didn't comment on it. I listened to it again and I started to cry. The lyrics are very emotional and generally Giorgos is 'drama'.
EVA: Right after the commercial break we are going to cry, too with Helena's new song!

EVA: What a great song! ["Pios"]
MANOS: *READING MESSAGES FROM FANS* Helena, when are you going to come to Igoumenitsa?
HELENA: I don't remember when I will go to Epirus but if I remember right, I will come to Ioannina. It is not too far! I have been to Igoumenitsa many times because when I was a girl we were travelling by car from Sweden to Greece and Igoumenitsa was part of our travel.
MANOS: If you weren't an artist what would you like to be? (from Biakos and Dimitra)
HELENA: Ah, Biakos is my godson and Dimitra is his mother. Biakos is his nickname, his real name is Vasilis.
MANOS: So, why are they asking you?

HELENA: Because Dimitra knows how much I love children. I would like to do something that deals with art. A director for example. But I always wanted to be a psychologist for children only. I'd love to deal with teens who are in a difficult period of their lives.
EVA: Do you read books about psychology?
HELENA: Yes, I have Swedish books which I read. Generally I am very interested in psychological things.
EVA: So you are going to be a great mother, too.
HELENA: I don't know that, everyone complains about his/her parents.
MANOS: I want you to tell us 'good luck' for our examinations (message from Elisabeth)!
HELENA: Good luck guys! I wrote it on Facebook, too! And something that helped me is to chew something while you are studying. Psychologists have said that you remember easily what you are studying.
EVA: We saw you in the OK! Magazine and Tony put on some weight.
HELENA: Yes of course.
EVA: Do you feed him all day long?
HELENA: No, actually I haven't understood yet why people are interested in kilos so much. We have many other serious problems to worry about. Tony is interested in body building since many years and he put on weight after many years of being fit. He has put on 10 kilos or so.
MANOS: It could just be wrong capture position.
HELENA: Yeah maybe. But yes he has, he did it on purpose.
MANOS: You don't care so much.
HELENA: No, I like it!
EVA: How it feels when you have to share everything with the public, even your very personal life? We can see every week exactly what you have done, where you have been… It might be a good promotion for you and your work but on the other hand I guess it could become disturbing.
HELENA: I think its ok, this way people can criticize us and it's all part of the job. It becomes disturbing when they are writing about things that are not true, especially when they are important ones. Once they wrote that I had an abortion. Honestly, I could have given that journalist a punch in the face. I called my lawyer but I had to go abroad so the subject was somehow forgotten. It was a mistake though, I have to protect myself. I don't care if they talk about my kilos or other unimportant stuff, but I can't tolerate something so serious.
EVA: You found it disgusting and pathetic, didn't you?
HELENA: Yeah, it was ridiculous, disgusting and extreme. I wish I could express myself freely and say to those people the words they deserve!
EVA: How do you react in such bad and difficult situations?
HELENA: Usually when I am sad I burst into tears. In that case I was really upset, I was wondering how could he publish so huge lies about me.
EVA: But generally I think the media have been decent with you…
HELENA: Yes of course, I don't care about rumors about my weight, my personal life and stuff, that's for fun, but I think that this was the most serious thing they could write about. And that's why I was upset.
EVA: Are you nervous about the way you look?
HELENA: Not at all, because I consider myself a woman who doesn't care about her image, I like it when being simple and not "the way I should". I don't care about make-up and stuff, in my personal life I don't hesitate to go out without any make-up.
EVA: So you will not take your personal stylist with you in your holidays?

HELENA: No, no. I wanna be comfortable. Life's too short and I wanna have fun without restrictions. If I always follow rules, when the last day of my life comes I won't have moments of fun to remember because I followed the rules. If someone comes tomorrow and tell me "Helena this is the last day of your life" I would say "I've enjoyed my life very much". And I feel good with myself.
EVA: You think that this anorexic example which is intense nowadays disturbs you…
HELENA: No, this whole thing started because of the racism some people experience because of their weight. When we put on weight it doesn't have to be because of the amount of food we consume but also because of health problems we may have. When I was working one of my dancers had put on some weight and there was a person making fun of her. It was pathetic and I was disturbed because of his reaction. He should focus on something else if he doesn't like the dancer, she was a very nice girl. To make it clear, I am not disturbed because of thin girls, you can be thin but healthy at the same time. We have to care about ourselves and remain healthy no matter how fat we are. A close relative of mine experienced anorexia and it was tragic. Honestly I hope no one ever experiences something similar.
EVA: Does Tony prefer you being with some extra kilos or in a perfect shape?
HELENA: Tony cares about how I feel and not how I look. At least that's what I believe, actually you should ask him! [laughing]

HELENA: This [Agapi San Listia] is a cover of a Mexican song. This is one of the last-minute songs, we added it when the album was almost ready. And the recording of it was very funny. After we finished recording Giannis Doxas came home, we were talking about irrelevant things but we were dancing at the same time, without actually paying attention to the song! It was unbelievable!

MANOS: What an amazing song! [Mathe Prota N'Agapas]
HELENA: The boys (Tony and Niclas) had sent me to the hairdresser's the day of the recording, they prepared the house with candles and stuff and when I came back they welcomed me with a red dress and told me to record that song!
MANOS: Did you record it at home?
HELENA: Yes, every song of the album! There is a well-equipped studio in it. Generally it is important for the artist to have the necessary atmosphere in order to achieve the best result when recording a song.
MANOS: Such ballad songs fit you I think!
HELENA: I really like them!
EVA: Could you take us to your house? There is a studio installed, your collaborators gather there pretty often as you told us, you cook for them… How do you feel in there?
HELENA: At first it was very nice, but then it became a bit tiring. Every day there were about 10 people at home, while we were recording the album.
MANOS: Did you cook for every one of them?
HELENA: To tell you the truth I used the delivery option in most cases. I couldn't do otherwise, I had to get ready for the recording of the songs too, I was actually working but in my home.
MANOS: I want you to tell us how do you feel about being nominated in six categories for this year's Mad Video Music Awards.
HELENA: It feels great!
MANOS: Are we gonna get all of them? [laughing]

HELENA: I would like to get all of them but it would be egoistic, I think everyone deserves something! The competition is huge. But it is a sweet competition, being nominated is like getting half of the award!
EVA: A sweet competition? I don't think it's possible to be friends with other artists, what do you think?
HELENA: I think it is possible! Think of it as a pie, everyone gets a piece of it to eat. The difference is that one day someone of us will get a bigger piece of the pie but the next day someone else is going to get the big one.
EVA: I think that only you see it from this point of view.
HELENA: I think this is how we should be thinking about it.
MANOS: Are you going to sing for the Mad Awards this year?
HELENA: Yes of course! I've told them my wishes, I think they have arranged something with Tony but I don't know yet exactly what we are going to do. The bad thing is that they've found my button, and they have a way to convince me! [laughing]
MANOS: Soon we are going to listen to "Pirotechnimata".
HELENA: A song by Giorgos Sabanis and Giannis Doxas. At first it was written differently, but Niclas Olausson, being fan of the heavy house music made it of that style. It is a bit "heavy", not really commercial, but I think we will release a commercialized version of the song, too. At the day of the recording, there were so many people at home and I was really tired, I told them to leave [laughing] and I recorded it on my own, three o'clock in the morning!

MANOS: Before the commercial break we listened to a very nice duet! [Papeles Mojados]
HELENA: It is originally a song by the Spanish group Chambao, it has to do with immigrants. I could translate a part of it of you want.
MANOS: Yeah sure!
HELENA: "Many don't make it, they have to forget their dreams, wet papers, papers without identity". This is the chorus.
EVA: It is very emotional.
HELENA: Yes, indeed. And I think it was a nice collaboration. The Greek lyrics were written by Giannis Doxas.
EVA: *READING MESSAGES FROM FANS* How do you imagine yourself in ten years?
HELENA: I will have recorded more albums, I will try to become a better person and I will have become a mother. One child for sure, maybe two, or three!
MANOS: The following song is called "Ise I Foni".
HELENA: This is a song I really love, because my nephews like it very much and because I feel that my nephews are also my children I love everything they like! They are now listening to us via the Internet, Alexis, my sister-in-law Dessy, William and Emilio.

MANOS: *READING MESSAGES FROM FANS* "We want you to make a duet with Kalomira, and go to the Eurovision Song Contest together!"
HELENA: A duet would be a good idea, but I don't think I would perform again in Eurovision. I don't know about Kalomira but personally I wouldn't like to go again.
EVA: *READING MESSAGES FROM FANS* Which is the most stupid or insulting thing a fan has made for you, something you will never forget?
HELENA: It is something I don't feel comfortable with, I wouldn't like to say it, but I could tell you about a Swedish magazine which wrote that a fan of mine climbed the wall of my house using some tubes in order to reach me.
EVA: Which is the biggest temptation for you, in terms of food?

HELENA: I really like potato chips, generally I don't really like sweets. I only like homemade apple pie which I make myself, and I also like vanilla ice cream.
MANOS: When was the last time you lied?
HELENA: Generally I don't like lies, so I don't use them frequently. When I lie it is usually because I don't want to hurt someone's feelings, and the last time was a week ago. It must have been about something related to my job. Generally I can't tell lies, I can't behave myself and the others always understand that I am lying when I do so! [laughing]
MANOS: Which is the most usual reason for fighting with Tony?
EVA: I guess something about the job.
HELENA: No, basically we fight for stupid things! When talking about the job we are trying to keep a balance, without yelling at each other etc. This way we solve every problem quickly. You know, when you are together with another person for years, fighting with him becomes boring! [laughing]
EVA: How can you live together with the same person for such a long time? What's your secret?
HELENA: I was 17 years old when I moved to his place and it was easy for me to get used to that way of life. I don't know if it would be that easy if I was 30 but nowadays I am used to it. I think every couple should live together for a period of time before getting married.
MANOS & EVA: We would like to thank you very much Helena!
HELENA: Thank you too guys, I had lots of fun! Somehow I had forgotten how amazing the radio interviews are! Feels great!
EVA: Have fun at your summer tour!
HELENA: I expect to see you in one of my concerts!

Radio Sfera, Greece 2008: Helena's Choice

[Interview: Natalia Germanou, host and song writer of "My Number One" – Translation: Nikos R.]

NG: Good afternoon! It's nine o'clock and today the presenter of the program will be one of my favorite singers, friends and moments, because you are the favorite moment of my life...
HP: Yes, Natalia, we have experienced great moments together!
NG: Today, Helena Paparizou will be with us, the girl with who I spent the best week of my life with in Kiev, along with Christos Dantis.
HP: Good afternoon to everyone! I have to say something, I think that being a presenter is very difficult and I am a bit stressed.
NG: Why? Being a singer is more difficult.
HP: I am afraid of making mistakes while I am talking. So I will say one word in order not to be stressed. "Skoulikomirmigkotripa". Since I can tell that, I can tell anything.
NG, laughing: Yes. Since you said that, don't worry about anything. You know what? I have made hundreds of mistakes, so don't care. Helena Paparizou will choose every song we will hear. We have started with "Porta gia ton ourano", which I love, lyrics by Eleana Vrachali, and I can't remember the composers…
HP: The composers are Per Liden and Don K, Nicolas Olausson and Toni Mavridis, who have produced the whole album, which has a very new sound. It was important for me to make a new sound for my new record.
NG: You are rock this year.
HP: Yes, because I wanted it. I have had a vacation, and now I have worked on it more than in other years, we had collected many songs. I hope that people will like it. Because I am worried if they will like it or not. Some days ago, we were shooting the video and I was worried, I asked the director, Grammatopoulos: "Will people like my song?" and he answered "Why are you so nervous?" and I said "It' s like kissing a guy for the first time in my life!"
NG, laughing: I like it how you compare making a record to kissing a guy. Anyway, tell us which is the first song you have chosen for today.
HP: "Dinata Dinata" by Eleftheria Arvanitaki, the song that made us known, but we will hear it from Eleftheria's beautiful voice.

NG: We heard "Dinata Dinata", chosen by Elena. Elena will choose all the songs that we will listen to during the next hour. I can see "mou lipis" by Giorgos Mazonakis.
HP: Yes. It was one of the few Greek songs that I knew when I was in Sweden, and basically it was our first meeting with Giorgos Mazonakis, Nikos Terzis and Antonis Pappas, who wrote "Die for you" later. We will hear it by Giorgos, who is an artist that I really love.
NG: I want to ask you something. Do you miss anything from the Antique era? You surely were less stressed.

HP: To tell you the truth, I really miss that spontaneity. Things were more "innocent". I remember we were in Sweden in 1999, 7th April, when Nikos was recording "Opa Opa" which was our first single in Sweden and Scandinavia, and then we recorded "Dinata Dinata", and then we signed the contract and we had to record the whole album in three weeks. Things were so "innocent"… We had success and we didn't know what to do and that was very weird.
Themis Georgantas [famous host from MAD TV] tells it all the time, "When I called Elena to interview her for a magazine, her mother told me to call later, because she was at school!" ... I was at school, I was carrying the books…
NG: And you were going to the studio.
HP: No, when we were at Stockholm, I had permission from school. But I was going to the theatre, I studied TV production, and that gave me extra marks, because that was my job.
NG: Which song will we listen to now?
HP: "Den epitrepete" by Natasa Theodoridou.
NG: To who do you dedicate it?
HP: To my man.
NG: To Toni? Then they will say again that you have split up.
HP: I don't care!

NG: Helena Paparizou is here as a presenter. As I can see the next song [most likely "Kako Paidi" – "Bad boy/child"] will be from an artist that you have collaborated with, you have performed with and you love him.
HP: Yes, we are good friends, I love him. I wanted to choose another song by Nino, "Epireastika", which I love, but last time when we worked together, I realized that he was a bad boy, with the bad meaning. When we started our second collaboration [seasonal performance at the night club "Iera Odos" most likely] – our first one was at "Thalassa" some summers ago – and because I am in general very direct (I want to say what I think, otherwise I don't exist, I don't like playing...) I told him: "Nino I thought you were a bad boy last time when we worked together" – Anyway, we hang out and spent some time together and I really like his character. Besides, last year he was calling me "good girl" and I was calling him "bad boy" and it was funny.
NG: Do you want me to write a song called "Good Girl" [Kalo Paidi] for you?
HP, laughing: No, Giannis Ploutarhos had one song like that. Anyway, you know I trust you and that whatever you have written for me had success, so do whatever you want!
NG: I will write you a song, "The best girl"!

NG: We listened to "Adiaforo" by Pashalis Terzis. Tell me why you chose it.
HP: In general his last album was amazing. I really loved it.
NG: Mr. Terzis really likes you, you know that. Tell me why.
HP: I love him too! I also love his wife, Mrs. Mary! I love his whole family! Our collaboration [2006/07, Iera Odos] was great, the best one I ever had. That's why I will work again with him [2008/09, Iera Odos].
NG: Yes and we are all very happy with this collaboration.
HP: Imagine how happy I am! I was so happy when he called me and told me "How are you Elena? Do you want to work together next season?" Basically, it's a song that I don't know of if it makes me happy or sad. The melody is great, composed by Moukidis, who I really love...
NG: One of the most important composers in Greece. Every time I listen to a song that makes me cry it is written by Moukidis.

HP: Yes I like him, too. I also cry with his songs. I also like this song because it has an "ipirotiko" style, and I remember the place I come from.
NG: Let's go to the next song.
HP: "An I Agapi" from Manos Pirovolakis, a very sweet song. I will tour with him this summer.
NG: It's great that you will tour. Where are you going to?
HP: Everywhere. From south to east...everywhere!
NG: From Evros to Crete.
HP: Everywhere. Wherever they invite us to. We have met with Manos and are trying to become friends. I think we have a lot in common...We will do our best on stage with Manos!
NG: With Christos Dantis [singer and composer of "My Number One" and "Anapandites Klisis"] you have sung a duet, "Anapandites Klisis", which you sung in 2004?
HP: Yes in 2004.
NG: So it's been 4 years now…
HP: We are getting old Natalia...
NG: I am getting old, you are like a baby...!
HP: You know what I am saying? I am 30 years minus 4! [She laughs]
NG: It was a great song, one that I still play on clubs, and people are still dancing to it.
HP: It's a great remix. It's one of the few times that a remix is better that the original song. It was a great duet and very good to perform it on stage.
NG: The production of this duet, wasn't it something like "My Number One"?
HP: You know what? Christos is very clever. He knows very well his job. We should wish him to be happy with his wife Flora.
NG: Yes… You chose an old song from Dantis.
HP: Except for the old Greek songs we have learnt at school, from Theodorakis, Vempo etc., the first modern song that I heard was "Moro Mou Esi" by Christos Dantis. I have told it many times. When I was very young, 8 years old, I heard a song on MTV, "Aman Aman" ... I saw a man with curly hair...and I fell in love with him...! That record was amazing, I still listen to it. Let's hear it...Christos Dantis, "Moro Mou Esi".

NG: We are still here.
HP: I think this entire project "Week of Greek Music" is amazing. It's very good to honor Greek music. I have worked abroad for some time now, and I have realized that in every country the Top 10 is composed from songs of their country. That's why we should all support Greek music.
NG: I was watching "Dinata Dinata" music video on MAD TV some days ago… Elena was so young, with a fresh face… she was like a baby... you are not old now, but you have been through so much… Eurovision, etc. …
HP: Have I told you that the make-up artist in that music video was looking like Notis Sfakianakis [popular Greek singer]?
NG: Yes. Have you told it to Notis?
HP: No…
NG: You have chosen a song by Haris Alexiou…
HP: Yes she is my favorite female artist. If I have a career like her, I think I will be like her regarding the appearance. She reminds me of my mother.
NG: Really?
HP: Yes. I think she is very beautiful. I cry every time I see her. The last time we met was at Giannis Doksas and Giannis Koutrakis's birthday...I looked at her and told her that "I won't cry this time" [She laughs] ... Her voice makes me relax... It is the key to my soul... Whatever

she sings, it's amazing, no matter the style of the song... My whole family is a fan from Haris Aleksiou.
NG: Let's hear "Na mou to pis"

NG: We have to go now. There's another artist waiting outside. I really enjoyed that hour, I got to know a part of your character with the songs you chose. I agree with every song you chose, especially the Dantis' and Alexiou's ones. You have chosen a classic song to end our interview, by Vasilis Papakonstantinou, the "Koursaros".
HP: It was a summer that I was listening only to Greek rock... "Koursaros" by Vasilis Papakonstantinou and "Mpampis o Flou" by Pavlos Sidiropoulos were my favorites. They are great artists. I can't wait to see them live one day.
NG: I wish you the best for your tour, your album and next season.
HP: Thank you. Which concert will you come to?
NG: At Mitilini, if you have any concert there…

Porto e Mare Magazine, Greece 2008: Our Number One

[Interview: Alexandros Morellas]

Helena Paparizou has given wonderful happy moments to Greece, after that magical summer of 2004, when Greece won the Euroleague and hosted the Olympic games: Helena gave us our first victory in the Eurovision song contest, when millions of viewers voted for her throughout our continent. It was quite a similar magical moment when Helena appeared on the European music scene, back when she was still a little girl. Then, in 2001, she got the third place in Eurovision with "Antique", her first solo album coming out in 2004. Having sold millions of records and having achieved many number one hits, platinum records with "Iparhi Logos" and "The Game of Love", she released her new album "Vrisko to Logo Na Zo" in June 2008 and is already on tour in Greece with her shows sold out everywhere.

Having in mind the title of your latest album, "Vrisko to Logo Na Zo" [I find the reason to live] I would like to ask you if you think that you have found the meaning of life.
I live to find the answers to my questions. Those that I won't be able to find will be sought by my children.

Tell me a question that has not been answered yet inside you.
These are mostly questions about beliefs, since we all need something to believe in, to keep us alive, to help us find a meaning, whether that is God, or destiny or fate... As for myself, I believe in God.

Nevertheless, I get the feeling that you are a person of destiny. You believe in fate. Maybe that's why you are so absorbed with your professional and your personal life. Do you believe that if something is meant to be we should not abandon it easily?
Maybe you are not so wrong when saying that. Generally, as a person, Helena, I am very loyal to my relationships. I do not have that many friends and I do not make new friends easily. For example all my team partners on the job have been the same for many years.

Why so?
Because, when I manage to build up a relationship, it is difficult for me to break up. I do not want to break up with it. I am for duration. A relationship like collaboration is built for years.

You are not of the "thunderstruck" kind, even in friendships and relationships? Doesn't it happen that you meet a person and get excited from the first moments of your acquaintance?
It will happen, but rarely. My instinct will have to dictate it.

What gives you happiness?
Seeing the people around me being healthy and happy.

I mean personal small pleasures...
Generally I enjoy every moment of free time, because we all work hard nowadays.

Oh, do not complain. You had a great break here in Elounda, that was fun, wasn't it?
Yes, I had a very beautiful time, because I managed to dedicate some time to myself. Time to think, to ponder all what has happened so far, what I have been through... And, to tell you

the truth, I feel like it was a lesson about how to take better care of Helena. In the past years I was easily displeased - in a professional manner. Now I approach things more maturely.

On a personal level, have you noticed any changes in your character?
I have formed my character since a tender young age. Today, I would not say that I change as a person, more likely that I evolve. For example, previously I would not have accepted anyone saying: "This is who I am, like it or not!" I thought it was too selfish. Now I see it differently, since people have a choice either to be with you or not. I believe there should be no such pressure in relationships, just understanding.

Any strong impressions from your break?
Firstly, I woke up and slept any time I wanted to. There was no stress and this was priceless. One of the best recent memories I have from my vacation is being with my family over Christmas. Another one is my first time of swimming for this year, at Porto Elounda De Luxe Resort, in the pool! I was swimming at night, something that I adore. We had a wonderful time at Porto Elounda. However, I did not have all the time I wanted to enjoy the Six Senses Spa, which is my favorite part of Porto Elounda.

You had time to watch Eurovision though!
Oh yes, we got together all of us in one room and watched the contest!

So, what did you think of this year's contest?
It was very good. I was astounded by the stage presence of the Russian singer Dima Bilan. The fact that it was the work of the famous Greek choreographer Fokas Evangelinos gives you the impression that Greece has a part in this victory. The same goes for the choreography of the Ukranian singer Ani Lorak, which I also loved. In a way, you could say that Greece won all three top spots! [Greece became 3rd with Kalomira's entry "My secret combination", Ukraine second, Russia won.]

Having the double experience of very successful Eurovision performances, being 3rd with "Antique" but especially being 1st with "My Number One", what do you think makes someone win? Is there a recipe for success?
We have to work hard, to show people the result, and simply to love our song. I believe the artist must radiate the positive energy received from the earth. There is no negative energy. It is just our predisposition blocking this positive energy.

Seriously now, how much did you believe in this first place?
I really wanted it, mostly for my country and not for myself. As a Greek immigrant I wanted to offer this first place to Greece. At the beginning I was in despair, thinking we wouldn't even make it into the Top 10, but later, when we started to get all these 12-points-scores, I was convinced we are going to make it!

Which moment do you recall from that night? Which image has remained indelible?
The moment of holding the price in my hands, together with the Greek flag.

Judging it from now, do you think that your second entry to Eurovision has helped you with your career?
I believe that I spread my wings and flew a little higher.

Would you say that so far you have done things, both personally and professionally, that you did not want to do?
Professionally yes, though not many. Personally I can't say that I have done things I did not really want to.

Are you possessive?
I am jealous, but not too much. Love bears jealousy, but jealousy can also kill love.

Talking of love, are you afraid that the love of your fans might be lost, or just vanish in the time of your absence?
I believe that until now people have appreciated my work and me as a person and I must thank them for that. Of course, I cannot predict their reaction to every new piece of work, but, if I am consistent, then I believe that everything will go well.

Do you feel the need to change your styles in your work and your look from record to record?
Not exactly. I might feel insecure on the artist level, but only concerning my work, not my personal style. This particular record is more on the rock side, for example.

Is there any song on your new record that is more personal? That describes something particular about you?
The whole record is me. This time I worked with a lot of passion. I had the time, because I did not perform in a night club at the same time. I had no interviews, no wake-ups, and all this came out well.

What is your biggest worry when working on a new record? If it is going to sell? Do you look at the numbers?
I do not look at it so coldly. I always wonder if it will become popular with my fans, something I do strive for. My records so far have become platinum twice, and this surely pleases me, but it also causes a creative anxiety about the next step. After all, the fans are the ones who make you.

Could you leave Greece?
Not easily. I like the nightlife here. For example last night I went to a party at 23.30 and a little later to get something to eat. In Sweden, where I had lived until I was 17, restaurants close at 21.00 and night clubs at 2.00.

What does scare you more - your first wrinkle or your first white hair?
None of them. I imagine that it is nice to grow older, because this means you have gained a lot of experience. To be honest, I think I would do a mini-face-lift in my forties, just because I am a singer.

Do you feel important?
Only for the people who love me. I try to be better every day and to pass messages about how we should be more relaxed.

But, as a public person, is it difficult to have this attitude? Do you miss being at places without being recognized? To do things you would like to do without people looking?
Yes, I do miss this sometimes. I usually go to deserted beaches because I am a shy person. I carry respect and shyness inside me. I could never go topless, for example. It is nice to feel that nobody knows you and that you are not exposed. Above all, we are simple people, but, because we are also public figures, we have our "musts" and "don'ts". This is also the reason for coming to Porto Elounda. Here you really feel comfortable and relaxed. Enjoying your vacations without anyone watching you.

So see you back at Porto Elounda!
It's a deal!

Santorini FM Radio, Greece 2008 [Summary]

[Translation by unknown member]

Helena will not sing any Laika songs in the future, only songs which have Laika elements like Panta Se Perimena. She said that I kardia sou petra is a Laika ballad but she sung it with her own way because she is not a Laika singer. She may sing these Laika songs only in the night clubs and she is looking around a lot before deciding which Laika songs is she going to perform. She chooses Laika songs that fit her, songs that she doesn't make look ridiculous while she is singing them and Laika songs that she loves. There are Laika songs that she loves but they don't fit to her so she doesn't dare to sing them. She doesn't want to release a Laika album because she thinks that only people, who do that well, deserve to do so. "I am singing pop music well, and that's what I'm gonna keep doing this in the future".

The fact that her 20 concerts became 30 in some days means to her that they have a huge success. She is happy because the cost of every concert is low (and that's why the tickets are cheap too) because she knows that people can't give much money for her and her concerts. She also believes that the sponsors are very important and she is thankful for that. She also said that in December/January the concert will be broadcasted by Alpha TV.

"The concert is the same everywhere we go". She doesn't want to go to Athens and have a super concert and (e.g.) in Santorini to be not so good, without a nice stage etc. "We have made it the way it is, in order to be possible to have exactly the same stage, dancers, lights, everywhere, even in small villages. The only difference will be Stavento and Sampanis, who will be with me in Patra, Thessaloniki and Athens." [The costumes differed from concert to concert, too!]

The presenter said that it is the first time ever that one singer has brought so many people in that radio station. The fact that she feels that people like her makes her feel even more responsible for her fans. "My life didn't chang rapidly and that keeps my legs on the earth. I don't think that I am a VIP because I became an artist, because I know that without those people I would be nothing. People can give you success and they can take it back faster than you think, if they believe that you don't deserve it."

"I feel that my personal life is not so normal since I became an artist. People and media have some rules that do not allow me to go out without make-up for example. I am 26 years old and there are things in my life that i haven't enjoyed normally. Some days I may feel not so good but my job doesn't allow me to show it, I have to entertain people so I have to hide my feelings. The result: The next day, I will have taken energy from the people or I will be awful for a week. Everyone has problems. The rich people have problems; the poor people have problems... everyone. It's not true that I don't have problems because I am an artist. Life is difficult for everyone."

She is egoistic and social. When she gets angry, she really does and her egoist in combination with her anger make her 'turbo'. She is also very polite and that's why she doesn't get mad

easily - but when she does, she gets really mad. Hara Safarika mentioned that she likes working.

About the new album Helena said that it’s too early and she doesn’t have any plans yet. But she confirmed 'Pirotehnimata' as the new single. "Much money were given for this album, every song has to be a single. We have to give time to an album."

live photos from Salonica 2008: KyprisAthina

Diktyo Radio, phone interview, Greece 2008 [Summery]

[Translation by unknown member]

She was at Kilkis at the time of the interview, where Tony's parents are living. She mentioned that she will not go on tour every summer but she will try to make tours every 2 summers. Her team which follows her in every tour is 50 people. They are planning the tour since last summer and she was feeling that she had to do it for her fans and the people who listen to her music. "It's time for me to go to them and not to make everyone come to Athens in order to see me live. I also care about the small kids who cannot come to Iera Odos in Athens because I start singing late at night and we made some concerts ideal for families, starting from 21:30 and finishing at 24:30. We will have fun, I will sing pop and traditional songs".

She thinks that the fact that she is on tour and she visits new places and people is very important. "When I was in Peloponnisos a big oil producer came to me and gave me 10 kg oil!"

"With Manos we had a great time in every island we've been. We've been to their traditional parties and we've danced to traditional songs with people. It was one of my sweetest experiences from the tour so far." She learned people's habits in every city she has been to and she wouldn't have managed to do that if she wasn't on tour because her schedule wouldn't allow that.

"For the first time in my life I had collaborations with many young guys for the new songs of 'Vrisko To Logo Na Zo'."

"My collaboration with Manos [Pyrovolakis] is great. With Manos we are very good friends and we have many things in common. We always have fun together. Manos is not really a traditional singer, he has a traditional instrument and he uses that in making modern and ethnic songs. He reminds us that we should go back and listen to our traditional music, too, sometimes."

"I wish I will keep doing good choices about my songs and collaborations and people keep loving my work. I've mentioned it many times, I feel responsible and I have to be a better person and a better artist in the future."

Photo of Helena & Manos Pyrovolakis taken by Thanos T. – many thanks!

L'Officiel Magazine, Greece 2008/2009: Authentic Star

[Interview: Evi Karatza – Translation: Tsouvli]

You are really sensitized on social and really substantial issues. I'd like you to tell me a bit about your inclination to help people and offer actively as regards the immigrants.
There is definitely sensitization on my side. I am an immigrant's child myself. In Sweden, where I've grown up, they even treat illegal immigrants with humanity until they return to where they came from.

So you believe that the treatment of immigrants in Greece is different to that in Sweden? That there, the government deals with the issue more effectively?
I can't judge what Greece (the Greek government) does or has done all these years. What I have to say for Greece is that we haven't realized all the problems our country has been through, we have been confused ourselves with our political beliefs. I am person with a political view, but I don't like expressing it openly because it's personal and tomorrow I may change my mind, because, as you said, I'm too young, and I don't want people to say: "She was a communist and then she changed sides" or the opposite, something you hear really often for artists and actors. I understand that the whole system should work fairly, everyone's papers should be legitimate, but those who can't do that (have legitimate papers), the government has to treat them with humanity, too. As far as the immigrants are concerned, the people who chose to come and live here, there has to be an easier way to adapt, for example they should be able to learn English or Greek to make it (their lives) easier. They should be educated to be able to find a job, because if you don't take care of that, how are they going to get a job and to pay their taxes? I believe that immigration does good (to the country) and never bad. First of all, the country grows (in population). Just like people grow up and get better thanks to their experience, that's what happens to a country too. I think that the whole planet is ours and everyone deserves it. And especially us, we Greeks, we should take care of our country and welcome every immigrant.

You are so young but you already have a really philosophized view on life.
I try to think out anything that happens around us because it concerns us... We have to be sensitized in many things because we don't know what's going to happen. I haven't been lucky enough to have children yet, but we have to be prepared for the next generation, for what we're going to leave behind.

Children though are in your program, it's something you'd like...
Of course, every woman wants it to happen sometime, I believe...It's just that we don't know how life is going to treat us. Every day we live is different. No matter how much we try, it's the same, it's impossible to take it for granted.

You have philosophized, have you even accepted the concept of death? It's a very important issue that most people can't handle, it's difficult to handle.
I think that no one wants to die before it's time, everyone wants to die in a normal age, full of years. Nowadays, even 55 or 65 is a young age. I, for example, do not consider my parents as old. I regard them as my friends, I hang out with them. Most of my friends are at their 40s and I feel like it's easier to socialize with people older than me.

Would you say you were mature as a child?
I wouldn't say that, I just hang out with older people and always felt the need to have responsibilities. Maybe that's why I was so young when I moved out. It's not logical for a 17-year-old person, raised in a Greek family, to leave home. I didn't live on my own, though, I immediately moved in with Toni.

It is indeed very rare, because the members of a Greek family are usually very close.
Imagine that my first record deal was signed by my parents. I got pretty tired because I was constantly in Stockholm, coming and going by plane, and I then I said "That's what I want to do (singing), and even if something changes and I need to get back to my parents, at least I'd like to do it."... Thankfully, it went great and there have been very nice people working with me, of course some of my partners have changed, but I like to be loyal to them. I always believed in team work. It's great because in our team we all have an opinion but if I feel that I, myself, do not support something 100%, I cannot do it. Like, for example, the past year, my image was sexier, but I think that no one could ever have misunderstood that.

No, especially you...
The clothes I wear on stage may be somewhat revealing, but my personal style is simple and a bit conservative. I mean, I'd rather choose a simple pair of jeans, wear my boots, my coat, hold an odd purse. I've definitely created a style of my own, which is not extreme at all. I watch the little girls that get so influenced by models, celebrities, everything they read on magazines and watch on TV, and they end up dealing with eating disorders, such an important issue. Young girls seem to forget one thing: that for a model, her body is her job, it has to be thin so that the designer clothes look better on them. I'm not a model. I'm a simple woman, as every other woman, and we all want to look great. I've heard reporters saying that I'm not very exercised. I don't want to be skinny, I don't want to have tight abs, but I want to be healthy. I go walking once or twice a week. I don't need to lift weight, work out my abs or over exercise. The most important thing in our lives is being healthy: have a healthy diet and exercise. Of course, there are overweight people that have to deal with a big problem, but a good diet is not helpful enough, especially when they have a lot of extra weight. There are also medical operations, as far as I know, for example in Sweden, they are free by the government itself. However, there is racism. For a human, it’s psychological pain. Is it not enough that they have to live with it, do they have to be notorious? That way, they feel cut off. They can't even get a job easily... Eventually, only the soul is human, not even the brain. In our job, of course, we need it, but having a brain and no soul is nothing. That’s what we should consider the most important.

You have the soul, you have the mind and the voice –everyone knows that. What is it that has kept you from having an international career, what people wonder and expect from you?
After Eurovision, I had no complete English album, I only had four English songs. For me, when an artist is having an international career, it’s not enough to only have one hit song, because I’ve already done this with My Number One – It was #8 in the official charts , it was even played in Asia a lot. But that doesn’t mean that Helena Paparizou is having an international career. The truth is I never had the time to do it, visit all those countries. Of course, in another view, when I came to Greece with Antique, that was my international career for me. We were even selling more than Britney Spears in the Balkan peninsula. In Germany we reached the top 100. On the other hand, there is still a contract between me and Sony, but

that doesn't mean that the company has ever stopped me. It's just that nowadays, record companies are in a crisis. When they used to sign 10 upcoming artists, now they can only sign one. Records don't sell as much as they used to. iTunes are now part of our lives, and you can download songs for free… Things have changed. However, someday I will do it. I know I have my partners' complete support. Everything needs its time, though, and mainly I want to have time for me and my family.

I see that you're a perfectionist and you want to make this step right…
I want to do things right and not rushed. I don't think I've failed in anything. Of course, there's always the possibility of failing, because I may go abroad and flop. But, on the other hand, I'm not dissatisfied from what I already have. Imagine how many people here in Greece are trying to make it in singing and they can't. They're not as lucky as I am. Because, being good is not enough, you need to be smart and lucky, succeed in the right time and to have the right partners.

You have a unique energy and a great magnetism. Plus all these years you have remained original. Do you think this is because you haven't grown up in Greece?
The biggest blessing we have is our own planet. Because I believe in God, I think that we should be very proud by everything He made, and that way I have a lot of positive energy inside me. I like the fact that I'm not on my own on Earth, I co-exist. I love that I exist, I feel myself, I feel like an independent and strong woman and I like showing it. I don't like people putting me in a corner and asking me "Family or career?" I only hear that in Greece. Does being an artist mean that I should exist and die alone?

In summer, the media dealt a lot with your personal life. Is that whole thing bothering you? Do you think they're violating you in some way?
That's the cost (of being a celebrity). There are, however, and there have to be limits. It's like you inviting me for a coffee to your house, in your living-room, and catch me looking through your stuff. This is violation. I accept people in my living-room but I don't want people looking through my stuff. Of course, I have to say that media have treated me well, except for one or two cases which I have ignored. Smart people make mistakes, but they never make the same mistake twice.

Do you have friends in showbiz?
Most of my friends are not celebrities. Hanging out with those people makes me forget that I'm a celebrity. On the other hand, I live with a musician.

Are you a different person in your personal life, than what you are on stage?
I'm not the same person, and I started realizing that by the time I had a break, sat and rest. My business life goes fast and lots of things happen. Those seven years I had constantly been working, made me one with my business life. That's why I wanted to rest, and now I like finding time for myself and rest. I definitely have a thousand daily problems but every time I get into my green room, it's like wearing a mask. I'm not pretending on stage, but it's just a role. On stage, I am Paparizou, I'm not Elena. I may have been through a difficult day in personal, but at night, Paparizou will eventually save Elena psychologically. It's a psychological treatment. I also believe that if I ever feel like my career is declining, it's Elena that will help Paparizou.

What are your plans and your dreams for the future?
I'll tell you what my current dream is, which I should have already made it true. I want to have an international career. We're already looking for songs for the English album. I've spoken to people from abroad. I can see myself at least trying.

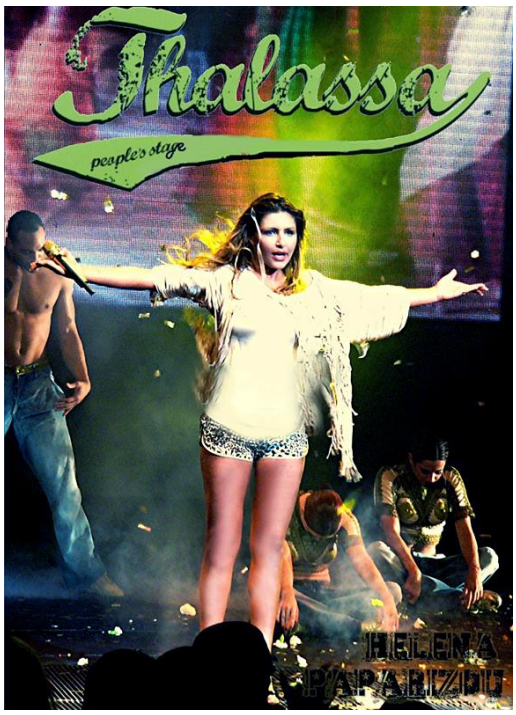
Has the economic crisis affected your (plural) job?
Definitely, but I think that the huge crisis hasn't affected Greece yet.

Do you think it's going to?
I think we have to be prepared for it when the crisis comes, but it may not even come. In Greece, family members help the rest of their family, which is something you may not see abroad. We Greeks can find the way to deal with it.

Pink Woman Magazine, Greece 2009: Belle Hélène

[Interview: Giannis Poulopoulos – Translation: Giannis R.]

She is so beautiful that you stare at her like watching fireworks in the sky. The way she thinks is so mature that you couldn't imagine her being different. If you are trying to find a single word to describe Helena Paparizou, that would be "authentic".



Friday night, at Helena's dressing room, Thalassa People's Stage. She welcomed me with a pair of jeans and a black shirt, without any make-up. I didn't tell her, but she looked like the 17-year-old girls who would be screaming for her in a while, when they would be listening her singing a heavy metal version of "My Number One". This summer is not going to be different for her since the word "holidays" is again an unknown one to her. "My holidays are going to be at Thalassa People's Stage with Stavento and 15-50", she says smiling. I am watching her while performing on stage. I am wondering once again why does she stay here instead of going after her dream of an international career. After a while she replied. "When we were working for my first English album, "The Game of Love", we decided to release it in spring so I would be abroad till October, aiming at promoting the album", she explained. "But unfortunately, the album was released in autumn and I wasn't able to promote it. I had contracts running and I had to stay in Greece. But, to be honest, since I am 27 years old now, the chances of making a European and not international career are few. This doesn't mean that I wouldn't like to try for a second time, even if I fail". While she's speaking, I couldn't avoid looking at her amazing body, neither the questions about diets, exercising and plastic surgeries.

What do you have to sacrifice in order to keep yourself in a good shape?
I am trying to eat healthy and exercise. But food is one of the most enjoyable things in life and because we live only once I am not willing to deny it. What should I be doing? Being hungry in order to look beautiful? I am not a model! I don't care about having five kilos more or five less, it seems that other people care about them more than I do.

Which is the toughest diet you have ever followed?
I have never followed a diet in my life! Two years ago, I had a metabolic problem because of stress and I used to gain weight even by drinking water. I went to a doctor, he explained the problem to me and he gave me a specific diet. You have to know though that it contained seven meals per day!

Have you ever thought that Toni maybe wouldn't like you anymore if you decide to gain weight?
If you don't like the way you look no one will like you either. I think sometimes, even if it sounds bad, we should care about us and do what we want and not what others tell us to do.

When Toni gained some weight, did you find him less sexy?
Implying that a person can't be loved by others because he is overweight is - at least – racial in my opinion. It's like saying that we should not love people of a different color, nation or religion. I am anything but racist.

Would you dare to make a plastic surgery to improve the way you look?
Yes, I would dare to make a face lifting if I feel that I need it. And I believe that if someone thinks that a plastic surgery would help his sense of insecurity he should do it. It would be good though if we try not to exaggerate and avoid them when being in a small age.

If you had ever made a plastic surgery, would you reveal it to the public?
I had a breast augmentation done. I wanted to do it and I did it, I don't think I should hide it. The funny thing is that they had been writing that I had it done before I actually did it. When I decided to do it, no one asked about it.

At your age, your mother must be telling you to get married.
Not at all! My parents never told me to do something if I didn't want to do it. I feel great the way I am.

When you randomly find wedding magazines, don't you search them to find a wedding dress that suits you?
Of course I do, I'm a woman, too, but marriage is not something I am interested in right now. When a couple is happy as it is, you don't want anything more than that.

If Toni was here tomorrow and asked you to marry him, what would you tell him?
I would prefer telling the answer to him only [laughing].

Has he ever asked you to marry him?
No.

Could you describe the way you have imagined your marriage?
I have always wanted a person who loves me, I have never thought about the ceremony itself.

Would you invite the media to your marriage, or you would prefer it to be held secretly?
It could be a secret marriage. When you are still young you imagine them all being romantic but when someone's doing this job he can't have everything the way he wants.

They say that girls realize that their boyfriend is suitable for them when they see in him the father of their children. Does it apply to you, too?
I believe that men say this for women. Women just want their man to be a real man. That's what matters. What I like about Toni these 10 years we have been together is that he supports me not even at the good times but at the bad ones also.

Has your biological clock rung yet?
Children mean a lot to me. Before coming here I went to my brother's house and I was playing with my nephews. I think that every woman is ready to become a mother. A child is the most beautiful creation in this world.

Would you like your child to get something that you and Toni have?
I just want it to be a good child. I want other people to feel that too, not only his mother. I really hope it will be healthy.

Was there any time period that you and Toni had problems with your relationship?
Not really. We always understood each other. Little fights will always be there but if you think about it even they are nice because when they are finished you get an extra hug!

Did you ever contact the magazines which had been writing that you and Toni were apart in order to stop those lies?
I didn't have to. In these cases the best thing you can do is stay quiet because truth will be revealed sooner or later. What makes me sad is that these people who write this stuff are not brave enough to sign their articles.

How much did Toni help you to get over the loss of your father?
As I mentioned before, Toni has always been by my side. For every child who loses his father, no matter his age the loss hurts the same. I remember my mother being really depressed when my grandmother passed away even though she was old. That's why I cannot think about marriage right now. This is not a happy period of my life and I can't be thinking about happy stuff. The only thing that helps me is knowing that my father enjoyed his life.

Was it difficult for you to sing on stage the same day that the funeral of your father was held?
It was really hard. That day I couldn't do the whole show, only a small part of it. God gave me power. But you know what? Helena is not the same as Paparizou. You have to separate those two. This way Paparizou doesn't feel the way Helena does. Or Helena could behave Paparizou when needed. When I am on stage I am miss Paparizou and I have to entertain the people. When I watch them being happy I gain power to move on. You cannot imagine how much did my fan club help me and I would like to thank them all so much! Even during their exam period they were coming to Iera Odos just to see me, for the first part of my show and then they were leaving! I think that was what I needed, nothing more. I would also like to thank the journalists who respected me and my family and left us mourning without any disturbance from the media.

What's the relationship between you, the God and the church?
I believe in God and I confess every day. For me confession is even a discussion you can do with yourself or a close friend or your husband through which you will be able to feel the repentance. The biggest church is the one we feel inside us. I really like going to church and this period I am reading again the Bible.

What did your prayer contain last night?
It is a really nice one that my aunt told me about: "I am falling down, I pray, I consider myself God's servant and I am not afraid of anyone".

Definitely the best and most unexpected way to end an interview! Helena, hope you will be always healthy!

Ihos FM Radio/Crete, Greece 2009

[Translation by Samiamiditsi]

What kind of preparations have you made for the concert at Iraklion, this Wednesday night?
First of all I must say that it is scheduled for 21.00, at the Pagriteion Stadium. Manos Pyrovolakis and Stavento will join me; they're totally different artists, but we believe that music units everybody, and apart from that we are very good friends. We have many things to say and to share with the people. It will be a party full of rhythm, dancing, "kefi", with a range of songs from hip hop, traditional, rock, pop, and we will certainly dance a lot.

This summer you haven't done a tour...
I've only made two concerts this summer, but I also performed at Thalassa People's Stage, where we started with Stavento, but as they had to go on their own tour, I perform with Loukas [L. Yiorkas, Greek representer in Eurovision 2011] now.

For which reason did you decide to give this concert at Iraklion?
Last year the concert scheduled was cancelled due to bad weather, and wish us luck this year, to give this concert and to bring all the people together to have a good time. Last year, it was the last concert from the tour that I was going to give and I was very upset [because it had to be cancelled], and I feel like I owe this concert to the people and that is another reason why I set up a concert at Iraklion this year. To Cyprus I go every two years. [Indeed – several summer concerts took place there in 2007, 2009 and 2011]

Will there be a repackage of the album "Vrisko to logo na zo"?
I will start now recording the new album [Gyro Apo T'Oneiro], which will be released in early 2010 and I imagine that it will be totally Greek, as the disc is for Greece.

Do you like mostly day or night?
With the habit of many years working at night, the night is something very special, has a different aura than the day. The day is something else and the night is something that I love very much.

There are many listeners who ask me if you have a profile on facebook.
I have, but under a pseudonym and I have it mainly for meeting again my childhood friends from Sweden.

Which is your 'relationship' with the Internet?
[Laughing:] I will say this: many years ago when I was at school, we had just started school, we learned about the internet, how we make all these homepages and a teacher asked us to make our own site, our homepage on the internet, but I disagreed. I didn't want someone to enter it and read who I am, how old I am, who are my parents, what's my dog's name and all that and they punished me to read two books of Dostoyevsky. So, I did not concern myself with this process from very early and now with the work and as I grow, I have to deal more with this, because it is also my job, with the emails and all these things.

When will you come to Thessaloniki?
We are trying to organize it for next year and do again a second major tour in Greece.

What is it that you like best on your work?
I can express myself with different people, because the lyrics of each song are not my own. There is a piece of hypocrisy in it, expressed in somebody else's words and I think it is very nice. In the sense that you can express yourself with somebody else's words, puts yourself in another situation.

Which is your relationship with the media? Do you feel any how disappointed?
All these years we had a very good relationship. I think it is mutual, I am very gentle with them and they are very polite with me, except two, three times when the tabloid press has written some things, but it passes.

You have a career abroad, and many collaborations. In terms of production of disks or live events do you think that it is far ahead of Greece?
What has quite a big difference in the ear, is the producing, saying the orchestrations. They have another conception of music. That is, the Greek music is played differently, but it is not something that bothers me. I like that each place stands in its way.

Has the economic crisis strongly influenced the music industry in Greece?
Very much in the way that artists do not sell so many records, artists are reducing too, yes; when a company diminishes it is dwindling by artists too. I believe that we should respect every kind of art and not do illegal downloads. There are legal downloads and I am not at all against them. And that's because I have seen some situations one saying why do we bother, we, the artists, as long as we make money from live events and the appearances, but it is not just us. There are all those who work on the albums, creating the covers, the sound engineers, people who write songs - too many people are fed back from a disk. Behind this work are hundreds of people.

Although you are a fairly successful singer, you have anxiety every time with the release of a new album, whether it goes wrong?
Always. This anxiety never leaves any artist. And as much as we believe that "yes, I support all of this work and I love her and I had a good time during the recording and creation", it is not quite like that with the people (meaning: they may not like it). So, I think, too, that as the years pass and an artist passes too, he will always have doubts, or otherwise, an uncertainty. When I sat and rested for two years before the release of «Vrisko to Logo na Zo», I had huge anxiety about this particular album, because I changed all the timbre, the tone of the songs and said that the world is accustomed to Elena's songs such as “Gigolo”, “Mambo”, “My number one” and whether they would like a song with a voice that is more rock and heavier.

Do you think an artist should be renewed or is this sometimes a little dangerous, meaning to lose his music identity?
I think it is very important to mature with our music and not just do surprises. That is we must feel if there is a change in style or that we do it because we feel the same. Although there are many who write the songs and then again different people who write the verse, you represent them, so the song should be you, the artist. You should be able to support it.

Any message to the listeners of Ihos FM?
I send all my love to all the listeners of your station in Rethymnon, be always well, with good health, and whoever can, come to Iraklion!

live photos from *Thalassa* 2009: KyprisAthina

Cosmo Radio, Greece 2009: MTV European Music Awards

[Summary – Translation: Samiamiditsi]

Thanking MTV Greece for her candidacy and the public for voting for her as “Best Greek Act” among artists such as Matisse, Monika, Professional Sinnerz and Onirama, "highly qualified and very different", as she says, Helena feels very happy to represent the Greek pop scene in Europe. On November 5, in Berlin, Helena "will go to attend and watch a great music festival" and will compete with 21 other winners from the national MTV Award for “Best European Act”. The nomination of the favorite European artist rests at the audience of MTV, who can vote on the website: www.mtvema.com. "Whoever is a candidate, it's like as if he/she has taken half the prize. Simply someone will take it home", she said disarmingly. She wants to reach the quintet because she merits it and not by force. "If I do not deserve it I will not get it" she said. What we expect from Helena Paparizou, is a second international album. "Inside me there is always the thought for a second international album and I want to have time to work on it. There are some ideas we are talking about with Sony ... I hope that the European Music Awards will help me", she added.

She has begun to record her new album, due to be released in early 2010. We will see her again on tour, which will begin this summer. She chose to rest when she released the album "Vrisko to logo na zo", because she wants to enjoy it..."The better I spend my time, the better the result will be." Produced by Giannis Doxas, the new disk will include songs by George Sabanis and Eleana Vrachali. The orchestration again will be conducted by Nicolas Olausson and Toni Mavridis. Is it going to be an album, like the Helena we are used to? In the previous album she dared some small changes in timbre. Of course, the sounds of Toni and Nicolas, as she said, "reaches a sound similar to my character. It reminds me of Helena. Always with the help of the lyrics and the way I express them. But the disk will be pop, as I am pop".

She rules out the possibility of a third contribution, but ... "maybe sometime I may write a song". Perhaps one day we could see her as a presenter, but much later. In the competition for the MTV EMA she will meet another acquaintance from Eurovision, Dima Bilan. "He has done some excellent work before and after Eurovision”, she noted.

"My career is in Greece and for this I am very happy ... I am very happy to be loved by the Greeks and by those who have heard me in Sweden", said Helena Paparizou, stressing that it is very difficult for an artist to make an international career as he/she must be based abroad. She was lucky, as she noted, that some of her songs, such as “My number one”, “The light in our soul” and “Mambo!” were heard abroad. “Because some songs are heard abroad this does not mean that an artist makes an international career," she noted.

Without having a high opinion of herself, she feels the need to come very close to people. "Not only because people want it, it is me who needs to have the people near me". She didn't want to talk about personal issues, stressing that she hasn't surpassed yet the death of her father. "People that have lost a very close relative can understand... when someone grieves, he grieves. And I still have not got over it. So you can imagine what my answer is, period.

ESCtoday.com, Greece 2009: Will Helena Paparizou do Eurovision again?

Helena Paparizou is one of the most popular Greek artists at the moment. She holds the record for her country, having managed to achieve two top three places in the Eurovision Song Contest in 2001 and in 2005, when she actually won it with “My Number One. Now, Helena is faced yet with another challenge, as she was nominated for the prestigious MTV Best European Act Award against 2008 Eurovision Song Contest winner, Dima Bilan, and Swedish Melodifestivalen 2009 finalist, Agnes. Esctoday.com caught up with Helena in Athens for a brief chat about her nomination, her Eurovision experience and, of course, we couldn't help asking if she is willing to do it again!

You are not a novice in competing on a large scale having won the largest musical competition for your country back in 2005. Now you are once again in a very important competition, the prestigious MTV Best European Act. How does that make you feel?
I feel very happy and proud but at the same time very anxious! This time, though, I am not competing with a song but as an artist, among 21 very good singers. Good luck to all of us!

How hard is it for an artist not from, say, the UK or the USA to break the borders and have an international career?
It is very difficult but I believe if you want something very much you can reach your goal, more or less. Among all my awards, I am very proud of the EBBA (the European Border Breakers Awards) which I got in 2006.

Looking back since 2005, when you won the Eurovision Song Contest, would you say your victory has affected your career? In which way?
It has definitely affected my career and only in good ways. It's a huge thing to become famous overnight and to have great fans all over Europe.

What is your fondest memory from the contest?
The moment that the zipper of my dress broke 10 minutes before my performance. (Helena laughs). And of course the moment I was running back to the stage after winning.

What was your relationship with the Eurovision fans from all over Europe? Did their support help you?
Oh! The fans’ support has been amazing all the way! I love my Eurovision fans and I thank them from the bottom of my heart.

You were born and raised in Sweden, who granted you with their valuable 12 points in 2005. Do your plans include some career moves there?
Well, actually, I sang two songs in Swedish for the soundtrack of Arn No 2, with well-known composers, such as Anders Glennmark, Niclas Strostedt and Eva Dahlgren. I do have in mind, though, to release something very soon. Now that you remind me of the 12 points from Sweden, I remember myself standing at the table screaming "Heja Sverige, Heja Sverige"... ask your Swedish friends what that means!

What are your immediate plans? A new album on the way?
I have just started to record my new Greek album which will be released within early spring 2010. Meantime, I will also record songs for the upcoming international CD.

Would you do Eurovision again? For Greece, or maybe for Sweden?
As a performer I wouldn't like to compete again, but maybe as a composer. Why not? And of course I'm talking about both of my home countries.

And last but not least, do you have a message for your European fans?
I love you all and hope to see you soon. Kisses and a lot of sugar!

DownTown Magazine, Greece 2009: I didn't have a breast augmentation done in order to show off!

[Interview: Nikos Georgiadis. translation: Giannis R.]

Helena Paparizou: The sexiest Greek star admits she was suffering from depression, denies the rumours about any secret marriage and asks for our vote in the European competition of MTV. The plastic surgery she wanted to have for years, her marriage with Tony which never happened, the international career that has fallen behind, the kilos that come and go, the loss of her father which she still hasn't got over, the unexpected MTV award. Helena Paparizou's getting older (okay, she's barely 28 years old), becoming stronger and redefining the limits of her image. After seven hours of photoshooting at a suite of *Vouliagmeni Suites* there's much to be learned about Paparizou. Like the fact that she is acrophobic and allergic to nuts. She sleeps a maximum of five hours per day (in order not to waste the day), she has a loud laughter, she's currently out of the habit of wearing high heels, because she hasn't been working for a while. She has missed the cold Swedish weather as well. But she enjoys the everyday cooking as well as inventing new recipes. Also, she always has a nice story to tell. The Greek brunette, who some years ago was causing chaos in her class because she was the noisy one among the quiet and honky Swedish children, made it to Europe's number one in 2005 and is now representing Greece again at the European awards of MTV. Voting is once again up to the public, but this time the votes are given via the internet and everyone can vote as many times as he/she wants on every MTV website (Belgium, Sweden, Portugal etc.).

Do you agree with those people who are worried when they take some time off from work? When the season comes to an end and I am aware of the fact that for three months I am not going to work as much as I did, I get sad. On the other hand, while I'm working I can't wait for that moment to come. Actually the only thing I'm not doing right now is performing at a venue at nights, because I'm recording my new album. But, you know what? Getting older changes your demands from life.

What are your demands now? Now my family is bigger than before – my brother was married and has twins – and I want to help his wife with the kids, but I also want to be able to visit my mother in Sweden. My other nephews living there are getting older and soon they won't want to see me.

Maybe they would want even more to see you, as soon as they realize how useful it is to have a famous aunt. For them I am just Helena. I play with them, I yell at them and they yell at me! The big one is 7 years old and he has realized it. First time he saw me on stage was in 2004 at *Thalassa* and he was only 2,5 years old. Despite the fact that his father comes from Iran, he is 100% «Paparizos». I remember him standing on a couch, dancing, holding a glass and shouting «Ya Mas!».

After the loss of your father last Christmas, you didn't stop working till September. Was this something that helped you? Last summer I did the tour and then I really wanted to work again with Paschalis Terzis. Then I was aiming at recording my new international album and then having some rest. But since I lost my father, I didn't want to write any songs. I was watching the microphone and I was scared of it, I couldn't create something new in the studio. As a result I fell behind.

Many people are wondering about the reason why your attempt to achieve international recognition was left behind. We have already recorded three songs. One of them was actual-

ly written for my father. When you lose one of your parents, you are forced to mature, to test your limits. As a result, some people suffer from serious depression and receive medication while others visit a psychologist.

How did you deal with it? I am very close to my family and I had many people around me. Even friends who are doctors supported me. Everybody suffers from depression for a while after such an event.

How much did it last in your case? I think I'm not over it yet. It's very hard to get over a depression and I happen to know that very well because I went through the same situation when I was a young girl. I even had to receive special treatment back then. What really helps though, is knowing deep inside that we want and we can get better.

I cannot even imagine how difficult it must have been for you getting on stage again after your father passed away. Very difficult. Luckily, I had the support of Paschalis as well as the support of the owner of the venue. For 1,5 months I didn't do the «laiko» program. The funeral was held on a Thursday, and during the same day I had to perform on stage. This was the hardest thing I ever did in my life. But it was my own decision. And I made it. Many wondered how did I manage to pull it off. But I know that my father would have wanted me to do what I did. I remember my mother always telling me *«that father of yours was always saying that his little girl would make his name famous»*. It happened because he wanted it so much. When he passed away, everyone was wondering how am I supposed to get back on stage. So my sister, who is ten years older than me and my brother and we always think of her as a second mother, said that *«if my father was here right now, he would have told you the following joke: A Jewish father arrives at home and asks: "Abraham, my child, where are you?„. - "I'm here dad„. "Isaac, my child, where are you?„. - "I'm here dad„. "Then who the hell is at the store?»*. Someone had to work; you cannot give up. In such cases, «Paparizou» helps «Helena». Singing's what makes me feel free. Fortunately I know that my dad died while he was dancing, he didn't feel any pain.

What about your relationship with your mother? Has it changed? After an event like that, you are getting closer to your other parent, as part of the fear you feel of losing him/her as well. We usually take our parents for granted, believing that they will always be there for us. But at some point you realize that this is not true. We used to be a big family and from being all together in Sweden we (*meaning:* the kids) left and they were alone. They retired and suddenly they realized that they shouldn't have worked that much the past years, having no time left for their children. Then *(meaning*: when Helena and her brothers/sisters left the house*)* my mother was 53 years old and my father 58 years old. So they started English lessons. Then my father started computer lessons. Till then I only knew how to get my e-mails and browsing Facebook. A few months before he passed away he called me: *«Hey. Father calling. Grab a pen and a paper. Write down my e-mail address. Next week you will have installed Skype, in order for us to talk via the computer because I am now retired and I don't have that much money to spend on our phone bills». «Dad, what is Skype?»*, I replied; *«it is a program that allows you to make video calls»*. He was very up-to-date.

I think though that visiting Sweden is good for you. Last time I came back from Sweden I was feeling like an angel. Tony picked me up from the airport and he was nervous about work. So I looked at him and told him (*her voice becoming deep and sensual*): *«Tony, relax»*. The way of life in Sweden is different. In Gothenburg you can reach any place in ten minutes. So I was there recently, went to our loft and discovered many old photos from our childhood. We spent three nights sorting them out with my sister. In every picture I was posing. I was craving everyone's attention!

Helena on the weighing-machine

I have noticed that you are never stable in your weight. This was the case even when I was a little girl. One summer I was skinny, the other not so much.
I remember how much skinny you used to be at the «Die For You» era. I was 53 kg back then. I wasn't anorexic, nor bulimic; I just couldn't eat because of the stress. But after my first allergic reaction I was down to 49 kg. I was afraid of eating even bread. I was just drinking water. I have a photo from this period and each time I look at it I get scared. I wasn't feeling good when I was so skinny. Do you remember that white dress from the 2001 Eurovision? It was supposed to be a slim fit and in the end it looked more like a bag. I had lost four kilos in two and a half weeks. Nowadays I control my stress. No matter how nervous I am, I always say to myself that I deserve five minutes to eat some food. On the other hand, it's not the weight that defines Helena. I understand that, as a pop image and as an example I might be for some people, I have to look healthy. Currently I have gained 5 more kilos, because I am not as active as I normally would have been. Besides, I'm a singer. The important thing for me is people to understand that I'm a good person and also protecting my voice.
Is it disturbing for you, the fact that people say that you have gained much weight? I will give them a gift-wrapped weighing-machine! It's strange, the fact that these people care about this subject much more than I do.
Apart from your weight, they also care about your personal life. Magazines may want you ending your relationship and getting married at the same time. (*laughing*) At the same time! I don't care about them; I do care though about some bad comments. They wrote that I've lost a baby, that I've had an abortion after my father died. That was awful.
But would you admit it, if it were true? Me losing a baby is none of anyone's business. Nowadays women lose their babies very easily. They don't need to know that. It's a sad thing and if it occurs, women must get over it with themselves.
But you do want to be a mother. Every woman wants to be a mother.
Natalia Germanou does not. I believe that eventually she will. It doesn't have to be her biological child necessarily; it could be the child of her best friend that she may want to take care of like it was her own.
Cannot really believe that you have married Tony secretly in Sweden. No! When you are grieving over your father, you cannot just go and get married. Grieving doesn't last a month or a year, it lasts as much as it has to in order for you to be able to move on. Currently my priorities are different. My personal life is fine as it is. I haven't got married 10 years now, there's no way I would do it now.
After ten years of shared life with Tony, does it really matter in the end whether you are married or not? Taking an oath in front of God's eyes is nice, even if you look at it just as a romantic procedure. But you have to remain faith to that oath you gave. I prefer not to get married and be right rather than getting married with every part of it being a mistake. Each time I hear about someone getting married I'm very happy though. I don't pretend to be modern or snob, but, as I have said before, I feel married already. Marriage is not the first thing crossing my mind when I wake up in the morning.
Do you and Tony talk about it? We pretend it doesn't exist! But each time someone else talks about it addressing to us we say *«here we go again!»*. In order for the marriage to be romantic, it has to be held during the first five years maximum.
Your lives though, are now strongly connected. You two are one. I would never want this. We do live in the same house, but I like it if someone has his own life as well. We are different

and at the same time we complete one another. Otherwise we wouldn't have managed to stay together for so many years. We don't press one another; we are relaxed instead.
How easy is it to prevent a relationship from wearing out? Surely we don't have that blind passion of our first two years. But the most important thing is the normal development of a relationship. You can be love-struck once or twice in a lifetime, Nikos. If you reach a certain age, you're not on the lookout for the big love, but for the right person. Even if you don't get immediately the love you need. Your soul mate is not necessarily the perfect lover or your big love, but the person who has gained your respect. Sex cannot be taught, you can just discuss it with your partner in order to improve it. Once I asked a male friend of mine – because as you have realized, I hang out with men mostly – who is 44 years old, if he prefers a good housewife and average lover than the other way round. He told me that he wants her to be a good housewife because it wouldn't be a problem for him to teach her to be a good lover. This was a typical response from a Greek man! Sex is a game for two. The only thing you can do is improving it, not teaching it. You are sexy, or you are not; there's no other option.
Do you feel sexy, Helena? I'm at an age that the presence of my feminine side is intense. Now I know that I can be beautiful even when I'm just sitting. A friend of mine told me: *«Helena, you are still in the beginning».* It may sound silly, I don't know, but I think that women feel better with themselves as they're getting older.
Obviously you are satisfied with your image. I am satisfied with my soul. If I didn't feel good with my soul, I wouldn't feel good with my image either.
I'm telling you this because it takes a lot of guts to admit in public that you had a breast enlargement done, provided that you didn't need the promotion. I hadn't planned to say it. It just happened. We all notice some imperfections in our body. I wanted to do it for many years. I discussed the possibility of having a plastic surgery with many doctors, before I made the final decision to do it. The relationship between the doctor and the patient is similar to the relationship between the parent and the child. You need to feel secure in order to trust him. So I didn't do it until I found a person that made me feel this way. He respected my wishes, he didn't tell me *«that's the way I'm doing it, end of story»*. And still, we had many meetings before we took the step forward.
But let me just play the devil's advocate for a minute. Have you thought that, since you are a model for many young girls, having a plastic surgery would pass the wrong message to them: «go ahead and have plastic surgeries, in order to become prettier»? First of all I didn't undergo more than one plastic surgery. It was a wish of mine, in order for me to feel more «feminine». In addition, I didn't have it when I was 18, but when I was 27. The point is that we should not exaggerate and butcher ourselves. Last year I put on 10 kilos. The easy way out for me would have been to undergo a liposuction. No. Whoever wants to lose weight, he/she should work out and stop eating too much. I eat whatever I want, but I serve it in a smaller dish. I lost those kilos the healthy way, with jogging.
If Tony told you «don't have the plastic surgery, I like you just the way you are», what would you have done? But I didn't do it for Tony, or anyone else. I didn't have a breast augmentation done in order to show off. I want it to look natural. There are limits in everything. Drink, but don't get drunk. Put some make-up on, but don't look like a tranny show! I hate to see young girls putting on double layers of make-up and powder as well. They just don't have to.

MTV loves Helena

You are really close to enter the top 5, which will compete on the 5th of November at the European MTV awards. (Helena's representing Greece at the MTV competition for the "Best European Act„ among 21 other artists from all over Europe. The public can vote for the winner on the Internet. We may vote as much as we want from all the European MTV websites). It's becoming a national matter again. But it is. Since I'm representing the Greek song, I'm carrying with me the flag of my country. I don't care about my current position on the chart; I just want to be there. I will learn on the 2nd of November, when the voting of the countries ends. It would be okay if nothing happens. But I would be so happy to wear a nice dress and walk on the red carpet.
This year the competition is tough. Dima Bilan and Pixie Lott are all over the charts. Agnes as well; she has a hit in the Billboard top 10. Dima Bilan and I are there because of Eurovision. I guess that all the eurofans, who follow the winners of the contest, are going to vote.
Can you imagine your future in Greece? I enjoy living in Greece. I like the fact that it's now 2:00 in the morning of Monday and I know that I could still go out and eat somewhere or have fun. In Sweden there's nothing to do on Sundays. It's like a "dead„ day, the sun sets early, too. Even the video clubs close at 20:00! I've always wanted to be here. Even when I was a little girl, every time I came back to Sweden from our vacation in Greece I cried. I was waiting for the winter to end in order to go back to Greece.

Minutes before leaving the suite – which reminds us of a war zone after the photo shooting – we should probably mention that the song *"Pirotechnimata„*, which became one of her biggest hits, was a last-minute addition to the album. «In terms of instrumentation, this song really gave as a hard time in the studio. I recorded this particular song all alone in the studio. I kicked everyone out of it, at 3:00 in the morning (*Helena and Tony have installed a professional recording studio in their house in Glyfada*) and it was only the machinery and I left! But Doxas' lyrics are amazing as well: *"I broke down mountains for your love; I wanted you to see me; like your God, like an angel; like a dream you live in and love*».

Orange FM Radio, Greece 2010, March 22: Fan Zone

[Interview: Panos Deligiannis and Stamatina Tsimtsili - Translation: Derek]

Panos & Stamatina: We are on air again, on Orange, and of course here with us we have Helena Paparizou today!
Elena: ..and all Paparizou fans are tuned in! [laughing]
Stamatina: We've received plenty of messages on the internet and in our mail inbox, havoc!
Elena: I just want to say… since I had time to read one message asking if I received Paparizou forum's present for my birthday: Yes I received all the presents and I especially like the box...
Stam.: Do they send you presents?
Elena: Yes, they have sent me very beautiful presents and there was particularly…one big fan of mine...from Germany [Austria actually, we are talking about Andriana], who had sent me a very beautiful little box with a photo of mine on it, a box to place in my jewelry, to have it with me in my dressing room or wherever I go to put my things in there, so thanks a lot for that! My fans create a lot of unusual/innovative things, I love them very much…
Stam.: Please mention something that made great impression to you, Elena.
Elena: Eh… well first of all I will have to say: How do you call these little things we used to play with when we were kids?
Stam. : Cubes.
Elena: A Cube, with a photo by a fan from Chios, Markella. And again my friend from Germany [yes, this time it's right, but now we are talking about KyprisAthina] she had created - it looked professional- a magazine which was entitled Paparizou Museum.[90] It was like a museum, which had all the photos of me, and people turning their heads to look at them… like the Louvre. [It is the Louvre!] People walk and look around… it was… my fans create very nice things!
Stam. : Did it ever happen to you that a fan approached you and was trembling, with you having that feeling that he/she was trembling and feeling very anxious?
Elena: Of course. And at the same time they hold chocolate to offer me and want to kiss me and hug me! [laughing]
Elena: We are back on Orange 93.2 along with Stamatina and Panos!
Stam. : I think we can keep that and play it every time we are on air. I like it!
Elena laughes.
Panos: Exactly. We will keep it of course
Stam. : So, there is havoc among your fans who claim that they will come from abroad and they have booked their tickets to come to Greece.
Elena: Yes, see when I was previously talking about Germany, I meant Rebecca, you know I couldn't… eh… my head wasn't functioning correctly to say her name. I see here that..: "Andriana from Austria, Akos from Hungary, Rebecca from Germany, Tina from Czech Republic, Chris and Natalie from the UK have already booked their flights to be in Athens around June the 30th especially for your concert!" Thank you guys, I would really really expect you and I hope you will enjoy it!
Stam. : Tell me, what kind of fans are those who come… I mean… how much…?
Elena: Look, the truth is, that in summer when I was at Club Thalassa, they had come by 2-3 times!
Stam.: Don't you feel very honored?

[90] Issue 3/2009 of our magazine "Paparicious", incl. the "Paparicious Museum" - find these artworks also inside this book – look for the "Parizeum"!

Elena: It’s a great honor, sure, of course. I love them and I try to dedicate some time to them. Especially... it’s already an honor when they come from the other corner of Athens to see you, but especially when they come from the UK etc.!

Real News Newspaper, Greece 2010: All around the Dream

[Interview: Maria Sigala - Translation: Samiamiditsi]

When she enters the offices of "R", all heads turn towards her direction with a domino rhythm to admire this gorgeous woman. The "who is it?" does not remain in the air for too long. It's Helena! And on March 28 she comes back better than ever with a brand-new CD!

You are a professional singer. How did we go from the question "when comes out the next CD?" to the question "When comes out the next DVD?" [Apparently referring to the sticky DVD of the famous to all Greeks Julia Alexandratou]
No comments! [laughing] I will only say that we must be careful in our lives. In general....what you declare that's what you are!

When do you start your appearances/shows?
On June 30, in Athens, I start a very long tour with Onirama and my big sponsor, IVI. And I'm excited about this partnership because we are preparing very different things. Surely I like appearing in "bouzoukia", provided it is what I want....

What do you want?
Look ... Many people say "Oh, Elena, are you in a music scene?" In Greece, however, they are called "bouzoukia". Whatever we do there will always be "bouzoukia". Although I am pop, I've always said that I could not shun this kind of entertainment places, since this is the Greek way of entertainment. I just try to do different things and I think I found a way that fits me. Furthermore, the style of entertainment is changing. Even the big entertainment clubs/places have become more "pop", rigged with sofas etc.

You mean the carnation bothers you?
Not at all! Sometimes, when I went to Sweden, I went out and if I wanted to "communicate" with the opposite table, I used to say or think: "What should I throw them now? Ice?"

According to the news, you were separated [from Toni] at some point of time. Is it true?
No, all these news were groundless. For sure all couples get angry with each other, they do this, they do that, but no one said we live in paradise. With Toni, however, we are entering the 12th year of our relationship. For two people to manage to be so many years together, it means that they complete each other. We have fought for sure, but we were never separated. Apart from that we are two people that are very free in our relationship.

Could you forgive infidelity?
Oh, a difficult question. It hasn't happened to me. At the beginning, usually you say "I can't forgive". After so many years of relationship, however, you are in a dilemma. I don't know. It is something that if it comes, I'll have to deal with it at that time.

Have you ever been tempted to cheat?
No! I admire of course some men, as well as Tony may see a woman and say: "Oh my God, what a woman!", but we don't have a problem to talk about it. We are very cool with each other.

Are you going to get married?
It isn't in our proximate plans. Besides, we feel married. And an even bigger "marriage" would be a child.

When do you wish it to come?
[Laughing:] We will see! It will come when the time is right! Right now I am dedicated to my work and to love the people that I must.

Would you have the cheek to do it [give birth to a baby] without getting married?
Easily! Marriage does not define family. A family is defined when there are two parents who understand each other and who keep a healthy balance for their children. We need to cast away the egos when we bring up children. It is of course easy to say because I do not have any children...But my brother has a child outside marriage. Now he is married to a woman who also had a child and they have formed a wonderful family where four children grow up together, my nieces and nephews.

Can you get used to a loss?
When we lose a beloved person, it doesn't matter at what age we lose him, or how. We keep a wound that is closed, but ... How is it when I fall and hit my knee? At some time it will heal, but now and then it will hurt. So, when it blows from the south, my "little knee" will hurt.

You didn't have second thoughts about revealing that you were dealing with depression... [DownTown 2008/2009 Interview]
The Greek society is ashamed to discuss this. Other countries are not afraid to speak openly, it is in the daily shows, in newspapers, "How to help yourself", "go to this website" ... it is discussed. A loss can be a cause. But the anxiety and perfectionism that has caught us all, unfortunately, causes more psychological problems.

How did you describe then what you were feeling?
I wanted to speak with my mother. My mother, though a classical Greek mother, the first thing she taught me before I was diagnosed with depression was that when someone is not well, he needs support. You cannot pressure someone that is not well; he wants his time. And this time belongs only to him/her, neither to the spouse nor to the doctor nor to the brothers.

Did you see people going away from you in hard times?
Some came to help, I was not ready and ultimately these people were angry with me. "OK, get over it by yourself". After of course they understood themselves that it doesn't work this way. They did not ever come to tell me they were sorry and I did not expect it. It is difficult for the one who goes through it, but also for the ones next to him/her.

What helped you handle this situation?
Time. I tried to do things that I like, I worked on the house, I moved the furniture. And I dedicated a lot of time to my nieces and nephews.

What did all these leave to your soul?
That if we don't cry, we will not enjoy laughter afterwards. We always enjoy laughter more if we have cried a little bit before.

Image is important in your work. Does this oppress you?
A little bit, because I don't think that I always have to be skinny. A model has her/his body as a tool, my tool is my voice.

When you don't work, you let yourself be carried away?
From September when I stopped my shows, I decided to dedicate time to myself and my family and to have some vacation. Always, when you work and dance every night, it is logical that you are more fit...

Does this "you got fat" bother you?
No. I am not a racist to start with. Just because someone puts on weight it means that he/she has gone bad as a human being. Someone told me once "Helena, is that you? You got fat, why?" Because I got some rest! What should I say?

You make others feel comfortable with you immediately…
In the world we sell a show. All the rest must be true. I believe that the world is in need of intimacy with you. I address to young children who may think that my life is a fairytale, though it is not. But there are beautiful moments, as well as very difficult ones. It is ten years now that I do this job. It is "Helena" with her personal moments that has now singled out, than the "Paparizou" that the world sees. When "Elena" is not feeling well, she goes up on stage and "Paparizou" makes her well! It completes me that I can entertain the world.

What do you say to all those that see a connection of drugs with the showbiz?
That they exist everywhere! Drugs are a problem of the society and not a problem of the showbiz.

Would you ever try drugs?
No! I am afraid of them very much! I consider them a stupidity. And I prefer to put on 20 kilos from taking drugs.

What would be your advice to George Alkaios?
It is difficult for me to give an advice to George, because George is the reason Antique began their career. By the cover of "Opa Opa", which was written for Notis Sfakianakis, Antique reached their first success. George is always himself. And that's enough. I wish him only success.

The presentation of his song reminded too many people of your performance...
I'll tell you the truth. I think that in our lives we must look ahead. We cannot look what happened to Eurovision 5 years ago. However, Greece won in 2005. The question is from now on what we should do! Eurovision is a European music festival, not the Nobel Prize. I do not like whenever Eurovision comes and they all say "let's talk with Elena because she won". I want to believe in a future victory!

On Sunday, March 28, your new CD will be released with "R". Why did you decide to launch it with a newspaper?
I think that it is a very good way for premium sale! With my record company, Sony, we want - in a legitimate way - to bring our songs in even more households. I think it's a very smart

move, especially since record sales in music stores have fallen and there is great illegality with the downloading. "Gyro Apo T'Oneiro" contains 12 brand new songs by great contributors and I think you will love it!

Do you dedicate it to your father?
Yes, because it is my first album that comes out without my father being here and because he was always by my side. If my father , who signed my first contract instead of me because I was not 18 yet, had not been by my side, I would not do this job today! He was my best friend. He was the best father to me, because I was a very special little kid ... Everyone believes that he/she has the best father, but George Paparizou was the best father for Helena Paparizou!

DownTown Magazine, Greece 2010: I am not afraid of being ugly!

[Interview: Kallia Kastani - Translation: Panos Th.]

A new CD, two MAD Video Music awards (Sexiest Music Video and Best Music Video the year), a concert in Athens on June 30, a performance at "Greek Idol" and an enormous tour through the whole of Greece with Onirama are 5 good reasons to talk with Helena Paparizou. The 6th one is even better – it is just because you want to have a great time!

After four hours in the same place with Helena, you almost have the happiness that a child feels, after an afternoon at the fun park, and its stomach is full of ice-cream. For four hours, Helena (beautiful, such as a crispy chocolate and, yeah, super sexy, with grey cotton shorts, t-shirt and sandals) she is laughing, kidding, sings whatever she wants at any point, miming in a funny way, shifting clothes, posing obediently like a soldier in high and super high heels and amazing sets and answers to everything without pretending, inhibitions. Why? Because "that's the way she has been brought up", she has been thought to search for the truth - honestly, not any of the songs is "More like Helena"... I want to be authentic, real, I don't want to pretend that I am someone else. I wouldn't feel good if I would do so. Besides I think that this is what we owe to other people who choose us and approve us".

You are too real some times. Why did you do these statements about your weight at MAD Awards?
To be honest, I wouldn't have talked about that - it is an over-discussed matter. It turned up, just because the other day we were talking about how important it is to feel good with yourself, with some friends.

You? Do you feel good with yourself?
Very good. I always laugh, I am sarcastic with myself, breaking my look. I am not afraid of being not attractive, I have fun, I am miming, do silly things. This is how I am.

You are not afraid of being not attractive? Huh, are you kidding me? When?
Come on, I don't wake up shiny, fresh and beautiful every morning. I wake up dishevelled, such as every woman who, maybe, hasn't slept enough, feeling tired or being nerve-racked. Or I could feel like a goddess, look myself in the mirror and say "Darling this is your day. You will go out and turn everyone on".

Anyway, now that I have a closer look to you, your standards are very normal – I don't understand why such a matter for your weight is being created by media.
I really don't know why this happens. To be honest, I don't really care anymore. That's what I wanted to say at the MAD Awards: that in despite of some kilos more during the filming of the music video I won the award for the Sexiest Video Clip! From that it comes that eventually, men prefer mostly the "juicy" women. But anyway, the number of kilos is only what the scale shows. Sometimes you put them on and other time you lose them. Apart from that I only care for what I offer to the people around me.

Do you care for yourself? You work out, every day for example?
Yes, I both work out and dance very much, but I will tell you for once more that this is not important for me. I am a singer. I care for "working out" my vocal chords for and for singing nice songs. I want to improve myself to these two continuously.

Do you think that as a pop artist you have to have a sexy look?
The only look that I think I have to have is the one I said to you before: be true. For me sexy doesn't only depend to how someone looks - sexy could be the character the way you move, the way you touch something or the way you light up a cigarette. All these. What makes me feel sexy is music. Through music or dance I can feel sexy and also express that.

Where do you look for the confirmation as a woman? At Toni's eyes or in the eyes of other men?
Well, I believe that the whole life is a flirt, a game of seduction - even if you talk to a child you have to find a way to make it to pay attention to you. But, you look for the confirmation from the people you love very much, from those who will tell the truth to you. Because they love you for what you are: Helena, not Paparizou.

I was talking about love "confirmation". Don't they flirt at you?
That's happening, but usually the people that meet me face to face, show excitement and joy. That's what I receive both from women and men.

Has Toni been flirted when you were there?
Yes, that has happened. And it was very flattering, as it would be for every single person.

So, you were not jealous?
I didn't say that. In one or two times that I remember someone obviously flirting Toni, we laughed, yes I was jealous a bit, but that was all. No more than that. It's normal that those things happen. Being with a man -or a woman- many years doesn't mean that you can't do anything else.

So do you have that kind of love fights?
Well, maybe sometimes. Just what happens when you have got through many years in a relationship is that you are getting bored fighting. You say: "OK, now why should we break our hearts for a stupidity?". I think that Toni thinks the same thing. Generally, as a couple we are very cool. For example, in this moment Toni is at Paros with his friends for four days. And that's OK.

Really?
Yes, that's what I always use to say: A relation keeps being safe and sane only when you live free in it. The fact that we two are living in the same house doesn't mean that we have the same necessities or that we have to live our life in the same way. We have to keep up with each other, we will be in love, we will fight - everything is part of this game. Plus, now that I have been alone for two days I am waiting for him to come back like mad.

I think that the worst thing that can happen to a relation like yours - which is like an a typical marriage, we have to be true - is that loving each other is over or love being a sweet routine so that you do not dare to part. Because you love the other one like a friend or relative.
I believe that if we don't feel good with something happening to our life we have to move on and call this situation off. I don't like routine in my everyday life. Of course, love, as it is be-

ing described in novels, with butterflies in the stomach, doesn't last forever. I feel very good with Toni, I have chosen him - just like he has done with me - and I have a great time with him.

What about the loss? Did you get used to your father's loss?
No, I don't think that this is something that you can get used to. Some of my friends have also lost their parents, some only one, some both of them, and they say to me that it's like wound that keeps bleeding forever. It's like having a bone broken. We will move on, the bone is going to be cured, but when a south wind blows, it's gonna hurt again. But maybe it will hurt less.

You keep feeling like he was alive?
Yes, I feel that my father is very close to me. We are talking, and my thoughts of him always accompany me.

The relation with your mother is stronger now?
It's different. My mother was always an independent and strong woman, with understanding for many things. She was the person who was by my side in a strong way until my father died. Now I feel that maybe the parts have been inverted. Now, I support her more to organize her life without my father. The same thing happens with all her children.

They say that those huge and very decisive happenings of our lives give some lessons. Did you learn anything from your father's loss?
What I learnt is that I have to do creative things for myself for my life being filled and joyful. And I have been talking about my personal life, and not the professional one.

Really, how can you put those two aside?
I can't do that always. I can't prevent the job things from getting into my home. But I try when I am in my house with my friends or my partners who are friends of mine not to talk about work. Or when I have time off, that little, precious time with Toni, I don't want to talk about our work. Because – I have told that some time before- when Helena feels good, this helps Paparizou.

Your show at Athens Pride this year, was a pretty much discussed topic. Did you have a second thought before answering positively to go?
No, I have participated in gay pride events abroad. And why not? When someone buys my album, or watches me at a concert, do I ask him if is gay or straight? I have many gay fans and many gay friends. And anyway, who am I to judge someone for something that he/she has chosen his/herself? At life's end, everyone belongs to God's judgement. I have come to this world with one and only mission: to give love. Nothing more.

Except from love, it also needs guts to do something like this in a conservative Greek society.
But I didn't go to Athens Pride to make people say "wow, look, Paparizou went to the gay pride!". I went because I wanted to. It's a well-known institution, with huge productions in whole Europe and all-over the world, where very important artists are called. I had been in Madrid in 2006, people and artists had been called from everywhere. They had also called the Eurovision winner.

Speaking of Eurovision, did you see the contest this year?
Of course I did! I cancelled the rehearsal which was arranged for that night and I stayed home to watch Eurovision with Toni and some friends from Sweden. We had a great time.

What was the effect on you?
I liked the winning song a lot - Toni was sure from the beginning that Germany was going to win- even if in my top 5 I had also included Greece. We didn't do badly, but I think we deserved a better place. We could have done better. Anyway, George did a fantastic work. I am very proud of him, that he dared to compete in Eurovision with a song had Greek lyrics. He supported it excellent.

How does it feel when you see a Greek artists singing on that stage where you have been on twice? Don't you feel nostalgic?
No, but I have a big feeling of agony. From the time I competed in Eurovision and after, when the Greek artists is on stage I bate. I feel the same thing with Sweden also.

Have you placed your award somewhere so you can see it?
This is very funny. At the beginning, I did not want anything in the living room to remind me of my job, so I had put it all into the guest room. But then everyone who came asked me to see it. Now they make new shelves for me and when they are ready (plus because in the area near my home they have started working, and then our home shakes, I keep them in a closet, because I don't want anything to fall down and break), I will put them in the living room.

Does crisis affect you?
Very much, as everyone. We artists, we see the crisis coming for years now and we sense that night-clubs and bouzoukia prices must be lowered, and that we maybe must lower our salary, so that a businessman can go about and support a big production.

So you don't start saying that "I don't negotiate my wage"?
Of course not. But what do you think, that I live in another planet? Everyone must cut some things of, so we can do our job, at the end of the day. What will happen otherwise? We will be singing at our homes?

On Monday you were at Greek Idol. Do you watch the show?
Of course I do, whenever I didn't have rehearsals or anything else and I was at my home, I had been watching it. But even when I didn't watch it I bewared to know who was out.

Did you spot any of the competitors?
I had Antigoni in spot, who I knew before the show - we had been talking to co-operate in our tour with Onirama. She had been at an audition and I was mad about her. But after that, she learnt that she would be in Greek Idol so it didn't work. To be honest, I was sure that she would make it to the finals. She is a very talented girl.

What's your opinion about Roula? She was also judged, as you should remember, very hard about her kilos.
I can't stand that kilos thing! Will I judge Roula Koromila, who - as everyone says to me - is the person who brought the shows up in Greek TV? This woman is on the top on what she does and she does it perfectly.

Can you judge yourself? What would you change on Helena if you could?
I would like to say "No" more regularly. I got a big problem with that. Because everyone knows that when I say "no" they usually don't pay attention to this, and they insist until they get what they want. And then I feel bad that I said "no" at the beginning.

What are you going to do this summer?
I've been starting a big tour with Onirama - the tour is called Fisika Mazi, with the support of my big sponsor, IVI. The first concert will be at Theatro Petras (30/6) and I am very stressed to have everything right!

photo from the summer tour in Athens: KyprisAthina

Life & Style Magazine, Greece 2010: "We must pay attention to our dreams and do whatever we can to make them come to life."

[Inteview: Mihalis Argyropoulos – Translation: Nikos R.]

Helena Paparizou reveals "the time to be a mum is coming" and explains why isn't she getting married and why she doesn't care about her and Toni's looks. Why isn't she getting married? Why doesn't she care neither about her appearance nor Toni's appearance? How have they managed to be together for so many years? Will she ever be a mum? Helena Paparizou like you never heard her before...

"I like being a girl next door ", says Helena, as she is walking on a street in Plaka [old quarter of Athens], like a Sicilian woman, for the needs of the photo shoot for Life & Style. Suddenly everything is like an old Greek movie. Helena is being followed not only by the magazine's team but also from many other people: young fans who smile and have come from Patras to meet her, little children who don't believe in their eyes and watch her. "Welcome beauty" say all the waiters from the restaurants, the same time when two old ladies send her kisses from their window. The singer speaks to everyone with great intimacy. Some minutes later, she will tell me how she loves talking with her neighbors and shopping from little shops and become a friend with the people who work there. Being famous since a teenager, it is normal that sometimes she likes to be just Helena and not Paparizou: "The fact that I am famous doesn't mean that my family isn't a simple family", she explains to me. "My aunts, my father's sisters, still live in our village, Mouzaki in Karditsa, and are traditional, wearing black scarfs and clothes and have animals... They make sour milk and I love drinking it right from the plastic bottle they put it in. When I'm there, I'm relaxed with my slippers and I run to see my favorite uncle, my dad's brother. The first thing that I'll do is to sit on his knees, although I'm a grown up woman. I'm their little Paparizaki, that's how they call me... I enjoy these things. But when I'm in Sweden I will go to my favorite restaurant where I went when I was a little girl and is owned by a Kurdish family, so as to learn their news and they mine. Last October I went to find an old friend and then I walked over to my old neighbor and got to my old school. I was taking pictures, and so many memories, smells and visions came to my mind… I like remembering old times and I haven't lost my friendships. I also am a friend with my brother and sister. We were so close with my sister and my brother, even though we had a great age gap."

The person who is always with her, is her spouse, Toni Mavridis: "We are together for 11 years. We work together, he produces my songs, and we work in the same space. It is important to show respect to what your spouse is going through. Just because we are together, it doesn't mean that we are one. We are two separate people who share the same house, the same opinions, the same logic and the most important: we match sexually. The worst thing in my life was my father's loss. It was difficult, but Toni was always there. He may felt that he wasn't doing enough, but he was the one who was staying awake all night with me and was comforting me. Just remembering this, I tell to myself that this man was there for me. Your man isn't only for bad times, but mainly for good times. There's a chance that you have a big success and your partner can't take it. Or have many friends and your partner doesn't like this. Thanks God, Toni and I are not like this. If we were so, we'd been apart since a long time. It's luck that I have a partner like that. I don't like using the word sacrifice, because everything you do you do it because you want it, but there are times that you have

to make a step back for your partner. I have done that for Toni and I was very happy that he did so for me when he had to, we both wanted to give something to the other person. In a relationship, as time goes by, you discover more things than the looks. The appearance is the first thing you notice, but you meet so many beautiful people and when they open their mouth, you want to run away, while others might not be that good-looking but they are so great due to their personalities. When you eat a candy, you don't eat the wrap. As time goes by, attraction does not come only from good looking, but mainly from brain. Regarding Toni's looks, I love that he has a beard and that he is more rough – he is so masculine now."

Magazines and gossip shows love Helena Paparizou and they analyze everything: her weight, her marriage, everything. "I don't bother from what they say, I would bother much more if they said that I was getting a divorce!", she says laughing. "I don't care about what they say or write. In the beginning I did but after Eurovision I stopped it because it's not something that I need in my life".

Is she feeling any pressure for not being married? "Needs and desires are ours and not society's. I'm not against marriage but I almost am married, I am so many years with Toni and we have lived together from the beginning. Each one can do what he wants. Living with other people's obligations and wants does not mean that I have no personal opinion and that I am unhappy. That means I have to do what I want, because it's my life."

"All the dreams I had as a child have come to life. I wanted to do something with my life, I loved music and dancing, I wanted to be known for these. I worked hard. I'll never forget what Mrs. Mouskouri, who always was there for me, told me, after Eurovision and "My number one": "Whatever you did, you did it for Greece, but you were the one who did it. The best horse can't win if the rider isn't good". Mouskouri is a great inspiration for me. When she gives me her hand, it's like she's giving me strength and I listen to everything she says to me. When I sang a song in French, she told me "Next time, call me because you made a couple of mistakes" and I replied "Of course Nana! Of course!" When she talks to me I always listen.
I believe that we must pay attention to our dreams and do whatever we can to make them come to life. The only bad thing is that you may lose your excitement, but you should always keep dreaming. At the same time, I feel grateful that my family is ok, and that I have a great man in my life and that I am not ill. I think that I must not ask for something more. In ten years I'd really like to have children and keep being healthy and singing. I used to make plans for the future, but after my father's death, I'm different. I make plans for my work, but regarding everything else I don't want to make any plans or talk a lot about them."

These days, Helena is very busy, as she's touring Greece with Onirama. The tour will last till early September and Helena will sing in Crete, Lefkada, Corfu, Halkida. During the photo shoot she still had in her mind what happened in her perfomances in Thessaloniki and Tihero Evrou. But, she was touched more by two people that she met, rather than the excitement of the whole crowd: It was a girl who had a big health problem and who was going to have a surgery, and a young man, who, during her concert, asked her to dedicate a song to a friend who died when he was 15 years old. "Helena picked him up on stage and she asked him to talk about his friend. But her visit to the little girl wasn't a regular visit. She played with her, she sang, and she was so happy, it wasn't something she had to do, but she was very happy and she did it with her heart", I was told by someone of Helena's team. "I am very sensitive

in other people's pain. Especially regarding children. I think that even though if you don't believe in God, you believe in love and that's why we are born. To give love and take it back. That's how my mother and father raised me up". Helena became a star by herself and has many hits, and as a result she's an icon to many young children. It's something that she already knows. "Being an icon is of course difficult, because I'm a human and it's natural that I'm going to make mistakes. I have been in fights, I have sworn, and thanks god nobody was there to report it", she laughs.

She didn't hesitate to be the first big artist to perform in the Greek gay pride and to support gay marriage. "I don't believe that gay people are different to other people. I think gay people must have the same rights as straight people. If I had a gay son? Nobody gives birth to a child thinking that his child will be gay or straight. What everyone cares about is the child to be healthy, a good person, to grow up well and be a good man." … so the time for a child has come? "Yes I think so! All my friends have babies and I do baby-sitting for them. I don't know if it's next year or in two years, but the time has come!"

Olympio Vima, Greece 2010: "People are afraid of having fun..."

[Translation: Samiamiditsi – Photos: KyprisAthina]

Being many years on top as an artist, Helena only wants to entertain people. And that's something she can do. She made us proud by winning Eurovision. Next Saturday night she will be in Katerini for a concert with Onirama. Right before her visit in Katerini, Elena gave an interview in Olympio Vima, referring to her plans and to the Greek music industry's future. As you will read, she is getting ready for collaboration with Antonis Remos, and she's also continuing promoting her last album, releasing her new single "Girna Me Sto Htes".

How did this collaboration with Onirama come up?

My first tour was back in 2008, and I've never experienced that before. I told to my producer, Anti Orfanidou from Galaxias Productions, that I want to make a concert again. That was in early 2009 after "Thalassa", because I want time to think of the concert and to prepare it – prepare the stage, the tracklist, everything. I also told her that I don't want to be on tour alone, and I wanted something big. The idea was Onirama, they were asked, and they just answered yes.

Onirama are great, how is the tour up to now?

It's pop, you can't get more pop. Thanks God, the collaboration is great up to now, and people seem to have a great time. I hope that people in Katerini will also have a good time, after all that's our job, entertaining people, so as they have a good time dancing, laughing, singing.

Touring, as you said, is something that you have planned. What are your next plans for winter?

First of all, we have decided for my next single from the album "Girna Me Sto Htes", and we have already prepared another version of the song, more dance [All Around the Dream Version – only this dance version has been released as a single, the original version remained an album track only]. We will release both versions, and each radio station and everyone will decide which one they'd like to listen. Regarding perfomances, I'll be with Antonis Remos. He's a person that I love very

Helena & Antonis Remos, Winter 2010/11
photo: www.kyprisathina.de

much and he was with me since the beginning. He was the first one with whom we collaborated as Antique back when we came to Greece, and then the first one I collaborated with as a solo artist. I always work perfectly with Antonis, and I say that he marks a new beginning for me every time, and I don't know what's about to come this time!

People will talk about you a lot this winter.
The program will be amazing, we have already met once to see what we can do, and next week we are meeting again. There are so many things we want to do! Apart from each one singing his songs, we also have to sing together onstage.

It's not that you don't have chemistry.
No, we have, because we know each other for a long time, and we have sung together again, but now there's something different, I feel so relaxed this time.

Talking about music, apart from the "big" names, we always see new people in music. How do you feel about that?
When we talk about a career, it's not just an album. People ask me "Helena why don't you make an English album?" Career means releasing songs for many years, giving music to people and people loving them. That's something difficult. I was new in music back in time, and there were many new with me then. Not everyone will stay. It just happened to me. Companies must believe in people to invest money and build careers. The fact that many people enter music from reality shows or not is great, because new people must make music. Helena for example can't always be that 17 years old girl who started making music or the 23 years old girl who won Eurovision. I will be 40 soon and there will be younger people than me. It's just life. Truth is that we need music, we can't live without music. If there were no radios, people would sing on the streets.

People love music, and do you think it's music that keeps people optimistic now in the crisis?
When we're talking about the crisis, we talk about everyone. It affects everyone. The crisis in music is older – it's more than ten years. Music companies try to think of new ideas to keep making new artists and continue with the ones they already have. An album costs. The photo shoot, the music engineers, producers, musicians, everyone needs to be paid, and you have to put double price to the album so as for the people in the company to be paid. Regarding the economic crisis, people in TV and newspapers have contributed to it a lot. The "transfer" stress and fear for the future and as a result people are afraid to have fun. Truth is that whatever we do, we always need some fun in our lives. We need to laugh, to dance. That's why we all should be careful, since we are the ones who have to entertain people, we have to be careful.

You referred to the big cost of an album, which may be a loss for the companies, but isn't this the purpose and the way for an artist to express himself? Could someone do this with some singles released online?
This is something that happens now, and companies try to find another solution. An album from some years ago can't exist anymore, only artists like Haris Aleksiou or Giannis Parios, because they have huge discographies. This can't happen anymore today. Remos and the rest of us, we can't release many albums. There are no artists who can release many albums. They release an eco-pack with cheap paper and no booklet and the tracks are no more than ten. Or they release a maxi single and companies try to push digital sales. That's how it is globally, they try to sell more digital copies. Here in Greece, though, physical sales decline, while the digital are steady low. All the companies are trying to find a solution to satisfy everyone because people are the ones who choose what they like.

What do you have to tell to people who are waiting for you next Saturday?
They should relax and have fun, we are coming to entertain you and I'm 99,9% sure that everyone's gonna have a great time!

„Paparazzi“, Bulgaria 2011

[Translation: ”NiniaFresa”]

Hi Elena! How to do you feel back in Bulgaria?
I’m here to perform at a night club but even without a reason I’m happy when I visit Bulgaria. It’s nice to meet the media and the people I love. I love to eat Bulgarian cuisine and to walk in the streets of Sofia. I think since my last visit Bulgaria has changed a lot in a positive way.

Your supporting act was Elena Parisheva. Did you know her before or you just met her?
To be honest, I just met her. But she is an extraordinary performer and a very beautiful woman.

Elena Parisheva is very good in singing in Greek. Would you ever try to sing in Bulgarian?
Of course, with pleasure, but it will be a bit difficult. I will need at least 6 months or in the best case 3 months in Bulgarian classes to have the right pronunciation.

How did you decide to become a singer?
I’ve been singing since I was 8 years old. At that age my music teacher was convinced that I’m good for a solo act. My first group I had in the age of 16, I was an R’n’B singer back then. But I don’t want to go back to those days because I get sad. My friends from that group died in a big fire which I escaped by a lucky chance. After that accident I gave up music for a while.

How do you spend your spare time?
It happens rarely to have such. Usually I watch movies and lately I’ve been practicing Pilates.

Do you like shopping?
I adore it but lately I haven’t had time neither for that.

Do you cook?
I love cooking. Basically I adore sweets and maybe for that reason I’m a master of preparing Greek cake.

Which Bulgarian meal you liked the most?
In Bulgaria I ate the best sea food specials ever. Including a clam soup.

What is your fashion style?
I love Cavalli, I admire Gucci and my favorite Greek designer is Mitropoulos. I’m more sporty-elegant.

Which are the things you like and dislike about yourself?
My advantage is that I’m a very happy person and by that quality I attract people. What I don’t like is that I talk too much.

TV Interview, Bulgaria 2011

[Translation: "NiniaFresa" - Photos: KyprisAthina]

Last night Elena Paparizou started the promotion for her latest album. Now listen to what she said in an interview she gave to our channel.

One of the biggest Greek stars Elena Paparizou chose Bulgaria as a first step of her European tour. The beautiful Greek woman performed songs of her album "Giro Apo T'Oniro" in a remarkable show. Her professionalism was as respectful and influential for the hundreds of guests there as her wide smile, remarkable voice and stage charisma. Before Paparizou went on stage, another star performed in a not any less spectacular show. Elena Parisheva performed a mix of her greatest hits together with ballet "Magic" and their creative choreography. The culmination of the evening was as spectacular as it had been expected. Elena Paparizou greeted the guests and called them her brothers and sisters and stated her happiness to be in Bulgaria and to perform for all of her friends. The most special friend among them, Slavi Trifonov [TV host, who recorded "Why?" with Antique], was not available and couldn't welcome Elena. One of the biggest fans of Paparizou ended up to be Zlatka Dimitrova. She didn't stop singing along with her favorite artist and was passionately cheering for the rest of the audience to follow. Most excited of all was a fan [our dear forum member Sonya!] who succeeded getting on stage and singing together with her beloved artist. Now we offer you an exclusive interview with Elena Paparizou.

Nice to meet you! You took a very long pause and finally tonight you are going to present your show. Tell us a bit more about this long pause of 2 years before you presented your new album at the end of the last year. Why so long?

Why I took such long pause? Unfortunately sometimes in people's lives very bad things happen. In 2008 my father passed away at Christmas day. It was a very difficult time for me and I needed a long time to get over it and recover from the loss. The most important thing was that all the people I worked with supported me and gave me the courage to move on. It's normal to be depressed when you lose somebody very beloved. But what matters is that I'm back and I'm back for good.

Tell us more about the songs in your new album. You are going to present it here tonight and also around whole Europe.

First of all, I still have my show in Greece with Antonis Remos, a very famous Greek singer, and we still work together every Friday to Sunday in a night club in Athens. And we try to combine that with European tour, which is not going to be the usual tour with concerts but more like performances at club sections first of all. Bulgaria is actually the first step of that tour which is good because I remember that Bulgaria was the first country Antique performed in outside Sweden. I love Bulgarian people, I know that a part of them loves Greek music. I know they love me, and I know how much they miss Antique. And tonight I'm going to perform a couple of songs of Antique, I know they will love them and I'm very happy to be here tonight.

Have you got friends here in Bulgaria?
You know, with all these years I made a lot of friends here, even from the record label which released the Antique albums and with people we don't work with anymore. And I truly believe that you realize who your real friends are when you stop working with them. And they are here tonight. I'm going to see them and have a little chat for 5 min because after that I must go on stage. I believe I have a lot of good friends here in Bulgaria and I will make more friends.

Are you happy in your personal life?
I'm very happy, I think you can see it in my eyes, I'm very happy as a person in general. I always believed that all the problems can be solved like in Math. The Mathematics have a problem, they have to solve it. So if I have a problem, I have to solve it. It's very easy.

Which is the next step you are going to make?
You mean with discography or concerts or…?

With concerts and in your private life.
In my private life I don't know what will happen. Sometimes is not good to plan anything, especially in relationships. You must work on them so they can be good. When it comes to discography, I'm going to make a compilation of my best hits after Antique with a few new songs. We start from here, then we will go back to Greece and then we will continue. We've got Germany and Romania in our plans. They are discussing different things so I'm just excited. I'm here.

You have a duet with Slavi Trifonov. Would you make another with other artist?
I was actually discussing this today with my PR manager because I love Bulgaria very much. We would like to. I would love to make another duet with Bulgarian artist, a new one or why not with Slavi again, because everybody knows how much I love Slavi.

Thank you so much!
Thank you!

PF

Billboard Charts, Greece 2011

[Translation: Panos Th. And Derek - Photo: KyprisAthina]

Except for your Greatest Hits, what are we going find on your album?

Except for my biggest hits, there will be 3 new songs [“Baby It's Over” and “Love Me Crazy”/”O’ti Niotho Den Allazei” actually made it on the album, the third song “Murderous”/”Tis Agapis Ta Thymata” was given to another singer finally, Ivi Adamou, and remained unreleased by Helena]. I wish they will be in both English and Greek. The songs are written by Swedish and English people and are produced by Toni Mavridis. The lyrics in Greek are written by Giannis Doxas. In English, there are foreign people who have written the lyrics. Right now, I can't remember all the names, because usually abroad, there are a lot of people who cooperate to write a song. And, I don't want to forget to say that this time I sung for the first time lyrics written by N. Moraitis, and I was very pleased, because I have never had a collaboration with N. Moraitis. I have already recorded the new song. And I can't wait to meet him. That's because, when I was still with Antique, we almost never had the opportunity to meet the composers of each song, I mean, those who have produced the music or written the lyrics. We only got to see "C&N Project" who were the producers as we say it in English. In Greece, the producer is the arranger. When my solo career begun and I got signed to Sony, I demanded to be able to meet all the composers, lyrics writers and arrangers before I record the songs.

Will you include any DVD to the GH&M Collection?

The version that will be available to music stores will be a triple CD with many songs. We have included "Just walk Away" which is a live recording from the first Mad Secret Concert, and many other songs that I’ve loved. For example I had completely forgotten a song written by Alex Papakonstantinou called "Taxidi gia to Agnosto", which used to be one of my top favorites, or another song from "Iparhi Logos" album, written by Pegasus, called "Pou pige tosi Agapi”. These are songs that have been very important to my personal life, but they are not widely known to the public. I would say they haven't become hits. I think they should have been more known. They are very nice songs; I hope people will enjoy them. And then we will do something "very-exclusive". We will release a deluxe edition, which will be only available in the internet and in fewer copies. There will be a process that you will have to order and wait for it to arrive and all that stuff, but it will contain much stuff, like posters, and a present for those 500 fans who will get hold of it, and generally loads of stuff.

Every "Greatest Hits" collection (and that's your first one), aims to make your fans have a look in the past, and take a look at your career. If you had a time-machine, and traveled into time, which point of your career would you like to re-experience again?

Oh, I would say many moments, including moments that I’ve experienced as an Antique member, but this "best of album" has to do only with "Helena's Solo Career". I have experienced unbelievable moments in my life, and I 've been very lucky because I 've met very good people, people that were very useful in what I wanted to do, and people that are not in my life at this point, but helped me at that some point of my career - and I actually owe who

I've become now to these people. I mean, during the Eurovision period, I'd experienced so many things. I would love to re-experience the final night of Eurovision. I'd also like to re-experience again, that moment, when I was in Spetses (on vacation back in 1999 when "Opa Opa" became a huge hit all of a sudden), and I received many, many phone-calls by journalists from Sweden, saying "Opa Opa? Vad är det för nå?" ["Opa Opa? What's that?"] and I was answering "I am on vacation" and I remember I had to go back to Sweden because the song had exploded [in terms of success]. Another moment I remember is when I first heard my voice on the radio. It was like I was deafened because I had it in the maximum volume, and I had my ear stuck on the speaker, because it was like I couldn't get enough of that. It was the first time you see, and I couldn't believe it. The first time I did something completely different, it was for the "Energy Radio" in Sweden, when I was a hostess, and we had a famous guest: Ricky Martin. The first time I met international stars, such as Céline Dion among others. Another moment is with Nana Mouskouri, when I appeared on French T.V., invited by Nana, and the greatest part was when we had a small duet, and sung a refrain of a song live on air. I remember getting off the TV studio trembling, crying and saying to myself "I have sung with Nana Mouskouri", and Giannis Marketakis [her make-up artist and good friend], was looking at me and saying "Calm Down, it was very nice!". I couldn't believe it. We are very good friends with Nana, and with many more Greek artists, but Nana Mouskouri is unique. And I 'll mention another artist, who is Haris Alexiou, and every time I see her she says to me "Please don't cry again" because I get emotional each time I see her since I love her so much, and listen to her music a lot.

Any video clip or performance that you are proud of? And for what reason? Except for the Eurovision one.

The truth is that there are nights that I want to go to youtube to travel back in time and remember all those things that have gone by. I have been in this job for 12 years, so I 've done many many things, so far. I know there are not too many, because I wish I will have the chance to do another 122 things. I am proud of the first music video that I 've done with Gavalos: "Follow Me". It was the first one we shoot in Greece. The first time I sung a "Hasapiko" song, called "Kainouria Agapi", where I saw the castle of Monemvasia for the first time... I won't forget the run-through we had done with MTV in Berlin, where we discussed about art... Because we were all into art, even the reporter… It's something that we deal with all day, and we can't go ahead without this. If I don't occupy myself with something "artistic" each day, it's like I don't live, like that day didn't exist for me. And then another thing I did recently and enjoyed very much, was the "MadWalk". [Fashion & Music event, Helena performed on the catwalk for her favorite Greek designer]

Could you describe in 3 words your plans as an artist from now on?

I say what I'd like to do, because I can't describe exactly what will happen. In the first place, I want to keep my optimism, to work very hard so the result will be good and I want my songs to be loved by the people. Because music is a very important element to our lives and if the song isn't loved it turns into a 0 and so does the artist. And you know, when you have gotten used to people loving your work it seems bad if one thing doesn't get equal acceptance. And I remember that in the past Christos Dantis [singer and composer of "My Number One"] had said "It's difficult to climb up the road, but reaching the bottom is very quick, it can be very sudden." When you start reaching the bottom, you won't even realize it. I want to believe that I will stay strong and keep doing what I do, to have a bunch of people around me so I can inspire them, and get inspired by them and create beautiful things!

I want you to send one message to all your fans - and what would you like to say to Billboard?

I will begin with the Billboard because I always say "keep the best for the last" [the fans], so good luck to Billboard here in Greece! For my buddies, I wish them to be very well and I know that they are kind of sad because there are only 4 weeks left of performances at Diogenis Studio, and I receive many messages and they come backstage every night there. Some days they come and we are sharing hugs and crying… I will miss them, but I swear that I won't be away for too long!

Nitro Magazine, Greece 2011: Helena Confidentially

[Interview: Panos Kokkinis - Translation: Derek]

Nine months after her break-up, Helena Paparizou decides to put things in order and speaks – for the very first and very last time - about Toni, about how close she got to not wanting to live anymore and about the kid that she is willing to adopt.

I feel dirty. She is in front of me laid down on the red sofa of the recording studio, right next to Athens Metro Mall, talking to me with a childlike enthusiasm about her new projects (the new single titled "Mr. Perfect" and the filming of the video with Konstantinos Rigos, her performance - as a Nana Mouskouri's guest - at the Berliner Philharmonie and her collaboration with Giannis Parios on Pyli Axiou in Thessaloniki). However I have my mind dipped into "everything-yellow". I want to know – just like yourself – why she broke up. Who cheated on whom, who broke up with whom and in what condition porcelain tableware can be found inside her house in Glyfada, where the couple lived together until March when they broke up (that's where Toni still lives today - Helena has rented another apartment in Glyfada).

Helena: What do you mean by "why it's over"? It's over because it's over. We reached the point where it had to end, "at the end of the road". I am not going to tell you who pulled the trigger. How does it make a difference if it's me or Toni who ended it? In the end of the day, the only ones who know what happened are me and him. Nobody else. And I don't care what's being written or heard. I'm never going to speak a bad word about Toni. Nobody will hear a bad word about him from me. He was my man and I will support him. We had our own 12 years together, I loved him very much during that time and I will love him for everything he was while we were together.

I insist: Did it end smoothly or was it triggered by something?
Both.

I carry on: Is it certainly definitive?
It doesn't matter. All that matters is that it's over.

I continue undeterred: Do you talk on the phone or do your lawyers contact each other instead?
Occasionally. Just so we let each other know we are fine.

Do you think you should have broken up earlier? I will answer sharply. No because I wasn't ready for it earlier. Things are very simple. People change every day which is something I know well since I've changed myself since my father died. I have reconsidered my life, I have set different priorities. Because the things that matter most are firstly "health", then "love" and then comes all the rest.

What would have happened if your father hadn't died? What would have been different?
My relationship would have been completely different. I believe I would definitely have a child.

I carry on undeterred: Would you still want – after all that has happened- to have a child with him?
If it would have happened, it would have been my child. And I did want to have kids with Toni. We were in a phase "if it happens, it happens". Now I don't want to.

And the final blow: Did it not bug you to see him going out with another woman so soon and at a place where photographers were present?
Whether now or a little later, at some point this would happen. And if something would have bothered me, I would have said it to him privately. Well, they should have both been more careful. Although, from what I know, it was just a coincidence that paparazzi were there. He didn't go there intentionally. But let me tell you something. So what? Did they do something bad? Even if they went out and got off and had sex, did they harm anyone? Is there something more human from a person wanting to have sex?

The transition is very good to let it go and not grab it. Like a starving dog in front of a big bone, I stumble trying to say - as cutely as I can: I agree about the necessity of sex. So when was the last time you had sex? She looks at me, she laughs loudly and says:
Well, let it be, let it be, **implying longstanding sexual abstinence.**

So I'll let it be. Temporarily. As long as we play this game of cat (her) and mouse (me), I try hard to justify my humble instincts to myself, insisting that she ought to tell us what happened with her relationship, from the moment she was the one praising her partner in every one of her interviews, she was the one saying he was the man of her life, her sky and her stars. It's her obligation, - I claim - to talk about the end of the fairytale that started at 17, when she saw him and said: "This man is a big adventure".
Toni looked dangerous to me. Manly. It's what you want to see at 17. And our life together was an adventure indeed. We experienced very intense moments together. We also experienced very silly moments, very tender moments and very bad moments. Just like every couple. And like I said to you before, I will continue to speak all the best about him. Besides Toni and I are still friends. It's very difficult but we are. Not the type of friends that can go out for a coffee and continue hanging out together. This can't happen the way things have turned out to be.

I try to fit inside her mind. I'm thinking what would bother me if I would break up with my wife of seven years plus another 10 years it took me to seduce her. For instance to be forced to leave the house we made together, full of photos and silly souvenirs from vacations…
I've only got a few more objects left behind. But it's OK. Houses don't possess a soul whereas humans do.

How we would separate our common friends…
I want my friends for myself. I don't hand them out. But I can't forbid Toni to go and e.g. have a drink with my brother-in-law, my cousin's husband whom I consider to be my sister. I don't have such hang-ups.

For Helena the hardest part of this outcome was something else:
To explain it to my two nephews, 9 year old Wilhelm and 8 year old Emilio, who both loved Toni very much. I asked my mother and sister to leave the house for a while, I called them

(her nephews) by the table on top of which I had placed a cake I had bought and said to them: "Helena and Toni are no longer together". They got shocked. The older one – frightened- asked me: "Do you think my mum and dad might break up too?", whereas the younger one, whose mum is divorced and has already been in two relationships since, asked me sharply: "Will you have a new boyfriend now"? What I said to them? "No, I have only two men in my life now. You.

This woman never ceases to impress me. In my eyes - for once more - she proves to be more "premium" than circumstances allow one to be. Without any hang-ups she answers to all the questions without hiding behind managers, record companies or the friendship she has developed with her fellow jury member on Dancing on Ice and publisher of *Nitro*, Petros Kostopoulos. Yet this doesn't make me feel less dirty: What she wants me to point out is how she starts her day.

I push the bedcovers aside, I go to the bathroom, I wash my face, I look at myself in the mirror and crack a huge smile. Pay attention, I don't just crack the smile, I feel it. And then I play music at full blast, drink a cup of coffee and check my mail. I finally feel good with myself. I feel like I'm going through my second puberty. And yes, I will go through the same frolics that go hand in hand with puberty. Plenty of frolics. Wherever the road takes me.

But I don't care about the zen upland she has reached now but the lowest point that she had reached before.

I believe that sometimes we must reach our lowest point to rise again. And (to prove) we are stronger than we think. In the end of the day who said life is easy? We have to fight. And I'm here, ready for the battle. There are 10 year old kids out there that suffer from cancer and fight with it every day. And I would complain e.g. because I don't have a boyfriend? It sounds ridiculous to me. The truth is there was a period of time, before I flew to Sweden, that I would wake up late in the afternoons and say to myself:"There is no reason to live anymore". This is a very ugly emotion. That's why I was bugged, made a 180-degree turn and left. Of course that happened once I was done with all my obligations, once I made sure I'm not neglecting anyone and having said to my assistants: "Now I want to be on my own". In fact as long as I stayed in Sweden I even visited a psychologist and it helped me a lot. I had also visited one in Greece, after my father's death. It's just different to talk about your emotions in your native language. He/she told me: "wishes and must-do's in life are only beautiful when they are ours". Because in the end of the day, it's you who must take your decisions, not others on your behalf. It's something that I had done many times in the past because I wanted to satisfy others. It's not a coincidence that my job consists of this thing: to satisfy everyone, to entertain them, to make sure they are well. Do you know what the outcome of this is? To leave yourself behind. To step aside and allow someone else you trust to take charge. But now, after I spent 5 months examining and rethinking everything, I came to this conclusion: That I know what I want better than ever. That in this particular moment I try to take care of Helena, whom I had put in someone's pocket and forgotten her there. Now I've let her out of the pocket again.

It's obvious from her words that her 5 month stay in Sweden had a positive effect on her.

I went there to rest. And that's what I did for the first time in my life. You can't imagine how many forests I have walked in and how many rivers I have crossed! I would leave the house and would walk in the forest for hours and when I would get tired, I would lie on the grass.

An equally healing experience for her soul was something as simple as going to the tax office or the super market. For completely different reasons than the ones you suppose:
One thing that I have really enjoyed about Sweden, is that I would always see beautiful people around. For instance, I went to the tax office and my "soul opened up". I would think: "What a beautiful chick she is", "what a stud he is". More specifically I remember that we went to a super market in Gothenburg with my sister and my two nephews to buy stuff. When we got to payment counter, she went to put things in bags and I stayed there to pay. So she then told me in Greek: "Raise your head from the ground finally. Look at this beautiful man." I raised me eyes, I looked at him and told her: "Yes Aretoula mou, he's very handsome" and I bent my head down again. Just like I would usually do at first when I avoided looking at/meeting anyone. Indeed the guy was gorgeous. Tall and slim, with blue eyes, beautiful mouth and ash blonde hair. So I paid and when I was about to receive the receipt, I heard my 38 year old sister telling him: "Young man, why don't you pass your phone number in case my little sister calls you"? I (honestly) tell you, I love those 40 year olds. They have nerve".

A pause, big smile and then comes the "moral lesson":
"The truth is that -in general- I am embarrassed. And especially after 12 years in a relationship, as you would expect, I have forgotten how flirting is done. Nowadays everything is done through the internet and I get bored by this. I like physical contact. To go out and flirt with someone. However, lately I receive lots of compliments. It shocks me! Not to mention that men in Sweden are more open about their feelings. Especially when they are drunk. It's very common for someone to approach you and tell you sharply: "Shall we go and have sex"?

Seriously now, is there a special someone? Someone to whom her sexy appearance on Dancing on Ice addresses to, the appearance in the black dress that skyrocketed her cleavage very high on twitter-gossip? This dress made a friend of mine's mother-in-law think my friend is a lesbian , as they were both watching the show and my friend stuck to praising her breasts.
On one hand I am very open and very flirty, but I haven't been in another relationship yet. It's not like I'm going out looking for the one. I'm not ready for a new relationship. A new relationship now feels like a hard task. The only thing I know is that the next man that will come into my life, the one I will choose to have a kid with, will have to accept adopting one, too. Otherwise we will not stay together. It's something that I've promised to myself. Imagine that when I was young, at 15, I wanted to adopt two. Particularly one from Africa and a girl from China, because I knew that they throw them away there".

I'm sure that Helena will become a perfect mommy. But at this point I want to focus on her sexy side. The one that -because of extra weight- we couldn't see enough in the past few years.
I started gaining weight over the summer of 2009, right after my father died. I had gone to his hometown, in Karditsa, to rest, and when I returned, my stage costumes started to feel narrower. So when I finished my performances there, I flew to Sweden for 10 days having bought 1-2 new pairs of jeans and shirts. When I got back they wouldn't button up. And this over a period of time that I was on a diet and did training with Niki Petroulaki 4 days/week. Niki would tell me: "It's impossible you are not unswollen (yet)". Then I realized that my thyroid gland had been disturbed a lot. It's a hereditary disturbance and it's expressed during a

major sorrow. You get swollen and all of a sudden you gain 6-8 kg. Imagine that the normal level is 2 and I had reached 18. Not to mention it takes a great deal of time and drug treatment to lower the levels to normal. Thankfully I've gotten a lot better now. But even this is a proof of what I said to you earlier, that I had neglected myself. I would get injured for instance and I would not receive physiotherapy. Imagine that after Eurovision, at Fever, I sang there for a period of 3 weeks while I was suffering from pneumonia, tonsillitis and my temperature would not go below 38 degrees! Nowadays I would not allow this to myself.

Helena is and looks well again. More than ready for the "second half" (of her career), which includes permanent stay in Greece - something I wouldn't be so certain about some months ago. I was left with the impression she would completely leave everything and each one of us behind.
When I got back to Greece the first time around - to arrange some obligations I had left behind-, I was very negative about it. And I said "no" to many things. I was ready to fly back to Sweden again. But I realized that I don't want to leave. I have moved here - before Eurovision already - and I will stay here. I don't like going backwards in my life. If I leave Greece, I will move to e.g. London, New York, Barcelona or Los Angeles. But not back to Sweden. Unless I have become 45 years old, with kids and have consciously decided I want a very quiet life".

Something irrelevant: Helena has been interviewed by me many times. In one of them, for *Pink Woman* 2007, she had said to me: *"I remembered one discussion I had with a friend of mine -who knows showbiz very well- about celebrity couples and how they break up. At one point he asked me: "Have you thought that it's usually men who cheat on women"? In the sense that it's always been harder for a famous woman to cheat. I got shocked."* I read this quote to her again. Her comment?
"What you reminded me of…Yes I think this is still the case. It still is".

The final conclusions are yours. And take into account what she told me when I asked her if she forgives easily:
I want to be forgiving. What I don't want is to forget.

Sveriges Radio, March 9, 2012: Popular!

[Interview: P4 “Prämier” Radio - Translation: Swedish]

And now as I have squeezed me into the lounge at the back, she tells me she doesn't bite.
No I don't bite, not as yet anyhow. I only sing.

Helena Paparizou is here - fun that you are here!
I do also think that. I am very happy that I do this actually. It was just when the request came in, and "I am already in Globen Arena (where final is held). It was in January when we discussed that. And it will be a really cool version (of Eric Saade’s song “popular”).

Now you show up suddenly and we haven't heard from you in a while. Do you live in Greece now, or…?
Yes I still live in Greece and I am here to visit and I will job a little and go back to Greece and then I come back here again.

And what do you do in Greece then? How is it going with the career there?
The career there goes excellent and I have released about three plates, after Eurovision, and made two big tours in Greece. And I have worked in different night clubs and at a TV show, where I was in the jury, on "dancing on ice". So I have made a lot of funny things.

But have you betrayed us (Swedes) now then?
No, no, no, I have not. Absolutely not. It got to be a little weird for me. It came out today through tabloids that my father died 2008 so we had a little rough time, because we reported these things, that the ambulance didn't arrive in time. The ambulance waited for a police escort because it was a - how you say – “High risk zone”. So, my family felt very unwell and we had anger in us. So I did not feel ready to come here to Sweden if you say so, to work and to meet Swedish media. It didn't get correct. But now the family feels good, so it felt good to come now.

Have you had time to follow Melodifestivalen, and seen any of the heats?
I saw a little of the second heat, and I liked him who went to the final. I don't...

David Lindgren!?
He that is musical artist.

Yes.
Excellent good. He is very good I think.

So it is him you want to win then?
I am not really sure who I want to win. I think that Thorsten Flinck is someone who makes me feel touched unbelievably much. He is so different and the way he delivers himself on. And then I like Loreen a lot, she is also very good. Danny is…

Now you don't need to say anyone more.
They are so crystal clear but they are so different. And it is very nice when there is a competition where they are so different. The thing is... Loreen is very, very different. Not the way she sings on, she sings very good. The way she moves expressing herself. Like bodily. I like things that are a little different actually. I must say that.

Elena, good luck now. Tonight on the rehearsal and tomorrow on the real one, too.
Good luck to the ones that will compete we should say!

Thanks that we could interfere with you.
Thank you.

In this very glamorous lounge. There is also some fruits there.
Mmm, and some candy, Swedish candy, nice. Thanks you all should have, bye bye.

Aftonbladet, March 9 2012[91]: ”Dad doesn't want me to cry”

[Translation: Swedish]

Helena Paparizou is ready for her comeback in Sweden - and melodifestivalen. Father Giorgios fast death got her to leave Sweden. After six years the Eurovision star – Helena Paparizou, 30, stopped to hide. “I am not angry anymore”, she says.

As usual the Greek compound was celebrating the Christmas day with a big party in their place, In Backa, Gothenburg 2008. But suddenly the chairmen and Helena Paparizou’s father Georgios Paparizou, 60, collapsed. His heart stopped beating. It took over 20 minutes before the ambulance came, because the area was a high-risk zone, the ambulance personnel needed to wait for a police escort. When they reached the place it was already too late. Georgios died in Helena’s sister Aretis arms.

Three years after the hard loss the Swedish-Greek singer Helena Paparizou is back to Sweden, in a hotel suite in central Stockholm. She tells how she was on a night club scene in her home city Athens, unknowingly that her father died. When she was done on the scene in the morning, 5 am, she meet her brother, neighbor, a good friend and a psychotherapist. “They told that my father got a heart-attack. I got panic, I got some days off and took the airplane to Gothenburg”, Helena tells us. When she reached Landvetter she got to know the truth. “I was waiting for my bag, and then my brother told me that my father had died. There I lost everything, myself, everything. I collapsed right down on the floor and began to cry”. When she reached her mum Efrosini at home she was met by relatives and friends in sorrow.

When Helena thinks back on that day she becomes quiet. “I haven’t cried on a long time when I have though on my dad, but I just got all pictures in front of me. It is over, I have promised myself that one should not cry. Because I am strong, he doesn’t want me to cry.”

She continues: “What I think most on is mum, she lost her life partner, they had so much fun together.” The Paparizou family searched redress after what happened. They send in a report to Health and Medical Treatment 2009, where they questioned why ambulances need to wait for the police before they get into high-risk zones. And they got rejection in the administrative law 2010. “My family felt so bad. I want all high-risk zones to be abolished. I don’t want it to happen to anyone else. We have got rejected on or reports but I will always blame them”, Helena says.

In 2009 Helena had some plans to do comeback in Sweden, but she shot this to the future. “But I didn’t take any break. Instead I worked my ass off in Greece. I couldn’t sit still a second at home.” She also began with a therapy. “I didn’t want to come back to Sweden after this aggression, after what my family and me went through with dad. I do not want any family to feel that they lost a person so unnecessary.”

Now Helena doesn’t hide from Sweden anymore. “I am not angry anymore, the anger and bitterness I don’t feel anymore”. On spring she is on TV with “Let’s Dance”. Tomorrow night she is on the stage for Melodifestivalen in Globen, in front of millions Swedish watchers, and interprets last year winning song “Popular”. It will be a big show with 23 dancers. “Christer

[91] http://www.aftonbladet.se/nojesbladet/melodifestivalen/article14496131.ab

Björkman called on the right time. It will be a special experience for me in front of the Swedish people. Last year I cheered for Eric Saade, so I though my thumbs would snap and I was very happy that Sweden got on a good place."

Last time she was on a Swedish scene was around six years ago. Then she recently won Eurovision with "My number one" and made an international career. After that she released three CDs in Greece. "Christer Björman has tried to get me into the Swedish competition many times. But I will never compete again." The 30 years old singer has been living in the capital of Greece, Athens, for several years now.

Despite the economic crisis Helena will not move to Sweden. "I do not care about what politicians say and don't care about what they do in the parliament; they can hit their head in the wall if they want. It is always a pity for the people that need to pay. I love the country and will stay and fight", she says.

Even the artist branch industry has been hit hard of the crisis. "When I moved go Greece I worked five, six times on a week. Now it is two times a week and the payment is halved."

Helena jokingly takes her on the flesh on her belly. Half a year after her father Giorgios' death she got troubles with Struma, with other words enlarged thyroid. "Damn what I gained weight. I went up ten kilograms on a month. I was constantly tired, had problems with sleeping and a hell of a temper. It is like having PMS 24 hours a day."

Since 2010 Elena has got medicine named Levaxin, and if she is lucky, she doesn't need to get operated. "I have two lumps in my throat that maybe need to get away, it is sometimes a little swollen and they are fluid-filled." She haven't felt so good like she does today. "I love my body and enjoy getting older. I don't care about flesh. I still hear that I should go down in weigh, but I stand."

Name: Helena Paparizou
Age: 30
Lives: Athens, Greece
Family: Single
Present for: Singing Eric Saades "Popular" in Melodifestivalen on Saturday, and dancing on "Let's Dance" this spring.

Helena about…
…Melodifestivalen: "Some things must remain valuable. Being in Eurovision each year is like eating pea soup each day. It doesn't taste anything at the end. You should leave some highlights. 2005 will always be one of my best years, I worked night and day."
...being a super star in Greece: "I don't accept many proposals, but this winter I sat in the jury of "Dancing on ice"; I do many shows on the big night clubs around the country. On the scene I can be a real diva but when I go down from the stage, I live like everyone else. Then I am Helena."
...about phobias: "After my relationship ended I went to Sweden and began with cognitive therapy. I got stuck in an evil circle, got panic attacks and a lot of phobias like Agoraphobia, Claustrophobia and Acrophobia. For a while I almost couldn't go out and throw away the waste."

TV4 "Nyhetsmorgon", Sweden 2012 (March)

[summery/translation: Swedish and Michi]

Helena was meant to do a comeback but because of her father's death she was so angry and couldn't not face the media. That she had so much grief and anger in her so she couldn't entertain. So she couldn't work in Sweden back then. She says to Loreen that she shall enjoy being at the songcontest so that she should stay herself. She loved being at Eurovision and had so much fun. She likes her age and that she heard that woman get actually even better if they get 40 and that is 10 years for her until that ... She will work with a record company in Sweden and she may not say anything about the question if she will participate at "Let´s dance".

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ESC TODAY, Sweden 2012 (March)

[interview: Russell Davies]

Greece's 2005 Eurovision Song Contest entrant Helena Paparizou spoke to Russell Davies from esctoday in her dressing room backstage at the Stockholm Globen, during the Melodifestivalen final rehearsals. She said that she is happy to be performing for the second time at the Globen, with a different version of Sweden's 2011 Eurovision song contest song Popular (for the interval). She tells esctoday that she loves Eurovision and will always be a Eurovision fan. Speaking about the current debt crisis in Greece, she says that despite this we need to have fun and that music makes you feel good. After a quick unaccompanied version of Popular she gives us a few hints about what to expect for the interval. Her future plans include releasing Popular as a single in Sweden and Greece as well as appearing on a new TV show. Asked about the possibility of returning to Eurovision she said she would like to return in a different capacity

You look fantastic!

Thank you very much- I feel very good. Actually I am very happy that I am here and that I am gonna perform for a second time here at Globen, because the first time was 2006, when I was here with"my number one". But this year will be something totally, totally different. First of all I really wanna thank Krister Björkman, who is like... I think he is like the president of eurovision. I'm sorry to say that [laughing]. Every year he wanted me to be in the competition again, "come in and compete again" - I don't wanna compete again. I feel like I have done it and - I am always gonna be a fan of eurovision. When is eurovision night, nobody can disturb me, nobody can. Even if they call me, I am not going to answer the phone.

So there is no Melodifestivalen for you anymore, are you sure?

No, because I have done this twice. [...] I want a lot of people to have the time to experience this, because it's an amazing feeling to go to eurovision, even if you don't win. I mean I remember the first time when we went with the group of Antique, it was a lovely experience. Not only younger people, but also older people wanna experience something totally different. it's an amazing thing, it's like ... the pulse it's amazing. It doesn't matter where you go ... there's a thing with Eurovision because I feel so proud that I am an European. And it's like a

big festival for all of us Europeans. ... Of course I can always go and see the show again, but I love to stay at home, to cook with all my friends, and we stay and we eat and we always have... you know, a small piece of paper and we write ... "who do you believe is gonna win, who do you believe is gonna win,..." So, I love Eurovision. I will always be a eurovision fan. always.

SVT Rapport + Aktuellt, Sweden 2012 (March)

[translation: Swedish (?)]

Hello come in!

A telephone call came in as usual by Christer Björkman and he said "No Elena, I promise. You aren't going to compete, I promise not to ask that. But can't you come over and do Eric Saades song as guest. Popular is a great pop song and Fredrik Kempe have written a fantastic song and Eric Saade is a fantastic artist. So it didn't go to make it as much "pop".

2005 Elena Paparizou won schlager EM for Greece. She is born and grew up in Sweden. But since many years she lives in Athen, there she works a lot and preparing among other things a summer tour in the crisis Greece. You can't just do it like "How much did people get paid 2008, then I take less then that". No, you must reset everything and then you begin from the start. You need to make new deals with the audio company, production company. You make new deals from the beginning again. And everyone must reduce the payment. It is better if people have things to do, but get less paid. Then they at least get paid. All Greeks have taken a loan, so when they reduce the payment it gets very hard for them and the electricity is very expensive And it is very expensive to buy food in the ica stores, or.. in the food stores. It is very expensive.

I was thinking about you and you closest, your brother, his family. How do you notice the economic crisis in the everyday life?

It gets noticed, of course it gets showed. Then, it is a very strange question. At first, everyone is asking me if I am going to move back to Sweden because of the crisis. No is my answer.

Next question is always, "Greeks is lazy, huh? They doesn't want to job?"

No, they are not lazy. They work many hours. They jobs from at least nine or ten on the morning and everyone is back home at ten or eleven on the evening.

What do you believe will happen with Greece then?

Well, we need to bite us on our lip and do what is needed to do. But I would want that the state to respect that the people shouldn't lose everything. It is easy that people losing everything. And I am scared that the middle class will die out and there will only be very rich people and very poor people.

Do you think about that when you are on stage nowadays, do you have this with you?

I should really be honest now, of course I feel a lot of stress. I always say that a smart human does wrong, but doesn't do the same wrong twice. So I don't hope the Greeks do it again, against themselves.

But now you are here and is going on the stage tomorrow, is that a breath hole for you?

Well, my profession is something completely different. I am worried is more about Helena. My profession is that I am Helena Paparizou and I should entertain people. And I think it is extremely funny to do it. And I think it is very important to have fun before, too. Because then deliver.

Do you have fun here then?
I do have so much fun, I have forgot how fun it is to be here in Sweden and work here. And it feels lovely because I meet old colleagues, new people and new artists. And it get to be "Who is that". What game did he got out from. Very curious... meeting new people and well, I think is is very fun.

Almenäs Bjuder in Show, Sweden 2012 (April)

[translation: Miranda]

Now we have reached the finale pf this series. During eight weeks I have met exciting and interesting people here on Solvalla. We have eaten some food, bet on horses, and have had nice
concersations. Tonight's guest I got to know in this year's Let's Dance, and here behind me she are dancing, Helena Paparizou.

You're not dancing Helena.
What?

We decided that you were going to dance a bit behind me.
No, I'm hanging out in the bar.

No, but we said so. You were going to show us your work here.
I would love to dance cha-cha, but no one wants to see me on tv anymore.

Welcome Helena!
Thanks Jessica! I was thinking if you can't dance, you can at least chew. You have to train up your cheek muscles.

Now we are training our cheek muscles, laughing, eating and talking. It wasn't such a long time since we last met on Let's Dance. You were highly tipped to win, but then you went out as the second person.
Yeah...

I don't think I was the only one who was shocked about that. Why do you think it turned out like that?
The thing is, I don't what to think about, is it that people forget to vote, or do they think, she has already done this, she can already dance, she doesn't have to participate, and there are others who can't dance who we can vote for. But for me it is ok, it is like what I said the same night I went out, I'm so happy I got this request from tv4, that they had thought about me when I have been away from Sweden for so many years.

Now when it has been, how many weeks?
Two weeks has past. It has hurt. But I have to say this, during the fourth show I went to Gothenburg and there we had a cozy Friday.

With the family?
With the family. All of members in the Paparizou family, nieces also and we hung out in front of the TV, we shouted and cheered and had a really great time. So it will be very much Let's Dance
even though you're gone, and soon I will go back to Greece for a short while, and will be back again. But i will log on the internet, read about what's happening with all of them.

Who do you think will win now that you're gone?
It's really, really tough to know, you don't know.

You have to say someone. Who do you think?
I'm going to say, it depends that they do well every time. I have that feeling that I want either Anton or Molly to win. That's how i feel. May the best one win, it's always the people who are going to vote. About two weeks ago, I was a contestant, now I can vote. I will always vote
for the ones I enjoyed during the evening.

But, you and David don't meet as often in the rehearsal and training halls, do you have any gossip that we don't know about? Has anything excting happened behind the scenes?
Mostly for my part it has been that henemark is always there, and Tobias gives you a massage, because I went past their training hall, henemark's and Tobias. I'm so sorry for telling this, but Camilla (H) said to me "I have no inspiration, I don't know what to do" and suddenly Tobias started stripteasing there and I was like " What's happening here?!" and opened the curtains and thought I wanted to be in there too.

Are you single now?
Yes, I am single.

Completely? 100 % or 95 %?
It kinda gets around 90 now, because I have dared to try the thing called dating.

Oh.
It's exciting, but it's really hard. Especially when you have been with someone for 12 years. Now I have been single for more than a year, and I felt I needed to try it.

That's exciting. Are you dating in the american way, so you date multiple guys at the same time or do you date as we do in Sweden, one at a time?
One at a time. Oh, God. But maybe you should try the american way, but then you have to the guts to do it.
Your dream guy?
My dream guy...It's so easy to say that you want your guy to be hot, I have seen so many hot guys, but as soon as they open their mouth, it's just like "Oh my gosh..." Go home to bed.

And that's not good enough?
No it isn't. I want a man, that's a real man. He has to know what do with his life, he should be ok with the fact that he has a woman on his side.

Now you have come back to Sweden with big steps you have to say. You have been in let's dance, and you have performed on MF. Are you aiming for a new take in Sweden? A new carrier? You have been gone a few years.
I Have been gone a few years, the last thing I did in Sweden was the world championships with "To all the heroes..", and that was 2007 if i remember it correctly. And then a lot happened in my personal life, my dad past away I wasn't ready to come back, but then I felt, no it's time to do what should have been doing for several years now. It's great fun, because I'm dealing with a new record company here in Sweden. Tomorrow is my first day when I'm going to go in and do some demos.

Fun.
So i think it's really fun. then I wanted to broaden my life as a singer a bit. Last year I was in the jury, in Sweden I was a contestant in Let's Dance, and now I feel it's for some musical, some film...

Do you have anything concrete going on?
yeah I have some funny requests, but i can't talk about them. It's top secret, but it is really fun actually. I'm so happy, and this will be really exciting. But you don't just get requests, you have to audition also to see if you're right for the part, because they can decide, now this doen't fit.

I also have heard rumours that Christer Björkman has nagged you on participating in MF.
He's so cute, Christer, I think he had made up his mind, but he gave up this year. He was like, No Elena I'm not calling you to ask if you can compete, I want to ask you if you want to perform last year's winning song, and I thought this I wanted to do, it's going to be a burlesque number.

It's kinda like a circus, the whole Eurovision thing when you see it from the outside.
Yes.

But what was the strangest thing you saw?
the weirdest thing for was that my zipper broke 5 minutes before I had to go on stage.

Oh! What did you do then?
What did we do? We shouted loudly, it was a dress that Roberto Cavalli had sown, and we panicked. And we tried to mend the zipper, and luckily everything's there, doctors, seemstresses, everything is there. So a seemstress comes along, and she sows the whole dress together really quickly. God how I panicked, I thought I was going to faint before I went on stage.

So she sowed you into the dress?
Yeah, she sowed me in.

But you are a competitive person?
No.

But you have competed in Eurovision and Schlager.
But I never thought, I have to win now.

So you haven't got hooked on gambling?
I have lost some money on a casino once, but I have been here to Solvalla once before. I then I lost around 500 SEK. And I never win.

Then you have gambled once?
But it is like this, some are lucky in games, some are lucky in love. I hope it will be love this time around. [A part talking about a gambling has been removed because it was unclear to the editor when Helena was talking and when the interviewer; besides it was very specific talk about a game so international fans might not really bother at all.]

Soon Loreen is going to Baku and compete in Eurovision. Do you have any advices for her?
I think she just has to stay herself, she is an amazing performer, it's a superb song...

Do you think she has a shot of winning?
I think she has extremely high chances of winning, I will vote for her.

Last week, Ulf Eveling was here and sent you a question. He has interviewed a lot of people, known as unknown, foreign as swedish, 30 000 interview I thought he had done in his life, that's quite many. The question he sent was very special, and asked "Why?"
Why?

yes.
Why why? That's why!

A great answer! let's cheer to that!
Cheers!

If you dare to cheer with water.
Yes, I do. Water is the most holy thing existing.

Mega TV, Proino Mou: Greece, December 9, 2013: #AskElena

[translation: Derek]

Five people she couldn't live without ?

Five are too few for her. Mum, brother, sister, her nephews, her partner, her best (girl) friend, her best (boy) friend. A tour bus would be too small to fill them all.

The right singer to represent Greece in ESC?

She thinks she'd never accept the challenge but it's Monika (Μονικα Χριστοδουλου) because she is rather alternative, very selective and rather snobbish (when it comes to where she performs, etc) singer so she'd like to see her dare more.

You've shown signs of competent acting in your music videos. This is call for you to be in a movie. When are you going to respond to this call and how?

She thinks it's very hard to do it after all these years since she never completed her studies in this field. She thinks she is much more likely to do a musical than a movie because a musical would be closer to her main profession. When it comes to acting she thinks she would never dare to take a leading role. She thinks she'd be happy enough with a guest appearance. She goes on to say that she's received quite a few offers for a movie in Sweden. One of them was supposed to start being filmed in 2012 but the role was very provocative and she didn't dare to take it.

What musical would she like to be part of?

Hair is one of her favourite musicals. She goes on to say that she recently received an offer for EVITA but negotiations didn't proceed since the play requires 2 sopranos (Evita and Che) and a baritone (Peron). If she were a Soprano she would gladly accept the offer but since her request to lower the key of the play wasn't granted and since her soprano voice would sound very foreign and unrecognizable to the audience she had to say no.

Your birthday is next month. Which has been your happiest birthday so far?

She hopes for the upcoming birthday to be her best one yet.

What is the infamous change about?

The change is about her daring decision to do a hair change because it was something she had been dreaming of thinking of her mother and hoping she will start resembling her more as she grows older.

Have you acquired good and trustful friends in the show biz?

We may not hang out together but those I consider as my friends; I think they truly are friends of mine.

What is she regretful about?
Have no regrets about the things that you did. Only be regretful about the things you haven't done.

Is there any Greek composer/songwriter that you want to collaborate with but still haven't?
At some point I did want to collaborate with George Theofanous. Last year I did a duet with Natassa Theodoridou that was written by him and this year Theofanous has been doing a collaboration with various artists with Christmas songs [probably referring to the Super FM Christmas concert in Cyprus]. She would like to do more songs with him. The one collaboration she never thought she would accomplish is the one with Nikos Antypas.

What is the most unexpected incident that has happened to you on stage?
It's clearly the one she's made a reference to earlier (during the show) - while she was on stage on Fever, someone got on stage during her laiko act and from behind her, he tried to grab her crotch. It was shocking and she's never been so angry. When asked about how she reacted to it, she says that she grabbed him from his lapel and she was dragging him all over the stage since that was a proper sexual assault.

What have you got to say to those who will speak ill of your ESC participation.
She accepts different opinions but she feels very certain about her decision even if she will reach the bottom. It was her decision to go for it, her song really represents her, the lyrics of the song speak in her heart since she feels like a life survivor herself. She wants to enjoy it and have fun! And to all the people out there who have negative thoughts about it she says "I've never denied my Greek origin. In fact I'm a Swedish born-Greek. Within our house Greek mentality was the most prominent element but our parents were very strict that outside the house we had to adopt to the Swedish culture with a touch of Greece. Regardless of what reactions this statement will bring about, I always feel like a "mobile advertizing" for Greece because whenever I'm there there's not a single person that will not ask me about Greece."

Why did she not attempt the Swedish comeback earlier?
Because she had a lot of sorrow due to her father's death. And at that time there were some court battles with the Swedish state ("Lex Maria") because of the late arrival of the ambulance [at the site of her father's heart attack]. Her whole family wasn't ready at the time - she wasn't there to face the difficulties after her father's death with papers being sent back and forth, etc but the only thing she could say about that time is that it wasn't just a bad period - she was afraid that the rest of their lives would be like that.

What is the greatest career achievement?
"That I'm still here. Eurovision was certainly an event that made me break into the households of all Greeks; too much love."

Are there any songs you regret recording?
There are some songs that she liked less. She says this is the good thing about team work cause once the company has settled on the 5 songs that are potential singles, a fan could pick another song as their favourite therefore the 5 songs that were initially meant to be singles are no longer the center of attention. And a song picked by the fans could stand out.

Was there a time you considered to quit singing?
That had happened once. Back in 2011 when I was about to move back to Sweden.

And what changed your opinion?
When I looked at myself in the mirror and I admitted that I'm ready to receive help and it will be a long journey for me to get back to normal from the bottom I had reached. It's when you start loving life again.

Which Greek or international singer do you dream of collaborating with?
"Celine Dion. I would die to do a duet with her. Although I have met her in person..."

You've met her?
"I met her when I went to Las Vegas. And she knew who I am. She was a very spontaneous, warm and wonderful person. However what happened is that Albert Hammond who's written "Just Walk Away" happened to see my cover of the song on youtube and because it was his own song he decided to include me in one of his albums so I thought this was perhaps only a beginning of more collaborations to come with Celine or Albert Hammond, hopefully."

QX magazine, Sweden 2013 (summer)

[translation: Chris]

PAPARIZOU - BIG GAY MAMA

Eurovision winner Helena Paparizou will perform at the Stockholm Pride. Ronny Larsson from QX gave her a call in Greece. Helena gears up for a boat trip in Greece when QX reaches her.

You have performed at Stockholm Pride two times before. How do you feel coming back?

Wonderful! I love Pride and think it's an important celebration that everyone can be involved in. Those who do not like the Pride are simply afraid and we can hopefully change that by welcoming them to the party.

Is "Save Me" a characteristic song of your upcoming album?

Yes, we can say that. It's in the direction that I want to go. This [Save Me] and The Light In Our Soul. I'm mainly a pop artist. I am working with Bobby Ljunggren -whom I have known for many years- in 3 songs but also with composers from Greece and Finland.

Last year you participated on Let's Dance. How was it like?

I sat in the jury of Dancing on Ice in Greece because they thought I knew ice skating since I came from Sweden (laughs). After that I felt that I wanted to stand on the other side of the table and challenge myself. It was fascinating to wake up and sleep with dance for a couple of months. But I was eliminated very quickly which was less fun. I wanted to stay!

Last year you did a burlesque-rock version of Popular in Melodifestivalen. Would you return as a contestant again?

I do not want to participate as an artist and I've said this before. Perhaps as a songwriter or as an interval act. But I wouldn't say it's never going to happen. It's just silly with artists who say that they will never participate again and they stand in the line-up again next year. We'll see ...

Earlier this year you created a buzz because of your presence on the cover of a freely distributed magazine in Athens before Pride 2013 where you kissed singer Courtney Parker ...

Yeah, but for me it was an important message against homophobia and Courtney is a good friend of mine.

Do you have gay friends?

I almost have only gay friends! Most of them are boys and call me Big Gay Mama (laughs). My gay boys have been in my life ever since I was around 20. They like me because I am a «free spirit» and therefore I like to go out in gay clubs. There I can let myself be and feel comfortable without having people taking videos of me and uploading them on the internet.

Have you always been sure you're straight?
I have had thoughts like everyone else. When I was around 13 I thought about it a lot and I did not dare to talk about it with anyone. To talk about it with my Greeks parents was not an option so I went to one of my sister's best friends who was a lesbian and lived with her girl-friend. She explained everything very well and that what is for some people just a phase is for others a permanent state. But above all, it's not about who you are going to sleep with but meeting a life partner that you really fall in love with. She explained everything in a such a good way and I carry her words with me when I talk to my niece and nephews.

A few years ago you sang in Swedish for the soundtrack of Arn, including a song written by Eva Dahlgren. How was all this?
It was an honor to sing one of her songs. I recorded it with Anders Glenmark and it was a lot of fun because I had difficulty singing in Swedish. My "Gothenburg" pronunciation of "r" was very intense and it sounded silly. My mother tongue when it comes to singing has always been English.

If you could recommend one of your songs that the Swedish public is not aware of...?
Baby It's Over is good and of course All The Time which is a duet with *Courtney Parker*.

OK Magazine, Greece 2013 (May): I want to create a family with Andreas

[translation: Panos]

It's Palm Sunday afternoon, at Kolonaki Square, with the temperature reminding of summer. Helena is sitting outdoors at *cafe Vivliothiki*, and she is drinking hot chamomile, her favorite drink, as she says, which her friends are teasing her for. She is not hiding behind black glasses. She is wearing tight faded jeans, a V-neck top and high platforms. A man is approaching her, and tells her that he is also coming from Mouzaki Karditsas. Her eyes shine every time she mentions Mouzaki, where she spent her summer holidays as a child, and where -even now- is her hideaway. Almost a year has passed since she last had an interview. Since then, many things in her life have changed: she fell in love, moved to a new place, lost weight, changed her label. Nevertheless, Helena didn't lose her spontaneity and her optimistic view on things. She is talking with excitement about her new CD, titled "Ti Ora tha Vgoume", coming out in a few days, about the nice moments she had on studio, and the talented composers and lyricists who have written songs for it, among them: Nikos Antipas, Nikos Moraitis, Giorgos Papadopoulos, Giannis Doxas & Meth from Stavento.

I have the feeling that some people tried to make you lose your spontaneity lately.
In our lives we get through several phases. For now, I want to be calm. I don't chase adventure. The genre may be pop, but it has many ballads. I never hid in my entire life, it would be false to fake something else from what I am.

That may have harmed you?
I don't know if it harmed me, but I am sure it was real. When I am not feeling good, I can't hide it. I need to be real in my life. When some time ago I was leaving from "Paidika Horia SOS", I saw a man playing clarinet at Voulagmenis Ave. I was stoned! I opened the window of the car, and started screaming to him "Fare Well Man!". I like to be be spontaneous and get about my positive energy.

Don't you feel like bursting, when someone you consider as a friend, suddenly opposes to you?
I get sad for sure, and I complain, I am human. I know that I am clear inside, and I have to get over it. If I have made mistakes I have to correct them. I have apologized many times throughout my life. Saying you are sorry is just like love, it brings you closer to the other. The aim must be to get better, not worst. At some points it is convenient to be an artist, you say that everyone must be standing you because you can get very emotional. Even I can wake up one morning and be "sour", and blame everything without having happened anything. But I get so muvh love around me, especially when I am out of Athens. Some days ago, I was at Pirgos, I got into a flower shop, and when the owner saw me, got into my arms, and she wouldn't let me go.

Some other artist could have been bothered.
I like living everything that is true. Even if I was a mess psychologically, I lived it to the end. Before I found someone in my life, I was good for a long time, I felt ready. If you have negative residues, you get suspicious. That man got into my life on the right moment.

Is it better to hang out with a person out of showbiz?
Yes! (laughing). Andreas occupies with completely different things, he needed time to get to

know showbiz, but finally he accepted it in a very nice way. In the beginning it was difficult though. For sure it wasn't pleasant to him that there were photographers at the memorial of his uncle. I want to protect our families. When my father died, I had sent a letter to the journalists asking them to let us bury him without publicity. At that moments I was just George's daughter. Even if my career it's half of my life -I 've been singing for 14 years- but my family is my refugee. Whatever is happening to me, I will call either my mom or my siblings so as to share it with them.

That's why you had returned to Sweden back then?"
Yes. I think it was the best thing I could do. Nobody here could really support me. I had said back then that I would quit singing, and I would never return to Greece.

What made you change your mind?
People's love. I told to myself "Since you love so much what you do, you must return". Now that moment seems far away from me, but it helped me at the same time. I can now appreciate more whatever good happening to me. Every time that I 'm about to make myself or someone else sad, I reverse it. I don't want to make anyone sad anymore, and neither do I let anyone do anything similar to me. Now, when I don't like something, I say it without second thought. In the past I would keep everything to myself. I think we have made our relationships complicated without any reason. That's why I try to be as optimistic as possible.

is Andreas responsible for any of that changes?
When I left from Greece, I didn't only seal in my mothers house. I did several different things. I visited a psychologist again, because many of my phobias had arose again. I was suffering from agoraphobia, and I was scared of heights. I couldn't even sit on my balcony. These things require some work, you need to face your fears. [..]

So you are now steady on your feet.
Yes. I would never like to be less than 15 years old. I like being 31. My friends who are around 40 years old, are telling me that the closer you get the better you feel, provided that you love and take care of yourself.

Is Andreas your family now?
Yes, he is. Since we live together, and he is the first person I see when I wake up, and the last before I sleep, he is my family.

Are you finally getting married?
There is no official engagement. He bought me a ring as a present and he told me: "Elenaki, I want to live the rest of my life with you, because I cannot imagine it without you". And as he was giving it to me, I told him "Andreas, I can't imagine my life without you either", and I put the ring on. It's like there was a proposal, without having set the date. What I want is to be well together, and end with a marriage and not a divorce! To have a nice family. It's a blessing to have your own kids. And if you can't, to adopt. It's equally great.I believe that I will be an amazing mother, and I have picked a great partner to have kids with.

Would you have a break from your career?
It's hard to answer that. For sure, I wouldn't like singing with a big belly. Forcefully there would be a break so as the body would return to normal.

Your body has been a topic of discussion many times
The truth is that I had gained many kilos. I am getting sad every time that I am asked that. When you are trying to lose weight and you can't, you oppose to your own self. Do you know how many times I wanted to throw the scales out of the window? When I say that I am happy that my voice is well, it's not an excuse but a reasoning.

I see that you have lost some weight
Even now they keep on writing that I am fat. All that thing it is kind of racial. I am not 20 years old, and I don't try to be.

Truth to be said, you were not thin in your puberty
That's for real, when I was 19 I lost many kilos. Especially in Eurovision 2001, I lost 5 kilos in 10 days. I couldn't eat or sleep because of the stress. At this point I am about 3,5 kilos fatter than I was in Eurovision 2005. I have just had that plastic surgery, and my body looks different.

Do you regret that?
No, but if I had this surgery again, I would have made them smaller. Actually, when I did it, they weren't so big, but then I got fatter. If you notice, I am not dainty. [...]

[translation not completed yet]

Biscotto Life Guide, Greece 2013 (May)

[translation/summery: Labros]

Helena says that she has taken part herself in every stage of the new album's production so it feels very “Helena”. She will go on a summer tour. Helena does not want to go into details about her international plans, but she has signed with Universal Music Netherlands, so she will try a few things and hopes everything will go fine.

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Sveriges Radio P3, Sweden 2013 (August)

[translation/summery: Swedish]

Helena supports the LGBT community: She believes when you are famous you should open your mind for other people because you can be heard on a whole different way.
On her cover on a magazine LIFO: It is a free magazine, and she kissed a girl on the cover, Courtney Parker. Everyone should have the right to express his/her sexuality. She wanted to express her opinions about this because she isn't a mother yet, but she will be a mother. Helena has decided that, and she doesn't know how the future will be for her kid and she wants to know as much as possible: The more she knows, the more she can learn the kid on a better way.

Her performance at the MAD VMA made her look like Madonna. How big she really is in Greece? She answers that it is very thought to talk about oneself. She continues that it goes very good in Greece and that she has a nice fan club that supports her wherever she is. She says that this interview will be up on their platforms there in a week, because they follow everything she does. *[Yes, and the members even translate all your interviews, but we seriously have never needed a whole week for finding your recent interviews – we are much faster than you can ever imagine! – Comment by the editor.]*

Will there be an Antique-comback? Helena has thought about it, and that it was fourteen years ago now on 7th April. She remembers that because Nikos always mentioned this date. But she doesn't know about a comeback, because she hasn't talked to Nikos for many, many years.

MTV your noise daily, Greece 2013

[translation: Chris]

Helena: “First of all, we had a great time with travels, everywhere, maybe it was the first time that I had a trip and I had the time to see different things, places because as usual we do other things and imagine I even have no time for a coffee. We had gone about 3 days ,it was amazing, the night was awesome!”

Last March, you have been in Sweden, you joined as a guest star at Melodifestivalen and sung "Popular". That experience how did it make you feel?

Because I had many years to appear in Sweden, i felt that i had to begin from the start , to forget all activities had done in Greece, of course when i went there, they all welcome me , they had not forget me i met many new people . There were old cooperators they hugged me they helped me . i am very glad for what i had done, i believe that i have enriched more my artistic family.

It seems you talk warmly yet about Sweden and Swedish there...

Look, Sweden is the country in which i was born, has offered me all the right education . On the other hand, Greece is a country which have continued offering me changes and things, otherwise i wouldn’t be the artist who i am at this moment and love which i have received. But over all i am human , meanwhile wherever i go, i wanna feel comfortable, feel love and of course i wanna give love, if i dont have this , i wont have anything in my life,

7 years have passed since ESC (from your own participation then).

There are many moments i remember and others which i dont remember at all cause i lived so intensely that particular season of my life the only thing i will keep in my mind from all this experience is that maybe this institutional was the cause i "entered" in every Greek families because the moment i will never forget was when i arrived back In Greece at the airport we went to the Mansion, everybody still youngers, eldest people were in streets ..... i remember particularly an old couple which holding each others hand and saluted to me. Meanwhile, i became cloud, ι really was touched by them, namely.

The experience about ESC, how you imagine that now?

I have to say it was a very sweet memory i want wish Greece participants good luck every year . i dislike the fact that Europe has a negative comment about Greece cause Greece is a country which created the culture in General worldwide and i want Europeans and everyone worldwide keep a stable prestige about Greece . All problems are like Maths, Always there are solutions. The problems sure will be solved someday . We are not malingers simply we are a bit unlucky the current moment i want to be united Greeks and continually to be evolved not be unprogressive, (not tell who blames for, but we must find which is the solution.)

What are you listening at this period?

To tell you the truth, because just now i moved out, home it occured to open an old cd case and i found out Celine Dion's album "The Power Of Love" and Mariah Carey's album "Music Box" (including "Hero" song) and "Butterfly" album (including "My All") so i listen to them all the time the last 2 weeks .....and these singers helped me at my performances because they have peak arranged voices.

Radio “Mix Megapols Morrongäng”, Sweden 2013 (October)

[translation/summery: Swedish]

Helena says that it's sad that so many have racist thoughts in Greece right now. Especially because many Greeks have emigrated for centuries. She lives in Greece right now and signed a contract with Sony Music in Greece and made a new contract with Universal Netherlands, given her a little more free hands. She can then work with Universal in Greece and Lionheart in Sweden. She has many different Scandinavian things in her songs, Scandinavian song writers like Jimmy Jansson, and more. She will be in Sweden a lot now, the new music album is done and ready. They play the song "Save me", she was asked to say something short about it: Jimmy Jansson and Bobby Ljunggren wrote the song. Fredrik Sonefors has produced it. It was fun to record it, it do have two different versions. One Greek and one English. They talked about the duo Antique when the song was played, and one of the program leader said Nikos was Helenas brother. She explains it was not, and talks about who Nikos really was. Eurovision: When she won, what did that mean for Greece. She says it meant much. Many got happy. Also Swedes... Asked if she is one of the biggest stars in Greece, she doesn't exactly provide an answer to this question, but she answers she has been blessed with a great career in Greece. She likes the audience there also. And she is liked there... The program leaders was disappointed on the answer, and asked again to answer the question: If she could go outside without people noticing her. She answers that she many times goes around without makeup, then the people often doesn't notice her. But they recognize her when she begins to talk. Then what happens when they recognize her. She answers they are positive, happy, people who want to take a picture, autographs. If it doesn't feel cool to be "home" in two countries. She answers yes. That's the way she feels rich. Two cultures, two home countries. If she can speak more languages then Swedish, English and Greek. She answers *no* and "isn't three enough?" She says she still can't spell and say many words. She says two hard words in Greek. It took her five years to be able to say those words correct. And a program leader asks if she says them often. She answers at least one of the words. She is asked what happens next in Sweden, or if she will go back to Greece. She will go back to Greece on Monday, because on Sunday she will be on Bingolotto. She will sing "Save me". The new album is ready, and will be released in autumn or spring. There are many different plans and it's not yet decided. She is asked why she is having it ready but not releasing it. She answers something about that there are many different plans and that's why it is not released yet. But the most important things is that everyone who has contributed to the CD is satisfied with it. And then we all need to hope that people will like it. Asked if she can come there again, when the album is ready and perform one of the songs live. She answers "yes, absolutely".

Aftonbladet, August 2, 2013: Sleepless

[translation: Derek]

Helena Paparizou, 31, is back on Swedish soil after 7 years.
Yesterday she played at Pride Festival and her new album is on the way (out in fall).
I am very, very nervous. Now, it is determined whether they are interested in me or not, she says.

Before her Pride performance the otherwise sleep-deprived singer was up early.
I woke up at four so nervous about standing on stage in Sweden again. The time has come, she says.

Has been away for a long time...
Helena Paparizou says that nervousness stems from the fact that she has been away from the Swedish music market for so long. It's been a little too long, almost seven years. It's not just my own effort, there are so many people who have worked for this record. What I think we are all concerned about is that it might flop.

A visit to her nephew's school in 2011 gave her an insight.
I was at their music lesson, and they asked me why I was famous. Time flies. They were born in 2002 and I have not done anything in Sweden that they could follow. It was the worst slap.

She did, however, a sneak comeback in Sweden last year when she performed Eric Saade's "Popular" in Melodifestivalen and participated on the "Let's Dance". Recorded a Greek album: Then she went back to Greece and made a Greek record.
Helena Paparizou has lived in Greece for many years and she now lives with her Greek boyfriend in Athens. Will you concentrate on your Greek career again if it doesn't go as (well as) expected here?
No, I'm stubborn. I will insist. Obviously it'll be Sweden for me now. It feels like I'm starting from scratch.

The album will come in October and as for her future plans she will aim to spend time in Sweden as much as possible. Whether there will be a comeback on Melodifestivalen is still unclear.
They've called almost every year and wanted me to participate. This year, no one called.

Would you like to?
You should never say never, but I am in this kind of mindset about it "been there, done that". I have experienced the Eurovision twice.

A new appearance outside the competition, she can however imagine.
Christer Björkman may call me as much as he wants. I am equally excited every time I get to hear his voice. I would absolutely be willing to do something.

Proto Thema, Greece, December 2, 2013: «I am a *Survivor* »

[interview: Μαρία Λεμονιά; translation/summary: Derek]

She's introduced in the article as the greatest singer/performer of her generation in Greece (well said!) and it is revealed that this is a phone interview from the day of her announcement as one of Melodifestivalen's acts

Her decision to participate in Melodifestivalen was completely spontaneous. One day when she was at the Lionheart office in Stockholm back in September during the last studio sessions for her upcoming English language album she heard the echoes of *Survivor* from another room and she was instantly touched by it so she decided to step in that room. There she found some old colleagues and friends who after seeing her enthusiastic reaction to the song asked her if she could see herself in Eurovision again (obviously with this song for which Helena has revealed that it was meant to be submitted for Melodifestivalen 2014 anyway). She didn't have to think a lot about it before saying yes because *Survivor* describes what is truly going on in her own life for the past 1 year. She's nervous about her participation in the contest considering she's been away from the Swedish music scene for a long time and she sees this as an opportunity for a career restart.

Helena the incident (some of you might remember it from one of her interviews on aftonbladet.se) when during one of her nephew's school events in Sweden, a little girl asked her if she's famous. That's when she realized that she's been away for so long that a whole generation is unaware of her.

When asked if she's afraid of losing some of her prestige by participating in a national final for Eurovision, she says that the relationship with the audience isn't self evident and granted and even artists like Nana Mouskouri who have sold 300 million records worldwide will tell you that they have to fight for it on a daily basis. She believes that giving soul and body and constantly trying hard are requirements for career endurance.

When asked if she's grown tired of bouzoukia nightclubs, she says she hasn't but she told herself *it's enough now, I want to do something else*. She says she was never snobbish towards this type of entertainment and it has in fact taught her great lessons about her career and direct communication with the audience.

When asked why she went to the auditions for *Evita* (within the journalist's question it's also revealed that she eventually decided to turn down the role afterwards) she says that she likes to challenge herself in new areas and receiving new offers leads to enthusiasm and the spark of creativity, otherwise a career resembles a railway car that follows the established route of the railroad.

She considers the period from 2008 to 2011 as a really tough period as she lost her father and a lot of bad things happened to her during that time which lead to her depression and to consider quitting from the music business. She fought hard to see light at the end of the tunnel and *Survivor* is well suited to her.
She says she's very happy during this stage of her life as she's now come to terms with herself and as a result with other people too. Within Andreas she's found everything she seeks in a man and although they've been together for some time now, they are still passionate

about each other. She describes him as a great partner who cares about the people around him. She goes on to say that through him she has discovered more aspects of her character and she doesn't just sing for him, she lives for him. She makes clear there hasn't been a proper engagement but he has proposed to her!

When asked if having kids could be an obstacle to her career she says that in Sweden women can still have a career after having one or 2 kids. She'd love to have kids because it's nice to spend your time between work and family commitments because that's a way to avoid stagnancy and routine. Asked to describe an everyday like moment that signifies her happiness she says that both of them are waiting for each other by the front door and whatever time they get back home (whether it's 20.00 or 2 after midnight) they'll sit at the table, they'll look into each other's eyes and they'll talk.

To the question if fame that came for her at a very young age ever made her arrogant she replied that it didn't, because her father always used to tell her *Helena don't forget where you came from*! Asked if she grew up in a househould that followed Greek habits/customs she reveals that there were actually Swedish customs but the mentality and temperament always remained Greek. For instance her parents (from other interviews we know that in fact it was her mum) forbid her to speak Greek when she was around Swedish people, however when they were around other Greeks, they were totally *Greek* by talking loudly and interrupting each other the entire time which is something she's never gotten rid of. Likewise in the press conference they held for MF she says she was the only one in the bunch who was speaking loudly and making noise.

When asked how she feels about Greeks who think it's a pity that she will compete for Sweden although she's Greek, she says that she doesn't want any Greek to feel this way about her, in fact she wants Greeks to feel happy that their compatriot is doing something abroad which is what Swedes felt back in 2005 with her ESC victory. She goes on to say she is a Greek that promotes Greece wherever she stands abroad and because of her temperament she always carries Greece with her - besides she thinks the title to her song *Survivor* is suitable for *Greeks,* too

When asked what she feels about Notis Sfakianakis's open endorsement for the neo-nazi party *Golden Dawn*, she says that everyone is entitled to their own opinion but it's a pity that in 2013 there are such extreme opinions out there. She says that she talked about this in one of her Swedish interviews as well (probably referring to *Nyhetsmorgon* back in August). She says she dislikes fascism and she hates any form of racism or discrimination against black people, fat people, skinny people, gays, immigrants or patients (the weak). She respects Notis Sfakianakis as an artist but she stands by Despina Vandi's decision who talked from the perspective of a child of immigrant parents. She goes on to say that she isn't just a child of immigrant parents but she became an immigrant herself (after moving to Greece) so she has 2 reasons to stand by Despina's opinion!

Nordpop.com, Sweden, March 7,2014

[interview: David from Nordpop]

Tomorrow we celebrate the final of Melodifestivalen 2014 and on stage we'll have several winners of the Swedish format, and also two winners of the Eurovision Song Contest. One will be Charlotte Perrelli and other Helena Paparizou , though she will be competing . We have seen her on several occasions to participate in the contest of the SVT but she had always been as a guest . Many who have been able to see her every year wanted her to compete in the famous Swedish Christer Björkman festival, but the real responsibility for having achieved such a thing has a name: *Survivor*. In the semifinal it failed to break into the top two spots but last Saturday it was one of the winners of Andra Chansen (second chance final). All eyes will be on her on Saturday, and that was the only winner of Eurovision representing Greece. It also has a significant base of fans scattered around the world. This 2014 would be the year of his return, musically speaking, Sweden and the truth is that it has done through the front door . We know that participating in the Melodifestivalen is, at best, good for any artist who wants to make a career in Sweden in particular and in Scandinavia in general. Therefore, we have had the opportunity to share some time with her in a week being busy . Here you can read the full interview in which he tells how they started , how he decided to participate in Melodifestivalen and which tells us his plans for the nearest future.

First of all , thank you for sharing your time with us in a week with so much work . You are already well known , many discovered you thanks to your two units in Eurovision 2001 and 2005 , the year you won , but ... how were your first steps into the world of music?

I started singing in the school choir when I was 8 . At 11 I sang solo for the first time on a Greek holiday and since age 13 I started my first band called Soulfunkomatic . We were a group with three Latin American rappers called Choklo , Chato Tea and cake . My stage name was Soulfunkadizzy (laughs). We made R & B and hip- hop. They were great times ! Then I started the group Antique when I turned 17 years with a 'real' discography.

What has influenced your career Swedish half Greek and half ?

I have always kept the best of both cultures. Swedish is my native language but I prefer to sing in English and Greek but have ALWAYS worked with Swedish producers .

And who are your musical influences?

I'm a pop singer but that does not mean I only like pop music. I like good music with deep lyrics . Whether it's rock , pop , classical or alternative.

You're a newcomer to the Melodifestivalen , and has participated as a guest before and many wanted to see you compete. Why now if you've already represented Greece twice?

In fact, I told myself I would not compete again but the song was so compelling that it was already in the Melodifestivalen , competing again. Why not represent Sweden at the moment? I have always felt that I have two countries.

What does Survivor for you? What was it like to hear first?
Survivor speaks to me and many others. And like many others, I have been through many things that have made me have to fight in life. But at the end of the day I am a survivor and I want to share it and let other people also feel that they can be if they are not already .

And .. what does it mean for you and your career, participate in Melodifestivalen 2014?
It was supposed to release my album in November in Sweden but as you see I am a very spontaneous person . The composers of the song had already decided to send Melodifestivalen before I say : "This song is mine " . Somehow, I cannot say it is not a good thing for my return to Sweden.

I know Melodifestivalen before but I wonder what you felt last Saturday when I said, "You are in the final."
I felt very happy and very proud for me and composers of the theme.

Did you imagine that you would live all these emotions?
Everyone likes to feel proud and happy so I feel great!

All eyes are on you, people like your strength on stage and you're one of the winners of Eurovision ... do you feel great pressure ?
I feel no pressure to win Melodifestivalen . I know I have a great song and that if he won the contest in Sweden represent the best I can , as I did for Greece.

And .. what do you think about Melodifestivalen ? Will a before and after in your career?
The Melodifestivalen is one of the biggest music shows in Sweden and is longer than Eurovision itself. It's really hard to compete with 32 songs .

As you can see , we are lovers of Nordic music. Think you have something that makes it special?
It has everything special Nordic music. It is the second music industry in the world and that does not just happen :-)

Besides Melodifestivalen, what other projects do you have in mind?
The March 26 sale leaves my album One life in Sweden ... and hopefully also released in many other countries.

Before finishing ... any dream to fulfill?
One dream of my life is to never stop singing. I love what I do .

Finally, a special message for the readers of Nordpop ?
I hope you enjoy all the good pop music world ! And inform themselves on the pop music on your website.

Tack så mycket , Helena! Good luck in the final! Hope to see you soon in a concert live in Spain and, of course, in Copenhagen!

People Magazine, Greece 2014 (July)

[translation: Panos]

She started saying that she is not getting married on August, but she has been proposed to. Andreas asked her to marry him one morning, with some sweet words, but there are many things to plan before that. She also said that she will be the one to take the final decision about where and when the marriage will happen! It's something that she wants to remember!

Helena is talking about the fact that she's got a lot of gay friends, even transgender, and that she's totally ok with that. In fact that's something her mom taught her! She believes the parents are to be blamed for the bullying behaviors of the children. "Children get used to this behavior by their parents, and the reproduce it harshly"

And what if her child was gay? She wishes to be a mom first of all. She 'd love it if her child told her about it, and of course she would be ok with it!

She has gained like 5 kilos, and she is totally ok with it! In fact she was irritated the other day when she watched a show on Greek TV, and several 25-year-old girls were saying negative comments about 50-year-old women and their bikinis on beach! She turned off the TV: "When we are not 30 anymore, is it forbidden then to go on the beach? We will all be 50 someday, and that will end up being social racism."

Business: She was proposed to be a judge at a new show called "The music School" in Mega Channel, but she said that she couldn't make it due to business trips. She also says that she is a singer and that's what she would like to do, not judging!

She had discussed with some producers about being in the musical Chicago, but then it just stopped. "I would die to sing Evita in the past, you know. I prepared a lot for it, I would go blonde for the part, but there was a problem. Evita was a soprano, and I had to change the key of all the songs 2 to 2 and a half tones down! Nobody would understand that it would be Helena singing. So, it wasn't easy to get the licence! I was discussing about that with the foundation of Hellenic World (Idrima Mizonos Elinismou) for about one month!

Ego Weekly, Greece 2014 (October): Happiness is a big family!

[translation/summary: Chris]

Helena was outside Greece for a year due to her "One Life" album promotion and Swedish concerts. But her home will always be Athens. About her future plans: In November-December she will join Julgalan (her first Winter Swedish Tour) and prepare her next studio album. She likes the new hair colour change with Koleston. She would have taken part in "The Voice of Greece" but had no time due to other obligations; but in the future she is positive to any proposal related with music on TV.

She enjoys daily talk with simple people on the streets or grandmas - she has not lost her spontaneity otherwise she wouldn't be the Helena we know. She never keeps a distance from fans as others pop stars used to do. Lately, she had a great time with her mum in Athens and did a lot of things together.

After her father's death she rethought everything in her life and did a new beginning finding herself firstly - then came romance with Andreas (her big love). The Court case with her former partner Mavridis has not become clear yet. Her marriage will probably happen suddenly without specific timing and last but not least she desires a child because as she says: Happiness is a big family!

She once refused erotic proposal from a lesbian girl in the past in a polite way as she cares about gay people. She doesn't care about comments in the yellow, since she doesn't want to make these journalists happy depressing herself. Her most essential item is her voice as long as she's a singer and she doesn't care so much about her kilos and outer appearance. About her smoking post on Facebook during summer she comments: "I will suggest to a smoker stop smoking and occupy with sports or other activities. I would never give a cigarrete. I will definitely stop smoking sometime."

On TV she watches Greek comedy series, the Eleni Menegaki show and cooking programs. She likes cooking so much and searches on the internet, in cooking books or on TV (from an early age on) and wants her fridge full of vegetables.

myself.gr, Greece 2015 (February): "My absence was a mini break"

[interview: Katerina Bousiou; translation: Chris]

Helena Paparizou is in Greece after 3 months absence due to her concerts and gigs in Sweden. We had already seen her visiting her hometown Karditsa with her partner Andreas Kapsalis for the elections. 24 hours ago, she completed the recording of 2 new songs which notify her comeback in Greek music. Helena is happy as always and laughs as a little child when referring to her comeback: «It was something I was looking forward to for a long time. I know people missed me and me too! Today we have just completed the English-language song of HouseTwins titled "Love Till It's Over" .Simultaneously we will release a Greek song with Greek lyrics called "Otan Angeli Klene", written by Giannis Doxas in Greek lyrics in collaboration with Greek-Swedish producers.

Is it a love song?

Yiannis Doxas has used smart points. I could have never imagined to do something like this before.

Does the use of older hits titles in the lyrics have a personal meaning for you?

Yes, it's about almost all my discography. It includes titles from my greatest hits. On the other hand, we live in a difficult time regarding politics and social situation, so the grasp of the song is the solidarity.

It entires a social sound you mean....

We had mentioned in an older interview the political case of the country. Because our government changed, it doesn't mean that everything changes rapidly. It's unknown yet what will happen. Of course everybody wants and hopes for the best.

What does solidarity mean to you?

To help each other. It's a very important thing for me.

I don't know if solidarity is on the spotlight of showbiz...

I don't know about others but many others artists have helped me since my beginning years with Antique when a Swedish producer learnt about us and when I met Yiannis Doxas or Thanos Karagrigoris. His wife, Dina, saw me during a Russian TV show and then she got amused and on this way I came to Greece.

"Love Till Its Over" and "Otan Angeli Klene" are your own big comeback?

I have never left Greece. My house is located in Glyfada. It was just about a mini break due to my concerts I had arranged in Sweden which I will continue in summer and I am very happy!

PARIZ - the ultimate Helena Paparizou Fan book includes
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3rd „Survivor" edition: February 2015

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