Mikis Theodorakis

Mikis Theodorakis (born in July 1925) is a Greek songwriter and composer who has written over 1000 songs. At the same time, he was a politician. He fought for democracy and against the Greek military dictatorship, Junta (1967-1974), which sent him to exile. He was against the war in Iraq. He was awarded the Lenin Peace Prize in 1983.

He has dealt with classical music writing oratorios, ballets, chamber music and operas. He wrote the opera of “Lysistrati” for the Olympic Games of Athens in 2004. Before that, in 1992, he composed the Canto Olympico for the Olympic Games of Barcelona.

During 1964 he wrote the music for the Michalis Kakogiannis’ film “Zorba the Greek”, also known as “Syrtaki dance”. He also composed music for the Jules Dassin’s film “Phaedra” (1962), Kakogiannis’ “Electra” (1962), “Z” by Kostas Gavras, “Serpico” (1973) starring Al Pacino etc. His compositions have been performed by famous artists such as the Beatles, Shirley Bassey, Joan Baez, Edith Piaf etc.

He also composed music for poems that were written by award-winning poets of Greek and foreign origin. Some of these are “Axion Esti” (Odysseas Elytis, Nobel Prize 1979), “The Mauthausen Trilogy” (Iakovos Kambanelis”), “Romiosyni” (Yiannis Ritsos), “Romancero Gitano” (Frederico Garcia Lorca), “Epiphania” (Giorgos Seferis, Nobel Prize 1963).

In 2000 he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Vangelis Papathanasiou

Vangelis Papathanasiou was born on 29 March 1943 in Volos. At the age of six he gave his first public performance playing his own composition on the piano. Later, he studied at the Fine Arts School in Athens.

He is considered the father of electronic sound. He wrote the soundtrack for more than 15 films. Some films are “Missing” by K. Gavras starring Jack Lemmon, “Christopher Colombus”, “Blade Runner”, “El Greco” by Y. Smaragdis, “Alexander” by Oliver Stone. The film “Chariots of fire” gave him the Oscar for music in 1982.

He staged, directed and orchestrated the opening ceremony for the 6th IAAF World Athletics Championships, which took place in Athens, in August 1997. He also created the musical coverage of the documentary of the great oceanographer Jacque Yves Cousteau.

On 28 June 2001 he presented his space choral symphony “Mythodia” at the Olympian Temple of Zeus in Athens. This was chosen from NASA as the official music for the space mission called “2001 Odyssey on Mars”.