

GEORGES MOUSTAKI

As you look at him you are impressed by the intense presence of his personality. GEORGES MOUSTAKI, archetype from Greece, with a voice, tender and dominant at the same time, pervades the listener evoking pictures of his belief and emotions. He is a singer with a message, one of those who do not just take the microphone for the sake of singing, but who live in their music and have got something to say; and this makes him strong.- strong in the message of his chansons, strong in the will to reach the audience with his music again and again. – And this brought him the world fame he enjoys today.

GEORGES MOUSTAKI, born on may 3rd, 1934 in Alexandria/Egypt as Joseph Mustacci, eductated in the sprit of french culture, which causes him to move to Paris at his age of 17, joining the artists' clique of the „rive gauche“. He learns to play the guitar and writes songs working daytime as a freelance journalist while singing in small bars at night to lose his stage-fright

One of his most important encounters of these days he is with Georges Brassens who recognizes his talent and developping possibilities. He admonishes him to persist and introducing him to other artists' circles. Yet still MOUSTAKI hesitates, his interest torn between the arts of music and painting – today a hobby he still dedicates a large part of his leisure time to. It takes three years till his chansons become known to a wider public by the interpretation of Henri Salvador and around that time he makes acquaintance with Henri Crolla who introduces MOUSTAKI to Edith Piaf, the little great woman with the magic gift to extract just the best out of the people around her. So she does with MOUSTAKI. Fascinated he starts writing for her, almost fanatically and success does not wait: he writes that song which is to go round the world, an evergreen for all times, his personal break-through: „Milord“.

From this moment on he leaves St. Germain and joins the world of variety: now GEORGES MOUSTAKI is a big name in the world, not only in the world of chanson. The big stars ask him to write songs for them: Yves Montand, Colette Renard, Dalida, Henri Salvador, Barbara, Hugues Aufray... he even writes negro-spirituals for the Golden Gate Quartet. Songs are born: „Milord“, „Ma Liberte“, „Nous sommes Deux“(with Mikis Theodorakis), „Sarah“, Joseph“, „Ma Solitude“, „Marche de Sacco & Vanzetti“ (with Baez and Morricone)... People who cover them are, amongst others, Angelo Branduardi, Ingrid Caven, Bobby Darin, Juliette Greco, Francoise Hardy, Ute Lemper, Angela Molina, Kaori Momoi, Nilda Fernandez, Enzo Enzo...

When MOUSTAKI wrote for Tino Rossi, Tino said overwhelmed, „I haven't heard such great music since Vincent Scotto.“ A truly great compliment as Scotto counts among the greatest genius of chanson-writing of all times, famous for his ability to deliver custom-made songs for each singer, interaction between song and singer especially vital for the interpretation of chansons.

Every time when reaching a new stage of creativity there seems to be an elementary personal encounter in MOUSTAKI's life, as catalyst, like in 1966 when Barbara, touring with Serge Reggiani at the time, asks MOUSTAKI to watch them in Caen. MOUSTAKI arrives and is fascinated to re-discover, as he believes, the folklore existence of Piaf in Reggiani, hence writing for him some of his most beautiful songs, such as „Ma Liberte“, „Sarah“ or „Madame Nostalgie“. Still today MOUSTAKI considers Reggiani, along with Ray Charles and Harry Belafonte, one of his favourite singers.

Also himself MOUSTAKI counts among his favourite singers, without false modesty. And right he is as his audience thinks just the same, especially women, whom he adores from deep down of his soul and seduces with his tender, remotely rough and hypnotizing voice every time anew. In his concerts you almost get the impression of sacredness and eroticism at the same time, without any contradiction. Nothing is forced, fake nor superficial and, especially not sure... everything flows, hesitating, undefined; you start trembling, your heart beating, worries...? Why? Everything is going to be alright!

The rythm of his concerts as his music, the announcements, the long silent introductions to his songs, without any urgency, the tender voice, momentarily ephemeral, remind of a sexual prelude, increasing the desire by delaying the act, yet feeling his immediate immanence in every gesture or tone. Every listener thus has his little secret with MOUSTAKI.

Andree Simons writes: „In the end, no matter what you think of him, there is alyway a shadow of a doubt.“

So much for the artist MOUSTAKI, a figure of cultural history.

The private person is rather shy, of contemplative consideration, fiendly and modest by his nature. The face pale, yet of strong expression, full of compassion and interest, he is a dedicated listener and watcher, with a fragile air yet.

His passions are playing ping pong, motorbike riding, painting and foremost, reading books. In the library of his father MOUSTAKI turned into a passionate reader documented by huge piles of books yet to read in his living room, right next to a mountain of books already read; another corner reserved for his collection of instruments, most of them he can play more or less masterly, further back more piles, of records, by friends, his own, foreign ones, presents... heard and unheard.

MOUSTAKI is open for everything; of taking nature and superb intellect he loves an open word paired with humour and courtesy. Averse to every kind of violence, also verbal, he withtreats when he is attacked, or attacks when it is aimed at the weaker, accuses with a loud voice, as done so often, the totalitarian regimes in this world, then in Brazil, Chilly, Portugal, Spain, Greece, Tchekoslovakia or elsewhere. When it is about the rights of the innocent the sage lamb turns into a tiger, as happended just recently in an open letter attacking Jospin for his participation in the Nato assault of Yougoslavian and Chinese civilians, without, of course, defending or excusing the Milosevic regime in the least.

MOUSTAKI loves peace, pacifism and truth, as much as it seems to be a cliché. A sage who seems to have travelled through the centuries, white clothes, white hair, white beard and pale face, lucid, creature of the light, magician of word and song... a cliché? Thousands and thousands of fans and listeners do not think so and cherish him with frenetic acclaim and applause.

Join in with them!

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