

Alekos Galas



One of the most highly respected BOUZOUKI artists, Alex “Alekos” Galas (ah-LEH-kos GA-les) is recognized and considered to be among the best BOUZOUKI virtuosos. A “world-class” musician, recording artist, composer and producer, Alekos Galas has established his musical achievements and recognition with a successful performing career spanning over four decades. Playing the BOUZOUKI professionally since his early teens, Galas has played on numerous recordings for various artists and genres that include Smooth Jazz, World Fusion, and Jazz Fusion. He is noted for his technical mastery, dexterity and complex solos on the BOUZOUKI and is sought out as a session player which has included film soundtracks.

A true fusionist, his new self-produced offering, *Mediterranean Breeze*, features Alekos in the leader role, with commanding performances and the introduction of a traditionally ethnic instrument reformulated in the hands of a master. The sound is beautifully translucent, introducing the listener to a modern sounding, texturally fused reverberation that is a groundbreaking recording. This collaboration is augmented with notable and legendary musicians MARC RUSSO, ABRAHAM LABORIEL, ALEX ACUNA, each lending their unique musical voice and creating a release that engages the listener from the first notes

“Yes, it is genre bending - but elusively cohesive and delightfully musical in every aspect. Galas has truly blended these normally opposing genres into a connective experience that is guaranteed to change the image of the Bouzouki, and for Galas to be the one in the innovator seat makes this life-long dream a reality.”

~ Carmel DeSoto, Yahoo

“There is no doubt Alekos Galas is a virtuoso of the bouzouki. His dazzling technique and virtuosity are shown all over the album.”

~ Wilbert Sostre, Jazz Times

“What makes this release even more intriguing is the innovation of adding Bouzouki, a widely recognized world instrument most commonly used in Greek music. The result is magnificent, and highly successful. Galas has created a landmark sound, melding for the first time a Bouzouki with the commercial sounds of Smooth Jazz and Pop along with cuts that are a hybrid of World fused with adult-contemporary influences.”

~ Jeff Becker, Jazz Sensibilities

“*Mediterranean Breeze* is a highly recommended listen and addition to any listener’s collection that desires a unique experience, but one that is highly palatable and a wonderful excursion into the hybrid canvas of amalgamated genres.”

~ Geannine Reid, Ejazz News

“Showcasing his mastery of many genres and musical styles, the work is a master class in art for the senses. Featuring Galas on the mystical Bouzouki, the album introduces the world to one of its finest melody makers.”

~ Christopher Llewellyn Adams, Cashbox Magazine

“Tasty stuff that keeps the flavor coming, you’ve got to be dead if this doesn’t brighten your day or mood. First class throughout.”

~ Chris Spector, Midwest Record Volume 34/Number 85

“The sounds of the Mediterranean are explored on this new album by Alekos Galas, whose chosen instrument is the bouzouki. On *Mediterranean Breeze* (Ehos) he mixes up a bit of sounds from his Greek heritage and mixes it up with pop and smooth jazz. I found the pop sounds and those that steered more to the Greek side of things were very good, and I can easily imagine this to be used for a wide range of things.”

~ John Book, This is Books Music

“The program is jovial with radio-friendly Latin rhythms. Galas composed, arranged and produced the entire session. He displays his prowess with fleeting passages on “The Road Home”, one of several standouts on his debut recording.”

~D. Oscar Groomes, O’s Place Jazz Magazine

ALEKOS GALAS

A dream realized through tradition and vision....Master Bouzouki artist, Alekos Galas came from humble beginnings, but his visionary dreams have brought his traditional instrument to new heights. Alex 'Alekos' Galas was born in San Francisco, California. His mother and father were Greek immigrants to the U.S.; his mother immigrated in 1948 and his father in 1952.

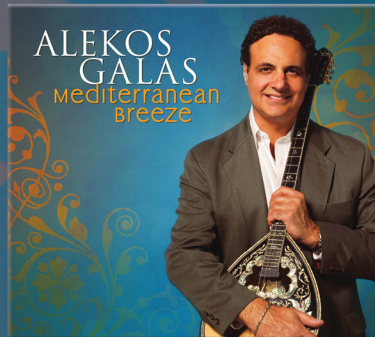
As far back as he can remember Alekos wanted to be a musician and to perform in front of an audience. Galas explains, "Kids 4-5 years of age pretend and imagine different fantasies; I always pretended that I had a stringed instrument in my hands, moving my fingers and imagining large crowds applauding. The day the instrument ended up in my hands was the providential event of my life. While playing 'Hide-and-Seek' at eight years old, during a visit with a relative, I hid in the closet where there, seemingly staring at me, was a Bouzouki. I put the instrument in my hands and started to pluck the strings. The sound fascinated me and as I took it out of the closet to explore the sounds, my uncle, the owner of the bouzouki confronted me. I thought I was in trouble like most mischievous kids, touching what did not belong to me. Instead, he simply asked me if I liked the instrument. I replied, 'Yes, very much!' Seeing that I was in awe with the Bouzouki, he then said, 'OK Alex, I want you to have it.' From that day forward, my life changed forever. When I often look back and think about that day, I believe that it was "written in my life destiny" and was definitely meant to be. As a performer, I am always asked the question, 'Why did you choose the Bouzouki?' My reply: 'I didn't choose the Bouzouki, it chose me.'"

As a youth, Galas played and practiced the Bouzouki for hours upon hours, learning by ear to play television show and movie themes, music from the radio, and of course, the traditional music of Greece. Alekos reminisces, "On one summer day, after practicing the entire day, it was getting late and my father asked me to stop since he and

my mother were ready to turn in for the night. I asked permission to go to the garage in order to continue playing. Finally, I became tired and decided I'd better go to bed. To my great surprise, when I looked out the window, it was sunrise!" To this day, Alekos has the same passion about his instrument.

It was becoming increasingly apparent that Alekos had found his destiny. Aware of his talent, his father bought records of Bouzouki artists and Alekos would learn note for note the many instrumental pieces. Galas' father was very proud of him and at the age of eleven, he bought a Bouzouki that cost \$600; very expensive for those years and considering the family was not wealthy by any stretch of the imagination.

Alekos continued to hone his skills as



a youngster. His father (mentor and guide) could tell his son was ready to become a true performing musician. He knew to embark on this journey Alex would have to perform live in front of audiences. His father would take him to Greek night-clubs that showcased Bouzouki artists. Mr. Galas would speak to the owners of clubs and venues on his son's behalf to arrange performances with the various groups. Galas remembers vividly, the first time he performed on a professional stage at a night-club when he was 11 years old. "Performing together with a professional band, I played several Bouzouki instrumentals with no mistakes and as if I had rehearsed with them. I also remember not being shy performing in front of the audience. It seemed so natural. I would perform as a featured soloist at many various venues, for large and small crowds at different events, and performing at Colleges and

High Schools as well. When I was 14, I performed at the San Francisco Civic Auditorium (now called the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium) in front of 7,000 people for the event, 'International Day' that featured Arthur Fiedler conducting the San Francisco Pops Orchestra. This performance featured several ethnic groups performing music from their respective countries such as: Spain, Italy, Germany, and Poland. My group represented Greece and to my thrill, I played the exciting Bouzouki piece 'Zorba the Greek,' receiving a resounding applause."

It was at 17, Galas began his professional musical career performing in major cities all over the United States and Canada. This spanned over 4 decades and included many concert appearances at Performing Art Centers and Concert Halls. Through the years, Galas recorded and featured the Bouzouki for many artists in the Greek music genre, as well as successfully crossing over into other genres of music, recording for different World Music projects, jazz fusion, and for pop & smooth jazz artists. He was privileged when asked by record producer and composer, Steve Wood, who has written the music scores for over 30 IMAX films, to play Bouzouki for the IMAX FILM, "GREECE: SECRETS OF THE PAST." The soundtrack ended up winning the GSCA Award for best film score of 2006.

Throughout his musical career, Galas has performed with top musicians and recorded for music projects of many genres. *MEDITERRANEAN BREEZE* is a project that is a culmination of experiences and ideas he has wanted to release for some time. His compositions are from his heart and soul; a musical expression of beauty, human emotions, and love. Music is his life, and for that reason, the compositions and performances of Alekos Galas undoubtedly reflect the passion and creativity of his life-long journey to not only bring his music to the masses, but to also infuse other genres with the beautiful sounds of the Bouzouki, which is clearly exhibited in his latest release, *MEDITERRANEAN BREEZE*.