

Caption: From Video Club to Video-clip!

Photo Caption: Local Rock & Biz-kid Platon Caprides

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I was watching the weekly countdown of the top video-clips on MAD TV a few days ago. I, like everyone else, have my favorites, the stuff I just sit through, and the stuff that makes my head hurt and then I have to switch channels. The current number one rated video, entitled *Pan ap'ola* or *Above all Else*, is performed by local pop-rocker, Myronas Stratis. He appears to be, on the surface anyway, a friendly, sincere, capable young Greek guitar player and singer who has watched too many Bryan Ferry videos.

He has cloned his outward appearance, wardrobe and personal-grooming look to resemble Bryan Ferry's late 70s stylistic period, around the time his solo release, *The Bride Stripped Bare*. Check out Stratis's video and Ferry's album cover and tell me I'm wrong. Personally, for my taste anyway, his video always fell into the stuff I just sit through. However, the teeny-bopper, gyno-muppet mallgirls of Athens go doot-da-doot whenever they see him doing his power-croons on the TV set. Then, I finally noticed, as coffee flew from my mouth in surprise, that his bass-player in the video is the manager of the Mooviz video-club located practically next to my house, Platon Caprides.

I have always believed in supporting local rock bands and local businesses. However, this situation that presented itself to me was a ridiculously over-the-top coupling of my, possibly, only two beliefs in this world. Ergo, I buzzed down to the video club to talk to Platon, who, like always, was playing his unplugged electric bass while sitting at the cash register. Our conversation lasted about half an hour, and was not like anything you'd expect from a newly-hatched, pop-video tele-presence.

Platon is a young, handsome, urban street-clad, low-profile guy who is not terribly comfortable talking about himself. This phenomenon is rare in the rock/pop genre, as young musicians tend to get squirrely and full of hairy, egocentric-crap when they finally get a little bit of attention. As I tried to drag information out of him, the answers he gave to my questions were even more antithetical to the standard pop-personality than I would have imagined possible.

He has played with many bands over the years, and his association with Myronas is one of friendship and fun. They've known each other for roughly five years, and while the singer is a professional, Platon plays in his band for enjoyment purposes, just for the buzz of playing with his pal. This is his approach to all the bands he's been associated with. He's been connected

with many name groups over the years, but his video club business is clearly the primary focus of his life.

He operates the store with his father, George, who greatly supports his son's musical interests. When I tried to corner Platon, asking if he were given a chance to tour the world with some big name band like the Killers or Kings of Leon would he leave the club, his father jumped into the chat and said "I'll MAKE him go on tour with them if it's a good opportunity for him." It's was an unusually nice gesture of George to vocalize such support for his kid. It was equally nice to see a father/son relationship where they're not in a constant, competitive, snarly power-war and giving each other long looks. Their conversational tone throughout our conversation was easy, relaxed and mutually respectful.

Platon confesses his favorite music is 70s soul and funk a la Marvin Gaye, Earth, Wind and Fire and 90s alternative rock. He listens to no metal of any kind, or Greek music. He proudly claims that the first concert he ever attended in his life was the Gypsy Kings when he was six years old.

Myronas and Platon, presently, have no further plans for future video collaboration. They play gigs around the city, often at the Anodos club, where local heroes Onirama are the current house band. Myronas Stratis's current CD, Tora Einai Alios, or Now You'll Get It, is available at all local record stores like Metropolis and Virgin and is doing well on the current radio playlists.

It's always fun to talk to the man behind the front man in musical collaborations. The young bassist plays in a solid, rock bottom foundation style, with occasional, very slight, melodic underpinnings. And, while Myronas is the high-visibility, pop-being in the band, Platon, by far, has the best local story going. It appears, through examples like Platon, that local business and local rock music can live in semi-professional harmony and can greatly benefit the local entertainment scene. So, when moms and dads tell their kids to get rid of their guitars and get real jobs, show them this article. Business and finance are here to stay, that is for sure, but so is rock and roll, and the world is a better place for it.