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The Internal Relationship between Byzantine Chant and Folk Music

This lecture will attempt an historical outline of the creation and development of the Byzantine Ecclesiastic music in order to point out the sources that shaped its formation and more specifically to reveal the internal relationship with the Greek folk music along its century-old history. Both these two major musical Greek traditions, the Byzantine Ecclesiastic chant and the folk music, will be defined in an attempt to display the particular characteristics of each one and illustrate their common traits and distinctive elements.

To this end, we will explore the rich heritage of ancient Greek music's theoretical system and its direct influence on Byzantine chant. We will also touch on the diapason system, the division in genera, some terminology and the concept of ethos associated with each mode. The Octoechos modal system will be explained from a theoretical perspective including the relationships between the modes (Kyrios and Plagal), the variety of intervals, the meaning of the three genera (Diatonic, Chromatic and Enharmonic) and the function of the three idioms (Eirmologico, Sticherarico and Papadiko). Ethnographic studies related to both musical traditions also offer us insight into the associations and divergences among music traditions. The actual performance of Byzantine chant and folk music during the lecture by two exceptional cantors (Prof. Chaldaiakis and Prof. Ketsetzis will effectively illustrate the internal relationship between the two traditions.