

**The Politics of Culture:
Historical Moments in Greek Musical Modernism**

Vol. I

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In Memoriam

DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

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ABSTRACT

This thesis spotlights eleven formative moments or ‘events’ in the history of twentieth-century art music in Greece. They date from 1908 to 1979 and are ordered by two master narratives, the ‘Great Idea’ and the ‘European Idea’, concepts with multifarious implications for the making of contemporary Greece.

The nature of the musical works presented during these events, the particular kind of reception they received, the debates they generated, and the role their composers hoped they would play in the construction of a contemporary Greek musical identity are some of the indicative issues that will be discussed, and always in relation to the prevailing political and social context.

More specifically, I will try to show by way of these events how politics and culture were inextricably tied together. In some cases the events directly mirrored the political divisions and social tensions of their time, while in others they formed an easy (“innocent”) prey to political agendas – indigenous and foreign – that were at some remove from matters aesthetic.

The discussion of these historical moments in the concert life of Greece is partly based on secondary sources, but it is also supported by extensive archival research. It is hoped that both the general approach and the new findings will enrich and update the existing literature in English, and that they may even serve to stimulate further research in the music history of other countries located in the so-called margins of Europe.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIS	Allied Information Service
ASCA	American School of Classical Studies at Athens
ATI	Athens Technological Institute
CEMAMu	<i>Centre d'Etudes de Mathématique et Automatique Musicales</i>
CMRC	Contemporary Music Research Centre – Athens (ΚΣΥΜΕ)
DAAD	<i>Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst</i>
EBF	English Bach Festival
EC	European Community (EU after 1993)
EIPT	Greek National Broadcasting Corporation
EMY	European Music Year (1985)
ΕΡΓΗΜ	Electronic Music Laboratory
EPT	Greek Radio Television (acronym that replaced EIPT after 1975)
FFF	Ford Foundation Files (Athens)
HACM	Hellenic Association of Contemporary Music (ΕΣΣΥΜ)
HAU	Hellenic American Union
HGCM	Hellenic Group of Contemporary Music
HWCM	Hellenic Week of Contemporary Music
ISCM	International Society of Contemporary Music
KKE	Communist Party of Greece
ΝΔ	New Democracy
EOT	Greek Tourism Organisation
ORFT	<i>Office de Radiodiffusion-Télévision Française</i>
ΠΑΜΕ	PanHellenic Anti-dictatorial Front
PaSoK	Panhellenic Socialistic Movement (ΠΑΣΟΚ)
PMS	Panhellenic Music Society (ΠΜΣ)
SEKE	Socialist Labour Party of Greece (ΣΕΚΕ)
UPIC	<i>Unité Polyagogique Informatique du CEMAMu</i>
USIA	United States Information Agency (acronym used in Washington, DC)
USIS	United States Information Service (same as USIA but for overseas use)
VoA	Voice of America
WDR	<i>Westdeutscher Rundfunk</i>

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines selected historical moments in the twentieth-century art music of Greece, relating them both to their immediate political context and to the two master narratives that to a significant extent have shaped the cultural profile of the modern Greek nation, the ‘Great Idea’ and the ‘European Idea’. These historical moments take the form of ‘musical events’, concerts for the most part, during which modernist musical works were first introduced to Greek audiences. Despite their broad stylistic heterogeneity, I use the term ‘modernist musical works’ predominantly as a convention to refer collectively to those works which acted as agents of innovation, and which either encountered resistance at the moment of their introduction (as they were often perceived as alien or as threats to established musical traditions and socio-political conventions) or, conversely, found widespread and enthusiastic acceptance as harbingers of cultural regeneration and socio-political change.

Eleven musical events, which include the historical débuts of young composers, premières of musical works, composition competitions and concerts at festivals, are foregrounded in this enquiry, within an historical range reaching from 1908 to 1979. For each musical event I will question how the prevailing, often polarised, political climate affected the construction of its meaning. For instance, in some of these events we will note that sharp divisions in the reception of certain musical works were not related to their technical or aesthetic aspects but to the ideological agendas or the indirect political messages associated with them. But it is no less important to ask why radical modernist works entirely lacking such agendas also became politicised at their reception. Since certain of these later works were viewed as socially subversive, politically destabilising and culturally corrosive, the discussion will need to shift to their corresponding context in order to understand their dismissal, and the subsequent failure of the respective composers to pave the way for alternative musical trends to be established in Greece. Finally, the thesis will examine why certain musical events involving

demanding and ‘difficult’ works were themselves appropriated by political agendas and in certain cases put to the service of the ruling establishments.

It is intended that the eleven events around which this study is structured should open windows to a variety of recurrent debates. These debates are related to the cultural ambivalence of modern Greece, the contested musical identity of Greek art music, and the role Greek composers hoped to play in their own culture and in the mainstream European cultural scene. For the most part they aspired to be a part of that wider culture, and they sought acknowledgement as either equals within it or even as exceptional contributors to it.

Some of the musical events under discussion will shed light on specific indigenous cultural disputes. Others will highlight the impact of international politics on Greek culture and will elaborate on the manner in which foreign cultural and financial interventions prepared the ground for, and facilitated the transfer of, new musical languages (and their associated political messages) from the dominant cultural ‘transmitters’ or centres to peripheral recipients such as Greece, the only Balkan country that remained outside the iron curtain in the post-World War II era.

The thesis is not intended as a narrative history of twentieth-century Greek art music. Rather it spotlights some of the high points within this history, not least because during those paradigmatic and transformative moments the tensions caused by the clash of modernist works with deep-rooted indigenous traditions or by sudden confrontations with what Pierre Bourdieu terms ‘habitus’ and Aristotle defines as ‘hexis’ are thrown into the sharpest possible relief and are therefore more suitable for observation and study.¹

Scandalous and divisive premières in major cultural centres of the Western world have received special attention in the history of twentieth-century music. Although this thesis is not intended as a comparative historical study between modernist movements in the major

¹ ‘Hexit’ may be defined as the system of dispositions with which a person (or a group) is invested by education and upbringing. See William F. Hanks, ‘Pierre Bourdieu and the Practices of Language’, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 34 (2005), pp. 67-83.

European cultural capitals and in Greece, it will nevertheless highlight certain parallels between these different ‘locations’ of modernism. For instance, the event of 1926 invites comparison between the receptions of Stravinsky’s *L’Histoire du Soldat* in interwar Greece and in the Weimar Republic. Similarly the event of 1975 (an avant-garde spectacle designed by Xenakis) suggests cultural and political analogies with an equivalent event in Iran in 1971. At other times, in contrast, musical modernism in Greece diverges from that of the more charismatic urban centres of Europe and seems rather to follow the route of other countries of the European periphery. An indicative example of this divergence is presented in the last chapter of the thesis, which examines two major musical events in 1975 and in 1978 and demonstrates how the conservative Greek government of the time used modernist high culture ‘as part of the modern politics of European national identity’ in ways that were at odds with tendencies in the culturally vibrant and financially affluent centres of Western Europe.²

The musical events comprising the backbone of this thesis are presented in two parts, arranged according to the two master narratives. Both of these were of instrumental importance in the making of modern Greece in the twentieth century, and I will argue that they were also fundamental to music historiography. Chapters one and two of the thesis are ordered by the first master narrative, the Great Idea, a futurist conception that was clearly articulated during the early days of the foundation of the Greek Kingdom.³ This can be

² This was the case in some Scandinavian countries, such as Finland, which during the 1980s continued their subsidies to high culture while other countries were forced to limit them. See Leon Botstein, ‘Music of a Century: Museum Culture and the Politics of Subsidy’, in Nicholas Cook and Anthony Pople (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music* (Cambridge: CUP, 2004), pp. 2-68 (p. 64).

³ Modern Greece was the first of the newly-formed nation states of Europe to win its full sovereignty and recognition by the Great Powers in the nineteenth century. The young Greek Kingdom was however restricted within a territory that excluded the majority of the nation. This mismatch between nation and state boundaries became the cause of frustration both for Greeks living within the state and for the Greek outsiders who saw the international treaties of 1830 and 1832 as provisional and in quest of completion. Summarised information from: Roderick Beaton and David Ricks (eds.), *The Making of Modern Greece: Nationalism, Romanticism and the Uses of the Past, 1797-1896* (London: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 1-18.

understood from two angles; as an irredentist vision (expanding the borders of the new-born nation to encompass territories which were to a significant extent inhabited by Orthodox and Greek-speaking populations since the late antiquity) and as a cultural aspiration according to which the modern Greek nation was to become a new spiritual hub responsible for carrying out a civilising mission for the Balkan Peninsula and Eastern Mediterranean.

Chapter one is concerned with the ways in which the Great Idea was conveyed through the music of the composer Manolis Kalomiris (1883-1962) at his début in Athens in 1908 and at the premières of his first opera and first symphony (1916 and 1920 respectively). In examining these three watershed events I will examine how Kalomiris's ideological agenda and musical works supported a nation-building strategy, a strategy that was predominately governed by the Great Idea.

The two musical events of the second chapter (in 1926 and in 1930) are indicative of the unsuccessful attempts by the composers Dimitri Mitropoulos (1896-1960) and Nikos Skalkottas (1904-1949) to establish an alternative to the nationalist movement painstakingly founded by Kalomiris. The question that arises here is how the multiple traumas of the Asia Minor Disaster of September 1922 (the moment that irreversibly put paid to the Great Idea), together with political unrest, financial recession and ensuing cultural confusion, affected the reception of new musical idioms (notably atonality and serialism) that were explored by these two composers.

The second master narrative, which in a sense replaced the Great Idea after the Second World War and the Greek Civil War, is the European Idea. This can also be viewed as a double-sided concept. On one hand, the European Idea had an obvious political objective, the affiliation of Greece within the European Union, protecting her from Cold War pressure and safeguarding her continuously threatened territorial integrity. On the other hand, in order to play a more active role in the mainstream European cultural scene and eventually to regain a cultural status worthy of her classical past, the Greek intelligentsia, including composers,

hoped to utilise Greece's position in the European Union to establish stronger cultural bonds with the Western world.

Chapter three, which concentrates on three major musical events in 1962, 1966 and 1971, examines how Greek composers staked their claim to this Western status (both in the US and Western Europe) and how the politics of the Cold War and the notion of European unification that was promoted by key countries facilitated their efforts. Chapter four, which discusses two major era-defining avant-garde events in Greek art music (1975 and in 1978), shows how impressive avant-garde festivals or spectacles were also put into the service of the Greek diplomacy.

My insistence on the socio-political context of the eleven events of the thesis might appear to be similar to the approach of Marxist musicologists, who reacted strongly against the type of history which sees musical works as following independent or autonomous laws, detached from cultural, social and political contexts.⁴ Like some more recent Anglo-American scholarship my approach acknowledges that music and its history needs to be understood within a system of communication and social practice: a system that in the case of Greece is complex and dynamic and showcased dramatic and unforeseen changes during the twentieth century. For this reason the musical events, whenever appropriate, will also be discussed in tandem with a cluster of concepts which acted either as political or cultural polarities such as Archaists *versus* Romeic – Demoticists; royalists *versus* liberals; communists *versus* anti-communists, and Europeanists *versus* Euro-sceptics. The following table may be useful at the outset as a reductive framework for the entire study.

⁴ 'Even though today we cannot accept the particular master narrative of Marxist historiography – the belief in a coherent, universal set of laws that govern society and history – we can still learn much I believe for the efforts of a school whose primary aim was to understand music as a social practice'. See Anne Shreffler, 'Berlin Walls: Dahlhaus, Knepler and Ideologies of Music History', *The Journal of Musicology*, Vol. 20/4 (Fall, 2003), pp. 498–525 (p. 500).

	Musical Event	Socio- Political Milieu
Chapter 1: Music to Suit the Nation		
The Great Idea	The Politics of Language: Kalomiris's Athenian Début	1908 Nationalist drive in the Balkans; Bulgaria becomes independent; Young Turk revolt; bourgeois revolt in Athens known as the Goudi <i>coup d'état</i> (1909); Eleftherios Venizelos's advent into Greek politics (1909-1910); intense debates about the 'Greek language issue'.
	Who is the Master Builder? The Première of Kalomiris's Opera	1916 Disagreement between King Constantine I and Prime Minister Venizelos about Greece's involvement in World War I which became the cause of the 'National Schism'.
	Barbarians Defeated: The Première of Kalomiris's <i>Levendia</i> Symphony	1920 Victory of the Allied forces in World War I; <i>Treaty of Sèvres</i> benefits Greece's irredentist visions; Venizelos's government organises the 'Victory Festivities' in Athens.
Chapter 2: Nipped in the Bud: The Short Story of Interwar Modernism		
	Modernism as Social Subversion: The Athenian Première of <i>L'Histoire du Soldat</i>	1926 Asia Minor Catastrophe (1922); major problems at the Northern borders of Greece; the monetary crisis escalates; dictatorship of the General Pangalos (1925-26); repetitive industrial action by organised labour.
	Barbarians at the Gates: Skalkottas's Début in Athens	1930 Anti-communist propaganda; strict press censorship; Venizelos's special anti-communist decree; the Great Depression of the 1930s causes a financial crisis and prolonged political instability.

The European Idea

Chapter 3: Working in Tandem		
Signposting a New Epoch: A Composition Competition	1962	US civil aid ceases but military support continues; Greece is admitted as associate in the EC.
The Politics of Patronage: The ‘First Hellenic Week’	1966	Clash between the Greek monarch and the ruling party; direct American intervention in domestic affairs.
The Janus Faces of American Philanthropy: The ‘Fourth Hellenic Week’	1971	Colonels’ Junta (1967-1974).
Chapter 4: New Music to Suit the Nation		
Culture and Diplomacy: The ‘Xenakis Week’ in Athens	1975	Turkish invasion of Cyprus and fall of the Junta (1974); return of Constantinos Karamanlis from his self-imposed exile in France (1963-1974); first post-Junta national elections; new constitution and abolishment of the monarchy; legalisation of the Greek Communist Party; official visits of the French President Valéry Giscard d’Estaing and the German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt to Athens in support of the diplomatic efforts of Greece to join the EC.
The Past on Display: <i>The Mycenae Polytope</i>	1978	Intense diplomatic mobilisation to support Greece’s candidacy to the EC; the Greek Prime Minister Constantinos Karamanlis signs the treaty of accession to the EC in Athens.
Epilogue: The ‘World Music Days’ in Athens	1979	Transition period in Greek politics; decline of the Left and the advent of the socialist party, PaSoK.

Research context

Although it is dangerous to generalise about such matters, it seems indisputable that Greece's chronic fiscal difficulties – right from the moment she won her independence – and her strategic geo-political position were the primary factors that triggered two undesirable consequences: financial dependency and foreign intervention in her domestic political affairs. Despite the fact that these two factors have been the subject of extensive academic research in social and political sciences, the cultural repercussions arising from dependency and intervention, particularly in relation to twentieth-century Greek art music, have to a large degree been overlooked or are merely passing references in musicological publications.

Musicological research on twentieth-century Greek art music in the native language has proliferated since the mid-1980s, when Departments of Musical Studies were established in major Greek universities. To a large extent, the research outcome of these music departments is concerned with the presentation of as yet unknown primary research material and archival findings. Greek composers are mainly introduced and treated through 'life and works' studies to which the authors occasionally add musical analyses of selected works or embark on discussions related to compositional techniques and influences.

One may argue against this type of research as a mere display of historical findings, lacking critical perspective and detached from socio-political contexts. However, this stage of research really was of crucial importance, for it enriched the as yet limited reservoir of primary musical data with biographical details, oral testimonials, catalogues of compositions, texts on music and criticism, personal correspondence, notes, scores or manuscripts, and so on. Considering that a number of musical archives in Greece are not easily accessible, and that important material is still either in private possession or inappropriately stored, this 'rescue' research makes a critical contribution.

Apart from unpublished academic work, a relatively smaller number of books in Greek dealing critically with twentieth-century Greek art music have also appeared in recent years.

The musicologists Olympia Fraggou-Psychopedi, Katy Romanou and Anastasia Siopsi have published monographs that examine aesthetic and ideological aspects of the National School of Music, concentrating particularly on Kalomiris's musical dramas.⁵ But prior to 2012, when the scholar Markos Tsetsos published his book *Nationalism and Populism in Greek Art Music*, monographs that emphasised musical responses to the political context of Greek music were exiguous. Although musical nationalism and the associated concept of the Great Idea have to some extent attracted increased attention, our knowledge both of the Cold War context and of the impact of the European Idea on Greek art music still remains very limited.

Unfortunately, literature on twentieth-century Greek art music in the English language is also few and far between. However, in their efforts to draw attention to a repertory that has been overlooked by Western music historians, a number of Greek scholars, like their colleagues from other countries in the Balkans, have recently attempted to make their voice heard in the English-speaking world. Some indicative examples are collaborative studies of Serbian and Greek music, two recent books on Nikos Skalkottas, and chapters in collective volumes.⁶ A more detailed examination of this and related literature will take place during the discussion of each of the musical events, while an extended list of the most representative publications in Greek and in other languages will be cited in the bibliography.

Sources

Although this thesis is based on a combination of primary and secondary sources, the balance between them varies from chapter to chapter. In Chapter 1, I depend equally on a wide range of published research and on primary data that I have resourced from my research at the Kalomiris Archive in Athens. On the other hand, in writing Chapter 2, I made extensive use of the Mitropoulos Archive hosted by the American School of Classical studies at Athens, the National Library of Greece, the academic libraries at the Ionian and Athens Universities, the

⁵ See the bibliography for full references.

⁶ See bibliography: Vrondos (2008); Mantzourani (2011) and Romanou (2009).

rich collection of Greek literature and literary periodicals at the Maughan Library at King's College London, The National Archives at Kew and the British Library. For the section on Skalkottas, I particularly benefitted from the references and primary information cited in the works of Dr. Eva Mantzourani, Dr. Costis Demertzis and John Thornley, and from my research at the Skalkottas Archive in Athens. Since Chapter 3 discusses musical events that have not yet received much attention from academia, I have had to rely mostly on primary sources –mainly located at the ATI Archive in Athens and the depository of the Ford Foundation in Athens both of which proved an essential source of information in the writing of the 1971 section in particular. In addition, some of my arguments in this chapter were formulated after private discussions with certain key individuals who were actively involved in the events under discussion. Apart from bibliographic sources, Chapter 4 also relies on resources from the ‘Lilian Voudouri’ Music Library of Greece and the CMRC. Most importantly, through research at the National Press Archive in Athens I managed to identify over 1500 reviews, interviews and associated material much of which was utilised in the 1975, 1978 and 1979 sections of the thesis.

Style

The translations of excerpts from Greek to English, unless otherwise mentioned, were made by myself. As the language, style and punctuation of the primary sources varies greatly, my aim was to convey the essential meaning, avoiding a literal word-for-word translation. Finally, the names and surnames of the Greek composers follow the transliteration format of Oxford Music Online.⁷

⁷ <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com> (accessed February 2013).

PART I

The Great Idea

By virtue of her geographical position, Greece is the centre of Europe; having the East on her right and the West on her left, she has been destined through her downfall to enlighten the West and through her regeneration to enlighten the East.

The first task has been fulfilled by our ancestors; the second is assigned to us. In the spirit of our oath and of this Great Idea, I have seen the delegates of the nation assembling to deliberate not simply on the fate of Greece, but of the entire Greek race [...]

We have been led astray and away from that Great Idea of the fatherland which was first expressed in the song of Rhigas. [...]

Contemporary Greece, united as she is now in one state, with one purpose, as one power, and with one religion should therefore inspire great expectations in the world.¹

Ioannis Kolettis (1844)

The higher duty of Greek music, I believe, is to become the core, the centre, of the future art music of the East, and to suggest through her own achievements, a unique musical path to be followed by neighbouring peoples. In this way, she will become once again the leading, the enlightened, nation.²

Manolis Kalomiris (1949)

¹ This is an extract (quoted here with minor translating adaptations) from the address by Ioannis Kolettis (1773-1847), the Leader of the ‘French Party’ and the Prime Minister of Greece, to the National Assembly, the legislative body responsible for drafting the first Constitution of modern Greece. See Paschalis Kitromilides, ‘The Dialectic of Intolerance: Ideological Dimensions of Ethnic Conflict’, *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, Vol. 4 (1979), pp. 5-30 (p. 14).

² Manolis Kalomiris, *Παγκόσμιος ή Εθνική Μουσική* (Rhodes: State Printing Corporation, 1949), p. 18.

Chapter 1: Music to Suit the Nation

1908. The Politics of Language: Kalomiris's Athenian Début

Sound and Verse, as once,
Let them become again a pair,
a new impelling cause.
– I see it, slowly rising, Palace of music! –
Set off well and blessed your time be
Hail oh Dear, bliss of yours!¹

Costis Palamas

A metaphor

In the spring of 1908, a young Anatolian composer of Greek origin set off from Kharkov (present-day Kharkiv in Ukraine), where he was then living and teaching, on a long journey to Athens to première his most recent works. The musical infrastructure that Manolis Kalomiris (1883-1962) found upon his arrival was fairly limited, leaving him with no choice but to resort to the concert hall of the Athens Conservatory, the only venue with the two grand pianos he needed for him and his wife to perform a programme which included two of his major works: the Prelude and Double Fugue in seven voices for two pianos (1906/8) and the *Romeic Suite* for orchestra in a two-piano arrangement (1907/10/36).²

In general, these two works registered the influence of the Austro-German classical and romantic traditions that Kalomiris had embraced while studying piano and composition at the *Konservatorium der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* in Vienna from 1891 until 1906. The Prelude and Double Fugue, a work from the Vienna years, is one of Kalomiris's contrapuntal

¹ Extract from the poem 'Στο Μουσικό Μανόλη Καλομοίρη' [To the Composer Manolis Kalomiris] with which the poet Costis Palamas apostrophised the 1908 début of Kalomiris. It was originally published in the journal *Noumas* [*Νουμάς*] on 15.08.1908, p. 1, and was later incorporated in the poetic collection *Πολιτεία και Μοναζιά*.

² See photograph of Manolis Kalomiris and his wife Chariklia attached as Appendix 1(1908), p. 3.

tours de force, demonstrating, as a Greek music critic observed, that this young composer had already mastered ‘the technical means of the musically advanced nations’.³ In his Double Fugue in seven voices in particular, that was revised after his graduation, we can see the influence of Max Reger, whom Kalomiris considered among the most prominent of the German masters, and whose work, as he had once argued, bridged Bach’s legacy with the spirit of modern times.⁴ During his student years in Vienna Kalomiris had the opportunity to listen to Reger play his Variations and Fugue Op. 86 on a theme of Beethoven for two pianos in a live performance that was to prove of catalytic importance for the young composer, who was sitting next to his idol turning the pages of the manuscript. Soon after this short encounter, the influence of Reger on Kalomiris became more marked. As he later confessed, he even began sketching his own Variations and Fugue on a Greek folk song for two pianos in a similar manner, a project that was never finished, but that indicated nonetheless his eagerness to draw together Greek folk music, late-romantic musical idioms and classical forms.

Moreover, the works with which the young Greek composer introduced himself to his compatriots in 1908 revealed the impact of a forgotten but equally inspiring figure, his teacher in harmony and counterpoint, Herman Grädener.⁵ Kalomiris excelled in the class of Grädener, who praised his Greek disciple both for absorbing whatever the academic environment had to offer and also for his exuberant musical temperament that at times pushed beyond established boundaries.⁶ Although critical of what he considered Grädener’s academicism, Kalomiris acknowledged his significant contribution to his musical education

³ Αθηνιώτισσα [pseudonym], ‘Ρωμαϊκή Μουσική’, *O Νουμάς* (22.06.1908), pp. 1-2 (p. 1).

⁴ Manolis Kalomiris, *H Ζωή μου και η Τέχνη μου* (Athens: Nefeli, 1988), p. 81.

⁵ Hermann Theodor Otto Grädener (1844-1929) who belonged to the ‘Brahms circle’ in Vienna was a highly regarded musician at the turn of the century. He was an accomplished violinist, conductor and from 1875 to 1912 served as a faculty member of the *Konservatorium der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* in Vienna.

⁶ Kalomiris [4], p. 69.

and technical development.⁷ Surface similarities between some of the songs that Kalomiris choose for his 1908 début, such as the *Patinada* (*Πατινάδα*) and *Triantafylaki* (*Τριανταφυλλάκι*), and Grädener's Songs Op. 44 may be seen as manifestations of this early influence.

However, in the shorter pieces of the programme of his 1908 début, such as his piano Nocturne (1906/8), the influence of Chopin is not merely a surface characteristic. Chopin's Nocturne in C minor, Op. 48, No. 1 actually served here as the model upon which Kalomiris sketched his own. The pianistic accompaniment, melodic contours, overall form and even the central modulatory section in C major of Chopin's Nocturne were all replicated by Kalomiris, as the corresponding excerpts from the two works in Appendices 2a & 2b (1908), pp. 4 & 5 reveal. However, behind these early influences from the academic and the broader musical environment of Vienna, there was a determination to highlight his particular Greek-Anatolian cultural background. In these 'student' works, Kalomiris argued, there was

[...] a hesitant attempt at a particular Greek-oriental colouring within a corresponding harmonic background. For this, reason, these works of my youth, I believe, could without exaggeration be characterised as subtle hints of my subsequent creative [life and] work.⁸

After the performance of the Prelude and Fugue for two pianos, the Athenian audience had an opportunity to enjoy three songs by Kalomiris, two of which were based on poems by Malakasis. In particular, the song *Staring at the Spinning Wheel* (*Στην Ανέμη Καρφωμένα*), Appendix 3 (1908), p. 6, appears to bear the strong imprint of Schubert's lieder. The accompaniment is not merely in supportive role; through a perpetual rotating figuration it becomes an effective metaphor of the spinning wheel itself, thus evoking unavoidable

⁷ 'Grädener gave me a solid contrapuntal foundation and this was an important support in [the development] of my subsequent personal technique. The way he analysed the form of fugue was really exceptional and [his analyses of the] unfolding of the episodes [of the fugue were] very logical and more consistent than any other French book of counterpoint'. Kalomiris [4], pp. 69-70.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

comparisons with Schubert's *Gretchen am Spinnrade*. In this song Kalomiris appears to follow a practice which Schubert pioneered in his most celebrated lieder where physical movement such as spinning, the lapping of water or a ride through the storm are mirrored in the pianistic accompaniment, and where this is not confined to a mere descriptive tone-painting role but is conceived in such a way as to convey the dominant mood of the literary text.⁹ Similarly, both the first and the last movements of the most emblematic work from Kalomiris's youth, the *Romeic Suite* (the work with which the concert closed), are also indicative examples of this practice, which in this case serves the programmatic demands of the work.

Despite the fact the *Romeic Suite* does not unfold a specific story it can arguably be considered as belonging to the genre of the symphonic poem.¹⁰ This work can best be described as a series of poetic scenes that in general refrain from narrative and literal descriptions, and from this perspective Kalomiris's imagination was more poetic than visual. Nevertheless, there are isolated moments that seem to occasionally break this pattern. Such is the opening of the first movement, 'From the Tales of the Grandmother', which begins with a repetitive motivic figuration in the strings (taken from the piano accompaniment of his song *Staring at the Spinning Wheel*) and was visualised by a music critic as follows:¹¹

⁹ Christopher Gibbs, *The Life of Schubert* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), p. 44.

¹⁰ In the genre of symphonic poem Kalomiris had acknowledged two major figures who inspired him. While he was studying in Vienna, Kalomiris writes, he discovered that 'Richard Strauss was not an imitator of Wagner, as the Vienna Conservatory circle viewed him but in fact a colossal personality equally important as the great master of the opera'. However, it was a Viennese performance of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade* that acted as a catalyst for the young Kalomiris, and increasingly his attention was drawn to the 'Five' of the Russian School. This *Scheherazade* experience and his admiration for the Russian School were among the prime motives, as he claimed, to relocate to Russia after the completion of his musical studies in Vienna. See Kalomiris [4], p. 77.

¹¹ See Appendix 4a (1908), p. 7.

[The opening of the *Romeic Suite* resembles the] soft and monotonous movements of a spinning wheel of an old lady and it is like seeing a grandmother in front of the fireplace recounting to her grandchildren fairy tales of various kinds, and [it is as if] you see beautiful girls and brave princes and their servants playing their flute.¹²

A recognisable variation of the ‘spinning wheel motive’ appears again at the opening of final movement of the *Romeic Suite*, which Kalomiris entitles ‘The Palace’.¹³ This movement, unlike the first one, has a more specific programmatic function indicated by Kalomiris in the score, where he cites the last verse of a poem also entitled ‘The Palace’ by Yannis Pscharis (1854-1929). The poem – presented below in free translation – urges the ingenious artist to accomplish the impossible:

Upon the seawaters once
An artisan with skills and knowledge
A great effort had made
The foundations of a renowned Palace to lay
...
So do you, despite the tempest,
In the depth of our souls must reach
In the language of our people, which is one
The foundations of a renowned Palace to lay.¹⁴

The slightly varied ‘spinning wheel motive’ which reappears in the final movement of the *Romeic Suite* may be seen as representing the tempestuous sea, a metaphor for the difficulties that an artist has to overcome in order to accomplish this highly ambitious plan, the almost unattainable endeavour of building a grand palace on the sea waves. The last movement of the *Romeic Suite*, as a critic wrote a few days later,

[...] begins with the sea waves which rise continuously. Then, a simple motive is played by the horns that one can say symbolises The Idea [...] This motive grows and becomes stronger; it becomes a theme; it is heard from everywhere. Then another one comes! It is the motive of labour. Then all the motives from the previous movements reappear. The composer most probably wanted to symbolise that from the fairy tales of a grandmother to the [medieval characters of] Erotocritos

¹² Αθηνιώτισσα [3].

¹³ See score Appendix 4b (1908), p. 7.

¹⁴ Yannis Pscharis, *To Παλάτι* (1908).

and Aretousa the dreamed Palace will be built. And then all these motives alternate until finally the Palace emerges in E major (until then the music was in dark modes with many flats).¹⁵

After the shocking and humiliating defeat of the Greek army in the Greco-Turkish War of 1897 and the subsequent popular demand for a radical political change and institutional reforms, a significant part of the Greek intelligentsia launched the ‘construction of a palace’ as a metaphor for the renewed construction of the Greek Nation. They envisaged that this new construct would be founded upon living folk culture and the vernacular or Demotic language, which had until that moment been overlooked and was derogatorily termed as ‘Romeic’ or ‘vulgar’. They were the ideologues and advocates of Romeic culture (who may also be referred to as Demoticists) and were fiercely opposed to the official Hellenic cultural model as an alien and essentially artificial revival of a ‘dead’ classical past. However, the metaphor of the construction of a palace, often referenced in more abstract terms as ‘The Idea’, allowed certain ideologues to attach to it non-cultural meanings, and for many The Idea was simply associated with the Great Idea, a highly ambitious irredentist vision.¹⁶

To a large extent, the audience at Kalomiris’s concert did not criticise the obvious and extensive borrowings from the Western musical canon. In fact they were left in no doubt that

¹⁵ Αθηνιώτισσα [3]. Elements of the pre-industrial era such as spinning wheels, fairy tales and medieval romances are recurrent features in various folk traditions that had also become themes of hyper-romantic symphonic works such as, *The Golden Spinning Wheel* Op. 109 by Dvořák and *Omphale's Spinning Wheel* Op. 31 by Saint-Saens.

¹⁶ The Idea was a rather loose concept and it did not necessarily coincide with the Great Idea. Because after the traumatic Greco-Turkish War of 1897 the Great Idea was severely criticised, it was subsequently reduced to The Idea, a much broader concept. The poet Costis Palamas, for instance, maintained that ‘The Idea’ was a ‘National Ideal’ possessing a life of its own. It was independent of the masses, and he insisted that since The Great Idea was realistically unattainable, it should be remain in the realm of the spirit simply as The Idea, as this would protect it and allow it to retain its allure. In contrast, the poet Yannis Psacharidis saw the cultural aspect of The Idea as a preparatory stage for the Great Idea. See Gerasimos Augoustinos, *Consciousness and History, Nationalist Critics of Greek Society: 1897-1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), pp. 25-28 and Katerina Zacharia (ed.), *Hellenisms: Culture, Identity and Ethnicity from Antiquity to Modernity* (London: Ashgate, 2008).

the works clearly expressed a more profound and shared vision of change. They realised that ‘The Palace’, a potent poetic metaphor, was being given its first musical articulation on that summery night of 1908.

Competing ideas: Romeic versus Hellenic

Apart from the purely musical aspect of his 1908 début, Kalomiris also compiled his programme notes in a simple form of Demotic language, and this has subsequently been declared the ‘Manifesto’ of the Greek National School of Music. In addition, he rendered the titles and musical terms in an extreme idiosyncratic vernacular; and it was the public use of this type of language that brought him, on the evening of his début, to the very epicentre of a highly divisive cultural and politicised dispute known as ‘the language problem’ or ‘the language question’.

The roots of the Greek language problem can be traced back to the ideological and cultural foundations of modern Greece, upon which the two competing ideologies generically termed Hellenic and Romeic were constructed.¹⁷ To a considerable degree, the idea of the revival of a classical past that could be achieved through the re-establishment of the ancient Greek language had been addressed long before the creation of the modern Greek state by an intellectual elite (philhellenes and educated Greeks alike) as ‘a response to the European conception of Classical Greece’.¹⁸ The exponents of Katharevousa (a reconstructed archaic

¹⁷ ‘The double image of Greek cultural origins generates some wrenching paradoxes for Greek nationalism. On one hand, the attempted recovery of the Classical past suggests the survival of paganism and therefore evokes, or evoked until comparatively recently, the ire of Church. On the other, the enthusiasm for things Byzantine and post-Byzantine includes at least a tacit recognition of the Islamic contribution, and especially that of Turks, to present-day Greek culture. These ideal types have become known, respectively, as ‘Hellenism’ and ‘Romiossini’. The first is named for classical Hellas, the second for the ‘New Rome’ that the Roman Emperor Constantine founded and that became the capital of the Eastern Roman – later, the Byzantine – Empire’. Michael Herzfeld, *Anthropology through the Looking-Glass: Critical Ethnography in the Margins of Europe* (Cambridge: CUP, 1987), p. 101.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

type of language), asserted that once Romeic was cleansed from undesirable Ottoman, Slavic or even Latin influences – vestiges of centuries of slavery – the connection of the modern Greek nation with Classical Greece would be indisputable. However, this linguistic sanitisation created a paradoxical phenomenon according to which ‘Greeks came to experience the curious situation of seeing whatever was most ordinary, intimate, and unexceptional in their daily lives [such as their vernacular] treated as relics of an undesirably exotic past’.¹⁹

While Kalomiris’s music enjoyed success in the circle of Demoticists, he was at the same time one of the favourite targets of the Archaists (Katharevousa supporters). Nevertheless, the ferocity of the attacks that he faced cannot solely be attributed to his music, as his 1908 works were not perceived as threatening to established musical traditions, just as the remarks on folk culture in his so-called ‘Manifesto’ were not really threatening to an established Herderian position on this subject.²⁰ The key point is that it was his so-called Manifesto, not his essentially Austro-Germanic musical language that was perceived as radical, since Kalomiris here broke with the protocol that demanded the use of the French language or of Katharevousa in one of foremost elitist institutions at the time, the Athens Conservatory. Moreover – and this was even more important – his use of the Demotic placed Kalomiris in open dispute with those who valued Katharevousa as the official language of the country and aligned him with the highly politicised camp of the Demoticists.²¹ He later acknowledged:

The truth is that I ‘earnestly’ did whatever would cause the animosity of the Katharevousa supporters. I had printed visiting cards stating ‘Manolis Kalomiris and his woman’, [instead of his

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ See Appendix 5 (1908), pp. 8-9, for a translation of Kalomiris’s ‘Manifesto’ originally published as ‘A Few Words’ which was handed out to the audiences of his concert.

²¹ See Appendices 6a & 6b (1908), pp. 10-11, for the two versions (in French and in Demotic Greek) of the programme of Kalomiris’s 1908 début.

wife] No matter where I went I chatted with passion about the language [issue] and I ignored everything scholarly and everything that was not customarily Demotic.²²

The voices proclaiming that the Demotic language should finally become the vehicle to attain the profound political and social reforms that the country urgently needed had by 1908 become increasingly loud. They were amplified by the unexpected support of Kalomiris, who articulated the musical voice of Demoticism, siding with those who threatened the old elites and their obsolete political establishment (*παλαιοκομιματικό κράτος*), whose linguistic authority rested predominantly on Katharevousa. This young Greek-Anatolian composer openly challenged this elitist and formal language, the exclusive medium in public administration, schools, and the University of Athens. In his programme notes – the Manifesto was also published in the periodical *Noumas* three days prior to his concert – Kalomiris maintained that for ‘aesthetic’ and ‘technical’ reasons ‘Katharevousa’s fake and artificial life’ was absolutely inappropriate for the foundation of a worthy National School of Music.

The establishment of Katharevousa as the official language of the Greek Kingdom since 1830 had resulted in the formation of a particular social, cultural and political ‘class system’. The nationalist and diplomat Ion Dragoumis (1907-1920), for instance, wrote that the mastery of this particularly complex linguistic idiom became a ‘personal asset’ of a privileged caste who could afford to pay its price in time and money.²³ The Greek peasantry – unable to express themselves in Katharevousa – continued to use their local vernaculars and consequently saw themselves as disqualified from politics and from the public life of Greece.

This situation, however, would change during the first decade of the twentieth century, when the increasing nationalistic ferment in the Balkan Peninsula compelled a progressive part of the Greek intelligentsia and the thriving entrepreneurial Diaspora class to rise up

²² Kalomiris [4], p. 148.

²³ ‘IDAS’ [Ion Dragoumis], ‘Ο Στρατός και Άλλα’, *O Noumás* (11.10.1909), p. 10.

against these linguistic archaisms. The political reforms demanded by this emerging class were also accompanied by a strong commitment to the spoken and informal language (Demotic), folk culture and folk poetry in particular, which had been overlooked by the previous elitist political regimes. The intellectuals who identified themselves as Demoticists gave a broader socio-political meaning to the language problem in order to fight their opponents, the Archaists. Already in 1888, the author and poet Yannis Psycharis (1854-1929) had pointed out that the language problem was essentially a political one, and later in 1907 Ion Dragoumis argued that it had ceased to be merely linguistic, but should be considered first and foremost as ‘a major social issue’.²⁴ Until it was given its final political solution as late as 1976, the language problem had been repeatedly raised and had become a focus of both cultural and political debate.

Kalomiris, however, was not the first Greek composer to highlight the importance of language and folk culture. Seven years prior to his 1908 début, the composer Georgios Lambelet (1875-1945) had published a study entitled ‘National Music’ in which he expressed very similar ideas.²⁵ From 1903, together with Psycharis and Georgios Axiotis (1887-1924), Lambelet, who was also an ardent supporter of the Demotic, co-edited the literary journal *Criticism* (*Κριτική*), where he published articles regarding language and music from an aesthetic rather than a socio-political perspective.²⁶ For example, in 1928 Lambelet argued

²⁴ Ion Dragoumis, ‘Τί είναι το Γλωσσικό Πρόβλημα’, *O Νομάς* (16.12.1907), p. 1.

²⁵ Both Kalomiris and Lambelet had recognised the importance of Greek folk song and the Demotic language in their writings. Nevertheless, their personal rivalry over the scope of the reformed Athens Conservatory, Kalomiris’s questioning of the ‘Greekness’ of the Italian-influenced Ionian composers, among whom Lambelet held a prominent position, precipitated the tensions between the two men. See Sheryl Bliss Little, *Folk Song and the Construction of Greek National Music: Writings and Compositions of Georgios Lambelet, Manolis Kalomiris and Yannis Constantinidis* (Ph.D. Thesis: University of Maryland, 2001).

²⁶ Axiotis was another Greek Diaspora composer (born in Mariupol, part of Russia at the time) who had immigrated to Athens in 1875. From 1895 until 1901 he studied composition in the Conservatory of San Pietro a Majella in Naples with the composer Paolo Serrao. In the small number of his surviving works, folkloric dance rhythms and modal elements are frequently, but subtly, referenced.

that ‘language cannot be examined only through the prism of linguistics and that as with music, language is an art that is based on aesthetic criteria and taste’.²⁷ The fundamental difference between Lambelet and Kalomiris in relation to the language problem lies at this juncture. While for Lambelet the Demotic language instigated mainly aesthetic concerns, for Kalomiris (as for Psycharis) it was the vehicle for the politico-cultural reconstruction of the country and a *sine qua non* for the attainment of the Great Idea, namely, a transformative resurrection of the Eastern Roman Empire as a twentieth-century Romeic Nation.

Persistently overlooking references to the Hellenic or Archaic past in his Manifesto, Kalomiris conditioned his vision for a Romeic national music on three important components: the land, the people and a common language. ‘The Palace’, as he stated in his Manifesto, needed to be founded upon ‘Romeic soil, constructed in such a way that it is first enjoyed by Romeic eyes and perceived as a thoroughbred Romeic’.²⁸ Between 1907 and 1910 Kalomiris used the term ‘Hellenic’,²⁹ very sparingly, and in the final sentence of his Manifesto his vision of national music was explicitly set against linguistic archaism. He emphasised this by using the key term ‘Romiossini’, the antonym of ‘Hellenism’, and he sought the ideological foundations of his position in the works of his two spiritual mentors, the poets Yannis Psycharis and Costis Palamas (1859-1943), whose perspectives he viewed as the undisputable paradigms for the creation of a worthy Greek art music.³⁰ As he explicitly stated:

²⁷ Georgios Lambelet, ‘Γλώσσα και Μουσική’, *Μουσικά Χρονικά*, Vol. 1 (April, 1928), pp. 1-6 and Vol. 2 (May, 1928), pp. 44-46 & 51-52.

²⁸ Appendix 5 (1908), p. 9

²⁹ The terms ‘Hellenic’ and ‘Greek’ are customarily rendered in modern Greek language as ‘Ελληνικός –ή –ό’.

³⁰ ‘Romiossini’ can refer collectively both to the *cultural identity* (which is defined in particular by common traditions, vernacular language and Orthodox Christian faith) and to the *people*, the Romeii (the Greek speaking Christians) who lived either within the borders of the Greek Kingdom or in those areas previously belonging to the Byzantine Empire. While Romiossini locates the origins of modern Greeks in the Eastern Roman Empire (that would later become the Byzantine Empire,) the term ‘Hellenism’ emphasised the descent of modern

[...] as our literature reached maturity [ανδρώθηκε] only after it freed itself from the restraints of Katharevousa, so our music will reach an analogous height when it follows the path of truth that the poet of *The Journey* [by Pscharis] showed us and rises on the wings with which Romiossini had been endowed by the poet of ‘The Dodecalogue of the Gypsy’ [by Palamas].³¹

Kalomiris was also fascinated by local dialects and he occasionally incorporated into his writings both vocabulary and grammatical types from his native Smyrna or Constantinople. This enrichment of the Demotic with dialects from the fringes of Romiossini shows clearly Kalomiris’s all-inclusive approach (both musical and linguistic), which was in sharp contrast to the selective approach of the Archaists, who only regarded as cultural exemplars those that stemmed from Classical antiquity.

By the time Kalomiris arrived in Athens, the language problem had also become a primary issue both for the Greek Diaspora and for a progressive part of the indigenous intelligentsia, who desired institutional and structural reforms and the modernisation of the obsolete political system.³² It is also no coincidence that some of the most prominent members of the Demoticists came from Greece’s ‘unredeemed’ regions, such as Macedonia, Constantinople, and Smyrna. Among these regions, before the second Balkan war, the multinational province of Macedonia was coveted by its neighbouring states Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia, all basing their rights to Macedonia on ethnological and cultural grounds. Greece persistently based its claims not only on the presence of large Christian Orthodox populations, but also on the fact

Greeks from Classical antiquity. These two contrasted approaches to Greek identity were expressed by two historiographers: Argyris Eftaliotis (1849-1923), a feverous supporter of the Demotic language, who in 1891 published his controversial work *The History of Romiossini*, and Constantinos Paparigopoulos (1815-1891), whose *The History of Hellenic Nation* (1860) offered solid support to the dogma of ‘historical continuity or evolution’ of the Greek Nation from the Ancient (classical) to Medieval (Byzantine) to contemporary Greece.

³¹ Appendix 5 (1908), p. 9.

³² The political parties of the post-independence years were named after the Great Powers whose interests they promoted: thus the English (led by Alexandros Mavrogordatos); the French (led by Ioannis Kolettis) and the Russian Parties (led by Ioannis Kapodistrias). This ended after King Otto’s forced abdication in 1862, and until 1909, when the Goudi *coup d'état* broke out; the political parties of Greece were not named according to their ideological orientation, but were referred to by the personalised leaders’ surname.

that these populations spoke Greek vernaculars. And it was at this stage that the debate over which type of language (Demotic or Katharevousa) was suitable for Greece's expansionist vision came centre stage as a major political issue. Should Katharevousa be promoted in Macedonia through official education, or should the familiar vernaculars become the appropriate medium to awaken the Greek national consciousness of these Macedonian populations? While the attitude of Archaists was intransigent, a Cretan politician Eleftherios Venizelos (1864-1936) suggested that:

If we wish the foreign-speaking populations of the new areas to master the Greek language quickly [...] they must be taught the spoken tongue.³³

At the time, his critics (mainly belonging to the Archaist camp) fully endorsed a popular rhetoric about Slavic and Russian propaganda, which according to them aimed to corrupt the nation's very foundation, a foundation built upon Katharevousa. Three months prior to the début of Kalomiris in Athens, in March of 1908, Russian and British officials were openly promoting a plan that included an autonomous state of Macedonia, and two months later the monarchs of Russia and Britain met in Revala (the present capital of Estonia, Tallinn) to discuss among other issues the future of Macedonia. When this news arrived in Athens public opinion, sensitive to national threats, easily embraced rumours of Russian roubles disposed for the benefit of Slavic aspirations to this region.³⁴ This fear became an instrument in the hands of the Archaists who through the press or from their official positions proclaimed that those defending the ordinary Demotic language supporters were 'Slavophiles, communists, enemies of individualism and Hellenism'.³⁵ For instance, the fact that Kalomiris had recently arrived from Russia and was associated with the mouthpiece of Demoticists, the periodical

³³ Peter Bien, *Nikos Kazantzakis and the Linguistic Revolution in Greek Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 181.

³⁴ Georgios Kaloyiannis, *O Νομάς και η Εποχή του (1903-1931): Γλωσσικοί και Ιδεολογικοί Αγώνες* (Athens: Epikerotita, 1984), p. 44.

³⁵ Herzfeld [17], p. 102.

Noumas, and its main sponsor, the wealthy cotton merchant of the Greek Diaspora, Alexandros Pallis (1851-1935), offered Gerogios Pop (1872-1946), an ardent Archaist and chief editor of the rival newspaper *Athinae (Αθήναι)*, an opportunity to attack Kalomiris and to allege that:³⁶

Kalomiris brings roubles given to him by Russians and Russians are combating Hellenism. [...]

Palamas writes poems in a vulgar [language] because he gets paid by Pallis. Kalomiris [too] writes the programme notes of his musical evening in a vulgar language because he gets paid by Pallis.³⁷

The Archaists repeatedly denounced Pscharis and Pallis as the ‘servants of anti-national acts, unstable and illiterate’, and they ultimately turned this linguistic rivalry into an issue of national security.³⁸ As Professor Georgios Mistriotis (1840-1916), one of the most highly regarded Archaists, had asserted, ‘Hellas had no geographical borders properly fortified, but is safeguarded by the barricade and the quick-firing rifles of our [Katharevousa] language’.³⁹ On one hand, by aligning with the Demoticists Kalomiris realised that he would have increased support both from the most militant part of the Greek intelligentsia, such as Palamas, Pscharis and Miltiadis Malakasis (1869-1943), and from Diaspora entrepreneurs such as Alexandros Pallis. On the other hand, and most importantly, Kalomiris had a personal motivation to adhere politically to what is termed by Anna Frangoudaki an ‘aggressive

³⁶ During his years in Kharkov (1906-1910) Kalomiris received issues of *Noumas* from Julia Papamoschou, his sister-in-law and the housekeeper of Pallis in Liverpool, and her presence at a second concert for a private circle of Demotists in Athens is recorded by an anonymous author in *Noumas*. It is very possible that the rendering of the musical terms and titles of Kalomiris’s début works in an extreme vernacular, which seemed to have infuriated most of his critics, was influenced or even suggested by Papamoschou, who had experience in publishing scientific terms in an outwardly extremist colloquial dialect in *Noumas*. Georgios Pop (1872-1946) was a Greek politician, chief editor and founder in 1901 of the highly popular newspaper *Athinae (Αθήναι)* that rivalled *Noumas* and often denounced Pallis as a ‘Slav collaborator’.

³⁷ Anonymous, ‘Παραγραφάκια’, *O Νουμάς* (15.06.1908), pp. 5-6.

³⁸ Kaloyiannis [33], p. 136.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

nationalism' or by Mark Mazower an 'aggressive foreign policy'.⁴⁰ This particular type of a nationalism primarily stemmed from Kalomiris's feelings of distress about the Ottoman oppression of his homeland Smyrna. Like Pscharis, he had come to believe that only Greek military intervention and not a diplomatic or peaceful solution could bring Ottoman rule to an end and eventually make the annexation of these regions to the Greek state possible. Among the politicians who expressed this type of foreign policy was the young politician Eleftherios Venizelos, who also envisaged the liberation and annexation of Crete, his native island, to Greece.

It is important to realise that the vision of Venizelos, Pscharis and Kalomiris for the cultural revival of the nation was primarily conditioned upon its geographical expansion. When Kalomiris stated in 1908 that 'national music without a national language and literature is impossible', he was expanding an argument of Pscharis, who in 1888 had proclaimed that:

The prime foundation is the soil. Only with such foundation can people manage to survive. But [their survival] is conditioned upon [their] own language, a new language and not just an old one. Only such language can produce national literature and has 'true freedom and complete independence'.⁴¹

The language debate acquired a profound political meaning for the Greek Diaspora, who after their defeat by the Turks in 1897 and the ascent of a privileged upper cast in the social and political life of the 'Old' (pre-1909) Greece, found themselves in a hopeless situation. Their suppression turned to aggression, and many of the distinguished members of this Diaspora considered a Greek military intervention as the only hope for their salvation. For instance, in *My Journey* (1889), the book that is widely regarded as the manifesto of Demoticism, and that was a major inspiration for the young Kalomiris, Pscharis wrote:

⁴⁰ See Anna Frangoudaki, 'Diglossia and the Present Language Situation in Greece: A Sociological Approach to the Interpretation of Diglossia and Some Hypotheses on Today's Linguistic Reality', *Language in Society*, Vol. 21/3 (September, 1999), pp. 365-381 (p. 368) and Mark Mazower, 'The Messiah and the Bourgeois', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 35/4 (December, 1992), pp. 885-904 (p. 886).

⁴¹ Yannis Pscharis, *To Taçíði μον* (Athens: Estia, 1905), p. 297.

[...] a nation appears as a nation and shows that knowledge about progress and culture only when it adopts and understands the value of its own national Demotic language. The army will solve everything. Whom do we fight against? [We fight] the Turks and the teachers [of Katharevousa]. The army will chase out the Turks and when they are away and the [Greek] Kingdom grows, ideas will grow too and the spirit will rise. [...] The language debate is a political one. What the army is trying to do with the geographical borders, the language wants to do with the intellectual frontiers. Both intellectually and geographically [we] must expand [in order] to achieve a higher purpose.⁴²

By 1900 the Greek populations who lived outside the small Kingdom realised with fear and dismay that the Greek Governments had openly aborted the irredentist aspect of the Great Idea as utopian. Greece's plans for territorial expansion, which included the incorporation of areas such as Asia Minor, Thrace and Crete, had vanished, with the Greek state passively remaining in the comfort zone of its existing frontiers. During the first two decades of the twentieth century the agitation of the militant nationalists over this unresolved national issue had been collectively expressed mainly through the Demoticists. One of the foremost nationalists and Demoticists, Ion Dragoumis, feverishly denounced the misbegotten plans of the Greek politicians to achieve the equation of the true notion of 'Nation' and 'State':

The politicians of Greece came to regard the State and Nation as the same thing, or even worse, unable to attain the greatness of the term 'Nation', they turned their incapacity into a norm. The State was not in a provisional condition, it had not been constructed to embrace the scattered nation. It was not an intermediate phase *but rather an ending.*⁴³

By 1908 the socio-political unrest had grown to such a degree that the idea of a military intervention had matured and was collectively expressed by the rising bourgeois and the army officers in what became known as the Goudi *coup d'état* of 28 August 1909, an event that precipitated the advent of Venizelos, the 'messiah of the bourgeois', as Mark Mazower so aptly characterised him.⁴⁴ As soon as the *coup d'état* started, the diplomat Ion Dragoumis, under the pseudonym 'Idas', issued a long pronouncement in which he conditioned his

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 298.

⁴³ Ion Dragoumis, *Ελληνικός Πολιτισμός* (Alexandria: Kassimati & Iona, 1914), p. 10.

⁴⁴ Mazower [40].

political vision upon the Demotic. In a manner that resembled Kalomiris's Manifesto, Dragoumis too stated that 'the liberation of the mind that comes from the release from the restraints imposed by Attic and Katharevousa [will result in] the free treatment of the living language in all cases and forever'.⁴⁵ Similar views were openly and frequently expressed in *Noumas*, a political, social and literary periodical that during the Kharkov years enabled Kalomiris to stay in touch with cultural issues in Greece and became the medium through which his voice was heard.

The Demoticist movement was not, however, politically homogenous. In 1907 a book entitled *Our Social Issue* by Georgios Skliros, proposing a Marxist analysis of Modern Greek society, was published and this subsequently caused a series of fractures amongst the Demoticists. Takis Tangopoulos, the chief editor of *Noumas* and a close friend of Kalomiris, tried to homogenise these diverging ideologies in order to obviate the danger of a severe schism, appealing above all to their common language: 'We, the Romii, as a State are still incomplete and as a Nation overly scattered. The battle is common; Demotists and socialists are brothers and we are fighting for the same thing. To awaken the people', wrote Tangopoulos in his desperate effort to keep the Demoticist movement united.⁴⁶

Although Kalomiris might not have taken a public position in the polarisation of the Demoticist camp, his political stance was clearly expressed when the Goudi *coup d'état* acquired such a momentum as to compel the editor of *Noumas* to suggest that the time had come for the Demoticists to become a 'socio-political party and not merely a literary movement' if they did not want to see themselves 'out of the marriage feast like the foolish virgins on the night of the coming of the bridegroom'.⁴⁷ At the beginning Kalomiris seized the opportunity to align himself with the nationalist camp and in particular with Ion

⁴⁵ Dragoumis [24], p. 11.

⁴⁶ Kaloyiannis [33], pp. 133-134.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

Dragoumis, who was supportive of Demoticism but sceptical about socialism. When the Goudi *coup d'état* broke out and Dragoumis revealed that he was the author ‘Idas’, Kalomiris welcomed him with an announcement in *Noumas*.⁴⁸ In the same public announcement Kalomiris praised the contribution and importance to the Greek music of Marios Varvoglis (1885-1967), a composer whose music he had admittedly never heard and whose French musical background he acknowledged as very different from his own, but whom he otherwise regarded as a supporter since they shared the same linguistic positions.

In the course of shaping linguistic and political alliances through *Noumas*, Kalomiris referred emphatically to The Idea. As previously mentioned, this was a rather loose concept that conveyed a wide range of meanings conveniently employed by Kalomiris according to context. In certain cases he would specifically refer to the ‘Idea of Greek Music’, or in other cases to the ‘Idea of Demoticism’ (capitalised in the original below) carrying also political overtones:⁴⁹

Regarding the IDEA – a triumph – we have to point out here without any false modesty: if Romiossini deserves two musicians who know what it means to strive for National music and Greek art, then those musicians are us – Varvoglis and I. Both of us embraced our National literature and our National language, we are both Demoticists; and both of us are ‘contemptuously referred to as hairy [unkempt]’. A title of honour, I repeat, and who knows if in the days to come it might become a symbol of real freedom and renaissance.⁵⁰

To a considerable degree, Kalomiris’s ‘Idea’ – as Herzfeld points out when he writes about the implications of changing ideology upon cultural identity – expressed ‘a generalised

⁴⁸ Kalomiris, ‘Για Ωδεία και τ’ Ωδείο’, *O Νομάς* (07.02.1910), pp. 4-5 (p. 5).

⁴⁹ For instance, in the memorandum of the Association of the Greek Composers of 1931, of which Kalomiris was a founding member, it is stated that the prime goal of the Association is ‘by any means the promotion of the *Idea* of Greek musical creations’. Memorandum of the Association of Greek Composers (12.02.1931).

⁵⁰ Kalomiris [48].

ideal' that could become 'a symbol of cultural superiority which can survive innumerable changes in the moral and political order'.⁵¹

The linguistic defeat

Social pressure for political, institutional, and language reforms and the rise of nationalism in the Balkan Peninsula, manifest in the Young Turk Revolt of 1908, precipitated a political crisis in Greece that was expressed with the Goudi *coup d'état* a year after Kalomiris's début and that paved the way for Eleftherios Venizelos's advent into Greek political life. Among the very first people Kalomiris sought to see upon his definitive repatriation to Athens in 1910 was Venizelos, who by then had become the Prime Minister. Venizelos eagerly met the young composer, and accepted his invitation to attend his forthcoming concert, featuring again the *Romeic Suite* performed by the Symphony Orchestra of the Athens Conservatory. Kalomiris, like the majority of the Greek people, had always 'regarded songs and folktales' not only 'as reliques and commemorations of the past but as prophesies of future redemption'.⁵² And it was upon such prophetic convictions that he justified his early admiration of Venizelos, whom he viewed as an almost mythical or messianic figure capable of 'liberating' the enslaved Romeic Nation. Indeed, after their short meeting in Athens in 1910, Kalomiris wrote that:

I had come to the conclusion that Venizelos was not only supportive of Demoticism, but that he was reading *Noumas* himself and was not ashamed to confess it. As I was strolling down to the Hermes Hotel where I was staying, I told myself 'Lefteris will liberate us – not only from the Turks but from the restraints imposed by the '[Katharevousa] language defenders'.⁵³

⁵¹ Michael Herzfeld, *Ours Once More: Folklore, Ideology and the Making of Modern Greece* (New York: Pella, 1986), p. 5.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 117.

⁵³ Kalomiris [4], p. 160. 'Lefteris' is an abbreviated version of the first name of Venizelos, 'Eleftherios' which literally means 'liberator'.

However, Venizelos did not remain consistent in his position on the language. In 1911 he openly denounced the Demotic, and this reversal outraged Pscharis, though surprisingly not Kalomiris. The crisis broke out when after a three-day-long parliamentary discussion about the language problem Prime Minister Venizelos unexpectedly turned against the constitutional recognition of Demotic. Venizelos, who had only just won the elections in August 1910, disenchanted his Demotic supporters, who had to a large extent contributed to his political victory. The much-anticipated constitutional reform clearly reaffirmed that Katharevousa would remain the official language, and surprisingly Venizelos even spoke about ‘Pscharis’s disastrous influence’ shortly before the voting began. This initiated a passionate counterattack by Pscharis in *Noumas*, where he emphatically expressed his shock at how the Prime Minister voted for such a ‘national disgrace’ and immediately withdrew the dedication to Venizelos from his book, *The National Symposium*. Compelled to respond to Pscharis’s gesture, Kalomiris also announced publicly shortly after that:

[...] it is known that one of my works, the *Romeic Suite* is dedicated to Pscharis. Following the latest statement made by Mr Pscharis in *Noumas*, [about Venizelos] this dedication is removed, the man and his name. The work remains [as it is]. (Constantinople 23.03.1911)⁵⁴

The erased dedication from the *Romeic Suite* of Kalomiris became an open gesture of personal support for Venizelos, support that would last a lifetime. Kalomiris by-passed his earlier linguistic position in favour of a vision of the Great Idea that he and Venizelos had in common. However, there is no doubt that Kalomiris was also disheartened by Venizelos’s unexpected shift, though at the time he seemed to have been convinced by the need for a temporary linguistic compromise in favour of longer-term political benefits. Venizelos faced strong opposition from members of his party and from the Church to reaffirm the hegemonic position of Katharevousa. In particular the Member of Parliament Georgios Pop, who had

⁵⁴ Manolis Kalomiris, ‘Ψυχάρης και Βενιζέλος’, *O Noumás* (03.04.1911), p. 214.

previously accused Kalomiris of ‘Russian roubles’, closed the final session with a speech in which Kalomiris was once again targeted:

[...] at a time when Kamillieris and the one and only great composer of Greece Dionysios Lavrangas were struggling to survive, on the recommendation of Mr Pallis to the Athens Conservatory, he [Kalomiris] was invited by this linguistic deviant [Pallis] on the basis of his linguistic beliefs and was hired by the Athens Conservatory on a salary of 600 drachmas per month. Isn’t all this scandalous?⁵⁵

In general, Kalomiris became less militant about the Demotic language after 1910. This was not so much a result of linguistic reorientation but a rather natural change of attitude that gradually prevailed among the Demoticists, as they came to realise that a moderate linguistic compromise rather than an extreme position would be more beneficial in their battle with Katharevousa. His rigid position regarding the use of the Demotic language when he was approached in 1908 by Georgios Nazos (1862-1934), director of the Athens Conservatory, about a teaching position had changed by 1910, when he was appointed there as a professor.

Both Venizelos’s support of Katharevousa in 1911 and Kalomiris’s formal challenge to the official language in 1908 are paradigmatic examples that showcase the political and cultural expediency of the language issue. The linguistic reversal of Venizelos in 1911, which is often interpreted as an abandonment of the Demotic ideal or as a failure, proved to be an astute political strategy, as in 1917, after his clash with the King, Venizelos once again embraced Demoticism.⁵⁶ Similarly, in 1908, Kalomiris’s straightforward revolt against the linguistic establishment and his subsequent identification with the prominent progressive intelligentsia of his time empowered him to promote his musical agenda and develop the

⁵⁵ George Lampsidis, *Oι Περιπέτειες της Δημοτικής* (Athens: private edition, 1993), p. 178.

⁵⁶ See Eleni Gardika-Katsiadaki (ed.), *Στα χρόνια του Βενιζέλου: Εσωτερική και Εξωτερική Πολιτική – Οικονομία – Εκπαίδευση – Πολιτισμός* (Chania and Athens: National Research Institute ‘El. Venizelos’ and Ministry of Education – Lifelong Training & Religious Affairs, 2010), p. 79.

principles upon which his vision for national music, an essential component of the envisaged Romeic national identity, was to be built.

Despite the fact that the 1908 *début* of Kalomiris is unanimously considered by musicologists as a watershed moment in the twentieth-century history of music in Greece, both the aesthetic and technical aspects of the music of this concert, as previously indicated, are inversely proportional to its historical significance. It was primarily the politics of language that signposted the beginning of a new musical era in Greece. And like the construction of a ‘palace’, it was upon the Demotic language that this militant composer also envisaged the beginning of a new musical movement.

1916. Who is the Master Builder? The Première of Kalomiris's Opera

Venizelos! Venizelos!
Do not fail us! Do not fail us!
Now is come for thee the hour,
To show forth thy master power.
Lord of all Hellenic men,
Make our [sic] country great again!

Venizelos! Venizelos!
Thou'lt not fail us! Thou'lt not fail us!
Righteousness is on thy face;
Strength thou hast to rule our [sic] race:
Great in war and great in peace,
Thou our second Pericles!

Ronald Burrows (1913)¹

A willing sacrifice

On the night of 11 March 1916 Eleftherios Venizelos was in his box at the Municipal Theatre of Athens attending the première of *The Master Builder* (1915), Kalomiris's first complete opera or music drama, as he insisted in naming it. When the curtain rose, Venizelos saw on stage an imposing bridge, while a chorus sang the following words:

Long live our Master Builder! Long live he and his builders! A bridge we have built over the river Arta. All day long we were building it and by night it would collapse. But this time we raised it up strong and proud to the sun. Long live our Master Builder! Long live our Master Builder! Long live the builders! We have built a bridge! ²

¹ 'Song of the Hellenes to Venizelos, the Cretan', poem by Ronald Montagu Burrows (1867-1920), a leading British philhellene, prolific author, adviser to Venizelos, Principal at King's College, London and founder of its Koraes Chair. Richard Clogg, 'Politics and the Academy: Arnold Toynbee and the Koraes Chair', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 21/4 (1985), pp. 1-115 (p. 1).

² Haris Politopoulos (trans.), liner notes, *Manolis Kalomiris: The Master Builder*, USSR Cinema Orchestra & Radio Chorus, Emin Khachaturian (dir.), Greek Cultural Office, 1990, p. 44.

As in any ancient Greek tragedy, where the basic outline of the story is more-or-less known to the audience, the main character of the play is condemned to *hybris* by either challenging the gods, nature's orders or the established laws of the *polis*. In order to meet the audience's anticipation for justice, and therefore fulfil the requirements of the plot, the dramatic hero has no choice but to face the consequences of his actions. The Master Builder's striking words of arrogance and self-indulgence over the completion of his bridge, 'I do not tremble, I am not afraid of fate and I offer life to an entire world!',³ resonates as a paradigmatic expression of *hybris*, a conspicuous violation of the primordial ethical order according to which human beings are always subordinate to the laws of nature. Nature's revenge does not take long, as in the following scene of the opera the 'enslaved river' breaks its banks. Its stormy waters pull down the bridge once again, signifying the defeat and unattainable mission of the Master Builder. The audience attending the première of *The Master Builder*, among whom were King Constantine I of the Hellenes and the political and intellectual elite of the Greek capital, were acutely aware of the unavoidable human sacrifice that would be the price the tragic hero had to pay. The prophecy that was soon spelled out by the old wise man of the village confirmed that:

The river wants blood to calm down and take pity on us. It is hungry. Can't you hear it moaning?
It is an angry beast asking for a human body. Can't you hear it?⁴

The Master Builder's secret lover, the beautiful Smaragda, who also happens to be the daughter of his employer, is finally revealed as the necessary sacrifice. The tension of the drama reaches its final climax when Smaragda comes forward and willingly steps down to lay herself at the foundations of the bridge. With her consent, the devastated Master Builder and his apprentices lay the foundation stones over her young body and the bridge is finally erected. After this dramatic scene, and while the chorus praise both Smaragda for her self-

³ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

sacrifice and the Master Builder for ‘mastering his heart’, the builders sing: ‘We are the cranes, the birds who bring and sow in souls, in mountains and plains, the black swallows of the Springtime of the Mind’.⁵ This compelling story, one of many versions of the universal theme of human sacrifice, also forms the basis of a variety of popular legends in the Balkans. In Greece it is known as the folk song ‘The Bridge of Arta’, and it is a pedigreed metaphor to denote continuous disasters and fruitless efforts in the completion of a grand design.⁶ It was upon this story that the author Nikos Kazantzakis (1883-1975) based his play *The Master Builder* (originally named *The Sacrifice*) and which Kalomiris transformed to a libretto.⁷

We may trace the origins of this folk legend and its subsequent transformations to Euripides’s *Iphigenia in Aulis*, a drama that shares a number of striking similarities with Kazantzakis’s play. Both Euripides’s and Kazantzakis’s works give eloquent expression to the political climate of their times, and both were awarded literary prizes, in 405 BC and in 1910 respectively.⁸ Their vital similarity lies in the recognition of sacrifice as duty, a willing death as an ultimate act of patriotism. Since Homeric times the myth of human sacrifice in

⁵ Alfred Vincent, ‘*The Master Builder*. From Folksong to Opera: The Adaptation of “The Bridge of Arta” by Nikos Kazantzakis and Manolis Kalomiris’, in Elizabeth Close, Michael Tsianikas and George Frazis (eds.), *Greek Research in Australia: Proceedings of the Biennial International Conference of Greek Studies* (Adelaide: Flinders University, 2003), pp. 119-156 (p. 151).

⁶ The earliest known reference of this folk legend in Greek language was made in Spyridon Zambelios, *Ἄσματα Δημοτικά της Ελλάδος: Εκδοθέντα μετά Μελέτης Ιστορικής περί Μεσαιωνικού Ελληνισμού* (Corfu: Ermis, 1852).

⁷ During the first decade of the twentieth century this legend was a popular literary theme. Indicative examples are the books: *The Bridge of Arta* by Elias Voutieridis published in *Noumas* in 1905; *The Invaluable* by Pandelis Horn published in 1906; and *The Sacrifice*, written in 1908 by Nikos Kazantzakis and published in the periodical *Panathinea* in 1910 under the revised title *The Master Builder*. Human sacrifice is also the theme of the *The Sacrifice of Abraham* written by the Cretan renaissance author Vincenzo Cornaro (1553 – c. 1614). It is based on the well-known biblical story (Genesis: 22), and must have stimulated Kazantzakis, whose tragic characters appear to be tormented by the dilemma of either enjoying the pleasures of life or sacrificing themselves for an altruistic or patriotic cause. Some of his books focusing on this theme are: *The Last Temptation; Christ Recrucified; Report to Greco; and God's Pauper: St. Francis of Assisi*.

⁸ Euripides conceived the idea of Iphigenia’s voluntary sacrifice when, despite the fact that they had won the sea battle of Arginusae in 406 BC, six generals of the Athenian navy were nevertheless sentenced to death by the state court for failing to rescue the survivors of this battle.

order to accomplish an important task (e.g. the Troy expedition) has undergone a number of significant changes; but it was Euripides who made the most daring change, as in his play Iphigenia voluntarily sacrifices herself for communal benefit. However, despite this Euripidean treatment of self-sacrifice, which involves the divine intervention that saves Iphigenia at the last minute, the finale of both Kazantzakis's play and Kalomiris's libretto follow the tragic finale of the folk legend, according to which the victim is not saved, but dies in order for the grand design to be accomplished.

Wagnerism in Athens

Soon after his final return to Greece in 1910 Kalomiris became the prime exponent of Wagnerism both through his extensive writings and his own music dramas; in one of his well-known statements he acknowledged that throughout his life the political vision of Venizelos, the poetry of Palamas and the musical ideals of Wagner were consistently his points of reference.⁹ He had also explicitly stated in 1916 that the model upon which his *Master Builder* was based was Wagnerian.¹⁰ The employment of *leitmotiven* in this first complete operatic work, the concept of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, which he considered an unquestionable sign of musical progress, and his contempt for Italian opera were all elements that Kalomiris drew from Wagner.

From 1910 onwards Kalomiris publically engaged in ruthless criticism of Italian music and of any Greek composers of predominately Heptanesean (Ionian Islands) descent or of an Italian musical background and/or education who followed the Italian operatic traditions. One of his favourite targets was Spyridon Samaras (1861-1917), who was seen by Kalomiris both as the foremost exponent of Italian operatic music and possibly as his major rival in

⁹ Manolis Kalomiris, *H Ζωή μου και η Τέχνη μου* (Athens: Nefeli, 1988), p. 138.

¹⁰ Manolis Kalomiris, Preface to *The Master Builder* (Athens: Gaetanos, 1940), p. 2.

influencing the musical life of Athens.¹¹ Indeed, Samaras was already an established and prolific composer whose operatic works, most in the Italian language, ‘heralded the style of Puccini’ and had since the late nineteenth century been enjoying significant success in opera houses from cities such as Paris and Berlin to Constantinople and Cairo.¹²

In his 1910 articles in *Noumas*, the journal that he choose as a springboard for his public attacks against Italian music, Kalomiris echoes some of the arguments that Wagner had promulgated in 1851 in his theoretical work, *Oper und Drama*. There, Wagner had described Italian opera as ‘a harlot’, a woman who never gets beyond herself, except for the purposes of pleasure and profit.¹³ Rossini’s music, Wagner wrote, consists of melody alone: ‘absolutely simple ear-pleasing melody or, in other words, melody that is just melody, and nothing else’.¹⁴ Likewise, Kalomiris characterised the Italian *bel canto* in particular ‘as a glass of champagne’, a commercial product that can offer only temporary pleasures. ‘All its value and strength is concentrated in melody [...] because apart from melody, Italian music has nothing else of its own [to offer]’.¹⁵ And Kalomiris argued this in order to reach his final verdict, which was that, ‘Italian music and its embellishments have always stood as an obstacle to the creation of National music’.¹⁶

Following the reform of the Athens Conservatory in 1891 and the appointment of the Germanophile Georgios Nazos as its Director, a large number of Greek composers who were in some measure influenced by Italian music and who had previously played a significant role

¹¹ George Leotsakos, *Ta Nέα* (21.01.2000).

¹² George Leotsakos, ‘Samaras Spyridon’, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press.

<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/24445> (accessed on 09.03.2013).

¹³ Richard Wagner, *Oper und Drama*, Vol. I, trans. Edwin Evans (London: W. Reeves, 1913), p. 187.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

¹⁵ Manolis Kalomiris, ‘Μουσικοκριτικά Γυμνάσματα’, *O Νομάς* (02.05.1910), pp. 2-3 (p. 3).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

in the musical life and education of mainland Greece found themselves severely discriminated against, and marginalised from the official musical institutions of the country.¹⁷ However, the decline of Italian influence and the subsequent Germanisation of the musical life of Athens is a rather vexed issue that needs to be examined not only through the prism of politics, but as part of a broader cultural tendency of the first years of the Greek independence.

For instance, the appointment of Prince Otto, son of the philhellene King Ludwig I of Bavaria from the House of Wittelsbach, as the first monarch of modern Greece in 1832 and the wedding of Prince Constantine to the German Princes Sophia later in 1889 had political implications that need to be considered in the wider context of the growth of German philhellenism. Moreover, the excavations of the German School of Archaeology, and above all the immense impact of Greek classical art and literature on German philosophy and art during the first decades of the twentieth century had created a phenomenon described by Eliza Butler in 1935 as ‘the Tyranny of Greece over Germany’.¹⁸

At the same time reciprocity between the cultural elites of the two countries began to develop. On one hand, German (classically orientated) philhellenism was transformed into (contemporary-orientated) Graecomania. On the other hand, Germany became a cultural

¹⁷ The dismissal of Italian-influenced Heptanesean composers from their teaching posts after the 1891 reform of the Athens Conservatory (which adopted a new curriculum modelled on the French and German Conservatories) and the sudden imposition of the Austro-Germanic classical canon were decisive turning points in musical education, concert life and the western musical idioms that Greek composers began to adopt. See *inter alia*, Katy Romanou and Maria Barbaki, ‘Music Education in Nineteenth-Century Greece: Its Institutions and their Contribution to Urban Musical Life’, *Nineteenth-Century Music Review*, 8 (2011), pp. 82-83; Katy Romanou, ‘Italian Musicians in Greece during the Nineteenth Century’, *Musicology, Journal of the Institute of Musicology of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts*, Vol. 3 (2003), pp. 43-55 and Georgios Drosinis, *O Γεώργιος Νάζος και το Ωδείο Αθηνών* (Athens: Estia, 1938).

¹⁸ Eliza M. Butler, *The Tyranny of Greece over Germany: A Study of the Influence Exercised by Greek Art and Poetry over the Great German Writers of the Eighteenth, Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1935).

model for the Greeks, with an ever-increasing number of young Greeks students resorting to German universities to supplement their education. And even a few years before the première of the Wagnerian *Master Builder*, literary pseudonyms such as ‘Lohengrin’ and ‘Tannhäuser’ were extensively used by Greek authors.¹⁹ Radical political ideas such as Marxism and Socialism also found their way to Greece through Germany, while as the scholar Mariliza Mitsou points out, during the first decades of the twentieth century Germany became ‘the latest fashion’ for many Greeks.²⁰

This complexity of the bonds between the two countries can be traced back to the mid-nineteenth century in the fields of architecture and particularly fine-arts, when a large number of Greek graduates from the *Münchner Akademie der Bildenden Künste* had formed the so-called Greek School of Munich and had subsequently been appointed as professors at the School of Fine Arts in Athens, while German academics were also given preference as lecturers at the University of Athens (est. 1837).²¹ The fact that the Germanisation of the Athens Conservatory was rather belated in relation to the fine arts can mainly be attributed to the fact that music education in early twentieth-century Greece was not really professionalised, but was predominately a leisure activity of the middle and upper classes.²²

Following his 1908 début in Athens, and particularly after his permanent settlement there in 1910, Kalomiris became actively involved in the defence of German music and of Wagner,

¹⁹ Mariliza Mitsou, *Ελληνογερμανικές Σχέσεις στη Λογοτεχνία και την Επιστήμη τις Πρώτες Δεκαετίες του 20^{ού} Αιώνα*, in Evangelos Chrysos and Wolfgang Schultheiss (eds.), *Ορόσημα Ελληνογερμανικών Σχέσεων* (Athens: Hellenic Parliament Foundation, 2010), pp. 130-140 (p. 137).

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Sterios Fassoulakis, ‘Γερμανικὲς Καταβολὲς του Ελληνικού Πανεπιστημίου και Ελληνικὲς Αμφισβητήσεις του Γερμανικού Πανεπιστημίου’, in *Πρακτικὰ Διεθνούς Συμποσίου, Πανεπιστήμιο: Ιδεολογία και Παιδεία*, Vol. I (Athens: General Secretariat for Youth, 1989), pp. 99-104.

²² The Athens Conservatory was established in 1871 and during the first decade of its operation the music students were coming from lower or working classes or orphans. This would however change after its 1891 reformation. See Aris Garoufalidis and Haris Xanthoudakis, ‘Αρχειακά Τεκμήρια του Ωδείου Αθηνών για τον Σπύρο Σαμάρα’, *Μουσικός Ελληνομνήμων*, 9 (September-December, 2011), pp. 19-33 (p. 19).

especially when it came to opera. ‘By borrowing the German musical form’, Kalomiris wrote in 1910, ‘and by giving it content from his Nation, [the composer] is in a position to breathe into it the soul of the Nation, and without really realising it he has already created National music’.²³ And later in the programme notes of *The Master Builder* he wrote that musicians everywhere have acknowledged Wagner’s achievement in ‘revitalising tragic passion though an amalgamation of drama with music in an harmonic [unified] whole’.²⁴

Considering the all-pervasiveness of Germanic culture in Greece in the 1900s, one would expect that the principles of the musical drama that Kalomiris had set forward in Athens in 1916 – namely a synthesis of Wagnerian aesthetics and of national elements (both original Greek folk tunes and technical elements such as folk modes, rhythms etc.) – would have a guaranteed success. On the contrary, *The Master Builder* was met with unprecedented resistance, particularly from those Greeks who were either politically on the side of Germany or who considered themselves loyal to the Royal family of Greece, King Constantine I and his wife Sophia, sister of the German Emperor, Friedrich Wilhelm Viktor Albrech (known as the Kaiser).

The music of war

A mere tourist attraction nowadays, the four-arched stone bridge of Arta in north-western Greece acquired a number of profound symbolic meanings over the last four centuries, including the instability of the state’s frontiers and the continuous failures of the Great Idea, which found an apt parallel in the repeatedly collapsing bridge.²⁵ A myth is by default a diachronic agent conveying a wide range of potent messages. However, when a myth is

²³ Kalomiris [15], p. 2.

²⁴ Kalomiris [10].

²⁵ The causes for collapse of the Bridge of Arta were to be found in the unstable ground on which the bridge was built and in the boycotts by the Greek rebels who, during the Ottoman period, often demolished it at night to deter the replenishment of the enemy’s army.

remodelled or adapted to current needs, as Kalomiris did with *The Master Builder*, its imagined or idealised notions acquire additional currency and become ‘a new mythology based on the old’.²⁶ This is a practice that can also be traced to the golden age of Greek tragedy, during which the poets’ strategy of remodelling the myth, as Edith Hall writes, enabled them to evoke the ‘mythical world of the “then and there” from which they sought to bring meaning to contemporary reality, and enrich their repertoire of theatrical effects’.²⁷ Similarly, Kalomiris viewed his music as a medium through which this revival or remodelling could achieve its highest potential. As he stated in 1916:

The musical drama of *The Master Builder* [is] a free creation founded upon the familiar myth. But I believe that only the myth – the myth of the ancient tragedy – welcomes and in fact demands the treatment of music and musical atmosphere. In such an atmosphere – the world of the myth – the fantastic one – exists freely and vibrantly, and more conveniently lives its mythical life.²⁸

In the process of adapting Kazantzakis’s play to the libretto for his opera, Kalomiris also made a number of subtle literary modifications. Although from a literary perspective these slight modifications have been considered of minor importance, their effect on the reception of *The Master Builder* in 1916 appeared to be of much greater significance.²⁹ For example, in the opera the romance between the Master Builder and Smaragda is presented as idealistic and pure; it is not contaminated with guilt, as in the original Kazantzakis. In the opera

²⁶ Jim Samson uses this expression in reference to the role of folk ethos and nature worship in the construction of an idealised past of the Germanic world: ‘Nations and Nationalism’, in Jim Samson (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge: CUP, 2001), p. 585.

²⁷ Edith Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy* (Oxford: OUP, 1989), p. 2.

²⁸ Kalomiris [10].

²⁹ Kalomiris modified Kazantzakis’s play *The Master Builder* according to his own vision and the demands of the ‘economy of means’ of the poetic text. He retained only those elements that suited his goals, and his choices were based on musical, dramatic or ideological criteria. He was assisted by Nikolaos Poriotis, Agnis Orfanos [Georgios Stefopoulos] and Myrtiotissa [Theoni Drakopoulou-Pappa]. Vincent [5]; See also, Yiannis Sambrovalakis & Maria Hnaraki, ‘Τα Γεφύρια του Πρωτομάστορα: Ο “Λόγος” στο Θεατρικό του Καζαντζάκη και την Όπερα του Καλομοίρη’, in Nikos Maliaras and Alexandros Harkiolakis (eds.), *Μανώλης Καλομοίρης: 50 Χρόνια Μετά* (Athens: Fagotto Books, 2013), pp. 105-122.

Smaragda's sacrifice has a highly altruistic significance, indicating an obligation or a patriotic duty, whereas in the play she is simply paying the price for a socially inappropriate love affair. While the play focuses on the dramatic element of female sacrifice, Kalomiris elevates the Master Builder as the prime heroic character of the opera because he is the one who is called upon to resolve the dilemma. Must he sacrifice his personal happiness and love for Smaragda for the benefit of his community?

Conveniently, in 1916 these kinds of changes suited Kalomiris because the schismatic dilemma that the Greeks were facing could be mirrored more accurately on the stage. This dilemma can be summarised as following: should the country become actively involved in World War I or choose neutrality? Moreover, the weight that was placed on the role of the Master Builder in the opera suited Kalomiris, as it endorsed his opera with political symbolism through the identification of the Master Builder with Venizelos. Indeed, from the onset of the public discussion about the work, Kalomiris's former piano instructor and a prominent music critic of the time, Sophia Spanoudi (1878-1952), emphatically stated: 'The music of *The Master Builder* of Kalomiris is dedicated by the composer to the Master Builder of the Greek state'.³⁰ Although this dedication was not officially announced by the composer in the programme notes or in the press at the première of the work in 1916, the parallels between the protagonist of the opera and Venizelos were simultaneously spotted by friends and foes alike. The Member of Parliament and editor Georgios Pop, for instance, wrote:

From this work a naive impression is created. It is possible to note the new invention [by Kalomiris] of turning the discussions of the parliament into melodramas. Venizelos's admirers now have the obligation to give his [Venizelos's] speeches to Manolis Kalomiris so that he can emphasise them [with his music] in greater detail.³¹

³⁰ S.K.S. [Sophia Spanoudi], *Eστία* (12.3.1916). Even though Venizelos is implied, his name is not explicitly spelled out.

³¹ Κος Υποβολεύς [pseudonym], *Αθήναι* (12.3.1916).

Kalomiris's choice in 1916 to retain a neutral stance in relation to the identification and dedication of *The Master Builder* with Venizelos is to a large extent understandable. Because the production of his work was subsidised by King Constantine, an official dedication to the anti-royalist Venizelos would entail a serious risk to the première of his opera.³² It is also logical to assume that the arrangements for the staging of the opera at the Municipal Theatre were finalised prior to the severe clash between Venizelos and King Constantine. However, despite the neutral position taken by Kalomiris, allegations that the opera was dedicated to Venizelos were enough to polarise further the prevailing tense political atmosphere in the country.

At that time, the battle of Verdun, the most catastrophic and longest of World War I, had already begun and undercover agents from both fronts had swarmed Athens. Greek politicians were facing pressure from the Entente and Central powers regarding their involvement in the war. Venizelos openly supported the Entente, as upon a victorious outcome he was promised the annexation to Greece of the unredeemed territories. In contrast, King Constantine, influenced by his wife, the cousin of the Kaiser, believed in the victory of Germany and considered the neutrality of Greece as politically more appropriate. The ferocity of the political clash led Venizelos to resign as Prime Minister in December 1915 and in September 1916 he established a second separate government in Thessaloniki. In the meanwhile, King Constantine was supported by Germanophile pro-royal propaganda that spread from the state schools, where pupils would sing morning prayers 'to sooth the pain of their blond King', to the 'ordinary folk', who on hearing the Royal anthem, *The Eagle's Son* – be it in theatres, entertainment venues or even in the streets – had to be upstanding. More importantly, officers of the Greek army were reassured that 'their wise and great King would

³² See Appendix 1 (1916), p. 13.

remain neutral and would soon send them home instead of dragging them into another war against the Turks, chasing national ideals and fruitless visions'.³³

The dilemma was clear. Greece could either become involved in the war with the possibility of future territorial advantages or they could remain in the comfort zone of neutrality. It was an analogous dilemma faced by the Master Builder, who on the completion of the bridge asked for 'a Grand Palace' as a reward from his employer. Nevertheless, his builders and apprentices urged him to abandon such grandiose ideas in favour of a more secure and modest domestic life by reminding him that:

There is no sweeter thing than a sweet small home. There is no warmer thing than a warm small home. To come home at night, your wife waiting for you at the doorstep, holding happiness in her arms.³⁴

This parallel did not escape the attention of the politically divided Athenian audience. There was a clear suggestion that only a brave leader who would sacrifice his most beloved people could attain the Great Idea, the final stage in the construction of the Greater Greece. One of the critics who attended the final rehearsal of the work wrote:

I was observing the Master Builder of the Greek state from my box at the general rehearsal of this musical work [...] I thought that Kalomiris is not only the composer of the work but that a driving force must have driven him to the manuscript – some flame of enthusiasm for national restoration, a Hellas with a new face, the belief in a superior mission and even the certainty that his effort will be recognised and crowned. I am certain that this all originated from the magnetic personality of Mr Venizelos who motivated the sensitive soul of the composer who worked and finally completed the first Greek melodrama. On the same night I informed Kalomiris of my thoughts. 'Oh how right you are!' he replied, 'For this reason I dedicated the work to him. From the first time I met him, he showed me so much interest, so much affection and love. I assure you, I felt that I had the duty to respond, I needed to produce something grand. How right you are!'³⁵

But the Royalists too realised with horror the potent appeal of this association. A direct identification of Venizelos with the heroic Master Builder would mean an open confrontation

³³ Alexandros Kotzias, *O Εθνικός Διχασμός* (Athens: Lambrakis Publishing, 2011), p. 35.

³⁴ Politopoulos [2], p. 50.

³⁵ Plato Rokadakis, *Eθνος* (17.03.1916).

with the Greek monarchy about their role. One of the strategies that the Royalists pursued was to dismiss its musical and aesthetic quality:

I was present at the rehearsals of the work. And I particularly noticed the bridge-contractor, the Master Builder on the stage. But I even ignored the presence in the theatre of the other Master Builder, the political dodger. I have had enough of his [performances] from his own stage, the [Greek] Parliament. And in conclusion, my statement can be summarised as a musico-poetical expression of the triumph of the German-Turkish alliance. How could a work such as this [musical] collage be inspired by Venizelos's pro-Entente politics?³⁶

Venizelos's supporters immediately engaged in drawing yet closer parallels between the accomplishment of the Great Idea and the construction of an imposing bridge that the opera describes. On one hand they associated Venizelos with the Master Builder, who is presented both in the play and in the opera as a Nietzschean superhero, while on the other hand they saw Kalomiris as one of his 'builders' who would erect, as one of the journalists stated, 'his musical masterpieces, columns, capitals and friezes' according to the grand plans of Venizelos.³⁷

In support of Greece's neutrality, the royalist press also strived to point out in various ways the futility of World War I. Musically, 'this war failed to inspire modern composers such as Debussy, disappointing those who were expecting a new *Marseillaise*'. Thus wrote an anonymous author, possibly Georgios Pop, in the article 'A War without Music', published on the front page of *Athinae* immediately after the première of *The Master Builder*. World War I 'could not even inspire the eminent Saint-Saëns', the same author argued, and he concluded that:

The music of this war at this moment is non-existent. This terrible war has no other music apart from the music of the 420 that strangles any other lyrical expression.³⁸

³⁶ Constantinos Kalatzis, *Nέα Ημέρα* (17.05.1916).

³⁷ Plato Rokadakis, *Εθνος* (25.03.1916).

³⁸ Anonymous, *Αθήναι* (12.03.1916). The 420mm German *howitzer*, a machine gun that was introduced during the World War I.

The other Master Builder

However, it was not only Venizelos who was in the spotlight through his identification with the Master Builder. A few minutes before the final bars of the opera, the chorus, until then split into two opposing camps (another possible symbolism), comes together to greet the Master Builder unanimously as ‘a victor over his heart’, while even his apprentices, who had previously turned on him, now salute him with the last verse of the poem with which Palamas had welcomed Kalomiris at his Athenian début in 1908: ‘Hail oh dear, bliss of yours’, thus hinting to the audience who overfilled the Municipal Theatre that there might be yet another possible identification with the Master Builder. ‘My Hero’, wrote Kalomiris in his memoirs, ‘when he finally built his bridge above the body of his beloved, his soul tormented sets out for new struggles’.³⁹ Some enthusiastic members of the audience welcomed the work as a true expression of the ‘Romeic soul’ and its composer as the ‘master of his art’,⁴⁰ a possible paraphrase of the words of the libretto.

While rivers often function as natural borders that separate and define cultures and ideologies, hence demarcating contrasts, bridges have always been related to human intervention over nature that reverses these divisions. Likewise, Kalomiris’s supporters welcomed his opera as an historical landmark in the evolution of Greek music and placed his name on the list of the leading exponents of the Great Idea.

From this point onwards we will be able to say that we too have OUR OWN music and not parodies of Italian, French and even German art; and that Kalomiris, as a Master Builder, chiselled and demolished the old unstable bridge and founded upon the body of our pure demotic poetry the new stable bridge that unites us with the universal art. [...] Whatever happens tomorrow, the bridge of Arta is finally settled and the musical progress of our country will by necessity cross it. *The Master Builder* will be this bridge and the composer will rightfully be placed in the fourth position after the three creators of the New Hellas: PSYCHARIS, PALAMAS [and] VENIZELOS.⁴¹

³⁹ Kalomiris [9], p. 152.

⁴⁰ Dimos Nissiotis, ‘Καλομοίρης’, *O Νονυμάς* (26.03.1916), p. 1.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

Reviews such as these did not remain unanswered by Kalomiris's Royalists detractors. They not only called into question the 'Greekness' of the opera, but even expressed doubts as to the validity of Kalomiris's Greek citizenship:⁴²

No! A thousand times no! Not only is this not Greek art; it is not an art of any kind. [...] Of course, Mr Kalomiris cannot expect to brand his work as Greek simply because he adds a demotic melody [...] or because now and then he throws without artistry, as a drop in the ocean, a few notes into his work that mostly remind us of Asiatic Turkey, the home country of the composer! He cannot, he cannot, I repeat, demand that this is named Greek art.⁴³

The Master Builder was not, however, the first work of Greek musical theatre concerned with domestic politics. A series of comical scenes that satirised the high level of corruption within Greek politics, *The Parliamentary Candidate* (1867), by the Corfiot composer Spyridon Xyndas (1814-1896), had its Athenian première twenty-six years earlier. More importantly, in 1916 shortly after the première of *The Master Builder* and at the same venue Spyros Samaras, an internationally distinguished Corfiot composer and pupil of Xyndas, premièred his operetta *The Cretan Maiden* (1916). While Kalomiris was a relative newcomer to the Greek musical scene, Samaras was preceded by two generations of composers originating from the Ionian Islands and his unambiguously Italian operatic style stood in marked contrast to Kalomiris's Wagnerian musical orientation and aesthetic. Despite the fact that earlier in 1910 Kalomiris had dismissed Samaras's music as light and 'Italianate' and had even questioned his ability to write Greek music at all (to the extent that he called him a 'foreign composer'), his extremist views appeared to have softened by 1916.⁴⁴ Due to the lack of any real substantive evidence, we can only resort to hypotheses as to the real reasons for this shift.

⁴² Similar doubts about Venizelos's ethnic origin had also been expressed in the Athenian press a few years earlier. Mark Mazower, 'The Messiah and the Bourgeoisie: Venizelos and Politics in Greece, 1909-1912', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 35/4 (December, 1992), pp. 885-904 (p. 886).

⁴³ Georgios Pop, *Aθήναι* (16.03.1916).

⁴⁴ 'Samaras is not Romios [...] he is a foreign musician who writes foreign music in foreign language and for foreign audience'. Manolis Kalomiris, 'Τια Ωδεία και για τ' Ωδείο', *O Nouμάς* (07.02.1910), pp. 4-5 (p. 5).

To begin with, Kalomiris had by that time gained the support of Venizelos and did not feel that his position in the musical life of Athens or in the Athens Conservatory was threatened by Samaras. Moreover, *The Master Builder*, in comparison with *The Cretan Maiden*, had almost monopolised the attention of the press, increasing Kalomiris's popularity and the chances of him playing a protagonist role in the musical life of his country. It is also possible that Kalomiris and Samaras sensed that behind the opposing musical styles of their operas they both were supportive of the same political strand.⁴⁵

Samaras' *Cretan Maiden*, written in a popular buffo idiom (similar to Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*), refers to the liberation of Crete from Venetian rule. Viewed within the political context of the time, as the musicologist Nikos Maliaras argues, both works may be considered as supportive of irredentist visions and of Venizelos. Thematically both operas focused on liberating Greece's unredeemed territories, while musically the incorporation of orchestrated versions of 'Pendozalis', a characteristic folk dance of Crete, may allude to Venizelos.⁴⁶

Although the two composers may indeed have spotted these ideological parallels, there is no indication that they were recognised by the audience at the time.⁴⁷ In fact, the different musical aesthetics of the *The Master Builder* and *The Cretan Maiden* were hardly enough to give rise to a major public dispute; on the contrary they became the subject of a popular

⁴⁵ As the composer and researcher Philippos Tsalahouris has informed me, by 1916 Kalomiris had reconciled the conflicting interests with Samaras to the extent that he showed him the manuscript of *The Master Builder* before its première as a sign of respect to his former rival.

⁴⁶ Nikos Maliaras, *Ελληνική Μουσική και Ευρώπη: Διαδρομές στον Δυτικοευρωπαϊκό Πολιτισμό* (Athens: Panas Music, 2012), pp. 105-118.

⁴⁷ According to George Leotsakos the divided reception of *The Master Builder* did not reflect the aesthetic preferences or musical taste (which Leotsakos questions) of the Athenians but rather their political beliefs. 'Ο "Πρωτομάστορας" του Καλομοίρη, "Μέγας Σταθμός" της Ελληνικής Μουσικής', *Μουσικολογία*, 4 (01.01.1986), pp. 26-33. For an updated version of the same article see: <http://www.kalomiris.gr> (accessed on 20.01.2013).

comedy-show that presented caricatures of Kalomiris and Samaras duelling in a sword-fight.⁴⁸

The Master Builder in new contexts

Between its première in 1916 and its re-staging in 1930 the composer reworked *The Master Builder*. The irreversible catastrophe of Asia Minor in 1922 had put a sudden and absolute end to Venizelos's Great Idea. 'The project of national completion', as it was also termed, had become, more than at any other time, a utopia. Venizelos had lost the elections in 1920, and it is ironic that during the second staging of his opera in 1930 the politician, once regarded by Kalomiris as the Master Builder of Greater Greece, was signing the 'death certificate of the Great Idea', the 'Treaty of Friendship, Neutrality and Arbitration' in Ankara with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

The older of the two editions (piano reductions) of *The Master Builder* (1917 & 1939) has the following dedication: '*The Master Builder* is dedicated by the composer to the Master Builder of Greater Greece, Eleftherios Venizelos'. This 1917 edition was printed when King Constantine was forced to abdicate and Venizelos was in power. By the time of the second edition, where the dedication was omitted, Venizelos had died, and his opponent, General Metaxas, had imposed a dictatorship. Under this new regime Kalomiris's choice to remove the dedication to Venizelos was not as straightforward a decision as it may appear. A surviving copy of the 1917 edition, which Kalomiris had used as a proof copy, reveals the dilemma that the composer encountered during the second revision and edition of the work. The first page of this 1917 edition proof copy, attached as Appendix 2 (1916), p. 14, reveals Kalomiris's repeated attempts to find a formulation that would allow him to maintain the

⁴⁸ Katy Romanou, *Εντεχνη Ελληνική Μουσική στους Νεότερους Χρόνους* (Athens: Kouloura, 2006), p. 155-156.

sentiment of the original dedication to Venizelos, without however provoking the anti-Venizelist ruling establishment.

However, his final decision to remove any indication that the work was dedicated to Venizelos may be interpreted as opportunism, as by that time Kalomiris would have been acutely aware that the prospect of staging his second opera *The Mother's Ring*, which took place in Berlin in February 1940, was dependent on the financial support of the dictatorial regime of Metaxas and of Nazi Germany. A dedication to Venizelos would also most probably have destabilised Kalomiris's friendship with Costis Bastias, who as both head of the Department of Fine Arts at the Ministry of Culture and supporter and friend of Metaxas was the foremost leader of cultural propaganda.

But Kalomiris's decision to remove the dedication to Venizelos from the second edition may also indicate that he was conscious of the unsuitability of the former political symbolism of his work, which after the Asia Minor Disaster would seem out of place. Kalomiris's abandonment of the political symbolism of *The Master Builder* after 1922, and his increased focus on its significance as an historical document of Greek music, can be elucidated through three examples of Kalomiris's writings dating from 1929, 1943 and 1961.

1929

Kalomiris wrote a second introductory note, for the reworked *Master Builder* in 1929, and it clearly reveals the bitterness of the composer about the collapse of the Great Idea and the newly transformed meaning of the work. The unfeasible construction of the bridge now becomes for Kalomiris a personal drama similar to that of his tragic hero.

More than thirteen years have passed! Such a long time! So many unfulfilled dreams, so many hopeless battles, and so many collapses of the bridge in our souls over the past years. I read now those 'two words' and I smile. (These are) expressions of a young man, who believes in everything and everybody, in wonderful ideals, in the Arts, in the future, in himself. [...] *The Master Builder* stands as *a symbol of my life and fate* – the fate of every Builder of our land with his urge for great

and noble [visions] that he cannot or is prohibited from erecting. And I don't know if it is for this [reason] or because in the music of the legend of the Bridge of Arta I had embodied, together with my youthful inexperience and clumsiness, the best of my life's blaze, of my dreams, of my Greece.

Despite the identification of the Master Builder with the composer in the second paragraph of the introductory note, Kalomiris inserted a rather concealed reference to Venizelos whose name, possibly for political reasons, 'dare not (be) mention(ed)':⁴⁹

I had deep feelings for this music in comparison with my other works and I wanted, in spite of all 'those who denied' and 'those who rejected it', *to rework it having a great paradigm facing me*, [Venizelos?] which *I dare not mention*, and to rebuild the legendary bridge with the wings of my [bygone] youth and my manful power to shine in the midday sun.

However, in the concluding paragraph of his 1929 note Kalomiris unambiguously restates the identification of the Master Builder primarily with himself:

Therefore, from 1923 until 1929 I reworked the *Master Builder* and now I am delivering it as a combination of old and new, stemming from the most intense feelings of my soul. In a similar way the Master Builder finally erected his bridge from its old stones, erected upon the corpse of his beloved.

1943

During the Nazi occupation of Greece in 1943 a significant performance of *The Master Builder* took place in Athens. In the chaotic situation that followed shortly after the end of World War II, during which personal rivalries often turned to accusations of collaboration with the enemy, Kalomiris too faced serious accusations and resorted to this performance to defend his patriotism. In a comprehensive statement that Kalomiris compiled to defend himself he wrote:

⁴⁹ In another work the *Triptych for Orchestra*, which Kalomiris began to compose in 1936, the last movement (Finale) is dedicated to Venizelos, although he is again not directly named. (The dedication states 'In memory of a Hero'). The researcher Philippos Tsalachouris writes that: 'It is known from the testimony of Kalomiris's wife that on the night the news of the Venizelos's death became public, he began to compose a funeral march to mourn the Master Builder of Greater Greece'. Notes for the *Triptych for Orchestra*, Kalomiris Archive, unclassified document.

I believe that the performances of *Fidelio* and *The Master Builder* [during the German occupation] are a credit to me – both as an artist and as a patriot. [...] It raised the national spirit [...] and symbolises the indomitable struggle of the Greek Nation that always lives in the souls and imagination of our people.⁵⁰

1961

It was only when Kalomiris had completed his final opus, the opera *Constantinos Paleologos* in 1961, that he was finally convinced that he had surpassed the legendary *Master Builder*.

I believe that with the music of [*Constantinos*] *Paleologos*, more than in any of my other creations, including the monumental *Master Builder*, I have opened a new chapter in the history of Greek Art!⁵¹

He died the year after the completion of *Constantinos Paleologos*, fully content that his final work was finished and convinced that he had finally laid the solid foundations for his bridge. However, this time it was not the young and beautiful Smaragda that was lying dead in the foundations of the bridge but Kalomiris himself:

Now I have the whole opera finished in front of me and I look at it with pride and I am as proud as the Master Builder with his [finished] bridge. And since I did not have a Smaragda to lay in the foundations to stabilize my bridge, *I laid myself*. In the music of *Paleologos* I laid whatever I had from myself, from my power, from my soul, from my heart, from my dreams, and from my despair! Yes, despair, because even when you see your dreams are torn into pieces, the despair itself becomes a creative force.⁵²

In profound ways, *The Master Builder* and Symphony No 1 (which I will discuss in the following section) were the works with which Kalomiris most clearly identified himself. Among the surviving correspondence in his archive, a letter dated 14 June 1960 signed by Kalomiris and addressed to the Athens State Orchestra, is a clear indication of his fading fame in the post-World War II era.⁵³ It was written after Kalomiris was informed that his wife's free pass to the State Orchestra's concerts would no longer be made available.

⁵⁰ Unclassified document, Kalomiris Archive, p. 90.

⁵¹ Kalomiris, Preface to *Constantinos Paleologos* (Athens: Athens National Opera Editions, 1961), p. 3.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Kalomiris Archive, File: 1/124/ 49.

Seriously wounded by this dismissive gesture, the ‘old lion’ wrote back to the administration of the State Orchestra refusing to accept his own free pass. Below his signature, instead of the customary and expected titles such as ‘Member of the Athens Academy and General Director of the National Conservatory’ it reads: ‘The composer of *The Master Builder* and the *Levendia Symphony*’. This sudden ‘change of protocol’ is indicative not only of the centrality of these two works among his compositional output, but more importantly of Kalomiris’s anxiety to remind his compatriots, who appeared to have forgotten, who the real Master Builder of Greek music really was.

1920. The Barbarians Defeated: The Première of Kalomiris's *Levendia Symphony*

Two thousand years ago a man walked through the gates of the stadium in Olympia. It was Themistocles, the victor of the battle of Salamis, who had saved Hellas from a barbaric invasion and who was covered in laurels as he had recently returned from defending the Hellenic sanctuaries and hearths.

A present-day victor of a similar battle, who saved a small, humiliated Hellas for the second time from the invasion of the Barbarians, Eleftherios Venizelos walked through the gates of the Panathenaic Stadium yesterday. The Panhellenes, who had come from everywhere, overflowed the white tiers of the stadium. And with his entrance at this beautiful historical turning point, the same scene from the past was repeated.¹

Odes and lauds

On the night of 15 September 1920, 3000 Athenians gathered to attend the première of Kalomiris's Symphony No. 1 (1918-20) in the Amphitheatre of Herod Atticus on the southern slope of the Acropolis. This work, the first symphony in four movements by a Greek composer, was given the title *Levendia Symphony* by Kalomiris.² The title means 'valour', 'bravery' or 'manliness', and the epic character of the work is immediately apparent from its opening fanfare, played in unison and *fortissimo* by the trumpets and trombones.³ It seems

¹ Pavlos Nirvanas, 'Ο Πατήρ της Νίκης', *Eστία* (16.09.1920), abbreviated and freely translated excerpt.

² The *Levendia Symphony* is dedicated to the poet Costis Palamas and it is in four movements: I. *Maestoso patetico* (Heroically and Passionately); II. *Lento* (The Cemetery on the Slope); III. *Scherzo*, (The Feast) and IV. *Maestoso* (Grand Chorale on the Kontakion, 'To Thee, the Champion Leader'). The performance of its second movement was on that occasion omitted. Although all bibliography on the matter mention that the Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos attended this performance, the press reports at the time reveal that he left the amphitheatre after the first movement was performed. See Anonymous, *Ακρόπολις* (16.09.1920) and *Ευπρός* (18.09.1920).

³ 'Levendia' is a product of culture and character training and includes both moral and existential qualities such as self-reliance, pride, self-sacrifice, honour and inner direction'. Yorgos Kourvetaris and Betty Dobratz, *A Profile of Modern Greece: In Search of Identity* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), p. 5. The fanfare at the opening of

that the audience was overwhelmed by this performance, and was in no doubt that the work would become one of the masterpieces of the Greek symphonic repertoire. However, the *Levendia Symphony* owes much of its later reputation to just one of its four movements. It is the choral finale, an imposing arrangement by Kalomiris of the Byzantine hymn ‘To Thee, the Champion Leader’ for mixed chorus and full symphony orchestra, that was applauded most and that was largely responsible for the electrifying atmosphere of patriotic fervour it generated on the night of its première.⁴

Legend has it that this hymn was first sung on the night of 7 August 626 by the Byzantines. They supposedly chanted it while remaining standing throughout the night, expressing in this way their deep gratitude to their ‘General’, Holy Mary the Patron Saint of Constantinople, who had on that night miraculously intervened and saved her city from the ‘Barbaric’ herds.⁵ Thirteen centuries later the first few notes of the same hymn evoked unavoidable comparisons and prompted a similar response from the Greek monarch and the audience. As one journalist wrote after this concert:

While dusk is falling over the sacred rock [of Acropolis], the musicians, the choir and the orchestra are performing the Hymn ‘To Thee, the Champion Leader’. Signalled by the King, the audience stands up and listens silently. The moment is particularly emotional. The composition is impressive and imposing; it includes sounds of bells that convey a particular grandiose and deeply emotional sentiment as they ring amongst the instruments [of the orchestra] and the human voices. The night has fallen over the sacred Acropolis. The concert finished and the King leaves in the

the first movement functions as a cyclic theme that unifies the whole Symphony. See musical example Appendix 1 (1920), p. 16.

⁴ Although this is customarily referred as a ‘Hymn’ it is in fact the Prooemium (the first strophe) of a more elaborate composition that in Byzantine music is called ‘Kontakion’. More precisely, this ‘Victory’ Prooemium, as Egon Wellesz terms it, is part of the *Akathist Hymn*, a Kontakion whose name dictates the congregation to be standing. Egon Wellesz, ‘The “Akathistos”: A Study in Byzantine Hymnography’, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol. 9/10 (1956), pp. 141-174 (p. 155).

⁵ The association of Holy Mary as Constantinople’s supreme Patron Saint goes back to the founding of the city as the mosaics in Hagia Sophia that picture Holy Mary flanked by the two Byzantine Emperors offering her miniature replicas of the city and her church also verify. For more on the supernatural defenders of Constantinople see Norman H. Baynes, *Byzantine Studies and other Essays* (London: Athlone Press, 1955), pp. 248-260.

midst of applause. After a while the sacred place is vacated. The audience is content and proud as they stroll down to the city.... ‘*patris* [fatherland] – *patris* – *patris* ...!’⁶

The première of the *Levendia Symphony* was part of the Victory Festivities (Epinikia) held in Athens in September 1920 to celebrate Venizelos’s diplomatic triumph, the signing of the *Treaty of Sèvres* which seemed particularly advantageous for the attainment of the Great Idea.⁷ The festive atmosphere was palpable, and as announced in the daily press: ‘the parades; the memorial services; the laying of wreathes at a cenotaph in the stadium and the glamorous processions of the armed forces and clergy were all very well attended’.⁸ Primarily, the Victory Festivities aimed at cultivating a sense of common Pan-Hellenic identity, since the *Treaty of Sèvres* had assigned to Greece new territories with ethnically diverse populations and cultures.⁹ Apart from boosting national pride and emphasising Venizelos’s diplomatic success, these grandiose celebrations were intended to enhance his chances of re-election in the forthcoming national elections.¹⁰

⁶ Anonymous, *Ελεύθερος Τόπος* (16.09.1920).

⁷ The termination of World War I was officially marked by the Paris Peace Conference while the series of treaties that followed soon after defined the new borders of Europe. Venizelos’s choice to support the Entente powers was proven correct. On 15 May 1919, the Greek Army was given the green light by the winners of the War to disembark in Smyrna, and in the same year Kalomiris accompanied the Greek Commander-in-chief with the Greek military band as they entered Constantinople. On 10 August 1920, the *Treaty of Sèvres* marked the official end of the Ottoman Empire. The *Treaty* assigned to Greece Western Thrace, the Imbros, Tenedos and Aegean Islands and the administration of Smyrna (İzmir). According to the principle of self-determination, the inhabitants of Asia Minor would after five years decide through a referendum their preference as to whether to remain under Turkish rule or to join Greece.

⁸ Anonymous [6].

⁹ At the dinner receptions for the Greek and foreign officials every district of the country had culinary representation. This is a symbolic indication of the unifying and integrating efforts of Venizelos’s government. Food and wine arrived from every region of the country and Athens looked like a ‘human mosaic of cultures’, as it was described in the press. At the end of these celebrations the 2000 Greek mayors who were invited for the occasion would embark on a steam boat to the coast of Asia Minor to familiarise themselves with the new lands that were expected to be annexed to Greece in the near future.

¹⁰ See Appendix 2a, 2b and 2c (1920), pp. 17-18, for lithographed images celebrating Venizelos’s diplomatic success that were published in the Greek press in 1920.

As the military bandmaster, Kalomiris led the music processions on the first day of the Victory Festivities and performed arrangements of the Byzantine hymns ‘Christ is Risen’ and ‘To Thee, the Champion Leader’ at the Olympic stadium in the presence of King Alexander and Venizelos.¹¹ Aside from their obvious religious connotations, there was, for Greeks of all classes and ages, a deeper significance in these two specific hymns. They represented the highest expressions of triumph, joy in a free life and hope for redemption, while at the same time embodying the very finest of Byzantine poetic and musical art.

Kalomiris’s capacity to capture the *Zeitgeist* was epitomised in the final movement of the *Levendia Symphony*, since the hymn that he selected was associated with a particular historical and cultural site, Constantinople, the spiritual centre of medieval Hellenism, and the city that the supporters of the Great Idea ‘hoped to turn into the capital of a totally liberated Greek nation-state’.¹² It was Constantinople, the hub of the once mighty Byzantine Empire or the ‘New Rome’, and not Athens that was expected to become the revitalised cultural centre of Hellenism and the East. Similarly, it was envisaged that the imposing Byzantine cathedral Hagia Sophia and not the Parthenon would become the spiritual and religious symbol of the enlarged nation.

Yet this idealistic vision was by no means shared by Greeks everywhere. It was not only the Greek communists (who saw the Great Idea as a form of imperialism) but also the ardent Royalists who rioted in Athens during the Victory Festivities. By appropriating the ancient symbol of the Golden Athena, an olive branch, which they waved in the streets, they protested against Greece’s eastern expansion yelling: ‘Long live our King and the Olive Branch; down with Ankara and the East!’,¹³

¹¹ See photograph as Appendix 3 (1920), p. 19.

¹² Michael Herzfeld, *Ours Once More: Folklore, Ideology and the Making of Modern Greece* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), p. 123.

¹³ These Royalists consisted primarily of the supporters of King Constantine who at the time was in exile (after he was forced to abdicate in 1916) and who had been replaced as King by his son, Prince Alexander.

After the surrender of Constantinople to the Ottomans in 1453, a series of prophesies about the liberation of the Holy City ‘seemed to have exercised a considerable influence upon the popular imagination, especially as the new national consciousness began to take hold and visions of the redemption of the city through supernatural intervention continued to exist’.¹⁴ By the end of World War I and particularly in 1919, the year that Kalomiris paraded with the Greek military band in the streets of Constantinople, the fulfilment of these prophesies suddenly ceased to be a utopian ideal and became an increasingly realistic prospect, given that the allied powers now ruled much of the city. After his triumphant reception by the Greek Diaspora there, Kalomiris must certainly have visualised in his *Levendia Symphony* the revival of both the religious glory of Byzantium and the heroism of the Greek army. At the same time, his decision not to treat the aforementioned Byzantine hymn as an individual work but to use it instead as the choral finale of his Symphony inevitably invoked comparisons with the *Ode to Joy* from Beethoven’s Ninth.

Beethoven’s impact on Kalomiris and on the choral finale of the *Levendia Symphony* was not primarily to do with stylistic or technical features. It is best viewed in light of two articles ‘Beethoven and the Symphony’ which Kalomiris published on 10 and 17 April 1921 in *Noumas* after the première of his own heroic symphonic work. There Kalomiris referred to Beethoven as the ‘God of immense humanity and as a ‘superhuman transcending his fate’, and it is on this level that his critical response and aesthetic understanding of Beethoven’s symphonies is to be found.¹⁵ Kalomiris attempted to capture in words what he thought to be the very essence of Beethoven’s symphonies. He maintained that it was Beethoven’s poetic urge to express ‘the struggle with fate, victory, and joy’, and above all ‘the esoteric and general idea of heroism’ that was the driving force behind his nine symphonic masterpieces.¹⁶ Apart from the poetic idea of heroism, bearing in mind that the *Levendia Symphony* was also

¹⁴ Herzfeld [12], p. 129.

¹⁵ Manolis Kalomiris, ‘Ο Μπετόβεν και η Συμφωνία, ΙΙ’, *O Νουμάς* (17.04.1921), p. 250.

¹⁶ Manolis Kalomiris, ‘Ο Μπετόβεν και η Συμφωνία, Ι’, *O Νουμάς* (10.04.1921), p. 228.

dedicated to the poet Palamas, Kalomiris established several other connections between his own Symphony and those of Beethoven.¹⁷ One of these is the theme of ‘Joy’ which both Kalomiris’s *Levendia Symphony* and Beethoven’s Ninth explore in their final movements. According to Kalomiris, the redemption of Constantinople resulting from divine intervention was analogous to the God-given ‘Joy’ with which Beethoven concluded his Ninth:

The music of Beethoven recreates [Schiller’s *Ode to Joy*] and elevates it to the immortal symbol of Joy that the Gods had offered to humans in return for the sorrows that they had given them.¹⁸

In a published press announcement on the eve of the première of the *Levendia Symphony*, Kalomiris made it clear that it was on this relatively abstract level (generalised notions of heroism and joy) that his work was to be understood, stating that the descriptive titles given to the four movements of his symphony do not suggest that his work is ‘programmatic’:

[The composer] does not wish to paint a detailed [picture] but he hopes to express the inner emotion that he felt when he saw his dreams and the legends of the [Hellenic] race materialise in the Macedonian mountains and in the valleys of Asia Minor. With all these he tries to render some of his personal impressions, sufferings and longings as an icon of Greek heroism in war, in dance, in death, in love, in triumph and in victory.¹⁹

Moreover, Kalomiris’s published article on Beethoven’s symphonies seven months after this press announcement reveals something of the premise on which he had based those earlier comments on his work. He wrote:

As in the *Eroica*, so in the *Pastoral* [Beethoven] is not aiming at an external description, but he tries to render the emotions of the composer when he thinks of the villages and the valleys. [As] he points out in one of his scores: *Mehr ausdruck* [sic] *der empfindung* [sic] *als Mahlerei*.²⁰

¹⁷ As Kalomiris argued, through his Symphony No 3 Beethoven gave the world ‘the esoteric, the general idea of Heroism’. Hero, Kalomiris wrote, ‘is not only the Hero who governs the masses, who conquers cities and dominates [entire] states, but he can be equally the spiritual Hero; the Hero who fights for an idea, for a creative [mission]. [The Hero] could be Bonaparte, or Alexander the Great or Beethoven himself or Dante or Palamas’. Kalomiris [15].

¹⁸ Kalomiris [15], p. 251.

¹⁹ Manolis Kalomiris, *Ακρόπολις* (11.09.1920).

²⁰ Kalomiris [15].

The work had an overwhelming effect not only on the audience who attended the première on 15 September 1920 but also on Kalomiris's fellow composers. One of its probable outcomes was Mitropoulos's abandonment of the impressionistic trends in his own earlier music (most noticeably in his opera *Soeur Beatrice* of 1918). It appears that it was above all the *Levendia Symphony* that prompted Dimitri Mitropoulos to draw on folkloric and oriental elements, blended with a late-romantic musical idiom, in works such as *Eine Griechische Sonate* (1920). As he confessed to his colleague Marios Varvoglis:

For the first time [in Kalomiris's *Levendia Symphony*] I see a powerful inspiration in a Greek musical work. Not you, I, or Mr Riadis have managed to construct a symphonic work of such length with such an intense expression – rare for our time – because the motoric pace of life has made us too nervous to have the stamina to create a work of such scope [...] Only Kalomiris has managed to achieve such a noteworthy musical structure. And I assure you Mario that from this day, I believe firmly in Kalomiris's great importance for Greek music.²¹

The effectiveness of the choral finale of the *Levendia Symphony*, illustrating the glories of Byzantium and the Orthodox Christian heritage of the Greeks, appeared to be particularly inspiring for some of Kalomiris's colleagues, including the Heptanesean composer Dionysios Lavrargas (1960-1941), who publicly questioned the appropriateness of the Greek national anthem and proposed that

This victorious paean ['To Thee, the Champion Leader'] that is so emblematic [...] could I believe – without causing any damage – replace our National Anthem, which is based on the triple metre dance rhythm of the Hymn to Liberty by Solomos, set to music by the late Mantzaros.²²

Empires and Barbarians

While Kalomiris's musical expression of heroism was based on his understanding of the Beethovenian symphonic model, the première of the *Levendia Symphony* also helped promote a historiographical concept broadly known as 'historical continuity'. According to this

²¹ Marios Varvoglis, *Ελεύθερος Λόγος* (01.02.1925).

²² Dionysios Lavrargas, 'Η Συμφωνία της Αεβεντιάς. Γνώμη του Μουσουργού κ. Δ. Λαύραγκα [sic]'. As quoted in Anonymous (ed.), *Μανόλης Καλομοίρης* (Athens: National Conservatory Edition, 1932), pp. 39-40.

dogma, the history of the Greek nation is an undisturbed, continuous and linear evolution from remote antiquity through the Byzantine era to modern times. And the connection of the *Levendia Symphony* to this concept (an effective tool in the nation-building process) will be elucidated further if its première is viewed in relation to another cultural event that took place on the very same afternoon, a performance of Aeschylus's play *The Persians*, the oldest surviving ancient drama.²³

Both Aeschylus's play and the *Levendia Symphony* have as their theme the victory over the Barbarians.²⁴ Moreover, instead of boasting about the victorious outcome of the war against the enemy, both play and Symphony celebrate an idealised heroism expressed in poetic terms. As Olympia Fraggou-Psychopedi writes: 'Despite the outbreaks of enthusiasm and triumph [in Kalomiris's *Levendia Symphony*], these [outbreaks] are not based on the 'black and white logic' of winners and losers'.²⁵ The heroic virtue that the *Levendia Symphony* attempts to evoke is even more obvious in Aeschylus's play, where the defeated Persian soldiers are not mocked, but rather praised for their robust resistance, so that the heroic Hellenic virtue might appear even greater.

The victory over the Barbarians that both Aeschylus's play and the *Levendia Symphony* celebrated proved to be short-lived, as was the national euphoria that accompanied the *Treaty of Sèvres*. Venizelos lost the national elections two months after the Victory Festivities took

²³ 'The Greeks used the term 'Persians' as a general reference to the people of the Persian empire, regardless of their ethnic identity'. Nigel Wilson (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Ancient Greece* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 557. See Appendix 4 (1920), p. 20 of the poster of the performance of the *Persians* of Aeschylus on the same day prior to the première of the *Levendia Symphony*.

²⁴ The preoccupation of Greek tragedies with the Barbarians is striking. Nearly half of the surviving ancient Greek tragedies portrayed barbarian characters and almost all of the existing plays refer to barbarian customs. The ancient Greek 'discourse of barbarism' is usually an exercise in self-definition, for the barbarian is often portrayed as the opposite of the ideal Greek. It suggests that the polarisation of Hellene and Barbarian was invented under specific historical circumstances during the early years of the fifth century BC, partly as a result of the combined military efforts against the Persians. Summarised information from Edith Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

²⁵ Olympia Frangou-Psychopedi, *Η Εθνική Σχολή Μουσικής: Προβήματα Ιδεολογίας* (Athens: Foundation for Mediterranean Studies, 1990), p. 144.

place in Athens, King Alexander died unexpectedly, and his ardent enemy King Constantine returned from exile. And two years later Greece experienced the severest trauma in its recent history. While the 1922 Asia Minor Catastrophe left Greece profoundly wounded, the *Levendia Symphony* retained its powerful national appeal as a symbolic survivor from this irreversible national disaster.

Apart from their fear of the Barbarians, the Greeks had throughout the centuries developed and maintained an ambivalent relationship with the ‘civilised’ West. Their anger at the western world was intensified by the fall of Constantinople in 1453, when the much anticipated assistance from the Christian nations never materialised. They also sensed the same disappointment in 1922 when the Entente armada passively observed Smyrna set on fire by the Turkish army. It was this despair, and this anger directed against the West (the ‘Franks’ as they were collectively called), that is described in Kalomiris’s last opera, *Constantinos Paleologos*:

The Franks, the Franks, the Franks!
In the name of Jesus our brothers, kill them!
Death! Death! The King gave us away to the Franks! Death! Death! Over them!

Such expressions of anti-Western sentiment, as Michael Herzfeld writes, ‘became a formulaic experience, and Greeks could only rail against the treachery of the ‘blond races of the West, [though] this never stopped them from appealing to the Great Powers for help first’, nor from yearning for Western recognition and acceptance as cultural equals.²⁶ Despite its earlier irredentist connotations, the *Levendia Symphony* eventually became part of Greece’s cultural claims to Western modernity, and it was among Kalomiris’s most performed symphonic works abroad. In particular the performance of the *Levendia Symphony* in France shortly after the Asia Minor Disaster in 1924 still retained its nationalistic resonance:

Europe, that so furiously took from us our Smyrna just to throw it like prey to Turkey, places now on the list of the most distinguished musicians of our time, the composer from Smyrna, Mr

²⁶ Michael Herzfeld, *Archaeology through the Looking-Glass: Critical Ethnography in the Margins of Europe* (Cambridge: CUP, 1987), p. 34.

Kalomiris. It is an honour for France to be such a great host! [...] For a real artist to become international he must first become national, and Kalomiris is continuing our ancient tradition as he is deeply Greek and at the same time he is also the master of the foreign musical technique.²⁷

The *Levendia Symphony* was acknowledged as a true cultural product of the nation, evidence that Greek music had finally met the criteria necessary for membership of a European canon. ‘Greek music finally takes the place it deserves next to the Glinka’s Russia, Smetana’s Czechoslovakia, Granados’s Spain and Grieg’s Norway’, wrote a critic of the aforementioned Parisian performance.²⁸ However, at this particular moment the *Levendia Symphony* signified another political vision, completely at odds with the Great Idea, which it had originally supported. It was now seen as a vehicle to enhance the country’s marginal political role in Europe, and a means to restore its severely damaged national pride. As one critic stated: ‘despite the recent catastrophe, the *Levendia Symphony* proves that the Greek nation is still alive’.²⁹ Its performance in the French capital was a powerful manifestation of the nation’s cultural potential not only in the Eastern but also in the Western world:

With the performance of Kalomiris’s works in Paris, Hellas is officially entering the Great Entente of European music. And this is an [indisputable] fact. It is like a political triumph, something like a war victory. It is nothing less. And this is because the presentation of our national art has the same significance and should be in the first line along with our nation’s political and military representation abroad. It [national music] acquires the same importance in the eyes of civilised nations. And when a nation presents to Europe an artistic representative of a calibre such as Kalomiris, then this nation is taken seriously! It is alive; it exists; it vibrates; it has claims; and it has the right to claim the titles of honour and glory. This is the truth.³⁰

Premièred in 1920 as a historical landmark of modern Greece, the *Levendia Symphony* encapsulated a series of complex ideological themes associated with the long anticipated and notably ambitious political and cultural role that Greece aspired to play in the Balkans and in Eastern Europe. While the Great Idea for a resurrected Byzantine Empire was shattered

²⁷ Sophia Spanoudi. As quoted in Anonymous (ed.), *Δελτίο Πενταετίας του Ελληνικού Ωδείου (1919-1925)*, p. 37.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

under the immense weight of the ‘Catastrophe’, the ‘Greek Idea’ for which ‘I fought all my life’, as Kalomiris wrote in his ‘Spiritual Testament’, remained vibrant and at the very epicentre of his *Levendia Symphony*.³¹ As one critic stated about the performance of the *Levendia* in Paris:

The present Hellas – which politically looks like a faded spectrum of the historical Greater Hellas – presents us with a sample of great national vitality. As a musician of high calibre, Kalomiris is now recognised internationally and is the official missionary of the ‘Greek Idea’ [...] He finds strength in the aftermath of a great disaster; as on the day following the national tragedy he undertakes an artistic tour to one of the greatest cultural centres [of Europe] to present with the prestige that his great art affords him, and to shout to Europe that Greece exists. That she [Greece] is alive in the ashes of the national ruins, where the historical long-lived [musical] masterpieces are still alive and can be found in the creative works of her children.³²

Despite their apparent differences, both Aeschylus’s *Persians* and Kalomiris’s celebrated choral finale are linked through the powerful ‘discourse of barbarism’, a discourse that had enjoyed a long history since ancient times. The image of a powerful enemy consolidated under the term ‘barbarian’ had forced autonomous Ancient Greek-speaking states to foster a collective sense of cultural and political uniformity in order to defend their lands and to define their identity against the Barbaric ‘Other’.³³

³¹ The term ‘Spiritual Testament’ was given by Kalomiris to his handwritten will in which the composer settles his material acquisitions, the copy-right of his works and other issues regarding his musical career and ideological positions. This document is kept in his house in Athens and was accessed in September 2010.

³² Spanoudi [27], p. 39.

³³ See Hall [24], pp. 1-2.

1926. Modernism as Social Subversion: The Athenian Première of *L'Histoire du Soldat*

The challenge

The Concert Society is preparing an exceptional surprise for Athens. It is the celebrated work *L'Histoire du Soldat* which has to date been staged with triumphant success in the largest theatres of Europe and is considered the apex of the evolution of contemporary theatre. For the première of the work every possible effort has been made to meet the standards of the European theatres. The collaboration with Mr Mitropoulos as the conductor of the bizarre – in terms of its composition – orchestra with the best soloists [...] does not leave any doubt about the success that the work will have here. Its première is planned for 28 January [1926] at the ‘Kentrikon’ theatre and will certainly be an [extraordinary] event for Athens.¹

With this enthusiastic advertisement the Greek première of Stravinsky’s *L'Histoire du Soldat* (hereafter *Histoire*) was announced to the public in Athens, which was once again in a state of political unrest and confusion.² But the Athenian concert-goers were caught by surprise, as two of their most recognised compatriots, the conductor Dimitri Mitropoulos and the actor Nikos Papageorgiou (the narrator), made their entrance onto the stage of the ‘Kentrikon’ theatre dressed in Russian costumes, which some critics described as pyjamas, while smoking and chatting before taking their places.³ Similarly, the stage design of *Histoire* was markedly unconventional and in sharp contrast to the naturalistic theatrical settings to which the Greek audience had grown accustomed. At the back of the stage there was a canvas on which one could see a valley painted in orange, a mountain in red and a river in blue with black waves, a leaning bell-tower painted in red and houses painted in blue with similarly leaning windows.⁴

¹ Anonymous, *Πρωΐα* (21.01.1926).

² The Greek interwar years (1922-1940) were politically unstable and turbulent. Only from 1928 to 1932 did the country enjoy relatively stable rule, but even during this short period Venizelos’s government resorted to outwardly undemocratic legislation such as the suspension of the freedom of the press in order to tackle an alleged communistic takeover.

³ See the cover page of the programme notes featuring the casting of *Histoire* as Appendix 1 (1926), p. 22.

⁴ See the sketch of the stage design of *Histoire* as Appendix 2a (1926), p. 23.

Against this multi-coloured surrealistic background the protagonist, a soldier dressed in a traditional Greek warrior costume, heightened the visual affront that the conservative audience felt to such degree that on the day following the première a critic wrote that if the police had been present in the theatre they would have certainly ‘stopped those who receive state subsidies to educate the Greek people musically’ and who had shown to the audience who ‘left the theatre frustrated just what futurism really meant’.⁵ It may have been the music, or perhaps the diffusion of colours and shapes, or the unconventional costume of the soldier, but for whatever reason most critics were left with the impression that the performance lacked cohesion and unity.⁶ Some detractors of *Histoire* felt that the work did not even merit a review. As they reported in their reviews, they felt bewildered by the unusual dissonances and alien jazzy rhythms of Stravinsky’s music, by the bizarre composition of the orchestral ensemble, by the uncanny setting, by the mishmash of costumes, and by the Faustian story rendered into Demotic Greek. Moreover as in the case of Kalomiris’s début in 1908, they associated the translation of the libretto by Nikolaos Poriotis into Demotic Greek with a poverty of artistic imagination.⁷

This reworking of a Russian folk tale seemed to many a modernist vulgarity, with the finale, representing the rebarbative Devil as a stockbroker triumphing over the naive soldier, giving particular offense. Even for the less vocal members of the Concert Society, *Histoire* seemed to have left their high expectations unfulfilled. They appeared, as one critic remarked, like children ‘who go to a party and expect a cake that never arrives’.⁸ But for the more edgy

⁵ Ο Θεατής [pseudonym], *Καθημερινή* (31.01.1926).

⁶ Michalis Kounelakis, *Βραδυνή* (02.02.1926).

⁷ Don Basile [pseudonym], *Nέα Ημέρα* (31.01.1926). Apart from being a prolific translator of theatrical plays and summaries of operatic libretti from French, English and German to the Demotic Greek language, Nikolaos Poriotis (1870-1945) had distinguished himself in rendering and publishing in Greek the literary texts of vocal works by Mendelsohn, Schumann, Beethoven and Wagner.

⁸ Eleni Halkousi, *Νέος Αγώνας* (01.02.1926).

critics and audience members this première was like adding fuel to an existing fire. Not only did the work, which was advertised as the most celebrated in Europe, fail to meet their expectations; they felt that it represented ‘the decadence of modern European civilisation’.⁹ In a sense it acted as a catalyst for a re-examination of the already inflamed socio-political problems and the cultural confusion of the literati. While for the progressive sector of the Greek intelligentsia *Histoire* may have pointed towards alternative cultural horizons, for the more politically conservative sector of the audience this première was perceived as an assault on their intelligence and a dangerous challenge to their aesthetic standards. In profound ways *Histoire* intensified the bourgeoisie’s social, political and moral anxieties, as everything on the stage of the theatre seemed a deliberate and exaggerated projection of the unrest in society. More importantly, the aesthetic challenge was soon interpreted in blatantly political terms as a sign not just of social subversion and degeneration, but more specifically of communist ideology.

Although the music and staging of *Histoire* were at the centre of the criticism, it ranged widely across politics, aesthetics and ethics. Until that point, Stravinsky had enjoyed increased acceptance and popularity in Greece, including from those critics belonging to the extreme nationalist camp. This is because he had become familiar to, and was highly regarded by, Greek audiences through the most popular work of his early Russian period, *The Firebird*, which Mitropoulos had given in 1925 with the Hellenic Conservatory Orchestra. Moreover, despite the fact that Sophia Spanoudi, the most eminent of the nationalist critics, had been particularly caustic in her review when Mitropoulos performed chamber music by Stravinsky in 1927 with his piano-trio ensemble, she nevertheless pointed out that Stravinsky’s musical language, and in particular his ‘Slavic brilliance and chromatic oriental colouring’, ought to be cherished by Greek audiences since it seemed to ‘blend well with our

⁹ Ακροατής [pseudonym], *Πολιτεία* (03.02.1926).

musical style'. She even suggested to Mitropoulos in her review that in order to enhance the appreciation of Stravinsky's music in Greece 'a systematic series of lectures regarding the work of the Russian composer, which could include technical, aesthetic and literary analyses of his work' might precede concerts of his music.¹⁰

The 1926 performance of *Histoire* was long remembered as the most scandalous of the time. Indeed echoes from its divided reception resonated thirty-one years later at the première of a work by Mikis Theodorakis, his Suite No 1 for piano and orchestra (1956), which was characterised as 'a weak imitation of Stravinsky', a 'musical nothingness'. 'I was very scared of a repeat [of hostilities] similar to those at Mitropoulos's performance of *L'Histoire du Soldat* in one of the popular concerts', recalled a journalist after the première of Theodorakis's work.¹¹ Theodorakis himself interpreted the audience's dismissal of his Suite in political terms. He maintained that the severe criticism that his work received was a potent indicator that he had achieved a final break from the bonds that had until then tied him to bourgeois musical values and tastes.¹²

A Greek modernist

Before acquiring international fame as a conductor, Dimitri Mitropoulos, the driving force behind the performance of *Histoire*, was the first active advocate of contemporary music during the early interwar years in Greece. Despite the limited means at his disposal he managed to perform numerous demanding contemporary works and endured with stoicism severe criticism that often strayed into issues in his private life. Even during the American years of his later career, when he had established international fame as a conductor,

¹⁰ Sophia Spanoudi, 'Μουσική', *Nέα Εστία* (15.11.1927), p. 951.

¹¹ Ioannis Yiannoulis, *Εθνικός Κύρης* (02.03.1957).

¹² 'The unanimous rejection of this Suite by the Greek critics is the best proof I can provide that I have finally disposed of those elements which my bourgeois culture had bequeathed to me'. Mikis Theodorakis, Theodorakis Archive, 'Lilian Voudouri-Music Library of Greece', File: 54/2, p.61.

Mitropoulos continued to jeopardise his reputation by promoting contemporary music: ‘By playing modern music, I risk my fame. I am, however, firm, as I believe in this music’, Mitropoulos had reported, while he was conducting the New York Philharmonic Orchestra.¹³

During his earlier student years in Athens, however, Mitropoulos was known to his compatriots as a composer whose musical idiom synthesised impressionistic and late-romantic elements. Although some of his works from that early period incorporated folk elements, Mitropoulos was never fully accepted as a composer by the members of the so-called ‘Greek National School’. His initial use of Greek folk material was remarkably subtle, ‘without ever appearing on the surface’, as Kalomiris very aptly wrote about one of Mitropoulos’s early works, the piano fantasy *Fête Créoise* (1919).¹⁴

Upon his return to his home country from Berlin in 1924 (he had begun but not completed his studies with Busoni and had been working at Berlin’s Municipal Opera since 1922) Mitropoulos was expected to invigorate the concert life of the Greek capital.¹⁵ To a large extent this was accomplished, as his passionate devotion to both standard symphonic repertoire and contemporary music proved to be extremely beneficial, as the surviving music programmes and press reviews of the time reveal.¹⁶ Indeed the sixteen years that he spent in Greece before settling permanently in the United States in 1939 were remembered by his compatriots as a time when they enjoyed a rich concert life with a wide range of western art music presented in a more thoughtful and systematic way than ever before.

¹³ Apostolos Kostios, *Δημήτρης Μητρόπονλος: Ζωή και Έργο* (Corfu: Ionian University, Department of Music, 2000), p. 27.

¹⁴ Manolis Kalomiris, *Έθνος* (12.03.1928).

¹⁵ For a detailed factual account of Mitropoulos’s years in Berlin see Haris Xanthoudakis, ‘Ο Μητρόπονλος στο Βερολίνο’, *Μουσικός Ελληνομνήμων*, Vol. 5 (January-April, 2010), pp. 3-16.

¹⁶ Aris Garoufalidis and Haris Xanthoudakis (eds.), *O Δημήτρης Μητρόπονλος και το Ωδείο Αθηνών: To Χρονικό και τα Τεκμήρια* (Athens: Ionian University Editions, 2011).

However, there was a darker side to all this. Mitropoulos's post-1924 modernist inclination was a source of disappointment and conflict for many of his compatriots. They watched him taking a new musical path, as yet untrodden in Greece, a path which in their view was mistaken and misguided, mainly because it was incompatible with the nationalist ideals fostered by Kalomiris, the leading musical figure of the time. Mitropoulos's change of position, apparent in his programming, was also reflected in his compositional output. In his first major atonal work *Passacaglia Intermezzo e Fuga* for piano (1924), one can register immediately the impact of Busoni, who had passed away a few months earlier. It was the work that signposted the beginning of Mitropoulos's modernist journey, through which he sought to connect the musical life of his home country with the latest modernist trends of central Europe. He continued his compositional experimentation on this solitary path, producing works such as the atonal song cycle based on Constantine P. Cavafy's homoerotic poetry, *10 Inventions* for voice and piano (1926-27), and the *Ostinata a Tre Parti* for violin and piano (1927), a work that exhibits a simple form of serialism (the first ever written by a Greek composer) that indicated his desire to experiment with the most advanced methods of his time.¹⁷

Mitropoulos's decision to perform *Histoire*, along with a cluster of other modernist works, may be associated with the performances of works that he either attended or performed during his two-year stay in the mecca of interwar modernism. Within Berlin's highly diverse environment, where the tension between conservatism and innovation gave the city its distinctive atmosphere, Mitropoulos was given a unique opportunity to encounter the work of some of the most eminent musical figures of the time, including Erich Kleiber, Fritz Stiedry,

¹⁷ The technique is similar to that found in the relevant movement of Schoenberg's Serenade Op. 24 and in the Waltz from the Five Piano Pieces Op. 23. See also Haris Xanthoudakis, 'Σαιμπεργκικές Επιδράσεις στη Μουσική του Μητρόπολον', in Ioannis Foulias (ed.), *Δημήτρης Μητρόπολος (1896-1960): Πενήντα Χρόνια Μετά* (Athens: Orpheus: 2011), pp. 59-80.

Max von Schillings and Richard Strauss. Apart from his exposure to a wide range of symphonic and operatic repertoire, later reflected in his choice of programmes in Greece, he also came into contact with composers such as Béla Bartók, Kurt Weill and Vladimir Vogel, and traces of their influence can be found in his subsequent compositional output.¹⁸ An early biographer of Mitropoulos reports that he played the solo parts of Stravinsky's *Petrushka* and Scriabin's *Prometheus*, which he also performed in Athens in 1926.¹⁹

There are also two strong indications that may allow us to argue that Mitropoulos attended the performance of *Histoire* that was staged in Berlin in January 1924, a few months before his departure. In the first place Busoni, Mitropoulos's teacher during the Berlin years, repeatedly praised *Histoire*. We know, for instance, that he took his master-class students (at his own expense) to the 1929 Frankfurt performance of the work, where he sat next to Stravinsky. Busoni and his wife were reported to have wept on that occasion, and it may well have been the Frankfurt *Histoire* that led him to a fundamental reassessment of Stravinsky's music.²⁰ Secondly, the stage setting of the 1924 Berlin performance was designed by a friend of Mitropoulos, Panos Aravantinos, an eminent Greek stage designer, responsible for several major productions at the Municipal Opera of Berlin.²¹ Aravantinos was the man who

¹⁸ See Xanthoudakis [15], p. 10 and William Trotter, *O Ιεροφάντης της Μουσικής: Η Ζωή του Δημήτρη Μητρόπολου*, ed. Stahis Arfanis, trans. Alexis Kalofolias (Athens: Potamos, 2000), pp. 77-78.

¹⁹ William Trotter, *Priest of Music: The Life of Dimitri Mitropoulos* (Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1955), p. 42.

²⁰ Vogel, who was also present, recalled that Busoni had tears in his eyes and kept repeating that Stravinsky had succeeded in writing an opera – without any singing!. Tamara Levitz, *Teaching New Classicality: Ferruccio Busoni's Master Class in Composition* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1996), p. 262. See *inter alia* Joan Evans, “‘Diabolus Tiumhans’: Stavinsky’s *Histoire du Soldat* in Weimar and Nazi Germany”, in John Daverio and John Ogasapian (eds.), *The Varieties of Musicology: Essays in Honor of Murray Lefkowitz* (Warren, Michigan: Harmoniew Park Press, 2000), pp. 175-185 (p. 175); Igor Stravinsky, *An Autobiography* (London: Calder & Boyars, 1975), p. 108, and Robert Craft, *Conversations with Igor Stravinsky* (London: Faber & Faber, 1959), p. 89.

²¹ [From 1917 to 1930] ‘Panos Aravantinos (1884-1930) was creating [in Berlin] the stage designs for the avant-garde operas of Berg, Richard Strauss, Weill, and Milhaud’. Haris Vrondos, ‘Skalkottas and the Others’, in

apparently helped Mitropoulos find employment there and it is plausible that the Berlin performances of Scriabin's *Prometheus* and Stravinsky's *Histoire* in January 1924 may have encouraged Mitropoulos to perform both works in Athens two years later. At the same time, his own music undoubtedly responded to Berlin performances of Schoenberg, notably *Pierrot Lunaire* and the *Chamber Symphony* Op. 9, both given in 1923. A case in point here is the use of *Sprechstimme* in his *10 Inventions* for voice and piano, not to mention an almost explicit quotation from Schoenberg in the second movement of the *Passacaglia Intemezzo e Fuga*.²² Not only was Mitropoulos inspired by the modernist aesthetic of Busoni, Schoenberg and Stravinsky; the whole overwhelming cultural experience of his relatively short stay in Berlin played a key role in crystallising his views on the appropriate cultural expression of his Greek identity.

National identity was the most persistent preoccupation of all those artists who had experienced the Asia Minor Catastrophe and who had witnessed the sudden collapse of the Great Idea upon which their ambitions had formerly been based. And Mitropoulos was really the first composer to point decisively away from the Eastern Mediterranean and towards the 'progress' of the West, thus openly challenging the role of folk song as the ubiquitous driving force of Greek art music:

Greek music [need] not always [be] based on folk themes. For many centuries now musical progress has been located in the West. During this time we were left without musical education, apart from oriental [Ottoman] music, which however has no relevance to us because we are more European than Oriental. [...] We must turn to European music, to take from it those elements that

Nikos Skalkottas: A Greek European, ed. Haris Vrondos (Athens: Benaki Museum, 2008), pp. 14-47, (p. 30). A sketch of his stage design of *Histoire* that may have been used for the 1924 Berlin performance can be seen as Appendix 2b (1926), p. 24.

²² This 'semi-literal quotation' is taken from Schoenberg's Op. 11/1, bar: 14 and it appears in Mitropoulos's *Intemezzo* bar: 9 from the *Passacaglia Intemezzo e Fuga*. It was first spotted by Jim Samson during my supervision in 2008 and was later announced in a conference by Athanasios Trikoupis, 'Passacaglia Intermezzo e Fuga για Πιάνο (1924): Μια Αναλυτική Αποτίμηση της Συνθετικής Πρακτικής', in Foulias [17], pp. 81-98 (p. 84).

suit us most, and to assimilate them in Greek works: works made by Greeks who live and feel like Greeks.²³

Mitropoulos was questioning here the Eastern or Romeic side of Greek identity, the heritage on which Kalomiris and the Demoticists planned to construct a Greek national literature and music. To do so was certainly to pose a major threat to the status quo, and the resulting polemic, on several levels, created serious problems for Mitropoulos during his years in Athens. His vision of how Greek musical life should be modernised was ambitious and far-reaching, embracing not only established canonical works but also the music of those who at the time were considered controversial or extremist, notably Schoenberg and Stravinsky. Inevitably this led to conflicts with the more conservative sector of the Greek literati. It is true that others apart from Mitropoulos were seeking alternative cultural models in the West, but a substantial tranche of Greek society rejected this tendency altogether and questioned the value of modernisation. Questions of national identity, of how one might express Greekness, became inextricably linked to questions of the new, and of how the imperative of the new might be reconciled with the claims of tradition, and the polemic became ever more strident in all the arts and letters during the interwar years. When, for instance, a year after the première of *Histoire* Mitropoulos performed his own early atonal and serial works, the critics seemed utterly bewildered and unable to comprehend them. ‘There is nothing reminiscent of the past’, one wrote, apparently unable to evaluate and follow these musical innovations, and going on to ask, ‘Where is he taking us?’²⁴

Mitropoulos repeatedly made clear that his desire to introduce modernist music to his homeland, and to enrich its hitherto restricted repertoire, was not in support of any kind of hidden political agenda or manifesto. To assert that through the performance of *Histoire* Mitropoulos was attempting to articulate a social critique or to rebel against the social or

²³ Nikolaos Louros, ‘Στην Πάουερ με τον Κο Μητρόπουλο’, *Νεοελληνικά Γράμματα* (date unknown), p. 12.

²⁴ Sartor [pseudonym of Georgios Nazos], *Καθημερινή* (09.06.1927).

political establishment, a claim often made by the Greek leftist press during the post-World War II era, is to fly in the face of the evidence. Public statements or interviews given by the composer – ‘I dream of a day that the state would secure a comfortable life to the artists, so that art is offered free of charge to the People’²⁵ – were removed from their context and appropriated by the leftist press, who ignored the fact that Mitropoulos had openly dismissed any divisions between the *engagé* and aesthetic.²⁶

Mitropoulos’s political beliefs were in reality influenced by long and intense theological and spiritual quests that had engaged him since his adolescent years, and that were gradually transformed into a profoundly humanist *Weltanschauung*, which in political terms has been aptly described as a ‘utopian or visionary socialism’.²⁷ He never saw his art as in direct opposition to either the conservative Athenian bourgeois state of his early years or the American free market society in which he lived in his later life.²⁸ In the concluding section of an interview given during his American period he criticised equally a socialist realist aesthetic for violating the democratic right to freedom of expression and the mercantile American artists for commercialising their art:

As an honest artist and musician my spirit belongs to an aristocracy devoted solely to art; in Russian terms, I suppose I am a bourgeois. However, my soul, my heart and my love for the people and for humanity are forcing me to compromise, especially in our time, with the obvious progress that the average person has made. I am willing to show a spirit of collaboration and

²⁵ As quoted in Panos Vlagopoulos, ‘Ο Μοντερνισμός του Μητρόπουλου’, in Foulias [17], pp. 261-269 (p. 261).

²⁶ ‘I do not believe that there is music that could be attributed the characterisation ‘for the masses’ or against the masses [...] To compel composers to write music in this or the other way is utopian and insulting’. Mitropoulos (October 1956). As quoted in Apostolos Kostios, *Δ. Μητρόπουλος: 25 Χρόνια από το θάνατό του* (Athens: Eptalofos, 1986), p. 85.

²⁷ Vlagopoulos [25].

²⁸ Mitropoulos became actively involved in American politics when he supported Henry Wallace who represented the left wing of Roosevelt party and who later founded his own Progressive Party and took part in the US elections of 1948. *Ibid.*, p. 262.

understanding, with the hope and the passion of a missionary who believes that he will finally succeed to attract people, to guide them to superior spiritual and artistic realms!²⁹

Épater le bourgeoisie

Mitropoulos's love of Stravinsky's music was increasingly evident to Athenian audiences, as he 'insisted on bringing to the attention of the conservative Athenian public the works of the Russian composer', in the words of one critic.³⁰ However, his decision to conduct *Histoire* in 1926 in Athens was like opening the floodgates of a dam, allowing an unprecedented number and diversity of contentious issues to pour through. The debate would rumble on, moreover, long after the performance itself. That the copious reviews in the daily press raised so many political, aesthetic and even spiritual and moral issues is indicative of the divisive effect and lasting impact that the *Histoire* had on the cultural life of the Greek capital. These debates can only be fully understood in relation to broader cultural trends and political ideas that not only affected the reception of this particular work but that shaped the thinking of the Greeks more generally concerning the introduction of European modernist trends during the interwar period.

In the same year that *Histoire* was performed the first radio receivers for domestic use arrived in Athens, plans for housing were imported from France, Kodak cameras were made affordable to the middle classes, and the wealthier younger generation abandoned local urban music in favour of the more fashionable foxtrot. This apparent modernisation of the country was indicative of the anxious attempts of the Greeks to catch up with the latest trends in fashion, sports and leisure in the central European countries. Greek society was in search of new starting-points, and it sought in the western world both new political alliances, new lifestyle and alternative cultural models. The troubled literati – the so-called 'Thirties Generation' – presented what was undoubtedly the most blatant example of this cultural

²⁹ Kostios [26], p. 86.

³⁰ Spanoudi [10].

reorientation towards European modernism in arts and letters. The fact that *Histoire* was advertised as ‘the most modern play in Europe’ reaffirmed this pursuit of the Western world. It was reassuring to the bourgeois members of the newly-formed Concerts Society – a subscription-sustained and partially state-funded institution under whose auspices *Histoire* was performed – that Stravinsky’s work would meet their demands.³¹

But the politics of the day told another story. Caught in an international recession, suffering from the post-traumatic stress of the Asia Minor disaster, overwhelmed by the thousands of impoverished Anatolian refugees whose strikingly oriental songs and idiomatic languages were in sharp contrast with their own, the Greeks and their political representatives showed little resistance to a *coup d’ état* that was led by the army General Theodoros Pangalos a few months prior to *Histoire*. The dictatorship of Pangalos, apparently designed to combat the moral decline and corrupting forces responsible for the disintegration of Greek society, had cultivated a powerful anti-communist propaganda. The daily press bombarded its readers with noticeably fictitious police reports about communist conspiracies that were uncovered prior to overthrowing the ‘established order’ and assassinating ‘leading politicians’.³²

Aware of the pervasiveness of doomsday scenarios about a communist takeover, and in an effort to halt any possible politicised reception of both the music and staging of *Histoire*, an announcement – presumably made by Mitropoulos – was given to the press four days prior to the performance. It explicitly stated that although the libretto was based on an old Russian tale, the ‘work itself does not refer to a specific place or time’.³³ The same statement was

³¹ The main financial supporter of this musical corporation was the banker Miltiades Negrepondis whose wife was a greater admirer and life-long friend of Mitropoulos.

³² These expressions appeared in *Πρωΐα*, *Πολιτεία*, *Καθημερινή* and *Εστία*, newspapers controlled by the Pangalos regime.

³³ Anonymous, *Πρωΐα* (24.01.1926).

repeated in the programme notes of the performance, which are no longer extant, but whose content is known from a version in Mitropoulos's own hand.³⁴

The press statement made by Mitropoulos, firmly placing *Histoire* in the time of myths and legends and detaching it from the problems of the present, can be viewed as an attempt to avert the danger of *Histoire* becoming politicised at its reception. However, it was not enough to prevent politico-economic associations being made. The audience had paid their entrance fee in bank notes which had been clipped by a third, a method of devaluation of the drachma imposed by the Bank of Greece. This unorthodox fiscal measure, termed a 'compulsory loan', was implemented just a few days before the première of *Histoire* and further intensified the monetary uncertainty that was to be uncannily mirrored for the audience by the protagonist soldier of *Histoire* violently shredding the portfolio of shares and bank notes that the Devil had given to him. A critic described the scene as follows:

The stock exchange is also involved in the drama, as there is frequent mention of a 'portfolio' containing pounds, dollars, cheques...which the soldier shreds on the stage at the end. The audience paid 45 drachmas, they saw many colours, they listened to dissonances instead of harmonies and melodies and they were imbued with antimilitaristic and communistic ideas.³⁵

Combined with the pervasiveness of the rhetoric about an imminent communist threat and the associated fear of social subversion, the violent rebellion of the soldier against the consumerist society that had frustrated his hopes for happiness led one critic to argue that:

It is certain that the world is not mad enough to embrace Stravinsky's art. However, there is no doubt that there will be unstable people who will imitate him. Unfortunately, they are morbid personalities who cannot find pleasure without perversion. They are products of our neurotic time. Undoubtedly [*Histoire*] is the artistic symbol of communism, anarchism, futurism and international disorder and of any other subversive tendencies.³⁶

³⁴ ASCA, Mitropoulos Archive, Section: II/12/3a.

³⁵ Ο Θεατής [5].

³⁶ Δ. Ζ. Σ., *Nέα Ημέρα* (02.02.1926).

One can arguably attribute the hostile reception of works such as *Histoire* to the fact that it included elements markedly alien to indigenous traditions and that it did not seem to offer any contribution to the quest for a Greek cultural identity, still the prime concern of both the traditionalist and the modernist sectors of the Greek intelligentsia. Our understanding of the rejection of *Histoire* by Greek audiences, and of the failure of European modernist trends in Greece at the time, will be enhanced if we turn to political and social issues that are often overlooked in this context. It is possible to argue, for instance, that the strong resistance to *Histoire* in 1926 was an understandable reaction on the part of the exceptionally nervous middle and upper classes, who were increasingly turning to conservative values as the labour riots in large cities all over Greece became more threatening and the monetary crisis, which finally came to a head in 1929, deepened. Even General Pangalos's dictatorial regime, in an attempt to ease the public's increasing resentment, moved yet further to the right and to conservative values. The most characteristic example of this was a decree that imposed penalties on women who violated the designated length of their skirts, a measure that also found supporters in the cultural world, as in the writings of the poet Pavlos Nirvanas (articles with titles such as 'Immorality is in fashion' appeared frequently in the press).³⁷ Eventually not just women's fashion but ethnic minorities (mainly impoverished refugees) and in particular supporters of communism were blamed for the economic and social downfall of Greek society.

In this tense economic and political climate the modernist radicalism of *Histoire* could not escape an association with extremist subversive tendencies such as anarchism and communism. The 1922 influx of refugees from Asia Minor had formed a new impoverished proletariat that had expressly formulated their social demands. Communist ideology was slowly but steadily gaining ground, and by 1924, the year Mitropoulos settled in Athens, the

³⁷ Pavlos Nirvanas, *Eotíá* (02.02.1926).

Socialist Labour Party of Greece (ΣΕΚΕ) was transformed into the Communist Party of Greece (KKE). Both the Greek government and the industrialists were suddenly faced with an organised labour movement whose public demonstrations and strikes steadily increased in intensity and number. The divisions between the classes became sharper, and these demarcations inevitably exacerbated the existing tensions.

Social demarcations also separated the Greek audience for western classical music around this period. The two rival institutions, the older Athens Conservatory and the Hellenic Conservatory, established in 1919 by Kalomiris, represented two diametrically opposed class-based approaches. The Athens Conservatory was particularly selective in admitting new students, while the Hellenic Conservatory had an ‘open door’ policy of encouraging students from diverse backgrounds to study music, thus contributing to a significant increase in the demand for classical music concerts and the formation of a new audience. There was an attempt to bridge the increasing divide between more affluent and less privileged audiences by founding the Symphony Orchestra of the Concert Society in 1926. Yet while this merger of orchestras from the two rival conservatories should have smoothed over some of the simmering tensions, it in fact threw into sharp relief the difference in expectations between the two audiences.

The explicitly class-based strategy that the administrative council of the new Symphony Orchestra of the Concert Society followed in an attempt to widen the audience for western art music was consolidated by the establishment of two types of symphonic concerts. Popular concert performances aimed at a broader public took place either in theatres or in open venues with a reduced fee or occasionally free of charge and included accessible and ‘light’ classical music, while subscription concerts included a more complex and interesting mixture of standard symphonic repertoire, contemporary and challenging works:

In the ‘Popular Concerts’, on the one hand, performances of familiar [musical] works that are more suitable for the halls of coffee houses are predominately given, while on the other hand, in the concerts of the *nouveau riche*, subscribers [of the Concert Society] eccentric works such as Honegger’s *Pacific 231*, Stravinsky’s *L’Histoire du Soldat etc.* are performed.³⁸

Despite the rivalry between the two Athenian conservatories there was a general consensus among composers, musicians and critics that the prime goal of this new symphony orchestra was to educate or guide the people. However, the choice of the repertoire proved to be a matter of constant friction. Mitropoulos’s choice of works such as Schonberg’s *Verklärte Nacht*, Honegger’s *Pacific 231*, Stravinsky’s *Histoire* and Scriabin’s *Prometheus*, all of which were performed in 1926, was considered by many critics to be totally incompatible with the educational mission of the Concert Society. The composer Georgios Lambelet argued that Mozart’s music ought to have been promoted instead of ‘modernist absurdities’ that were totally inappropriate for the Greek populace. What was however noteworthy about Lambelet’s criticism was his interest in the ‘musical development’ of the Asia Minor refugees, who at the time inhabited shanty towns around Athens and were certainly not in a position to pay forty-five drachmas to attend *Histoire*. It comes as something of a surprise to see this concern for the Anatolian refugees on the part of Lambelet, who had previously (in 1916) denounced Kalomiris as ethnically alien because of his Anatolian origins. Yet on the occasion of the 1926 première of *Histoire* he wrote:

Apart from a small portion of music connoisseurs in our country, 99% of the Greek audience – including the biggest part of the *musically naive refugee population* – are still in their first steps of musical development. Therefore it is totally foolish that the Concert Society is determined to familiarise this audience with the most bizarre and eccentric works of Honegger, Stravinsky and Scriabin.³⁹

Lambelet’s renewed interest in these ‘newcomers’ can however be understood as an attempt to control or culturally orientate the impoverished refugees that had been causing

³⁸ Sophia Kentavrou-Economidou, ‘Ο Πανδασκαλισμός στη Μουσική και η Διαπαιδαγώγησις του Κοινού’, *Mουσικά Χρονικά*, Vol. B (October-November, 1930), pp. 249-250.

³⁹ Georgios Lambelet, *Πρωΐα* (03.02.1926).

anxiety both to the more xenophobic sector of Greek society, who viewed them as culturally alien, and to the political establishment (particularly the Royalists), who believed that they strengthened the proletarian basis of the Communist Party.

Lambelet's statement may be seen as echoing ideas found in a series of articles in the daily press, aimed at the bourgeoisie and its political establishment, and including 'The disastrous idleness of the bourgeois', which was published a week prior to the performance of *Histoire*.⁴⁰ These articles drew attention to the struggles of working-class refugees by prompting the upper classes to help ease the lives of the underprivileged through financial support to prevent them from turning to alternatives such as communism. Journalists at the time indicated that the bourgeois class ought to show a 'niggardly charity' to 'repeal the attack of communism' and should 'make financial sacrifices' in order to demonstrate with 'facts and figures' to the Greek working classes that the political system of Russia, which they were viewing as a potential political alternative, was in fact inferior to that of the free market.⁴¹

In this polarised political climate, dominated by anti-communist propaganda and anti-Russian sentiment, Mitropoulos appeared on the stage of the 'Kentikon' theater dressed in a traditional Russian costume and performed music by Stravinsky. The anti-conformist protagonist of the work, the soldier of *Histoire*, an essentially anti-heroic figure, was dressed as a traditional Greek guard, who, according to some of the critics, allowed his 'antimilitaristic and communistic ideas to thrive on the stage'. This was for many a subtle but apt metaphor for the financially and ethnically marginalised members of Greek society, feverishly fighting for their emancipation.⁴² It coloured the response to the visual and verbal challenges of the soldier, and also to music. The detractors of the music of *Histoire* regarded

⁴⁰ Ioannis Anastasiadis, *Πρωΐα* (20.01.1926).

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Ο Θεατής [5].

Stravinsky's polytonality as an attempt to 'institute dissonance as normative'.⁴³ 'Is it a disease? Is it degeneration, or is it a morbid expression of some anarchistic intention? Who knows? Probably all of these combined', was the rhetorical question of one hostile critic.⁴⁴ The answer came two days later from the Director of the Athens Conservatory, who gave another, less subversive, meaning to the 'emancipation of dissonance' in Stravinsky's work.⁴⁵

This is the drama of a naive soul who is caught in the mesh of Satan. Don't you hear the dissonance of such a life?⁴⁶

Austro-German prestige

During the interwar years the two centres that influenced, indeed monopolised, music education in Greece, and to a large extent the musical styles of Greek composers, were the French and the German capitals. The appeal of Austro-German culture, and in particular its musical canon, was of course widely felt and expressed far beyond Greece: in other European nations and even in the United States. At the time it was not uncommon to compare the exemplary nature of the Austro-German canon with the achievements of the ancient Greeks, referring in both cases to qualities of atemporal perfection.⁴⁷

⁴³ Δ. Σ. Ζ. [36].

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ 'Although the word emancipation has now lost much of its flavour, it must have possessed considerable potency in the years after 1900 for those to whom the emancipation of the peasants in Russia and the slaves in the United States were living memories, and for whom the emancipation of the workers, women and various national and ethnic groups were contemporary social and political issues all over Europe'. Robert Falck, 'The Emancipation of the Dissonance', *The Journal of Arnold Schoenberg Institute*, Vol. VI/1 (June, 1982), pp.106-111 (pp. 106-107).

⁴⁶ Georgios Nazos, *Απογευματινή* (04.02.1926).

⁴⁷ 'Let us take for example Beethoven's Adagio from the Piano Sonata, Op. 27 No 1. What is this lament, this divine revelation, based on? It is based on the simplest and most primordial musical law; the *perfect cadence*. And what is the monumental construction of [Beethoven's] Fifth Symphony, the most dramatic symphonic work of the past centuries, based on? It is based on the simplest, the brightest combination and contrast of chords that lead to natural resolutions. Beethoven is the Aeschylus of music; he did not seek to reach beyond nature and the legitimate limits of art [...] This is the ultimate idealistic purpose of the divine art that gives to the great spirits

However, the musical Germanization of Greece, initiated by the reform of the Athens Conservatory in 1891, was nurtured and intensified by Germany's increasing political and financial penetration of the country. Within a decade of the performance of *Histoire* there were already ten branches of the German Academy of Munich throughout Greece, while the collective efforts of the two daily German newspapers produced in Athens, the German schools, the generously sponsored German School of Archaeology in Athens and the German Church all worked intensively on the promotion of German culture, language and music.

To fully comprehend the extent of the cultural monopoly of the two cultural and political poles of influence one has only to read the classified advertisements in the daily press. German and French governesses were preferred to raise and educate Greek children of the upper classes. Even in the state schools, Schubert songs were taught with Greek verses, and the rivalry between the two nations – for political influence, economic penetration and cultural domination – continued uninterrupted until the outbreak of World War II. In 1932, for instance, a Greek music journalist wrote that ‘we know that in music the German race is unsurpassed’, while four years later the British ambassador Sydney Waterlow wrote that ‘We have nothing but Greek sympathy left on our side, to set against the much more powerful German weapons of systematic and progressive economic and political penetration’.⁴⁸ By 1938, the French, and in particular the German, governments rivalled each other in promoting their reputations for musical excellence, not least by making use of tours and visits from their

the ability to communicate timeless truths’. Sophia Spanoudi, ‘Η Σύγχρονη Ανηθυικότης της Τέχνης και ο Πιανίστ Αρθούρ Ρουμπιστάϊν. Η Διάλυσις του Συλλόγου Συναυλιών’, *Nέα Εστία* (01.07.1927), p. 243.

⁴⁸ See Georgios Lampridis, ‘Από πού μας Έρχονται τα Wiener Sängerknaben – Η Αποκάλυψις ενός Άγνωστου Κόσμου’, *Μουσικά Χρονικά*, Vol. Δ (January, 1932), pp. 28-34 (p. 28) and Sydney Waterlow, ‘Report of the British Ambassador in Athens to the Foreign Office’ (Athens: 22.02.1939). The National Archives UK, BW: 34/9.

finest musicians.⁴⁹ This made a perceptive and wary British Council officer in Athens advise the headquarters in London that:

[...] performances of British musicians [in Athens] would have to be very good indeed if they are to sustain comparison with the first rate continental artists who frequently appear here during the winter season.⁵⁰

The interest in German music was intensified by the visit of the very popular Richard Strauss, who arrived in Athens for a four-week stay four months after the final performance of *Histoire*.⁵¹ He was received with great enthusiasm by the Greek audience, by personalities such as the poet Aggelos Sikelianos (1884-1951), and also by the dictator Pangalos, who gave Strauss the necessary approval to choose, design and supervise the construction of an imposing music academy and an auditorium to host an annual festival, all of which would bear his name. A prime location with a view of the Acropolis was chosen, and despite the credit crisis funding was made available for his proposals, which were unanimously welcomed. Although the plan did not materialise, as Pangalos's dictatorship was soon to be replaced by another, the German Minister of Foreign Affairs nevertheless congratulated Strauss for his services to Greek-German relations.⁵²

⁴⁹ Greek-German bilateral cultural relations reached an impressive height in 1940, when Kalomiris's opera *Mother's Ring* was performed in Berlin, just as Wagner's *Ring* was given in Athens. See Katy Romanou, 'Exchanging *Rings* under Dictatorships', in Roberto Illiano and Massimiliano Sala (eds.), *Music and Dictatorship in Europe and Latin America* (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2009), pp. 27-64, and 'Μια Τραγική Ανταπάτη του Μανώλη Καλομοίρη', in Nikos Maliaras and Alexandros Harkiolakis (eds.), *Μανώλης Καλομοίρης: 50 Χρόνια Μετά* (Athens, Fagotto Books, 2013), pp. 61-82.

⁵⁰ Anonymous, 'Observations and Recommendations on Foreign Office Despatch No 411 of the 15th November 1957 as to the British Council's Progress in Greece for 1938-39, Paragraph 12-14 Concerts, Exhibitions, and Lectures etc.'. The National Archives UK, FO: 371/5781.

⁵¹ Strauss was accompanied by his personal architect Michael Rosenauer, who brought with him the drawings for the auditorium and the Richard Strauss Music Academy that was to be constructed in Athens. See Wilhelm Kurt, *Richard Strauss: An Intimate Portrait*, trans. Mary Whittall (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2000), pp.183-184 and Thanos Konstantinidis, *O Ρίχαρντ Στράουνς στο Δελφικό Σπίτι των Σικελιανών* (Athens: Agras, 1999).

⁵² Kurt [51], p.184.

Parallel stories

The strong attachment of Greek audiences to the traditional values of naturalistic theatre, extending as far as the Wagnerian archetype for music drama, was further intensified by widespread xenophobia and politico-economic uncertainty. In this respect, the reception of *Histoire* in the major German cities of Munich and Dresden, which had long-established musical traditions, showed remarkable similarities with, and some interesting parallels to, the reception of *Histoire* in Greece. The Greek press reviews of the 1926 performance echoed the tone of their German counterparts. The conservative German audiences, as Joan Evans writes, received *Histoire* as a ‘visual as well an aural affront’, since Stravinsky’s provocative work was ‘designed to desecrate the old Gods’.⁵³ Despite the fact that *Histoire* enjoyed a number of successful performances in the Weimar Republic, opposition to the work gradually intensified after the National Socialists acquired political power in 1930 and Stravinsky’s *Histoire* became ‘one of the favourite targets of the conservatives’.⁵⁴ Their criticism was not so very different from that of their Greek counterparts, with epithets such as ‘atonal’, ‘Bolshevist’, ‘international’ and ‘degenerate’ used abundantly in both German and Greek reviews of the work. Similarly to its divided reception in Greece, *Histoire* more than any other work by Stravinsky, assumed the character of a *bête noire* during the final years of the Weimar Republic – a reputation it was to maintain throughout the Nazi period.⁵⁵ Not surprisingly, it received only one performance in Germany after the Nazi takeover and despite Stravinsky’s post-1936 rehabilitation in Germany, *Histoire* could not shed itself of the taint of ‘cultural Bolshevism’. Even Richard Ohlekopf, the editor of the *Signale für die*

⁵³ Evans [20], 177.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

Musikalische Welt who though his writings defended Stravinsky, maintained that certain works such as *Histoire* represent ‘border-line cases’.⁵⁶

In Greece during the interwar years there was a notable phobia stemming from the social instability caused by the dramatic increase not only in unemployment and inflation, but also in the number of Asia Minor refugees, who were seen as a potential danger to the stability of Greek society both culturally and politically. *Histoire* faced strong resistance in interwar Greece not only because it challenged the established ‘rules’ of the Austro-German canon and the aesthetic criteria of the comfortable middle and upper classes, but equally because it intensified the fear and anxiety of the Greek bourgeoisie which saw itself under threat. The Greek performances of *Histoire* in 1926 contributed to this tension and challenged the limits of accepted social and political modes of expression. As the majority of the press was politically censorious, its harsh criticism primarily reflected the resistance of the major political powers of the time to changes in the social and political status-quo. This resistance was intensified through well-organised political propaganda based on direct methods (*i.e.* imprisonment or exile of civilians) or through indirect methods (*i.e.* new suppressive legislation) to prevent any possible uprising of the impoverished working classes and/or Asia Minor refugees.

Exactly as in the Weimar Republic, the culmination of the social and political crisis in Greece was the establishment of a Fascist regime, the Metaxas dictatorship installed in 1936. The Bolsheviks, the Jews, and the modernist composers were all to blame for the decadence of German society and the financial crisis of the interwar period, with Stravinsky named as a ‘musical Bolshevik’ by German nationalist critics and likewise in Greece, with Mitropoulos labelled as a ‘communist in the artistic sphere’.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

⁵⁷ Δ. Ζ. Σ. [36].

While the xenophobia of the German National Socialists targeted the Jews, in Greece it was the newcomers from Anatolia who were considered the problem, with their arrival creating a multiple socio-cultural shock with long-lasting effect. Real or perceived fear, or even the anticipation of it, appears to have been the binding characteristic in many of the totalitarian regimes which emerged at that time in European countries, including Greece and Germany. According to the rhetoric of fear, the ‘hostile Other’ (which so often took the form of minorities), the impoverished workers and even the unconventional musical works of modernist composers, were all seen as seriously undermining the social and moral foundations of society.

1930. Barbarians at the Gates: Nikos Skalkottas's Début in Athens

The sound of Barbarians

Having been granted leave of absence from his studies with Arnold Schoenberg, Nikos Skalkottas, a 26-year-old Greek student in Schoenberg's master-class at the Prussian Academy of Fine Arts in Berlin, made the long trip to Athens to present himself as a composer and conductor.¹ His début took place on 23 November 1930 at the 'Olympia' theatre, where he conducted the Athens Conservatory Symphony Orchestra. The programme opened with Schubert's Symphony No. 9 in C major and continued after the intermission with a work of his own, the *Concerto for Winds* (1929) in three movements, followed by Liszt's Piano Concerto No. 2 and Wagner's Overture from *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*.²

The *Concerto for Winds*, the work that was most stridently attacked by audience and critics alike, is unfortunately considered lost. The only evidence we have about its character is an extant programme note containing a piano reduction of the beginning of each movement, accompanied by a short analytical commentary, part of the programme notes compiled by Skalkottas himself.³ As far as one can tell from these musical fragments of the *Concerto for Winds*, Skalkottas does not seem to apply a consistent serial system. Moreover, it is also unlikely that he would have publicly presented a serial work at this stage of his studies with

¹ Nikos Skalkottas (1904-1949) graduated as a violinist from the Athens Conservatory in 1920, and a year later he enrolled at the Prussian Academy of Fine Arts in Berlin to continue his violin studies, abandoned six years later in favour of composition. He joined Schoenberg's masterclass at the same institution in October 1927, and as he had confessed to his close friend Nelly Askitopoulou a year earlier in a letter dated Berlin, 18.08.1926: 'Composition is my only concern and my only ideal, because I find in composition I have more flair and a brighter future'.

² See Appendix 1a & 1b (1930), pp. 26 & 27. This was Skalkottas's début as a composer and a conductor in his homeland.

³ See translation of Skalkottas's programme notes in Appendix 2 (1930), pp. 28-30.

Schoenberg.⁴ However, with some degree of certainty, we can speak of an atonal, possibly expressionistic work with a high level of dissonance. For instance, the repeated accompaniment chords in the treble clef of the opening bar of the first movement (*Allegro con brio*) are built from the pitches of a chromatic tetrachord (B-C-C#-D), indicating that by this time Skalkottas had entirely abandoned triadic harmonies.⁵

His music retained nevertheless other formal dimensions associated with a traditional tonal syntax, including cadential articulations designed to delineate the structure of each movement, as well as melodic shapes and phraseology that belong essentially to the nineteenth century, despite the absence of functional principles of tonal harmony. One can find such features in Schoenberg's Op. 11/1, for example, as Jonathan Cross has pointed out.⁶

These features which appear in the short descriptive analysis of his work, Skalkottas made no reference to his method(s) of vertical or horizontal pitch organisation. Instead, he limited his analysis to the classical forms and thematic and motivic procedures upon which the work was constructed.⁷ In addition, he made reference both to the overall form of each of the three movements and to the various formal techniques that he applied within these movements. The terms he uses, including 'development', 'variation', 'rhythmic transformation', 'thematic

⁴ Two works from the same period, the *Suite für Kleines Orchester und Violine* (1929) and the *Konzert für Klavier, Geige und Orchester* (1930), which were considered lost until 2013 when they were retrieved by Yiannis Tsilikas from the library of the University of Buffalo, are also written in an atonal idiom which however foreshadows the serial path that he would later also follow.

⁵ See musical excerpt in Appendix 2 (1930), p. 28.

⁶ Jonathan Cross, 'Paradise Lost: Neoclassicism and the Melancholia of Modernism', in Melita Milin and Dejan Despić (eds.), *Rethinking Musical Modernism* (Belgrade: Institute of Musicology, 2008), pp. 54-64 (p. 56).

⁷ Those pursuing analytical work recognised from early on that thematic and motivic matters would performe be at a premium in the new post-tonal, atonal, and dodecaphonic pitch content and structure. Summarised from Jonathan Dunsby, 'Thematic and Motivic Analysis', in Thomas Christensen (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory* (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), pp. 907-926 (p. 917).

development' and 'free variation', are all suggestive of the influence of Schonberg's teaching.⁸ As Skalkottas wrote in his brief analysis:

The first movement of the *Concerto [for Winds]* is in a free sonata form. It begins with a distinctive rhythm that is extracted from its theme and dominates the entire movement. After its variation and the transformation of the various rhythms we come through a cadence to a second theme. The second theme is in lied form [...] The development of the themes is short. It consists of an inversion of the first theme and a rhythmic variation of the second.⁹

In fact, shortly before his 1930 Athenian début Skalkottas emphasised, in an interview with the local press, the high esteem in which he held Schoenberg. 'A New Greek *Kapellmeister*', as this two-part article was entitled, advertised his début and reintroduced Skalkottas to his compatriots by picturing him as a fascinating and industrious young composer with a wide range of interests. In the second part of the article, sub-titled 'Schoenberg and Modern Music', Schoenberg and Stravinsky were designated by this young modernist as 'the leaders of modern music', with Schoenberg, as his disciple maintained, 'being one of the few truly inspiring music teachers – needless to say the best'.¹⁰

Prior to his arrival in Athens, sometime between September and October 1930, Skalkottas was remembered as a highly talented and promising young violinist. A prestigious gold medal awarded upon his graduation, a generous scholarship, a farewell recital, and another rarely mentioned but equally successful recital in the municipal theatre of Athens in 1919 in the

⁸ When after his 1930 début Skalkottas left Athens and returned to the Prussian Academy of Fine Arts in Berlin at the end of the winter term of the 1930-31 academic year, Schoenberg noted in the student records that his student: 'can really achieve many good things. He is very independent and knows what he wants. During his absence he wrote a very good string quartet which will be performed at the students' concert'. A year later Schoenberg also made a laudatory comment about Skalkottas's compositional skills: 'One can understand from the structure of the composition, from its development and its motivic working what I allow my students to do and what I do not. He [Skalkottas] evidently excels'. As quoted in Costis Demertzis (ed.), *Αφιέρωμα: Νίκος Σκαλκώτας 1904-1949* (Chania: CAM, 2004), p. 32, and in Peter Gradenwitz, *Arnold Schönberg und seine Meisterschüler: Berlin, 1925-1933* (Wien: Paul Zsolnay, 1998), p. 172.

⁹ Appendix 2 (1930), pp. 28-29.

¹⁰ Anonymous, *Βραδυνή* (30.10.1930).

presence of Saint-Saëns informed some of the audience's most vivid memories of his adolescent years in Athens.¹¹

But he could not have found a more provocative way to confront his compatriots on his return to Athens than this concert. According to some of those present, the dissonant harmonies and atonal melodic lines from the opening bars of the first movement of the *Concerto for Winds* actually drove some members of the audience from the concert hall.¹² All the press reviews, which Skalkottas read in the days following the première of his work, were dismissive, and interestingly they alarmed their readers by invoking the pedigree metaphor of a barbarian invasion, a potent symbol, familiar from ancient times, of the constant threat to the 'civilised world' from without. In a lengthy review, one of the most eminent music critics of the time, Sophia Spanoudi wrote, among other things, that:

Mr Skalkottas is not an [interesting] phenomenon; he is simply an example, a very ordinary example, of the total derailment and negative levelling of art in our times. Dear readers, 'beware: lethal danger!' The invasion of the Barbarians is in Greece.¹³

¹¹ 'I will always remember the final concerts of the Athens Conservatory graduates at the Municipal Theatre. In the presence of Camille Saint-Saëns, Skalkottas played Beethoven's Violin Concerto. In the middle of the performance of the Concerto the finger board of his violin broke and flew into his face. Without losing his calm, he turned around, took the violin of his teacher, Tony Schultze, and continued as if nothing had happened. Needless-to-say the last note of the Concerto was not heard through the loud applause of the audience which literally worshipped him'. Thomas Doxiadis, 'Αναμνήσεις που Διδάσκουν', *Λυρικός Κόσμος*, Vol. 26 (November, 1969), pp. 19-22 (p. 21-22).

¹² Polyxene Mathey, a Greek pupil of Carl Orff who was the soloist in Liszt's Piano Concerto No 2 at this concert, recalled that: 'while this work [*the Concerto*] for Winds was performed, some members of the audience read the newspapers while others left [the concert hall] uttering, "What nonsense!" Skalkottas's music was progressive, very progressive, and I think that the history [written by the] future generations will appreciate his music much more'. Polyxene Mathey, 'The Return of Ulysses: A Film about Niko Skalkottas', dir. Costas Alefantis (Athens: Aegis, 2005).

¹³ Sophia Spanoudi, *Πρωΐα* (21.11.1930).

Two Don Quixotes

On one hand, the *Concerto for Winds* enraged just about all the Greek music critics, who used the composer's association with Schoenberg to his disadvantage. Skalkottas's compositions, as Sophia Spanoudi asserted, were 'simply boring and unpleasant exercises of the neophyte disciple of Schoenberg which patient listeners should tolerate without protesting'.¹⁴ On the other hand, his double capacity as conductor and composer invited immediate comparison with Busoni's former student and a well-recognised conductor in Athens, Dimitri Mitropoulos. 'Will he make it? If this young composer fails he will destroy his career', wrote a daily newspaper.¹⁵ Apart from sharing some noteworthy biographical details summarised in the table below, Skalkottas seemed to have been following, at a slight temporal distance, the path of Mitropoulos. An indicative example of this tendency is the preoccupation of both composers with *concerti grossi*.

Table 1 Mitropoulos and Skalkottas: Biographical and Compositional Parallels

Dimitri Mitropoulos		Nikos Skalkottas	
Birth	1896	1904	Birth
Enrolled at the Athens Conservatory	1910	1912	Enrolled at the Athens Conservatory
Graduation – piano diploma	1919		
Studies in Brussels	1920	1920	Graduation – violin diploma
Studies in Berlin	1921	1921	Studies in Berlin
<i>Eine Griechische Sonate</i> for piano	1920	1924	<i>Greek Suite for piano</i>
<i>Intermezzo Passacaglia e Fuga</i> for piano (atonal)	1924	1926	<i>Sonata for solo violin (atonal)</i>
<i>Four Cytheran Dances</i> for piano	1926	1931	Starts composing the <i>Greek Dances</i> for orchestra
<i>Ostinata a Tre Parti</i> for piano	1927	1927	<i>Fifteen Little Variations</i> for piano
<i>Concerto Grosso</i> for Strings and Winds	1928	1929	<i>Concerto for Winds</i>

Mitropoulos's work, *Concerto Grosso* (1928) is a neoclassical work that was premièred in 1929 in Athens and a year later in Berlin, a performance that Skalkottas most likely

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Anonymous [10].

attended.¹⁶ But whereas this work had an ambivalent reception from the Berlin critics after its performance in 1930 and a lukewarm reception at its earlier Athenian performance in 1929, Skalkottas's *Concerto for Winds* in contrast provoked the sort of abusive criticism that had last been seen four years earlier when Mitropoulos presented Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du Soldat* in Athens. As on that occasion, the *Concerto for Winds* was described as 'repulsive' and 'monstrous', and Skalkottas's début in his homeland was dubbed a 'second invasion of the Barbarians':

Mr Skalkottas, who for some time has affiliated himself with the most subversive principles of Schoenberg's and Hindemith's circle, has repudiated tone, harmony, form and expression – namely, all the principal elements of music. The first such barbarian invasion was made by *L'Histoire du Soldat*. [...] Skalkottas is already trying to surpass his own teachers, but as for us, we refuse to follow him with any seriousness and we refrain from commenting in any way on the monstrosity that is *Concerto for Winds*.¹⁷

It appears that Mitropoulos, who at the time was living and working in Athens and was an already established conductor, did not really support Skalkottas, or at least not openly. He had already been hesitant to perform the Suite for piano which Skalkottas had sent him from Berlin in 1925, and it may be that the disastrous reviews of the *Concerto for Winds* made him even more sceptical about promoting his compatriot's modernist works.¹⁸ The surviving letters of Skalkottas from that earlier period include a number of statements that reveal the

¹⁶ Mitropoulos performed his *Concerto Grosso* in February 1930 in Berlin. On this occasion his success as a composer was somewhat eclipsed by his simultaneous conducting and performing at the piano of Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 3, which really did capture the attention of the public and of the critics. In May of the same year Skalkottas's *Concerto for Winds* was premièred at the Prussian Academy of Arts and the parallels between Skalkottas's *Concerto for Winds* and Mitropoulos's *Concerto Grosso* 'cannot be coincidence'. See Apostolos Kostios, 'Parallel Paths towards Opposite Directions', in Haris Vrondos (ed.), *Nikos Skalkottas: A Greek European* (Athens: Benaki Museum, 2008), p. 214 (pp. 194-225).

¹⁷ Don Basile [pseudonym], *Καθημερινή* (30.11.1930).

¹⁸ There is no evidence that Mitropoulos ever showed interest in Skalkottas's modernist output. On the contrary, throughout his career he had always been very keen on his colleague's tonal work, the Greek Dances for orchestra, three of which he had premièred in Athens on 21 January 1934, a performance that was fervently applauded by the Greek audience.

great esteem in which he held Mitropoulos, and suggest that he had high hopes that Mitropoulos would promote his works in Greece.¹⁹ However, after 1928 Skalkottas showed signs of disenchantment, and there may indeed have been other unknown reasons that prevented the two young composers from forming a closer artistic alliance to counter the parochialism they both identified in the compositions of the Greek National School.²⁰ ‘Latent antagonism’, ‘class division’, perhaps even professional disagreements over a position at the Athens Conservatory that Skalkottas rather bluntly rejected: all these could have been reasons for the reserve between these two Greek musicians who in other respects held a very similar and mutually compatible modernist agenda.²¹

Opening Pandora’s box

Well informed of every detail of the dismissive reviews of his work, and of the identity of his detractors, who had overnight branded him the *bête noir* of Greek music, Skalkottas felt obliged to counterattack on his return to Berlin. From there he sent an equally caustic article about his recent experiences in Greece, publishing it in the musical journal *Mousiki Zoi* (*Μουσική Ζωή*). It was like opening Pandora’s box, as in this rejoinder Skalkottas reflected widely on the musical scene of Athens and repudiated almost every argument his detractors had used. He challenged all the reviews of the Greek music critics, questioning both their critical acumen and their musical skills, and openly naming them as illiterate, ignorant and biased. He also made reference to the poor quality of the compositions of his compatriots, to

¹⁹ For instance, in a letter to Nelly Askitopoulou dated Berlin, 25.08.1925, Skalkottas stated that: ‘[Mitropoulos] has sent me an enthusiastic letter. I sent him my Suite for piano and he must have liked it very much, particularly in terms of taste and form! He is a great musician for Greece and the first great figure to have appeared in Greece so far’.

²⁰ In 1928, during his visit to Greece, Skalkottas wrote: ‘I also met Mitropoulos once and he made a horrible impression on me. However, he has a nice car!’ Letter from Skalkottas to Yannis Konstantinidis dated Athens, 03.09.1928.

²¹ Kostios [16], pp. 194-225.

the plummeting standards of the Symphony Orchestra of the Conservatory that had performed his work, and to the pitiable condition of the conservatories more generally. ‘What is currently happening in our capital is not happening among even the most primitive tribes of savages’, Skalkottas strikingly concluded.²² Without doubt this very public response, which was seen as yet another outrageous insult, had direct consequences for his relationship with Manolis A. Benakis, his friend and most importantly his sole benefactor, for Benakis asked him to stop publishing in *Mousiki Zoi* soon afterwards.

While Skalkottas’s remarks faithfully recorded the underdevelopment and disorganisation of musical institutions when compared to those in the cultural capitals of Northern and Central Europe, his public response highlighted a further non-musical parameter that affected the reception and judgement of his music. He believed, and emphatically stated in *Mousiki Zoi*, that the harsh criticism of his works was both politically driven and culturally biased:

My aim is not to raise sensitive issues about their survival [meaning the music critics], but rather to draw attention to their abuse of the profession. For here is the way in which they dispense it. They defer first to the political ideology of the newspaper for which they write (unfortunately politics and art have of late been going hand in hand), then to their own musical beliefs, supposing they do actually hold any beliefs, then to their own incompetence, and only at the very end to the specific person whose work they judge.²³

Skalkottas’s references to the ‘political ideology’ to which the Greek music critics were subservient might have been applied to the majority of journalists, not just music critics, for they operated under strict state censorship officially imposed by Venizelos’s government a year prior to Skalkottas’s concert.²⁴ After the politically turbulent period that followed the

²² Nikos Skalkottas, ‘Μουσικοκριτική’, *Mousikή Ζωή* (March, 1931), pp. 124-126.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

²⁴ Of the twenty-seven newspapers that were published in Athens in 1930, sixteen supported Venizelos’s party. By 1935, the total number of newspapers had increased to forty-five. These figures are particularly impressive considering that the population of the Greek capital in 1930 was 800,000, of which 35% was illiterate. By 1930, both the editors and the owners of the newspapers were granted special privileges such as tax exceptions and state insurance, and only a few distinguished journalists enjoyed secure positions in the press industry.

Asia Minor disaster, Venizelos had returned to politics for the last time in 1928. Facing huge difficulties in pacifying the debt-ridden farmers, the workers' unions and the impoverished Asia Minor refugees, and in a final attempt to forestall the increasing popularity of the Greek Communist Party, the Venizelos government, like earlier repressive regimes, imposed strict press censorship that was consolidated in a special decree: 'For the Protection of the Social Regime'.²⁵ The latent danger that Venizelos sensed was foregrounded in December 1931 when the Fourth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Greek communistic Party (KKE) openly declared that:

Greece is an imperialist country that used force to conquer whole regions inhabited by other ethnicities (Macedonia and Thrace), that suppresses them and subjects them to colonial exploitation, and that prosecutes and exterminates national minorities. In the name of the basic principles of bolshevism, the Greek Communist Party KKE declares for Macedonia and Thrace the right to self-determination until their final separation from the Greek Nation. [It further declares] the right to an independent Macedonia and Thrace, and actively supports the revolutionary struggle of the populations of these regions for their national liberation.²⁶

As the state's borders were once again threatened, this time not by external enemies but from within, both nationalism and patriotism flared up once again. In this political context, innovations in art and literature were often seen as subversive or supportive of communism, and as a result Skalkottas's dissonant music was perceived as no less dangerous than the proclamations of the Greek communists. For those critics belonging to Kalomiris's circle in particular he was a 'Barbarian', an 'unpatriotic' composer and a 'slave of foreign fashions'. Although some of these accusations did not appear in public forums in that precise wording, they were nevertheless widely bandied about, and they were passed on to Skalkottas by his

Summarised information from: Lucia Droulia and Yioula Koutsopanagou (eds.), *Eγκυροπαίδεια του Ελληνικού Τόπου: 1784-1974* (Athens: Institute of Neohellenic Research, 2008) and Panos Karykopoulos, *200 Χρόνια Ελληνικού Τόπου: 1784-1984* (Athens: Grigoris, 1984).

²⁵ Known as 'Idionymo' (Decree Number 4229/24-25.07.1929).

²⁶ George Mavrokordatos, 'Οι Εθνικές Μετονότητες', in Christos Hadjijosif (ed.), *Iστορία της Ελλάδας των 20ού Αιώνα: Ο Μεσοπόλεμος 1922-1940*, Vol. B2 (Athens: Vivliorama, 2003), p. 30.

benefactor, Benakis.²⁷ In response to these accusations upon his return to Berlin in December 1930, Skalkottas wrote to Benakis as follows:²⁸

They can insult me as much as they want: Let them [do so!]. But they must not call me a slave to foreign fashions or unpatriotic, because that would be the biggest lie, the only thing that would seriously wound me.²⁹

In February 1931 (a month prior to his published response), Skalkottas once again pointed out in one of his letters to Benakis that the harsh criticism his works received was unrelated to the artistic value of his work:

It wasn't the bad reviews that affected me, nor the fact that they didn't like my music or couldn't understand it... What hurt me [most] was the nasty tone, and especially in matters that do not have anything at all to do with my music.³⁰

Benakis must have brought to the attention of Skalkottas that because he was considered ‘too modern’ rumours were being circulated that he was also ‘left-wing’. John Thornley provides a similar interpretation and considers that ‘the use of the insulting epithet “left-wing” almost certainly had an ironic intent’.³¹ Skalkottas may well have been re-quoting Benakis when he wrote back to him that:

²⁷ Despite my contacts both with the retired and the current archivists of the Benakis Historical Archives and a thorough search in their premises in February 2011 I have been unable to locate the fifty-six letters that Skalkottas sent to Benakis from 1928 onwards. This correspondence which would have been an extremely informative source for Skalkottas researchers (but no doubt harmful to Benakis’s posthumous reputation) has mysteriously disappeared since Benakis’s death in 1977. I therefore depend entirely on John Thornley’s article, [‘I beg you to tear up my letters...’, ‘Nikos Skalkottas’s Last Years in Berlin (1928-33)’, *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, Vol. 26 (2002), pp. 178-217] who was the only person that Benakis allowed to study this correspondence.

²⁸ For example, the phrase ‘slave of foreign fashions’ might have been paraphrased from a review by Kalomiris who concluded that: ‘It is a pity that Greek music will lose a brilliant musician so that Germany might acquire one more imitator of the exterior forms of Schoenberg or Hindemith’s art’. Manolis Kalomiris, *Eθνος* (24.11.1930).

²⁹ Letter from Skalkottas to Benakis dated Berlin, 16.02.1932. Thornley [27], p. 93.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Thornley [27], p. 204, ft. 174.

This year my situation will have to change, because otherwise I'll explode from my troubles. And if I don't explode, then I'll let off steam in some new [musical] work. And as you know wonderfully well, my venting of steam is very left-wing – from a musical point of view!³²

Both for his survival in Berlin and for his Athenian début, Skalkottas depended on the generosity of Benakis, who apart from the traditionally strong relations his family had with Venizelos's party was also a member of the administrative board of the Athens Conservatory, and thus exerted a considerable influence over cultural matters in the city. It was in Skalkottas's strategic interest to compliment Benakis by writing a work for him, and as soon as his *Concerto for Winds* was composed, and prior to its 1930 Athenian première, he announced to Benakis that: 'I want to dedicate this *Concerto for Winds* to you, but I want you to hear it first'.³³ The work was scheduled to be premiered in Berlin, and Benakis travelled from Athens to attend the concert at the *Akademie der Künste* on 20 May 1930. Aside from the *Concerto for Winds* that was intended for him, the concert included other works by students from Schoenberg's class.³⁴ To Skalkottas's disappointment, however, the *Concerto for Winds* proved hard to digest both for Benakis and for the German critics who happened to be in the concert Hall of the *Akademie der Künste* on that evening.³⁵ In one of the harshest Berlin reviews, Dr Sachs, a German critic from the newspaper *Steglitzer Anzeiger*, stated that:

The Symphony of Hannenheim was the most vital [*vitalste*] of the three compositions. The composition of Skalkottas is somewhat vertical, not so linear-dialectically [contrapuntally] worked

³² Letter from Skalkottas to Benakis dated Berlin, 16.09.1931. *Ibid.*, p. 204.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 192, ft. 93.

³⁴ These were: Norbert von Hannenheim and Winfried Zillig. Two weeks earlier on the 6th April 1930 at the Singakademie, in a programme which included works of W. F. Bach, A. Honegger and L. Boccherini, Skalkottas presented two of his works: the Concerto for Piano, Violin and Orchestra and the Small Suite for Violin and Orchestra. The piano soloist of his Concerto recalled that 'Schoenberg, Jarnach and other professors from the academy applauded Skalkottas'. Mathey [12].

³⁵ 'Berlin newspaper reviews of the first performance [25.10.1930] indicate that the work made considerable aural demands: The conservative Heinz Pringsheim condemned it outright as 'repulsive' (*Allgemeine Musikzeitung* 06.06.1930) As quoted in John Thornley, 'An Encounter with "Greek artistic reality": Nikos Skalkottas's Return to Athens in 1933', in Haris Vrondos (ed.), *Nikos Skalkottas: A Greek European* (Athens: Benaki Museum, 2008), pp. 334-367 (p. 360).

as Zilling's was, and [exhibited] peculiar effects such as the introduction of irritating jazz rhythms.

On the whole, and to a major degree, it exhibits tendencies of grotesquerie.³⁶

It is a tragic irony, one of many in Skalkottas's life, that the work which he had hoped to dedicate to his friend and patron did not produce the results he had envisaged, since after its subsequent performance in Athens this work contributed to the gradual deterioration of their relationship. Facing multi-faceted attacks from Greek critics and composers, and in danger of losing Benakis's valuable support, Skalkottas continued until 1932 to defend the merits of his modernist works, however fruitlessly, and he remained particularly defensive about his *Concerto for Winds*. In one of the letters he wrote after his return to Berlin he emphasised to Benakis that 'my *Concerto for Winds* is not "horrible" or "dreadful", nor are any of the rest of my compositions. All the works I've written since 1928 up to today are fine'.³⁷

It is also possible that Benakis became more sceptical about Skalkottas's political stance, as in one of his articles published in *Mousiki Zoi* Skalkottas offered a subtle, but easily perceptible, social critique openly expressing his concerns about the unionist position.³⁸ He made reference to 'the new class of students and workers' and the 'social position of musicians', phrases which in the context of the strict press censorship imposed by Venizelos, could easily be read as pro-communist.

The lengthy Skalkottas-Benakis correspondence reveals the composer's anxiety as he sought repeatedly to interest his patron both in his music and in his private affairs. This anxiety intensified soon after the Athenian début, as in January 1931 Benakis reduced his monthly subsidy and limited his interest to business matters, showing no further concern in Skalkottas's compositional career. The relationship between patron and protégé had deteriorated dramatically by 1932, when Benakis accused Skalkottas of being 'an enemy of

³⁶ As quoted in Gradenwitz [8].

³⁷ Letter from Skalkottas to Benakis dated Berlin, 12.07.1932. Thornley [27], p. 204.

³⁸ Nikos Skalkottas, 'Η Μουσική Κίνησις του Βερολίνου', *Mousikή Zwή* (February, 1931), pp. 123-126.

order'.³⁹ Since the correspondence of the two men is now considered lost, we can only speculate as to whether this comment was made in relation to a perceived misuse of his funds by Skalkottas or to Benakis's understanding of Skalkottas's artistic and political views. It may even have been influenced by the use of the word 'anarchy' in the reviews of his *Concerto for Winds* in 1930.

There is evidence that Skalkottas was victimised both in Germany and in Greece for his affiliation to Schoenberg's circle. Kalomiris called him an 'imitator of Schoenberg',⁴⁰ and Benakis made it clear that he 'heartily disliked [both] Schoenberg and his music'.⁴¹ In a letter from the pianist Marika Papaioannou, as yet unpublished, similar concerns are clearly expressed about Skalkottas's mistreatment because of his association with Schoenberg. Following a concert at the *Singakademie* on 6 April 1930, during which Skalkottas presented two of his works, Marika Papaioannou, who had been present, wrote:

The works of Skalkottas certainly lost 50% [of their potential] because of the poor performance. [The pianist Polyxene] Mathey played very well despite the fact that her parts were horribly difficult. The critics found an opportunity – through Skalkottas – to attack poor Schoenberg, who has only enemies. One of them told a friend of mine that the reason [Skalkottas] was attacked was because they knew his true value and how much he could achieve, so that he would finally [be forced] to abandon Schoenberg.⁴²

It is also possible that Benakis's dislike of Schoenberg may have been further exacerbated by Venizelos's liberal party's outwardly anti-Semitic policy, as Benakis's family had traditionally offered to this party their administrative services and significant financial

³⁹ Thornley [27], p. 209.

⁴⁰ Manolis Kalomiris, *Eθνος* (04.12.1930).

⁴¹ Thornley [27], p. 208, ft. 197.

⁴² Fragments from an undated letter from the pianist Marika Papaioannou to an unknown recipient (possibly her sister Katy). From the contents of the letter it is inferred that it was written in April 1930. The letter was written after her piano recital, in which she performed *Six Greek Rhapsodies* by Felix Petyrek (1892-1951), one of Schreker's pupils, who since 1927 held a teaching post at the Athens Conservatory.

support.⁴³ There can be no doubt that Skalkottas was aware that his patron's views on music were different from his own, and of his possible anti-Semitism, and in his effort to abolish the Schoenbergian modernist stigma, he wrote to Benakis in 1931: 'I am not in his [Schoenberg's] good books' and later in 1932 repeated that:

I wrote to you once that I am not – nor was I ever – his disciple, because my music is primitive in comparison to that of Schoenberg. In time, I shall end up taking a different path, my own path, an independent one.⁴⁴

Although John Thornley suggests that Skalkottas may have 'invented this disagreement'⁴⁵ with Schoenberg, it must have had some foundation in reality, as in a letter to Marika Papaioannou written just after his graduation from Schoenberg's class, Skalkottas wrote:

I have not much to write to you. The criticism of my works is divided. Depending on the musical dogma of each critic, I get laurels and hatchet jobs. I am well at the moment and happy that my mother is in good health and that I left Schoenberg's [class] today for ever.⁴⁶

In a final attempt to regain his patron's sympathy and financial support, Skalkottas not only implied in his letters that he had rejected Schoenberg's influence, but actually misled Benakis when he wrote to him about his atonal *Octet*, claiming that 'it is the most recent of my works and not at all modern'.⁴⁷

⁴³ In Venizelos's view, the Greek Jews lacked patriotism as they had contributed to the country's misfortunes by voting against his party in the 1920 national election – a move which in the eyes of his devoted followers was equivalent to treachery: 'Thanks to the Thessaloniki Jews', wrote one, 'we lost Eastern Thrace, and the Asia Minor Disaster occurred, which was terrible for our nation'. See Mark Mazower, *Salonica, City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims and Jews 1430-1950* (London: Harper Collins, 2004), pp. 408-409.

⁴⁴ Letter from Skalkottas to Benakis dated Berlin, 12.07.1932. Thornley [27], p. 208.

⁴⁵ Thornley [27], p. 208, ft. 197.

⁴⁶ Letter from Skalkottas to Marika Papaioannou dated Berlin, 19.06.1930.

⁴⁷ Thornley [27], p. 200.

Political antagonisms in the cultural domain

In his published responses in *Mousiki Zoi*, Skalkottas also pointed out to his detractors that their judgements on his works were culturally biased because their preference for French music and performers prevented them from appreciating any other kind.⁴⁸ As he wrote:

The other component of criticism in Greece is one that reiterates a political and musical stance that parrots French chauvinistic views. Mahler is heavy and obscure. His forms are overstretched, and will never be accepted beyond the German borders.⁴⁹

Similar cultural polarisations – particularly between German and French music – were apparent in other countries at the time, but in Greece they were more sharply divided, for they were increasingly bolstered by propaganda stemming from the very cultural institutions that these two countries had been maintaining in Greece. French culture, language and literature were particularly pervasive in the interwar years, but at the same time Austro-German classical repertoire was continuously bolstered through concert life and a powerful German propaganda machine.⁵⁰ During these years there was increasing political interest in Greece on the part of the major European powers. In addition to Germany and France, there was (primarily financial) interest from England, which was a significant holder of Greek debt, while after 1928 Fascist Italy also sought active involvement in the life of Greece. But it was Germany and France that competed over the cultural domination of the country, as they

⁴⁸ Skalkottas made a similar reference in relation to a concert he presumably gave later in Germany: ‘The reviews of our concerts are divided. Depending on the musical belief [φρόνημα] of every critic, each of us gets his laurels or his hatchet jobs’. Skalkottas to Papaioannou [46].

⁴⁹ Skalkottas [22], p. 125.

⁵⁰ The strong ideological, cultural and political links that had been forged between France and Greece long before the Greek War of Independence in 1821 and throughout the period of the Greek Enlightenment continued throughout the twentieth century. An example was the case of Hubert Pernot, who became the first Professor at the Neohellenic Institute of the Sorbonne, established by Venizelos in order to promote cultural relations between France and Greece. Haris Xanthoudakis, ‘Εικόνες από μία Έκθεση: Ελλάδα και Γαλλία, ένα Ταξίδι στην Ιστορία’, *Mουσικός Ελληνομουνήμων*, Vol. 5 (January-February, 2007), pp. 3-5.

linked the effectiveness of their political and economic influence to the success of their cultural penetration. Germany had managed to create ‘a virtual monopoly in trade, something that was to have a significant political significance by 1938’, while France was traditionally the country from which Venizelos would seek political support and where he would look during times of difficulty.⁵¹

The French language, French textbooks and French teaching methods were traditionally favoured by the Athens Conservatory, and although Kalomiris, like Skalkottas, had used the term ‘French-obsessed’[γαλλόπληκτοι] to counter-attack some of the music critics, he was himself actively involved in the promotion of French music in Greece. French artists such Jacques Thibaud, Alfred Corot, Arthur Rubinstein, Henri Constant and Gabriel Pierné were among the best known soloists who were invited to perform in the Greek capital. Indeed Kalomiris’s own orientation towards French impressionism as a composer was so evident after 1924 that some scholars of his work characterise this period as ‘impressionistic’.⁵²

The notable bilateral musical relations between Greece and France during this period were to a great extent facilitated by Venizelos’s political sympathies. Venizelos’s liberal party openly fostered Greek impressionist trends in the visual arts, and also encouraged the promotion of works by Greek composers in concerts in France. In two private letters to Venizelos, as early as in 1923, Kalomiris reminded him about his ‘plans for [the] promotion of [Greek] culture in Paris’ and requested the necessary funds. Despite the official denial of

⁵¹ Constantinos Tsoucalas, *The Greek Tragedy* (Baltimore: Penguin 1969), p. 46.

⁵² According to Marcos Tsetsos, the collapse of the Great Idea forced Kalomiris to abandon the heroic musical rhetoric that both *The Master Builder* and the *Levendia Symphony* expressed. Like many Greek sculptors and painters, Kalomiris turned to the world of symbolism and lyricism and to an impressionistic perspective on Greek rural life and nature. This new orientation, lasting until around the mid-1930s, is mostly noticeable in his Second Symphony, dedicated not to any heroic figure but to his housekeeper and gardener. See Marcos Tsetsos, ‘Μανώλης Καλομοίρης και Ελευθέριος Βενιζέλος: Ιδεολογικές και Αισθητικές Όψεις μιας Σημαίνουσας Σχέσης’, in Tassos Sakellaropoulos (ed.), *Ελευθέριος Βενιζέλος και Πολιτιστική Πολιτική* (Athens and Chania: Benaki Museum, 2012), pp. 270-279.

the funds, Kalomiris's 'plans' did nonetheless materialise a year later, and he lectured on Greek music at the Sorbonne.⁵³ The warm reception of Kalomiris's works in Paris was soon followed by additional concerts in 1926 and in 1937. This recognition in fact strengthened his stature in Greece, and the success of his works in the French capital certainly convinced him about the success of his larger project, as he asserted that: 'It is today [1937] indisputable that we indeed have a Greek [National School of] Music'.⁵⁴

Skalkottas's opposition to French cultural influences therefore ran contrary to a widespread private and public interest in everything French. It may be, though, that there was a more personal dimension to this. Kalomiris's reviews of musical life in Athens in the newspaper *Ethnos* (*Εθνος*) seemed to have annoyed Skalkottas, who was aware of them during his stay in Greece in 1930.⁵⁵ Kalomiris's laudatory reviews of concerts by Thibaud and Cortot, who gave concerts in Athens in December 1930, were in very sharp contrast to the unanimous rejection by critics of Skalkottas's works. For instance, an anonymous music critic ended his dismissive review of the *Concerto for Winds* by praising Cortot for re-establishing order and seriousness in Greek musical life following Skalkottas's disruptive début:

The long anticipated return to Greece of the great artist Mr Cortot has immediately put things in order, bringing back some necessary seriousness in our musical affairs.⁵⁶

Skalkottas's rejection of prevailing French impressionist tendencies accords with the ideological positions fostered in cultural circles in Berlin, which dismissed these tendencies

⁵³ There is no doubt that collectively strong personal relationships, political sympathies and ideological affinities were also important factors that shaped Kalomiris's stance towards French music and culture.

⁵⁴ As quoted in Katy Romanou, 'Η Προβολή της Ελληνικής Μουσικής στη Δύση κατά τον Μεσοπόλεμο'.

http://www.kalomiris.gr/kalomi_files/001_synuetis/001_003_documents/docs_others/popups/ii03.htm (accessed on 27.02.2012).

⁵⁵ 'During my five-month stay in Athens, I often had the chance to read the various reviews that expressed judgments about various foreign soloists, about performances of our orchestra, and about several works of foreign and Greek composers'. Skalkottas [22], p. 125.

⁵⁶ Don Basile [17].

as outdated or academic. In Berlin, Skalkottas had been nourished by the explosion of expressionism, had experienced first-hand the growing interest in, and debates about, serialism, neoclassicism and new objectivity, and was certainly of the view that Berlin's cultural environment was far more progressive and inspirational than that of Paris. This is also evident in one of his letters, in which he proudly emphasised that one of his compatriots, the distinguished pianist, Spyros Farantatos (1895-1962) who had visited him in Berlin, acknowledged the city's cultural superiority over Paris.⁵⁷

Paris and Berlin, the two main cultural centres at the time, had to a large extent monopolised the musical education of Greek composers and had to some degree divided them into two groups. Those trained in Germany, such as Charilaos Perpessas (1907-1995), Mitropoulos and Skalkottas (only the latter two embraced radical modernism), were received with scepticism by their compatriots in comparison to the vast majority who received their musical education in Paris. These latter included Petros Petrides (1882-1977), Marios Varvoglisis (1885-1967), Dimitri Levidis (1886-1951), and Georgios Poniridis (1892-1982), and their works were eagerly accepted in the traditional circles of the Greek National School. The only composer who proved an exception to the rule was Yannis Konstantinides (1903-1984) who despite studying in Berlin remained deeply influenced by French impressionism and stated that his decision to study in Berlin was mainly influenced by his friendship with Skalkottas.⁵⁸

Apart from his criticism of French music, Skalkottas also turned against the modern Italian School of Alfredo Casella. Since 1923 Casella had led the so-called Corporation of New

⁵⁷ 'Farantatos is overly excited and believes that Berlin is beyond comparison with any other European musical centre'. Letter from Skalkottas to Nelly Askitopoulou dated Berlin, 14.12.1925.

⁵⁸ 'When composing, I always had the French tradition in mind and this attitude remained. I was very consistent in this until the end'. As quoted in George Sakalieros, *Γιάννης Κωνσταντινίδης (1903-1984): Η Ζωή και το έργο του. Αναλυτική Προσέγγιση και Παροντιάση του Συνθετικού του Ύφους, με άξονα τα έργα για ορχήστρα* (Ph.D. Thesis: University of Athens, 2005), p. 20.

Music in Italy, and shortly after Skalkottas's Athenian début he appeared in two concerts as a composer and pianist and gave a lecture on the evolution of contemporary music at the Athens Conservatory. Kalomiris, who was present on that occasion, wrote that:

He [Alfredo Casella] spoke about the evolution of contemporary music and he put forward his ideas in a simple and moving manner. These ideas were so clear, so precious that we may hope they will be appreciated by all of those who strive for the prosperity of their national music.⁵⁹

The multi-talented Casella, whose lectures always revolved around the 'idolisation of Italianism', and whose moderate and acceptable modernism was in harmonious symbiosis with Italian fascism, fitted well with Kalomiris's vision about the construction of a Greek National School of Music. For the Italians Casella was a 'living symbol of the new springtime of Italian music', and for Kalomiris, who was seeking foreign models to accommodate his nationalist views, Casella represented a living paradigm of a successful contemporary composer who drew on indigenous traditions. Nevertheless, Skalkottas directly challenged this notion:⁶⁰

Judgments such as those on Casella, a very adept and experienced musician but not necessarily a composer, who has been hailed in our country as a pioneer of modern contemporary music, a wonder of originality, a maelstrom of inspiration – and all this presented, *inter alia*, as a model for contemporary Greek composers.⁶¹

The increased exposure of Italian music in Athens, particularly after 1926, was by no means coincidental. By the time Skalkottas arrived in Athens, the music of the founding members of the Corporation of New Music, Casella and Malipiero, was promoted by Fascist Italy in Athens, and it succeeded in attracting the interest of Greek composers and critics alike.⁶² Within the context of common geopolitical interests the 1928 Greek-Italian Treaty of

⁵⁹ Kalomiris [40].

⁶⁰ Guido M. Gatti and Abram Loft, 'In Memory of Alfredo Casella (1883-1947)', *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 33/ 3 (July, 1947), pp. 405-408 (p. 405).

⁶¹ Skalkottas [22], p.125.

⁶² It was during these concerts that Mitropoulos and Kalomiris acquainted Malipiero and Casella with whom Kalomiris's daughter Krinio studied the piano for a short period in 1936.

Friendship signed by Mussolini and Venizelos, stressing the need for closer cultural collaboration, soon bore fruit in the arts. As a result, Italian music, ranging from the popular operas of Puccini and Mascagni to contemporary works by Casella and Malipiero, was widely performed in Athens until the night of 26 October 1940, when the war ultimatum from the Italian ambassador in Athens was delivered to the Greek government and brought this short period of Italian cultural propaganda to an abrupt end.

Modernism at home

Before his final break with Benakis in 1932, Skalkottas had expressed through their correspondence his thoughts on the relationship between folk song and Greek art music, writing to his benefactor as follows:

[...] I don't agree with your ideas about Greek music Manoli. A Greek composer can write Greek music without using Greek folk song, just as a Greek can write German, French or Italian music, in spite of having Greek themes and Greek melodies. So when you dream of Greek music based on our villages, our mountains and our islands, leave Strauss, Wagner, and Bruckner behind you [...] they had as their basis the villages, the mountains and the folk songs of Germany and Austria [...] and I don't think our villages, our mountains or our islands resemble [theirs].⁶³

With this statement, an essentially programmatic position for the future of Greek music, Skalkottas, like Mitropoulos, openly challenged the positions expressed in the Kalomiris manifesto of 1908, which had insisted on Greek folk song as the only safe criterion to define the Greekness of a musical work. The quest for Greekness in arts and letters was particularly intensified in the decade following the Asia Minor Disaster, and the persistence of this quest made a critical interrogation of the past an absolute necessity. This need for cultural reorientation forced the Greek literati to search for Greek elements that had previously been ignored or overlooked, elements in which the essence of Greekness might be found.

⁶³ Letter from Skalkottas to Benakis dated Berlin, 27.02.1932. Thornley [27], p. 202.

Skalkottas's ideas about Greekness and especially his references to Greek landscape can best be understood in the context of the School of Geopolitics that developed in the 1930s in the German-speaking world, and that was of immense appeal to the troubled Greek literati and artists at the time.⁶⁴ The modernist movement in poetry, the so-called 'Generation of the thirties', included modernist painters such as Ghikas and Yiannis Tsarouhis and authors such as Pericles Giannopoulos and Georgios Theotokas, who among many others were influenced by this geopolitical movement. In the thirties the progressive Greek intelligentsia were increasingly preoccupied both with a 'return to the roots' movement and with contemporary European modernisms, which they sought to use as a kind of 'control' in assessing their own modernist culture. Skalkottas's statement about Greek music in fact echoes George Theotokas:⁶⁵

When will we surrender to our blind instincts, to the clouded mysticism and the twisted modes of thought of the foreign people who had never been exposed to the Greek light? We are wasting our time. [...] Their teachings cannot grow in our soil nor can they do us any good. Only monstrous works are born from such incompatible combinations.⁶⁶

The Greek sun, the mountains, the dry soil, the Greek light, the Aegean Sea and the sandy shores became the elements of nature that the Greek modernists used in the renewal of the literary and visual arts. The modernists of the thirties used these elements as points of reference and managed to turn them into appealing symbols of Greekness. This particular use of geopolitical elements is what distinguished Greek literary modernism, which worshipped

⁶⁴ Even in his earlier correspondence Skalkottas made references to the beauty of Greek nature. This was also reflected in the titles of some of his later works such as, *The Sea* (1948-49); *Island Images* (1943); *The Land and the Sea of Greece* (1948). The term 'geopolitics' was introduced by Rudolf Kjellén known for his influential book, *Der Staat als Lebensform* (1916), [The State as a Living Form].

⁶⁵ For a critical approach to this Greek modernist movement in literature see Dimitis Tziovas, *Oι Μεταμορφώσεις των Εθνισμού και το Ιδεολόγημα της Ελληνικότητας στο Μεσοπόλεμο* (Athens: Odysseas, 2006).

⁶⁶ Georgios Theotokas, *Αναζητώντας τη Διαύγεια: Δοκίμια για τη Νεότερη Ελληνική και Ευρωπαϊκή Λογοτεχνία* (Athens: Estia, 2005), p. 30.

nature in an almost pagan way, from corresponding European modernisms, which referred to and were mainly nourished by the urban and industrial metropolitan cities of Europe.⁶⁷

Aside from the pervasiveness of the geopolitical movement in the renewal of Greek arts and letters, one of the factors that prompted Skalkottas, particularly after his 1930 début in Athens, to turn his attention to tonal idioms and to the folk music of his country was the accusation by his critics that he was incapable of writing tonal music and had ‘resort[ed] to modernism to cover up his lack of talent’, an argument repeated made by Sophia Spanoudi in particular.⁶⁸ Skalkottas’s tonal work, the *Peloponnesian Dance* for string Orchestra, the first of the 36 Greek Dances, whose rough pencil score was attached to a letter he sent to his patron in 1932 and can still be viewed in a folder in Benakis Museum, might be understood as a twofold gesture.⁶⁹ On one hand, it functioned as proof to Benakis that after his provocative *Concerto for Winds* he had returned to the ‘correct’ path of tonal music, but it was also – Skalkottas said as much – a tangible piece of evidence to ‘make some people shut their mouths, the ones that make out I am not capable of writing tonal music’.⁷⁰

Yet to understand Skalkottas’s initial motivation for writing the *Greek Dances* as a means of repairing the damage caused by the 1930 performance of his *Concerto for Winds* is not to exclude other personal or professional factors that stimulated his interest in folk culture and his occasional return to the accepted path of tonal music.⁷¹ The widespread acknowledgement

⁶⁷ Also see: Dimitris Tziovas, *O Μύθος της Γενιάς του Τριάντα, Νεοτερικότητα, Ελληνικότητα και Πολιτισμική Ιδεολογία* (Athens: Polis, 2011), and Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists* (London: Verso, 2007).

⁶⁸ Spanoudi [13].

⁶⁹ It was during the same year that Skalkottas asked his benefactor to send him a modern history of Greece. Letter from Skalkottas to Benakis dated Berlin, 27.02.1932. Thornley [27], pp. 200-201.

⁷⁰ Letter from Skalkottas to Benakis dated Berlin, 23.03.1932. *Ibid.*, p. 206.

⁷¹ In December 1931 Skalkottas accompanied at the piano the soprano Margarita Perra and the tenor Constantinos Mylonas in a performance of his transcriptions of Greek folk songs for a radio programme in Berlin entitled *Griechische Stunde*. It was presented by Curt Sachs and broadcast on 15.12.1931. This occasion seemed also to have instigated Skalkottas’s interest to Greek folk song.

of the genuinely Greek character of his *Greek Dances*, and the warm applause wherever they were performed, encouraged Skalkottas to compile an impressive collection of 36 *Greek Dances*, including a large number of transcriptions for various ensembles or for piano.⁷² An indicative example of their powerful public appeal is that on the day that Fascist Germany declared war on Greece (6 April 1941), the scheduled performance of Beethoven's Symphony No 4 by the Symphony Orchestra of the Athens Conservatory was immediately replaced by three *Greek Dances* by the very composer whom the critics had earlier described as 'a slave of foreign fashions' and 'unpatriotic'.⁷³

Despite their success, the Greek Dances were not enough to repair the damaged image of Skalkottas caused by his 1930 concert. It was not only the impact of the alien musical language of the *Concerto for Winds*, with its harsh and incomprehensible dissonance, that annoyed Kalomiris, but also the absence of any trace of national character. Kalomiris wondered why such a talented composer had ignored the 'most diverse, the most glorious and ancestral artistic material of his home country'.⁷⁴ In his review, Kalomiris confessed himself willing to come to terms with any kind of 'hyper-modernist' music, but he made it clear that he was utterly against any modernist expression that overlooked Greece's rich national musical heritage: 'the Ancient world, the Byzantine past, and folk music'.⁷⁵ To strengthen his argument, he compared Skalkottas's *Concerto for Winds* with *Balkanofonija* (1927), a

⁷² Even Kalomiris included four Greek Dances by Skalkottas in a concert in Germany as part of the pre-war cultural exchanges.

⁷³ The success of this concert was immense. As the composer George Kazassoglou (1908-1984), who was present, recalled: 'In the last bar of the *Greek Dance* a frenetic applause broke out followed by endless standing ovations. Such expressions were justified by the preferences and the importance that the Greek audience at the time gave to the works of Greek composers. The reference to his [Skalkottas's] *Greek Dances* as masterpieces has been in use more than for any other Greek or foreign work'. 'Νίκος Σκαλκώτας: ο Άνθρωπος, και ο Δημιουργός Καλλιτέχνης', *Αρχείο Ευβοϊκών Μελετών*, Vol. KB (Athens: 1978-79), pp. 7-19.

⁷⁴ Manolis Kalomiris, *Eθνος* (24.11.1930).

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

symphonic work by the Yugoslav composer Josip Slavenski, which was also performed in Athens in October 1930 during the First Balkan Conference, arguing that⁷⁶

The work of [Slavenski] is technically hypermodern. In its harmonic construction it may even be more modern than the *Concerto [for Winds]* of Mr Skalkottas. Nevertheless, what a powerful inspiration, what freshness and character this work [exhibits]. We may not agree on all aspects of its technique, but we understood it once and for all.⁷⁷

Before assuming his position as a music critic for the newspaper *Ethnos*, and four years prior to Skalkottas's début, Kalomiris had explicitly defined the role that he would assume through his music reviews: 'I decided to guide public opinion in relation to our musical matters'.⁷⁸ With a substantial compositional output, several historical performances, many years of service in key administrative posts in the public sector and in the music schools he founded, and by virtue of Venizelos's patronage, Kalomiris had succeeded, despite strong opposition from his rivals, in becoming the dominant, indeed the invincible, figure in all matters to do with Greek art-music.

As the interwar period, beginning with the Asia Minor Disaster and the failure of the Great Idea, was for Greece a period of re-orientation and reconstruction, it was natural that both the intelligentsia and the politicians would find themselves in some confusion and disagreement

⁷⁶ The concert of Balkan composers in Athens to which Kalomiris refers in his review (24.11.1930) aimed to promote the cultural integration of the Balkan countries, which were to form a geopolitical Balkan Federation 'aiming at a total liberation from all Western influence'. For this, a Balkan Conference from 1930 to 1933 was held annually. 'The First Balkan Conference took place in Athens on 5-12 October 1930. Representatives of Bulgarian, Greek, Romanian, Turkish, and Yugoslav governments met at the invitation of the Greek Prime Minister, Eleutherios Venizelos in an effort to move towards a Balkan Federation'. See Katy Romanou, 'The Pendulum Case: Musicians' Dilemmas in "Marginal" Societies', in Dejan Despić and Melita Milin (eds.), *Spaces of Modernism: Ljubica Marić in Context*, 7 (Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Sciences and the Arts, 2010), pp. 189-196 (p. 191).

⁷⁷ Kalomiris [74].

⁷⁸ Manolis Kalomiris, *Εθνος* (22.02.1926). In assuming the leadership of Greek musical culture, Kalomiris adopted what Marcos Tsetsos has called the 'private-management of the national culture'. *Εθνικισμός και Λαϊκισμός στην Νεοελληνική Μουσική: Πολιτικές Όψεις μιας Πολιτισμικής Απόκλισης* (Athens: Sakis Karagiorgas Foundation, 2011).

as to the appropriate ideological foundations for rebuilding Greek culture. Kalomiris remained a visionary Romantic (though he was not always so in purely musical terms), and he continued ostensibly to nourish through his music and writings the idealism associated with the Great Idea. He therefore saw Skalkottas as a danger, a ‘barbarian’, a ‘bearer of foreign fashions’ who would potentially alienate Greek audiences from their indigenous traditions and cultural roots, and would at the same time distract Greek composers in their quest for a unique musical identity to suit the (imagined) nation.

Reaching the masses

Two interesting developments flowed from the disastrous reception of Skalkottas’s *Concerto for Winds*. Firstly, upon his return to Greece in 1933 he continued to compose major serial and atonal works. In other words, the traumatic experience of those earlier reviews did not alter the course of his modernist odyssey. But his modernist adventure now remained a largely private matter, and it was only with reluctance and circumspection that he presented or spoke about these works. Although it is reported that he showed, or gave, scores to close friends or colleagues, his modernism thrived for the most part in a secure and private domain. In this safe environment the extreme complexity of his orchestral scores, with their transcendental difficulties (including the use of notes outside the range of the instruments), could be realised at will.

The second important development was that Skalkottas gradually turned to an alternative style with which he chose to present himself to the public. Not only was his increasing preoccupation with tonal works in various genres and styles an indication of his concern for an alternative to Schoenbergian modernism; there are several statements in his writings that indicate his concern to communicate with larger audiences through a more accessible

language, particularly during the time of the German occupation of Greece and the politically turbulent years that followed World War II.

However, Skalkottas's large corpus of tonal works was given scant justice by the academic establishment after his death. Scholars have traditionally shown much less interest in these works than in his serial or atonal music.⁷⁹ Although they have not been ignored, there has been no general consensus as to the motivation for this striking swerve from serialism and atonality to more accessible tonal or modal styles. We may consider three very different perspectives on this issue: by Kalomiris, by the musicologist John G. Papaioannou, and by Costis Demertzis. The positions of Kalomiris and Papaioannou are particularly indicative of their attempt to accommodate their personal views and ambitions, which greatly influenced the way they 'placed' Skalkottas in the music history of contemporary Greece. Kalomiris was of the view that Skalkottas's late preoccupation with tonal works based on folk or popular musical sources should be seen as a return to the correct and acceptable path, and as an abandonment of his earlier modernist endeavours. At Skalkottas's memorial concert, he alleged that:

As we lament today the tragic loss of Skalkottas, this lament becomes even louder because cruel fate, that is so heavy on Greek Art, took him from us so early, so unexpectedly. At precisely the time when, finding himself, he discarded the mantle of German hyper-modernist music to transmute into sounds the soul and the deeper qualities of Eternal Greece that gave him the wings to fly over untrodden mountaintops.⁸⁰

In contrast, John G. Papaioannou, the architect and musicologist who engineered the posthumous discovery of Skalkottas, and who devoted his entire life and much of his private income to the rehabilitation of the composer as a means of associating Greece with the modernism of the Second Viennese School, asserted that:

⁷⁹ See Alsmeier (2001); Mantzourani (1999 & 2011); Papaioannou (1997); Zervos (2001) and Hadjinikos (2006).

⁸⁰ Manolis Kalomiris, *Eθνος* (04.04.1950).

From 1946 to 1948-49, Skalkottas composed works such as the *Concertino for Piano*, which is very naïve, and he also deliberately wrote a Classical Symphony, a *Sinfonietta* and other large works in a similarly naïve, ‘à la Poulenc’ manner. Such things Skalkottas composed during his breaks in order to have *fun*.⁸¹ [...] In my view Skalkottas’s [true] language lies in the late, great dodecaphonic works. Only here is Skalkottas great: capable of standing alongside the greatest composers of our century.⁸²

Kalomiris’s understanding of Skalkottas’s late tonal works as a ‘return to the correct path’ and Papaioannou’s reading of them as ‘leisure activities’ indicate just how far these works have been taken out of the social and political context in which they were composed. A contemporary scholar, Costis Demertzis has since tried to understand their significance by taking into account the conditions that Skalkottas faced upon returning to his homeland, and in doing so he has raised a number of apt questions:

How does [Skalkottas’s] *Classical Symphony*, written in 1946-47 during the civil war, reflect the events of this war? What is the meaning of the majestic trumpet calls at the beginning, and what is the meaning of the joyful march at the end? And about the *Sinfonietta*, written in 1948: What is the meaning of the elegiac trumpet opening that is followed by an almost funereal chorale which leads to a grand, triumphal finale?⁸³

Comparing these aforementioned works to a handwritten essay entitled ‘Musical Influences’, Demertzis concluded that Skalkottas must have given much thought to ‘the political content of his works’ during the German occupation:

In approximately 1938, we find elements that make us think that the model followed by Skalkottas is the Soviet one, perhaps as expressed by Prokofiev.⁸⁴

⁸¹ John G. Papaioannou, ‘Ελληνικότητα στη Σύγχρονη Δημιουργία: Ο Νίκος Σκαλκώτας και το Δημοτικό Τραγούδι’, in *Παραδοσιακή και Έντεχνη Μουσική*, Vol. 44 (Thessaloniki: Aristotelian University, 1984), p. 134.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p.145.

⁸³ Costis Demertzis, *Νίκος Σκαλκώτας: Από τη θεωρητική Διατύπωση στη Μουσική Παραγωγή ενός Ιδεατού Κόσμου. Τα Κείμενα Σειράς Εκπομπών για το Τρίτο Πρόγραμμα. Οι 55 Πρώτες Εκπομπές* (Chalkis, 1977- 1988). p. 49.

⁸⁴ Costis Demertzis, *To Εθνικό Στοιχείο στο Έργο του Σκαλκώτα* (Athens: Society of Euboean Studies, 1998), p. 3.

The as yet unpublished programme notes compiled by Skalkottas during the German occupation in 1941, when six of his *Greek Dances* were performed with the Symphony Orchestra of the Athens Conservatory, also reaffirm his concerns about communicating with a wider audience. There, he makes a clear distinction between ‘great’ musical works and those intended to be broadly accessible:

My humble effort at the musical treatment [of the Greek Dances] compared to the expectations [raised] by [other] great musical works is directed mainly at the soul of a broader audience, which will comprehend them effortlessly at first hearing and will appreciate their entire musical development just like the breeze of every popular [λαϊκού] tune and Greek rhythm.⁸⁵

Another indication of Skalkottas’s desire to communicate his ideas to a mainstream audience is his short contribution to a widely-read progressive journal *Neohellenic Letters*, published from 1935 until 1941 and containing articles by the most progressive of the mainly leftist younger generation of writers, critics and journalists at the time. Skalkottas managed to publish only one of a substantial number of articles on different topics which were probably intended for this journal. Those articles that have survived in manuscript present us with a considerable complexity of syntax and vocabulary, and raise a large number of social, cultural and stylistic issues. An interesting excerpt from one of these unpublished articles, ‘The Theory and Practice of Music’, reflects the impact of World War II, and related political concerns, on the musical works of Greek composers.⁸⁶ Skalkottas writes there that,

[The formation] of a higher musical canon [possibly meaning musical works with a higher value] could refer to those superior ideological [artistic] phases that also include political tendencies. This canon embraces musical creativity not as absolute and neutral, but as a revolutionary harbinger of

⁸⁵ Nikos Skalkottas, programme notes of the 12.01.1941 concert of the State Athens Symphony Orchestra.

⁸⁶ Even Mitropoulos, who had left Greece in 1940, wrote to Katy Katsoyiannis: ‘How can one remain neutral, how can one not hate Bach and even Beethoven, who represent the organised thought of the disastrous German race? The crocodilian sentimentalism of Strauss and the rest of the romantics, their Machiavellian mentality is everywhere, and it even reaches Art!’ As quoted in Fivos Annoyanakis, ‘Καλομοίρης ο Δημοτικιστής’, *Θέατρο* (January-June 1978), pp. 53-57 (p. 53).

new trends, as in an oratorio for instance, or a musical narration of political events. Lately musical works of this kind have come to light by [previously] unknown composers.⁸⁷

Examined alongside an autobiographical excerpt from his contemporary, the composer and active member of the Greek Communist Party, Alekos Xenos (1912-1995), it is apparent that this undated article by Skalkottas refers to the period of German occupation and it provides further evidence of Skalkottas's concerns about both the war and a socialist ideology. Xenos, one of the best known of the militant, communist composers and an active member of the resistance movement, wrote in his memoirs that:

From the conversations I had originally with Lavragas, and later with Kalomiris, Varvoglis, Mitropoulos and Skalkottas, regarding the problems of musical art, I formed the impression that in our current situation we had to communicate with the people and therefore we needed an art that was national in form and progressive and socialist in content. Although I admired the masterpieces of European art, something inside me was preventing me from utilising their forms and style. They were foreign to my personality and I was searching inwardly for new forms to express my emotions that stemmed from a new reality.⁸⁸

This does not mean that all of Xenos's political views were shared by the other composers he mentions here. But a contextual reading can reveal the ways in which the phrase 'national in form and progressive and socialist in content' might be interpreted. For instance, music that in the Soviet Union was written under the rubric 'national in form, socialist in content' had an entirely different function, as it was part of a more systematised cultural policy directed from Moscow. As Marina Frolova-Walker informs us, Stalin's slogan had a transitional purpose (a temporary ideal, as she argues). It was a means of smoothing over the cultural diversity of the massive Soviet federation in order for its national republics to eventually 'merge into a single mighty river of international Soviet culture, [that would be] socialist in both form and content'.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ As quoted in Demertzis [83], p. 51.

⁸⁸ Evangelos Maheras, *H Τέχνη της Αντίστασης* (Athens: Proskinio, 2008), p. 175.

⁸⁹ Marina Frolova-Walker, 'National in Form, Socialist in Content': Musical Nation-Building in the Soviet Republics', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 51/2 (Summer, 1998), pp. 31-371 (p. 334).

In Greece, on the other hand, ‘national in form, and progressive and socialist in content’, as Xenos re-articulated Stalin’s motto, needs to be viewed – especially at this particular moment – as a prompt to use a renewed and accessible musical language to communicate to Greek audiences the message of necessary resistance to the ‘new reality’ of the German occupation. And whether Xenos’s colleagues shared his political views or not, it was this patriotic message that all of them must have agreed on. The need for direct communication was by far the *sine qua non* condition of the moment. In other words, Greek music needed to be placed at the service of a liberation movement, and the testimony of Xenos makes it clear that there was no disagreement on that.

Whether Skalkottas’s preoccupation with accessible tonal music was stimulated by Xenos’s political views and the doctrine of socialist realism or whether it was simply driven by his need to be accepted and to communicate to a broader public in general cannot be determined with certainty. But it is sure that he was aware that folk music could be an easy prey of political appropriation and could result in the worst kind of institutionalised art. As he wrote in his only published article in *Neohellenic Letters*:

The folk songs of the Klephths (the love songs, the separation songs, the slavery songs etc.), drawn from every part of Greece, must not.... *fall to the discretion of a big commercial institution that has been instituted for propaganda purposes*. In that case [the folk songs] will be downgraded to a lower and non-spiritual level; they will be mere paraphrases [meaning arrangements].⁹⁰

Apart from the use of folk song for propaganda purposes, as mentioned by Skalkottas in this article, we see after World War II and during the civil war the urban genre of rebetiko becoming, as Stathis Gauntlett puts it, a ‘referential point in culture, a political and moral issue’.⁹¹ Like other genres of popular music that mainly grew around dingy urban harbours, such as fado or tango, widely associated with poverty and loose morality, rebetika were also

⁹⁰ Nikos Skalkottas, ‘Μουσική: Το Δημοτικό Τραγούδι’, *Νεοελληνικά Γράμματα* (23.07.1938), p. 8.

⁹¹ Stathis Gauntlett, *Ρεμπέτικο Τραγούδι. Συμβολή στην Επιστημονική του Προσέγγιση*, trans. Costas Vlisis (Athens: Eikostosprotos, 2001), p. 67.

originally stigmatised as expressions of the socially marginalised group of Asia Minor refugees, and carried with them associations of hashish use, prostitution and prison.⁹²

Despite the prevailing romanticised view of the lonely and marginalised artist preoccupied with his own version of serialism and untouched by the political turmoil of the times, Skalkottas, on his return to Greece and particularly during the German occupation, was far more concerned with the rapidly changing socio-political and cultural environment than his earlier biographers and researchers have to this date allowed. It is possible to argue that his brief turn to rebetiko towards the end of his life was emblematic of this concern. Just as he kept his rejected modernist output in his private domain, so he ‘concealed’ a rebetiko song, a socially denigrated genre of popular music, in the second movement of his serial Concerto for two violins (1944/45).

In assessing Skalkottas’s works, Papaioannou drew no distinction between the use of folk song and this rebetiko song, as he either failed, or chose not, to recognise the political, social and cultural colouring that the latter genre had acquired. On the contrary, Demertzis has aptly described the use of rebetiko as an important departure for Skalkottas, a deliberate turn from Greek folk song to the disreputable urban genre. Demertzis writes:

The folk [element] is transformed to the popular by the end of 1944 with the liberation of Greece from the Germans. At the time, Skalkottas writes a Concerto for two violins and uses in the second movement a song of Tsitsanis. From this point Skalkottas no longer makes any references to folk song, and this is reaffirmed with *The Sea*, a popular ballet [as the composer has noted in the score].⁹³

In profound ways this reorientation of Skalkottas towards popular urban music foreshadows a broader cultural change that took place soon after his death in 1949, and it reflects the emphasis placed by the entire Greek intelligentsia on the contemporary urban

⁹² See Gail Holst-Warhaft, *Road to Rembetika: Music of a Greek Sub-culture* (Athens: Denise Harvey, 1994) and ‘Rebetika: the Double-descended deep Songs of Greece’, in William Washabaugh (ed.), *The Passion of Music and Dance: Body, Gender and Sexuality* (Oxford: Berg, 1998), pp. 113-115.

⁹³ Demertzis [84], p. 3.

culture of the predominantly working classes. In the years that followed Skalkottas's unexpected death, Manos Hadjidakis and Mikis Theodorakis not only legitimised the use of urban popular music by academically trained composers, but introduced an alternative to 'imported' European modernist trends, the Greek 'popular art-song' movement.

Skalkottas, contrary to the image of an aloof composer he allowed others to form, was highly sensitive to the adaptability of his music in an environment in which political and social conflicts were bitter, sharp and direct. The following excerpt from one of his articles, despite its cumbersome syntax, is indicative of this:

The symphonic concerts that aim at a sustainable and evolving education for the people, need of course to correspond to a developing and living context⁹⁴

Little could Skalkottas have known that after he was granted leave of absence from Schonberg in the winter of 1930 his journey to Athens would inaugurate such a long and turbulent odyssey. He could never have imagined the kind of criticism he would face from his compatriots; nor could he have expected that the work with which he hoped to compliment Benakis would bring him such catastrophic failure. Above all he could have had no inkling that the modernist route that Stravinsky, and particularly Schoenberg, had inspired in him would be forced into the shadows of a private, interior world.

After his disastrous début, and under the dramatic conditions of World War II and its political aftermath, Skalkottas sensed the need to communicate with a wider audience and to (re)gain their support. Within these new socio-political contexts he simultaneously explored more 'popular' and 'accessible' symphonic genres, radically opposed stylistically, aesthetically and technically to those he was cultivating in private.

The specific political and cultural parameters of the interwar years greatly affected the reception of modernism in Greece, as Skalkottas accurately noted in his public response in

⁹⁴ Nikos Skalkottas, 'Η Δύναμις των Συμφωνικών Συναυλιών' (unpublished and undated article).

1930. They effectively eclipsed any possibility of performing works along the lines of his *Concerto for Winds*. On one hand, the opprobrium he experienced after his return to his home country in 1933 confined his modernist endeavours to a private sphere, while on the other hand, the equally repressive German occupation of Greece and the conditions of the post-World War II era provided an unparalleled opportunity for Skalkottas to develop his communicative skills with a wider audience and to articulate a renewed musical Greek identity.

Part II

The European Idea

For Greece, Europe is a familiar place. Western European civilisation is the synthesis of the Greek spirit, the spirit that contributed to fundamental concepts of liberty, truth and beauty [...] And it is natural and obvious that Greece wants and deserves to join its forces in the common effort of the European peoples.¹

Constantinos Karamanlis (1978)

What we think of as European civilisation can first be found in the embryo of Mycenaean culture. We see in the extraordinary civilisation of the Mycenaeans, together with that of the Minoans (to which they were indebted), the first glimmerings of a superior European culture.²

Iannis Xenakis (1978)

¹ Free adaptation from Marieta Minotos, ‘The Content of the Konstantinos G. Karamanlis Archive: its European Dimension’, *Revista General de Información y Documentación*, Vol. 18 (2008), pp. 239-256 (p. 249).

² Free translation from the programme notes of Xenakis’s *Mycenae Polytope* (Athens, 1978), p. 10.

Chapter 3. Working in Tandem

1962. A New Point of Departure: A Musical Competition in Athens

Let your King know that the fine edifice
has collapsed and that Apollo has
neither a temple nor prophesying bay
leaves anymore and that the babbling
water from the wellspring has dried.¹

A new generation of modernists

On the afternoon of 16 December 1962, a concert featuring selected modernist works by Yannis Ioannidis (1930-), George Leotsakos (1935-), Nikos Mamangakis (1929-2013), Iannis Xenakis (1922-2001), Theodore Antoniou (1935-), Stephanos Gazouleas (1931-), George Tsouyopoulos (1930-) and Anestis Logothetis (1921-1994) took place at the ‘Kentrikon’ theatre, the same venue in which Mitropoulos had conducted *L'Histoire du Soldat* 36 years earlier. This concert was the final round of the ‘Musical Competition of the Athens Technological Institute (ATI) and the Manos Hadjidakis Award’ (hereafter the 1962 Competition), aimed exclusively at composers of Greek origin following ‘progressive trends and contemporary idioms’.² The jury comprised the musicologists Daryl Dayton, Fivos Anoyannakis (1915-2003) and John G. Papaioannou (1915-2000), the composers Manos Hadjidakis (1924-1994), Jani Christou (1926-1970) and Günther Becker (1924-2007), and the

¹ These were supposedly the last words of the oracle that were delivered to the last pagan Roman Emperor Flavius Claudius Julianus (331/32-363), known as ‘Julian the Apostate’ at the temple of Apollo at Delphi in the mid-fourth century AD. The oracle announces its own death and in effect the end of the ancient world and the beginning of the Christian era. A noticeable echo of this oracle can be found in the final sentence of Kalomiris’s memoires, ‘the babbling water from the wellspring has dried. After all, *pourquoi et pour qui?*’ With this symbolic gesture Kalomiris announced not only his physical death but more importantly the futility of the Greek National School of Music. Manolis Kalomiris, *H Ζωή μου και η Τέχνη μου* (Athens: Nefeli, 1988), p. 172.

² ATI, ‘Ανακοίνωση’ (06.04.1962). The ‘Manos Hadjidakis Award’ was for \$1,000 or 30,000 drachmas.

pianist George Hadjinikos (1923-).³ The American composer Lukas Foss was also invited to Athens to chair the event, and to conduct the instrumental ensemble that was formed especially for the occasion.

Of the 26 works that were submitted to the primary jury, ten were finally selected and performed in front of a remarkably keen and vocal audience.⁴ One of the works that attracted the attention of the audience was Theodore Antoniou's *Concertino* for piano, strings and percussion (1962), constructed as a traditional sonata-form design. Antoniou applied in this work a 'spiral twelve-tone technique' to control the horizontal dimension, while the properties of the harmonic series were used for the construction of vertical sonorities.⁵ An unplanned special award was given to the *Concertino*, and this apparently annoyed some members of the audience, who protested verbally against the decision. Apart from this episode however, the audience showed every sign of appreciation. As John G. Papaioannou noted after the concert,

[...] it must be said that the favourable acceptance by the audience showed how positive the whole experience [of the 1962 Competition] has been in assisting the Greek public to become aware of contemporary trends, and of the problems and achievements of new Greek composers.⁶

Neither Yannis Ioannidis's atonal work, *Duo* for violin and piano (1962), nor Stephanos Gazouleas's *Six Lyric Pieces* for flute and piano (1962), a sequence of short twelve-tone compositions registering the influence of Anton Webern, received an award.⁷ But Nikos Mamangakis's *Monologue* for cello (1962), which avoided any established compositional techniques, received a second unplanned award. In this work, Mamangakis explored various

³ John G. Papaioannou's name will be quoted in full in order to avoid confusion with the composer Yannis Papaioannou (1910-1989), whose first name and surname are identical in Greek.

⁴ The primary jury consisted of Manos Hadjidakis, Jani Christou and (as Chair) John G. Papaioannou.

⁵ See programme notes of the 1962 Competition attached as Appendix 1 (1962), pp. 32-50 (p. 42).

⁶ ATI, 'Ανακοίνωση' (14.01.1963).

⁷ '[Galouzeas's] *Six Lyric Pieces* [...] are congenial imitations of Webern's poetic miniatures'. See Nicolas Slonimsky, 'New Music in Greece', *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 51/1 (January, 1965), pp. 225-235 (p. 231).

ways of producing unusual cello timbres, and used a mathematical system entirely of his own invention to determine its pitch organisation. As he remarked, *Monologue* represented an attempt to liberate himself from the weight of the past and to give free expression to his creativity:

The form of this work is, in its entirety, free from traditional patterns or from established new techniques. [...] I believe that the *Monologue* for cello does not belong to any of the so-called new trends or new styles; not because I underestimate them, but because being a follower of a known style of school (which might ensure complacency or safety) is something I find too dogmatic, and I am trying to avoid it at any cost.⁸

The jury seemed to have favoured works that exhibited radical innovation in all aspects of musical composition, whether through the employment of novel methods of pitch organisation, unusual timbres, unconventional performance practices or inventive music notational systems.⁹ Hence their unanimous decision to award the ‘Manos Hadjidakis’ prize jointly to Iannis Xenakis and Anestis Logothetis for their respective works *Morsima-Amorsima* and *Culmination*, both composed in 1962. At the time these two compositions not only appeared to open horizons to new musical landscapes; they also functioned as paradigmatic challenges to the long-established western art music tradition. While *Morsima-Amorsima* was constructed with the help of a probabilistic algorithm that Xenakis had devised for the 7090 IBM computer, and is an indicative example of the early pioneering efforts of composers to harness computers as tools in compositional decision-making, Logothetis’s work *Culmination* challenged tradition by proposing a highly flexible pictorial or graphic notational system.¹⁰ His graphic scores, often described as forms of visual art and with clear parallels in architecture, gave shape to a three-dimensional space. Movement in

⁸ Appendix 1 (1962), p. 40.

⁹ The works of the finalist composers are presented as Appendix 2 (1962), p. 51.

¹⁰ Regarding the early uses of computers as composition tools see Charles Ames, ‘Automated Composition in Retrospect: 1956-1986’, *Leonardo*, Vol. 20/2 (1987), pp. 169-185.

space (in various directions) was treated as equivalent to movement in time, replacing the left to right uni-directional reading of scores written in conventional notation.¹¹

The generation of Greek composers born in or around the 1930s may have varied in the extent of their innovative, experimental reach, but they had in common a determination to overthrow the ‘old regime’ of the Greek National School. The impending collapse of their ‘Palace’ – the metaphor had been in frequent use since 1908 – was actually prophesised by their ageing leader Manolis Kalomiris, whose death two weeks after the announcement of the 1962 Competition reinforced the sense of a caesura, of the end of an era.

Manos Hadjidakis and John G. Papaioannou envisaged the 1962 Competition as a new point of departure, and for them the references to Greek folk music in some of the compositions originally submitted for review must have evoked associations with the outdated Greek National School. This may explain why certain notable works making direct reference to Greek folk music – including Xenakis’s *Zyia* (1952) and *Kathisto* (1953) – were disqualified after the first round. Evocations of folk music might also have been the reason for the rejection of the three works submitted by the gifted Dimitri Dragatakis (1914-2001).

The statement by Hadjidakis that ‘in a few years we should [be able to] wash off both the dust of European civilisation and of our immortal Romiossini’ highlights the two barriers seen as halting the musical progress of Greek art music.¹² And in a similar tone, John G. Papaioannou suggested that twentieth-century music needed forcefully to oppose the three hundred-year old musical tradition of Europe. ‘The combative attitude of music in our century’, he wrote

¹¹ See Maria Baveli and Anastasia Georgaki, ‘Towards a De-codification of the Graphical Scores of Anestis Logothetis (1921-1994): The Graphical Space of *Oddysey* (1963)’, in *Proceedings of the Conference: ‘Sound and Music Computing’* (Berlin, 2008). <http://www.smc-conference.org> (accessed on 05.04.2012).

¹² Vicky Galatou (ed.), *Mάνος Χατζιδάκης: Ψηφίδες Μνήμης* (Athens: Orchestra of Colours – Greek Ministry of Culture, 2004), p. 40.

does not allow compromises. Its enemy, late Romantic music – and by extension even all modern music from 1600 to 1900 that was felt to have lasted much too long – is now powerless. [...] It is therefore essential that contemporary music preserves this fighting spirit for some time to come.¹³

In his view it was ‘the degree of innovation’ – a concept which he did not further elucidate but which he often exhibited himself as a performer of improvisatory works – that endowed interest and originality to new music.¹⁴ ‘Nanakos’, as the architect and close friend Panayiotis Psomopoulos called him, ‘was interested in the most bizarre and provocative music and gave the most extreme performances; pulling with his fingers or sweeping the strings of the piano with various objects in order to produce the most unusual sounds’.¹⁵

Together with Hadjidakis, John G. Papaioannou had realised that ‘a zero hour’ – a new starting point in Greek art music – needed to be signposted. The unexpected solution came with Hadjidakis’s 1961 Oscar Academy Award for music, even if this also brought Hadjidakis some of ‘the worst days of his life’.¹⁶ As he never really came to terms with his success as a composer of more popular commercial music, Hadjidakis sought salvation or possibly expiation by using the profits from his popular song composition to fund the 1962 Competition. Assigned a central position in what is customarily termed the ‘art-song movement’, he probably realised his unsuitability as a composer of avant-garde music. Yet driven by his belief in the potential of the younger generation of Greek composers, he undertook the mentorship and patronage of that music. ‘For the first time’, Hadjidakis asserted, ‘our serious music can put forward names that can be ranked among the top ones in the European musical scene’.¹⁷ This was a position he shared with John G. Papaioannou and

¹³ John G. Papaioannou, *Towards a Definition of Contemporary Music: A Historic [sic] Approach* (Athens: ISCM Monograph Series, 1980), p. 21.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹⁵ Interview with Panayiotis Psomopoulos on 29.09.2011.

¹⁶ Hadjidakis had been awarded the 1961 Oscar for his music for the film *Never on Sunday* directed by Julius Dassin. Galatou [12], p. 23.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

it was also reiterated in the public announcement, the press release and the programme notes of the 1962 Competition:

The conviction that there are significant creative powers available in Greece, in the field of contemporary music, has been the starting point for the organisation of the 1962 Musical Competition. The Athens Technological Institute, in its activities in the field of art, has already included several manifestations aimed at assisting the promotion of such musical values, and it was already planning to extend them to cover broader areas. In connection with this aim, it met with the active support and generous assistance of the composer Manos Hadjidakis, who made possible the realization of a common objective.¹⁸

The mention of the ‘creative powers available in Greece’ was something of a surprise, since the vast majority of the younger generation of Greek composers taking part in the 1962 Competition were émigrés who, just like the many Greeks who sought employment in the booming industrial cities of post-war industrial West Germany, found new career opportunities abroad. Greek composers, particularly those in West Germany, sought a new fertile ground for contemporary music, or as Amy Beal wrote about American experimentalism, ‘a place to ply their wares with dignity’.¹⁹

At the end of the 1962 Competition all these composers, excluding the exiled Xenakis, accepted their prizes, and with an eye on posterity posed for a photograph.²⁰ This historical competition had brought them centre stage in the musical life of their country, and as we will see they were determined to make the most of what this new political and cultural milieu had to offer them. While Hadjidakis and John G. Papaioannou saw these Greek composers as distinguished representatives of Greek music in European capitals and as agents of new music within Greece, the ATI, an institute with no apparent connection to music, had an indirect but equally supportive role in fostering their music.

¹⁸ John G. Papaioannou, Appendix 1 (1962), p. 35.

¹⁹ Amy C. Beal, ‘A Place to Ply Their Wares with Dignity: American Composer-Performers in West Germany, 1972’, *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 86/2 (Summer, 2002), pp. 329-348.

²⁰ Appendix 3 (1962), p. 52.

The ATI and the champions of new music

The ATI was a highly innovative and prosperous private organisation, research institute and graduate school of design that since its establishment in 1958 in Athens by Constantinos A. Doxiadis (1913-1975) had attracted academic elites of international calibre.²¹ It had launched a new philosophy in urban planning research that examined the relationship between architecture, politics and social needs. Doxiadis had brought the ATI right to the heart of a globally powerful politico-economic network and had developed direct access to the foreign resources of prestigious universities such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University, as well as prosperous international organisations such as the Congress of Cultural Freedom and the Ford Foundation. As one of the largest beneficiaries of these resources, Doxiadis – as head of the ATI – developed modernist planning and design concepts that were subsequently used as ‘vehicles for freedom, peace, and progress’ by more ‘advanced’ western countries.²² Modernist urban planning, according to Doxiadis, needed to facilitate unobstructed communication, as well as the free transport of goods, people and of course ideas and culture. His urban-planning projects ignored stylistic considerations and instead focused on rationality, objectivity, statistical data, numbers, and computer-generated models; but most importantly

²¹ Doxiadis was characterised by his American colleagues as a ‘Master Builder’ (ATI Archives, file:16593). For a comprehensive study on Doxiadis’s life, activities and modernist concepts see: Yotta Kazazi (ed.), *O Κονσταντίνος Δοξιάδης και το Έργο του* (Athens: TEE, 2009).

²² ‘The work of Doxiadis stood at the opposite pole to socialist-realist urban planning and architecture. [...] a completely new system in urban planning, freeing it from formal design and replacing it the organisation of urban areas in ever-expanding grids and systems, eliminating monumental composition and replacing it with schemes for unlimited growth and change. His “Dynapolis” and eventually “Ecumenopolis”, the world-encompassing city, exploded all known scales in urban planning.’ Michelle Provoost, ‘New Towns on the Cold War Frontier. How Modern Urban Planning was Exported as an Instrument in the Battle for the Developing World’, *Eurozine* (28.06.2006). <http://www.eurozine.com/pdf/2006-06-28-provoost-en.pdf> (accessed on 06.04.2012).

[...] ideas of change and growth without boundaries and technology solving every possible problem: from demographic growth to energy shortage, from pollution and economic backwardness to ethnic and social unrest, all made Doxiadis's vision the perfect vehicle for the ideology of US development.²³

I will argue that it is within this technocratic environment and political framework that the new musical languages and other innovative concepts fostered by the 1962 Competition must be understood. It is also important to consider the fact that the individuals working for the ATI – whether they were city planners, sociologists or musicologists – were essentially promoting models for development and progress that were in support of the Western political agenda. A brief historical retrospective, that will simultaneously highlight the key role of John G. Papaioannou in the post-war Greek cultural scene, will help us to understand the significant contextual parameters of the 1962 Competition, which to a large extent also defined the evolution of post-war avant-garde Greek music and which have hitherto received limited attention.

John G. Papaioannou, who had assigned himself the role of spokesperson for young Greek avant-garde composers, also occupied a prominent position amongst the team of architects of the post-war urban reconstruction programme of Greece. Later, when this project was largely accomplished, he was invited by Doxiadis to establish one of the largest architectural offices in Europe, and from this the ATI evolved.²⁴ This key position enabled him to establish a network of key Greek and foreign (particularly American) politicians, academics and institutions that facilitated and in many cases financed his musical activities. In addition, he acquired transferable administrative and organisational skills that he effectively applied to the numerous musical institutions that he later founded. Moreover, as a writer and music

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ 'By 1956, Doxiadis had five hundred colleagues in six countries and two continents, and by 1961 branches of his office were operating in every continent'. Mark Wigley, 'Network Fever', *Grey Room*, 4 (Summer, 2001), pp. 82-122 (p. 116).

historian, John G. Papaioannou applied to his ‘musicological theories’ many of the concepts that Doxiadis had launched in the field of urban architecture.²⁵ The concepts of ‘Megalopolis’ and ‘Ecumenopolis, the city of the Future’, introduced by Doxiadis along with other theories about the ‘growth’ of human settlements and highly influential in modern urban planning, found application in John G. Papaioannou’s ideas about music historiography, as his writings are often accompanied by diagrams projecting the evolution of music, all strikingly similar to the diagrams of Doxiadis.²⁶

Although these theories were not widely accepted, the liaison position Papaioannou occupied at ATI afforded him the opportunity to help certain composers to receive commissions, grants or periods of study in the US. All these of course created antagonisms, and Papaioannou was often accused of nepotism and of manipulative strategies.²⁷ Operating as a ‘General Secretary’ in major musical organisations for over three decades, he set standards for, and acted as the advocate of, the Greek avant-garde movement, and he succeeded in these roles because he was an exceptionally competent fundraiser and an experienced cultural administrator. It was John G. Papaioannou who brought the music of Xenakis to the attention of Hadjidakis and who soon came to the conclusion that this exiled Greek was the only contemporary composer who²⁸

²⁵ ATI also hosted a series of cultural activities, such as art exhibitions, panel discussions on various cultural topics and regular concerts and lectures with a clear bias towards contemporary music. For instance, a year prior to the 1962 Competition John G. Papaioannou prepared the ground by organising a series of lectures entitled: ‘Cultural Meetings on Wednesdays’ on topics such as ‘Xenakis and the avant-garde of our times’; ‘Introduction to electronic music’ and ‘The contribution of Greek composers to contemporary music’.

²⁶ ‘Ecumenopolis: A strongly interconnected worldwide network of large settlement systems in balance with its environment’. Papaioannou [13], p. 14.

²⁷ Although he actively encouraged all Greek composers to submit their works, the criteria to define them as ‘progressive’ and therefore eligible for the 1962 Competition was left to the three-member committee of which he was the self-appointed Chairman.

²⁸ John G. Papaioannou was particularly active in disseminating Xenakis’s music in Greece and was the first to give lectures and to systematically broadcast his works on Greek Radio. Along with other personalities, such as

[...] had the courage to ignore the musical tradition of 500 years; to ignore the music from the renaissance and after [...] giving us not [the kind of] music that we inherited and which we were accustomed to. Therefore here lies the greater difficulty we have with Xenakis. His music requires us to be either very pure or very strong.²⁹

Hadjidakis maintained that Xenakis represented the apotheosis of rationally organised thought expressed in terms of sound, and that he should be regarded as a true exponent of the very essence of the Greek spirit in the Western world. He argued that:

The importance of Xenakis is boundless because for the first time in the international musical scene a person appears who is daring enough and heroic enough to present himself as a Greek³⁰

Not only did John G. Papaioannou and Hadjidakis envisage their exiled compatriot's homecoming and musical leadership role, but Xenakis himself seemed to relish the idea, writing to Papaioannou that:

I can suggest the following three names that could compete with success among foreign composers:

- a. Sklakottas
- b. Theodorakis
- c. Xenakis

The three of us represent trends that exist in Europe and have a noticeable impact. I believe that the enormous effort that you have made in support of Skalkottas's work and his international recognition requires a natural leader to be the head [emphasis by Xenakis] of the modern Greek [school of] musical composition. I am afraid I do not know any other young musicians in Greece, except Hadjidakis, but I do not think he can compete among foreign composers. How you will manage this I do not know, but I believe that you have all the virtues required.³¹

Even before submitting his works for the 1962 Competition, Xenakis consulted John G. Papaioannou about his eligibility:

I received [the announcement] for the ATI Competition and the Manos Hadjidakis Award. I want to congratulate you for this initiative that does not exist even in England. Particularly Manos

Nelly and Chrysos Evelpidis and Doxiadis, he used his political influence to achieve the repatriation of his friend.

²⁹ Galatou [12], p. 40.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Letter from Xenakis to John G. Papaioannou dated Paris, 11.01.1957.

[Hadjidakis] deserves congratulations as he donates the profits of his genius to the service of Greek music. And this example is rare and honours Manos and his country. If my participation is not censurable (politically or for reasons of age) I would like to take part myself. Give me your opinion on this. [.....] I am so sad I cannot return. We would do many heroic exploits in the music domain.³²

The 1962 Competition offered Hadjidakis and John G. Papaioannou the opportunity to introduce Xenakis as a national figure in Greece. These highly ambitious men hoped that with Xenakis as the spearhead of a new avant-garde movement, Greece could become a major point of reference in the history of the twentieth-century music.

The American way

As an architect John G. Papaioannou was one of the key individuals upon whom the success of the post-war urban and public infrastructure reconstruction programme of Greece rested. Likewise, as a performer, musicologist, cultural administrator and radio producer, he was one of the major advocates of new music in Greece, and for a prolonged period the key agent liaising between the Greek modernists and leading US composers and educational institutions. Both Hadjidakis and John G. Papaioannou invested significant funds and energy to promote new music in Greece, but I will argue that their efforts would not have thrived without the foreign cultural and financial aid that Greece received from the West (initially from the US and later from West Germany).

In fact, the US educational and cultural aid package was proportionally one of the largest of its kind ever given to a European country during the Cold War period. The attention given to the cultural needs of Greece was in reality the result of special agreements between the two countries. These agreements involved millions of dollars' worth of war surplus sold to Greece to finance the US educational and cultural programmes. As a result, the US government could

³² Letter from Xenakis to John G. Papaioannou dated Paris, 16.05.1962. As an act of courtesy to Hadjidakis, Xenakis dedicated him *Morsima-Amorsima* (London: Boosey & Hawks, 1962).

afford to maintain well-equipped branches of the United States Information Service (USIS), an organisation that carried out an extensive and intricate politico-cultural propaganda campaign, in six major Greek cities.³³

In the concert life of Athens in particular, the results of this cultural aid were impressive, as a large number of leading American musicians, such as Lukas Foss, Ross Lee Finney, John Cage and Leonard Bernstein, gave performances in front of eager Athenian audiences.³⁴ In Greece, as elsewhere in the world, the mission of USIS was supported by Voice of America Radio (VoA), through regular broadcasts of jazz and classical music, and with a particular emphasis on recordings by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Mitropoulos and Maria Callas at the Metropolitan Opera.³⁵ In addition, the Greek branches of USIS

³³ ‘The United States Information Agency (U.S.I.A.) was established by the Reorganization Agency Plan 8 of 1953 and went into effect August 1, 1953 to carry out international information activities as authorized by the United States Information and Education Exchange Act of 1948. The United States Information Service (U.S.I.S.) is the outward sign and voice of the United States Information Agency, an activity closely related to and implementing the Foreign Service of the State Department under whose head it operates. The agency does not limit itself to news. In its effort to explain foreign policy overseas, to further U.S. foreign policy objectives, to promote a better understanding by making known our way of life, our aspirations and know-how, the U.S.I.A. uses every form of mass media; press, film, radio, television, cultural exchange, personal contact of its officers and the services of the 168 libraries they have established throughout the world’. Lillian D. Anderton, ‘USIS Libraries: A Branch of U.S.I.A.’, *Peabody Journal of Education*, Vol. 45/2 (September, 1967), pp. 114-120 (p. 114). ‘USIA existed until 1999 when its operations were transferred to the Department of State’. See Wilson P. Dizard Jr., *Inventing Public Diplomacy: The Story of the US Information Agency* (London: Lynne Rienner, 2004), p. xiv.

³⁴ In October 1956 the Seventh US Army Symphony Orchestra (which had until then never performed in the USA) gave three concerts in Athens. ‘The creation of the Stuttgart-based Seventh Army Symphony Orchestra (1952-62) is a good example of the United States’ continuing effort to convince Germans that Americans were cultured people’. Amy C. Beal, ‘Negotiating Cultural Allies: American Music in Darmstadt, 1946-1956’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol.13/1 (Spring, 2000), pp. 105-139 (p. 109). Major cultural events in Athens sponsored by the USIA in the mid-1960s included visits by Gian Carlo Menotti to perform *The Medium* at the Greek National Opera, the San Francisco Ballet and American Ballet Theatre Company, jazz concerts by Dizzy Gillespie, and performances by the Minneapolis and the Michigan Symphony Orchestras.

³⁵ This focus on artists of Greek descent and of international calibre reflected the policy of the US State Department, which ‘considered it crucial to use cultural material familiar to and valued by the peoples of the

circulated regular reports from the cultural, academic and political life of the US, while a more systematic update on American cultural issues was carried out by the specialised periodical entitled *From the New World*. The Athens branch of USIS also maintained an impressive music collection – the largest of its kind in Greece – including the latest musical scores and records.³⁶

Another American institution, the Hellenic-American Union (HAU), founded in 1957, supplemented the cultural activities of USIS in Greece and began to organise concerts at its purpose-built premises. At these concerts the emphasis was placed on more progressive American and younger Greek composers. Works by older Greek composers such as Kalomiris, Varvoglis and Andreas Nezeritis (1897-1980) were initially also performed but these were progressively reduced and by the mid-1960s they had disappeared.³⁷ Their marginalisation has been acknowledged by Mrs Katy Myrivilli, the Greek officer at USIS who oversaw the music programme until 1968 and who has admitted her own reluctance to promote the works of older composers (notably Kalomiris).³⁸ Seeing their music disregarded both by their younger colleagues and by the prosperous Western cultural institutes operating

satellite nations in its efforts to win their sympathy for Western political cultural causes. By emphasising such material, the State Department hoped to cultivate a sense of national pride that could work against the Soviet agenda'. Danielle Fosler-Lussier, *Music Divided: Bartók's Legacy in Cold War Culture* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 2007), p. 51.

³⁶ The 1949 catalogue within the loan collection of recorded music in the USIS library in Athens includes 238 composers of whom only 57 are American. A later catalogue printed in 1957 shows that the collection of scores and recordings of American music had increased dramatically to feature 110 American composers.

³⁷ The earliest concert programme organised by the USIS that I was able to locate featuring works by Greek and American composers, took place in January 1953. It included Menotti's Piano Concerto played on record; three songs by Hadjidakis, and his piano suite *For a White Sea-shell* (performed by John G. Papaioannou). After 1959 these Greek-American concerts were overseen by the Hellenic American Union where they were scheduled and managed by John G. Papaioannou. The last work of Kalomiris performed at the USIS live concerts was on 11 January 1956.

³⁸ Katy Myrivilli was the assistant to the cultural attaché of the American Embassy from 1951 to 1969 when she resigned for political reasons. In 1970 she was hired as a consultant to the Ford Foundation in Athens until 1982. (Interview on 30.01 2011).

in Greece, many of the older nationalist composers either reluctantly incorporated selected modernist techniques into their work (a high level of dissonance, serial features, ambiguous tonalities, and so on) or chose to remain faithful to tonality and nationalist rhetoric and sought their alliances in the Soviet bloc.³⁹ For instance, Andreas Nezeritis, who was one of the most respected and uncompromising members of the Greek National School, openly stated that ‘the formalism of the Western world disgusts me’.⁴⁰ He even claimed that the only composers representing musical progress at the time were the Soviets, whose music, by remaining faithful to tonality, reinforced its ‘national characteristics’. As he had passionately stated to a Russian reporter who interviewed him in Athens in 1957, ‘Shostakovich, Khachaturian and Kabalevsky are the only ones composing real music.’⁴¹

These are just a few of the cultural activities and attitudes one might select evidencing a nexus of blatant anti-communist propaganda and direct US intervention in Greece’s domestic politics; the aim was of course to prevent Greece from sliding into the communist bloc like the rest of its Balkan neighbours.⁴² The introduction of new music in Greece needs to be

³⁹ The older generation of Greek composers revealed their rather desperate efforts to catch up with the *Zeitgeist* by resorting to surface modernist adjustments. An indicative example is Georgios Poniridis (1910-1982), whose Variations no. 2 for piano was characterised as ‘a rather aged work with contemporary elements creeping in’. See George Leotsakos, *Ta Nέα* (12.11.1965). Other composers, such as Leonidas Zoras (1905-1987), resorted hesitantly to atonality, while Theodoros Karyotakis (1903-1978) turned to serialism, and even Kalomiris in his last colossal work, the opera *Constantinos Paleologos* (1961) used a combination of a twelve-tone series and leitmotiven that reveals new but tantalising glimpses to a method that he had previously passionately denounced.

⁴⁰ Andreas Nezeritis, interviewed by Yevgeny Popovkin, *Ta Nέα* (16.05.1957). As Katy Romanou also writes: ‘It is not coincidental that Kalomiris paid a formal visit to the Soviet Union in 1956. Socialist realism being a new centre to aim at’. ‘The Pendulum Case. Musicians’ Dilemmas in “Marginal” Societies’, in Dejan Despić and Melita Milin (eds.), *Spaces of Modernism: Ljubica Maric’ in Context, Proceedings of the International Conference: 5-7 November 2009* (Belgrade: Institute of Musicology of Serbian Academy of Sciences and the Arts, 2010), pp. 189–96 (p. 195).

⁴¹ Nezeritis [40].

⁴² In March 1947, President Truman made an extraordinary request to Congress for direct military and economic aid in Greece and Turkey, aimed at resisting Soviet military pressures in both countries. The

placed within this broad political background. And the (USIS-sponsored) presence of Americans such as Lukas Foss and Daryl Dayton on the jury of 1962 Competition is a further tangible example of the outcome of US cultural politics in Greece during the Cold War period.

The discussion should not be limited to the impact of visits, concerts and lectures given by leading American composers in Athens. The USIS centres, and particularly that of Athens, were even more important to Greek composers than the equivalent ‘American Houses’ in West Germany were to their German counterparts. It was in these USIS centres that the most important Greek composers first came into contact with works by Bartók, Stravinsky, Schoenberg and Webern, for instance. The vast majority of the participants at the 1962 Competition (including the Greek members of the jury) were ‘self-educated’ at the premises of the Athens USIS music library. John G. Papaioannou was also actively involved in the musical activities of USIS, and together with Dayton he toured throughout Greece performing anthologies of American and Greek music respectively.⁴³

The appointment of Lukas Foss as Chair of the 1962 Competition was a direct outcome of the sponsored six-month trip made by John G. Papaioannou to the US a year earlier. In the US he lectured on architecture, urban planning and particularly Greek music, and he was

“Truman Doctrine” was the first significant drawing of clear lines against Moscow’s aggressive moves. [...] The role of propaganda in countering these Soviet actions soon emerged as a congressional issue’. Dizard Jr. [33], p. 45.

⁴³ The United Information Service (USIS) was the name under which the United States Information Agency (USIA) operated overseas. The term ‘Service’ was deemed more appropriate, since the use of the term ‘Agency’ outside the USA would have invited associations with the CIA. The American musicologist and pianist Daryl Dayton, who arrived in Greece in 1959 initially as a Fulbright grantee, remained there until 1967, and during that period he served as an American Cultural Attaché of the Athens USIS. In his youth Dayton had studied music at Grinnell College and at the Oberlin Conservatory (Ohio) and had also taken private piano lessons from Artur Schnabel in Berlin. In December 1967 he returned to the USA to head the Music Department of the central office of the United States Information Agency (USIA) in Washington DC. A facsimile of one of the lecture series of American and Greek music that he delivered in tandem with John G. Papaioannou is attached as Appendix 4 (1962), p. 53.

introduced through the USIS officers to American academics and composers, including John Cage and Lucas Foss, both of whom were subsequently invited to be jury members. Ross Lee Finney, another composer whom he met on his American visit, recalled that when Papaioannou visited him ‘in Ann Arbor, he spent hours playing tapes of Greek music for the young composers at the University of Michigan’.⁴⁴ And while Cage was unable to travel to Athens for the 1962 Competition, Foss, a composer known for his regular commissions from USIS, responded positively to the invitation. In fact, Foss enjoyed more attention and celebrity than the award recipients, as on the day following the competition he gave a well-attended concert of exclusively American music, including works by Charles Ives, Earl Brown and Morton Feldman, and concluding with an improvisatory work performed by seven Greek instrumentalists, the first ever presented to a Greek audience.⁴⁵ As John G. Papaioannou wrote:

Mr Foss gave his view of the newest problems and trends in musical composition and performance, as focused around the concept of aleatory elements and improvisation, bringing composer and performer closer together, and making them both responsible for the realization of the composition.⁴⁶

The German alternative

The Americans were not, however, the only missionaries of new music in Greece. The other strong competitor in the field was West Germany, for soon after the end of World War II Germany showed a particularly strong interest in regaining its pre-war economic position in Greece. Something of this interest became apparent in the 1961 Christmas radio speech to the German people by the first German Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, who in a surprising explosion of philhellenism praised the Greek people for their cultural achievements. A year

⁴⁴ Ross Lee Finney, ‘Music in Greece’, *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 3/2 (Spring – Summer, 1965), pp. 169–170 (p. 169).

⁴⁵ Appendix 5 (1962), p. 54.

⁴⁶ ATI, ‘Ανακοίνωση’ (14.01.1963).

later both John G. Papaioannou and the German composer Günther Becker were appointed as directors of the Studio for New Music, an organisation that was funded and housed at the Goethe Institute of Athens, the first branch that was founded outside of Germany in 1952.

The political support of West Germany was acknowledged by the Greek government as having played a major role in the admission of Greece into the European Community (EC), and the reciprocal arrangements to accommodate the needs of both sides expanded greatly to other political, social and cultural domains. Greece, for instance, gave special privileges to the German School of Archaeology and to the Goethe Institute, while on an economic level Germany gave assurances to provide better interest rates on any capital loans if Greece would politically support and remain on West Germany's side regarding the 'German problem'. Subsequently both countries developed close commercial relationships, and Greek politicians showed a remarkable willingness to settle the open cases of World War II war crimes in the name of this multidimensional and harmonious co-operation.

Both Germany's financial aid and political commitment in support of Greece's membership to the EC were seen as opportunities to extricate Greece from American interventionism. It had become the norm that whenever officials from the US felt that their 'authority' on Greek issues was being called into question they used 'threats of curtailment or cutting of economic aid' as a means to impose their own policies and conditions.⁴⁷ In order to halt this intervention in the political life of Greece, the vast majority of the leading post-war Greek politicians, including Georgios A. Papandreou (1888-1968), Alexandros Papagos (1885-1950) and Constantinos Karamanlis (1907-1998), paid strategic visits to West Germany and signed multiple agreements that secured significant financial aid and long-term German investments in Greece, agreements that were also often supplemented by cultural

⁴⁷ Constantinos Tsoucalas, *The Greek Tragedy* (London: Penguin, 1969), p. 106 & 121.

exchange programmes and educational memoranda.⁴⁸ Along with the Studio for New Art that was founded in Thessaloniki, the Studio for New Music at the Goethe Institute of Athens played a crucial role in not only counterbalancing American avant-garde music by offering a European alternative but also provided a safe non-state domain in which highly experimental forms of music could be cultivated.⁴⁹ During the heyday of anti-Americanism, the Goethe Institute was also met with less suspicion than American cultural organisations.

The 1962 Competition can certainly be viewed as an era-defining event in the history of Greek music. For the first time, two decades after World War II, a significant number of Greek composers, previously scattered throughout central Europe, appeared in their homeland, united under the leadership of John G. Papaioannou and Hadjidakis. They presented to Greek audiences a cluster of musical works in markedly diverse styles, and with their enthusiasm and dynamism they transmitted to their compatriots a sense of cultural renewal and revival. In their efforts to make their voices heard they were greatly assisted both by local gifted individuals such as John G. Papaioannou and Hadjidakis, and by the American and German cultural penetration that followed naturally from a highly polarised political milieu.

The award-winning works and composers also conveyed ideas that were analogous with the concepts of ‘new architecture’ that were launched by the ATI. Intoxicated by their new technological tools these avant-garde composers and architects discarded centuries of traditional practices and gave prominence to technological tools which they considered both

⁴⁸ Dimitris Apostolopoulos, ‘Οι Οικονομικές Σχέσεις μεταξύ Ελλάδος και Γερμανίας μετά τον Β’ Παγκόσμιο Πόλεμο’, in Evangelos Chrysos & Wolfgang Schultheiss (eds.), *Ορόσημα Ελληνογερμανικών Σχέσεων* (Athens: Hellenic Parliament Foundation, 2010), pp. 277-291.

⁴⁹ The Studio for New Music in Athens gave its inaugural concert on 30.10.1962 with works of the Second Viennese School. Until the summer of 1976 it had organised 69 concerts, 26 lectures, 2 exhibitions, and 5 seminars. See John G. Papaioannou (ed.), *Αναδρομή: 50 Εκδηλώσεις* (Athens: Goethe Institute, 1971) and: *Α' Σεμινάριο Σύγχρονης Μουσικής* (Athens: Goethe Institute, 1972).

as ‘vehicles for disseminating their ideas’ and as ways of achieving the maximum control over their material.⁵⁰ The computer-assisted works of Xenakis, the two pieces by Logothetis with their rejection of traditional notation, and the work of Mamangakis proclaiming freedom of expression rather than slavery to schools and methods, were all in harmonious relationship with Western notions of ‘progress’ and ‘innovation’. The eager reception that these highly inventive works received, combined with the efforts of indigenous composers and foreign cultural aid, acted as a catalyst for the demise of the ageing Greek National School of Music. In this new politico-cultural context, with its massive and well-funded avant-garde invasion, the works of Kalomiris and his descendants appeared, like the temple of Delphi, as ‘crumbling edifices’ unable to accommodate the needs of the present time.

Combined with the lack of an official policy on culture and particularly on music, both US and German institutions of cultural aid assumed a more significant role in the evolution of the Greek avant-garde movement during the following two decades. Strategically, the hope was to keep Greece aligned for geopolitical and economic reasons. But the recognition that it was all-important to secure an alliance with an indigenous intelligentsia resulted in a strong dual presence in representative cultural organisations. Above all, the needs of younger Greek composers to become involved in recent musical developments, together with their desire to succeed in, and be acknowledged by, the West, were met in no small part by John G. Papaioannou, who put his administrative experience at their service and secured commissions and opportunities for further funding, contacts and studies in the US. These powerful incentives encouraged composers to respond to the challenges and opportunities of the post-war avant-garde. For two decades after the 1962 Competition these Greek composers continuously strove to prove to Western avant-garde circles that their works were, as Ross Lee Finney wrote, ‘a positive expression of the world in which they live[d]’. At the same

⁵⁰ Iannis Xenakis, interviewed by Rozita Sokou, *Kaθημερινή* (20.06.1965).

time, we should recognise that these works were not entirely the products of free thought, but were rather the outcome of a prolonged cultural infiltration by Western culture and its political agendas.⁵¹

⁵¹ Finney [44], p.170.

1966. The Politics of Patronage: The ‘First Hellenic Week’

In the shadow of Schoenberg

By mid-April 1966 almost every Greek newspaper had announced that an historical moment in the art music of Greece was about to take place at the ‘Zapeion’ building in Athens. ‘Greece is overcoming the fear of the new [music]’ and ‘Greece is entering an *Ars Nova*’ were among of the more suggestive titles with which the daily press welcomed the renowned ‘Assman String Quartet’ prior to the Greek première of the complete String Quartets of Schoenberg at two concerts on 14 and 16 April 1966.¹ A Greek critic wrote that, apart from their aesthetic pleasure, the live performances of these four iconic works in the Greek capital would

[...] have an historical importance for our audience, which will have the chance to follow the composer’s evolutionary route until the attainment of the twelve-tone system.²

Similarly, some of the most knowledgeable newspaper critics eagerly published short analyses of these String Quartets prior to their performances.³ These two concerts represented ‘the historical side’ of an unprecedented grand-scale event: an overwhelming seven-day festival entitled the First Hellenic Week of Contemporary Music (hereafter the First Week), which took place from 14 to 21 April.⁴ For that entire week audiences were bombarded with a variety of events, including live performances of 64 contemporary works by 39 composers, 15 world premières including three special commissions, four music lectures, an exhibition of scores and manuscripts, and a panel discussion on the problems of contemporary music.

¹ George Leotsakos, *To Βήμα* (10.04.1966).

² Dimitris Kostios, *Δημοκρατική Αλλαγή* (21.05.1966).

³ See one of these analyses attached as Appendix 1 (1966), p. 56.

⁴ ‘Like many festivals of its kind, the First Hellenic Week of Contemporary Music leaves aside schools and traditions [...] and focuses on one historical perspective [of contemporary music]’. Leotsakos [1].

The canonical status of Schoenberg's String Quartets, which were described as demonstrating 'the organic evolution of music from the beginning of the century', along with their masterly performance – which thrilled both the enemies and the enthusiasts of Schoenberg's music – were the prime reasons that these two concerts became the highlights of the First Week.⁵ However, John G. Papaioannou, one of the major powers behind this event, stated that the mission of the festival was to promote 'the serious accomplishments of the New Greek School of Music', which he asserted was 'one of the most vibrant and innovative Schools internationally'.⁶ This was one of the first public statements in which he introduced the concept of a New Greek School to wider Greek and foreign audiences. Consequently, his ownership of this concept allowed him to select and to classify hierarchically – according to his own criteria and taste – those Greek composers eligible to be members of this very heterogeneous 'School'.

While the 1962 Competition was an event of local importance, which aimed at gauging the reception of new music in Greece and encouraging younger avant-garde Greek composers, the First Week had from the moment of its inception a much larger ambition. In reality, this cosmopolitan festival, intended to be an annual event in Athens, was part of a highly systematised effort to establish the New Greek School within and beyond the borders of the country. The launch of the New Greek School, however, needed to be bolstered by some kind of historical narrative, and this was achieved during the First Week by selective programming and commissioning, and by spotlighting particular trends within contemporary music. More importantly, this New Greek School needed a 'founding father', a role that John G. Papaioannou assigned to Nikos Skalkottas, whose posthumous discovery he also credited to

⁵ Cf. Georgios Sklavos, *Hμέρα* (23.04.1966) and Leotsakos [1].

⁶ John G. Papaioannou, *Εθνος* (17.03.1966).

himself.⁷ Papaioannou repeatedly stated that with this ‘totally unknown, unperformed, unpublished, unrecorded’ Greek modernist, who had an ‘impressive output of more than 170 works’, Greek music made a ‘Great Leap Forward’.⁸ Despite the fact that Skalkottas’s music neither secured an audience during his lifetime, nor inspired the subsequent generation of Greek composers, Papaioannou used him in his historiographical narrative because, like Mitropoulos, Skalkottas could function as a link to mainstream European modernist traditions.⁹ As he stated:

Contemporary music reached its first climax with Debussy, Stravinsky Schonberg and Berg, with a temporary break from 1935 to 1945 in order to take off in entirely new directions led by Webern. [...] Pioneers of these trends in our country were Mitropoulos and Skalkottas. Since the post-war years, however, a whole generation of Greek composers has been actively contributing to the progress of Contemporary Music. [...] It was therefore necessary to systematically promote Contemporary Greek Music both in Greece and in Europe, and also to promote European, and foreign music in general, in our country.¹⁰

Yet Papaioannou was anxious to present Skalkottas not just as a disciple in the shadow of Schoenberg, but as a composer whose works (both in terms of quantity and quality) could be compared with or might even surpass those of his teacher and mentor. And it was in his interest to emphasise that Skalkottas had developed a remarkably ingenious serial technique. Skalkottas’s serialism, John G. Papaioannou wrote, ‘is radically different from that of Schoenberg and his school, but is equally, if not more, demanding’.¹¹ In his view, Skalkottas had evolved the serial method to the point at which he could be considered not as a follower of Schoenberg but as the rightful inventor of a new serial and atonal language. For Papaioannou, this was Skalkottas’s ‘natural language’, a language that allowed him to

⁷ John G. Papaioannou, linear notes, *20th Century Greek Avant-Garde Music: A Cross Section* (Athens, CCMR, 1998), p.18.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Although John G. Papaioannou would often refer to Mitropoulos’s modernism in his papers, publications, programmes etc., this was done in a rather in flippant and hasty manner.

¹⁰ John G. Papaioannou, *Απογευματινή* (17.03.1966).

¹¹ Papaioannou [7].

compose ‘large-scale and glorious works of great beauty’.¹² Hints of these claims had already been expressed in English-language musicology long before the First Week in 1957, when Papaioannou published his first substantial study of Skalkottas in Howard Hartog’s *European Music in the Twentieth Century*. Here he

[...] treated Skalkottas as the subject of a complete essay. The only other figures to share this privilege were Bartók, Stravinsky, Hindemith and Schoenberg, with Berg and Webern sharing a chapter [...] By implication Skalkottas was equated with them: by rights, then, he should have been far better known than he was. Intellectually he was their equal, his very personal style in some ways becoming a subtle fusion yet also a metamorphosis of the language of Schoenberg and Bartók but emerging with a distinctive and intuitive voice.¹³

Although ‘by chance’, as Papaioannou wrote in the programme booklet of the First Week, it was not possible to present any of Skalkottas’s serial works, he reminded the audience that this Greek modernist was nevertheless ‘one of the “leading” classics of the twelve-tone school and a composer of international calibre’.¹⁴ The uniqueness of Skalkottas’s modernist idiom was demonstrated in the three major works selected to be performed at the First Week: the well-known *Ten Sketches* for string orchestra (1940), the *Sonata Concertante* for bassoon and piano (1943), a work that places transcendental demands on the bassoonist, and the *Sonatina* for piano (1927), a work in an atonal idiom that, as Papaioannou highlighted, had been developed prior to Skalkottas’s tutelage with Schoenberg.¹⁵

This emphasis on the performance of those earlier Greek modernists, Mitropoulos and Skalkottas, offered both an historical foundation upon which the ‘New Greek School’ could

¹² ‘Like Schoenberg in his 1915-1923 pre-serial period, Skalkottas stopped composing in the serial system that was his natural musical language, and instead became preoccupied with trivial work, such as various orchestrations and the composition of simplistic tonal works, during the difficult years of 1932-1934’. John G. Papaioannou, ‘Εκπομπή: Παρασκευή 20.11.1959’, *Κείμενα Σειράς 12 Εκπομπών: ‘Νίκος Σκαλκώτας’* (Athens: EIP, Τρίτο Πρόγραμμα, unpublished, 1959), p. 3.

¹³ Ates Orga, ‘Skalkottas: Shadowy Figure of Greek Music’, *Music and Musicians*, Vol. xviii/11 (1968-1969), pp. 36-40 (p. 36).

¹⁴ First Hellenic Week of Contemporary Music, programme notes, Appendix 2 (1966), pp. 57-102 (p. 84).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

be built, and also a sense of historical continuity, a narrative in the evolution of Greek contemporary music taking us from Skalkottas to Xenakis. From its beginning, contemporary music in Greece had to be promoted as rooted in European modernist traditions, but of equal or even higher quality, and with unique (national) characteristics. Yet despite the best efforts to demonstrate Skalkottas's originality and genius, his works did not escape comparison (occasionally unflattering) with Schoenberg. This was because during the re-introduction of his music to Greek audiences, his works were often performed in tandem with Schoenberg's. One case in point was the inauguration concert of the Studio for New Music at the Goethe Institute of Athens in 1962, but another was the First Week, where Skalkottas's works were overshadowed by the exceptional performances of Schoenberg's String Quartets by the highly skilled German ensemble. Whether the organisers of these concerts wanted to emphasise the connection of Greek modernism with the Second Viennese School or had hopes that Skalkottas's work would be recognised as of equal (or even higher) significance than Schoenberg's, these associations, as Ateş Orga remarked, often led 'to a gross invalidation of Skalkottas's own achievements'.¹⁶

The 'Historic' First Week

The First Week was partially sponsored by, and was placed under the auspices of, the National Tourism Organisation (EOT). However, this should not be read as an indication of the state's interest in new music, but rather as a marketing strategy aimed at advertising Greece as a destination for cultural tourism. The First Week was primarily a non-profit private initiative, as it was planned and organised by the Greek Section of the International Society of Contemporary Music (ISCM) and the Hellenic Association for Contemporary Music (HACM), institutions that had since their foundation in 1964 and 1965 respectively

¹⁶ Orga [13], p. 37.

functioned as the main promoters of new music in Greece. Since sponsorship from the Greek state was negligible, Germany and Italy, through their respective cultural organisations operating in Greece (the Goethe and Italian Institutes), became the main sponsors of this festival.

The ‘Assmann String Quartet’ and the ‘Wind Quintet of the Southwest German Radio Symphony Orchestra’ from Baden-Baden were both financed by the Goethe Institute of Munich and gave four concerts. Similarly, the Italian Ministry of Culture sponsored the chamber orchestra of the ‘Accademia Musicale Napoletana’ and the ‘Italian Quartet of New Music’, that performed in three concerts. The privately sponsored Greek ensembles that took part in the First Week were the ‘Athens Wind Quintet’, the ‘Athens Instrumental Ensemble’ and the ‘University of Thessaloniki Chamber Choir’, which was accompanied by an instrumental ensemble.¹⁷

Their determination that the festival would be recognised as pioneering led the organisers of the First Week to adopt a maximalist approach in sharp contrast to the limited financial means of the HACM and the inadequate cultural infrastructure at their disposal. Assisted by the composers Günther Becker and Yannis A. Papaioannou, the musicologist John G. Papaioannou sought to bring to the First Week the most renowned living avant-garde composers and to include in the concert programmes as many world premières as possible.¹⁸ These men hoped to attract a broad audience – locals and visitors – by giving the events enormous publicity and by including the most diverse and influential works to showcase Greece’s achievements and potential in the field of avant-garde music. In the impressive programme booklet, printed in Greek and English (a practice already established by the

¹⁷ For unknown reasons, a concert by the Experimental Orchestra of Athens which was planned by Hadjidakis was cancelled at the last minute. Anonymous, *Eλευθερία* (21.04.1966).

¹⁸ See photograph from the press conference of the First Week attached as Appendix 3 (1966), p. 103.

cultural department of the Athens USIS), John G. Papaioannou stated that this festival aimed at

[...] offering an opportunity for the Greek public and for visitors to Greece to become acquainted with a wide spectrum of representative works of our time, not neglecting ‘classical’ contemporary compositions or others of historic interest, but putting the emphasis clearly on the most recent trends and on avant-garde music. [...] At the same time, the ‘Hellenic Week’ is expected to arouse or strengthen the interest of Greek performers in contemporary music, both international and Greek, and to give them the opportunity of participating in its performance, whilst performers from other countries, whom Greek audiences will be able to listen to, will become acquainted with contemporary Greek compositions. The Greek public, finally, besides becoming exposed to a variety of programmes in the above-mentioned spirit, is likely to obtain a more lasting experience and enjoyment from its contact with the music our times is producing.¹⁹

Through this ‘historical effort’, some anticipated that ‘Greece would finally cease to be chaff amongst the [musical] nations’.²⁰ As president of the HACM, the composer Yannis A. Papaioannou argued that the First Week was an opportunity given to Greece to ‘catch up with the *Zeitgeist*'.²¹ Apart from enhancing the audience’s historical consciousness of contemporary music in Greece by foregrounding the works of the older modernists and ‘educating’ them on the latest avant-garde trends, the First Week also aimed at stimulating the production of Greek avant-garde compositions.²² Within this spirit, the HACM commissioned three Greek composers, who at the time were following entirely different trends, to write works especially for the First Week.

Yannis G. Papaioannou, the composer and eminent teacher of contemporary techniques (including serialism) to the younger generation of Greek composers, was not only privileged by having four of his earlier serial works performed at the First Week; a further work was also commissioned from him. This was the Three Songs (1966), settings of Cavafy’s poetry

¹⁹ Appendix 2 (1966), p. 61.

²⁰ Leotsakos [1].

²¹ Yannis A. Papaioannou. As quoted by Vassilis Psyrakis in *Μεσημβρινή* (17.04.1966).

²² ‘The prices of the tickets will be exceptionally affordable since they aim to educate and enlighten the audience’. George Leotsakos, *To Βήμα* (17.04.1966).

for mezzo-soprano and instrumental ensemble, a work that was written in the atonal, contrapuntal style that he had just begun to develop at that time. The second commission was given to Nikos Mamangakis: his *Trittys* for classical guitar, santouri, a set of percussion instruments and two double basses (1966). Mamangakis dismissed the idea of a fixed series, and was preoccupied with a personal system based on the number ‘three’, according to which he defined the form and organised the pitch content of the work (hence the title of the work, which in ancient Greek means ‘three’). Jani Christou, a composer who increasingly alienated himself from the rest of his Greek colleagues and who also employed a distinctive, unconventional system of notation, was the last recipient of a commission. He had composed in a single day the work *Praxis for 12* (1966) for two groups of string players, a double bass and a conductor-pianist, who also performed on two percussion instruments (a cymbal and a deep gong). Christou had written that ‘the purpose of the work was to provide an opportunity for action (praxis)’, and unlike Logothetis’s *Odyssee* (1966) (a work in graphic notation that was also presented during the First Week), the *Praxis for 12* did not include elements of improvisation or chance, since the composer had strictly organised the graphic score in thirty sections or patterns (praxes) and provided detailed guidelines on the course of actions that the ensemble members were to perform.²³

While the compositions of the New Greek School were impressive in character and diverse in range, the same cannot be said about the Italian compositions that were performed during the First Week. Important figures of contemporary Italian music, such as Bruno Maderna, Luciano Berio, Luigi Nono, Luigi Dallapiccola and Goffredo Petrassi, whose works could have offered an historical panorama of the Italian musical scene, were noticeably absent from

²³ John G. Papaioannou, liner notes, ‘Jani Christou 1 – Late Works’ (Athens: CSDG 68, 1974), p. 3. For a detailed discussion on Christou’s *Praxis for 12*, see Stavros Houliaras, *To Μουσικό Σημειογραφικό Σύστημα των Γιάννη Χρήστου στα Έργα της Τελευταίας των Δημιουργικής Περιόδου: 1965-1970* (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Athens, 2009), pp. 125-164.

the programme. This may be attributed to the limited number of Italian performers, or perhaps to the personal choices and interests of the ensembles' director, who seemed rather uninterested in constructing a grand historical narrative in the manner attempted by the administrators of the HACM.

The earlier generation of Italian modernists was represented only by Alfredo Casella and Virgilio Mortari. Of the works performed at the three Italian concerts in the First Week, only Luciano Chailly's *Sonata Tritematica No 10* (1962) and Riccardo Malipiero's Sonata for oboe and strings (1959) followed serial techniques, while other works, such as *Concerto Breve* (1959) by Valentino Bucchi, displayed Bartókian influences.²⁴ However, one of the most striking performances of the First Week was the world première of the famous String Quartet no 4 (1964) of Giacinto Scelsi, whose 'static or very slow-moving clouds of texture created through microtonal harmonies, glissandos, and trills' thrilled the Greek audience.²⁵ Scelsi had travelled to Athens well in advance of the festival, where, as the principal violinist of the 'Quartetto Di Nuova Musica' Franco Sciannameo recalled, he

[...] was treated like a grand *seignior* of contemporary music, and his [Fourth] Quartet soon came to be regarded as the gem of the Festival. When the audience demanded that Scelsi's piece be repeated, he was beside himself; for him it must have been an experience just short of an apotheosis. [...] as we rearranged chairs and music stands for the encore, it was like entering a new era: the twentieth-first century.²⁶

Among the Italian experimentalists of the First Week, Franco Evangelisti, an *habitué* of Darmstadt, had his string quartet *Aleatorio* (1959) performed. Evangelisti is best-known for

²⁴ *Concerto Breve* was originally written for a string quartet but for its performance during the First Week it was arranged for a small string orchestra as Concerto for Strings, and its theme was derived from the letters of Bartók's name. See John C. G. Waterhouse's review: 'Valentino Bucchi: Anticonformismo e politica musicale Italiana by Liliana Pannella', *Music & Letters*, Vol. 59/1 (January, 1978), pp. 71-73 (p. 71).

²⁵ Christopher Fox and David Osmond-Smith, 'Scelsi Giacinto', *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press. <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/24720> (accessed on 22.02.2013).

²⁶ Franco Sciannameo, 'A Personal Memoir: Remembering Scelsi', *The Musical Times*, Vol. 142/1875 (Summer, 2001), pp. 22-26 (p. 25).

his experimentation at the WDR studio in Cologne (1956-57) and for his knowledge of the German avant-garde, which he transmitted back to his homeland.²⁷ In contrast to his more intense works, *Aleatorio* appeared to give greater weight to the ‘chance’ elements by paying particular attention to the choices that were made available to the performers.²⁸

However, the composers who left the strongest impressions during the First Week were those who had come from West Germany. In particular, Joseph Anton Riedl, an eminent figure in the field of electronic music who was at the time directing one of the most prosperous and well-equipped sound studios, the Siemens Studio for electronic music in Munich (both Antoniou and Mamangakis had received their training there), was invited to give a lecture-recital, as was Mauricio Kagel. They presented works with electronically generated or electronically processed sounds that accompanied their recent films.²⁹ Riedl’s film *Velocity* (1963) is based on the changing appearance of the world through speed, and asserts the right of man to freedom of movement based on the new experience of speed in our time.³⁰ The thirty-five year old Kagel argued in his lecture that the ‘sound’ and the ‘action’ can be considered either as two autonomous elements or as closely interconnected.³¹ He also intrigued the Athenian audience with his presentation of ‘Instrumental Theatre’, and with his

²⁷Giordano Ferrari, ‘Evangelisti Franco’, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press.

<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/09095> (accessed on 16.04.2012).

²⁸ Mario Bortolotto and William C. Holmes, ‘The New Music in Italy’, *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol.51/1 (January, 1965), pp.61-67 (p. 68).

²⁹ These films were shown again in 1968 at the ATI theatre. Since they were dealing with themes such as communication and transportation they were ‘of exceptional interest for the subjects to be discussed at the Delos Conference’ that was organised by the ATI. See Athens Technological Institute – Athens Centre of Ekistics, ‘Newsletter’ Vol. 1/11 (15.05.1968), p .7.

³⁰ Appendix 2 (1966), p. 79.

³¹ The focal point of Kagel’s film was not the sound, but the actions of the protagonist of the film that produced the sounds. Kagel’s intention was to separate the sound from the action (i.e. the visual element) that is required to produce it. See Ricardo Dal Farra, ‘Something Lost, Something Hidden, Something Found: Electroacoustic Music by Latin American Composers’, *Organised Sound*, 11 (2006), pp. 131-142.

electronic composition, *Antitheses* (1962), written for his film of the same title, though the latter piece seemed to be greeted with some suspicion.³²

The First Week also included a number of other musical lectures. The Italian Giuseppe Savagnone talked about his invention of ‘musical prismatism’, a compositional system that used a limited number of intervals. He demonstrated its application in his work *Preludio Recitativo e Fuga* (1966), which was also performed. John G. Papaioannou counterpointed the German lecture-recital of electronic music by giving a corresponding one, including, *inter alia*, recordings of Xenakis, Logothetis and Adamis.

Private and political motivations: West Germany and Italy

Since its establishment in 1962, the Studio of New Music at the Goethe Institute of Athens provided both Greek composers and their audiences with a consistent update on contemporary and electronic music from West Germany’s musical centres through a series of concerts, lectures, exhibitions and training courses.³³ To a significant extent, the joint vision of the administrators of this Studio, Günther Becker and John G. Papaioannou – a festival of contemporary music in Greece that would rival corresponding festivals in major European capitals – could be realised precisely because the political interests of West Germany in Greece at the time appeared to favour cultural and educational exchanges that would strengthen the bonds between the two countries. To understand in greater detail the German interest in Greek cultural affairs and her involvement in Greek avant-garde music in particular – an involvement that had direct practical implications for the First Week – we must turn to

³² George Leotsakos, *To Βήμα* (19.04.1966).

³³ For a detailed account of the activities of the first nine years of the operation of the Studio for New Music in the Goethe Institute of Athens see: John G. Papaioannou (ed.), *Αναδρομή: 50 Εκδηλώσεις* (Athens: Goethe Institute – Studio for New Music, 1971).

political factors that played a central role in avant-garde and experimental music in post-war West Germany itself.

This topic has been researched by authors such as Elizabeth Janik, whose book, *Recomposing German Music*, examines the challenges of the radical post-war musical agenda in West Germany, an agenda persistently promoted by the Western allies.³⁴ Other scholars, notably Amy C. Beal, have given particular attention to the role of American experimental music and American composers in West Germany during the implementation of an ambitious cultural programme aimed at the re-education and de-nazification of the German people. The aim here was to promote music that could stand in the sharpest possible contrast to that favoured by the previous fascist regime.

Although systematic and rigorous cultural programmes, such as those in post-war West Germany, were not implemented in Greece, its cultural life was indirectly affected by the dramatic changes and the cultural agendas of those countries under whose influence Greece fell in these immediate post-war years. At this time Greek culture was targeted by the Western allies, and Greek composers faced challenges similar – albeit less intense – to those experienced by the Germans. For instance, after 1944, when Greece came under the British sphere of (political, economic and cultural) influence, British military officers implemented a cultural reorientation programme (admittedly on a relatively modest scale), a programme of de-Germanisation, cultural reconstruction and musical reorientation, all aimed at the Greek concert audience. An indicative example of this is that in June 1945 the English military authorities announced to the Greek people on the sole radio station under their control that ‘German music would not hold a privileged position in the Greek radio programme anymore’.³⁵

³⁴ Full title: *Recomposing German Music: Politics and Musical Tradition in Cold War Berlin* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

³⁵ F. H., *Aglohellenic Review*, Vol.1/4 (June, 1945), p. 30.

However, British musical influence was short-lived and of limited impact. By the early 1960s West Germany had, rather surprisingly, regained its pre-war position by becoming Greece's most important ally in the cultural, economic and most importantly political domains. Bilateral relations between the two countries thrived, as the cultural, educational and employment opportunities offered by Germany were unsurpassed. In the field of music education in particular, the *Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst* (DAAD) scholarships enabled prominent young Greek composers, such as Antoniou, Mamangakis, Logothetis, Tsouyopoulos and Kounadis, to extend their studies in West Germany, to absorb many of its new tendencies, and even to rise to prominent academic positions.

Certain German individuals also helped strengthen the cultural bonds between the two countries. Of particular note was Günter Becker, a champion of avant-garde and electronic music who settled in Greece after 1956 to teach Crown Prince Constantine of the Hellenes, and who remained in the country for twelve years. He gave frequent lectures and performed a large number of Greek works, some of which were inspired by Ancient Greek themes and others influenced by his own close association with Greek composers. His services to musical life in Greece, and to certain Greek composers in particular, were immense. Even after 1970, when he relocated to Essen to found a studio for new music similar to the one he had established in Athens, he continued to assist Greek composers and to promote their works in Germany.³⁶ The importance of the Studio for New Music in Athens and the contribution of Becker were publicly acknowledged at the opening reception of the First Week, during which the Italian and German ambassadors and the Greek officials unanimously expressed their belief in the potential of the Greek avant-garde.³⁷ Although the structure of the programme of

³⁶ Anonymous, *Ta Nέα* (05.04.1970).

³⁷ ‘It is the intentions of the EOT to provide every possible assistance in relevant educational and artistic efforts that not only honour Greek artists but also honour Greece abroad’. Ioannis Georgakis (1916-1993), General Director of the EOT. Anonymous, *Ta Nέα* (15.04.1966).

the First Week appears like a well-balanced mix of German, Greek and Italian music, an examination of archival evidence reveals that the political and financial support of West Germany in particular was of vital importance for the establishment of the festival.

Until the late 1960s West Germany used its financial assistance to peripheral countries such as Greece as an instrument to support one of its most important political goals: removing any possible danger that ‘weak’ or smaller countries might recognise the ‘other’ German state.³⁸ The bulletin programmes of the Goethe Institute of Athens showcase an abundance of lectures and other cultural events propagandising the role of West Germany in a new and united Europe. The governments of both West Germany and Greece – followed by their technocrats, intelligentsia and avant-garde composers – cooperated harmoniously and synchronised their progress towards a common European vision. An indicative example of this cooperation in the domain of contemporary music was the lecture ‘Progress and Retrospection in Contemporary Music’, given by the musicologist Jürgen Uhde in February 1963 at the Goethe Institute of Athens. Likewise in April and May, both Milko Kelemen and Nikos Mamangakis, who at the time were working at the Siemens Electronic Studio and were recipients of DAAD scholarships, gave lectures on electronic music at the same venue.³⁹ But the most important German visit to Greece took place in 1964, when the music director at the central office of the Goethe Institute in Munich, Professor Hans-Joachim Koellreutter (1915-2005), travelled to Athens to meet Greek composers and give a lecture entitled ‘New Music

³⁸ Dimitris Apostolopoulos, ‘Οι Οικονομικές Σχέσεις Ελλάδας Γερμανίας μετά τον Β' Παγκόσμιο Πόλεμο’, in Evangelos Chrysos & Wolfgang Schultheiss (eds.), *Ορόσημα Ελληνο-γερμανικών Σχέσεων* (Athens: Hellenic Parliament Foundation, 2010), pp. 277-291.

³⁹ ‘The most advanced electronic music facilities in Western Europe, the Siemens Studio for Electronic Music in Munich, sponsored by the West German-based electronics corporation’. Amy C. Beal, ‘A Place to Ply Their Wares with Dignity: American Composer-Performers in West Germany, 1972’, *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 86/2 (Summer, 2002), pp. 329-348 (p. 339).

as the Expression of a New World'.⁴⁰ The importance of Koellreutter for the First Week lies in the fact that he would eventually become the most important agent between the organisers of the First Week and much-needed German funding.

Theodore Antoniou, who had already become a well-known figure in the musical circles of Munich, and who had developed close associations with German avant-garde figures, had effective discussions with Koellreutter in Berlin about the German contribution to the First Week, as the following letter to John G. Papaioannou clearly demonstrates:

Dear Mr Papaioannou,

Yesterday I returned from Berlin. As I said, I met Mr Koellreutter there and we discussed matters relevant to our musical Week in Athens in Easter of 1966. He also thinks this [Week] needs something original and novel to attract the attention of the European world – possibly only world premières (which is [however] difficult) or [only works] by young [composers] or musical theatre etc. Of course we will agree on something.

We have [obtained from the Germans] a budget of an additional 10-12 thousand marks for the Week. From what I understand, with this money we must invite German performers; probably one string quartet (Hamann or Asmann), or possibly the Southwest German Wind Quintet (Baden-Baden).⁴¹ I listened to them the other day in Berlin. [They are] wonderful! They will also need to agree, of course. We may need to invite him [Koellreutter] as well, as he told me it is certain that we will get the [promised German] marks. He is generally very useful. I befriended him in Berlin and he said he will help us.⁴²

The German funds were greatly appreciated, but John G. Papaioannou also wanted to include American music in the programme in order to enhance the international profile of the First Week. This turned out not to be possible, as US financial aid to Greece had ceased in 1962, and in November of that year the agreement about Greece's entry to the European Economic Union was implemented. The withdrawal of US financial aid soon had its effects on mutual cultural relations. Without success, Papaioannou pleaded with Daryl Dayton, his

⁴⁰ Full title: 'New Music as the Expression of a New World: Lecture with Demonstration Through Slides and Musical Examples', Athens, Archaeological Society, 11.01.1964.

⁴¹ 'Südwestfunk (SWF) in Baden-Baden had enormous financial means for promoting new music'. Beal [39], pp. 334-35.

⁴² Letter from Theodore Antoniou to John G. Papaioannou dated Munich, 04.02.1965.

old friend at the American Embassy of Athens to contribute to the Week, and in a last attempt to arouse the interest of the Americans, he even directly addressed some leading American composers such as Lukas Foss and John Cage, writing that:

Needless to say, the emphasis will be on very new, mainly avant-garde music from as many countries and trends as possible, with a certain focus on new compositions.⁴³

Both the appeal for American funding and the invitations to Foss and Cage to take part in the Week bore no positive results. Persistent by nature, even after the end of the First Week, Papaioannou continued to solicit the American authorities for financial or cultural assistance. This is evident from a telegram (or ‘airgram’ as they called it then) sent from the American Embassy of Athens to the Department of State, in which Papaioannou urged American composers to participate in the Second Week that was scheduled for the spring of 1967.⁴⁴

Despite Koellreutter’s ‘German Marks’ being the only realistic source of funding, his contribution was not publicly acknowledged in the programme notes or at the official opening reception of the First Week. This caused significant discomfort for Antoniou, who was the person who had secured the German subsidy. He decided to express his complaints in writing to John G. Papaioannou, demanding that the matter be brought to the attention of the general assembly of the HACM:

Mr Becker and Mr [John G.] Papaioannou know very well who spoke first and who cared about the creation of this Week. It is more than two years since I had numerous meetings with Mr Koellreutter, Director of the Goethe Institute in Munich. In order to secure the initial funding, I specifically travelled to Berlin twice to meet him, as he lived there at that time [...] and he in fact with much dedication tried to secure [the funds] for our [First] Hellenic Week. In my subsequent letters and correspondence, and during the two meetings with my teacher Yiannis A. Papaioannou, I discussed my ideas and the outcome of my meetings with Mr Koellreutter. Together with the advice from Mr Koellreutter we then had the idea to raise the issue with the Italians, French and Americans – and of course with the Greek authorities, in order to achieve something more inclusive and complete. [...] It is not so serious that my own efforts were forgotten [not

⁴³ Letters from John G. Papaioannou to Lukas Foss and John Cage. Both letters are identical and are dated Athens, 01.01.1966. See facsimile of one of the letters attached as Appendix 4 (1966), pp. 104-105.

⁴⁴ See facsimile of the airgram attached as Appendix 5 (1966), pp. 106-107.

acknowledged], but I think it is a great omission that we forgot Mr Koellreutter's invaluable contribution. I do not think that we help ourselves with those [people] by forgetting them.⁴⁵

Aside from the financial contribution made by the German authorities, the music ensembles, programme and general character of the First Week were inescapably influenced by the involvement of West Germany. For instance, the programme of the First Week included some repertoire and some ensembles from the two main festivals in Munich, the city in which Antoniou was based, and from where he travelled along with many Greeks, including Mamangakis, Tsouyopoulos and Kounadis, to the various contemporary music meccas of West Germany such as Berlin, Cologne and Darmstadt.

One of the most important festivals in Munich during that period was *Musica Viva*, which had originally been directed by Karl Amadeus Hartmann, and in the early days of the Cold War received impressive amounts of state funding for the promotion of contemporary music.⁴⁶ *Musica Viva* had its roots in an ambitious cultural plan that was initially implemented by the allied occupation forces, whose main politico-cultural objectives were described in terms that included many prefixes such as 're-' and 'de-' ('reorientation': 're-education'; 'denazification' and 'decentralization').⁴⁷ The festival 'took on the task of establishing historical continuity', particularly involving previously occulted or banned

⁴⁵ Letter from Theodore Antoniou to John G. Papaioannou dated Munich, 28.05.1966.

⁴⁶ Amy C. Beal, 'The Army, the Airwaves, and the Avant-Garde: American Classical Music in Postwar West Germany', *American Music*, Vol. 21/ 4 (Winter, 2003), pp. 474-513 (p. 481).

⁴⁷ 'Following Germany's surrender in May 1945, the three Western occupation forces [...] were quick to implement a broad programme of 're-education'. This stressed 'denazification', an unrealistic and far-fetched goal that sought to purge Germany of National Socialist Party members, ideology, and terminology; 'democratization', an equally ambiguous term; 'demilitarization', which quickly lost its meaning with West Germany's remilitarization in 1954; and 'decentralization', or the diversion of the cultural and political authority away from urban centres such as Berlin. [Culture] was regarded as the primary means of 're-educated' and compelling the German *Volk* to critically re-evaluate their past'. Alexander Rothe, 'Rethinking Post-war History: Munich's *Musica Viva* during the Karl Amadeus Hartmann Years (1945–63)', *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 90/2 (2007), pp. 230-274 (p. 231).

modernist figures.⁴⁸ After Hartmann's death, Wolfgang Fortner, Becker's mentor, whose works were also performed during the First Week, became its artistic director from 1964 to 1978. In addition, *Musica Viva* 'served as an international model' for festivals in other cities around Europe.⁴⁹ One of them, a *Musica Viva* series organised by the Athens Goethe Institute, featured exclusively contemporary German composers, and was directed, as one of the few surviving programmes indicates, by Becker – see Appendix 6 (1966), pp. 108-109.

Although the First Week does not appear to have been based on Munich's *Musica Viva*, one can draw parallels between these two festivals. For instance, while Munich's *Musica Viva* promoted West Germany as a place of artistic freedom, creativity and peace, the First Week aimed to highlight Greece as a place hosting an exceptionally innovative school of new music, and thus to invalidate any notion that the country was musically backward. To cultivate in their audiences an awareness of the historical foundations of the new music, both festivals placed their emphasis on composers who had previously been labelled marginal, subversive or degenerate. Terms such as 're-discovery' and 're-evaluation', used by John G. Papaioannou in relation to Skalkottas, are equivalent to those that described the objectives of the cultural reorientation programme of West Germany, a programme in which festivals of contemporary and avant-garde music were instrumental.

Another festival with a yet more visible effect on the First Week was *Neue Musik München*. Joseph Riedl, Antoniou's instructor at the Siemens Studio of Electronic Music in Munich, was the person who established and directed *Neue Musik München*, partly as a rival

⁴⁸ 'Not only did *Musica Viva* connect post-war avant-garde music to the "classical modernity" of the 1920s, represented by the programming of Hindemith, Stravinsky, Bartok, and the Second Viennese School (composers who were frequently performed elsewhere during this time), but it also featured such earlier composers as Debussy, Busoni, and Mahler – these being the 'fathers of musical modernity'. Whereas contemporary music festivals like Darmstadt and Donaueschingen were primarily focused on outdoing one another through premières, *Musica Viva* took on the task of establishing historical continuity'. *Ibid.*, p. 242.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

to the more ‘conservative’ (if we may so describe it) *Musica Viva*. *Neue Musik München* also included in its programmes a series of concerts that kept the ‘historical perspective’ which was such a predominant feature of *Musica Viva*, but it also broadened its repertoire by including composers from countries from the European periphery (Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece), and it featured music that could not be found in other ‘official concerts’.⁵⁰

In fact, the performance of the complete String Quartets of Schoenberg in the First Week was very largely a matter of convenience, as these works had already been part of the repertoire of the ‘Assman String Quartet’ and were performed at the concerts of the *Studio für Neue Musik München* the previous year. As the afore-mentioned letter from Antoniou to Papaioannou (dated Munich, 28.05.1966) verifies, it was he who proposed that they be included in the programme of the First Week. Having secured German funding and working next to Riedl at the Siemens Studio, Antoniou operated as an ‘agent’ and booked the ‘Assman String Quartet’, which had performed the complete String Quartets of Schoenberg at the 1964-65 *Studio für Neue Musik* series – see the programme attached as Appendix 7 (1966), pp.110-113.⁵¹

In contrast to German, Italian participation and contribution to this important festival was based on a strong professional relationship and symbiotic friendship between the Greek composer Jani Christou and the Italian pianist-conductor of the chamber orchestra of the ‘Accademia Musicale Napoletana’, Piero Guarino (1919-1991). Like Jani Christou, Guarino had been born in Alexandria, Egypt, where he had spent his early adolescent years before

⁵⁰ ‘Riedl’s venue was specifically intended for the performance of music neglected by major concert series’. Beal [39], p. 340.

⁵¹ ‘[The *Neue Musik München*] that was partly funded through Munich’s cultural budget had the goal of introducing lesser or unknown music in Munich, new music that was ignored or hardly acknowledged by other Munich concert programmers and that included border-crossing genres (multimedia installations, new instruments, visual art, and literature) and represented international trends of more experimental directions’. Anton Riedl, as quoted in Beal [39], p. 340.

moving to Greece in 1936 to study piano and composition at the Athens Conservatory.⁵² His exceptional skills as a conductor and pianist, combined with his profound understanding of the works and philosophical concepts of Christou, made him an unsurpassed interpreter of the latter's music. Guarino had been exposed to Greek music through his studies in Greece and had developed a predilection for certain composers, including Skalkottas and especially Christou, with whom he had developed a close friendship. He had taken the liberty of orchestrating the piano part of Skalkottas's Concerto for Oboe (1939), and had managed to convince the Italian composer Giacinto Scelsi, who at the time was ready to emerge from his self-imposed obscurity, to take part in the First Week. As the second violinist of the 'Quartetto Di Nuova Musica' recalled:

Through the efforts of the Italian conductor-pianist Piero Guarino and the Greek composer Jani Christou, the 'Quartetto di Nuova Musica' was invited to perform at the 1966 Hellenic Festival of Contemporary Music in Athens, Greece. The selected programme consisted of quartet music by Alfredo Casella (Guarino and Christou's teacher), Franco Evangelisti, Luciano Chailly, and the world première of Quartetto no.4 by Giacinto Scelsi. [Following the première of Scelsi's Quartet] at a reception given by the Christous in their Athens penthouse to honour the festival's participants, Scelsi and two other gentlemen performed a very dynamic and prolonged six-hand improvisation on an upright piano.⁵³

During the First Week a strong bond was established between Scelsi and Christou, and on his return to Italy Scelsi arranged for Christou's *Praxis for 12* and Antoniou's *Jeux* (1963) to

⁵² Piero Guarino, a forgotten figure who had played an important role in the promotion of contemporary Greek music, was born to Italian parents in 1919 in Egypt. He studied piano and composition at the Athens Conservatory and at the Academia Santa Cecilia in Rome. In 1950, Guarino founded the Alexandria Conservatoire and was its Director until 1960, when he was called back to teach at the advanced conducting classes at the Academia Santa Cecilia. For two years he conducted the Academia Napoletana Chamber Orchestra, specialising in the works of contemporary Greek and Italian composers. He was considered the ideal interpreter of Christou's music. Summarised information from programme booklet of the 1964 English Bach Festival, p. 19.

⁵³ Sciannameo [26], p. 25.

be performed at the Italian festival *Nuova Consonantsa*, of whose organising committee he was a member.⁵⁴

Nationalists and Communists: United in opposition

The contribution of the First Week to the cultural development of the country was widely acknowledged, as all the events were well attended and on the whole well received. However, both the Greek leftist press and the composers and supporters of the National School of Music reacted strongly against this modernist invasion funded by foreign countries.⁵⁵ Both factions based their criticism on different factors. For instance, Petros Petridis, one of the most important living nationalist composers and a well-known opponent of cosmopolitan trends, characterised the twelve-tone compositions that were performed at the First Week as of marginal importance, and the avant-garde composers as ‘deserters from rigorous musical training’. He claimed that the ‘survival of tonality’ would come, surprisingly enough, from the composers of popular songs and soundtracks, for they alone would fulfil the ‘natural need of humans to sing’.⁵⁶ Even Georgios Sklavos (Guarino’s former teacher) described the works of the First Week as boring and monotonous, and poured scorn on Dimitri Dragatakis, who was progressively moving away from nationalistic musical ideals to join the ‘modernist camp’.⁵⁷ Other critics expressed their scepticism at such an unprecedented and systematically organised effort:

⁵⁴ Anonymous, *Ελευθερία* and *Εθνος* (30.04.1966).

⁵⁵ Anonymous, *Αλφα* (12.05.1966).

⁵⁶ Petros Petrides, interviewed by Stephanos Artemakis, *Καθημερινή* (16.10.1966).

⁵⁷ Sklavos [5]. Since the early 1950s the Greek nationalist composers adopted a defensive attitude and generally dismissed the efforts of the younger generation of Greek composers who increasingly adopted serial or atonal idioms. An indicative example of this attitude is Kalomiris’s review of Sicilianos’s Concerto for Orchestra Op.12 (1954), of which he wrote: ‘The shadow of dodecaphonism hovers over the thematic inspiration of the young composer’. *Εθνος* (04.12.1954).

We currently observe the establishment of associations for the propagation of ‘new music’. In union is strength! In older times our hearts were touched by the music itself – without any organised support.⁵⁸

In addition, the Greek leftist press perceived the involvement of foreign institutes in the First Week as a form of politico-cultural intervention that favoured particular forms of artistic expression, while deliberately excluding other important ones:⁵⁹

The Goethe Institute and the Italian Institute make for a combination that neither in the past nor in the future offers guarantees of the sincerity of their interest in Greek culture. [...] Why are only the most radical Greek composers represented in a Week of Greek contemporary music? [...] For those Greek composers whose works are excluded, can the organisers claim that that they do not have works in contemporary idioms? What about Theodorakis? Isn’t his *Second Suite* such a work? Therefore there are only two possible explanations. Either Theodorakis has no value as a composer (and if they believe this they should tell us!) or political criteria [in the selection of works] prevailed again [...] And this time the ‘foreigners join the chorus’ [idiomatic expression meaning intervention in an indirect way] in a manner that is undesirable and totally unacceptable.⁶⁰

Windows to the (Western) world

In 1952 Greece joined NATO, and her political position in the Western world was further reinforced through her admission in 1962 as an associate member of what was then the EC.⁶¹

Among the foreign powers that showed a high level of commitment to keep Greece within the Western alliance at the time when the First Week took place was West Germany. The major presence of Greek avant-garde composers in the German-speaking world, their networking with leading personalities of the avant-garde, and their close contact with Greek musical life through German-funded institutions such as the Studio of New Music and German-funded

⁵⁸ Dimitris Hamoudopoulos, *Ελευθερία* (29.04.1966).

⁵⁹ ‘The selection of works needed to follow objective criteria and not be limited to those “familiar with the faith” of dodecaphonism and other extremist trends’. Bassilis Arcadinos, *Αυγή* (08.05.1966).

⁶⁰ Ο Παρατηρητής [pseudonym], *Αυγή* (15.04.1966).

⁶¹ Until 1963 the country was governed by conservative parties, at which point the Centre Union Party of George Papandreou won the election and ruled until July 1965. Political instability after that period prepared the ground for the abolition of parliamentary democracy in 1967 and the establishment of a seven-year dictatorship known as the Junta.

festivals such as the First Week, are all manifestations of this immense cultural impact of West Germany on the musical life of Greece and on the vast majority of Greek composers, whom Papaioannou collectively presented as the New Greek School. While the important contribution of the Italian ensembles in the First Week was the fruit of personal and short-lived networking, the implications of the German contribution were more far-reaching.

Having suffered from censorship and from the artistic restrictions imposed by previous totalitarian regimes, a considerable part of the German intelligentsia, including composers, proclaimed artistic virtues such as ‘freedom and independence’, ‘purity and artistic autonomy’ either as ‘life goals’ or as manifestations of ‘anti-fascist beliefs’.⁶² The younger generation of Greek composers, the vast majority of whom had received their training in Germany, embraced these virtues. One of the possible reasons for this is that they felt the time had come to eradicate the stigma of ‘sterile imitators of the West’ borne by their predecessors, and to claim their place as equals or even as superior members in the new music of the Western World. The First Week can be viewed as opening a window to this world, as before this ‘historical’ event

[...] Greek composers were anxiously standing aside from whatever was happening in Europe, and – possibly unconsciously – regarded themselves as obliged to transfer one or other [musical] trend from Central Europe to Greece. Such danger has now been largely eliminated, because of the frequent contact [of our composers] with the Western music world.⁶³

Thanks to the power of German cultural propaganda and patronage, and the importance of Germany’s subsequent influence on the First Week, we may well call into question the ‘freedom and independence’, and the ‘purity and artistic autonomy’ repeatedly claimed by Greek avant-garde composers.

⁶² Danielle Fosler-Lussier, *Music Divided: Bartók’s Legacy in Cold War Culture* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2007), p. 29.

⁶³ Leotsakos [1].

1971. The Janus Faces of American Philanthropy: The ‘Fourth Hellenic Week’

Protesting

On the evening of 26 September 1971 an eager audience filled the 1200-seat ‘Rex’ theatre in central Athens to attend a concert given by the Hellenic Group of Contemporary Music (HGCM), a pioneering ensemble which since its foundation in 1967 by Theodore Antoniou had given regular, free-of-charge concerts to Greek audiences. The atmosphere was particularly emotional, as the programme began with *The Latin Mass*, an early modal work for chorus, brass and percussion (1953) by Jani Christou, who had been killed in an accident the previous year.

Luciano Berio’s *Sequenza II* for unaccompanied harp (1963) followed Christou’s *Latin Mass*, and then Antoniou came on stage to conduct one of his recent compositions, *Protest II* for an instrumental ensemble, baritone, actors, strobe lights, electronic synthesizer, tape and slide projectors (1971). Shortly after the beginning of the work some of the audience stood up and began to shout. Most of the audience were taken by surprise, since the work, which ‘begins musically’ as Antoniou remarked in his note, did not seem to provoke such a reaction.¹ However, it soon became obvious that the so-called ‘activists’ were in fact actors taking part in the performance. They were instructed by Antoniou to declaim in a vociferous manner a text from a recent official announcement issued by the Colonels, banning a theatrical play for which Antoniou had written the music.² These ‘enraged’ actors gradually

¹ Theodore Antoniou, ‘Searching for the Theme of an Article about Contemporary Theatre Music’, *Boundary*, Vol. 2/1 (Winter, 1973), pp. 454-469 (p. 455).

² *Ibid.*

walked from the stalls towards the stage, a gesture that is actually notated in the graphic score of *Protest II*.³ Antoniou describes the scene as follows:

[...] the musicians had abandoned their instruments and, all together, build up a terrifying crescendo of sound, like that of a mass demonstration in the streets. Strobe lights increase the tension. The deafening sound begins to mould itself in an ostinato rhythmical pattern, which is suddenly cut like a knife. All the actors and performers are now lined up on the stage staring fixedly at the audience as though challenging them to examine their position.⁴

The audience soon grasped the obvious symbolism, as Antoniou had made his intentions clear in the programme note:

In this piece he [the composer] protests against all kinds of social, political, and artistic injustices. It is a dramatic mixed-media work developed on musical and meta-musical ideas, and by means of contemporary techniques related to instruments, space, musical systems, notation and electronics, etc. Improvised sections develop simultaneously with others strictly notated.⁵

Despite the fact that *Protest II* was not conceived as an audience-participation work, its première took an unexpected turn. Some brave members of the audience spontaneously jumped onto the stage and joined the actors-performers, turning the performance into ‘a genuine and moving demonstration’ against the Junta that had been ruling the country for the past four years.⁶ In fact it was the abolition of democratic rule and the imposition of severe censorship that led Antoniou to the conclusion that Greek composers needed to redefine the social role and larger purpose of their music. Moreover, he considered it his duty to invalidate any notion of the avant-garde as a form of ‘bourgeois art’.⁷ He emphasised that ‘music must be put to the service of the people, and become “engagé”, in order to give expression to the problems in our society and to mirror our times’.⁸ In fact, the political crisis in Greece had

³ Appendix 1 (1971), pp. 115-117.

⁴ Antoniou [1].

⁵ Fourth Hellenic Week of Contemporary Music, programme notes, Appendix 2 (1971), pp. 118-157, p. 148 [all translations presented here are based upon the Greek version of the programme notes].

⁶ Antoniou [1].

⁷ Theodore Antoniou, *Επίκαιρα* (30.04.1971).

⁸ Antoniou [1].

such an overwhelming effect on him that he wanted the works he composed after 1970 to be viewed as an ‘acts of protest and provocation’.⁹

Antoniou adopted this radical political stance in 1970, when he received a commission to write the music for John Gay’s *The Beggar’s Opera* for the Athens theatre company, ‘Free Theatre’ (Ελεύθερο Θέατρο).¹⁰ He developed a close bond with its director George Michaelidis, an active member of the anti-dictatorship struggle, and soon he began to ‘question seriously his function as a composer’.¹¹ In the same year he faced direct censorship when the play *Autopsy*, written and directed by George Michaelidis and with music composed by him, was banned after six performances. And it was precisely the text from this banning ordinance that the actors of *Protest II* declaimed at the concert on 26 September 1971.¹²

This concert, which was part of the Fourth Hellenic Week held in Athens 19-26 September 1971, was not the only occasion on which avant-garde works expressing opposition to the totalitarian rule of the Junta were performed. In two of these ‘engaged’ works the human voice plays a central role in articulating the opposition of the composer to the regime. The first was Dimitri Dragatakis’s *Zalouh* for clarinet, trombone, tuba, piano, percussion and four narrators (1971), performed six days prior to *Protest II*. In his notes for the work the composer wrote:

Zalouh was written in 1971 as a special commission for the 4th Week. Two [meaningless] syllables, i.e. ‘Za’-and-‘louh’ united in one word, that could express a shout, agony etc., is the basic *raison d’être* of this work.¹³

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ The première of this play on 3 September 1970 (at the ‘Vembo’ theatre) was a great success. The young, restless members of this company were deeply politicised and actively involved in the anti-Junta resistance. Antoniou confirmed that he was deeply influenced by this theatrical environment. Antoniou [1].

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Stefanos Zagoris, ‘Η Μουσική του Θεόδωρου Αντωνίου για το Θέατρο’, *Επί Σκηνής*, 12 (November-December, 2003), pp. 47-51.

¹³ Appendix 2 (1971), p. 145.

A day after the performance of *Zalouh*, George Kouroupos (1942-), a young Greek who had recently graduated from the class of Oliver Messiaen at the Paris Conservatoire, premiered his *Greek Song*, in which he also gave vent to his feelings about the Junta. Kouroupos wrote that his work was based on melodic patterns taken from Greek folk songs. While the ‘melismatic richness’ of the folk song was preserved in the vocal part, the piano accompaniment was given a contrasting ‘homophonic character’.¹⁴ Although the music itself does not exhibit obvious signs of political critique, the political point was articulated at its première by a highly subversive presentation. As the picture in Appendix 3 (1971), p. 158 shows, the baritone Spyros Sakkas was gagged with a cloth band or scarf, a dramatic gesture highly suggestive of the artistic censorship that was imposed by the Colonels’ regime.

Although opposition to the regime was not easily perceptible in works of ‘absolute’ music such as in Sicilianos’s String Quartet no. 4 (1967), also performed during the Fourth Week, such works were also on occasion conceived in these terms. Thus, Sicilianos later disclosed that his Quartet was born out of a ‘personal crisis’ caused by the dictatorship.¹⁵ Likewise, *The Secret Songs of Silence* (1971) by Stephanos Vassiliadis may be viewed as a particularly subtle expression of the composer’s reaction to the repressive environment, though in this case the listener is prompted not to protest but to ‘escape from the barbaric reality’ to an esoteric world (one is reminded of Dallapiccola setting Greek lyrics during the war years in a

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

¹⁵ ‘In November 1967 Sicilianos completed his Fourth Quartet Op. 28, in which he expressed his anger at the coup d’état that had established a dictatorship in Greece’. Valia Christopoulou, ‘Yorgos Sicilianos and the Musical Avant-garde in Greece’, in Costas Tsougras, Danae Stefanou and Kostas Chardas (eds.), *Beyond the Centres: Musical Avant-Gardes Since 1950 – In Memoriam Yannis Andreou Papaioannou (1910-1989)*, *Proceedings of the International Conference* (Thessaloniki, 01-03.07.2010). <http://btc.web.auth.gr> (accessed on 02.03.2012).

retreat to what he called ‘a sweet and starry region’).¹⁶ As Vassiliadis wrote in the programme notes:

These inward-looking songs - songs of intuition, of contemplation, of imagination, of dream, of introspection, of inspiration, of loneliness, of peace, of freedom - are a bulwark against all those empty and seductive fashions associated with cheap advertisements, Cold War propaganda and all the rest of it: these songs either survive deep inside us as the most beautiful manifestation of humanity, or they suffocate and die.¹⁷

A ‘Trojan horse’

The martial law that was established by a group of Greek colonels after a *coup d'état* on 21 April 1967 brought both political isolation and cultural stagnation to Greece. The affiliation agreement with the EC was suspended and censorship was imposed on all artworks that were perceived as exercising social or political critique. During the seven dark years of the Junta, thousands of civilians and prominent figures from the domains of politics, arts and letters became political prisoners and experienced various forms of physical and psychological torture, confinement and exile. Under these severe conditions a new ‘objective’ was added in the programme notes of the Fourth Week, intended to register the sharpest possible contrast between the artistic sphere and the ‘police state’ in which the Greek composers lived and worked. The aim of the Fourth Week, as John G. Papaioannou wrote, was to

[...] provide dialogue opportunities to the composers, performers and audience that can assist them to explore new ideas and trends and their influence on the cultural life of Greece'.¹⁸

¹⁶ ‘In the years when Europe was surrounded by barbed wire and was quickly being reduced to a heap of rubble, I sometimes found relief from that continuous lack of balance to which we had become conditioned in the supreme equilibrium of the Greek lyrics. They helped me endure the tragic events and, perhaps, provided the necessary contrast to the atmosphere of *Il Prigioniero*, in which I was immersed’. As quoted in Rudy Shackelford, ‘A Dallapiccola Chronology’, *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 67/ 3 (July, 1981), pp. 405-436 (p. 417). I am grateful to Professor Jim Samson for bringing this to my attention.

¹⁷ Appendix 2 (1971), p. 148.

¹⁸ This statement is missing from the English translation of the programme of the First Week that is attached as Appendix 2 (1971), pp. 118-157.

Within a climate of cultural and economic inertia, the Fourth Week provided both a ‘shelter’ and a ‘space’ for Greek composers, as well as for artists from other fields, enabling them to bypass political censorship and express their protest through their avant-garde works either unambiguously (Antoniou and Kouroupos) or more subtly (Dragatakis and Scicilianos).¹⁹ But in relation to the broader cultural European scene this festival was also represented, as one critic indicated, as the sole ‘bridge between modern Greek music and that of Europe’.²⁰ Moreover, for the first time since the inauguration of the Weeks in 1966, two smaller festivals springing from the Fourth Week brought contemporary and avant-garde music to the audiences of two provinces in Northern Greece, Thessaloniki and Volos.

At the time, most of the foreign critics attending these festivals expressed their astonishment at the dynamism, success and rapid mushrooming of the Greek avant-garde movement.²¹ Almost all of their reviews of the Fourth Week reported on the eagerness of the Greek audience to attend the twice-daily concerts and other mixed-media events at the ‘Rex’ theatre. Compared to the First Week, the commissions of works by Greek composers for the Fourth Week had tripled in number and most of the Greek avant-garde composers enjoyed frequent premières of their works by the HGCM. Moreover, they also had free access to one of the most advanced electronic synthesisers of the time – the Synthi-100 – that had been installed at the newly established Laboratory for Electronic Music (ΕΡΓΗΜ), and for the first time their compositions were released on gramophone records and distributed in Europe and in the US.

¹⁹ The main theme of the Fourth Week was multi-media art. It was a path just then being explored by the vast majority of the Greek avant-garde, notably the composers Adamis, Dragatakis, Sicilianos, Yanni Vlahopoulos (1939-), Mamangakis, Terzakis, Vassiliadis, Antoniou, Logothetis and the brother of Iannis Xenakis, Cosmas (1925-1984).

²⁰ Fivos Anoyanakis, *Athens News* (09.10.1971).

²¹ See David Jones, ‘Athens: The 4th Hellenic Week of Contemporary Music’, *Contact* (Spring, 1972), pp. 17-19 and Peter Gradenwitz, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (13.10.1971).

Nevertheless, without a series of grants given by the Ford Foundation to the HACM and to its affiliated organisations (the Skalkottas Archive, the EPΓHM and the HGCM) this vibrant avant-garde movement in Greece would not have come to life.²² Following the first three Weeks, organised in 1966, 1967, and 1968, the finances of the HACM slumped, and the prevailing political conditions left no hope for the continuation of this important festival. The following extract from a letter by John G. Papaionanou to the head of the Arts and Humanities Programme at the Ford Foundation two years prior to the Fourth Week is revealing:

Again, no sources in Greece or abroad are in sight that could undertake the basic financing of this event [the Fourth Week]. We turn once more to the Ford Foundation in the hope that it might give favourable consideration to this request of ours which, is our only hope for avoiding the discontinuation of this important series of music festivals.²³

This letter was followed by a detailed funding application requesting \$57,000 (\$48,000 for the Fourth Week plus \$9,000 for Antoniou's HGCM). Surprisingly, not only was this amount – the highest amount to that date requested by a Greek cultural organisation – immediately approved, but an additional amount of \$73,000 was made available for the promotion of contemporary music in Greece and abroad over the next two years.

Before the 1967 *coup d'état* the Ford Foundation had played a significant role in the post-war reconstruction programme in Greece by sponsoring government organisations related to the economic development of the country. However, this cooperation with state organisations abruptly ended in 1967 and the Ford Foundation made a timely U-turn by shifting its priorities from economic development to cultural matters. Apart from the HACM, the Ford Foundation sponsored an impressive number of cultural organisations and individuals from

²² In the five Weeks that took place between 1966 and 1976 the total number of commissions to Greek composers was: three in the First Week (1966); eight in Second Week (1967); ten in the Third Week (1968); ten in the Fourth Week (1971) and none in the Fifth Week (1976).

²³ Letter from John G. Papaioannou to Wilson McNeil Lowry, Vice President of the Ford Foundation dated Athens, 17.06.1969. ASCSA, FFF, Box: 12/1.

the arts, most advocating resistance to the regime during the seven years of Junta. Between 1968 and 1972 approximately four hundred Greeks were awarded various types of grants. As the administrator of Athens branch of the Ford Foundation, Katy Myrivilli, stated:

This large percentage [of Ford Foundation grantees], whose influence and creativity extend into as many areas as is covered by the wide-range of the Foundation's programme in Greece, has already had a great impact both in the completion of individual projects and in influencing the course of cultural progress. [...] In view of the history and the continuing circumstances that prevail in Greece, [Junta] it would seem essential that the programme in this country continues to receive a high priority and substantial commitment. There is quite simply no other source available to perform this same valuable purpose. [...] The contribution the Ford Foundation has made in Greece will clearly become recognized for what it was when the history of Greek intellectual life is written with proper objectivity and thoroughness.²⁴

However, the strong anti-American feeling that prevailed during the Junta years, together with the limited publicity that the Ford Foundation programmes were given and ‘the utmost discretion’ under which these activities were conducted, ‘gave rise to an atmosphere of secrecy which bred suspicion about the methods and purpose of the programme’; and these factors soon made the Ford Foundation a favourite target among Greek journalists and certain intellectuals.²⁵ Since the Junta itself could not be attacked because of the strict censorship, both the press and certain individuals attacked the Ford Foundation instead and denounced it as an extension of the US administration responsible for the dictatorship in Greece.²⁶ The Ford Foundation subsidies became both a major moral concern for those who received them and a political issue that divided the Greek intelligentsia and members of the anti-dictatorship struggle, including avant-garde composers. This issue was frequently raised in the press and it became a recurrent topic in a number of art journals that were circulated in a semi-legal way among the leftist intelligentsia. The attacks on the Ford Foundation, reaching their peak

²⁴ Katy Myrivilli, ASCSA, FFF, Box: 3/1.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, Box: 4/1.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

in 1972, also generated suspicion among the wider Greek public, who were not convinced that ‘something could be given for nothing’.²⁷

These subsidies were often dubbed a ‘Trojan horse’: a tool of American imperialism invading the cultural life of Greece and harnessing its spiritual leaders to the cause. The Ford Foundation was particularly attacked by the rejected applicants, who joined the ‘hard core leftists’ and accused the Foundation of implementing a policy of grants ‘to alienate artists, intellectuals and social scientists from political activities and to keep them at work in their own fields’, arguing that the ‘dirty capitalistic origin of the Foundation’s money had created a “house divided against itself”’.²⁸

By using several of the musical organisations with which he was involved, John G. Papaioannou ingeniously channelled Ford Foundation funds so that, directly or indirectly, they could benefit numerous Greek avant-garde composers during the entire period of the Junta. While many individual artists and cultural institutions – the Union of Greek Composers is the most indicative example – failed to obtain a single dollar, Papaioannou nevertheless succeeded in convincing the Ford Foundation administrators to sponsor his own projects.²⁹ The subsidies also helped promote Skalkottas’s music, which for many years had struggled to find any resonance abroad. In 1968, for example, a Ford Foundation grant allowed Papaioannou to hire editors to prepare performing scores from Skalkottas’s manuscripts, and this allowed 19 of his works to be performed at the English Bach Festival in

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.* and Box: 4/3.

²⁹ Even Antoniou, who knew Wilson McNeil Lowry personally, repeatedly failed to secure a grant without the involvement of John G. Papaioannou. In one of his distressed letters to Lowry he wrote: ‘I am not a specialist fundraiser. [...] If you think that the way to support the group [the HGCM] through the HACM as you did before, please feel free to do so. What I really want is to find a way to continue my programmes’. Letter from Theodore Antoniou to Wilson McNeil Lowry dated Salt Lake City, 10.05.1973. ASCA, FFF, Box: 12/3.

1969 to mark the bicentenary of his death.³⁰ Papaioannou's talent as a fundraiser was widely acknowledged and respected and it was this key position that gave him the power to mentor, influence and lead key musical events in the country for much of the second half of the twentieth century.

The men and the millions

The 'key' that allowed Papaioannou access to foreign sponsorship and particularly to the Ford Foundation treasury was 'given' to him by Constantinos Doxiadis. As discussed in an earlier section, Doxiadis had an unsurpassed talent in persuading the wealthiest and most prestigious American institutions to fund his modernist projects. At the ATI, the greatest recipient of funds in the history of the Ford Foundation, Papaioannou had a unique opportunity to learn first-hand the secrets of successful fundraising.³¹ It was there that he was trained to write proposals that reflected and complied with the principles and cultural perspectives of the American sponsors. In the field of fundraising generally, and in persuading American sponsors that specific cultural projects were worthy of funding, Papaioannou followed Doxiadis's lead.

Doxiadis's models for innovation and development by way of various carefully controlled networks that facilitated both communication and economic growth, were immensely appealing to the European and American intellectuals who were fighting in the cultural vanguard of the Cold War. While his political instinct led him to promote particular types of

³⁰ See newspaper announcement, Appendix 4 (1971), p. 159.

³¹ Research at the Ford Foundation archives in the US has revealed that Doxiadis had received via the ATI almost \$5 million for his various research projects, which could be regarded as 'the largest personal award in the history of the Foundation'. Jeannie Kim, 'C. A. Doxiadis and the Funding of Ecumenopolis', abstract from a paper in *Space and Progress: Ekistics and the Global Context of Post World-War II. Urbanization and Architecture, International Workshop on the Work and Ideas of C. A. Doxiadis* (Athens, 01-02.01.2006). www.doxiadis.org/Kim.htm (accessed on 15.03.2011).

architectural projects that would fulfil the American aspiration to appear as trail-blazing pioneers, the detailed and sophisticated studies that accompanied his funding applications allowed him to disseminate his modernist vision to the West. Moreover, he adopted an unusual public relations strategy to achieve his goals.

Every summer from 1960 Doxiadis would invite an elite group from various and often diverse disciplines such as architecture, social science, arts, mathematics, physics, anthropology and archaeology from mainly Western countries to take part in a series of conferences which became known as the ‘Delos Symposia’. The participants would embark on the ‘Hellas’ cruise boat to sail to the Greek islands. During these weekly cruise-conferences, communication was limited and no filming or mechanical recording of the various events, lectures or speeches was allowed.³² It was during these summer cruises that Doxiadis befriended Wilson McNeil Lowry, who since 1964 had served as Vice-President of the Ford Foundation and head of its Arts and Humanities Division.³³ Lowry, who became a frequent participant at the Delos Symposia, developed a fascination with Ancient Greek theatre and architecture and even chose Sifnos, a small Aegean island, as his permanent summer residence. During his summer residence in Greece Lowry and his family gradually

³² The outcome of these cruises was summarised in a document called ‘The Delos Declaration, [which] was reported extensively in newspapers and journals, was cited in discussions on housing at the United Nations, and was entered into the official records of the US Congress – events that were eagerly monitored by the monthly in-house magazine of Doxiadis’s design office. The model for all this was the fourth meeting of CIAM (The Congrès Internationaux d’Architecture Moderne) in 1933, the boat trip from Marseilles to Athens and back, out of which the famous Athens Charter on the future of the city emerged’. Mark Wigley, ‘Network Fever’, *Grey Room*, 4 (Summer, 2001), pp. 82-122 (p. 88).

³³ Wilson McNeil Lowry (1913-1993) was born in Columbus, Kansas. After receiving his Doctorate in English literature from the University of Illinois (1941), he worked for the Office of War Information (1942-43); as a lieutenant in US Navy (1943-46); as a freelance journalist (1946-1952) and as an associate director of the International Press Institute in Zurich (1952-53). From 1953 until 1975 Lowry was employed by the Ford Foundation to direct the Arts and Humanities Division.

developed an intimate bond with its people and showed a particularly strong interest in familiarising themselves with its traditions and culture.

Those members of the Greek intellectual elite who were appreciated by Doxiadis also benefited. In January 1968, soon after the establishment of the Junta, Lowry visited Athens and contacted Doxiadis, from whom he requested a list of the most important Greek intelligentsia worthy of financial assistance.³⁴ A note that verifies this encounter and request still exists amongst Doxiadis's personal papers:

He [Lowry] told me that he came here [to Athens] to stay for 6-7 days and wants to meet Greek artists, authors, actors, sculptors, and musicians in order see how they can get in touch with their American colleagues, arrange exchange visits and secure cooperation. I promised to provide him with a list of people he will see.³⁵

Doxiadis provided Lowry with a list of the names and addresses of people from the domains of poetry, dance, visual arts and theatre; and predictably it included the name of his colleague, John G. Papaioannou, as the most appropriate person with whom Lowry could discuss the sponsorship of Greek composers.³⁶ Later in the same year the first significant grant from the Ford Foundation to HACM to organise the Third Week was awarded, when the Division of Arts and Humanities of the Ford Foundation launched a programme in Greece 'unlike its usual programme policy for countries abroad'.³⁷ The series of grants worth over \$7 million from the 'Strengthening Cultural Opportunities in Greece' programme to Greek

³⁴ An additional source of information about Lowry's tentative plans to assist Greek intellectuals comes from the poet Kostas Taktsis, who was also one of the first grantees of the Ford Foundation. He wrote: 'A high official of the Ford Foundation had come to Athens. It wasn't the first time. [...] This time the Foundation official asked the assistant cultural attaché of the American Embassy which Greek writers he thought were good and [who] also needed some financial aid. The attaché had no idea. The Foundation's assistant, Katie Myrivilli, was sick in the hospital. So he asked some common friends of ours, George and Lydia Vassilopoulos, and they suggested me'. Kostas Taktsis, 'My Short Life with Seferis', Mary Keeley (trans.), *Grand Street*, Vol. 5/2 (Winter, 1986), pp. 187-200 (p. 197).

³⁵ 'Note for Mr Lowry' dated Athens, 11.01.1968. Doxiadis Archives, File: 1480/7.

³⁶ See note from Doxiadis as Appendix 5 (1971), p. 160.

³⁷ Myrivilli [24].

individuals and organisations was the largest amount ever given to a single country outside the US.³⁸ Its primary objective was

[...] to help forestall the erosion of the artistic and cultural resources in Greece which are threatened by severe economic conditions and *other factors*'.³⁹

Eventually the Greek programme of the Ford Foundation developed clear objectives based on a sound philosophy and determinate criteria and procedures. The most successful Greek applicants were those who could demonstrate that their proposed projects would have a direct impact on, and would contribute to, the cultural development of Greece. Acknowledging the danger of possible identification with either the American Administration, the CIA or with the Greek Junta, the Ford Foundation persistently refrained from sponsoring institutions linked to or sponsored by state or governmental organisations. This policy of the Ford Foundation had an impact on the Fourth Week, as the grants allocated to the HACM were subject to two irrevocable commitments. The first was that only Greek composers and performers would be eligible beneficiaries of the grants while the second prohibited the HACM from receiving any additional state funds.

Compliments to the patron

The turmoil around the Ford Foundation's role in Greek culture did not leave the HACM and Greek avant-garde composers untouched. At the end of the Fourth Week composers and other members of the HACM once again found themselves in a hopeless financial situation and unable to locate resources to fund their planned activities. On 22 December 1972 the General Assembly of the HACM was convened to discuss, among other issues, the finances of the association. John G. Papaioannou, whose latest application for funding to the Ford

³⁸ 'Strengthening Cultural Opportunities in Greece'. These files are currently deposited in the Library of Illinois University. Record series number: 26/20/96.

³⁹ Myrivilli [24]. Note that Junta is not directly named but is undoubtedly implied.

Foundation was still pending, faced the composer-members with a dilemma when he stated that:

If we receive the grant from the Ford Foundation our revenues will exceed the amount of 65,000 drachmas that we can collect through our own means. In our application to the Ford Foundation we have requested 1,500,000 drachmas, [but] the matter is pending. Therefore our budget has this ‘double substance’. It will be restricted if we do not receive the Ford Foundation grant and it will be expanded if we receive it. [...] the point which I want to make is the following: The entire support from the Ford Foundation rests on one individual who is the man in charge of issues related to humanities at the Ford Foundation, Mr Lowry, a man of great stature and education who has assisted Greece in many ways. I therefore submit my proposal to name Mr Lowry as an honorary member of our association [HACM].⁴⁰

Papaioannou’s position was unambiguous. If the Greek composers wanted their works to be performed they had to unanimously elect as honorary member a prominent American who represented an institution that was denounced in the Greek press as in the service of Cold War cultural propaganda and as an instrument of the CIA that supported the Greek Junta. To certain members of the HACM, particularly those with a leftist orientation, this proposal was disquieting, to say the least. The reaction was mixed. While some directly opposed Papaioannou’s proposal, others emphasised the genuine interest of Lowry in Greek cultural matters, arguing that this stood outside any political dimensions. Papaioannou and Antoniou – the prime advocates of the proposal – gave guarantees of Lowry’s political neutrality, and emphatically prompted the more sceptical members of the HACM to vote unanimously for the award of an honorary title. After the initial objections, the financial benefits of Papaioannou’s proposal were reconsidered and prioritised. The anti-American feelings were finally set aside and the general assembly of the HACM unanimously elected Lowry as a patron of the Greek Arts and an honorary member of the HACM. A few months later two

⁴⁰ ‘Minutes of the Repeated General Assembly of the HACM members on 22.12.1972’, pp.1-8 (pp. 6-7). Source: CMRC.

additional grants for the promotion of contemporary music in Greece were approved by the headquarters of the giant of ‘American philanthropy’.

An ‘American Janus’

Many Greek intellectuals, including active communists who faced exile and physical torture from the regime, acknowledged the positive contribution of the Ford Foundation to their lives and careers, and particularly the personal treatment and support which they received from its Vice-President, Lowry. The most eminent Greek literati, including the theatre director Karolos Koun, the author Dimitris Maronitis, and the ethnomusicologist Simon Karras, were convinced that the interest of the Ford Foundation, and of Lowry in particular, in the cultural matters of the country was genuine. This in turn gave them a different perspective on the US. As one journalist wrote, ‘America is a Janus – a giant with two faces: the one is turned backward and the other is facing forward in progress’; and concluded that ‘Mr Lowry (is) a real friend of the country who leads the Ford Foundation programme [... and] is the expression of the other, the good face of America’.⁴¹ One of the most indicative examples of this two-sided approach came from a prominent Greek philosopher and author, Christos Yannaras, who wrote upon Lowry’s retirement in 1975 that:

I met McNeil Lowry at a time when my country was experiencing an everyday tragedy, the results of the foreign policy of his own country. This policy totally ignored respect for the essentials of human life. The impression I drew was that McNeil Lowry was beyond this attitude of his country.⁴²

Even the Nobel laureate, the poet Odysseus Elytis, characterised Lowry’s services to Greece as deeds that allowed the Greeks ‘to discover the other, the true face of America’. It is a favour, Elytis wrote, ‘that we owe him and one for which his country should [also] be

⁴¹ Costas Stamatiou, *Ta Nέα* (23.11.1970).

⁴² ‘Tributes to W. McNeil Lowry’. ASCSA, FFF, Box: 3/2.

indebted to him forever'.⁴³ Despite the fact that much of preceding discussion regarding the Ford Foundation subsidies belongs to the wider cultural and political context of post-war Greece, it is nevertheless inseparable from the history of avant-garde music in Greece, a history within which it was customary to view foreign patronage with suspicion, as it was so often an instrument of propaganda.

The role of the Ford Foundation in Greece during the Junta period appears to be somehow different from that described by Frances Stonor Saunders in her influential book *Who Paid the Piper*.⁴⁴ There she refers to an earlier phase of the Cold War, during which she claims that the Ford Foundation functioned as an instrument of the CIA through the sponsorship of the Western Leftist (but anti-communist) intelligentsia as a recruitment strategy in support of Cold War cultural propaganda.⁴⁵ After 1958, American institutions such as the University of California, the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations began to cooperate with the Greek governments and funded far-reaching projects aimed at promoting economic development, strengthening Greece's free-market economy and raising the living standards of the Greeks, all in an attempt to forestall the 'gang war' that was still conducted by the Greek communists.⁴⁶ During the Junta period, however, the Ford Foundation wanted to avoid identification with the regime, and accordingly ceased its cooperation with Government organisations and focused exclusively on sponsoring cultural NGOs and individual artists.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ [...] the use of philanthropic foundations was the most convenient way to pass large sums of money to CIA projects without alerting the recipients to their source'. Frances Stonor-Sounders, *Who Paid the Piper: CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (London: Grata, 2000), p. 134.

⁴⁵ 'The architects of the foundation's cultural policy in the aftermath of the Second World War were perfectly attuned to the political imperatives which supported America's booming presence on the world stage. At times, it seemed as if the Ford Foundation was simply an extension of government in the area of international cultural propaganda. The foundation had a record of close involvement in covert actions in Europe, working closely with Marshall Plan and CIA officials on specific projects'. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

⁴⁶ For a concise history of the Ford Foundation in Greece see George Karambelias, 'The Ford Foundation Family: Διανοούμενοι, Χρήμα και Εξουσία', *Αρδην*, 56 (October-November, 2005), pp. 21-60 (p. 28).

Another parameter that distinguishes the Ford Foundation's involvement in Greek culture is the personal interest and the close friendships that Lowry established with the local leftist and communist intelligentsia during his frequent visits to Greece, which – as far as I was able to decipher from the Ford Foundation Archives in Athens – seemed to have exceeded his professional duties. A number of issues arise here: Was this massive financial injection of funds for Greek culture accomplished solely by Lowry, and motivated solely by his desire to support Greek intellectuals? Or was it a deliberate plan to harness the anger of the cultural elites of Greece against the foreign policy of the country by showing them the other good, philanthropic and philhellenic face of America? Despite the fact that this matter had generated a feverish debate and a prolonged public polemic involving the most eminent personalities from the domain of arts and letters, the answer still remains evasive and the truth is likely to be found somewhere in the grey area between Lowry's personal interest and the official Ford Foundation policy. When, for instance, Lowry visited Greece the local intelligentsia were surprised to discover that an American official, who represented one of the most financially powerful US organisations,

[...] did not adhere to the model of the American cowboy but to the educated and liberal class of Americans, and who in addition was an admirer of Ancient Greece (and possibly anti the Junta). Those [Greeks] were prepared to 'surrender' and withdraw their previous reservations – if they had such. [...] The 'good' American would prepare the ground to heal the wounds that his 'bad' brother had caused to Greece! ⁴⁷

Another factor which made the Greek intellectuals view the Ford Foundation as an expression of the 'good face' of America is that the grants were allocated to individuals irrespective of their political, ideological or sexual preferences; and freedoms of expression and association were fully supported. For these reasons Greek avant-garde composers accepted and welcomed the Ford Foundation subsidies, as these afforded them an opportunity to compose and perform their works outside the highly repressive environment of the Junta.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

Yet despite the fact that this ‘no strings attached’ financial support gave them a strong sense of freedom, the perception (illusion?) of artistic freedom created by the Ford Foundation grants was paradoxically very close to the definition of effective propaganda given in a US National Security directive of 1950, according to which ‘the subject moves to the direction you desire for reasons which he believes to be his own’.⁴⁸

Without any doubt, the most potent, sustained and influential cultural programmes implemented in Greece were by countries that had political and financial interests in the region. The operation of cultural institutes, information centres, studios of contemporary music and festivals were some of the cultural accomplishments performed in tandem with powerful foreign patronage. Without this foreign intervention, musical events of historical importance would never have occurred and it is certain that the history of avant-garde music in Greece would have been quite different. It therefore becomes obvious that any consideration of, or attempt to present, this history without reference to this context would be seriously incomplete, as foreign cultural and financial assistance was crucial in the construction of Greece’s avant-garde profile both within the country and abroad. Whether desired or not, Greek composers and indigenous cultural administrators relied on foreign patrons with ‘stronger arms’, and this argument dates back to the early days of the foundation of Modern Greece, since its poetic expression is reflected in the ninth strophe of the Greek national anthem.

Oft in garments blood-bespattered
Thou didst roam from land to land
Seeking, shamed and spirit-weary,
Stronger arms to wield thy land.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Stonor-Sounders [44], p. 4.

⁴⁹ From Dionysios Solomos’s poem ‘Hymn to Liberty’ (1823). As quoted in Theodore Stephanides and George Katsimbalis, *Anglo-Hellenic Review*, Vol. 1/1 (Allied Information Service – Athens, March, 1945), p. 4.

Chapter 4. New Music to Suit the Nation

1975. Diplomacy and Culture: The ‘Xenakis Week’

No country has either possessed a greater wealth of culture than Greece or been more backward in exploiting it.¹

Constantinos Karamanlis

The triumphant return

Under the full moon on the evening of 14 September 1974, an audience of 5000 flocked to the Herodus Atticus open amphitheatre on the southern slope of the Acropolis to attend a concert with a programme exclusively dedicated to Xenakis. It was a stirring moment when Iannis, accompanied by his wife Françoise, entered the amphitheatre and took his place next to Hadjidakis.² Without being officially announced, Xenakis was nonetheless instantly recognised and was greeted by a spontaneous eruption of applause from the audience.³ This concert would signpost his return to Greece 28 years after his escape to France, and it was the first time that his compatriots would be given an opportunity to listen live to a wide range of his most technically and aurally demanding works given by a number of distinguished ensembles and soloists. During his absence Xenakis had become a popular symbol of resistance against fascism and foreign intervention in the domestic life of his home country, but on that night no-one could have predicted how the audience would respond to his music.

As Brigitte Schiffer, an English musicologist and critic, reported:

¹ As quoted in Christopher Woodhouse, *Karamanlis: the Restorer of Democracy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), p. 244.

² Photograph, Appendix 1 (1975), p. 162.

³ Dominic Gill, *The Financial Times* (01.10.1975).

Where they really aware of the traumatic experience that awaited them, of the kind of music they were going to hear, most of them for the first time in their lives? If it was a surprise for them, they certainly did not show it.⁴

The Greek audience, perhaps expecting Xenakis's compositions to yield some potent message or to exert a force comparable to his deeds in the resistance and the Greek civil war, showed no signs of disappointment or frustration: 'Nobody left, nobody moved, and a stream of applause greeted every single work' of the programme which began with *Syrmos* (1959) for 18 strings and ended with *Antikhthon* (1971) for a large orchestra, performed by the Strasbourg Symphony Orchestra and conducted by Michel Tabachnik.⁵ From the sustained 'electronic-sounding clusters of multiphonics' played by the three clarinets, amplified by brass clusters, in the opening section of *Antikthon* to the rhythmic complexity of the interjected winds in the second section; from the 'intricate and elaborate distribution of glissandi' in the strings in the fourth section to 'extreme extensions of instrumental writing' in which each player has a clearly differentiated role: these were some of the elements that assailed the audience, most of whom were entirely unaccustomed to this type of music.⁶ The performance by the Strasbourg Symphony Orchestra, which highlighted these groundbreaking elements of Xenakis's music, also left a strong impression on the connoisseurs by changing their perception of what was humanly possible in an instrumental performance. As the musicologist and critic Katy Romanou wrote in her review a few days later:

We realised that [...] the Symphony Orchestra of Strasbourg can render with precision the most asymmetrical rhythmical subdivisions and the most extreme dynamic contrasts, can play the most 'inconvenient' successions of notes, and that they can produce on their instrument whatever

⁴ Brigitte Schiffer, 'Athens', *Music and Musicians* (December, 1975), p. 22.

⁵ *Ibid.* The Strasbourg Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Michel Tabachnik, was a touring orchestra specialising in Xenakis's works. It was founded by members of the former ORFT Orchestra of Strasbourg, which had been disbanded in December 1974.

⁶ See James Harley, *Xenakis: His Life in Music* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 74 and Nouritza Matossian, *Xenakis* (New York: Khan & Averill, 1986), p. 242.

[musical] interval or timbre is required. These performers, in other words, are active members of contemporary culture because they can interpret with precision any of its expressions.⁷

The interest of the audience was miraculously maintained throughout the entire concert and neither the mathematical complexity nor the harsh sonorities of *Herma* (1960/61) for solo piano or *Nuits* (1967/68) for unaccompanied choir, which ‘filled the space with shrieks of anguish and exclamations of horror’, caused the slightest disapproval or protest.⁸ *Nuits*, where Xenakis uses Sumerian and Persian phonemes instead of a text, is explicitly linked to politics by its dedication, and it had a particular appeal to the audience, since its opening momentarily evokes references to Greek dirges and also because some of the dedicatees of the work such as Costas Philinis (1921-2006), a friend of Xenakis from his youth and a political prisoner during the Junta period, happened to be among the audience.⁹

⁷ Katy Romanou, *Kαθημερινή* (18.09.1975).

⁸ Schiffer [4].

⁹ The dedication of *Nuits* reads as follows: ‘To you obscure political prisoners, Narciso Julian since 1946, Costas Philinis since 1947, Helene Erythriadou since 1950, Jocahim Amaro since 1952, and to the thousands who have been forgotten, whose names are lost’. As soon as Xenakis was allowed to return to Greece he stated: ‘I want to meet my old acquaintances, people I spent time with, including Costas Philinis, for whom I wrote *Nuits*’. Xenakis, *Ανγή* (08.11.1974). Philinis was a fellow student of Xenakis at the Athens Polytechnic, an active member of the resistance and a member of the Greek Communist Party. During the Junta years Philinis and Mikis Theodorakis were founding members of Panhellenic Anti-dictatorial Front (ΠΑΜ), a resistance group aimed at overthrowing the Junta. For his activities in ΠΑΜ, Philinis was given a life sentence and was jailed from 1967 to 1974. Like Xenakis, who believed that science and mathematics could provide models for the arts, Philinis applied mathematical principles in his political writings and analyses. In 1972 he published the first book on this topic in the Greek language (*The Theory of Probabilities and Political Strategy*), in which he studies political conflicts via theories of probability. During his early Greek years Xenakis was preoccupied with similar crossovers, but as he later confessed these efforts were destined to fail. As Xenakis recalled in 1978: ‘I remember that after the war we were trying to establish a revolutionary proletarian physics and a revolutionary proletarian mathematics. There were some serious men dealing with these questions. But it was historically proven that it is impossible for someone coming from the discipline of mathematics to speak about proletarian mathematics. We have revolutions in mathematics or physics when a revolutionary theory is promulgated in terms of mathematics or physics; not in terms of politics or economics. There is therefore autonomy in the arts as in other expressions of the individual that stems from the historical evolution and

Those who speculated that Xenakis's music was merely a passing fashion soon realised they were wrong, for soon after this concert two more followed a few days later on 18 and 20 September 1975, presenting a wide selection of Xenakis's music and attracting even larger and more enthusiastic audiences. The programmes of these concerts were carefully constructed so that the audience could follow the evolution of Xenakis's works from his emblematic *Metastaseis* (1953/54) and *Morsima-Amorsima* (1956-62) to his latest work for a large orchestra, *Empreintes* (1975), which was performed at the final concert.

In the second concert *Synaphai* for piano and orchestra (1969) received such applause that the performers were obliged to repeat its second part. Interpolated in the three concert programmes were works for solo piano, such as *Herma* (1960/61) and *Evryali* (1973), and works for smaller ensembles, such as *Charisma* (1971) and *Anaktoria* (1969), designed to counterbalance the larger symphonic forces of works such as *Pithoprakta* (1955/56) and *Antichthon* (1971).

The third and final concert was a sell-out and during the performance of the last work, *Empreintes* for orchestra, more than 5000 people were mesmerised by the long sustained and imposing unison of its opening and by its quiet ending, marked by a 'low dismissive grunt from the contrabassoon'.¹⁰ The silence that followed increased the dramatic atmosphere of the piece and for a moment 'the audience held its breath until it broke into an applause which gradually gathered volume and finally culminated in a standing ovation for the composer and the performers'.¹¹ Not only did the young crowd from the upper tiers of the amphitheatre erupt with whistles and bravos, but even the political and artistic celebrities in the front seats, which included the Prime Minister Constantinos Karamanlis, stood on their feet looking

development of ideas'. See 'Συνέντευξη με τον Ξενάκη', *Ριζοσπαστική Μαρξιστική Επιθεώρηση*, Vol. 13 (September, 1978). <http://www.musicheaven.gr/html/modules.php?name=News&file=article&id=2088> (Accessed on 20.01.2011).

¹⁰ Harley [6], p. 88.

¹¹ Schiffer [4].

everywhere for the 54-year old Xenakis, who suddenly jumped onto the stage to bow, for the first time in his life, in front of an audience from his home country.¹²

In addition to these three concerts within the same week, two lectures on Xenakis's theoretical concepts (one delivered by Xenakis and the other by John G. Papaioannou) and a Xenakis exhibition took place in Athens. All these events were extensively advertised and collectively launched and organised within a short time, from 14 to 21 September 1975, by the HACM as a special 'welcome home' festival which became known as the Xenakis Week. Unlike the Hellenic Weeks of Contemporary Music or previous festivals that were held in Greece for the first time, this was instigated, actively supported and given unprecedented publicity by the Greek government.¹³ The Prime Minister's Office in tandem with the French Ministry of Culture became actively involved, securing financial support and helping to ease the festival's passage through various bureaucratic bottlenecks.¹⁴

The Xenakis exhibition, lasting for a week and including records, manuscripts and scores, books, graphs, portraits and press reviews drawn mainly from John G. Papaioannou's private collection, also proved to be a major attraction. While browsing through the exhibition items, visitors simultaneously heard Xenakis's music, which was transmitted through loudspeakers.¹⁵ Operating nine hours daily, this soundscape embraced the works that had been excluded from the live concerts as well as the composer's complete electro-magnetic output within a two-day programme. The recordings were played continuously in chronological sequence, beginning with *Achoripsis* (1957) and finishing with *Cendrées*

¹² See Harris Livas, *Athens Daily Post* (22.09.1975); and two reports by Anonymous in *Βραδυνή* (23.09.1975) and *Καθημερινή* (17.09.1975).

¹³ 'In the history of our musical life neither a composer nor a musical event has been promoted to such an extent'. Katy Romanou, *Καθημερινή* (14.09.1976).

¹⁴ Xenakis Week, programme notes, Appendix 2 (1975), pp. 163-179.

¹⁵ Photograph of the Xenakis exhibition, Appendix 3 (1975), p. 180.

(1973/74).¹⁶ In addition, the audience could place individual requests and thus occasionally break the arranged sequence. It was estimated that the exhibition attracted more than 5500 visitors, with many remaining in the venue for a long period and some returning several times. Equally surprising was the curiosity and interest of the Greek audience in the theoretical foundations of Xenakis's music. The auditorium in the National Opera proved too small to accommodate the large turnout for a lecture given by Xenakis entitled 'Scientific Thought and Music', where he presented some of the theoretical concepts that he had developed, played examples, demonstrated scores and analysed excerpts from his works.¹⁷ When Xenakis left the stage three hours later it took some time for the applause to fall silent. A lecture given by John G. Papaioannou in the National Gallery was equally well received and had standing room only.

Like others of the large number of exiled Greek intellectual elites who had been progressively returning to the country after the fall of the Junta in the autumn of 1974, Xenakis was welcomed as a hero, a modern Ulysses making a triumphal return to Ithaca. His return acquired a highly symbolic meaning as it coincided with the return of democracy, possibly the most important turning point in Greek history during the second half of the twentieth century.¹⁸ As a new point of departure, this historical moment, customarily referred

¹⁶ *Cendrées*, which means 'ashes', is for mixed choir and orchestra and lasts 23 minutes. Xenakis noted: 'I chose the title of this work because the year 1974 was a difficult time from many perspectives – and here is where [my] emotions are involved. The conditions were difficult for me personally both from a work perspective and also from what was happening around me (the Vietnam War, the conditions in Greece, Spain and Portugal). Iannis Xenakis, 'Συζήτηση που έγινε στις 09.03.1978 στο Μεγάλο Αμφιθέατρο του Πολυτεχνείου'. As quoted in *Γραφή*, Vol. 2 (July – August, 1978), pp. 69-76 (p.75). At the open lecture that he gave at the National Opera during the Xenakis Week, Xenakis played a recording of the work.

¹⁷ This lecture is published in Makis Solomos (ed.), *Iάννης Ξενάκης: Κείμενα περί Μουσικής και Αρχιτεκτονικής*, trans. Tina Plyta (Athens: Psychogios, 2001), pp. 113-152.

¹⁸ 'The establishment in that year [1974] of full political democracy changed the structures of political life in profound and lasting ways. The most salient processes at the time which had significant impact on the cultural life of Greece were: '(a) the emancipation of the conduct of foreign policy from foreign tutelage; (b) the

to as ‘metapolitefsi’ (frequently translated as ‘change-over’ or ‘regime change’), raised expectations of radical political, social and cultural change.¹⁹

Upon his arrival in Athens Xenakis had categorically excluded any possibility of musical activity and argued that he needed time to ‘combine the images of past and the present’.²⁰ He even responded with the word ‘apathy’ when a journalist asked him how he felt about returning to Greece. ‘And if I say apathy it is because apathy is one of the elements of freedom’, Xenakis continued, as if he wanted to rationalise and to justify philosophically his awkward emotional state as he was preparing to land and face the place and the people connected to his turbulent youth.²¹ But his mixed feelings and initial reservations were soon swept aside by the extraordinary response to his music, and within the next six months he gave several lectures all over Greece.²² More importantly, however, the ambitious Xenakis Week, which took place within less than a year after his return, appeared to have rehabilitated him ‘beyond any doubt as the new national composer’.²³

The success of the Xenakis Week was entirely unforeseen, and it was in sharp contrast to the concerts of the rather lethargic 1975 Athens Festival, which had been held annually during the summer since 1955. Although this state festival had periodically hosted dance, drama and music performances of exceptional quality, during the Junta it fell into artistic stagnation, unable either to synchronise with the official culture or to respond to the new

democratisation of domestic politics [...]; and (c) the internationalisation, and more specifically Europeanization, of politics and culture, a development intimately connected with accession to the European Community’. See Richard Clogg (ed.), *Greece, 1981-89: The Populist Decade* (London: Macmillan, 1993), pp. 7-8.

¹⁹ This term is commonly used to describe the transition to civilian rule. It began with the return of Karamanlis in 1974 and ended in 1989 when the PanHellenic Socialist Party (PaSoK) lost the national elections.

²⁰ Xenakis [9].

²¹ Maria Rezan, *Απογενματινή* (08.11.1974).

²² From November 1974 to April 1975 Xenakis lectured at the University of Athens, the National Theatre in Athens and the Goethe Institute in Thessaloniki.

²³ Schiffer [4].

cultural quests of those agitated youth who would play a decisive role in the overthrow of Junta and the subsequent return to democracy.²⁴

Regular concert-goers welcomed the establishment of, and state support for, the Xenakis Week, but as soon as it started their initial surprise was turned to bewilderment as they were joined by enthusiastic masses, who had never before been exposed to such radical music. All three concerts of the Xenakis Week were broadcast nationally by (Greek) Radio 3, while more than 22000 people in total flocked to the various public venues to see the Xenakis exhibition and attend sophisticated lectures in order to grasp the meaning of all those compositional achievements they had missed during the previous years.²⁵ And although a small number of older critics were rather perplexed by Xenakis's works, younger ones were struck by these accomplished performances. Katy Romanou wrote that 'We awoke and found out how far we have been left behind by European civilisation'.²⁶

Both the daily press of Greece and the music journals recycled the accepted view that the Greek state had specifically organised the Xenakis Week to honour the composer and his important contribution to contemporary music. However, there is evidence to suggest that behind the unprecedented official endorsement of the Xenakis Week, this festival in fact served the interests of Greek diplomacy, and the political objectives of Prime Minister Constantinos Karamanlis in particular. In what follows I will raise several issues that are related to the political agenda, and especially to the timing of the visit to Athens by the President of the French Republic, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. By examining the nature of the

²⁴ Evident from the proliferation of youth festivals organised mainly by party political journals which took place in major cities all over Greece, the Greek youth movement retained much of its militancy for quite a long time after the fall of the Junta. These festivals, which included films, also presented an impressive variety of music, from rock to avant-garde.

²⁵ Radio 3 was part of the Greek National Radio and Television Corporation (EPT) and at the time was headed by Hadjidakis.

²⁶ Romanou [7].

discussions between President and Prime Minister, we can gain renewed insights into how the mutual interests of both countries appeared to have motivated Karamanlis – who was otherwise uninterested in avant-garde music – to provide his full support to the Xenakis Week.²⁷

The reception of Xenakis's music by the majority of his countrymen, most of whom lacked any specialised training or background in classical music, has long puzzled foreign and local critics alike. Although the majority of them have attempted to explain this by referring to the surface characteristics of Xenakis's music, I will argue that the stance of the Greek audience towards both avant-garde music and more accessible music after the fall of Junta can best be understood by way of its socio-political context, and not by its purely artistic qualities.

Constantinos Karamanlis: Restoring democracy and culture

One of the watershed moments in the political history of twentieth-century Greece was the return in 1974 of Constantinos Karamanlis, who ruled the country as Prime Minister for the following six years.²⁸ His task was to restore democratic rule, and although he was criticized by his political opponents for being inefficient in uprooting all vestiges of the previous authoritarian regime, his legacy has acknowledged him as a daring politician who paved the way for a smooth transition from Junta to democratic rule. On one hand, he was determined to industrialise the country, and on the other hand to safeguard Greece's entry into the heart of what was at the time known as the European Community (hereafter EC). And as we will

²⁷ When Karamanlis was asked about his musical preferences he responded: 'Hadjidakis. It is his music I prefer. It expresses the people. [...] As for Theodorakis, I love him very much as well. He votes for communists but [in fact] he is a crypto-Karamanlist'. As quoted in Constantinos Svolopoulos (ed.) *Κωνσταντίνος Καραμανλής: Αρχείο, Γεγονότα και Κείμενα*, Vol. 9, 1974-1977 (Athens: C. G. Karamanlis Foundation, 1996), p. 334.

²⁸ From 1974 to 1980 Karamanlis served as a Prime Minister and from 1980 to 1995 as President of the Hellenic Republic, with a short break from 1985 to 1990.

see in the course of this discussion, cultural events and avant-garde music in particular essentially functioned as utilitarian projects to be employed and put to the service of this latter mission. Both the speed of political change and its magnitude under Karamanlis's rule were overpowering. Political prisoners were released, amnesties – among them that of Xenakis himself – were granted, press and artistic censorship was lifted, and most importantly the Communist Party was legalised in order to exhibit the new democratic, modern and liberal face of Greece. The festive and optimistic mood of the Greek people after the fall of Junta was prolonged for many months, as after his return in December 1974 Karamanlis oversaw a constitutional referendum that decisively 'rejected the monarchy, which had been the conduit and the fulcrum for foreign intervention, fascist dictatorships, and paracratic vigilante groups'.²⁹

The rate of policy change was so rapid and positively unpredictable that an amazed Xenakis was issued with a new passport in 1974 stating 'Hellenic Republic', thus invalidating the institution of monarchy imposed on modern Greece since its early days.³⁰ In his lecture at the National Opera a year later, when he tossed a coin to demonstrate the application of probability theory in stochastic music, he had not yet become fully accustomed to these

²⁹ Nikos Petropoulos, 'A Coup de Grace for the Foreign Monarchy', *Hellenic American Society*, Vol. 1 (1975), pp. 10-21 (p.10).

³⁰ An incident that showcases the Greek audience's political sensitivity and at the same time their strong desire for a radical constitutional change is that on 3 December 1974, a few days before the referendum in which the Greeks were called to choose between a monarchy and a republic, Yehudi Menuhin, who was at the time in Athens for a violin recital, publicly expressed his wish that the Greek people would vote for the monarchy. This statement sparked immediate reactions from almost the entire music establishment of the country including Greek composers, unions of musicians such as the HACM, and critics, all of whom denounced Menuhin's statement as a 'propagandistic'. Whether it was this political statement or because of the quality of his performance, Menuhin's recital was both poorly attended and badly reviewed. For an extreme example of such a review see: George Leotsakos, *Ta Nέα* (05.12.1974).

changes, asking his compatriots through force of habit ‘Heads or Tails?’, only to correct himself with ‘Democracy or Tails?’³¹

Karamanlis was determined to ‘raise the cultural level’ of the people, and to Europeanise them, and if necessary, as he argued, ‘against their will’.³² To accomplish this he used a wide range of tactics, including his personal influence on certain European leaders, the mobilisation of Greek diplomatic bodies to reach commercial and cultural agreements with their neighbouring communist Balkan countries and Turkey, and the fostering and maintenance of good relations both with the US and the USSR. In addition to this intense diplomatic activity, he was the first post-war politician to exploit Greece’s ancient heritage. Many of the cultural events sponsored by his government aimed at attracting the interest of the international intellectual elite. As his fellow politician and scholar Constantinos Tsatsos wrote:

[Karamanlis’s] cultural policy comprised a painstaking effort to reveal Greek culture to foreigners. He generously funded projects that enhanced the cultural splendour of our country, precisely because he knew that the foreigners honoured us for our cultural offerings, not only ancient but medieval and contemporary.³³

The state-sponsored cultural events under Karamanlis’s leadership can be viewed as bold political enterprises with two objectives. Their aim was to boost the national pride of the Greeks and also to remind the European nations of Greece’s rich cultural heritage and current potential.³⁴ The position of Karamanlis was that even though the Greek economy lacked

³¹ Anonymous, *Καθημερινή* (21.09.1975) and Solomos [17], p.119.

³² Woodhouse [1], p. 244.

³³ As quoted in Marietta Minotos, ‘The Content of the Konstantinos G. Karamanlis Archive: its European Dimension’, *Revista General de Información y Documentación*, Vol. 18 (2008), pp. 239-256 (p. 249).

³⁴ Karamanlis’s post-1974 cultural development projects were impressive. Among the most indicative of them were: an international conference on the Macedonian Treasures in Thessaloniki; the foundation of the Athens Concert Hall and National Gallery; the opening of a new building for the Athens Conservatory, and a world-tour exhibition of the treasures of the Knossos Palace from Crete. As to music, Karamanlis showed an apparent bias towards Hadjidakis, and upon his appointment as Director General of the Athens State Orchestra he instructed

vigour and the country had recently exited from a seven-year dictatorship, Greece still deserved to become a member of the EC, an argument he made first and foremost on cultural grounds.

Karamanlis's persistence and commitment to modernising the country had been appreciated by a number of major foreign leaders, including the German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and the French President Giscard d'Estaing, politicians of great influence, and men with whom he fostered and maintained close relationships and who would prove instrumental in supporting Greece's petitions for EC membership. Giscard d'Estaing in particular was even dubbed the 'Godfather of Greece', not least because he had loaned Karamanlis his presidential aircraft to return to Greece on the night the Junta fell.³⁵ Although Schmidt and d'Estaing paid separate visits to Greece towards the end of 1975, it was the visit of the latter that essentially prompted and made possible the Xenakis Week. As John G. Papaioannou stated, this had been deliberately arranged by the Greek Government so that it coincided with the official visit to Athens of President Giscard d'Estaing (17 to 21 September 1975), as a symbolic gesture of cultural collaboration between Xenakis's country of origin and his adopted country, representing two worlds that have deeply influenced, and in many ways, his thinking and his creative output.³⁶

As a gesture of mutual courtesy and good will the French and Greek Governments also co-funded the Xenakis Week, during which Karamanlis and d'Estaing discussed political and

him that, 'The Athens State Orchestra must perform in Europe'. [As quoted by anonymous author in *To Βήμα* (07.10.1978)] In 1975 Karamanlis also passed new legislation for the funding of private cultural organisations such as the HACM; the 'Greek Choreodrama' of Rallou Manou that specialised in ancient dramas; the Dora Stratou Dance Company for Greek folk dance and the Art Theatre of Karolos Kuhn that gave impressive performances of ancient drama as well as contemporary and avant-garde theatre. Moreover Karamanlis's Minister of Culture Mr Trypanis noted that only those cultural institutes with 'high goals will be funded by the Greek state'. The Greek Government – as it was reported in the press – took the decision 'to boost those cultural organisations that represent Greece abroad and that this support symbolises the acknowledgement by the State of how significant their performances abroad are'. Anonymous, *To Βήμα* (29.05.1975).

³⁵ Andrew Leech, *Athens News* (08.11.2000).

³⁶ See Appendix 2 (1975), p. 165.

financial issues of mutual importance. It was envisaged that this would contribute towards a supportive and symbiotic policy environment and to far-reaching agreements beneficial to both sides. The prime concerns for Karamanlis were to secure the political support of France for Greece's affiliation to the EC and the strengthening of a military alliance in case of conflict with Turkey. On the agenda of the French president there were two important financial matters. Because the French arms industry was facing serious financial difficulties, d'Estaing was anxious to ensure that the orders for war supplies, missiles and jet fighters that had been given to France from the colonels of the Junta would not be cancelled by the government of Karamanlis. In fact, d'Estaing even exerted pressure on Karamanlis to place additional orders of arms to an amount in the region of one billion francs. It was implied that in return for these orders France would support Greece's military and political objectives, particularly those related to its affiliation with EC.

The visit of the French President to Athens in September 1975 also offered Karamanlis an opportunity to showcase the progress Greece was making in political, economic and cultural spheres. Even Xenakis's presence at the official reception in the presidential mansion prior to the opening of his Week offered Karamanlis a chance to put on display the democratic credentials that had been achieved in the short time since the fall of the Junta. 'Do you recognise this man?' Karamanlis asked d'Estaing, 'He was a partisan and I gave him his citizenship back'.³⁷

The sentiment of the Greek populace and particularly that of the younger generation towards France at the time of the visit of the French President was also extremely positive. Not only were the student demonstrations against the Junta, which culminated in the bloody Polytechnic uprising on the 17 November 1973, inspired by the May 1968 protests in France;

³⁷ Anonymous, *Καθημερινή* (20.09.1975).

all the major ideological and political reformations that took place in Greece between 1968 and 1973 echoed this legendary French movement.³⁸ During this period,

Xenakis had become a symbol for students protesting against tradition and the status quo: for instance, the graffiti slogan ‘Xenakis, not Gounod’, was scrawled on the walls of the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris. Those young people, seeking ‘music that transcended the limits of tradition and nationalism’ and rejecting the ‘forms and dress codes’ of the concert ritual, thronged to [the *Polytope* of] *Cluny*, where they ‘sat on the floor, surrounded by strange sonorities and subjecting themselves to perpetual and aesthetic experimentation’.³⁹

The May 1968 movement in France had such a lasting impact on the anti-dictatorship struggle of the Greeks that for a long period, even after the fall of the Junta, pro-French slogans such as ‘Greece and France: United!’ were frequently heard in processions in the streets of Athens.⁴⁰ From the first moment of his return to Greece Xenakis was asked about the strong pro-French sentiments of Greeks, and in one of his rare unguarded statements about Greek politics after he fled the country, he said:

I believe that in politics there is little space for sentimentalism. Therefore I insist that Greece should follow its own path. This doesn’t mean she can’t have friends, but temporary friends, not eternal! Alas, we believed in friendships in the past. But I believe that this current position of France is honest. [...] And I believe that this bond between France and Greece is constructive. Of course, if it continues [it must be] on a reciprocal basis and serve the real interests of both countries.⁴¹

But behind this 1975 visit of the French president and his public display of philhellenism at the official banquets, and despite the public announcements made by both political leaders about the cultural bonds between the two countries, French diplomacy also, and understandably, had more practical and tangible objectives, and the Greek side was prepared to acquiesce in these. It was reported in the daily press:

³⁸ Petros Efthymiou, *To Βήμα* (10.05.1998).

³⁹ Maria A. Harley, ‘Music of Sound and Light: Xenakis’s Polytopes’, *Leonardo* Vol. 31/1 (1998), pp. 53-65 (p. 59).

⁴⁰ Another reason for the pro-French sentiments of the Greeks is that both countries had left the military section of NATO: France in July 1966 and Greece in August 1973 as a protest to the Turkish invasion of Cyprus.

⁴¹ Xenakis, interviewed by Bassilis Makridis, *Ακρόπολις* (08.11.1974).

The realistic face of French liberalism is related to the politico-economic and military interests of Paris in the eastern Mediterranean region. These interests are of course not about selling their weapons. [...] However, this realistic – if you could put it crudely – opportunistic basis of French philhellenism does not reduce its usefulness [for Greece].⁴²

Xenakis, Karamanlis and the institutionalisation of new music

Both the popularity and the diplomatic expediency of the Xenakis Week led the Karamanlis government to provide further support for even grander endeavours in the field of avant-garde music, including the *Mycenae Polytope* three years later. John G. Papaioannou and the HACM also benefited from this abrupt shift in the cultural priorities of the Greek state, as they were able to access state funds and facilities. Prior to the Xenakis Week, both the HACM and Greek composers more generally were facing significant financial problems, as one of their principal sponsors, The Ford Foundation, was no longer available to them since the fall of Junta. In January 1975 the HACM gave publicity to a letter addressed to the Minister of Culture, in which Greek composers stated that the major political shifts in the country should be accompanied by equally radical cultural shifts. They denounced the official state institutions, such as the National Radio and Television, the National Symphony Orchestra, the state festivals and the National Opera, for being indifferent and hostile to contemporary music and for undermining the Greek audience's readiness to appreciate it.⁴³ This open letter was a call on the Greek state and authorities actively to support contemporary music, financially and in other ways. Initially their plea seemed to have been heard, as a few months later in June 1975 a group of French-trained Greek composers (Kyriakos Sfetsas, George Kouroupos and George Aperghis) led by Hadjidakis announced

⁴² As quoted in Svolopoulos [27], p. 125.

⁴³ A few days later, on 16 January 1975, during a press conference in Goethe Institute of Athens Theodore Antoniou also criticised the lack of state support and the serious financial problems that Greek composers were facing. See E. M. *Avyγή* (07.01.1975).

the foundation of a Studio of Electronic Music as part of the EIPT (Greek National Broadcasting Corporation). The statement given to the press was as follows:

[...] the most important function of this Studio is to bring the Greek populace [λαϊκό κοινό] into direct contact with contemporary music. This can be achieved if the concerts are preceded with a historical and political analysis, which makes clear that the boundaries between the various social classes and art are neither real, natural, nor founded on reason;[in fact] it is the exact opposite'.⁴⁴

However, this project never materialised, and only the Xenakis Week two months later appeared to give hope to the Greek avant-garde for a better future, as for the first time the Greek state, according to John G. Papaioannou, finally

[...] embraced both with its [financial] support and its affection such an important grand-scale event in the domain of contemporary music, where Greece possesses, as is internationally known, particularly strong forces.⁴⁵

Xenakis too had expectations of the Greek state, as shortly before the Week he stated that ‘the lack of state support for the arts can be compared with a country that has aeroplanes but no airports for them to land’.⁴⁶ The modernising vision of Karamanlis, his euro-centricity, his belief in the ideals of classical civilisation, and also his sponsorship of avant-garde music, were factors that finally convinced Xenakis of Karamanlis’s importance in effectively promoting both the ancient heritage and the current cultural potential of the country. And it was in this new political context and new spirit that Xenakis decided to approach Karamanlis in person about the need to institutionalise the avant-garde in his home country. This is evident from an unpublished letter – Appendix 4 (1975), pp. 181-182 – that was sent six years after his return to Greece. What is striking about this letter is that Xenakis seemed able to come to terms with the fact that fourteen years earlier Prime Minister Karamanlis had resorted to extreme repressive actions such as the imprisonment on charges of treason of a

⁴⁴ Katy Romanou, *Kαθημερινή* (10.06.1975).

⁴⁵ John G. Papaioannou, ‘Δελτίο Τύπου’ (24.09.1975).

⁴⁶ Xenakis, as quoted in Costas Linardatos, *Bραδυνή* (21.08.1975).

large number of communists and political personalities.⁴⁷ He also knew that Karamanlis had signed agreements with West Germany to terminate the trials of German war criminals from World War II and had withdrawn Greek claims for war reparations in return for financial and political support with the EC diplomatic negotiations. However, Xenakis's letter may equally be seen as a gesture resulting from the climate of the reconciliation between Right and Left that emerged after the return of Karamanlis in 1974. The momentum generated by the return of democracy to Greece helped heal some of the traumas caused by preceding dictatorships and wars. A final coming-to-terms with the past, coupled with a forward-looking perspective, was the prevailing mood of the times. However, the most successful reconciliations between politics and art were those that seemed to serve mutual interests, and it is within this context that Xenakis's letter to Karamanlis needs to be read.⁴⁸

Although he returned to Greece in 1974 with feelings of 'apathy', within six years Xenakis had, as the letter indicates, sought to engage actively in the cultural life of Greece and was willing to offer his services to the cultural reconstruction of the country under Karamanlis's 'wise' guidance (his term). His belief in Karamanlis, whom he saw as the patron for cultural renewal, even made him withdraw his initial reservations about the lack of state support for the arts. Karamanlis's focus on the promotion of Greek culture and artists influenced Xenakis's perspective on the cultural politics of Greece, and after the Xenakis Week he felt able to assert that: 'I can confirm that the [Greek] state finally promotes contemporary music and that change must come from there'.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ In the elections of 1958, the EDA, an extreme left wing party, won the 24.4% of the votes and emerged as a major threat to the conservative government. The following elections of 1961, which gave Karamanlis marginal power, were characterised as 'violent and fraudulent'.

⁴⁸ Dimitris Apostolopoulos, 'Greece and Germany in Postwar Europe: The Way towards Reconciliation', *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, Vol. 21/2 (October, 2003), pp. 223-243.

⁴⁹ Xenakis, *Avyγή* (21.08.1975).

Seeking a message

Undoubtedly the most important aspect of the Xenakis Week, as the eminent ethnomusicologist and critic Fivos Anoyannakis remarked, was the ‘massive unanticipated attendance by a young audience that had previously turned its back on the concerts of the State Orchestra and the National Opera’. In a similar tone Brigitte Schiffer, an English critic who attended the three concerts of the Strasbourg Symphony Orchestra, wondered ‘how this music had imposed itself on the masses?’⁵⁰ Knowing that Xenakis’s works had often divided audiences around the world, these critics could not explain the enthusiasm from the thousands of young people who every night vigorously competed for a seat on the upper tiers of the ancient amphitheatre and wondered whether they

[...] really knew exactly what to expect. It may well have been the same audience which filled the stadiums last year, shortly after the liberation, and frantically applauded Theodorakis and his musicians. If this was a surprise for them, they certainly did not show it. [...] This, the reaction of the listeners and their behaviour, was certainly the most unexpected aspect of the festival.⁵¹

How was it possible that Greek audiences, who had no knowledge of the Second Viennese School let alone the First Darmstadt School, could accept these radical works without any visible shock or great surprise?⁵² In their attempt to explain the sudden success and popularity that Xenakis’s works acquired and his almost overnight transformation from a cosmopolitan figure to a national composer of Greece, the critics speculated that certain qualities and associations of Xenakis’s works, such as

[...] the creaks and the noises, and the blasts and whistling of this music, the memories of the war of the 1940s which Xenakis had kept in his memory all these years, or the snowstorms on the Greek mountains or the swarms of the summer crickets in the valleys⁵³

⁵⁰ See Fivos Anoyannakis, ‘Η Εβδομάδα Ξενάκη’, *Επίκαιρα* (02.10.1975), pp. 64-65; Schiffer [4] and photograph, Appendix 5 (1975), p. 183.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Brigitte Schiffer, ‘Xenakis Week’, *Melos* (July, 1975), p. 18.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

may have awoken historical memories and Greek national consciousness through ‘the dramatic violence of the music; its return to archaic sources and its re-enactment of the Ancient Greek tragedy; its response to a Greek feeling and its impression of Greek thought’.⁵⁴ Apart from this perspective, no other attempt was made at the time to link the particular appeal of Xenakis’s music with the political climate, or to find similar associations with the reception of his music by the youth in other countries, including with the May 1968 movement in France.⁵⁵ Only two years later did Gérard Condé, a French journalist, point out that the popularity that avant-garde music had acquired in Greece was largely based on its symbolic association with an ‘energetic stand against the Junta regime – if not exerting overt criticism towards it’.⁵⁶

At all three concerts of the Xenakis Week one could observe groups of university students who had not only fought against the Junta but had subsequently become engaged in political activism, hawking their student newspapers of various political stripes before taking their place among the audience.⁵⁷ For this restive younger generation Xenakis was an unquestionable symbol of heroism and of resistance not only against fascism but against any form of foreign, imperialistic or colonial intervention in their country. However, this particular audience, which welcomed Xenakis both for the deeds of his youth and for his success as a composer abroad, also awaited a message from him: the type of message one expects from a leader who has headed a revolution, or a hero who has returned from a victorious war. Xenakis, however, repeatedly and consistently argued that his music was autonomous, lacking any extra-musical meaning, and on many occasions he felt compelled to

⁵⁴ Schiffer [4].

⁵⁵ As James Harley writes: ‘the restive students of the 1960’s, in particular, were drawn to his peculiar mixture of forward-reaching modernism and noisy, pounding primitivism’. ‘The Electronic Music of Xenakis’, *Computer Music Journal*, vol. 26/1 (Spring, 2002), pp. 33-57 (p. 33).

⁵⁶ Gérard Condé, *Le Monde* (05.01.1977).

⁵⁷ Livas [12].

declare that neither he nor his music had anything to do with politics. For instance, in a press conference he said to the journalists that ‘Art in general must be related to the problems of philosophy and science, as in ancient times, and not to politics’ and on another occasion at the Goethe Institute of Athens ‘a grave silence fell upon the room’ when a young student asked Xenakis what message his music brings.⁵⁸ His response was direct and sharp:

I do not consider my work to bear any messages. I have no message. Art is about itself. It is self-referential. No! There is no message in my music.⁵⁹

Similarly, in his lecture ‘Scientific Thought and Music’, that took place at the National Opera, another member of the young audience anxiously asked Xenakis, ‘Should we expect something from you? ‘It is up to you!’ Xenakis response was interrupted by spontaneous applause, after which he continued:

The fact that you are [still] here from 9 pm and it is almost midnight ... Listen! Listen with open ears. Listen and think. Listen with open mind. I can say nothing else.⁶⁰

At the time this perspective was in the sharpest contrast with that of Theodorakis, the highly popular and militant Greek composer who, together with Hadjidakis, is considered one of the fathers of what is customarily termed as the ‘popular art-song movement’. In the electrified atmosphere of Theodorakis’s concerts, organised for mass audiences all over Greece soon after the fall of Junta, his songs conveyed powerful symbols of hope and messages for visionary socio-political change. These ‘political songs’ appealed to the progressive or leftist intelligentsia and particularly to youth, because Theodorakis⁶¹

⁵⁸ Maria Papadopoulou, *Ta Nέα* (21.08.1975).

⁵⁹ Maria Markoyianni, *Γυναικα* (25.12.1974).

⁶⁰ Solomos [17], p. 151.

⁶¹ The political songs of the post-Junta period can be classified as a sub-category of the popular art-song movement, as they use the same expressive means. After the fall of Junta, the political songs of the best-known composers such as Mikis Theodorakis, Thanos Mikroutsikos and Manos Loizos simultaneously celebrated the end of the dictatorship and proposed a social and political critique.

[...] gave them a purpose and a cause, so to speak, to which they could relate, clearly revealed in both music and politics. [...] Mikis' slogan 'back to the roots' of Greece, gave a positive meaning and a fixed goal to youth; with his music he inspired in the people a cultural awakening and instilled in them a pride in what was truly theirs. At the same time, by developing their social consciousness through traditional rhythms and the poetic message, his music prepared them emotionally for [engagement with] politics.⁶²

Theodorakis and Xenakis both studied at the Paris Conservatoire in the mid-1950s, and although initially they both pursued their development as composers through Greek folk music traditions and were preoccupied with similar technical problems, they soon realised that they had reached a crossroads and chose to follow diametrically opposed directions. While Xenakis turned to science and technology in a quest for universal values, Theodorakis, after his ballet *Antigone* (1959), realised the potential of Byzantine music through which he could give voice to his Greek identity and express in music the needs of contemporary Greeks.⁶³

Both composers knew that it would not be possible to bridge their fundamentally different perspectives and in fact neither of them showed any inclination to compromise. Xenakis even expressed scepticism as to whether Theodorakis and his political songs could play any decisive role in guiding the youth movement, which he believed 'needed to follow its own path'.⁶⁴ Xenakis continued to express his objections to the highly popular political songs, and in a lecture at the Athens Polytechnic in 1978 he argued strongly that 'Music expressing political slogans eventually ends up strangling the artistic creation'.⁶⁵ In truth, the real 'schism' between the two composers was rooted in an apparently unbridgeable space

⁶² George Giannaris, *Mikis Theodorakis: Music and Social Change* (London: Praeger, 1972), p. xvii.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

⁶⁴ Xenakis [16].

⁶⁵ Xenakis, interviewed by George Pilihos, *Ta Nέα* (07.11.1974) and Vassilis Psyrakis, *Eλευθερουπία* (04.03.1978).

separating ‘autonomous’ and ‘engaged’ art. For Theodorakis, the latter was an imperative for the times, because:

When the people of a nation are threatened by profound historical crises, then the individual who represents culture needs to become a fighter [...] to fight with the people, with the nation at the front line. In this way culture becomes militant, and it maintains its quintessential character though its victory in the name of the people and the nation. Culture is not an autonomous phenomenon; rather it is like a tree that has roots in, and grows in the soil, just as the people – the nation – does.⁶⁶

Increasingly, Theodorakis sought to incorporate in his works both indigenous musical elements such as folk song, Byzantine music, and the urban genre of rebetiko, and indigenous musicians, such as singers lacking formal training or performers of folk and urban popular instruments (bouzouki being the foremost example). In contrast, Xenakis openly expressed his faith in the highly sophisticated art of the Greek Diaspora of avant-garde composers (who transparently sought both their cultural models and their careers in the West) and made special mention of George Aperghis, George Kouroupos and Kyriakos Sfetsas in France; Arghyris Kounadis, Anestis Logothetis and George Tsouyopoulos in Germany, and Theodore Antoniou in the US. Despite the fact that these composers had little contact with Greek musical and social life, they could, according to Xenakis, potentially lead and mentor the avant-garde movement and the youth of Greece.⁶⁷

New music – new patronage

The Xenakis Week is a landmark in the history of the avant-garde movement in Greece, because for the first time it enabled the Greek state to assume the role of patron of contemporary music, a role previously assigned to foreign institutions and/or non-governmental organisations. This supposed liberation of avant-garde music from foreign patronage, achieved as it was during the conservative rule of Karamanlis, was no less

⁶⁶ Mikis Theodorakis, *Μουσική για τις Μάζες* (Athens: Olkos, 1972), p. 13-14.

⁶⁷ Xenakis [65].

welcome to the communist press. However, the communist journalists also found some cause for alarm, pointing out that if artistic values established elsewhere were to be brought into the country this valuable independence could be lost, and ‘a colonial-style cultural policy’ imposed.⁶⁸ They were of the view that since avant-garde art could change or abolish established conventions, it could potentially instigate analogous and desirable changes in the political realm. However, they feared that

[...] the tactic of incorporating the avant-garde in a conservative bourgeois cultural context castrates its revolutionary potential and must not be tolerated by the working class. An engagement with the avant-garde can lead to the revolutionary treatment of other ‘given’ and supposedly unchangeable conditions.⁶⁹

The importance which the Karamanlis government placed on contemporary music became particularly obvious shortly after the Xenakis Week, when a series of contemporary music festivals such as the Fifth Hellenic Week of Contemporary Music in 1976, the Three Days of Contemporary Music in 1977, the *Mycenae Polytopon* and Four Days of Contemporary Music in 1978, the ISCM World Music Days, and the Days of Polish Music held in Athens in 1979 all received state funding. However, it may be worth focusing briefly on a lesser-known festival, since it shares the same political subtext as the Xenakis Week. This was the Hellenic Week of Culture that took place in Dortmund in Germany a year later. It was organised and co-funded by the Greek and German governments, and it took place in the small municipal music school of Dortmund from 9 to 16 June 1976 at the time of Greek and German diplomatic discussions relating to the affiliation of Greece to the EC.⁷⁰ Although this festival

⁶⁸ Costas Lagios, ‘Συζήτηση με τον Ξενάκη: Γνωριμία με τη Σύγχρονη Μουσική’, *Θούριος* (01.11.1975), p.15.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ The official announcement by the Ministry of Culture stated that the Dortmund Week was ‘an opportunity to promote Greek civilisation to foreigners who have no information in order to bridge the gap between the Parthenon and *Syrtaki*. The events will essentially have entertainment, cultural and commercial purposes. The cost of the hospitality is covered by the City of Dortmund and the transport and the fees of the musicians are covered by the Greek Ministry of Culture (54 million drachmas)’. As quoted by Vassilis Spilidis in *Καθημερινή* (05.06.1976).

aimed to showcase a broader and more comprehensive view of modern Greek culture, the political climate that had been created by the Greek diplomatic delegation prevailed over the cultural aspects of this festival. Even the programme notes that were distributed prior to the concerts featured portraits of Karamanlis and Schmidt on the cover. This very apparent and direct politicisation of the Dortmund Week eventually led five members of the HACM to resign from performing Greek music in Dortmund a day prior to their departure from Greece.

The daily press reported:

Five artists who were proposed by HACM [to take part in the Dortmund Week] withdrew because this cultural event has been linked to the promotion of the political goals of the government. This is evident from the scheduled round table discussion between the Greek and Germans who will be discussing issues related to the affiliation of Greece to the EC.⁷¹

The Dortmund Week is a crude but indicative example of how at times of high tension, culture and particularly music can be appropriated by politics. Like those musicians who withdrew from the Dortmund Week, a number of composers, critics and in particular audience members began to withdraw their support for, or refrained from attending, concerts and festivals of avant-garde music, as this was increasingly associated with a particular elitist ‘coterie’ serving both the personal ambitions of its members and the political interests of the ruling establishment. The avant-garde in Greece had, as the communist press had predicted, lost its previous revolutionary spirit under state patronage, and during the period of moderate democratic rule from 1974 to 1980 it became especially associated with the politics of the Right. As state support for avant-garde music increased, its reception by Greek audiences declined. The withdrawal of Greek audiences and of certain composers from contemporary music events became particularly noticeable in the late 1970s, a shift that was all too apparent at the 1979 Festival of the ISCM in Athens, an event to be discussed in my conclusion.

⁷¹ The protest was signed by the composers Michalis Grigoriou, George Kouroupos and Kyriakos Sfetsas, the flutist Stella Gadedi, the actor Grigoris Semitecolo and the cellist Christos Sfetsas. Anonymous, *Αθηναϊκή* (09.06.1976).

However, before elaborating on this link between the conservative rule of Karamanlis and the reception of avant-garde music in Greece, I will need to discuss one other historical landmark, the *Mycenae Polytope* of Xenakis in 1978.

1978. The Past on Display: The *Mycenae Polytope*

The Watchman:

Dear gods, set me free from all the pain,
the long watch I keep, one whole year awake
propped on my arms, crouched on the roofs of Atreus
like a dog.

I know the stars by heart,
the armies of the night, and there in the lead
the ones that bring us snow or the crops of summer,
bring us all we have – our great blazing kings of the sky,
I know them, when they rise and when they fall
and now I watch for the light, the signal-fire
breaking out of Troy, shouting Troy is taken.¹

Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*

Awakening Atreus

During the final days of August 1978 some unusual army activity could be noticed in the valley of Argolis and on its surrounding hills.² In the daytime the noise of trucks passing by carrying scaffolding and electrical equipment caused disruption to the local communities, and on the night of 2 September the residents of Argos – a city in the north-eastern Peloponnese – had an uncanny experience that resembled an ‘outer space invasion’.³ They saw bright light beams and flashes in the sky and heard bizarre drumming and strange noises coming from as far as 30 kilometres away. The source was Mycenae (Mikines), where the imposing and enigmatic Mycenae citadel lies, the place that was once home of the cursed dynasty of

¹ Aeschylus, *The Oresteia: Agamemnon*, trans. Robert Fagles (London: Penguin, 1979), verses: 1-11 (p. 103). *Agamemnon* is the first play in Aeschylus’s trilogy *Oresteia*, first performed in 458 BC. This excerpt is from the opening scene of the play, which takes place one night during the tenth and final autumn of the Trojan War as the watchman on the high roof of the house of Atreus in Argos fight to stay awake.

² Anonymous, *Ελεύθερος Κόσμος* (22.08.1978).

³ Harris Livas, *Athens Daily Post* (27.09.1978).

Atreus.⁴ Above this important archaeological site, giant blue light beams of anti-aircraft projectors were scanning the sky and on the surrounding grounds both the campfires and the flashing lights of troops carrying torches as they moved choreographically across the terrain had an overwhelming effect on the senses.

At first sight the scene might have resembled a military field exercise, but this impression would not have lasted long, as from the nearby hills one could hear herds of bleating goats with tinkling bells while at the same time seeing flashing lights rolling down the slopes. In addition to this surrealist setting, electric speakers located in a nearby gorge, aptly named Chaos, transmitted eerie electronic sounds that were both naturally amplified and distorted by the multiple resonances of the dry landscape. For more than one and a half hours these electronic sounds alternated with a variety of other sounds in complex rhythmic counterpoint, including drumming, the transmission of an unknown language, rhythmical recitations of ancient Greek texts, and the chanting of women and of a children's choir. Approaching the gigantic Cyclopean walls of the Mycenaean citadel that once guarded the palace of Atreus one could view cinematic projections of Mycenaean artefacts such as the golden funerary mask of Agamemnon that Schliemann had uncovered in 1876 and the ancient hieroglyphics carved on clay plaques, currently on display at the National Archaeological Museum of Athens.

On that night the ancient ruins of Mycenaean were surrounded by thousands of locals and visitors, none of whom had ever experienced an event such as this. Most of these people were either lying on the ground or were seated on a platform especially erected for the occasion, and they viewed together the same constellations seen by the Watchman of Argos, as

⁴ Atreus was the father of the legendary King Agamemnon, one of the commanders-in-chief in the war against Troy. In 1870, when Heinrich Schliemann discovered Troy, and six years later, when he excavated Mycenae (the city of gold), he proved to the world that the royal palace of Atreus, which Homer had described in the *Iliad* and which had later inspired the classical dramas of Sophocles and Euripides, actually existed. At the end of the nineteenth century this watershed archaeological discovery opened new horizons to this remote and almost mythical period, which for centuries had been a source of inspiration for historians, archaeologists, authors and artists alike.

described by Aeschylus. They were all lured by the extensive advertisements and newspaper articles which announced that on that night Xenakis would ‘awake(n) the ancient dynasty of Atreus’.⁵

This event was announced as the *Mycenae Polytope* and was described as ‘a feast of light, movement and music’.⁶ The performance was repeated on the following three nights, attracting an audience of more than 30,000, most of whom found themselves exposed to a unique multi-sensory experience during which, as Xenakis had envisaged, ‘history and Art will be henceforth amalgamated’.⁷ Dominic Gill, a foreign music critic who was present at the première of this event, recalled:

It could most certainly be imagined as the biggest and grandest essay in *son et lumière* ever conceived in Europe. The scale of the undertaking was vast: we sat on the hillside facing the citadel, half a mile of valley between us, mount Elias lowering behind. As darkness fell and a choir of women and children began gravely to intone a setting of texts by Euripides’ *Helene* from a platform set directly under the battlements of the town, the acropolis, Agamemnon’s royal palace at the summit, was suddenly bathed in light. The whole region seemed to have been animated for the occasion – not the *Polytope* merely, but a new genre perhaps of art *géographique*.⁸

The electronic composition that was periodically transmitted through loudspeakers was *Mycenae Alpha* (a term that is ascribed to the oldest hieroglyphics of Mycenaean civilisation), the only specially composed work for the *Mycenae Polytope* and the first work that Xenakis composed on the UPIC system in 1978.⁹ It is an ‘uncompromisingly noisy and

⁵Anonymous, ‘Xenakis Awakes the Atreidai: World Première of the *Mycenae Polytope*’, *Βραδνή* (02.09.1978); Anonymous, ‘Mycenae is Animated Tonight by Xenakis with Light and Movement’, *Καθημερινή* (02.09.1978).

⁶ Programme notes of the *Mycenae Polytope*, Appendix 1 (1978), pp. 185-198 (p. 189).

⁷ *Ibid.* Also see photographs Appendix 2a & 2b (1979), p. 199.

⁸ Dominic Gill, *Financial Times* (14.09.1978).

⁹ The UPIC (*Unité Polyagogique Informatique du CEMAMU*) is a complex system of computers and peripherals designed to facilitate direct access to sound and musical material by the user. The focal point of the system is an electromagnetic drawing board on which the user designs all the elements of the sound such as waveforms, the dynamic envelopes etc., tracing with an electromagnetic pen all the necessary parameters and sound information. These graphs are then immediately calculated and transformed into sound by a computer programme. See Henning Lohner, ‘The UPIC System: A User’s Report’, *Computer Music Journal*, Vol. 10/4 (Winter, 1986), pp. 42-49.

dense work made up of complex textures such as massive clusters which alternate with simpler sonorities'.¹⁰ Interestingly, though, the music possesses 'a quality of unreality and wildness', so that its harsh sonorities seemed to have corresponded both to the dramatic landscape and to the massive stone blocks of the fortified citadel which appeared to have been built by Cyclopes or creatures other than humans.¹¹ The following diagram shows that *Mycenae Alpha*, which is less than 10 minutes in duration, was repeatedly transmitted through loudspeakers as an interlude between the eight sections of the *Mycenae Polytope*.

Table: The Structure of the Audio Part of the *Mycenae Polytope*

Sections	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Exodus
Sound interpolation	<i>Mycenae Alpha</i>	<i>Mycenae Alpha</i>	<i>Mycenae Alpha</i>	<i>Mycenae Alpha</i>	<i>Mycenae Alpha</i>	<i>Mycenae Alpha</i>	<i>Mycenae Alpha</i>	-
Narrations of ancient texts and Xenakis's Compositions	Excerpts in Mycenaean language	Homer, <i>Iliad</i> (Canto I, verses: 1-5)	Homer, <i>Iliad</i> (Canto XII, verses: 241-244)	Homer, <i>Iliad</i> (Canto V, verses: 855-864)	Xenakis, <i>Helene</i> (1977), (verses: 1137-1164)	Xenakis, <i>Helene</i> (1977), (verses: 1495-1511)	Excerpts in Mycenaean language	Excerpts in Mycenaean language
	Xenakis, <i>Helene</i> (1977) (verses: 1107-1136)	<i>Psappha</i> (1975)	Xenakis, <i>Oedipus Coloneus</i> (1977) (verses: 668-719)	<i>Persephassa</i> (1969)	Homer, <i>Iliad</i> (excerpts from Canto XX & XXII)	-	Excerpts from the trilogy of <i>Orestia</i> (1965-1966), <i>Choefores</i> and <i>Eumenides</i>	-

Because the Greek government commissioned the *Mycenae Polytope* only a few months in advance, Xenakis was unable to compose music that would last almost two hours.¹² Apart from the *Mycenae Alpha* all the other works performed at the *Mycenae Polytope* were not

¹⁰ James Harley, *Xenakis: His Life in Music* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 115.

¹¹ See Brigitte Schiffer, 'Polytope de Mycenae', *Tempo - New Series*, 127 (December, 1978), pp.44-45 (p. 45). and James Harley, 'The Electroacoustic Music of Iannis Xenakis', *Computer Music Journal*, Vol. 26/1 (Spring, 2002), pp. 33-57 (p. 51).

¹² 'Xenakis would have to work for three years in order to compose music for two hours'. John G. Papaioannou, interviewed by Maria Markogianni, 'Πολιτιστικές Εκδηλώσεις: Η Αναβίωση των Μυκηναϊκών Μόθων μέσα από το Πολύτοπο του Ξενάκη', *Γυναικα* (11.10.1978), pp. 20-24 (p. 21).

specifically composed for this spectacle. However, Xenakis felt the need to justify the choice of his earlier compositions, and on various occasions he proposed, directly or indirectly, their relation to Mycenaean civilisation as the prime reason for their selection. For instance, in the programme notes for the work *Psappha* for solo percussion Xenakis indicated that it ‘is dedicated to Sappho whose language Aeolic is a direct parent of Achaean’.¹³ The changes or shifts from standard ancient Greek poetic metres (‘metebolae’), credited by Xenakis to Sappho, became the starting point from which he constructed, either ‘through systematic organisation or intuition’, the intricate polyphonic and rhythmic structures of this work.¹⁴ In *Persephassa* for six percussionists, dedicated to the chthonian deity, the goddess of the underworld Persephone, there was again an implicit link made by Xenakis to the Mycenaeans, whose belief in the afterlife is evidently displayed in the nine ingeniously constructed extant royal tombs. Xenakis had visited these domed constructions several times after his return to Greece, and he was captivated by how ‘the desolation of death associated with this civilisation had remained immobile in its case of ruins left by a history filled with rancour and oblivion’.¹⁵

The vocal incidental works that Xenakis chose for his *Mycenae Polytope* (*Helene*, *Oedipus Coloneus*, *Oresteia*) may be considered as ‘more personal than the instrumental ones, in the sense that they communicate Xenakis’s thoughts on ancient drama and philosophy’, a persistent preoccupation since his early youth.¹⁶ Although the texts of these works do not belong to the Mycenaean era but to a much later period, Xenakis again justified their choice

¹³ Appendix 1 (1978), p. 194. *Psappha* was originally commissioned for the light and sound spectacle *Persepolis* (1971).

¹⁴ Harley [10], p. 95.

¹⁵ Appendix 1 (1978), pp. 193-194.

¹⁶ Evangelia Vaggopoulou, ‘The Universality of Xenakis’ Oresteia’, in Makis Solomos, Anastasia Georgaki, Giorgos Zervos (eds.), *Definitive Proceedings of the International Symposium Iannis Xenakis* (Athens: May 2005), pp. 250-257 (p. 251). www.iannis-xenakis.org/Articles/Vaggopoulou.pdf (accessed on 15.02.2012).

by considering them as an artistic revival that would unite the ‘high summits of the Achaeans as seen by the Athenians of the fifth century BC’.¹⁷

As Xenakis’s perspective moves through the millennia from the Bronze Age of the Mycenaean period to the fifth-century Greek classics so too does his musical language, which ranges from the non-referential electronic *Mycenae Alpha* to more recognisable sound worlds. For instance *Helene*, sung by a local choir formed by women from Argos, is scored for two parts sharing identical rhythms, and although they do not move independently or contrapuntally their simultaneous sounding is governed by specified intervals such as fourths and fifths, giving the work an archaic or organum-like quality. Although Xenakis did not aim at an exact reconstruction of the music that had originally accompanied ancient Greek drama, he was nevertheless concerned to maintain the syllabic stresses, the natural prosody (long and short values) and the pronunciation of the original ancient texts. He believed that this could reveal important details about ancient Greek music that had been lost, and that it could also provide principles upon which contemporary composers might write music in the spirit of the ancient Greek dramas.¹⁸ These concerns were equally manifest in *Helene* and *Oedipus Colonus*, where Xenakis followed ‘the prosodic melody of the Attic language of the fifth century’.¹⁹ In the trilogy *Oresteia* he used even more modern and more freely constructed harmonic sonorities based on seconds or microtones (an element probably drawn from the Byzantine music) and also parallel fourths. In his effort to bring these specific works closer to modern times Xenakis even maintained the modern Greek pronunciation of the ancient Greek text.

¹⁷ Appendix 1 (1978), p. 194.

¹⁸ ‘The poetics of the speech [in the Ancient Greek language] is the most important tradition we have inherited. None of the translations render or will ever render its strength’. Makis Solomos (ed.), *Ξενάκης: Κείμενα περὶ Μουσικής καὶ Αρχιτεκτονικής*, trans. Tina Plyta (Athens: Psychogios, 2001), p. 8.

¹⁹ See Appendix 1 (1978), pp. 193-194.

He also paid close attention to the pronunciation of his selected excerpts from ancient Greek literature. He chose well-known excerpts from Homer's *Iliad* and some surviving fragments of Mycenaean hieroglyphics (known as Linear B), even though these texts were merely lists of household or utility objects. The recitation of these 'lists of objects' within such a sophisticated spectacle should not come as a surprise, since Xenakis had always been interested not only in the content and symbolic meanings conveyed by the ancient texts, but also in their sonic aspects, including their accent and pronunciation *per se*.²⁰ For this reason he consulted a number of linguists and experts on Mycenaean hieroglyphics, as he believed that they could reveal some important secrets, and open windows to a deeper understanding of the nature of these ancient civilisations. The final decision on how these excerpts would be recited was however left to Xenakis, who by using either his artistic instinct, the advice of the experts, or a combination of both, gave precise instructions and personally taught them to the performers of the *Mycenae Polytope*, the baritone Spyros Sakkas and the actress Olga Tournaki.

While the sonic part of the work was closely related to the Mycenaeans, its visual effects appeared to have been designed to evoke broader humanistic, even universal, connotations. For instance, Xenakis had reported that the herds symbolised 'the people and their bitter-sweet destinies'.²¹ He was however reluctant to reveal any other meanings that he had possibly attached to the various light effects.²² He revealed during an interview:

²⁰ In 1975, Xenakis maintained that the ancient text needed to be kept unchanged and that its sonic aspect should be stressed. The audience, Xenakis argued, 'can read and become familiar with the plot of the drama before attending the performance'. Anonymous, *Απογενματινή* (02.10.1975).

²¹ Livas [3].

²² Nouritza Matossian cites an official war photograph from May 1941, which shows the allies bombarding German targets in Athens. She argues that such images must have inspired Xenakis to include in his polytopes 'the movements of lights and laser beams which are choreographed with ferocity and passion': Matossian, *Xenakis* (London: Khan & Averil, 1986), p. 212. It is, however, equally possible that Xenakis drew many of the visual elements of his polytopes from the highly popular and commercial spectacles that are widely known in

The lights that I thought of attaching to the herds of goats were nothing more than the lights of the spirit, the creativity that illuminates both the night and the approximate space [...] all this symbolism of course loses its appeal when it is revealed and explained [...] Yes, I am afraid it would lose its charm and value. I believe that in art there must always be a threshold of mystery.²³

Xenakis was probably keen to disclose this particular symbolism regarding the use of fire prior to the première of the *Mycenae Polytope*, as seven years earlier in Iran his extensive use of fire in his other light and sound spectacle, the *Persepolis*, had rekindled painful memories for the descendants of Cyrus the Great. They remembered all too clearly how another Greek, Alexander the Great, had set fire to the palaces of Persepolis in revenge for the burning of the Athenian Acropolis by Xerxes in 480 BC.²⁴ Under these uncomfortable circumstances Xenakis felt obliged to counter criticism by reminding his detractors that in ‘Zoroastrian civilisations fire and light represented goodness and eternal life’.²⁵ The use of fire in the context of the *Mycenae Polytope* may however be justified by Xenakis’s choice of *Oresteia*. He was aware of the well-known opening extract of Aeschylus’s play *Agamemnon*, where the ‘watchman’, who for the past ten years had spent every night on the roof of the house of Atreus, struggles to stay awake as he anticipates seeing ‘the signal-fire breaking out of Troy, the sign of a Greek victory in the Trojan War.²⁶

As both a universal and a principal element in rites, fire also features and survives to this day at pagan Greek ceremonial rituals. The best-known of these rituals, the ‘Anastenaria’, had also been an inspiration in Xenakis’s early creative period, namely in his planned triptych

France as *son et lumière* which used identical means and were performed in places of particular historical importance.

²³ Xenakis interviewed by Costas Parlas, *To Βήμα* (17.09.1978).

²⁴ Sharon Kanach (ed.), *Xenakis: Music and Architecture: Architectural Projects, Texts and Realizations*, (New York: Pendragon Press, 2008), p. 217.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

²⁶ Aeschylus [1].

for choir and orchestra, the last part of which finally became *Metastaseis*.²⁷ The use of fire in the ‘Anastenaria’ ritual also involves processions, animal sacrifices and a climax with fire-walking, which was viewed by Xenakis as ‘a living fragment of a past civilisation, torn from the destruction of the millenarians by the Greek peasants of Thrace’.²⁸ This statement alone is sufficient to justify the extensive use of fire in the *Mycenae Polytope*, which also included torch processions. Following the instructions that Xenakis had given, groups of local youths carried torch fires, while a regiment of Greek soldiers moved in procession down the nearby hills carrying lights. All these groups were supposedly following specified routes in an effort to represent with their torches and lights various large-scale Mycenaean shapes and symbols when viewed from afar.

Xenakis had visited Mycenae 45 years earlier in his school days, and the inescapable magnetism of the ancient ruins, along with the rough beauty of the terrain, remained deeply etched in his memory. As soon as he was allowed to return to Greece he visited Mycenae several times, and sought to reawaken his early memories of the site.²⁹ Accompanied by John G. Papaioannou, he inspected the ruins and made topographic sketches of the area that were later used in the design of the *Mycenae Polytope*.³⁰ This project would acquire a particular significance for Xenakis, as it forced him to confront his feelings about his national identity *vis-a-vis* an important archaeological location, home to a fascinating primordial civilisation.³¹ On this occasion, unlike the earlier Xenakis Week in 1975, Xenakis presented himself to his

²⁷ ‘The planned triptych for choir and orchestra entitled *Anastenaria* comprised *La Procession versé aux claires* and *Le Sacrifice*. The projected third section, which became *Metastaseis*, detached itself from the source, and the original design was thus abandoned’. Harley [10], p. 6.

²⁸ François-Bernard Mâche, ‘The Hellenism of Xenakis’, *Contemporary Music Review*, Vol. 8/I (1993), pp. 197–211 (p. 202).

²⁹ Papaioannou [12].

³⁰ See sketch by Xenakis attached as Appendix 3 (1978), p. 200.

³¹ ‘Mycenae is embedded in my work’. Xenakis, *Eλευθερουπία* (04.07.1978).

compatriots through a specifically designed spectacle, inspired by their common land, language, culture and history.³²

The polytopes

Polytope is a neologism that was coined by Xenakis for light and music spectacles, and initially elucidated by him as ‘a new form of art with light and sound’.³³ As he became increasingly preoccupied with the idea of creating a ‘unified physical, visual and auditory space’, this concept evolved to include additional parameters.³⁴ These ideas found their first practical application in his very first polytope in the French Pavilion at the Montreal World Fair in 1967.³⁵ Although Xenakis did not design the shell of the building – as he had formerly done with the much acclaimed Philips Pavilion in 1958 – he created in its interior a virtual architecture consisting of ‘hundreds of flashing lights attached to steel cables suspended in the central void of the French Pavilion’.³⁶ This was an entirely automated spectacle that was executed for six minutes on an hourly basis. Xenakis’s music was transmitted through loudspeakers, while 1200 flashing lights in four different colours were gradually introduced individually during the piece and slowly mingled as they flashed from one surface of the steel web to another.³⁷

In 1972 Xenakis composed the *Polytope de Cluny*, which was installed in the Roman baths of Cluny in Paris. This light show was generated by a computer, which controlled the 600 white electronic flashes and 400 mirrors reflecting laser beams in three different colours. The sound element was an eight-track electro-acoustic tape ‘providing modulating timbres and

³² ‘With the Mycenaean Polytope a dream of mine came true’. Xenakis, *Bραδυνή* (06.09.1978).

³³ Polytope derives from the Greek words ‘poly’ meaning many and ‘topos’ meaning place or location. See Bálint András Varga, *Conversations with Xenakis* (London: Faber, 1996), p. 212.

³⁴ Kanach [24], p. 198.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

³⁶ Sven Sterken, ‘Towards a Space-Time Art: Iannis Xenakis’s Polytopes’, *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 39/2 (Summer, 2001), pp. 262–273 (p. 267).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 268.

varying pulses which were heard in counterpoint to the rate and density of the lights constantly going on and off'.³⁸

In 1978 another spectacle, *Le Diatope*, was specifically created for the inauguration of the Pompidou Centre in Paris; but the entire construction of this work was designed in such a way that it could be dismantled and transported to another location if needed. The tent, made from red vinyl and erected next to the Pompidou centre, had 'three curving apexes of steel fanned out from a height of 16 metres to the ground'.³⁹ In its interior Xenakis had installed 1600 strobe lights, coloured lasers and mirrors that were automatically controlled by a computerised programme, while the taped electronic music, *Legend of Er*, was transmitted by 11 loudspeakers.⁴⁰

These flashing coloured lights and music experimentations are reminiscent of earlier twentieth-century artistic exercises in synaesthesia, a path pioneered by Skryabin and later followed by both Schoenberg-Kandinsky and Messiaen.⁴¹ There is, however, a fundamental difference, in that the synaesthetic approach assumed a correspondence between specific colours and specific sounds or pitches.⁴² Xenakis, on the other hand, promoted a temporal view of colours and lights, and a spatial or architectural view of sound, for his polytopes were based on the idea that 'light occupies time, for it is dependent on rhythm and duration, while music shapes space'.⁴³

³⁸ Matossian [22], p. 219.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

⁴⁰ Two different types of electronic music were transmitted. The first one, commissioned by and created at the studios of Westdeutscher Rundfunk, was a 'manipulation of concrete sounds such as the African mouth harp, Japanese tzouzoumi'. The second one was created at CEMAMU 'with digital and analogue converters and microsounds'. *Ibid.*

⁴¹ According to Xenakis, the concept of polytope 'represents, in a sense, an encounter between two different kinds of music, one to be seen and one to be heard'. Kanach [24], p. 206.

⁴² See Greta Berman, 'Synaesthesia and the Arts', *Leonardo*, Vol. 32/1 (1999), pp. 15-22.

⁴³ Matossian [22], p. 219.

In 1971, when Xenakis received a commission from the Empress of Iran, Farah Diba, to design and perform a spectacle at the ruins of Darius's Palace in Persepolis, his idea of a polytope diverged dramatically from recognisable historical precedents. The *Persepolis*, as this particular polytope was named, served as the model upon which Xenakis later based the *Mycenae Polytope*. At both Persepolis and Mycenae Xenakis used almost identical means, including electro-acoustic music transmitted by loudspeakers, anti-aircraft projectors, herds of goats, campfires, and other elements he had not used before, producing in effect a 'singular confrontation of archaism and technology'.⁴⁴ His ultimate goal, as he stated in an interview in Greece in 1978, was that 'art should be taken out of the museums and the concert halls to occupy a place in nature'.⁴⁵ Unlike the abstract nature of the polytopes that took place in modern buildings, the open-air archaeological sites, and the history and legends associated with them, prompted Xenakis to present controversial historical-artistic reconstructions that 'call upon the spectator to actively interact with his senses and intelligence in order to grasp the meaning of the experience'.⁴⁶

Another striking feature of the *Mycenae Polytope*, distinguishing it from earlier spectacles, was the scale of its undertaking. The visual events created by the anti-aircraft beams that were used during the three nights of the performance extended to a vast territory of over 30 kilometres, covering not only the surrounding mountains of Mycenae but also the valley of Argos as far as Tyrintha.⁴⁷ The logistics and the degree of state involvement and funding were also unprecedented. Despite the austere fiscal policy of Karamanlis's government, the cost of the *Mycenae Polytope* exceeded ten million drachmas; it engaged more than 1700 participants in each of its four performances and it attracted an unprecedentedly large audience, considering Mycenae's distance from major urban centres. The event, which was

⁴⁴ Sterken [36], p. 269.

⁴⁵ Emy Panagou, *Βραδυνή* (08.07.1978).

⁴⁶ Kanach [24], p. 206.

⁴⁷ Anonymous, *Ακρόπολις* (12.08.1978).

entirely funded by the Greek National Tourism Organisation, was also supported technically by 11 other state organisations.⁴⁸ The project was overseen by John G Papaioannou and the composer Stephanos Vasiliadis, and during the four nights of the performances Xenakis used a walkie-talkie to co-ordinate the roles of the local people, the shepherds, the army regiment and the performers.⁴⁹

What also distinguished the *Mycenae Polytope* from earlier projects (with the possible exception of *Persepolis*) was that Xenakis envisaged a nexus of symbols within which the audio-musical and the visual elements of the spectacle could be linked and interpreted. The sound and visual events and their corresponding symbolism revealed the composer's intention not just to re-launch the world of pre-Hellenic antiquity within a broadly cosmopolitan and universal framework but also to propose a new cultural model, radically different from the established traditions Greece had previously felt impelled to follow.⁵⁰ Although this was embedded within a cosmopolitanism mission, it can also be recognised as a new quest for national identity, albeit transformed into a sophisticated model of avant-garde pretension,⁵¹ and for that reason acceptable to the conservative political establishment. In many ways Xenakis's vision for the *Mycenae Polytope* not only fitted with the aspirations of the pro-western (and by definition anti-communist) and pro-European politics of Karamanlis's ruling party; it actually proved to be of concrete political value to the party.

Despite Xenakis's rigorous defence of the autonomous nature of art, the *Mycenae Polytope* acquired a very particular political meaning, for it functioned both as an ideological

⁴⁸ Appendix 1 (1978), pp. 185-198.

⁴⁹ See photograph, Appendix 4 (1978), p. 201.

⁵⁰ 'In the music of this land for instance, Kalomiris and Varvoglis were essentially imitators; Skalkottas achieved something [of value] but he was unlucky, and Greece was not the right place for him. [...] Greece must again become a cultural paradigm [...] All this may sound like utopian dreams, but these dreams are [nevertheless] necessary. The only solution for Greece is innovative [cultural] creation'. Xenakis interviewed by Bassilis Pagourelis, *To Bήμα* (27.08.1978).

⁵¹ Ates, Orga, 'Skalkottas: Shadowy Figure of Greek Music', *Music and Musicians*, Vol. 17/11 (1969), pp. 36–42 (p. 37).

support for the foreign policy of Karamanlis and also as a medium for re-educating the masses, and promoting a type of national consciousness that was compatible with the spirit of a united Europe, a Europe Greece had every intention to join.⁵²

In order to achieve these aims, and despite its sophisticated conception, the *Mycenae Polytope* was not intended solely for an intellectual elite, but on the contrary aspired to be an audience-participation artwork.⁵³ By breaking with concert hall conventions, and evoking a sense of collectivity, irrespective of the cultural or political backgrounds of the participants, Xenakis placed the emphasis on reaching out to a broad and diverse audience. Motivated by these objectives, he designed the *Mycenae Polytope* so that the audience could move freely from one place to another and in some cases to interact actively with the performers.⁵⁴ Yet although this concept had been successfully applied in Persepolis, in Mycenae it was not possible for safety reasons. In Mycenae, the movement of the audience would indeed have enriched both their aural and visual experiences. Indicative of this is that Xenakis deliberately distributed the instrumentalists in different locations, and even designated the exact position of the loudspeakers in the nearby gorge named Chaos, so that the listeners could experience the different acoustic effects of resonance. More importantly, though, as Xenakis emphatically pointed out, the movement of the audience from one location to another would have helped them to understand the visual events and the musical language as a kind of

[...] synthesis, or as a magnetic thread that during its course draws together key epochs and civilisations, while at the same time revealing my own preoccupation with wider problems of culture and music.⁵⁵

⁵² ‘Initially the National Tourism Organisation considered the possibility – especially for the performance of Xenakis’s *Polytope* – of allowing the audience free admission, and thus abolishing the conventional space between spectator and spectacle by creating the necessary conditions for a participatory mass festivity, just as it in antiquity’. Xenakis, as quoted in anonymous, *Ελευθεροτυπία* (20.05.1978).

⁵³ The *Mycenae Polytope* ‘aims to mobilise the local population so that they feel this festivity is their own and therefore actively participate in it’. Xenakis as quoted in Anonymous, *Πιζοσπάστης* (13.08.1978).

⁵⁴ ‘Xenakis did not intend the *Mycenae Polytope* as a concert [...] his desire was to see the people and the children of Argos participate and sing even less well than a [professional] choir’. Papaioannou [12], p. 20.

⁵⁵ Xenakis [23].

Despite Xenakis's efforts to create through his sound and light spectacle a collective and unified experience, the responses of the audiences and the critics were sharply divided.⁵⁶ He received some high praise, but also harsh criticism for not being able to unify all the disparate elements and for using a plethora of costly mechanisms.⁵⁷ Although Xenakis himself acknowledged some defects in the execution, which he attributed mainly to the hasty preparation, some journalists were less tactful, commenting scornfully that 'Grandiose ideas do not always come to meaningful fruition'.⁵⁸

From Persepolis to Mycenaean

Both the *Mycenae Polytope* and *Persepolis* are demonstrative cases of how extravagant displays of the past presented through an avant-garde lens could be appropriated by, or attuned to, the goals and ideology of dominant political establishments. A brief overview of the political context within which Xenakis's *Persepolis* took place will support this reading, and will reveal interesting parallels with the *Mycenae Polytope*.

In 1967 Mohammed Reza, the Shah Pahlavi of Iran, had himself and his wife crowned as monarchs. Their major objectives were to modernise and westernise Iran, to impose secular and authoritarian rule, and to legitimate their authoritarian rule by forging continuities between themselves and the ancient pre-Islamic Persian Emperors.⁵⁹ In the same year of their

⁵⁶ 'This is like a totalitarian spectacle setting out to frighten us', some wrote, while others argued that its aim was to 'create awe'. For a synoptic account of these conflicting see: Manos Komninos, *Ταχνδρόμος* (05.10.1978), pp. 32-36 and Eugenia Alexaki, 'Μεταπολεμικές Αναζητήσεις Σύνθεσης των Τεχνών και Πειραματισμοί για Ένα Συνολικό Έργο Τέχνης (*Gesamtkunstwerk*): Η Πρόσληψη και η Προβολή τους στην Ελλάδα κατά τις Δεκαετίες 1960 & 1970. Ο Ρόλος του Γιάννη Γ. Παπαϊωάννου'. <http://www.ksyme.gr> (accessed on 10.09.2012).

⁵⁷ Dimitris Vitalis, *Pιζοσπάστης* (19.09.1978).

⁵⁸ Livas [3].

⁵⁹ The rule of Iran by the Pahlavi dynasty came to an abrupt end with the Islamic Revolution in 1979, when the 'Back to the Roots' movement reversed the process of the westernisation of Iran by former monarchs. The new spiritual and political leader Ayatollah Khomeini imposed *shar'ia* law, and excluded Western art and music, which he considered a 'colonised culture, the culture of foreigners'. See Ameneh Youssefzadeh, 'The Saturation

enthronement, the Shah and his wife, Empress Farah, founded and generously sponsored the Shiraz Arts Festival that aimed to become a meeting place for Eastern and Western art, though in practice the festival particularly reflected the Empress's Western-leaning tastes and her contemporary political and cultural ideas.⁶⁰

Despite the large number of political prisoners and the repressive environment of the Shah's rule, the Shiraz Arts Festival became a cultural hub of the Middle East and attracted a large number of artists from around the world. Many of these artists were granted commissions and were repeatedly invited to this annual festival. Although eminent names from the musical avant-garde, including John Cage, Karlheinz Stockhausen and David Tudor, all of whom had novel cultural experiences in Iran, it was Xenakis who was privileged to perform at the opening of the 1971 special anniversary of the Shiraz Arts Festival. In that same year the Iranian monarchs wished to celebrate the conquest of Babylonia by Cyrus the Great, the founder of Persian Empire 2500 years before, and for this occasion they commissioned Xenakis to develop a spectacle to be performed at the ruins of ancient Persepolis. Xenakis's *Persepolis* was part of a series of grand spectacles that took place in the ruins of Persepolis, the very epicentre of the anniversary celebrations.⁶¹ Like the *Mycenae Polytope*, *Persepolis*'s creative and abstract artistic displays of the past suited the ruling authorities, as they could easily be read as support for a narrative of historical continuity linking the ancient Persian emperors and the current Iranian monarchs.⁶²

of Music in Iran since the Revolution: The Role of Official Organisations', *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 1/2 (2000), pp. 35-61.

⁶⁰ Robert Gluck, 'The Shiraz Arts Festival: Western Avant-garde Arts in 1970s Iran', *Leonardo*, Vol. 40/1 (2007), pp. 20-28 (p. 20).

⁶¹ 'Iran in the 1970s presents a fascinating case study in how an authoritarian government can remain officially open to progressive Western ideas, while still strictly curtailing freedom of speech'. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁶² As Xenakis stated in the programme notes for *Persepolis*: 'This music corresponds to a rock tablet on which hieroglyphic or cuneiform messages are engraved in a compact hermetic way; delivering their secrets only to those who want and know how to read them. The history of Iran, a fragment of the world's history, is thus

Persepolis made a lasting impression on the Empress of Iran, herself a trained architect, and she proceeded to ask Xenakis to design an Arts Centre for Shiraz. But when he returned to France, Xenakis was attacked ‘in the name of human rights and freedom of speech’, both by the supporters of the exiled Ayatollah Khomeini and by Serge Rezvani, an author, painter and composer of Russian and Iranian origin, for placing his art at the service of an illegitimate monarch who had become a tyrant of his people.⁶³ Later, at an open lecture in Paris, he was again openly criticised by Iranian and Greek university students.⁶⁴ Whether because of these attacks or for unknown personal reasons, Xenakis soon after withdrew from further involvement with the Shah’s regime, which collapsed eight years later.

Although the *Mycenae Polytope* and *Persepolis* took place within entirely different socio-political and cultural contexts, they share certain characteristics, and it is reasonable to conclude that these avant-garde spectacles were promoted and generously funded to bolster very similar politico-cultural agendas. *Persepolis* suited the political aims of the Shah: to introduce Western elements to Iranian culture, to showcase his sovereignty, to re-educate the Iranians, and to establish continuity between the ancient Persian emperors and himself. And in a similar way the ideological programme underlying the *Mycenae Polytope* was based on the doctrine of the so-called ‘cultural and historical continuity of the Greek nation’, a doctrine which had – since the foundation of modern Greek state – been ‘the stronghold for the construction of the modern Greek nation and its identity’.⁶⁵

Supported by a plethora of Greek and non-Greek intellectuals from the pre- and post-independence years of modern Greece, the aim was to ‘assemble what could be considered

elliptically and abstractly represented by means of clashes, explosions, continuities and underground currents of sound’. Kanach [24], p. 221.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 218 & 223.

⁶⁴ George Karabelias, ‘Ο Ξενάκης και το Ίδρυμα Φόρντ’, *Αρδην*, Vol. 56 (October-November, 2005), pp. 44-46 (p. 44).

⁶⁵ See Alexander Kitroeff, ‘Continuity and Change in Contemporary Greek Historiography’, *European History Quarterly*, Vol. 19 (1989), pp. 26-298.

relevant cultural material’ and to establish through academic disciplines such as archaeology, folklore studies, and historiography a convincing theory of the ‘uninterrupted continuity of the national history since the time of remote antiquity’.⁶⁶ Since its crystallisation in the late nineteenth century, this idea had become a powerful weapon, embodied in official education and scholarship, to be put to the service of the nation-builders of modern Greece, the intelligentsia and the politicians alike. The concept of historical and cultural continuity, as espoused by Greece’s prominent literati, was ‘never simply an academic issue; it was always a political issue as well’.⁶⁷ And it was this late eighteenth-, early nineteenth-century dogma that provided the ideological foundation upon which the *Mycenae Polytope* was constructed.⁶⁸ According to this logic, the past was manifest in the present. The lifeless ancient ruins of Mycenae, according to Xenakis, were not disconnected from the present, but were rather

[...] sufficiently vivid and evidential to reveal to today’s rulers their own vanities and arrogance, and to remind the Greeks both of their stunning historic continuity over the last 3600 years and their resulting *obligation* to create original life forms worthy of the five summits of their past: The Achaean (Mycenaean), the Archaic, the Classic, the Hellenistic, [and] the Byzantine.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Paschalis Kitromilides, ‘Imagined Communities and the Origins of the National Question in Balkans’, *European History Quarterly*, Vol. 19 (1989), pp. 149-192 (p. 150).

⁶⁷ ‘When cultural continuity is quite obviously a political issue – and in Greece it was never anything else, since it provided the theoretical justification for creating the nation-state’. As quoted in Loring M. Danforth, ‘The Ideological Context of the Search for Continuities in Greek Culture’, *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* (May, 1984), pp. 53-85 (p. 66). See also Michael Herzfeld, *Ours Once More: Folklore, Ideology and the Making of Modern Greece* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), p. 4.

⁶⁸ Some of the headings with which the Greek newspapers announced the *Mycenae Polytope*, indicative of an emphasis on the concept of historical continuity, are: Anonymous, ‘An Orgy of Lights Sounds and Movement – The [Mycenae] Polytope Unfolds 3,000 years of Historical Continuity in the Land of Hellenes’, *Bραδυνή* (02.09.1978); Katerina Vrettou, ‘The *Oresteia*: An Effort to Revitalise the Civilisations of Mycenaeans’, *Απογευματινή* (04.07.1978); Eleni Spanopoulou, ‘Xenakis Bridges 36 Centuries in Mycenae’, *Ελευθεροπότα* (08.07.1978).

⁶⁹ Appendix 1 (1978), p. 194.

As the preceding quotation reveals, Xenakis aimed to evoke the achievements of two different historical phases in the history of the Hellenic peninsula (Mycenaean and Classical), and to create the conditions for a grassroots movement in support of the cultural regeneration of his home country. His position often seemed to imply that the post-Byzantine and modern Greeks lacked significant cultural accomplishments.⁷⁰ Interestingly, it was a position that echoed the pronouncements of Adamantios Korais (1748-1833), a prominent figure of the Greek Enlightenment and a Diaspora Greek who had invented for modern Greece a glorious past as well as a glorious future.⁷¹ As Edie Keroudie tells us, Korais saw Greece through the golden haze of Western Hellenism of the eighteenth century and his writings are reflections of European sentiments and prejudices. He was among the pioneers who strove to ‘awaken’ a historical awareness and to instil in his compatriots a feeling of national solidarity that would eventually lead them towards an insurgency against the Ottoman Empire.⁷² Korais, like the vast majority of nineteenth-century historians and scholars, saw Periclean Athens as the peak of human achievement and all that followed as a period of lamentable decline and decadence.⁷³ For instance, in a lecture in Paris Korais addressed the financial elites of the Greek Diaspora and made it clear to them that ‘it is your turn, your *duty*, to bring honour, by calling forth once again in the midst of a currently degenerate Greece something of its ancient exaltation and splendour’.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ ‘In relation to Greece, I can say without any hesitation that from an artistic point of view we are at zero’. Xenakis (21.11.1974) Source: Aristotelian University of Thessalonica. www.inventio/lib.auth.gr/record/103309 (accessed on 13.08.2012).

⁷¹ Peter Bien, ‘Inventing Greece’, *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, Vol. 23/2 (October, 2005), pp. 217-234 (p. 217).

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 224.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

That a nation must have a past is of course a fundamental assumption upon which nationalism rests, but ‘another equally fundamental assumption is that it must have a future, a variant of the idea of progress which has been the dominant strand in modern European culture’.⁷⁵ Remarkably, the following quotation by Xenakis echoes both of these two assumptions:

An awareness of the history [of Greece] creates *duties*. Greece must once more become a paradigm of culture [...] the Greek [individual] must understand that he is free from foreign influence and must try to create. And in doing so a knowledge of his past is essential.⁷⁶

It is on this assumption that the supposedly forward-looking perspective of the *Mycenae Polytope* rests, but we should note that this perspective is in essence deeply romantic. Unlike Korais, who focused mainly on classical antiquity as the unsurpassed model that the modern Greeks ought to follow, Xenakis turned to a yet more remote and mythical past. The Mycenaean period – the Bronze Age (from 1600 to 1100 BC) – seemed of even greater value to Xenakis, as it suggested that the cultural roots of modern Greece could be traced further back in time.⁷⁷ In addition, there are other areas in which Xenakis’s ‘cultural nationalism’ approximates to Korais’s ideas, particularly those regarding the Greek language.⁷⁸

Viewing the vernacular of his contemporary Greeks through the prism of the fifth century BC, Korais reached the conclusion that the spoken vernacular needed to be cleansed of those alien elements that through the millennia had supposedly corrupted the authentic ancestral language. For this reason he devised ‘Katharevousa’, an artificial language, featuring predominantly archaic vocabulary and syntax, a type of language with which the young

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

⁷⁶ Xenakis [50].

⁷⁷ ‘What I wanted to show with *Oresteia* was that the Mycenaean was an early Greek civilisation’. Xenakis [50].

⁷⁸ ‘Invocations of the name of the nation, pilgrimages to ‘sacred’ places, commemorations of heroes, the revival of the national language, these are just some of the rites by which cultural nationalism seeks to unite and mobilize its adherents into a community of sacrifice without a loss of their individuality. Cultural nationalism then is an educational movement directed to reform’. Athena S. Leoussi (ed.), ‘Cultural Nationalism’, *Encyclopaedia of Nationalism* (London: Transaction Publishers, 2001), p. 41.

Greek nation could proudly present itself to the West. Like Korais, Xenakis too was uncomfortable with the type of language his compatriots had adopted during the years of his exile. Upon his return to Greece, he realised that his own mother tongue included, as his close friend and colleague François-Bernard Mâche stated, ‘rather antiquated terms and dialects which could lead to misunderstandings’.⁷⁹

In view of the fact that this vocabulary had strong links with the type of formal language the previous authoritarian regimes had imposed, its use by a resistance hero like Xenakis could easily be construed as ‘conservative’, if not on a political, then ‘at least on a linguistic level’.⁸⁰ Xenakis, however, made no effort to conceal his frustration about the spoken language and there was a ‘didactic’ purpose to the ancient texts he had chosen for the *Mycenae Polytope*. As he stated:

The ancient language had to be demonstrated [at the *Mycenae Polytope*] as I wanted to show two things: the beauty of the language and how ugly the modern Greeks speak.⁸¹

Xenakis’s persistence in showcasing the ancient Greek language as an unsurpassed linguistic exemplar was partly because national languages in general had been demonstrated to be one of the most potent symbols ‘that invoke the incarnation of the collective experience of the nation’.⁸² In modern Greece this statement was especially applicable, as the language had been proven to be an effective tool in forging and strengthening the historical continuity doctrine. As John G. Papaiaonannou revealed, Xenakis wanted to demonstrate that Mycenaean civilisation was

the first civilisation with the Greek language. With the *Mycenae Polytope* he wanted to show that there is historical continuity in culture and language in particular, as even today one encounters words that are only slightly different from, or even identical to, ancient Greek ones.⁸³

⁷⁹ Mâche [28], p. 197.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ Xenakis [50].

⁸² Leoussi [78], p. 40.

⁸³ Papaioannou [12], p. 20.

It should come as no surprise that Xenakis paid so much attention to linguistic matters, as such preoccupations had traditionally been an umbilical cord linking the Greek Diaspora to the home country. However, the linguistic stance of certain distinguished Greek Diaspora members, such as Pscharis, Kalomiris and Pallis (as we saw in the 1908 event), had created major tensions and divisions, and had vital implications for the nation-building process and for the type of [Western] music upon which the nation's art music needed to be based. And like Korais, who invented both a past and a future for Greece as a way of providing a new identity, Xenakis too proposed through the *Mycenae Polytope* a new cultural path, according to which avant-garde musical works using the Greek classical past as their starting point had the potential to acquire universality.⁸⁴

Xenakis's approach should of course not only be viewed by way of Korais, but also in relation to other modern nationalist literati, such as the Greek ethnographer and folklorist Nikolaos Politis (1852-1921), whose life mission and entire *oeuvre* were dedicated to the support of the cultural continuity of the Greek nation.⁸⁵ Politis had adapted Edward Burnett Taylor's 'Theory of Survivals', and he selectively treated myths and legends, customs, rituals, folk song and fairy-tales not just as components of a theory of evolution but as a 'static doctrine of cultural continuity'.⁸⁶ If selected fragments from the past could be placed in the right order, unbroken continuities could be forged between an idealised past and the present. And it is from this particular standpoint that the artistic presentation of the Greek past ought to be viewed, as the following quotation from Xenakis suggests:

Through their past people learn their potential, where they come from and where they can head to.

It is not only through books at school that we learn about history and political events. It is particularly in civilisations such as the Mycenaean that these elements – the traits, the art works

⁸⁴ Anonymous, *To Βήμα* (14.09.1978).

⁸⁵ Politis dubbed folklore studies as 'national studies'. 'The national psyche', he argued 'is timeless; untouched by time or historical changes; it comes from the past to the present unchanged'. Summarised information from: Nikolaos Politis, 'Διάφορα: Ανακοινώσεις', *Λαογραφία*, Vol. A (1909), pp. 156-157.

⁸⁶ Herzfeld [67], p. 102.

and the monuments, the remnants of our past lives – become the link with the knowledge of the past.⁸⁷

It was unavoidable that Xenakis's artistic presentation of the Greek past, and of the aesthetic upon which the Greeks ought to base their contemporary art and develop their culture, would become a matter of contention. Was the *Mycenae Polytope* truly evocative of Greece or merely another imported cultural product? Was it expressing the autochthonous populace or was it just another badly chosen hybrid substitute like Katharevousa? One journalist asked:

Is the *Mycenae Polytope* Greek? Even the text [of the programme notes] is translated into Greek from French. It is a perspective similar to that of Korais, the French Greekness of Korais.⁸⁸

Similar doubts were expressed by other critics, and some even argued that the transformation of important archaeological sites into performance venues was totally inappropriate and was incompatible with their history. ‘The Parthenon and the Acropolis are not Frankish castles to undergo such treatment’, wrote some critics, while others pointed out the environmental and other dangers that these monuments undergo with such ‘artistic’ usage.⁸⁹

Despite their favourable treatment of Xenakis in the past, the Greek communist press also openly criticised his *Mycenae Polytope*. These critics knew that the *Mycenae Polytope* had been generously funded by Greece’s right-wing government, and that Xenakis’s artistic display had political implications beneficial to the pro-European vision of Karamanlis.⁹⁰ Xenakis was accused of eclecticism, and of using costly and sophisticated electronic equipment such as the UPIC system, which was only available to a privileged few. The same critics proclaimed that the participation of the locals was not spontaneous, and that ‘the local

⁸⁷ Xenakis [50].

⁸⁸ Harris Nikoloudis, *Kαθημερινή* (23.09.1978).

⁸⁹ Andreas Athanasiadis, *Kαθημερινή* (28.09.1978).

⁹⁰ ‘After 1974 the Greek government saw Xenakis as the ideal personality to promote its [political] goals internationally’. George Leotsakos, *Ta Nέα* (10.09.1978).

people of Mycenae and Argos [had been] forced by the authorities to become involved in it'.⁹¹ Most importantly, though, it was pointed out that through the *Mycenae Polytope* the conservative government of Greece aimed ‘to enhance Greece’s cultural status in the eyes of the EC’.⁹²

Ruins in the spotlight

Despite the invocation of Greece’s ancient past in various diplomatic, as well as cultural, forums, the affiliation process of Greece with the EC proved to be an unduly burdensome procedure. In 1976, two years prior to the *Mycenae Polytope*, and despite both the heroic efforts of Karamanlis and the support of Germany and France, the application of Greece to join the EC was rejected by the European Commission. The final decision was deferred for an indefinite period in order to provide Greece with ample time to accomplish the necessary reforms and meet the EC fiscal requirements. Despite this unexpected turn, Karamanlis reacted quickly and effectively. He addressed personal letters to every head of the nine EC member-states in which he forcefully protested against the decision of the European Commission by asserting that the

European Commonwealth needs to be founded upon *this [Hellenic] civilisation*, and its mission is [both] to guard and to advance it.. [...] Greece belongs and wishes to belong to Europe, where she has been based by her geographical position, her history and tradition – elements that she shares with the cultural heritage of your countries.⁹³

This appeal brought him one of his greatest diplomatic successes, as by July 1976 the initial negative decision of the European Commission was overturned and negotiations for the

⁹¹ Vitalis [57].

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ As quoted by Constantinos Svolopoulos, *Iστορία των Ελληνικού Εθνους* (Athens: Ekdotiki Athinon, 2000), p. 167.

affiliation of Greece to the EC began in earnest.⁹⁴ Prior to 1978 Karamanlis had meetings with all the leaders of the nine member-states of the EC, and he continued pointing out to them that ‘a united Europe without Greece would be unthinkable’.⁹⁵ His main opponents, the socialist party of Andreas Papandreou, The Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PaSoK) and the communist parties, were against Karamanlis’s pro-European politics, however, and this meant that he had to put yet greater efforts into ‘promoting and consolidating the European aspects on the domestic front’.⁹⁶

It was at this difficult political turning point in 1977-78, while Karamanlis was trying both to persuade the EC leaders and to convince his people about the necessity of EC membership, that he turned to Xenakis to lend cultural support to his political vision by insisting that the *Mycenae Polytope* needed to be performed as soon as possible. This was confirmed by Xenakis himself. In the course of an interview on January 1978, he reported that two Greek government officials had visited him in Paris and ‘expressed the view that it was imperative that the *Mycenae Polytope* had to take place that year’. As Xenakis confessed:

I had objections, mainly because I believed that the time for preparations was not enough. They insisted that it had to be done that year [1978] because no-one could predict what would happen the following year. I spoke to my colleagues John G. Papaioannou and Vassiliadis and they also believed that it had to take place that year.⁹⁷

Another indication of the determination of Karamanlis’s government to have the *Mycenae Polytope* performed at this specific time was the enormous funding provided by the Greek government during a period of austere fiscal policy, which they were forced to implement in order to bring the public deficit close to the standards of the other EC member-states.

⁹⁴ The ascension agreement between Greece and the EC was finalised in May 1979. Acknowledging the symbolic role of Greece in Europe, the protocol according to which these agreements are signed in Brussels was on this occasion broken and the treaty was signed at a special ceremony in Athens.

⁹⁵ As quoted in Marietta Minotos, ‘The Content of the Konstantinos G. Karamanlis Archive: Its European Dimension’, *Revista General de Información y Documentación*, Vol. 18 (2008), pp. 239-256 (p. 249).

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ Xenakis [23].

But the *Mycenae Polytope* was not the first project with a markedly political subtext funded by Karamanlis's government. Nineteen years earlier, at the height of the Cold War, there had been another spectacle with astonishing similarities to the *Mycenae Polytope*, both in its construction and its political expediency. In 1959 the Sound and Light Show at the Acropolis was the largest and most costly show of its kind anywhere in the world. With a budget of 120,000,000 francs, provided through the financial support of the Karamanlis government (still heavily dependent on foreign aid) and the National Tourism Organisation of Greece, this massive project was awarded to a French company, which retained a large share of the profits.⁹⁸ In reality, the show presented a French interpretation of Ancient Greek history, and it was achieved through the use of visual effects and the alternation of coloured light beams projected onto the Parthenon, while selected excerpts from Thucydides and Herodotus were recited to convey 'the closest resemblance to European and American ideas of democracy'.⁹⁹ The excerpts from the victories of the 'noble' and 'heroic' ancient Greeks were selected so that the audience would be left in no doubt as to the identity of the bearers of democratic ideals.¹⁰⁰ By implication, their culture was portrayed as superior, and *was then contrasted with* the stereotypically 'reckless', 'blood-thirsty', 'barbaric' and 'uncivilised' peoples of the East, the Persians.¹⁰¹ However, in the Cold War context this polarisation between the Greeks (West) and the Barbarians (East) conveyed a very specific political message. As Elizabeth Marlowe writes:

⁹⁸ 'Seven French technicians, assisted by hundreds of Greek workers, spend two months in Athens overseeing the installation of 35 Km of cable, a 5-ton organ-stop, 500 spotlights, 48 loudspeakers and 150 electronic circuits carrying 6,600 volts'. Elizabeth Marlowe, 'Cold War Illuminations of the Classical Past: "The Sound and Light Show" on the Athenian Acropolis', *Art History*, Vol. 24/4 (September, 2011), pp. 578-597 (p. 585).

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 582.

¹⁰⁰ 'The chosen tale is that of triumph of democratic virtue over Eastern tyrannical evil. The messy complexities and contingencies of fifth-century Athenian history are reduced to simplistic clichés of light *vs.* darkness, and good *vs.* evil'. *Ibid.*, p. 581.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 585.

With its explicit connections between ancient Greek Democracy and the modern political ideas of the West, the [Acropolis Light and Sound] show can be understood as the cultural expression of Karamanlis's stoutly pro-NATO, pro-capitalist (and pro-tourism) political agenda of the late 1950s. At the same time, the show's erasure of Greece's post-Classical history from its narrative obliterates entirely the nation's Byzantine period, as well as its three and a half centuries under Ottoman rule. This selective editing of the past is also, in its Cold War context, a very useful one, for it eliminates all historical connections between Greece and the East.¹⁰²

The première of the Light and Sound Show at the Acropolis was attended by leading politicians, including Karamanlis and the French Minister of Culture, André Malraux, whose speech on the occasion focused on the universal significance of Ancient Greek culture as a 'splendid symbol of the West', reflecting his confidence in modern Greece's pre-eminent position in the Western world.¹⁰³ Separated from the Light and Sound Show of the Athenian Acropolis by almost two decades, this event treated Greek history in a very similar manner. Here too there was a selective collage of classical and Bronze Age texts, discarding later and equally important historical eras, such as the Byzantine, and more particularly the recent Ottoman periods.¹⁰⁴ In fact the *Mycenae Polytope* recovered a category of past that the historian John Petropoulos had already dubbed in 1978 a 'dead past'.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ 'Everything contained for us in the vague world "culture" – that totality of all the creations of art and spirit – owes its glory to Greece, for *Greece played the main role in the formation of humanity*. [emphasis in the original] [...] Ancient Greece tells us: 'I have sought after truth, and I have found justice and liberty. I have invented the independence of art and the spirit. For the first time I have raised man to face his Gods, though he had been prostrate everywhere before then thought four thousand years. And in the same stroke, I raised him to face the tyrant!' This is a simple language, yet we still hear it as an immortal language. I speak of the living Greek nation, of the people to whom the Acropolis is addressed above all other nations, of the people who dedicate to their future all the incarnations of their genius as they have shone successively in the West'. André Malraux, 'The Acropolis Illuminated: Speech delivered on the Pnyx', *Greek Heritage: The American Quarterly of Greek Culture*, Vol. 1/2 (Spring, 1964), pp. 59-60.

¹⁰⁴ As reported by the French journalist Jean Laquerier in *Le Monde*: 'Reinventing his home country after 25 years of exile Xenakis felt that he related in depth with this land and with the civilisation of the Achaeans'. As quoted in Anonymous, *Θεσσαλονίκη* (15.09.1978).

¹⁰⁵ Spyros Vryonis and Gustave E. Von Grunebaum (eds.), *The 'Past' in Medieval and Modern Greek Culture, Symposium Papers* (Malibu: Undena Publications, 1978), p. 48.

The living past is the one that survives in the present. The dead past is the one that has disappeared, but functions as an idea that can be resurrected in the present and correct or complement the memory. For the Greeks the living past was the Ottoman [past] which they often tried to discard.¹⁰⁶

It is from this particular standpoint that the *Mycenae Polytope* invigorated through sound and light a ‘dead past’, by also presenting it as an exemplary model that could function as catalyst for change. In fact, many critics chose to emphasise this aspect of the *Mycenae Polytope* by totally distancing themselves from, or remaining silent about, its musical qualities or its execution. ‘Xenakis revealed ancient Greece and proved that we can still altogether win battles today!’ was an emphatic pronouncement by an eager journalist who avoided any discussion of its musical merits. This trend was also pursued by Karamanlis, who noted after the première that¹⁰⁷

It gave me the impression that I lived scenes from *The Iliad*. The music was so progressive that I cannot express my opinion. What I can say is that it was in harmony with the spectacle and the environment.¹⁰⁸

During these light and music spectacles performed at iconic archaeological sites – the Athenian Acropolis and Mycenae – the Greek past was reinterpreted according to the prevailing ideological context; in other words, the prime imperative was to cleanse it from alien, undesirable elements. Both the Acropolis show and the *Mycenae Polytope* reinforced the perception of these archaeological sites as potent symbols of reason, democracy, humanism and freedom, values to which the Western world staked a particular claim. In profound ways these spectacles invigorated a particular type of nationalism in the twentieth century, one in which ‘Greece became a metaphor: a subjective value of infinitive

¹⁰⁶ Antonis Liaskos, ‘Hellenism and the Making of Modern Greece: Time, Language, Space’, in Katerina Zacharia (ed.), *Hellenisms. Culture, Identity and ethnicity from Antiquity to Modernity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 201-236 (p. 219).

¹⁰⁷ Michalis Christidis, *Kαθημερινή* (05.09.1978). See photograph of Karamanlis at Mycenae Appendix 5 (1978), pp. 202.

¹⁰⁸ Anonymous, *Kαθημερινή* (05. 09.1978).

importance’, but most importantly a metaphor which in 1978 suited the Greek government’s most pressing political aspirations.¹⁰⁹

Reinventing Greece

The Parthenon Temple in particular was presented at the Sound and Light Show as an ‘embodiment of democratic ideals’, stripped of its post-Classical and Ottoman history: a monument now alienated from its original symbolism of wealth and Athenian imperialism.¹¹⁰

The widespread perception of the Parthenon as a *topos par excellence* and as an embodiment of universal ideals and values also encouraged Xenakis, seven years after the *Mycenae Polytope*, to propose to the socialist government of PaSoK (which had succeeded the right-wing rule of Karamanlis in 1981) an even more ambitious project, the *Athens Polytope*.¹¹¹ In this spectacle the display of the Greek past would be aimed at a largely international audience. Xenakis’s ambitions are clearly revealed in the following excerpt from his proposal to the Greek Ministry of Culture:

¹⁰⁹ Bien [71], p. 224.

¹¹⁰ The Athenian acropolis ‘as we see it today is a nineteenth-century construct following a large-scale purification programme involving the demolition of the Ottoman mosque in 1843 and the Frankish defensive tower in 1874. [...] In this respect the history of the Acropolis represents the confirmation and denial of the hybrid character of Greek culture. Greek culture can indeed be seen as a hybrid construct that did not emerge from the synthesis of opposites but from the tension between East and West; between Enlightenment and [Christian] Orthodoxy, Antiquity and Tourkokratia. Hybridity brings together, fuses, but also maintains separation’. Dimitris Tziovas, ‘Beyond the Acropolis: Rethinking Neohellenism’, *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, Vol. 19/2 (October, 2011), pp. 189-220 (p. 202). For a concise account on the ‘early purification programme of the Athenian Acropolis’ and ‘the rediscovery of Greece in a European context’ see: Effie F. Athanassopoulos, ‘An Ancient Landscape: European Ideals, Archaeology and Nation Building in Early Modern Greece’, *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, Vol. 20/2 (October, 2002), pp. 273-305.

¹¹¹ In 1979 John G. Papaioannou and Xenakis founded the Contemporary Music Research Centre (CMRC) that was modelled on the CEMAMu, the centre that Xenakis had founded in France. The main purpose at the time was to bring to Greece and develop there the UPIC system that Xenakis had already established at CEMAMu. Until his death Xenakis was the president of the CMRC and the proposals for the *Athens Polytope* (1985) and later the *Ancient Olympia Polytope* (1987) were submitted to the Greek Ministry of Culture in this capacity.

After the initiative of the European Community, Athens was declared the cultural capital of Europe for the year 1985. [...] To have a celebration that is worthy of a city like Athens, which is the cradle of Western civilisation and soon of the entire planet, it must begin with a grand-scale polytope, the *Polytope of Athens*. [...] Also, such an event, which will go back to the roots of our civilisation, must appear as much as possible to a universal audience in order to be embraced by all the people of the world, irrespective of their cultural background.¹¹²

With the *Athens Polytope*, Xenakis would have pushed the limits of this genre to an extreme, as he envisaged that it would not only include the whole cities of Athens and Piraeus but also the surrounding regions. More importantly, on the night of its première, which would be transmitted globally via satellites, the cultural and political messages would intrinsically be linked to a Hellenic past, the Parthenon and Athenian democracy. Apart from the anti-aircraft and laser beams of the Greek Army, it was anticipated that a naval fleet from Piraeus would also participate in this impressive spectacle. In addition, 30 helicopters would fly above Athens and the Acropolis, which would be at the epicentre of this event. At the pinnacle of the *Athens Polytope* Xenakis had scheduled a sudden pause in all the visual and sound events, followed by a few minutes of dramatic silence and complete darkness; after which the head of the Greek State (Karamanlis) would address the people of Europe by satellite transmission. Immediately after his address the anti-aircraft projectors would turn off their lights and thousands of homing pigeons, brought to Athens from all the European countries, would be set free bearing small lights. The *Athens Polytope* was scheduled to close with a custom-built statue of the Goddess Athena hanging from a parachute on the Eastern part of the Acropolis while laser beams would project various geometrical shapes on the ancient masonry of the Acropolis.

Although this grand scenario was politically encouraged, it never materialised because of its astronomical costs and because of strong opposition from archaeologists, who were concerned about the environmental impact on the monuments. However, Xenakis did not give up on his plans and two years later in 1987 he returned with another even more

¹¹² Iannis Xenakis, ‘Polytope of Athens’, draft dated 21.06.1985. CMRC Archive.

ambitious proposal, the *Polytope of Ancient Olympia*.¹¹³ This spectacle, which had the same objectives as the abortive *Athens Polytope*, was designed to take place simultaneously in five different archaeological sites: Knossos (Crete); Ancient Olympia; Delphi; Lesvos, and Vergina (Macedonia). Xenakis explained that:

This artistic creation will take part in five different locations of the Greek region and will be transmitted live through Eurovision and satellites all over the world. We believe that it will be a first-class cultural and artistic event that will promote the values of Hellenic civilisation and the spirit of Ancient Olympia to all humankind and will contribute to the idea of the return of the Olympic Games to Greece.¹¹⁴

Although these plans also failed to materialise, Xenakis's proposals for both the *Athens* and the *Olympia Polytopes* reveal his increasing preoccupation with ways in which certain selected periods of the Greek past could effectively be displayed so that Hellenic culture could reach a universal audience.¹¹⁵ The lack of any reference to the musical content of these proposed avant-garde spectacles is also an important indication that Xenakis's attention (at least at the time when he was writing the proposals) was mainly focussed on the visual and other non-musical components, in which he possibly saw a greater potential to attract a wider audience.

During the post-Junta years Xenakis was not the only Greek turning to the past in order to develop a renewed contemporary cultural identity. It is a commonplace of Greek cultural history that in the aftermath of a long series of catastrophes reformist members of the intelligentsia were prompted to look back to various eras of history in search of deeper foundations to revitalise or bypass established traditions. However, this resort to the past selectively discarded both Western and Eastern influences in order to construct a supposedly genuine Greek cultural identity. This was the case with Xenakis, who, as we noted, discarded

¹¹³ Stefanos Vasiliadis and Iannis Xenakis, 'The Polytope of Olympia', draft dated 16.12.1987. CMRC Archive.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ 'My music is neither French nor German. It is independent. This was the biggest bet of my life. To do something different but with Greek roots from the various phases of our history but, [also] from the viewpoint of the contemporary man'. Xenakis interviewed by Zacharias Tsirigoulis, *Αθηναϊκή* (21.08.1975).

the Ottoman past of Greece by privileging through his polytopes only the Archaic and Classical periods of its history. This was in line with a conventional reading of these periods as the rightful birthplace of European civilisation. He subsequently rejected more contemporary cultural expressions of the ‘living past’ of Greece, such as rebetiko, a genre of contemporary urban music. And he had difficulties too in accepting the impact of influential institutions such as the Orthodox Church, that for centuries had played a crucial role in the cultural identity of modern Greeks. In fact, Xenakis considered the advent of Christian Orthodoxy as one reason for the collapse of the ancient Greek musical tradition. He confessed that:

Rebetiko does not interest me so much. It is a dubious and recent [phenomenon]. Finally in the destruction of tradition the conservatories are not solely responsible, but also the church which did everything to eradicate it. [...] At times of course, music was abused and oppressed to the point of destruction by dictators who used it as a weapon [...] But to illustrate how the Christian religion exploited this art in a disastrous manner, I need only mention Ioannis Chrysostomous, who fought the chromatic mode that imposed the diatonic tetrachord and therefore demolished an entire edifice – an ancient tradition – that had survived in his times.¹¹⁶

During the post-Junta period the preoccupation of Greek intellectuals and artists with linking their work to the past was particularly noticeable. Not only did Greek classical composers reflect on different periods of the Greek past, but composers of lighter popular music exhibited similar traits. In 1978 Hadjidakis, for instance, attempted to lead a ‘Back to the Roots’ movement by organising a Pan-Hellenic conference in a rural region of Crete, where a large number of Greek literati, artists, composers and performers met to discuss how innovation in art and culture could be achieved through the various traditions of the Greek past.

¹¹⁶ Xenakis interviewed by George Mylarakis. Source: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki – Psifiothiki, <http://invenio.lib.auth.gr/record/103309/files/arc-2008-40998.pdf> (accessed on 01.08.2012).

Xenakis repeatedly spoke about his understanding of the *Mycenae Polytope* not as an elitist musical event or concert, but as participatory art and a spectacle for the masses.¹¹⁷ In fact a second *Mycenae Polytope* planned for the following year would have resembled a fair, with food, processions and a strange mixture of pagan and contemporary folk customs.¹¹⁸ With the *Mycenae Polytope*, Xenakis supported the rhetoric of an historic continuity of the Greek nation, a rhetoric which, however outdated and romantic, was also used by the ruling party as one of the core arguments in support of Greece's affiliation to the EC. Cultural events on a grand scale had been used in the past, including *Persepolis* in Iran and the Light and Sound Spectacle at the Athenian Acropolis. However, with the *Mycenae Polytope* Xenakis brought to light a less-known pre-Classical civilisation, which he showcased as the earliest form of European civilisation.

The government of Karamanlis was the first in the history of modern Greece to implement a systematic policy aimed at bringing the level of domestic cultural life close to the standards of Western countries. But Karamanlis was equally interested in displaying the cultural accomplishments of both the ancient and the modern Greeks to the Western world, and particularly to EC countries. Spectacular cultural events such as the *Mycenae Polytope*, which received wide publicity in the foreign media due to its unusual nature and scale and to

¹¹⁷ 'What I wanted more than anything else to happen with the [Mycenae] Polytope, since it is still in its infancy, is the creation of a new type of audio-visual spectacle. This desire of mine does not stem from demagogic or even appropriation of archaeology'. Xenakis [23].

¹¹⁸ In a short newspaper article entitled 'Plans for the following summer' the envisaged *Mycenae Polytope* of 1979 is described as follows: 'This Polytope will start with Xenakis entering the town of Nafplion. There, he will be welcomed by children bearing torches with wreaths on their heads which would be made from local wild flowers. In the streets local butchers will be selling [barbequed] meat; there will be plenty of wine and folk bands will be playing folk songs. Then a special ceremony will take place during which Xenakis will be granted an honorary citizenship and soon afterwards the audience will embark in carriages that will resemble ancient chariots and in a procession they will head towards the ancient theatre of Argos. [...] This is how the organisers are planning this event which will resemble a Bacchus festival dedicated to the man who in the middle of the summer awoke up from the oblivion of the landscape of Argos and covered it with light and music'. Anonymous, *Bραδυνή* (25.09.1978).

Xenakis's involvement, facilitated the goals of the Greek government during a particularly important stage of the negotiations. Karamanlis welcomed and subsidised Xenakis because the *Polytope* could be read as living proof of a long and continuous cultural tradition, a tradition that was still thriving and was capable of making a significant cultural contribution to the moulding of a united Europe.

That the cultural aspect of the *Mycenae Polytope* needed to be put to the service of Greece's political aspirations was explicitly pointed out by John G. Papaioannou in a letter to the Greek Ministry of Culture, explaining the reason why a filmed version of the *Mycenae Polytope* needed to be funded by the Greek government. As he wrote:

This [the film of the *Mycenae Polytope*] is directly *in the service of a national cause* as well as an artistic one, because *Xenakis is a national asset* today and the *Mycenae Polytope* – apart from its cultural aspects – has attracted international interest and brought to global attention not only the Greek civilisation but its deep roots in the past of more than 1000 centuries before classical antiquity – which at the end was presented as the civilisation of the whole of humanity [...] and this is what makes the difference between the *Mycenae Polytope* and stereotypical commercial film.¹¹⁹

The *Mycenae Polytope* served both as the *topos* (with its literal three-dimensional meaning) and as a *topos*, ‘a set of references’, to use Edward Said’s term in relation to the perception of the Orient by hegemonic cultures.¹²⁰ And interestingly, Xenakis’s approach to this ancient civilisation of his homeland forms a kind of parallel with this more widespread movement too. Said’s ‘orientalism’ refers above all to the European invention of an exotic Other, a construction that was either merely imagined or based on fragmented knowledge, or ‘some bit of previous imagining, or an amalgam of all these’.¹²¹ In a similar way, after his pilgrimage to Mycenae, Xenakis performed the *Polytope* to amalgamate his own futurist perspective with an idealised image of the past.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Draft letter from HACM to the Ministry of Culture dated February, 1979. CMRC Archive.

¹²⁰ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 117.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² Appendix 1 (1978), p. 194.

EPILOGUE

'Ulysses' at home

The Return of Ulysses (hereafter *Ulysses*), a thirty-minute symphonic work by Skalkottas, started life as the overture to an opera that was never written. Like the Homeric hero, this iconic work travelled extensively and was performed and broadcast in several foreign lands before returning to its *Heimat* thirty-four years after it was composed.¹ On the night of 19 September 1979 *Ulysses* was finally performed in Athens at the Herodus Atticus amphitheatre. The date was strategically chosen, for it also commemorated the death of Skalkottas precisely thirty years earlier, as well as the 75th anniversary of his birth. This long-anticipated Greek première took place along with some of the most demanding – both for the listeners and the performers – works of Skalkottas, such as the *Overture Concertante* from the Second Symphonic Suite (1944) and the Violin Concerto (1938). They were all performed by the Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra, though the interpretation, as the majority of reviews confirmed, failed to meet the high expectations of the audience.²

These symphonic works demonstrated some of the most characteristic methods by which Skalkottas fused his idiomatic serial system with classical and baroque forms, demonstrating his profound respect for the tonal tradition of Western music and for Austro-German symphonism in particular. His strong bonds with Austro-German music were apparent not

¹ *Die Rückkehr von Odysseus in seine Heimat*, as Skalkottas originally entitled his work, was composed in Athens in 1944/49. Its world première was given during the 1969 English Bach Festival by the London Symphony Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall directed by Antal Doráti. A second performance that was given in 1979 by the Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra and directed by George Hadjinikos was transmitted to the major European capitals by the European Broadcast Union Concerts, an organisation directed by Hans Keller.

² '[Although] the Symphony Orchestra of the Danish Radio under the direction of Miltiadis Carydis [1923-1998] made a great effort and managed to win the sympathy of the audience, it nevertheless failed to convince them that it could really interpret the works of Skalkottas. A passionate spirit and good intentions were unfortunately not enough in this case'. Haris Vrondos, *Για το Νίκο Σκαλκώτα* (Athens: Nefeli, 2005), p. 49. See also Katy Romanou, *Καθημερινή* (22.09.1979).

only in this symphonic concert, but also in a piano recital that took place a few hours earlier at the National Gallery of Athens, when the Australian pianist Geoffrey Douglas Madge, a virtuoso with a strong interest in neglected composers, premièred two of the 1941 piano works. These were the Four Studies for Piano and the 32 Pianos Pieces, a series of short pieces, many of them written in a type of neo-classical idiom described at the time as ‘wholly German’.³ Although the 32 Piano Pieces occasionally exhibit serial features, they are predominantly composed in a rather free atonal idiom and are invariably linked both with Skalkottas’s Berlin training and with a type of musical thinking described by Arnold Whittall as ‘[lying] a little outside the Austro-Germanic traditions’.⁴ However, like a gifted parodist, Skalkottas developed this work in such a way that everything sounds ‘familiar except the actual notes’.⁵ The composer’s handwritten remark (on the first page of the manuscript) that ‘this piano music is for exceptional occasions’ nevertheless contradicts any sense of parodic intent, and was in fact to prove prophetic, as the first performance of the entire cycle took place on the thirtieth anniversary of his death.

At their Athens première, these pieces attracted the interest of the critics, who praised them as a convincing demonstration of the inventiveness of the composer, who ‘thoroughly understood the possibilities of the keyboard’.⁶ On other occasions, however, some of Skalkottas’s most eminent modernist scores were treated with greater scepticism. Although the glowing reviews were without exception reproduced and extensively publicised in Greece

³ P. A. E., ‘10 Piano Pieces by N. Skalkottas’[review], *Music & Letters*, Vol. 49/1 (January, 1986), pp. 90-92 (p. 92).

⁴ Arnold Whittall, ‘Problems of Reference: Celebrating 2004’, *The Musical Times* (Autumn, 2004), pp. 25-39 (p. 25).

⁵ P. A. E. [3].

⁶ William Cerny, ‘32 Piano Pieces by Nikos Skalkottas’ [recording review], *Notes*, Vol. 53/1 (September, 1996), pp. 289-291 (p. 291).

by John G. Papaioannou, the reviews that were considered a threat to his posterity were concealed from the public gaze.⁷

Negative reviews of some of Skalkottas's other works had been published in the daily press in England ten years earlier, when 19 major works were performed at the 1969 English Bach Festival (EBF) to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of his death.⁸ These concerts were poorly attended, causing a significant financial loss to the 1969 EBF, but they were nevertheless a rare opportunity for critics and musicologists abroad to listen to a large corpus of works by this shadowy modernist figure. The presentation of Skalkottas as 'a unique case in the history of music' and as 'a neglected genius' – catchphrases with which John G. Papaioannou had earlier launched him in an attempt to position him as one of the key interwar modernists – were met with disbelief by the majority of the English critics. Peter Heyworth's ominous question in *The Observer*: 'All the world loves a neglected genius. But does Nikos Skalkottas fit the bill?' was expressive of a more widespread ambivalence in 1969.⁹ Stanley Sadie too characterised Skalkottas as an 'unfulfilled composer', and it soon became apparent that there was no consensus on the question of Skalkottas's status.¹⁰ Although his talent was unquestioned, the critics at the 1969 EBF seemed to agree that under different circumstances Skalkottas's gifts *might* have developed more fully and his music *might* have been less peripheral to twentieth-century music. More specifically, according to Sadie, Skalkottas's music lacked communicative clarity, since he had never been given the opportunity to listen to his mature music.¹¹ Similar views were also held by Greek musicians,

⁷ See George Leotsakos, 'Αφιέρωμα στο Νίκο Σκαλκώτα', *Δελτίο Κριτικής Δισκογραφίας*, Vol. 10/13 (July, 1973 – July 1974), p. 273-274.

⁸ The 1969 EBF was one of the defining moments in the efforts to 'canonise' Skalkottas. At the same time nineteen of his works were released by Universal Editions, a project that was funded by two Ford Foundation grants.

⁹ Peter Heyworth, *The Observer* (19.07.1969).

¹⁰ Stanley Sadie, *The Times* (18.07.1969).

¹¹ *Ibid.*

but only a few of them, notably the renowned conductor Miltiadis Carydis, dared to voice them publically.¹²

As at the 1969 EBF, both the symphonic concert and the piano recital on 19 September 1979 were intended to bring Skalkottas centre stage. They were advertised as a ‘Skalkottas Day’, and were scheduled as an integral part of the annual festival of the International Society of Contemporary Music (ISCM), the World Music Days (hereafter WMDs) that took place in Athens in September 1979. Moreover, since Skalkottas was promoted as a national figure, 1979 was officially announced as the ‘Skalkottas Year’. Unlike the EBF ten years earlier, the ‘Skalkottas Day’ was one of the better attended of the 28 concerts of the 1979 WMDs. However, despite the relatively positive reception, these two concerts lacked the spontaneous eruption of applause and passionate enthusiasm of the young crowds that had greeted the works of Xenakis four years earlier.

At the time, various over-dramatised anecdotes focusing on the details of Skalkottas’s difficult life and on the harsh circumstances under which he produced his lengthy catalogue of ‘circulated masterpieces’ became part of the formulaic discourse that accompanied most of the reviews of his works. While there is no doubt that Skalkottas underwent some particularly distasteful personal and professional episodes during his lifetime, his campaigners used such stories as part of a wider construction of his image as a neglected master who deserved a prominent place in the history of twentieth-century music.

Despite these attempts to promote his work both in Greece and abroad thirty years after his death, both the nationalisation and canonisation of Skalkottas were not really successfully accomplished, and his music receded from view, both nationally and internationally. In a number of articles, reviews and other published sources his advocates repeatedly pointed the

¹² ‘If Skalkottas had listened to his works [performed] or if the State Orchestra had played them at his time, his orchestration [technique] would have been better’. Miltialis Carydis interviewed by George Kyriazidis, ‘Ο Μιλτιάδης Καρύδης Διευθύνει Σκαλκώτα στο Ηρώδειο’, *Mουσική* (22.09.1979), pp. 20-24 (p. 24).

finger both at the backwardness of the Greek audiences and at the lack of state support for their efforts to (re)acclimatise Skalkottas to the musical life of Greece.¹³ For them, the composer had the broadest possible significance for the Europeanisation of Greece. This was noted by one of the youngest of the campaigners, the composer Haris Vrondos (1951-). He wrote that:

[...] We confine Skalkottas within our small national context, just as the Czechs once did with Janáček, a point made by Milan Kundera. Yet Skalkottas's music belongs to the European family and is related to a civilisation with which we must familiarise ourselves. The European orientation [of Greece] does not only mean a common currency and the sorting out of our economy. It means an effort to synchronise our own peculiar and distinctive cultural world with cultural institutions that are considered a given in the West. It is this flaw that we have not yet realised and this is the reason that we still overlook Skalkottas.¹⁴

In summary, the fact that the Greek audience and living Greek composers never fully embraced Skalkottas's modernist aesthetic and the reluctance of state institutions to offer shelter to his works were, according to Vrondos, factors indicative of the failure of Greek society to synchronise with Western, and more specifically European, notions of cultural progress.

¹³ '50 years have passed since the death of Nikos Skalkotas. In the meanwhile our country has changed: the post-civil war period, dictatorship, and regime change [...] and finally our European orientation. What did not change was the treatment we reserved for Skalkottas's work. With the exception of a few, who do whatever they can, the rest remain indifferent and/or hostile. I refer to the political establishment of the Ministry of Culture, the intelligentsia and the artists, who since they know nothing about the 1000-year history of Western Music do not care for Skalkottas, who is placed on that continuum'. Vrondos [2], p. 7.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

A sign of the times: The 1979 ‘World Music Days’

By 1979, privately or publically funded events, concerts and seminars featuring avant-garde music had increased significantly in number and were now held not just in Athens but in provincial cities all over Greece.¹⁵ Despite this more systematised promotion of contemporary and avant-garde music, the lukewarm reception and noticeably poor attendance at events featuring this music were indicative not only of a turning point in its reception more generally, but also of a broader political and cultural change that was taking place in Greece.

The 1979 WMDs, a festival that was held in Greece for the first time since its inauguration in Salzburg in 1923, was an event that brought to the attention of a multinational audience the latest Greek avant-garde compositions. On the other hand, this event also revealed a drastic decline in the social and cultural currency of this music. By looking at some of the key moments of this festival, we will record the waning of what had once been described as a ‘golden era’ or ‘springtime and fruition’ in the history of twentieth-century music in Greece.¹⁶

At the announcement of the 1979 WMDs the local press highlighted the cultural importance of this international event, which they characterised as a ‘great diplomatic victory for a small and peripheral country such as Greece’.¹⁷ However, despite the grandiose expectations that these announcements raised, the festival frustrated both the critics and its

¹⁵ Supported by the Greek Ministry of Culture, in November 1979 the HACM toured six major cities in Northern Greece with a series of free concerts and lectures entitled: ‘Introduction to Contemporary Music’. The aim was, as John G. Papaioannou stated, ‘to introduce the audience of Northern Greece to a series of worthwhile works – both Greek and foreign – from the vibrant music that characterises and expresses our times’. Anonymous, *Ελευθεροτυπία* (20.11.1979).

¹⁶ Stephanos Vassiliadis, ‘Μια Εποχή Άνοιξης και Καρποφορίας στην Ελληνική Πρωτοποριακή Μουσική’, in Ourania Kaifa (ed.), *H Εκρηκτική Εικοσαετία: 1949-1967* (Athens: Moraitis School, 2002), pp. 101-124.

¹⁷ Fivos Anoyannakis and George Leotsakos, *Καθημερινή* (27.09.1979).

limited audience.¹⁸ In certain cases they expressed their indignation verbally, lampooned certain works and even walked out of the concert venue *en masse* in protest. Right from the inaugural ceremony of the festival, which with heavy symbolism took place in the Theatre of Dionysus, the oldest surviving ancient theatre of Athens, and was officiated by the head of the Greek state, Constantine Tsatsos, the exiguous attendance was noticeable.¹⁹

While this festival became a Greek platform for the wider promotion of Skalkottas, it also showcased, to European counterparts in particular, Greece's stable democracy, finally achieved after a prolonged period of social and political unrest. The driving force and the main cultural administrator behind these official events was once again John G. Papaioannou, who in his four capacities as vice-president of the ISCM, General Secretary of its Greek Section, General Secretary of the HACM, and head of the Skalkottas Society and Archive, orchestrated the event and liaised with the ISCM. Despite the chronically poor state of its finances, the Greek government funded the festival to the tune of 6,000,000 Greek drachmas. This was an unprecedented amount disposed for a single cultural event, and it was justified by John G. Papaioannou as being of cultural and political significance for Greece. He wrote:

When, at the Paris 1975 ISCM General Assembly, it was decided to hold the 1979 WMD's in Greece, this decision was based on two arguments, [which were] considered to be of particular importance: the first was to have it coincide with the celebration of the 'Skalkottas Year 1979' as proposed by the Greek delegation; the second was that since Greece had just become liberated from a seven year military dictatorship, it was considered appropriate to underline its freedom by holding an important international event – such as the WMD's – as soon as possible.²⁰

While the majority of established avant-garde Greek composers, such as Yannis A. Papaioannou and Yorgo Sicilianos, refrained from participating in political discussions, a large group of younger Greek composers, such as Michalis Grigoriou (1947-), Vangelis

¹⁸ 'With very few exceptions the Greek audience that had previously flooded concerts of contemporary music was notably absent'. *Ibid.*

¹⁹ See photograph of the inaugural ceremony of the 1979 WMDs attached as Appendix 1 (1979), p. 204.

²⁰ WMDs 1979, programme notes, Appendix 2 (1979), pp. 205-214.

Katsoulis (1949-), Kyriakos Sfetsas (1945-) and Haris Vrondos, publically expressed their views on the political expediency of contemporary music.²¹ The intense promotion of Skalkottas works; the official announcements about the establishment of a new cultural centre in Athens; a state-funded music research institute and a state music academy; plans for new polytopes; and finally the visit to Athens of Pierre Boulez a few months prior to the 1979 WMD: all these were, as Grigoriou pointed out, ‘political manipulations related to the recent affiliation of Greece with the EC’.²² The state interest in avant-garde music was overtly hypocritical, Grigoriou argued, since in reality the Greek government deliberately wanted to present an illusory Europeanised image of Greece, an image that would be more easily accepted by the older EC member states.²³ In order to sharpen this image and remain attuned to this political imperative, the Greek Section of the ISCM commissioned two multi-media works under the rubric, ‘Special Archaeological Site Events’.²⁴

The first, pompously titled multimedia work, *A Ritual for Delphi: The Midnight Sun: Homage to Apollo and Amaterasu* by the Japanese composer Joji Yuasa, presented an odd mixture of Westernised Japanese folk music played by a shakuhachi (a type of Japanese bamboo flute) accompanied by taped electronic music and various small percussion instruments. This work, scheduled for the ancient theatre of Delphi, was – according to

²¹ Michalis Grigoriou, *Ta Nέα* (20.10.1979).

²² ‘It is outrageous to believe that the [Greek] state is suddenly interested in the problems that modern art is facing. As for the 6,000,000 drachmas that were spent this year – it surprises me not! It is not the first time and it will not be the last time that our country wastes funds for the sake of glamorous, unnecessary and outrageously tasteless cultural events to facilitate [a specific] political agenda’. Grigoriou [21]. Accompanied by the French Minister of Culture in June 1979, Boulez gave a lecture at the National Gallery of Athens entitled ‘On the Problems of Contemporary Music’. Fivos Anoyannakis and George Leotsakos wrote that ‘Boulez is someone who has memorised and parrots an ORFT speech. His speech was more theoretical than informative. The whole event was nothing more than a party for celebrities’. *Ελευθεροτυπία* (14.06.1979).

²³ ‘With her accession to the EC the Greek government appears to pay more attention to cultural activities and has already announced the creation of two national symphony orchestras in Athens and in Thessaloniki’. Anonymous, *Ελεύθερος Κόσμος* (09.01.1981).

²⁴ See Appendix 2 (1979), p. 211.

almost all of the critics – the fiasco of the entire festival and was greeted with ironic laughter. The visual features of the work included a collage of clichés with obvious symbolism, supplemented by a choreography that was executed amateurishly.²⁵

The second commissioned work, *Espace IX: Philopappos*, by the French composer Maurice Fleury, was a multimedia installation that was performed on the top of a hill (named Philopappos) opposite the Acropolis. For three continuous nights taped electronic music, slides, a film and coloured lights were projected onto several three-dimensional canopies made of fishing nets.²⁶ One canopy was in the shape of a cube, symbolising the perfectly balanced proportions of the ancient Greek temples, while several other arbitrarily shaped canopies supposedly represented the ancient ruins indicating the fragmented ancient spirit and knowledge that has to that date survived. The press reported that the work failed to attract much interest, and was considered second-class and derivative in comparison with the more imposing Sound and Light Show at the Acropolis and Xenakis's *Mycenae Polytope*.

Although the works at this festival exhibited a remarkable variety of approaches to musical organisation, ranging from serialism, minimalism and computer music to parodic composition, there was no evidence of 'really new trends emerging in New Music', as Donald Chittum wrote at the time.²⁷ In addition, only a small percentage of the works were actually world premières, highlighting 'how little actual new music was [re]presented'.²⁸ Critics such as Katy Romanou and Meirion Bowen, who wrote reviews about this festival, argued that the crisis in the ISCM annual festival was beyond resolution and made some radical proposals:

²⁵ Fivos Anoyannakis, *Πρωινή* (20.09.1979).

²⁶ See photograph attached as Appendix 3 (1979), p. 215.

²⁷ Donald Chittum, 'The I.S.C.M. Festival Athens, 11th-20th September', pp.1-3 (p.1). Source: CMRC.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

Founded in 1923, it [the ISCM] was indispensable in an era when composers were less internationally mobile and there were few records, radio or tapes to disseminate works and information widely. Now all that has changed. For some time the ISCM Festival has been a meeting-place mainly for composers, critics and publishers. Gradually, these are leaving the sinking ship: all realise that ISCM finances could be better deployed in other ways. Who will fire the final torpedo and start the salvage operation?²⁹

The majority of reviews that appeared in Greek and foreign journals hinted that this apparent crisis could also be traced beyond the failure of the ISCM, the leading institution of the avant-garde, to maintain the interest of a substantial audience in its festivals. As Georgina Born notes, at that time there was a ‘growing realisation among composers that Western art music had reached an impasse, a state of chronic doubt that led many of them to concur that the reasons for this crisis were both aesthetic and sociological’.³⁰ The 1979 WMDs was an event that brought to the surface both these aspects of the crisis. In relation to Greek music, the event accentuated the power struggle between an older generation of Greek modernists, such as Sicilianos, Yannis A. Papaioannou, Ioannidis and Adamis, and younger ‘revolutionaries’ such as Kyriakos Sfetsas, Grigoriou, Vangelis Katsoulis, Nikos Christodoulou (1959-) and George Zervos (1947-).³¹ On several occasions the young Greeks openly challenged the role of the avant-garde lobby, whose supposed aim was the cultural

²⁹ Merion Bowen, *Guardian* (21.11.1979). Similarly Katy Romanou wrote: ‘Although this is possibly the largest festival of contemporary music in the world no-one can listen to the best music of this kind [anymore]. [...] I am afraid that it is all about a routine that is kept alive even when the reasons for which it was established have already ceased; it is something like academies, institutions with great esteem, but marginal in relation to [real] life’. *Καθημερινή* (15.09.1979).

³⁰ Stylistically diverse composers such as Karlheinz Stockhausen, Alexander Goehr and Pierre Boulez located the crisis of the avant-garde both in aesthetic and sociological domains, even if they placed the emphasis differently. See Georgina Born, *Rationalizing Culture: IRCAM, Boulez and the Institutionalisation of the Musical Avant-Garde* (London: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 5-6.

³¹ Echoes of the clash between the ‘old regime’ and the younger composers frequently resonated in daily press articles. See *inter alia*: Stephanos Vassiliadis, *Μεσημβρινή* (04.12.1982); Vangelis Katsoulis, *Ta Nέa* (20.10.1979) and Kyriakos Sfetsas, ‘I.S.C.M. - Ε.Σ.ΣΥ.Μ.’: Βίοι Παράλληλοι’, *Μουσική* (November, 1979), pp. 18-21.

enlightenment of Greek audiences. For instance, Grigoriou openly questioned its authority and legitimacy to represent Greek composers and wrote that the

[...] musical avant-garde, as presented by the HACM, lacks any aesthetic and social foundation. It is essentially a new expression of academia that is characterised by artistic sterility, and it is therefore appropriate to let it die naturally instead of assisting it with artificial tonics and public funds.³²

This crisis in the Greek avant-garde, all too evident in 1979, continued to deepen, and in 1982, on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary celebrations of the Studio for New Music at the Goethe Institute, Fivos Anoyannakis, a critic who has been among the most ardent supporters of contemporary and avant-garde music in Greece, wrote the following:

After two decades of the Studio for New Music at the Goethe Institute, we now realise that the new musical trends are not that new anymore: that they have become ‘an establishment’, an ‘academy’, with similar characteristics to those of the late romantic and neo-romantic era, and with a bulk of a hundred thousand works always recycling the same *clichés* of [contemporary] compositions and style [...] At the same time, over the last few years we have witnessed a shift in the audience, which has slowly and gradually lost interest in concerts of exclusively contemporary music. And we do not refer only to Greek audiences but to the audiences of the major European centres [in general]. This is the same impression we had at the concert of the Studio for New Music. We felt as if we were attending a memorial service and not a celebration of twenty years of creative work. The audience is always the same small circle (of approximately 100 people), and they are loyal rather than enthusiastic. Where has the interest and the excitement of the earlier years gone?³³

‘From Skalkottas to Bouzouki’

The prolonged period of social unrest and political instability between the end of World War II and the return of Karamanlis from his self-imposed exile came to an end with the affiliation of Greece to the EC in 1979. During this period, Greek politics became sharply polarised, with the Communist Party on one side and a Far-Right that was often backed by Western governments, the monarchy, and the army on the other. Between these two political extremes, the Centre’s supposedly moderating role was to a large extent weakened because of its strong

³² Grigoriou [21].

³³ Fivos Anoyannakis, ‘Μουσική’, *Επίκαιρα* (09.12.1982), p. 75.

opposition to communism, which added further tension to the polarised climate. However, this situation began to change after 1968, when the Greek Communist party split into two mutually hostile fragments (namely the KKE exterior and KKE interior) and as a result ‘Greek politics became less black and white, [and] more of a murky grey’.³⁴

Political extremes, dividing the working classes in European countries throughout the previous years, were by the 1960s ‘tempered by the general increase in prosperity’.³⁵ Although this process had been delayed in Greece by the seven-year dictatorship, the restoration of democracy in 1974 and the rapid industrialisation under Karamanlis had by the early 1980s brought an unprecedented increase in the living standards of Greeks, and they reacted in a manner similar to that of their Western counterparts a decade earlier. Skalkottas’s compatriots became pragmatic wage earners, concerned more about their personal prosperity and about raising their living standards than about the passionate idealisms of the past.³⁶ Within this new socio-political context, as Haris Vrondos remarked, the modernism of Skalkottas was destined to fail in finding a receptive audience:

Perhaps we do not need the work of Skalkottas, but we are embarrassed to confess it. Exhausted by the daily chasing of money [...] we cannot identify with the poetic and ascetic figure of Skalkottas, who died young, who did not live long enough to see his children grow up, who did not have any money, who performed at the last music desk of the orchestra, who wrote music day and night, and who now comes to haunt our peace.³⁷

As the older polarised world disintegrated, and as the fragmented Greek Communist party lacked a charismatic leader, a large part of the progressive intelligentsia eagerly followed the third, much-needed, alternative path that was opened up by a new political party, the PanHellenic Socialist Movement (PaSoK), led by Andreas Papandreou under the populist

³⁴ Gail Holst, *Theodorakis: Myth & Politics in Modern Greece* (Amsterdam: Hacket, 1980), p. 219.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Vrondos [2], p.20.

slogan ‘Change’.³⁸ The cultural policy that was implemented soon after the victory of PaSoK in 1981 had two distinctive strands: the encouragement and promotion of artistic diversity and a cultural decentralisation that necessitated the dissemination of cultural activities to the provinces and rural areas of Greece. As a consequence of the first strand the ‘borders’ that divided the more sophisticated genres of music from the commercially successful ones (which to a large extent were closely associated with the bouzouki and its repertoire) became more flexible with the implementation of PaSoK’s cultural policy.

In fact, signs of this policy had appeared a few years prior to the rise of PaSoK.³⁹ This occurred because the Right realised that its popularity among the middle and working classes was rapidly declining and that it needed to embrace forms of popular art and music to attract this particular electoral group. This shift was noticeable in the state-sponsored festivals or cultural exchange programmes that were carried out by the HACM, including not just avant-garde music but popular music genres using bouzouki orchestras. Despite the fact that since its foundation in 1964 the HACM had been obstinately propagandising for the Greek avant-garde, it was finally forced by government directives to redefine its strategy and approach, and to include in its international programmes rebetiko, as well as other ‘light’, and even commercial, music.⁴⁰ This trend crystallised in 1979, when a four-day state festival ‘From

³⁸This rise in living standards was accompanied by a parallel ascent of the lower and middle class to governmental and administrative positions. Most importantly, the specific attention that was given to their needs by PaSoK, which had effortlessly won the national elections in 1981, benefited this rapidly expanding middle class, who became active in politics and especially in issues regarding the unions and social emancipation.

³⁹A conference, ‘Musical Development in a Provincial Town’ held in Kalamata, and a six-day festival of contemporary music in Santorini organised by HACM, are two examples from 1980 which indicate the growing interest of the Greek government in cultural decentralisation. With the advent of PaSoK, the attention given to the cultural development of the periphery – particularly the establishment of regional theatre organisations and other local arts infrastructure – intensified to such a degree that it was often mocked or caricatured in the daily press.

⁴⁰A notable example of the bias of HACM against composers of accessible music is that Hadjidakis’s membership application was rejected by the general assembly of the HACM. Despite the inclusion of popular

Skalkottas to Bouzouki', taking place in West Berlin, was organised and supervised by the HACM.⁴¹ Yet despite the occasional presentation of seemingly contrasted genres of music (many of which were overseen by the HACM and the Ministry of Culture), the major change when PaSoK came to power was that artists of popular bouzouki music began to enjoy privileges that the 'serious' music establishment had previously monopolised. This included greater access to state funding, participation in state festivals throughout Greece and performances in historical or archaeological venues.

The new socio-political environment of the time also had a noticeable effect on the reception of the previously highly popular songs of Theodorakis. By 1979 the crowds that were previously lured by Theodorakis's songs were now turning their back on him while another strike came from the Communist party that dismissed him as an 'opportunist, a millionaire acting the part of socialist martyr'.⁴² On similar grounds he was scorned by certain modernist composers such as Yannis A. Papaioannou while for the younger popular artists like Dionysis Savvopoulos (1944-), the poetry that Theodorakis had used in his songs 'became the butt of a satire for Savvopoulos's up-dating of Aristophane's *The Archantians*'.⁴³

music in its programmes the HACM still managed, when circumstances permitted, to achieve a disproportionate representation of Greek avant-garde music in state-sponsored festivals abroad. For example, in 1981 HACM received significant financial and technical assistance to promote Greek music at the festival *Autunno Musicale a Como* in Italy. Of the 12 concerts, only three included Greek folk, Byzantine and rebetiko. The remaining nine were devoted entirely to contemporary Greek and avant-garde music. As Stephanos Vassiliadis, a prominent member of the HACM, wrote: 'Until 1981, the HACM had repeatedly received funding from the Ministry of Culture or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and had presented concerts in England, Switzerland Cyprus, Hungary, Germany and Poland'. *Μεσημβρινή* (11.08.1981).

⁴¹ Anonymous, *Aκρόπολις* (09.02.1979).

⁴² Thomas Doulis, *The Iron Storm: The Impact on Greek Culture of the Military Junta, 1967-1974* (Philadelphia: Xlibris Corporation, 2011), p. 223.

⁴³ *Ibid.* Also see Karen Van Dyck, *Kassandra and the Censors: Greek Poetry Since 1967* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), pp. 50-56. As Savvopoulos asserted: 'Yes, in certain cases I wrote satiric verses directed against Hadjidakis and Theodorakis or Ritsos': Savvopoulos, 'Αχαρνής, Συνέντευξη στον Περικλή Γρίβα το 1978'. <http://www.savvopoulos.net/site/site.asp> (accessed on 12.03.2013).

The romanticised image of the resistance hero and freedom fighter that the public had initially formed about Theodorakis had begun to fade as the time, as Gail Holst writes, ‘was no longer for heroes, but for anti-heroes’, and the young students and intellectuals found more fitting musical alternatives.⁴⁴

The Greek avant-garde composers who barricaded themselves behind a stereotypical division of art and entertainment were alarmed by this new pluralist climate, and especially by the commercially successful music (Greek and foreign) that had begun to ‘creep’ into Greece. Aided by organised tourism and the advanced marketing campaigns of the record companies, Greek avant-gardists were alarmed by the threat of contamination of the supposedly autonomous avant-garde art space they had so painstakingly strived to create. Surprisingly, this issue was addressed first and foremost by Hadjidakis, a composer of accessible and popular music, in an open panel discussion at the Goethe Institute in 1978, when he pointed out that ‘since commercial circles use brainwashing methods in the area of light music, we must also use brainwashing methods to attract an audience to avant-garde music’.⁴⁵

The Panhellenic Musical Society (PMS), the largest professional musical union in the country (with many of its members working as performers of popular music), politicised Hadjidakis’s statement, and argued that with Karamanlis’s backing Hadjidakis aimed to impose an avant-garde on Greek audiences, and that by turning to foreign composers such as Boulez and Stockhausen local musicians would eventually be ostracised from the musical life of their country.⁴⁶ The epic debate between Hadjidakis, as a patron of avant-garde music, and the PMS lasted over three years and caused serious disruption, including the cancellation of a

⁴⁴ Holst [34], pp. 217-228.

⁴⁵ Hanns Eisler, *To Βήμα* (28.01.1978).

⁴⁶ In 1980, Hadjidakis organised two important contemporary and avant-garde music festivals: ‘A Week of Contemporary Music’ in March and a series of concerts in May and June at the National Gallery, both broadcast live by Radio 3.

number of important concerts and festivals.⁴⁷ Although the polemic against the modernising reforms that Hadjidakis intended for the National Symphony Orchestra, the National Opera and Radio 3 (organisations in which he was artistically and administratively involved) had financial motives, the PMS politicised its cause to such an extent that it brought into the public domain dormant politico-cultural debates. These included, *inter alia*, the involvement of the Ford Foundation and other foreign institutes in Greece's cultural and internal affairs.

As the activities of the HACM, and in particular Hadjidakis's involvement in the active promotion of avant-garde music, had evidently been favoured by the conservative government of Karamanlis, many Greek avant-garde composers were also denounced by the PMS as mouthpieces of the party. Apart from the repeated attacks by the PMS on Hadjidakis, older avant-garde composers (especially those belonging to the HACM) were also targeted by the press as representing an old regime and an elitist minority that was in a parasitical relationship with the conservative party.

During Karamanlis's rule, the HACM frequently enjoyed privileges at the expense of other artists or institutions, and was on many occasions given undue favourable consideration. More importantly, though, the HACM had long cultivated a profile as the sole musical organisation capable of leading the cultural Europeanisation mission of the country.⁴⁸ And while this institution continued to enjoy state support during the 1980s and thus exerted control on the avant-garde movement in Greece, a group of younger Greek composers began

⁴⁷ The 'embargo' of the PMS on foreign orchestras, for instance, caused the cancellation of a series of concerts to honour the 10th anniversary of Jani Christou's death in 1980.

⁴⁸ By 1985 the HACM had organised 22 Festivals of Contemporary Music (five Hellenic Weeks of Contemporary music; two Portraits of Greek Composers, five shorter festivals, the 1979 WMDs; three festivals in eight provincial towns; five festivals in foreign countries and the *Mycenae Polytope*), and it had also founded the Laboratory of Electronic Music in September 1978. The HACM had also been appointed by the Greek Ministry of Culture as the liaison agent between Greece and the EC on musical matters; and in 1981 it hosted six distinguished musical personalities from three European countries (Denmark, West Germany and Ireland) in order to familiarise them with the musical culture of Greece.

attacking certain members of the HACM, including its president Yannis Ioannidis and John G. Papaioannou, for having allowed it to grow into an authoritarian and elitist establishment. To counter these attacks Papaioannou became less militant regarding the promotion of the avant-garde in general, as he was forced to acknowledge its declining popularity. He also became increasingly worried about the withdrawal of some of his closest associates in the HACM, such as Dimitri Dragatakis, Theodore Antoniou and Yorgo Sicilianos, who gradually took on administrative positions in the other major rival institution, the Greek Composers' Union.⁴⁹ As Papaioannou sensed that his position in the HACM was increasingly called into question, he quietly wound down its activities and together with Iannis Xenakis, on whose international reputation he relied, founded a new organisation, Contemporary Music Research Center (CMRC).⁵⁰

*'Music for all: all for music'*⁵¹

Since the death of Skalkottas in 1949, the advocacy of contemporary and avant-garde music in Greece had to a significant extent been largely carried out (one could say monopolised) by John G. Papaioannou, whose political acumen, tireless zeal and commitment as a fundraiser and organiser of almost every major contemporary music event, festival, publication, exhibition and seminar, had succeeded in bringing Greek music onto the international stage (as was the case with the 1979 WMDs).

⁴⁹ In 1982 the Greek Composers' Union began to take part in official cultural exchange programmes and initiated a series of contemporary music concerts, breaking for the first time the monopoly of HACM in contemporary music.

⁵⁰ The CMRC was founded by Xenakis and John G. Papaioannou in 1979. The main purpose of this research centre was to introduce the UPIC system to Greek composers. Originally Xenakis and Papaioannou sought assistance and funding from the Greek government and envisaged it to be a state-funded institute, something that was never achieved. The UPIC was finally installed at the CMRC and officially opened its doors in 1986.

⁵¹ Slogan carried by the poster of the 1985 European Music Year.

In order to adapt to PaSoK's new populist cultural policy after 1981, Papaioannou founded a number of new non-governmental musical organisations that (surprisingly) had very little to do with the promotion of a contemporary or avant-garde repertoire. For instance, in 1983 he instituted an annual piano competition for young students, as well as 'The Greek Musical Cycle', an institution that aimed to promote music education and organise free concerts with a standard classical repertoire for the general public, but which also promoted the Idea of Europe in several purposefully organised festivals.⁵² Furthermore, he strengthened the bonds and partnerships between the HACM and certain festivals (both in Athens and in the provinces), such as the all-year-round festival 'Ekfrasi', which presented an extensive variety of Greek and foreign musical genres.

These activities culminated in an ambitious European cultural proposal, the 1985 European Music Year (EMY), which was designed to involve 'all aspects of music and musical life' and to 'contribute towards a greater appreciation of European unity and the importance of European cultural cooperation'.⁵³ This proposal was unanimously welcomed by members of the European Parliament, the EC and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, who saw the 1985 EMY as an exercise in cooperation between various organisations. The two leading members of the HACM, its general secretary John G. Papaioannou and its president Yannis Ioannidis, were appointed as members of the Greek National Committee, whose task was to submit the Greek proposals for the 1985 EMY. But their decisions had to be aligned with the principal objectives that a preparatory conference held in Venice in March 1983 had formulated, encapsulated in the following five points:

⁵² See one of these programmes entitled 'Towards a United Europe', Appendix 4 (1979), p. 216.

⁵³ Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly, *European Music Year, report by the committee on culture and education (rapporteur: Mr Jessel) and documents relating to the debate on 28 January 1985* (Strasbourg, 1985), pp. 4 & 7.

To promote music in general of all types and all periods; to broaden public access and active participation in musical life, in particular by young people and minorities; to offer better opportunities and social conditions for young composers and performers; to reinforce music education and training; to safeguard, enhance and enrich the common cultural heritage.⁵⁴

The Greek National Committee proposed three projects, whose nature and formulation were remarkably different from what had, to that date, been its primary focus; the passionate promotion of contemporary Greek and avant-garde music. The aim of the first project, 'East Meets West', was to present Greece as a strategic crossroad or as a melting pot of opposing musical traditions. 'Mediterranean Music', the second project, focused on the traditional music of the countries of southern Europe, while the far more ambitious, costly and ethnocentric project, 'Treasures of Greek Music: A Global Greek Music Festival from Prehistory to the Present', was held in Utrecht in October 1985 and, as its title indicates, focused on two chronological extremes.⁵⁵

It included an exhibition of ancient musical iconography with images of Cycladic sculptures such as the famous Keros Harpist, which dates back to the early Bronze Age of Greek music, and concerts of Greek folk music and Byzantine chant. The presentation of Greek music made a chronologically 'giant leap' of almost four centuries to arrive at the music of Skalkottas, Christou, Xenakis and other large groups of younger Greek composers, who possessed an impressive portfolio of electronic music.⁵⁶

However, and most importantly, within the European cultural context the 'Treasures of Greek Music' aimed at showcasing Greece's musical exceptionalism.⁵⁷ Its mission, as the Minister of Culture Melina Mercouri stated, was to prove that

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁵⁵ See cover page as Appendix 5a (1979), p. 217.

⁵⁶ Such as Vasilis Riziotis (1945-), Dimitri Marangopoulos (1949-), Vangelis Katouslis (1949-), Haris Xanthoudakis (1950-), Dimitris Lionis (1955-), Costas Moschos (1959-), and Minas Alexiadis (1960-).

⁵⁷ During its first three years in power PaSoK maintained an ambiguous and anti-EC stance that was often characterised as 'one foot in, one foot out'. Although the term 'Greek exceptionalism' is predominantly used in

[...] the music history of Greece is by far the longest and the most continuous within Europe [...] Greece has to offer some exceptional aspects of music, historic or contemporary and the European Music Year 1985 offers a unique opportunity for us to present a global view of this unusually rich musical heritage.⁵⁸

As is evident from his proposals, attached as Appendix 6 (1979), pp. 219-220, John G. Papaioannou had originally envisaged an autonomous Greek-organised festival featuring contemporary and avant-garde music of European composers. However, this proposal never materialised, as the Ministry of Culture, the exclusive funding source, considered the festival and the illustrated publication as more than sufficient to promote the idea that Greek musical culture – and by implication Greek culture in general – occupied an exceptional place within European civilisation. More specifically, the ‘Treasures of Greek Music’ festival was expected to remove some of the reservations held by other Europeans who, while always receptive to Classical Greece, retained a highly critical or even dismissive stance towards modern Greeks and their contemporary cultural achievements.

The underlying premise of this festival of Greek music – that there was a continuous and uninterrupted history of Greek music – can be traced back (as noted earlier in the previous chapter) to the nineteenth-century practice of Greek scholars of ethnology, archaeology and historiography. Their principal preoccupation, as Michael Herzfeld wrote, was to produce an ‘externally directed ideology’ that was predominantly based on the dogma of cultural

relation to culture, it reappeared in a different form in the political arena during PaSoK’s first term in office. Prime Minister A. Papandreou made claims for ‘a special treatment’ of Greece in relation to required reforms and financial policy due to the ‘peculiarities’ and ‘structural malformation’ of the Greek economy. Despite the fact that these requests were never satisfied, the PaSoK government shifted from the rhetoric of Greece being an exceptional EC member and adopted a pro-EC stance when the country began to receive the lion’s share of funds from the Integrated Mediterranean Programmes. See Susannah Verney, ‘Form the ‘Special Relation’ to Europeanism: PaSoK and the European Community: 1981-89’, in Richard Clogg (ed.), *Greece, 1981-89: The Populist Decade* (New York: Macmillan, 1993), pp. 131-153. See also a fragment of the programme notes of the ‘Treasure of Greek Music’ festival in Appendix 5b (1979), p. 218.

⁵⁸ Melina Mercouri, ‘Treasures of Greek Music: A Global Greek Music Festival from Prehistory to the Present’ [programme booklet] (Utrecht: Greek Ministry of Culture, 1985), p. 5.

continuity with Ancient Greece in order to defend their national identity from foreign criticism, but which in addition could be used ‘internally’ in support of the nation-building process.⁵⁹

In the ‘Treasures of Greek Music’ festival, the latest experiments in electronics by Greek avant-garde composers were presented under the same umbrella as the Greek music of the remote past. The conceptual notion here was that since Greek music of the ancient past was part of the foundations of European civilisation and could be considered as a shared heritage, contemporary Greek avant-garde music, which is a continuation of the same cultural strand, could equally and legitimately lay claim to the culture of united Europe. However, according to certain Greek composers, these parameters castrated Greek avant-garde music, divesting it of its controversial, ethnologically unique and ground-breaking traits. The anger of these young composers was directed particularly against those who had been the principal advocates of contemporary music in Greece, and who had contributed to its metamorphosis into a subject for exhibitions of an official national and transitional culture.

Contrary to their intended purpose, both the ‘Skalkottas Day’ and the 1979 WMDs signposted, like the return of Ulysses, a critical point in a journey, the journey of a large number of gifted Greek composers who had fought heroically to establish both within and beyond the borders of Greece a distinctively ethnocentric avant-garde movement. There was a prominent feeling in the air during this festival that like the *peripeteias* of Ulysses this long historical journey of the avant-garde in Greece was now heading towards its nemesis.

Even those directly involved in the story gave voice to this sense of disenchantment. Thus, Greek musical modernism was actually described by an ‘insider’ to the 1979 WMDs, the composer Vangelis Katsoulis, as a ‘failure’, an emotive term indeed. Despite the fact that one of his own works was premièred at the festival, Katsoulis dared to reveal, like the child in

⁵⁹ Michael Herzfeld, *Ours Once More: Folklore, Ideology, and the Making of Modern Greece* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), pp. 5-8.

Andersen's fairy-tale *The Emperor's New Clothes*, what he had really witnessed at the international 1979 WMDs in Athens:⁶⁰

In my opinion, the WMDs in Greece showed us yet again the *failure* of the movement that we characterise as the musical avant-garde. From the moment it made its début a few decades ago, this movement was associated with a kind of reaction against the musical and social establishment in general. Within the conservative climate that prevailed at the time, this music justly assumed the character of a revolution. Over the course of time it failed to sustain its revolutionary zeal, and therefore the establishment soon managed to assimilate it and make it harmless. At the same time the musical avant-garde lost its original purpose and was soon confined to a sterile kind of novelty that after a while ceased to be genuinely innovative. It lost its meaning, not only as a social and political act but by itself becoming an establishment movement. It followed a sterile path, lost its audience and became the banner of a small minority who, in vain, tries to resurrect it in order to maintain their status.⁶¹

⁶⁰ 'I cannot but recall the very well-known fairy-tale by Hans Christian Andresen, *The Emperor's New Clothes*. In other words, nobody dares to confess his disenchantment to his fellow in the fear that he will be considered as ignorant and will be ostracised from the [group of the avant-garde music] elite'. Katsoulis [31].

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

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