

THE TRANSITION OF GREEK ART SONG FROM THE NATIONAL SCHOOL TO MODERNISM

Abstract: This study presents the different ways in which two Greek composers, Leonidas Zoras and Jani Christou, viewed modernism. The songs of Zoras are typical example of the gradual withdrawal from the aesthetic framework of the National School which dominated during the first decades of the twentieth century. In contrast, Jani Christou, who spent his childhood in Alexandria and received an exclusively Western-type education, remained untouched by Greek traditional music or the Greek National School. His work was moulded by the ancient Greek philosophical belief in the elation of the listener through the transcendental power of Art. By his *Six T. S. Eliot Songs* Christou offered some of the best examples of twentieth-century expressionistic vocal music.

Keywords: Leonidas Zoras, Jani Christou, Greek National School of music, Greek art song

After the First World War, during which the development of the *lied*, which had by tradition been made widely known during the nineteenth century, was abruptly interrupted in countries in Europe¹, the genre continues to flourish within National Schools. For composers it provided a good alternative to the opera – the ideal reflection of the ideological and aesthetic aspects of the nationalistic musical Movements² – since, parallel to the elements of local musical tradition, it also embodied extra-musical elements deriving from popular culture, history, topical issues and expectations of society, thus fulfilling parameters then considered determinative to the creation of art of a national subject matter.

In Greece, in which the initial phase of the National School spanned from 1900 to 1930,³ the song for voice and piano was embraced and especially cultivated by the National School *lieder*, Manolis Kalomiris, and by other representatives, who seized, by means of the particular genre, the opportunity to declare their favoured standpoint on the lin-

¹ Paul Griffiths, 'Lied §V, The 20th century', *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, S. Sadie and J. Tyrell (eds.), (London: Macmillan, 2001), vol. XIV, 678.

² Olympia Frangou-Psyhopedis, *Η Εθνική Σχολή Μουσικής, Προβλήματα Ιδεολογίας* [*The National School of Music, Problems of Ideology*] (Athens: Foundation for Mediterranean studies, 1990), 43–4.

³ Frangou-Psyhopedis, *ibid*, 46.

guistic issue of ‘dimotikismos’ (i.e. the popular vernacular), by selecting verses of like-minded poets.⁴

Here, I will present the different ways in which two Greek composers, Leonidas Zoras and Jani Christou, viewed modernism. The former saw it as the conclusion of a route that had the National School as its departure point, while the latter saw modernism as the starting point of his compositional course. I will explain the factors that contributed to that situation – apart from the age difference of about twenty years that stands between them – and I will refer to the Greek elements in their work. I will base my argument on three pieces by Zoras, one from the National School creative period (*Skitsa* [Sketches]) and two from the experimental transitional period (*Akariea* [Instantaneous] and *Prosfora* [Offer]). I will avoid commenting on the conclusion of this route (*14 Songs on verses by K. Kavafis*) since they constitute a set of techniques, positioned in a more atonal framework, which have been investigated in the above-mentioned works. Christou will be investigated through his work *Six T. S. Eliot Songs*.

In 1925, the twenty-year old Leonidas Zoras, born in Sparta and raised in Athens, a student of Kalomiris in Harmony at that time, gave us through a set of ten songs for voice and piano published later under the title of *Skitsa* the first specimens of music of national tone, which at the same time discreetly suggests the composer’s shift to modernism, following his studies in Berlin in the years 1938 to 1940. In these songs the melodic material derives from chromatic modal scales, which are either met in traditional music *per se* or are created by the composer himself. Let us now look into some characteristic examples of the material he uses and the manner in which he treats it:⁵

⁴ In the early twentieth century the movement of ‘dimotikismos’ represented one of the parties involved in the conflict on the linguistic issue. By ‘linguistic issue’ reference is made to the deeply rooted linguistic split between the scholarly and the spoken language. Historically it appeared during the first century B.C. when Greek scholars introduced bilingualism to the Greek-speaking world, imposing a simulation of the classical Attic Dialect as opposed to the already established popular vernacular. Assistant Professor at Athens University, Konstantinos D. Malafantis, mentions: ‘The linguistic conflict between the archaists and the advocates of the popular language reappears in the mid eighteenth century and coincides with the Enlightenment period in Modern Greece and the inclination of scholars to work for the culture of the, mostly, illiterate population. Between those two trends a third one was created, introducing the avoidance of linguistic extremities as well as the merge of the ancient and popular language, by adherence to a cautious and compromising linguistic policy, which the scholar, Adamantios Korais named “the middle path”. The linguistic issue constituted an ideological field in the context of which severe conflict of ideas and attitudes took place in a critical for the development and formation of the Modern Greek Society phase.’

⁵ I would like to sincerely thank composer Fani Kosona, musicologist Victoria Taskou and Mr. Fani Soulakelli for our discussions regarding analysis of the works.

A) Traditional material – traditional usage

In the first song, the ‘Flogera’ [‘Flute’, example 1], the lonesome shepherd is seeking companionship in his flute in the typical scenery of the Greek mountain landscape. He therefore sings in a mode of two chromatic tetrachords (augmented second between III-IV and VI-VII degrees), a tune quite common in Western and South Greece. The melodic line frequently follows the traditional process of the mode from the dominant to the tonic. The plagal connections of the exceptionally plain diatonic chord material (i.e. which derives from notes of the mode) and a pedal note in the tonic, which runs throughout the song – and is renewed not only in the downbeat but also in the upbeat, as typically occurs in traditional music – provide the ethereal melancholy of the result. It could be argued that in every way the composer remains totally committed to tradition.

Andante doloroso (♩ = 60)

Più largo (♩ = 44)
p cantabile

ἄ - στύ - γη, ψί - λο - γέ - σα,
 Un - glück - sel - ge Schal - mel,
 Pau - vre "flo ghé ra"
 πάλ - τα κρύ - λει - γες γλυ - κιά τῆς ἀ - γά - πης τῆς χα - ρά - ρας
 im - mer tön - test du zur Zeit mei - ner Lie - be Lust und Leid.
 qui chan - tait dans le pas - sé la dou - ce joie d'ai - mer.

Tempo I

mf

Example 1: L. Zoras, ‘Flogera’, from *Sketches, musical poems for voice and piano*, poetry by L. Zoras, b. 1–10.

B) Traditional material – free usage

In ‘Mikros Theos’ (example 2), as opposed to the ‘Flogera’, there are two interesting phenomena, which relate to later practices of mode usage:

- a) Although the melodic material of the voice is traditional, the composer handles it as a mere starting point, without feeling obliged to respect its traditional melodic evolution. In the context of this free use, in parallel with the multiple jumps and intervals bigger than a fifth, the composer handles ornamentation notes in the western tradition (featured in example 2, bar 8, observe the usage of the notes $mi \sharp$, $mi \flat$ and $mi \flat\flat$).

Example 2: L. Zoras, ‘Mikros Theos’, from *Sketches, musical poems for voice and piano*, poetry by M. Malakasis, b. 1–9.

- b) polymodality: the voice using a descendant nikriz pentachord⁶ is accompanied by a melodic line of the piano in an Aeolian mode of the same base of $si \flat$ (example 2, bars 7–8).

⁶ The nikriz pentachord is the basis of the nikriz makam which is a minor one, characteristic for the augmented second between the 3^d and the 4th degree of the first pentachord. See Marios D. Mavroidis, *Οι μουσικοί τρόποι στην Ανατολική Μεσόγειο, Ο Βυζαντινός ήχος, Το Αραβικό μακάμ, Το Τούρκικο μακάμ* [Musical Modes in Eastern Mediterranean, The Byzantine Hhos, The Arabic Makam, The Turkish Makam], Fagotto, Athens 1999, p. 79.

See Marios D. Mavroidis, *Οι μουσικοί τρόποι στην Ανατολική Μεσόγειο, Ο Βυζαντινός ήχος, Το Αραβικό μακάμ, Το Τούρκικο μακάμ* [Musical Modes in Eastern Mediterranean, The Byzantine Echos, The Arabic Makam, The Turkish Makam], Fagotto, Athens 1999, p. 79.

C) *Original material of traditional character*

In 'Varka' ['Boat', example 3], we come across an Aeolian mode in mi that is chromatic between the third and the fourth degree. The interval composition of the mode recreates national elements, concerning the tone color, reminiscent of urban music from Smyrna, but is also the choice of the composer. In the frame of a mixture of modality with tonality, its harmonization with a G major seventh chord surprises us by creating a dangling feeling and a certain confusion regarding the tonal center of an unclarified major or minor atmosphere. At the same time, the ostinato appearance of the chromatic degrees of the mode in the bass reminds us of an equivalent melodic persistence, which appears in the articulation of Second Tone of Byzantine music.

Ex.ample 3: L. Zoras, 'Varka', from *Sketches*, musical poems for voice and piano, poetry by M. Malakassis, b. 1–3.

In all the songs, harmonization is delivered through common practices applied by composers of the National Schools: post-romantic and impressionistic treatment (resonances of fifths and fourths, altered chords with added notes – a sixth and a fourth, unresolved sevenths, chromatic transfers of chord material, pedal notes in tonic and subdominant, double pedal notes etc.) in connection with more modern techniques such as different types of clusters (e.g. a pentatonic cluster in the frame of a whole-tone scale) and poly-modality. The accompaniment is very rich, with independent melodic lines that thicken the sound, rhythmic diversity and extensive tremolo. For the appropriate musical arrangement of the text, the composer makes use of constant metrical changes to five-part and seven-part rhythms, which are very common in Greek music, while the voice enjoys a certain amount of melismatic freedom.

The selection of poems reveals that Zoras had a progressive concept of the role of poetry and its subject matter. The ‘national’ poets Dionyssios Solomos⁷ and Kostis Palamas⁸ with their references on historical topics are completely absent, while Zoras’ predilection turns to poets such as Miltiadis Malakassis⁹ who, under the influence of symbolism, eliminated from poetry any utilitarian, didactic or moral aims providing its self-sufficiency and orientating it to the inner self. Zoras, charmed by the rare musicality of the lyrical, elegantly built verses of Malakassis,

⁷ Dionyssios Solomos (1798–1857) was born on the island of Zakynthos and studied in Italy. A person of broad education, with progressive and liberal ideas, and strict claims for his work, Solomos longed for the rebirth of Modern Greek literature. His deep patriotic feeling, in combination with a powerful conviction of the value of the popular vernacular, prompted him to undertake a titanic poetic work, that of the configuration of the popular Modern Greek poetic language through the plethora of linguistic trends and proposals suggested at that time, simultaneously developing the previous poetic delivery of Cretan literature and popular song. In 1823, inspired by the fight of Greeks for independence against the Ottoman Empire, he wrote the *Anthem to Freedom*, the two first turns of which were set up in 1964 from the composer Nikolaos Mantzaros and constituted the Greek national anthem.

⁸ Kostis Palamas was born in Patras where he completed his secondary studies followed by Law studies at Athens University. In 1925, he was honored with the National Award for Fine Arts and Letters, while in 1926 he was nominated member of the Academy of Athens and later on Chairman. He died in Athens in 1943 during the German occupation; his death inspired hundreds of thousand of Athenians who swarmed in the streets to bid farewell and cry their demand for freedom. A central figure of Greek Letters and leader of the literary world for half a century, Palamas developed through his work the treasure of folk tradition and especially the popular vernacular, which he greatly promoted with his extraordinary faculties of a word-maker. His aim was to deliver it back to the people, purified from the allegations of trivialization attributed to it in the context of the linguistic conflict (see also footnote 4). Through his poetry and his review work he positioned himself on the big ideological juxtapositions of the, under configuration, Modern Greek society of the first decades of the twentieth century.

⁹ Offspring of an affluent family, Miltiadis Malakassis (1869–1943) completed his secondary studies in his birthplace (Mesologgi) and then attended Law studies at Athens University. His acquaintance with the poet Jean Moreas (1897) deeply influenced his poetic choices. His first collection, *Syntrimmata*, was published in 1898. From 1909 to 1915 he lived in Paris. When back in Athens, he served as the Director of the Parliament Library until 1937. He also was Chairman of the Greek Literature Society. In 1923 he was honored with the National Award for Fine Arts and Letters. ‘An eminent case of survival of the nineteenth-century Greek neoclassic movement’, as mentioned in the *Dictionary of Greek Literature* (Athens: Patakis, 2007), Malakassis is considered to fall under Palamas’ sphere of influence (see footnote 7). Romantic by nature, he cultivated a strain of poetry dominated by lyricism and language musicality. His detractors sustain that philosophical reflection is absent from his work, a statement reinforced actually by Malakassis’ admission that he feared the world of ideas. He saw poetry as a song, like music played with the tongue as an instrument.

reflects through his impressionistic touch the hazy aura they convey. What impresses us though is the choice of a poem by Kostas Karyotakis.¹⁰ Research to date indicates that Zoras was the first Greek composer to appreciate the grandeur of the neo-bourgeois realism of Kariotakis and to set his lyrics to music ('The Gypsy', 1925) at a time when his poetry did not yet enjoy its subsequent glory.¹¹

Between 1938 and 1940 Zoras was to be found studying in Berlin with the composer Boris Blacher¹² where he was exposed to the prevailing trends of the time. After a compositional break of considerable time, due to his commitment to conducting the orchestra of the newly established Opera Stage of the Greek Royal Theater, Zoras inaugurated, at the end of the 1940's, his second creative period experimenting in new techniques. This is a conscious shift, realized through his favorite genre (voice and piano song), as a result of his creative creed. The only purpose of the composer, he wrote in 1948, was 'the revelation of his true creative self and its positioning into the natural context of place, musical ambiance and generative environment [...] elements strongly related to

¹⁰ As a representative of the neo-romantic and neo-symbolistic trends which developed in Greek poetry in the interwar period, the poet and novelist Kostas Kariotakis constitutes the perhaps more significant literary voice to rise in the 1920's. Being among the first to introduce elements of modernism into Greek poetry, he influenced many important poets to follow his work, such as the Nobel prizewinners Y. Seferis and Y. Ritsos. His first collection, *O ponos tou anthropou kai ton pramaton* (1919) distinctly gives the mark of the desperate, cynical, ironical and anti-heroic poetry to follow, expressing his personal impasse, which the poet ended with his suicide in 1928, at the age of only thirty-two.

¹¹ Kariotakis' collection *Nipenthi*, of which 'The Gypsy' is part, was published only four years earlier, in 1921. Zoras' special affection for Karyotakis' poetry was later affirmed, in the 1950's, with the setting of a nine song cycle entitled *Nipenthi and Satires*. A new setting of 'The Gypsy' is included in this cycle (see Sofia Kontossi, *Λεωνίδαας Ζώρας, Εκατό χρόνια από τη γέννησή του* [Leonidas Zoras, One Hundred Years from his Birth], Athens: Leonidas Zoras' Archive, 2005, 34–5).

¹² Boris Blacher (1903–75) was born in China to a German mother and a Russian-Esthonian father. In 1922 he went to Berlin to study, initially architecture and mathematics, and later music (Hochschule für Music – of which he became Director between 1953–70). In 1938 he worked as a professor of the composition in Dresden, but his career was interrupted because his teaching didn't agree with National Socialism cultural policy doctrines. He made a triumphant comeback in 1947 with his work *Orchestral Variations on a theme by N. Paganini*. Since then he was considered to be one of the central figures in Berlin's musical life, important both as a composer of orchestral and vivid stage works (many of them based on classical text, such as Hamlet, Lysistrati, and Tristan) and as a teacher. His work is distinguished for its contrapuntal mastery, rhythmical wealth, orchestral fist and its anti-romantic clarity. His *Paganini Variations* are a repertory piece in the German orchestral world, been recorded by Solti.

the cause of his birth and existence.’¹³ Although the ‘natural context of place’ in which one is born is specific, one’s feeling for the musical climate and the generative environment is subject to change. Zoras continues: ‘Modern trends are to me a valuable enhancement of the means of expression available to the inspired creator.’¹⁴ He later adds: ‘I am not by nature opposed to any modern trend. Hence, without any dogmatic prejudice I allowed my inspiration to soar free [...]’.¹⁵

In 1950, Zoras composes *Akariea*, nine songs based on haiku poetry by Yiorgos Seferis, the landmark poet of symbolism in Greece.¹⁶ They make up a very successful play by the composer with the vocal miniature – so incredibly short as to cause second thoughts as to whether it suppresses the essence of the work of art or not – probably this is a unique example in Greek music literature.¹⁷ Elaborated in full detail they offer concise, transparent music of exceptional aesthetic appeal. In the few seconds of the duration of each song, Zoras achieves to project a fleeting, lyrical, occasionally humorous glimpse.

In these songs new compositional techniques emerge, which he never abandons thereafter:

- a) His declared aesthetic need for simplicity in the melodic line influences the choice of an exclusively syllabic arrangement of the

¹³ Unpublished composer’s manuscript (Leonidas Zoras Archive, box 9K, nr. 14).

¹⁴ As above.

¹⁵ Programme notes by the composer for a vocal recital held on 1 February 1967 in Athens (Leonidas Zoras Archive, ΠΣ2).

¹⁶ The Nobel-winner poet Yiorgos Seferis (1900–71) was born in Smyrna, Asia Minor. He attended school in Athens and Law studies at the University of Paris, where he became interested in literature. Back in Athens he was admitted to the Royal Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1926). This was the beginning of a long and successful diplomatic career. His wide travels provide the backdrop and colour for much of Seferis’ writing, which is filled with the themes of alienation, wandering, and death. Seferis’ early poetry is strongly influenced by the symbolists. In his mature poems one senses an awareness of the presence of Greece’s great past as related to her present (*Mythistorema*, 1935). Later on, Seferis verges on the surrealism (*Tria Krypha Poemata*, 1966). In addition to poetry, Seferis published a book of essays, *Dokimes*, and a collection of translations of foreign poetry (*Antigrafes*). In 1963, Seferis was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature ‘for his eminent lyrical writing, inspired by a deep feeling for the Hellenic world of culture’. In 1967, after a coup d’état, the nationalist, right-wing Regime of the Colonels took power in Greece. After two years marked by widespread censorship, political detentions and torture, Seferis stated on the BBC World Service and in every newspaper in Athens in authoritative and absolute terms: ‘This anomaly must end’. Seferis did not live to see the end of the junta (1974). At his funeral, huge crowds followed his coffin through the streets of Athens, singing Mikis Theodorakis’ setting of Seferis’ poem ‘Denial’ (then banned).

¹⁷ Regarding *Akariea*, see also Kontossi, *ibid*, 29–30.

text, which, combined with the demands of the contemporary lyrics' asymmetry, sets continuous alternating metrical indication, so that the natural flow of speech is ensured.

- b) He sets out to promote the kind of atonality in which we still come across hierarchical distinction among pitches. Although the bonds with tonality are not completely broken (the key signature is still noticed to imply the most important pitch, not to delimit a pitch class collection), dissonance is established. The dissonant material he selects (almost exclusively in all the songs, minor and major second, augmented fourth and their inversions) is used to divide the octave in symmetrical collections: whole-tone scales, along with semitone motives (in the form of resonances or melodic evolution) alternate with intervals of augmented fourth (example 4).

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the piece 'Pou na mazevis' by L. Zoras. At the top, a whole-tone scale is written on a single staff. Below it, the title '6. Πες να πεις' is written. The score is divided into two systems. The first system is marked 'Allegro Moderato (♩=192)' and '5 bars'. It features a vocal line with lyrics 'Πες να πεις να πεις να πεις' and a piano accompaniment. Annotations include 'motif of semitones' and 'transposition, 3rd m'. The second system continues the vocal line with lyrics '... να πεις να πεις να πεις' and the piano accompaniment. Annotations include 'Ped' and 'ms.'. The score is written in a mix of treble and bass clefs.

Example 4: L. Zoras, 'Pou na mazevis', from *Akariae*, 9 very short poems by Y. Seferis, musical delivery for piano and voice. Final manuscript.

- c) As regards notation, pitches are used enharmonically, regardless of their ‘tonal’ frame.
- d) He elaborates the intonational shape of a motif according to pitch class theory principles.

We must not forget to make reference to the use of a technique which was particularly developed by Olivier Messiaen:¹⁸ the constitution of pitches in a cell, the components of which are subject to an opposite direction transposition resulting in the expansion of the cell in space (example 5).

Moderato (♩ = 84)

cell that expands

mp

mp

2im

Εὰ πο-νο-ρω-ση-θε-ναι εἰς τὰ δεικνύ-

x

y

x = x, α, 3ε m ↓

p

y = y, α sem. ↑

2+

2+

- ηαι δο-νε ἀνδία - - ηαι-νε δεον ἡδύποο, οὐδὲ ρό' γαν οἱ δεον

Example 5: L. Zoras, ‘Dimotiko Tragoudi’, from *Akariea*, 9 very short poems by Y. Seferis, musical delivery for piano and voice, b. 1–10. Final manuscript.

¹⁸ See for instance ‘L’Échange’ from solo piano pieces *Vingt Regards sur l’Enfant Jésus* (1944).

In 1952 *Prosfora* was composed to Yiorgos Th. Vafopoulos' lyrics.¹⁹ The bond between music and speech is tight.²⁰ The exceptional musical economy in the composer's means of expression reflects completely the restrained pain emanating from the unrestricted poetic verse, free of any rhetorical elements, and therefore extremely direct. In response to this need the musical text appears without a meter indication, the traditional use of note-values is abolished, and bars are used to define conceptual units of the text.²¹ From this point of view this is a unique example in Zoras' entire creation (example 6).

Example 6: L. Zoras, 'To Epathlo', from *Prosfora*, three poems from the homonymous collection of Y. Th. Vafopoulos, b. 1–2.

In the first song, 'Epathlo' ['Award', example 6], the simple account of the wanderer who is about to start his journey finds the ideal partner in the technique balancing between Sprechgesang and singing/recitation of the Orthodox Church psalms practice, while the lyrics condensing the emotional intensity are elevated later on through singing and are differentiated graphically with the use of legato slurs. The piano keeps the pace with a minimalist accompaniment of two perfect fifths and later on (example 7) provides, in the form of resonance, the material of an acoustical scale from which voice enfolds, as well as its three ascending semitonal transpositions. Here Zoras creates interval relationships with priority over others governing the succession of notes.

¹⁹ Poet G. Th. Vafopoulos (1903–96) started as a neo-symbolist, with influences from K. Palamas (see footnote 7), K. Kavafis, Ch. Baudelaire and K. Kariotakis (see footnote 9). Through the *Prosfora* poetic collection (1938) written in memory of his wife, he turned to new expressive means – almost simultaneously to the movement of surrealism but without actually endorsing its doctrines. His poetic profile was shaped in the last five-year period of the Interwar, while the most important part of his work was created after World War II and the German occupation of Greece.

²⁰ Regarding *Prosfora*, see also Kontossi, *ibid*, 27–8.

²¹ 'Rhythm is subordinated only to speech. And, maybe, this is the deepest connection of the form to Byzantine, in general the liturgical atmosphere that was standing next to me.' Comment by the composer for *Prosfora* in the programme notes (see footnote 15).

Ex. nr. 7: L. Zoras, 'To Epathlo', from *Prosfora*, three poems from the homonymous collection of Y. Th. Vafopoulos, b. 15–16.

Arguably, transposition of the same referential sonority in all tones (e.g. resonance of the minor type with a major seventh in 'Anevasma' [Ascension]) – a compositional practice which was developed by Schoenberg and which refers to the early period of atonal music – is used widely and puts in doubt at a macro-structural perspective the hierarchical order of pitches, within this atonal framework. In 'Kalendari' ['Calendar'], chromatic transposition is dominated by a pre-decided 'harmonic' plan with regard to the sequence of resonances (resonances of the major type, which are exchanged equally from root position to first and second inversion; example 8). Within this ensemble of the modern aesthetic, where key is eliminated, one can recognize the voice's melodic and rhythmic references to the Orthodox Church tradition.

Example 8: L. Zoras, 'To Kalentari', from *Prosfora*, three poems from the homonymous collection of Y. Th. Vafopoulos, b. 4.

Akariea and *Prosfora* were performed for the first time in 1953, during a series of concerts first established in 1952 by the United States Information Service, the aim of which was to present all the new musical

developments to the Athenian public.²² The public enthusiastically welcomed Zoras' works, which were however, not to be untouched by some music critics' writings:

'His works [...] are moving within a field of hazardous experimentalism. His *Akariea*, 9 "little" songs of not more than 20 sec. duration each, involve so much thought as to that contained in a sentence without a verb. Which musical idea can one develop through so much laconic sentiment? The Spartan composer has misunderstood his ancestors' most wonderful virtue. In *Prosfora* the idea of music recitation is reduced up to the point of exhaustion.'²³

Throughout his life Zoras was not firmly attached to any specific musical system. He never used the twelve-tone system and the main goal for the use of new atonal techniques was not originality *per se*. He saw all these developments as the richness of different possibilities:

'The knowledge needs to be as wide as possible for all musical creative tendencies, from the older ones to the most modern ones, with conscious even fanatical effort to prevent every dogmatic attachment to any of the above. Thus, aim of this knowledge [...] [is] to develop the subconscious, general and impersonal musical intuition.'²⁴

If Zoras' Hellenism is tangible and detectable throughout his whole work and can be regarded as a natural development of the interaction between the time and place he grew up in, the education he received, the music he listened to and the ideological musical framework within which he matured as a human being, these same factors actually apply to create an Hellenism of philosophical character in the music of Jani Christou, reflecting his *Weltanschauung* and moreover, his beliefs in the liturgical role of art.²⁵

Christou was born in Cairo in 1926. He was the son of a cosmopolitan family of the elite. He received a traditional Anglo-Saxon education from his childhood. Therefore, his early encounter with music (piano lessons) was accomplished in 'neutral' ground, as regards national

²² Regarding the introduction of the Avant-Garde in Athens, see Katy Romanou, *Έντεχνη Ελληνική μουσική στους νεότερους χρόνους* [Greek Art Music in Modern Times], (Athens: Koultoura, 2006), 234–7.

²³ Minos Dounias, review note in *Kathimerini* newspaper, 22 January 1953.

²⁴ Unpublished composer's manuscript (Leonidas Zoras Archive, box 9K, nr. 14).

²⁵ 'Christou's creation stemmed from his deeply rooted belief that composition should spring from and develop through firm philosophical grounds' Anna-Martine Luciano mentions in her study *Γιάννης Χρήστου, Έργο και προσωπικότητα ενός Έλληνα συνθέτη της εποχής μας* [Jani Christou, Work and Personality of a Greek composer of our times], (Athens: Bibliosynergatiki, 1987), 184.

sentiments. From his direct family environment (his mother was a poet) he inherits his tendency to mysticism. On the other hand, from the wider familiar environment he inherited a deep understanding of the thought of ancient civilizations about afterlife. During the period 1938–44 he studied Philosophy, Linguistics and Symbolic Logic in Cambridge – studies that deeply affected his work – and Composition with Hans Ferdinand Redlich, who was a pupil of Alban Berg²⁶. Later on, Christou became interested in the theory of the archetypal symbols of Carl Jung. The musical creations of Christou became expressions of his philosophical thought. Through reconstruction of the arts (music, theatre/spectacle, dance)²⁷ he suggests a disengagement of modern Man from his existential agony ‘connecting his ego with a collective unconscious, which is archaic but eternal’,²⁸ through a music ritual that achieves a catharsis with the aid of power released by symbols and myths.

At an early stage of this course, Christou created in the *Six T. S. Eliot Songs* (1955),²⁹ as in other works of that period, a psychological trail identified with the symbol of the Phoenix, a mythical bird that is constantly reborn from its ashes and symbolizes the cycle of life: birth, growth, destruction, death, and rebirth.³⁰ The kids’ laughter in ‘New Hampshire’ is abruptly wiped out when they comprehend the threat of death (‘Death by Water’), the vanity of modern life (‘Mélange Adultère de Tout’), the pain of loneliness (‘Eyes that Last I Saw in Tears’), the nightmarish agony of Man coming face to face with his destiny (‘The Wind Sprang Up at Four O’ Clock’) and finally death and purgatory that

²⁶ Hans Ferdinand Redlich (1903–68) was one of the most important musicologists and authors of music books of his time, as well as Alban Berg’s biographer.

²⁷ As a characteristic example, let us remember *Epikyklos* (1968), music for ‘continuum’ and group of adaptable structure, which includes a ‘continuum’ and a happenings group. In the first audition, the participants involved the Dance Group of Zouzou Nikoloudi, a show-man, an actor and a group of musicians with a simultaneous film projection.

²⁸ Lucciano, *ibid*, 216.

²⁹ The Nobel-winner poet, essayist and playwright Thomas Stern Eliot (1888–1965) was born in Missouri, U.S.A and passed away in London. He studied multiple humanistic sciences extensively, such as: history, French and German in Massachusetts, comparative literature and history of modern philosophy in Harvard, French literature and philosophy in Paris, with final studies in Oxford, eventually settling down in England. His first, mature poem, *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, was published in 1915, though its impact in the field of English but also international poetry was perceptible after 1922 after publishing *The Waste Land*, a twentieth-century landmark poem.

³⁰ According to Hans Biedermann’s interpretation of the symbol in *Enciclopedia dei simboli* (Milano: Garzanti, 1991), 184–6.

bring rebirth in the endless flow of waters in the Red River ('Virginia'). This is an evolution of a drama, not in the sense of tragic or passion as the romantics saw it but in the ancient Greek meaning. It is not a random event; the composer decided to use as his vehicle the fully theatrical verses of a poet, whose writings are characterized by major modifications in tone, quick succession of images, abrupt sentimental changes, and use of symbols.³¹ Here, it should be noted that Eliot also believed in the myth as a means for re-establishing order in the modern world. The poet and the composer had many things in common in their way of living and thinking: social origin, catalytic effect of mother, cosmopolitan thought, high level of Anglo-Saxon education, philosophy studies, interest in mysticism, study of religions, meanings of symbols, attitude towards aesthetics in art, persistent idea about death.³²

Christou used various techniques in order to achieve dramatization of the musical language and to express a vast array of sentiments.³³

- a) Thickening: from a rhythmic and melodic point of view well built sound organisms, comprised of different cells (example 9 a, b) are supposed under an ostinato repeat, with continuously rising dynamics and acceleration of tempo.

The image shows two musical examples. Example 9a is a piano piece in 4/4 time, marked 'Allegro con spirito' and 'p' (piano). It features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with slurs and a 'lasciar vibrare' instruction. Example 9b is also in 4/4 time, marked 'Allegro' and 'pp staccato'. It shows two vocal parts: M.D. (Mezzo-Soprano) and M.S. (Mezzo-Soprano). The M.D. part has lyrics 'And the' and is marked 'pp staccato'. The M.S. part is also marked 'pp staccato' and has a 'Sf' (sforzando) marking.

Example 9 a, b: J. Christou, 'New Hampshire' and 'Death by water'
from *Six T. S. Eliot Songs*

- b) Impact: the sound organisms move on battling other entities of adverse character (e.g. a cluster).

³¹ About Eliot's theatricality, Peter Acroyd in his work *T. S. Eliot, Ο άνθρωπος πίσω από τη μάσκα* [T. S. Eliot, The Man beyond the masque] (Athens, Nefeli, 2002), 95, mentions: 'It is possible that in a future survey, Eliot's poetry will turn out to be regarded as the genuine English theater of the beginning of the century'. Y. Seferis in 'Υπό τον Έλιοτ' [About Eliot] from *Dokimes* (Athens: Galaxias, 1996), 151, also mentions among others: 'Eliot's poetry stirred in me a much deeper feeling, one that was impossible not to move a Greek: the element of tragedy'.

³² See Victoria Taskou, 'Ποιητής και συνθέτης' [Poet and composer], *Critical Edition on J. Christou Six T. S. Eliot Songs*, seminar work for the Department of Music Studies, Athens University, 2004.

³³ Certain of the following data are based on Lucciano's analysis, *ibid*, 87–103.

- c) Outburst: sudden use of distant registers releases, through an explosion, from the paroxysm caused by all kinds of thickening (example 10, bar 26, and example 11, bars 11–12).

The musical score for Example 10 consists of two systems. The first system shows a vocal line starting at bar 22 with the lyrics "The wa - king e - cho of con - fu - sing" and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a dense texture of chords and moving lines, with dynamic markings *ffz* and *ffz*. The second system starts at bar 25 with the lyrics "strife" and "Is it a dream or some - thing else". The vocal line includes performance instructions: *parlato f libero, con angoscia*, *sub. dim. quasi sussurrando*, and *canto*. The piano accompaniment includes the instruction *ff martellato - colpi di massimu velocità* and *colla parte*. The score is in a key with two flats and a common time signature.

Example 10: J. Christou, 'The Wind Sprang Up at Four O' Clock', from *Six T. S. Eliot Songs*, b. 22–27.

The musical score for Example 11 consists of two systems. The first system shows a vocal line starting at bar 7 with the lyrics "flow heat is si - lence No will is still as a" and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a dense texture of chords and moving lines, with dynamic markings *p cresc.* and *mf*. The second system starts at bar 11 with the lyrics "ri - ver Still. Will heat move On - ly through the mock - ing - bird Heard once?". The vocal line includes performance instructions: *Più mosso*, *f*, *ff Mosso assai*, *M.D.*, and *M.S.*. The piano accompaniment includes the instruction *fff feroce martellando, con colpi di massima velocità*. The score is in a key with two flats and a common time signature.

Example 11: J. Christou, 'Virginia', from *Six T. S. Eliot Songs*, b. 7–12.

- d) Distortion: though in expressionism the creator does not renounce the reason for the means he uses, the generally indifferent role that tone pitch plays in the voice part³⁴ enkindles the traditional relationship of the musician with his instrument, opening up the road that leads to ‘metapraxis’, a concept that Christou would devise, define and apply in his later works.
- e) Abrupt stop: creates fragmentation of musical speech, a characteristic expressionist medium.
- f) Repeat: repeated *forte* notes in the part of the voice enhance the energy and create an explosive environment (example 10, bars 22–25), while in *piano* they pile the sentiment of collapse and agony (example 11, bars 7–11).
- g) Description: by the word painting technique, the composer brings out vividly words and images of the poetic text.

Concluding *Six T. S. Eliot Songs* we could say that, in this music, all components of musical speech (form, texture, melody, rhythm) are totally subordinated to expressive needs. This is music of antithesis, which keeps us numb and psychologically strained, and transfers us through threatening and nightmarish images brought out in Eliot’s verses to the illogical world of dreams, madness but also of merciless reality. ‘Art comes not from ability but from necessity’ said Schoenberg to summarize the essence of expressionism that explains the need to defend the principle of the inner reality, against the idea of beauty in Art.³⁵ Christou, neglecting the aesthetic side of music, moves a step further: through the expression of personal experiences he directs Man to the route of salvation.

Софија Контоси

ГРЧКА УМЕТНИЧКА СОЛЮ ПЕСМА НА ПРЕЛАЗУ
ОД НАЦИОНАЛНЕ ШКОЛЕ ДО МОДЕРНИЗМА
(Резиме)

Уметничке соло песме у Грчкој током прве три деценије XX века настајале су под утицајем Манолиса Каломириса и националне школе. Управо у преломној фази развоја модерног грчког друштва, композитори су пу-

³⁴ In such cases importance lies on the register selected and by extension on the color of voice as an aspect of the tone pitch [regarding the color as an aspect of tone pitch, see Laura Vasiliu, *Articularea și dramaturgia formei muzicale în epoca modernă (1900–1920)* (Iași: Artes, 2002), 89–96].

³⁵ David Fanning, ‘Expressionism’ §3, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, S. Sadie and J. Tyrell (eds.), (London: Macmilann, 2001), vol. VIII, 473.

тем овога жанра изражавали своје политичке, социјалне и идеолошке ставове. Са музичке тачке гледишта, ова остварења превазилазила су оквире тоналног окружења, али су остајала дубоко укоренења у традиционалној песми.

У раду су представљена два начина на које су грчки композитори, Леонидас Зорас и Јани Христу, изражавали свој модернизам. Код Зораса, он је био завршна фаза до које је стигао кренувши од наслеђа националне школе. За Христуа, сам модернизам представљао је полазну тачку његовог композиционог стила.

Песме Леонидаса Зораса типичан су пример постепеног удаљавања од естетских оквира националне школе. У првој стваралачкој фази композитор је комбиновао постромантичарске и импресионистичке елементе наслеђене од свог учитеља Каломириса и савременију технику, посебно кластере и полимодалност, што се уочава у његовом циклусу песама *Скице* (1925). После студија у Берлину (1938–40) вратио се у Атину напустивши и тоналност свог претходног стваралачког периода. Експериментисао је са формом вокалне минијатуре која је у циклусу *Тренуци* (1950), на текстове хаику поезије, невероватно сведена и кратка, затим са *Sprechgesang* техником и ритмичко-мелодијским особинама православног појања у циклусу *Понуда* (1952) и са крајњим хроматизмом, стижући до атоналности у својих *Четрнаест песама на стихове Кавафиса*.

За разлику од Зораса, Јани Христу током свог формирања није био у додиру са грчком музичком традицијом. Рођен у Каиру где је образован у англосаксонском духу, после студија филозофије, лингвистике, логике и композиције у Кембриџу (1938–44) био је удаљен од потребе да се у својим делима одређује према достигнућима националне школе. Био је заинтересован за мистицизам и за учење о загробном животу. Веровао је у трансценденталну моћ уметности и у мит као могућност промене поретка модерног света. Хеленизам у његовој музици био је филозофског карактера. Христу је у својих *Шест песама Т. С. Елиота* желео да постигне драму, са значењем које је она имала у античкој Грчкој. С намером да слушаоца доведе до екстремног психолошког стања, искористио је сав драматуршки потенцијал поетских стихова и понудио један од најбољих експресионистичких примера вокалне музике XX века.

(С енглеског превела Биљана Милановић)

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