

**The solo piano works of Theodore Antoniou in the context of  
contemporary Greek piano repertoire: A performer's approach**

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Written element for the Doctor of Music in Performance

Royal College of Music, London

December 2019



## **Abstract**

This study focuses on the music for solo piano by the renowned Greek composer, Theodore Antoniou (1935-2018), with whom I have had a close collaboration for the performances and world première recording of his complete piano works. Despite Antoniou's international reputation, his piano works still remain neglected. Therefore, I aim to establish a performance tradition which is in line with the composer's musical perception and to make these works available to a wider, international audience. In this study, particular attention is drawn to Antoniou's conception of 'Abstract Programmatic Music', a term which he introduced in order to describe his own work. My study expands to selected piano works by the living Greek composers Andreas Paparousos, Yiorgos Vassilandonakis, John Psathas and Costas Tsougras, with whom I also collaborated for the purposes of my research. A vital part of my thesis is the examination of my evolution as a pianist through the close working relationship with the composers, as well as the expansion of my skills and techniques on the piano through the study of the chosen repertoire. The core of the current thesis is the comparison and combination among the three main factors which shaped my interpretations of the selected works, namely: 1) the indications in the scores, 2) the composers' own comments about their works and 3) my personal conception, feeling and reaction to these works. The portfolio which is submitted along with this thesis includes a CD with my recording of Antoniou's complete piano works, which was released by Naxos as part of its 'Grand Piano' series, as well as a second CD with my recordings of the contextual repertoire.



## **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to the composer, Theodore Antoniou, for his close collaboration and guidance throughout this study and for providing invaluable insight on his works.

In addition, I would like to thank Antoniou's secretary, composer Savvas Tsiligiridis, for providing me with vital material from Antoniou's archive in Athens; also, Antoniou's former student, composer and conductor Iakovos Konitopoulos, for being the initial link between Antoniou and myself.

I would like to express my gratitude to the composers Andreas Paparousos, Yiorgos Vassilandonakis, John Psathas and Costas Tsougras for our fruitful collaboration and stimulating workshops on their works which I include in my study.

Special thanks to the Spanish Association 'World in Harmony', as well as Mr. and Mrs. Brass for their precious financial support during my study.

I would also like to thank Naxos for publishing my world première recording of Antoniou's complete piano works under 'Grand Piano' records.

Many thanks to my directing supervisor at the Royal College of Music, Ivan Hewett, as well as the rest of the members of my supervision team, Haris Kittos, Andrew Zolinsky and Igor Petrin, for their guidance and insightful advice.

Finally, I would like to thank my dear friends, Grigoris Ioannou, Maria Maliderou and Athena Economou for helping me proofreading earlier versions of my thesis.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Research topic

The focus of my research is the solo piano works by the renowned Greek composer, Theodore Antoniou (1935-2018).<sup>1</sup> The aim of the research is two-fold:

1) to expound, in a written commentary, the material factors making up the musical identity of the composer, as revealed primarily in the piano works and also to explicate the challenges of bringing those works to performance, and

2) to achieve through actual performance of these works an interpretation which is faithful to the composer's intention and style. Most of Antoniou's piano works have never been recorded before and as such the goal is to take the first steps towards establishing a performance tradition. Antoniou's piano works are listed below:<sup>2</sup>

Title	Year	Publisher <sup>3</sup>	Duration <sup>4</sup>
Inventions and Fugues, Op.4 No.1	1958	Hellenic Music Centre	12:00
Inventions, Prelude and Fugue Op.4 No.2	1958	Hellenic Music Centre	7:39
Aquarelle (Watercolour)	1958	Edition Modern <sup>5</sup>	12:57
Sonata	1959	Hellenic Music Centre	9:10
Syllables	1965	Gerig Musikverlag	5:10
Prelude and Toccata	1982	Philippos Nakas (also G. Schirmer)	5:05
Entrata (Entrance)	1983	Philippos Nakas (also G. Schirmer)	15:36
Seven Rhythmic Dances	2000	Antinea	6:24
Synaphes (Connections)	2001	Philippos Nakas	8:52
Four Mini Canons	2002	Philippos Nakas	3:08

### List of Antoniou's piano works

At the heart of this research is my personal collaboration with Antoniou.<sup>6</sup> To a great extent this study is a journey of self-exploration. I am examining my evolution as a pianist through the close collaboration with the composer, as well as how the in-depth study of unknown repertoire led me to develop new skills and techniques on the piano. During this study, I felt

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<sup>1</sup> See 2.1. Antoniou's biographical details.

<sup>2</sup> Due to the limited duration of a CD, an abbreviated version of *Inventions and Fugues, Op.4 No.1* had to be included in the official CD and the recording of *4 Mini Canons* had to be left out (see 1.3.4. The duration issue and the order of the pieces in the CD).

<sup>3</sup> The manuscripts of *Inventions and Fugues, Op.4 No.1*, *Inventions, Prelude and Fugue Op.4 No.2* and *Sonata* are available from the Hellenic Music Centre, which has also pledged to officially publish the works in the near future.

<sup>4</sup> The durations are based on the portfolio of recordings submitted together with the thesis.

<sup>5</sup> Since mid-2014, the catalogues of Edition Modern are represented worldwide by Musica Mundana GmbH

<sup>6</sup> The nature of this collaboration is further explained later on.

it was important to broaden the scope of my research by collaborating with other living Greek composers and playing their works as well. This helped me attain a broader view and better understand Antoniou’s work, by comparing it with that of other composers. Listed below is the contextual repertoire (the reasons for selecting these particular pieces are explained below, in the ‘Rationale’).

Composer	Title	Year	Publisher	Duration <sup>7</sup>
Andreas Pappas (b.1975)	1•2	2014	Unpublished	14:00
Yiorgos Vassilandonakis (b.1969)	Persistent Outliers	2014	suoni reali music	6:00
John Psathas (b.1966)	Jettatura	1999	Promethean Editions	4:27
Costas Tsougras (b.1966)	12 Variations	1995	Papagrigoriou-Nakas <sup>8</sup>	8:13

#### Contextual repertoire

In addition to the dissertation, a significant part of this research project is a series of public performances of Antoniou’s piano works and of the contextual repertoire shown above,<sup>9</sup> as well as a world première recording of Antoniou’s complete piano works. The recording took place in the presence of the composer at the Athens Concert Hall recording centre on 3-4 July 2017 and was released and distributed worldwide by Naxos in March 2018, as part of its ‘Grand Piano’ series. The portfolio which is submitted along with this thesis includes the aforementioned CD, as well as a second CD with the contextual repertoire. The recordings of the contextual repertoire are selected from live performances, with the exception of Tsougras’s *12 Variations*, which is a studio recording.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The durations are based on the portfolio of recordings submitted together with the thesis.

<sup>8</sup> The work is scheduled to be published by Papagrigoriou-Nakas Music House in Athens in the near future. To date, it is unpublished.

<sup>9</sup> See appendix: list of public performances.

<sup>10</sup> More information about the selected recordings will be given at the end of the examination of every individual piece.

## 1.2. Rationale

This study is particularly important, considering Antoniou's reputation as a leading composer and a highly influential figure, especially in Greece, the United States and Germany.<sup>11</sup> In the music encyclopedia *die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Antoniou was described in 1973 as 'one of the most sought-after Greek composers abroad, together with Skalkottas and Xenakis.'<sup>12</sup> In 1995, Antoniou was described in the Greek press as 'probably one of the two most important living Greek composers with worldwide recognition, along with Xenakis.'<sup>13</sup> Several works by Antoniou have reached worldwide audiences; such an example is his *Nenikamen* (Cantata for baritone, mezzo-soprano, narrator, chorus and orchestra), which was commissioned for the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games in Munich in 1972 and conducted by Antoniou himself.

Despite the above, Antoniou's solo piano works still remain neglected. My project of recording production and public performances aims to make Antoniou's piano works available to a wider audience, especially in countries such as the UK, where they remain unknown. Jed Distler points out that:

Despite his prolific creative output and long-held prominence as the founder and conductor of important new music ensembles, Theodore Antoniou has not been well represented on disc. All the more reason to welcome Grand Piano's complete edition of his piano music.<sup>14</sup>

Additionally, in *Records International* it is mentioned that:

Antoniou seems to be an intriguing composer of real quality, whose prolific output in many genres appears to be poorly served in recordings.<sup>15</sup>

It must be emphasised that my research is a pioneer study, as there has been no prior research or a commercial recording of Antoniou's piano music. Through this project, performers, researchers and musicologists who are not familiar with these works are given the chance to discover them. New data is provided that will hopefully create an incentive for

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<sup>11</sup> See 2.1. Antoniou's biographical details.

<sup>12</sup> Johann G. Papaioannou, 'Antoniou, Theodore', *die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart – Allgemeine Enzyklopädie der Musik*, ['Antoniou, Theodore', *the music in history and present - general music encyclopedia*], (Bärenreiter Kassel 1973), Vol.15, 238, my translation

The musicologist Johann G. Papaioannou should not be confused with Antoniou's teacher, composer Yannis Andreou Papaioannou, to whom I refer later on.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Tamvakos, 'Έλληνες Δημιουργοί – Θόδωρος Αντωνίου', *Νέοι Αγώνες Ηπείρου*, ['Greek Composers – Theodore Antoniou', *New Struggles of Epirus*] (20/10/1995), 6

<sup>14</sup> Jed Distler, 'Antoniou, Complete Piano Works', CD review in *Gramophone*, July 2018, 68

<sup>15</sup> Unknown author, 'Antoniou: Complete Piano Works', CD description in *Records International*, <https://www.recordsinternational.com/cd.php?cd=04T062>, last access: 29/6/2019

further research not only on Antoniou's work, but also on Greek contemporary music in general.

During this study I have had the chance to work closely with Antoniou and gather a lot of information that would otherwise not have been available. Given that Antoniou passed away as I was still conducting my research, the insight he provided during this study was the last shared publicly by Antoniou pertaining to his work. As such, it assumes special significance.

A further reason for the choice of Antoniou as the focus of this research is the fact that he created a new aesthetic of 'Abstract Programmatic Music'. This aesthetic, as well as being interesting in itself, also poses interesting challenges to the performer, as will be examined in detail later on.<sup>16</sup> The term has only been applied by the composer to describe his own music, so it is of great interest to examine it more closely and to find ways to embody it in the performance of his piano works. On a personal basis, it has been truly inspiring for me as a pianist to collaborate with Antoniou, as I have developed a profound and sincere interest in his music.

However, although 'Abstract Programmatic Music' formed the departure point for my study, you will notice from my conclusion a black/white categorisation does not reflect the outcome of my research. Instead, Abstract Programmatic Music is a way of perceiving and interpreting music. There is no need to define it exactly, especially considering the fact that it is indeed as its name would imply, abstract.

It is also of great interest to examine whether the concept of Abstract Programmatic Music finds an echo in the works of the Greek composers following Antoniou's generation. The works in the contextual repertoire were selected because they present various different perspectives in relation to this concept. Although the selected composers do not view their work as Abstract Programmatic Music, a comparison to Antoniou's musical conception helps in drawing conclusions with regard to interpretation and performance.

As mentioned earlier, the exploration of the contextual repertoire personally helps me form a broader view as a musician, than if I were to limit my research to the work of Antoniou alone. The reason for choosing exclusively Greek composers is that, being a Greek pianist myself, I wish to discover and bring Greek piano works to a wider audience. I feel that the works in the contextual repertoire are a fair representation of the stylistic plurality, breadth

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<sup>16</sup> For an in-depth examination see 2.5. Antoniou's concept of 'Abstract Programmatic Music'.

and richness of contemporary Greek piano repertoire following Antoniou. In order to place the pieces presented in this study within the wider context of the established repertoire, I will draw parallels with the dominant trends of 20<sup>th</sup> century Western Art Music.

Furthermore, these works were selected because they present a variety of performance challenges which require very different approaches. Thus, in pursuit of my personal development as a pianist, they make for the ideal study material to master new skills, as well as to broaden my abilities and performing techniques.

### **1.3. Methodology**

#### **1.3.1. Outline of the methodology**

This study explores the challenges that I, as a performer, face in the piano works shown above and ways to overcome them. Working with the composers themselves has been key in my pursuit to attain a deeper knowledge of their music and refine my performances of their compositions.<sup>17</sup> In order to shape my interpretations of their works, the main three parameters that are taken into consideration are:

- 1) The indications in the scores
- 2) The composers' personal remarks about their work in general and the selected piano pieces in particular
- 3) My personal conception, feeling and reaction to these works.

A process of comparison and combination among these three factors is my main consideration when approaching the pieces. This process helps determine the details in performance, such as tempo, expression, touch, gesture and pedalling.

It is important to note that Antoniou was not a skilled pianist. As such, his piano writing does not generally contain precise indications which pertain to the actual execution of the pieces. There are instances where this issue is encountered in the contextual repertoire as well. Through my own practice and performance experience I aim to provide suggestions on overcoming the technical difficulties, such as hand distribution and fingering. Particular care

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<sup>17</sup> For further details see 1.3.2. The nature of my collaboration with the composers.

is also taken in explaining how the various instances of extended techniques in Antoniou's works are to be executed as they sometimes present practical issues.

In many cases there are ambiguities in the scores of Antoniou's piano works. These include differences between the manuscripts and the published editions, misprints, as well as instances where the composer's intention is not totally clear. Through discussion of these cases with the composer in detail, always taking into account my own artistic taste, a clear and definitive version of each ambiguous passage is suggested.

In order to identify and illustrate Antoniou's musical language and to make decisions about interpretation, every piano score is examined in terms of compositional techniques, form, style, pitch material, texture and rhythm. Attention is drawn to the similarities between his piano works and the larger scale musical compositions that he composed in that particular time period. This study also explores the similarities between the work of Antoniou and the work of other composers who seem to have influenced him to a certain point.<sup>18</sup> The written commentary provides a contextual statement about the composer, placing him in a cultural context in both Greece and Western Art Music as a whole.

Through practising Antoniou's piano works I realised that the learning and memorising process does not require a different approach than that of the standard repertoire. Given that, there is no need for a detailed, time-linear explanation of my actual process of practising each piece. Examples of practising techniques will only be demonstrated in a selection of passages which present uncommon challenges.

Along with his solo piano works, it is important to mention that Antoniou has used the piano extensively in his oeuvre in chamber music compositions and in eight works in the form of a concerto.<sup>19</sup> The word limit of the present text does not allow an in-depth examination of such a large amount of works. This study focuses on Antoniou's writing for piano as a solo instrument; areas like orchestration and the combination of the piano with other instruments in chamber music works are beyond the scope of this research. Selected examples of Antoniou's works, other than his piano pieces, are presented in order to give an overview of Antoniou's style. Such examples are also given in instances where a direct

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<sup>18</sup> See 2. A brief overview of Antoniou's biography, oeuvre, background and style.

<sup>19</sup> The latter include: Concertino Op.16b for piano, string orchestra and percussion (1962), Concertino Op.21 for piano, nine wind instruments and percussion (1963), *Events I* for violin, piano and orchestra (1967-8), *Fluxus II* for piano and chamber orchestra (1975), *North South* for piano and chamber orchestra (1990), *Chania* for piano and strings (1992), Concerto for piano and orchestra (1997) and *Left for two* for piano left hand and orchestra (2013).

connection with a piano work can be seen, as this helps to make decisions concerning performance.

### **1.3.2. The nature of my collaboration with the composers**

The idea for the research on Antoniou's piano works has its origins in my performance of his *Synaphes* in December 2015 in Athens, which earned the audience's and, especially, the composer's acclaim. After that performance, the composer and I jointly decided that I would undertake the world première recording of his complete piano works. To that end, I visited him frequently - ten times in all - at his home in Athens, where we worked together on his piano works.<sup>20</sup> In addition, Antoniou attended my recital held on 15/4/2017 in Athens, which was dedicated to his piano works,<sup>21</sup> and the CD recording procedure as already mentioned.<sup>22</sup>

As for my collaboration with Tsougras, after being prompted by the composer, I originally made an initial recording of his *12 Variations* and sent it to him for his feedback. This was held during a recorded video call (19/2/2018), where we discussed the most important aspects regarding the performance of the piece, which I cover later on, during the examination of this work. Tsougras was present during my performance of his piece at the State Conservatory of Thessaloniki (29/3/2018), where I met with him before the concert. At that time, we did not make any significant alterations to the performance itself; rather we did a run-through in order to check the acoustics of the hall and decide about the dynamics and amount of pedal required for the performance. Finally, we collaborated again the following day (30/3/2018) for the recording session of his piece at the recording studio of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

I met with Vassilandonakis at my home in Athens on 15/12/2015, where we had a workshop in preparation for the world première of his *Persistent Outliers* on 17/12/2015 in Athens.

With regard to Psathas's *Jettatura*, I sent him live recordings of the piece from my concerts and he gave me positive feedback. We first had the opportunity to meet each other in London, after my performance of his piece at St. James' Piccadilly (26/1/2018), which he

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<sup>20</sup> The dates of our meetings were: 23/6/2016, 5/7/2016, 12/7/2016, 28/12/2016, 18/1/2017, 21/4/2017, 26/4/2017, 20/6/2017, 12/9/2017 and 20/12/2017. All have been recorded, except for the last two.

<sup>21</sup> See appendix: list of public performances

<sup>22</sup> Information about the CD recording procedure will be given in 1.3.3. The recording procedure, 3. Working on Antoniou's piano works, as well as 5. Conclusions.

attended. The next day we held a filmed workshop on his piece at my donors' home, Eleanor and Gary Brass, in London.

Paparusos's *1•2* uses special notation that requires clarification. Therefore, before I started practising the piece, we held an introductory video call (9/12/2016) to Paparusos's work. Later on, as I performed *1•2* at several concerts, he would give me feedback on the live recordings. We got together for a workshop at my home in Athens (9/4/2018), in preparation for my performance of his piece in a recital I gave for the *Third Program* of the Greek National Radio on 10/4/2018, where he was present.

Our collaborations were conducted in the shape of informal workshops and by practicing the pieces on the piano. They were not structured interviews in some particular style of question and answer and the composers did not explicate their thinking in a continuous, flowing and ordered manner. Thus, I decided to quote only the most important points of our discussions at the parts of my thesis that examine the relevant arguments, and refer to the recorded (or, in some cases, unrecorded) workshop in a footnote. After careful consideration, I have concluded that this is the best possible way to relay all the necessary information I was given by the composers.<sup>23</sup>

The workshops were conducted in Greek and I have served as a translator, apart from Psathas's case, with whom we spoke in English. Given that we are dealing with verbal communication, with frequent interruptions and somewhat impromptu expressions employed at times, I have - with the composers' permission - made slight modifications to certain quotes in order to clearly convey the intended meaning.

At this point I just aimed to give an overview my collaboration with the composers. I will reserve their detailed comments in the appropriate places in the discussion of the pieces. Through the working relationships described above, friendships were formed. I am aware that composers are often not objective about their own work, so I tried to keep an independent, critical eye throughout the study.

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<sup>23</sup> I used the following method to organise my recorded material: Immediately after every workshop, I listened to the recording and typed the most important points discussed, noting for each one of them the timing in the recording as well. This method prevented any difficulties during backtracking.

### 1.3.3. The recording procedure

The recording sessions of Antoniou's complete piano works took place at the Dimitris Mitropoulos Hall – recording centre of the Athens Concert Hall on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 2017. Along with the sound engineer, Nikos Espialidis, Theodore Antoniou was also present in the studio, together with his associate, former student, composer and conductor Iakovos Konitopoulos.

Along with the experience in studios as a pianist, I have also had some experience as a sound engineer.<sup>24</sup> Having developed audio editing skills, I am aware of the places in which a cut can be made easily. This was very helpful in determining my takes during the recording sessions. I preferred to make longer takes in order to get in the atmosphere of the piece, rather than recording bit-by-bit and then pasting it together; too many takes would have resulted in a tiresome editing procedure.

My personal approach while recording has a key basis: avoid as much as possible listening to the recorded material during and after the sessions. Together with Antoniou, Konitopoulos and Espialidis, we would make the decision on which takes were preferable on the spot. In most cases, I would decide immediately after each take whether it had to be repeated and where a cut should be made; both me and the sound engineer would mark our scores accordingly. For the editing process, I worked together with the sound engineer, directing the cuts.

### 1.3.4. The duration issue and the order of the pieces in the CD

One of the main issues related to the release of the CD with Antoniou's complete piano works was its duration. The maximum capacity of an audio CD is 80 minutes, while the total duration of the recorded music was 87 minutes. Releasing two short CDs was not considered as ideal by Naxos. After consulting with Antoniou, a decision on the material that would have to be left out was made, so that the recorded material could fit in one CD. The first piece that we decided to cut was the *Four Mini Canons* (2002). This is conceived as an exercise intended for piano beginners; it is not regarded as particularly important by the composer.

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<sup>24</sup> As part of my master's thesis in the Mozarteum University (2015) I recorded and edited my own CD (Scriabin's Etude Op.8 No.12, *Vers la Flamme* Op.72 and Prokofiev's Sonata No.7, Op.83).

To get the recording under 80 minutes, it was also decided to make certain cuts in the *Inventions & Fugues, Op.4 No.1* (1958), which consists of seven movements. In the first and the second movements (Inventions No.1 and No.2) there are sections enclosed in repeat marks; the repetitions of these sections have been omitted from the recording. The seventh movement (Fugue No.2) was also selected to be left out, as its subject presents great similarity with that of the sixth movement (Fugue No.1), which makes for a more definite ending. Because of the required time limits, the third movement (Invention No.3) had to be left out as well. Antoniou and I both agreed that with these cuts the overall structure of the piece is as little affected as possible. Due to the omission of the above material in the official released CD, *Four Mini Canons* as well as an uncut version of *Inventions & Fugues Op.4 No.1* have been included in the CD with the contextual repertoire submitted together with the thesis.

Regarding the ordering of the pieces in the CD with Antoniou's complete piano works, the central question was whether they should be put in chronological order – according to their date of composition – or not. If they were indeed to be ordered chronologically, the CD would start with nine short tracks of polyphonic pieces – a beginning which is probably not ideal. Due to the nature of CD players, listeners tend to focus on the first track, so it has to make a strong impression. This seemed to be especially important considering the fact that Antoniou's piano works are not yet known to broader classical music audiences. For this reason, *Entrata* (meaning 'Entrance') is placed as the first track, as it is highly representative of Antoniou's music. The rest of the pieces are kept in chronological order, with the exception of the polyphonic pieces (Op.4), which are placed at a later stage (tracks 24-32). Antoniou indicated that he was happy with this arrangement, which also met with the press's approval.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> See: Burkhard Schäfer, 'Theodore Antoniou – Sämtliche Klavierwerke - Konstantinos Destounis, Klavier', ['Theodore Antoniou – Complete Piano Works – Konstantinos Destounis, piano'], CD review in *Piano News*, July 2018, [https://www.naxos.com/SharedFiles/Reviews/GP779\\_Piano\\_News\\_072018\\_de.pdf](https://www.naxos.com/SharedFiles/Reviews/GP779_Piano_News_072018_de.pdf), last access:11/5/2019

## **2. A brief overview of Antoniou's biography, oeuvre, background and style**

## 2.1. Antoniou's biographical details

Theodore Antoniou (1935-2018) was one of the most significant contemporary Greek composers, who gained international recognition and a multitude of awards; most notably, the 'Herder Prize' from the Alfred Töpfer Stiftung (2004).<sup>26</sup> A highly influential figure, he was the president of the Greek Composers' Union from 1989 until his death. He was Professor of composition at Boston University from 1979 to 2008, when he was awarded the title Professor Emeritus. For his overall contribution to the international musical scene, he was elected, in 2014, as a member of the Academy of Athens, Greece's highest intellectual establishment.

In Antoniou's family there was no professional musician; his father was an amateur guitarist. Antoniou grew up under difficult conditions: as a child he experienced the early loss of his father in the Second World War, the German occupation in Greece and the civil war. He had to work from his teenage years to make a living. With his mother's encouragement and the support of several scholarships, he studied the violin, singing and composition in Athens (1943-1961) and continued his musical training in conducting and composition at the *Hochschule für Musik* in Munich (1961-1965). He also attended the International Music Center in Darmstadt (1963-1966), as well as courses of electronic music at the *Siemens Studio* in Munich (1962-1964).<sup>27</sup>

Thereafter, he led a long international career as composer, conductor and professor, dividing his time mostly between the United States and Greece,<sup>28</sup> as he was teaching simultaneously in various Greek Conservatories and Universities in the US. Both as a composer and as a conductor, he was engaged by major festivals and orchestras all over the globe and also founded several contemporary music ensembles in places where he taught, such as *ALEA II* at Stanford University, *ALEA III* at Boston University, the *Philadelphia New Music Group* and the *Hellenic Group of Contemporary Music* in Athens. During 1974-85 Antoniou was assistant director of contemporary activities in Tanglewood;<sup>29</sup> in this capacity, he collaborated as a conductor with leading contemporary composers, such as George Crumb and Leonard Bernstein.

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<sup>26</sup> Previous recipients of this prize include Krzysztof Penderecki (1977), Witold Lutoslawski (1967) and Pancho Vladigerov (1968).

<sup>27</sup> N. Slonimsky, 'Antoniou, Theodore', *Baker's biographical dictionary of musicians*, Ed. Laura Kuhn (Schirmer Books, New York, 2001), i, 97-98

<sup>28</sup> G. Leotsakos, 'Antoniou, Theodore', *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Ed. Stanley Sadie, (second edition, Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2001), i, 765-766

<sup>29</sup> *loc. cit.*

As a renowned professor of composition, Antoniou has produced the greatest number of Greek graduates, who have themselves become composition teachers in Greece.<sup>30</sup> Since retiring from Boston University in 2008, Antoniou settled in Athens, where he continued composing, teaching and conducting.

During his lifetime Antoniou received glowing testimonials from leading figures of the contemporary music scene. A selection of these testimonials is presented below:

I write these words in most enthusiastic support of the various projects being guided by Theodore Antoniou. This is a fantastic man – not only as a fine composer, but a true lover of music, and music of all kinds. His enthusiasm, intelligence and charm make him an ideal teacher as well as a strong champion of new music, whether as conductor, performer, or administrator. [...] what is good for him is inevitably good for music.<sup>31</sup> – *Leonard Bernstein*

I was extremely pleased to get to know Theodore Antoniou, who taught successfully at Stanford. [...] This young Greek has a lot of talent; he employs the most up-to-date means of expression deriving from graphic or aleatoric notation using tape.<sup>32</sup> – *Darius Milhaud*

Th. Antoniou is one of the most prominent personalities in the musical life of our time. He is an exceptionally gifted and important composer, a brilliant teacher and conductor - he is innovative in his ideas and pursuits alike. [...] He is one of the most well-rounded people I know.<sup>33</sup> – *György Ligeti*

Mr. Antoniou is an exceptional musician, with an extensive musical background. [...] Th. Antoniou is a highly talented composer, whose orchestral works reveal his mastery of instruments, an in depth exploration of all the new techniques of contemporary music, as well as lyricism and dramatic flair. [...] Theodore Antoniou is a wonderful conductor, precise, dynamic, who engenders beautifully sounding live performances.<sup>34</sup> - *Olivier Messiaen*

Antoniou is a musician that displays exceptional ability in multiple fields. Above all he is a prominent composer. [...] His music emanates sensitivity, imagination, and a stunning virtuosity. He is also a supreme conductor. I would describe his conducting as a paragon of clarity and good taste.<sup>35</sup> - *George Crumb*

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<sup>30</sup> Athanasios Trikoupis, 'Διδασκαλία της μουσικής σύνθεσης στην Ελλάδα: ιστορική αναδρομή, δεδομένα και προοπτικές', [‘Teaching of music composition in Greece: history, data and perspective’], proceedings of the 7<sup>th</sup> Interdepartmental Musicological Conference (Corfu, 30/10-1/11/2015)

<sup>31</sup> Leonard Bernstein, manuscript letter, unpublished, 27/12/1980, found in Antoniou’s archive in Athens.

<sup>32</sup> Darius Milhaud: *My Happy Life (Ma Vie Heureuse)*, translated from the French by Donald Evans, George Hall and Christopher Palmer, (Marion Boyars, London – New York 1995), 247

<sup>33</sup> Tamvakos *op. cit.* 9

<sup>34</sup> Marina Tzouli, 'Μια συζήτηση του Θόδωρου Αντωνίου με τη Μαρίνα Τζούλη', [‘A conversation between Theodore Antoniou and Marina Tzouli’], *Polytonon* (magazine of the Greek Composers’ Union), Athens, issue 71 (July-August 2015), 37

<sup>35</sup> Tamvakos *op. cit.* 9

## 2.2. Antoniou's oeuvre

Antoniou was a very prolific composer with an output of 463 works of different genres, including operas, theatre music, choral works, symphonic works, concertos, chamber music and solo instrumental pieces. The main publishers of his scores are *Bärenreiter Verlag* in Germany, *G. Schirmer* in the United States and *Philippos Nakas* in Greece.<sup>36</sup>

Composers are often categorised by musicologists according to their compositional styles. In Antoniou's case such a classification is not possible due to a number of reasons; Antoniou's 60-year long compositional span (1958-2018) led to an extensive experimentation within different styles and genres, which resulted in a significant evolution in his musical language throughout his career. He often composed works for rather unusual instrumental combinations.<sup>37</sup> Most importantly, Antoniou always consciously tried to avoid becoming an adherent of any specific compositional trend. He often spoke about this publicly, as illustrated in the following quote:

I am not here to support or to justify any kind of musical system, I am here to adjust the system in the way I want it to be and if it does not meet my needs, I will break all its rules! If the composer imitates a certain system, tonal, dodecaphonic, atonal or any other system, he is contributing to his own artistic death. Our only power is the freedom of our personality.<sup>38</sup>

In one of our private conversations, when I asked him about his musical influences, he replied he had none.<sup>39</sup> Obviously, Antoniou prefers to be viewed as uninfluenced and independent. But, naturally, no-one can just spring into being fully formed. Antoniou's musical identity is formed by three main factors: 1) Greek musical tradition, 2) the prevailing 20<sup>th</sup> century trends of contemporary music and 3) his own innovative ideas and unique perception of music.

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<sup>36</sup> Theodore Antoniou, work catalogue, Philippos Nakas Music House, Athens, 2014

<sup>37</sup> A few indicative examples are: *Synthesis* for oboe, hammond organ, percussion and double bass (1971), *Celebration II* for 6 trumpets, 4 horns, 4 trombones, euphonium, tuba and organ (1994), *Five Epigrams* for viola and marimba (2005), *For Saxophone and Organ* (2006), *Synergy* for solo trombone and 8 trombones (2007), Concerto for bouzouki and orchestra (1988), Concerto for marimba, harp and orchestra (1995), Concertino for double bass and percussion ensemble (2003), *Just Drumming* – concerto for snare drum and orchestra (2012).

<sup>38</sup> Ioannis Giagourtas, 'Theodore Antoniou: The Life of a Great Composer and a Presentation of his Guitar Music', Master's Thesis, Dublin Institute of Technology, Conservatory of Music and Drama, 2010, 43

<sup>39</sup> Recorded workshop with Th. Antoniou, 23/6/2016

### 2.3. Antoniou's approach to Greek music tradition

In order to comprehend the musical background of Antoniou's era and his oeuvre, I will give an overview of the evolution of Greek Art Music in modern Greece from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century until Antoniou's arrival on the scene. Until the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the notion of national Greek music was mainly associated with the monophonic folk song and byzantine hymns of the Greek Orthodox Church.<sup>40</sup> At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the term takes on another meaning, due to the prevailing wider trend to westernise Greek music, through mixing folk song and church chant with harmony, counterpoint and the forms and musical genres of Western Art Music. There were two schools that explored these practices and which were regarded to uphold a Greek conscience: the Ionian (or Heptanese) School of Music (19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century) and the National School of Music (developed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century).

The Ionian School arose at the islands of the Ionian Sea (otherwise called Heptanesea, meaning 'seven islands'), which are located in the west of mainland Greece.<sup>41</sup> The nationalist element in the music of the Ionian composers has two facets. These are the incorporation of folk songs in their works and the libretti, which often drew inspiration from the Greek War of Independence from the Ottomans (1821-1828).<sup>42</sup>

There have been cultural and trade exchanges between the Ionian Islands and Italy for centuries, so it is not surprising that the music of the Ionian School was strongly influenced by Italian music. The predominant genre was the opera; the libretti were in Italian at first, and from 1867 onwards, occasionally in Greek as well.<sup>43</sup> The Italian influence is also evident from the fact that the Philharmonic Societies, an Italian institution, formed the basis of a flourishing music education system.<sup>44</sup> A prominent ambassador of the Ionian School was Nicolaos Chalikiopoulos-Mantzaros (1795-1872), who, through the Philharmonic Societies,

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<sup>40</sup> Kostas Chardas, *The music for solo piano of Yannis A. Papaioannou up to 1960* (Lambert Academic Publishing, 2010), 32

<sup>41</sup> The Heptanesea were successively ruled by Venetians (1386-1797), French (1797- 1814) and British (1814-1864).

<sup>42</sup> Chardas *op. cit.* 30

<sup>43</sup> The first Opera with a Greek libretto was *Ο Υποψήφιος* (*Ο Υποψήφιος*, meaning 'the parliamentary candidate') by Dominicos Padovanis in 1867.

George Leotsakos, 'Greece, III. Art Music since 1770, 1. The Ionian islands, 1771-1900', *Grove Music Online*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.11694>, accessed 16/8/2019

<sup>44</sup> Katy Romanou, 'Έντεχνη ελληνική μουσική στους νεότερους χρόνους' ['Greek Art Music in modern times'] (Koultoura, 2006), 86

taught a great deal of composers, who are considered to be representatives of the School.<sup>45</sup> Other important composers of the School include Dominicos Padovanis, Spyridon Xyndas, Spyridon Samaras, Pavlos Carrer and Dionysios Lavrangas.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the so-called National School of Music was established, which was based in Athens. The founder and leader of this School was Manolis Kalomiris (1883-1962). Some of the core components that shaped Kalomiris's musical identity are: the folk music he grew up with in Izmir; his training in Vienna (1901-1906) and his fascination with German music, Wagner in particular; also, his acquaintance with works of the Russian nationalists.<sup>46</sup>

Kalomiris settled in Athens in 1910. At that time, the most important music institute in Greece was the Athens Conservatory, which offered a Germanised curriculum. Conservatory Director was George Nazos, a Germanophile who studied in Munich. Nazos frequently appointed foreigners as teachers and broadcast his disapproval of Ionian composers. Kalomiris clashed with the Ionian composers, as well, accusing them of writing music that was not genuinely Greek, but Italian. As a result, the National School gained ground and several leading composers of the Ionian School were dismissed and marginalised.<sup>47</sup>

Kalomiris expressed his conception about establishing a Greek National School in his programme notes of his debut concert in the Athens Conservatory in 1908. He wrote, in the third person:

The composer, who offers today a glimpse of his works, has dreamt of a truly National music, rooted in the purity of our folk songs and forged with the tools of the musically advanced nations, first and foremost the German, French, Russian and Norwegian.<sup>48</sup>

In the same text, Kalomiris also pointed out that the quotation of folk songs themselves is not the most important element in expressing one's Greek identity. It is imperative, he remarks, that music is 'built on the rhythm, scales and character of our folk music.'<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> A very important work by Mantzaros is his setting to music of Dionysios Solomos's poem *Ύμνος εις την Ελευθερίαν* (Hymn to freedom) in 1828-30; the first verses of which later became the Greek National Anthem.

<sup>46</sup> Leotsakos, 'Greece, III. Art Music since 1770, 3. The Athens Conservatory and the National School'

<sup>47</sup> George Leotsakos, 'Kalomiris, Manolis', *Grove Music Online*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.14641>, accessed 16/8/2019

<sup>48</sup> Manolis Kalomiris, program notes for the concert dedicated to his works (in Greek), Athens Conservatory, 11/6/1908, found in 'Lilian Voudouri' Music Library of Greece, my translation

<sup>49</sup> *Loc. cit.*

It is important to note that Kalomiris's views were not at odds with the existing ideas of Greek composers. At that time, for example, similar opinions were set forth in the article 'National Music', by composer Georgios Lambelet in 1901.<sup>50</sup> However, Kalomiris's imposing personality, the German-friendly atmosphere in Athens at that time, as well as the quality and warm reception of his music by Greek audiences, established him as the founder of the National School. This School was initially defined as a group of composers who all actively collaborated under Kalomiris, such as Marios Varvoglis, Emiliios Riadis, Petros Petridis, Loris Margaritis, Andreas Nezeritis, the Cypriot Solon Michaelides and others.

The National School of Music produced mostly works that utilised post-romantic elements and Greek folk musical material within classical forms.<sup>51</sup> A characteristic feature was the expansion of the modality of Greek folk music into chromaticism, as seen especially in Kalomiris's music.<sup>52</sup> The music of the National School was also defined by thematic development, colorful orchestration and a blend of homophonic and polyphonic textures.<sup>53</sup>

The quotation of folk songs played a significant role in the work of Kalomiris, as well as in the work of all the other composers of the National School. However, it is important to note that this practice was also used by many composers who are not classified as National School followers. A notable example of this is Nikos Skalkottas, an ambassador of modernism and at the same time a lover of Greek folk music, who based most of his popular *36 Greek Dances* for orchestra (1931-1936) on Greek traditional songs. As far as the piano repertoire is concerned, indicative examples of works by prominent Greek modernists who followed this formula are *six chansons pour piano* (1951) by Iannis Xenakis and *four dances from Cythera* (1926) by Dimitri Mitropoulos.

A prominent position in Greek piano repertoire is occupied by the works of Yannis Constantinides (1903-1984). In his piano pieces, Constantinides incorporates traditional songs, which he harmonises and embellishes with pianistic figurations. We could say that a parallel could be drawn with Bela Bartok's treatment of Hungarian peasant music. It is worth noting that the use of folk song in piano repertoire emerged in the mid 19th century, in the

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<sup>50</sup> Georgios Lambelet, 'Εθνική Μουσική', ['National Music'], *Panathina*, 15/11/1901, 82-90 and 30/11/1901, 126-131, provided by Anna-Maria Retzeperi at the University of Macedonia, Department of Music Science and Art

<sup>51</sup> Giorgos Sakalieros, *Dimitri Mitropoulos and his works in the 1920s – The introduction of musical modernism in Greece*, (Hellenic Music Centre, 2016), 38

<sup>52</sup> Leotsakos, 'Kalomiris, Manolis'

<sup>53</sup> Sakalieros *op. cit.* 38

work *The awakening of the Klepht* (1849, from the term ‘κλέφτης’ in Greek meaning ‘freedom fighter’) by Iossif Livalis, who was a representative of the Ionian school.

Apart from the incorporation of traditional melodies, the use of Greek traditional rhythms and modes was of special importance for Greek composers. It is only natural for a Greek to draw inspiration from tradition, as there is great wealth of Greek traditional musical elements. Petros Vouvaris expresses this precisely as follows:

Despite the diversity of compositional styles and aesthetic ideals, all Greek composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century share the same inescapable compulsion to tackle the issue of their inherited tradition.<sup>54</sup>

In elevating the reputation of Greek music onto an international stage, Cold War cultural politics played a decisive role. By 1950 Greece was devastated after the Civil War that followed the World War; it received more Marshall Plan funds per capita than anyone else in Europe. Then, in 1952 the United States Information Service (USIS) and the Athenian branch of the Western German Goethe Institute organised a series of concerts and conferences of modern music. In no other period so many Greek musicians received such numbers of scholarships to study in the West, and so many commissions to compose for Western festivals etc. In no other period so much Greek music was so often performed in the West, and so amply acclaimed internationally. The shallow roots of Western art music were easily uprooted in Greece.<sup>55</sup>

The generations born in the 1920s - 1940s were the most favoured [Michalis Adamis (1929-2013), Theodore Antoniou (1935-2019), Georges Aperghis (1945), Jiannis Christou (1926-1970), Arghyris Kounadis (1924-2011), George Kouroupos (1942), Anestis Logothetis (1921-1994), Nikos Mamangakis (1929-2013), Kyriakos Sfetsas (1945), George Tsougiopoulos (1930-2006), Iannis Xenakis (1922-2001).]<sup>56</sup>

Among those who were interested in the promotion of avant-garde music in Athens, most effective were Manos Chatzidakis and the musicologist Iannis Papaioannou. The former organised in 1962 a composition competition, in which Iannis Xenakis and Anestis Logothetis got the first prize. Manos Chatzidakis was a close friend to Antoniou and several other musicians of the Greek avant-garde, and was very supportive to them. In 1964 he founded

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<sup>54</sup> Petros Vouvaris, liner note to *Greek Flute Music of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries*, (Naxos), 2011 CD 8.572369

<sup>55</sup> Katy Romanou, ‘Έντεχνη ελληνική μουσική στους νεότερους χρόνους’ [‘Greek Art Music in modern times’] (Koultoura, 2006), 234-236

<sup>56</sup> Romanou *op. cit.* 237

the ‘Experimental Orchestra’, with which he gave a number of premieres (though not of 20th century music only), and which was succeeded by the Hellenic Group of Contemporary Music conducted by Theodore Antoniou.<sup>57</sup>

Regarding Antoniou’s music, one of the particular characteristics which connect it with Greek tradition is the use of Greek rhythms. An indicative example is the Zeibekiko rhythm, which is found in his piano works *Entrata* (1983) and *Seven Rhythmic Dances* (2000), as well as in his concerto for bouzouki and orchestra (1988).<sup>58</sup> The Zeibekiko is a 9/8 or 9/4 rhythm, containing strict metrical subdivisions, which are seen in the left hand ostinato in the example below.

The image shows a musical score for three systems of piano music. The first system is marked with a tempo of quarter note = 76, dynamics of *ppp* and *espressivo*, and includes a 6-measure phrase. The second system features a 9-measure phrase. The third system contains several 6-measure phrases. The left hand part consists of a steady, rhythmic ostinato pattern characteristic of Zeibekiko, while the right hand part features more complex melodic lines with various ornaments and articulations.

Example 2.3.a. Antoniou: *Entrata*, bars 47-49

On the whole, Antoniou often uses various forms of compound meters, which intrinsically evoke the Greek musical tradition, along with the Balkan, Turkish and Middle Eastern musical traditions in general.<sup>59</sup>

In contrast to many of his Greek predecessors, Antoniou avoids quoting original traditional melodies in his works.<sup>60</sup> He prefers to compose his own folk-like tunes, which he usually

<sup>57</sup> Romanou *op. cit.* 236

<sup>58</sup> The bouzouki is widely regarded as Greece’s most popular instrument of urban music. It is normally not connected with Western Art Music; therefore, works in the form of a concerto for bouzouki and orchestra are very rare.

<sup>59</sup> Out of his piano works, compound meters are used extensively in *Aquarelle*, *Sonata*, *Prelude and Toccata*, *Seven Rhythmic Dances*, *Synaphes* and *Four Mini Canons*.

<sup>60</sup> An exception to this is the fifth movement of Antoniou’s *Five Greek Dances* for cello and piano (2005).

combines with disparate elements. Such an instance is the first movement from his piano work *Aquarelles* (1958), in which, according to Antoniou, ‘a folk-like tune is played by the right hand, while the left hand continues a 12-tone row.’<sup>61</sup>

Adagio  
espressivo (♩ = 72)

*p*

A characteristic, folk like tune in the r. h.

*mf*

Continuation of a 12-tone row in the l. h.

Example 2.3.b. Antoniou: *Aquarelle*, first movement, bars 1-9

In some cases, Greek scales and modes are very distinct in Antoniou’s music. Their intervallic structure originates from the maqams of Arabic, Persian and Turkish music and they filtered into Greek culture during the Ottoman occupation. A representative example appears in *Synaphes* (2001), bars 28-33 (below), in which the *Hijazkiar* mode is utilised. This mode includes two augmented seconds; the sound of this melodic interval is widely regarded as a feature characteristic of Greek folk music. Kalomiris classifies modes containing the augmented second interval as Greek traditional modes, pointing out, at the same time, that this interval is a feature of eastern music.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Recorded workshop with Th. Antoniou, 21/4/2017

<sup>62</sup> Manolis Kalomiris, *Harmony, Part 2*, (Stefanos Gaetanos Music Publishing House, Athens 1935), 179-180

26 (♩ = 52)

meditative normal

muted

aeolian harp\*

*p*

*p molto espressivo*

\*depress keys silently, gliss. on strings without pedal

32

*pp*

Example 2.3.c. Antoniou: *Synaphes*, bars 26-36

Antoniou's connection to Greece can also be seen in the titles that he uses for his instrumental compositions. Many of them are transliterations of Greek words, often influenced by the ancient Greek civilisation and spirit.<sup>63</sup> Many other Greek composers, including Xenakis, employ a similar approach in their compositions' titles as well. Utilising such transliterations is a way of promoting Greek culture internationally in an accessible manner through language.

Antoniou's Greek identity is also evident in his theatre and language pursuits. He has collaborated with prominent Greek directors (such as Karolos Koun, Alexis Minotis and Michalis Kakogiannis) and he has composed music for ancient Greek tragedies and comedies (works by Sophocles, Aeschylus, Euripides), as well as for works by contemporary Greek playwrights (such as Manthos Krispis and Vasilis Andreopoulos).<sup>64</sup> Equally, he has worked with renowned Greek poets (such as Odysseas Elytis and Nikos Gatsos), setting their verse to music. He has delved deep into amalgamating language and music and he often lectured on the subject, with special emphasis on the correct intonation of the Greek language through the use of musical meter.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>63</sup> A few indicative examples are: *Kommos* (lamentation in ancient Greek tragedy), *Paeon* (ancient Greek lyric poem which expresses triumph), *Aphierosis* (dedication), *Parastasis* (performance), *Antitheses* (contrasts), *Kinesis* (movement), *Threnos* (lament) and *Stychomythia* (dialogue in ancient Greek drama).

<sup>64</sup> Stefanos Zagoris. 'Η μουσική του Θόδωρου Αντωνίου στο θέατρο', [*Theodore Antoniou's music for the theatre*], *Workshop of Greek Music* (Ionian University, Department of Music Studies, February 2004), 4-5

<sup>65</sup> Marina Tzouli, 'Μια συζήτηση του Θόδωρου Αντωνίου με τη Μαρίνα Τζούλη', [*A conversation between Theodore Antoniou and Marina Tzouli*], *Polytonon* (magazine of the Greek Composers' Union), Athens, issue 68 (January-February 2015), 18-20

Antoniou's fascination with language often permeates his instrumental pieces. Frequently he employs themes which, in other works of his, are sung by a choir. An illustrative example among his piano works is *Entrata* (1983), where he used common themes with his cantata *Prometheus* that he composed that same year.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, at times he writes for the piano in a way that conveys the impression of the improvised rhythm of speech, as we will examine in detail later. His piano work *Syllables* (1965), which is based on certain properties of speech, exemplifies this. The assimilation of irregular patterns of speech in music is a practice applied by several 20<sup>th</sup> century composers, most importantly Leoš Janáček. Despite the fact that Antoniou never mentioned Janáček in any of our conversations, it is evident that he shares a concern which is not only peculiar to him.

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<sup>66</sup> More details will be given at the examination of *Entrata*.

## 2.4. Antoniou and musical modernism

The late 1920s saw the introduction of modernism and innovation in Greece, primarily thanks to a few composers who left an indelible impression on Greek music. Dimitri Mitropoulos (1896-1960) and Nikos Skalkottas (1904-1949), active in Athens from 1924 and 1933 respectively, spearheaded German expressionism, atonality and dodecaphony.<sup>67</sup> Skalkottas was a student and a member of Schoenberg's inner circle in Berlin during the 1920s. After achieving international recognition for his work in Berlin, he moved to Athens in 1933, bringing his serialist influences to his home country. It is however important to note that the first Greek 12-tone work was composed by Dimitri Mitropoulos (*Ostinata in tre parti* for violin and piano, 1927). What might strike us as particularly peculiar is the fact that unlike Skalkottas, Mitropoulos was never part of Schoenberg's group of disciples.<sup>68</sup> Yet, Mitropoulos held Schoenberg in high regard, as evidenced by the great number of Schoenberg's works which he conducted during his lifetime; the two men also corresponded frequently between 1945 and 1951.<sup>69</sup>

Both of Mitropoulos's and Skalkottas's efforts in establishing a modernist compositional trend in Greece were ultimately unsuccessful, due to opposition from the Greek National School. Mitropoulos would leave Greece for the United States in 1938; today he is known as a world-renowned conductor of his time. However, he still remains neglected as a composer at an international level, despite the quality and significance of his music. From his return to Athens in 1933, Skalkottas would spend his remaining years as a musical outcast in Greece, and would only come to be considered as the father of musical modernism in Greece shortly after his passing.<sup>70</sup>

During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there were more notable composers who remained disconnected from the principles of the Greek National School and branched out into variant trends of Greek pre-war modernism. Among them were Dimitrios Levidis (1886-1951) and Dimitrios Lialios (1869-1940), who both studied in Munich - the former under Richard

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<sup>67</sup> Sakalieros *op. cit.* 44

<sup>68</sup> Giorgos Sakalieros, 'Dimitri Mitropoulos and his works in the 1920s – The introduction of musical modernism in Greece', Hellenic Music Centre, 2016, p.52

<sup>69</sup> Their complete correspondence has been published in Sakalieros' book.

<sup>70</sup> Myrto Economides, 'Greece, V. In a modern State, 2. The 20<sup>th</sup> century (pre -1950), (i) Art music, (b) Composers', *Grove Music Online*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/omo/9781561592630.013.3000000167>, accessed 16/8/2019

Strauss and the latter under Lufwig Thuille.<sup>71</sup> By the late 1950s, Jani Christou and Yannis Andreou Papaioannou were prominent amidst Greek modernist composers. Other composers, who used modern elements in their works, were also becoming influential; such examples are Dimitris Dragatakis, Yorgos Sicilianos and Michalis Adamis.<sup>72</sup> It is important to refer here to the pioneer Iannis Xenakis, who became famous with his 'Metastaseis' in the mid 1950s.

Antoniou was introduced to 12-tone compositional techniques by Yannis Andreou Papaioannou, who was his teacher in Athens during the late 1950s.<sup>73</sup> According to the researcher of Papaioannou's music, Kostas Chardas, at that time, Papaioannou was 'the only advanced music theory and composition teacher in Greece who offered lessons on 12-note, serial, and aleatory elements. However, he essentially proposed a holistic approach to the Western musical tradition, while his concern was also to unveil the individual and unique interests and inclinations of each student.'<sup>74</sup>

In the majority of Antoniou's works, 12-tone elements can be observed, to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the particular work. However, Antoniou prioritised his own musical taste and aesthetic over strict adherence to a rigid set of rules, through the adoption of a liberal approach to dodecaphony. This would also be his approach in teaching a great number of composition students; he would advise a deviation from the 12-tone row, if this produced a preferable result in sound according to the taste of each individual student.<sup>75</sup> Antoniou himself defines this approach as a 'free use of dodecaphony.'<sup>76</sup>

Antoniou often combines 12-tone writing with tonal music in a variety of different ways. A characteristic example can be found in his Concertino Op.16b for piano, strings and percussion (1962). Slonimsky points out that:

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<sup>71</sup> Dimitrios Levidis studied during 1907-1908 with Richard Strauss but settled in Paris during 1910-1932 and took the French nationality in 1929. He became famous with his composition 'Poème Symphonique pour solo d' Ondes Musicales et Orchestre' (Ondes Martenot) and had numerous compositions published in Paris.

<sup>72</sup> George Leotsakos, 'Greece, III. Art Music since 1770, 5. Since 1945', *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2001, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.11694>, accessed 15/4/2019

<sup>73</sup> Antoniou graduated with the diploma of composition from the Hellenic Conservatory in 1961.

<sup>74</sup> Kostas Chardas, 'Papaioannou, Yannis Andreou', *Grove Music Online*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.20847>, accessed 13/5/2019

<sup>75</sup> 'Θεόδωρος Αντωνίου: Οπτικοακουστική Προσωπογραφία', ['Theodore Antoniou: Audiovisual Portrait'], a collective interview of the composer made by students undertaking the Module 'Music for Media' by professor Charalambos C. Spyridis of the Kapodistrian University of Athens - Department of Music Studies, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d3srNICD3Uw>, accessed 29/6/2019

<sup>76</sup> Recorded workshop with Th. Antoniou, 23/6/2016

His music is serial but not necessarily atonal. In this respect, his Concertino for piano, strings, marimba, vibraphone, kettledrums, and other percussion instruments, is most unusual. It starts out with a supremely tonal interplay of the tonic, supertonic and dominant in unison, in the plainest G major. The basic tone-row grows out of this figure by a simple additive process. The rhythm is organized serially at a different rate of distribution of stresses from that of the cumulative tone-row, so that each individual note of the theme is stressed as the tone-row is gradually integrated.<sup>77</sup>

The example below can help us understand Slonimsky's observations. Every first occurrence of a new note in the 12-tone row has been circled.

## Concertino

op. 16 b

Theodore Antoniou

10 Allegro  $\text{♩}$  bis 176 5

MARIM

KLAVIER *mf non legato*

1.VIOL *f div. pizz.*

2.VIOL *f div. pizz.*

BRATS *f div. pizz.*

CELLO *f pizz.*

BASS *f pizz.*

KLAVIER *cresc.*

Example 2.4.a. Antoniou: Concertino Op.16b, bars 1-10

Another example of a different type of mix between tonality and the 12-tone system is the Prelude and the Fugue from his *Inventions, Prelude and Fugue Op.4 No.2* for piano (1958). Both of these pieces are based on a 12-tone row which contains clear tonal references; in

<sup>77</sup> Nicolas Slonimsky, 'New Music in Greece', *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 51, No.1 (January 1965), 231

this sense, a similarity with the music of Berg and Dallapiccola can be traced. A tonal-atonal combination is accomplished in a different manner in Antoniou's *Aquarelle* (1958) for piano; as explained before, a folk-like tune is superimposed over a 12-tone row.

In various articles and music dictionaries Antoniou is described as a composer of serial music.<sup>78</sup> It has to be clarified that even though he uses elements of 12-tone rows and numerical organisation of rhythm (see seen in his *Concertino Op.16b*) he does not apply total serialism in his music, as encountered in Messiaen's *Quatre Études de rythme, II. Mode de valeurs et d'intensités* (1950) or Boulez's *Structures I* (1952). Antoniou was against the mentality adopted in such works. As will be examined later on, his way of 'breaking free' was his conception of Abstract Programmatic Music, in which an extra-musical idea determines parameters such as pitch, duration, dynamics, and mode of attack, rather than serial organisation.

Antoniou's musical language underwent significant evolution in the mid 1960s. In my view, the period from the mid 1960s until the late 1970s could be described as Antoniou's 'experimental' period, with a clear influence from the prevailing modernistic trends of that time. There are multiple factors that contributed to this: first of all, his studies between 1961 and 1965 at the Music Academy of Munich with Günter Bialas and at the *Siemens Studio* of electronic music with Josef Anton Riedl; moreover, the fact that he attended the Darmstadt School during 1963-1966.<sup>79</sup> There, he participated in workshops by leading composers such as Luciano Berio, Pierre Boulez, György Ligeti and Karlheinz Stockhausen.<sup>80</sup> Another factor which led to the aforementioned evolution was Antoniou's visits to the United States. He first toured in the US as a composer in 1966,<sup>81</sup> after that, he would revisit the US regularly, as a composer and conductor. Eventually, he settled there, as he was offered teaching positions at various universities in the US, and divided most of his time between the US and Greece.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Indicatively: George Leotsakos, 'Antoniou, Theodore', *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Ed. Stanley Sadie, (second edition, Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2001), i, 765-766 and Nicolas Slonimsky, 'New Music in Greece', *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 51, No.1 (January 1965), 231

<sup>79</sup> Nicolas Slonimsky, 'Antoniou, Theodore', *Baker's biographical dictionary musicians*, Ed. Laura Kuhn (Schirmer Books, New York, 2001), i, 97-98

<sup>80</sup> Rodopi Chardali, 'Θεόδωρος Αντωνίου (1935- ): Βίος, εργογραφία και συνθετικό ύφος. Μία αναλυτική προσέγγιση μέσα από το έργο *Nenikikamen* (1971) για αφηγητή, βαρύτονο, μέτζο σοπράνο, χορωδία και ορχήστρα.' ['Theodore Antoniou (1935- ): His Life, Works and Compositional Style; An Analytical Approaching Through the Work *Nenikikamen* (1971) for Narrator, Baritone, Mezzo Soprano, Choir and Orchestra.'] Bachelor's Thesis, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2012, p.10

<sup>81</sup> Tamvakos *op. cit.* 6

<sup>82</sup> See 2.1. Antoniou's biographical details.

Antoniou is considered a pioneer of electronic music among the Greek composers, along with Iannis Xenakis, Jani Christou and Michalis Adamis. In 1962, during his studies in Munich, he wrote music for the play *Rhinoceros* by Ionesco; this is regarded as the first attempt by a Greek composer to write *musique concrète*.<sup>83</sup>

During his stay in the US, Antoniou came into contact with the American experimentalists. As a result, his works started including many instances of extended techniques, in many different instruments, the execution of which is explained in the prefaces of his scores of large-scale works. As far as his solo piano works are concerned, extended techniques are encountered in *Syllables* (1965), *Entrata* (1983) and *Synaphes* (2001). In particular, the extended techniques employed are: muted strings, pizzicato on strings, glissando on strings, aeolian harp effect, paper on strings and hit palm on strings. These are typical of the piano works by composers such as George Crumb and Henry Cowell; this makes the influence of the American Experimentalists on Antoniou obvious.

In certain works by Antoniou, such as *Moirologhia* (Laments) for Jani Christou, for voice and piano (1970) and *Fluxus II - Concerto for piano and (chamber) orchestra* (1975) he experiments further with a prepared piano in the form of placing various objects between the instrument's strings - a technique which is closely associated to John Cage. Below we can see an excerpt from the preface of *Fluxus II*, which contains performance instructions for the prepared piano.

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<sup>83</sup> Tamvakos op. cit. 7

Piano:  
Prepared piano:

- = put objects on the strings on various harmonic positions to produce a low marimba sound when played on the keyboard.
- = Touch string lightly with a pencil after striking keyboard to produce secondary sounds.
- = notation used for notes after book is placed on strings (m.33 etc.)
- = indicates stopping string. Press string close to bridge and strike on keyboard using pedal.
- = play on the strings. (if no banjo, plectrums)
- Pl. = Plectrum
- = strike on the string with the palm of the hand
- = indicates very fast trill using notes 1/2 step above and below note (a continuous turn) ex.
- = scratch with a coin in an up and down motion along indicated string

m. 136-143 Right Hand: Memorize the model and play it irregularly by changing tempo and dynamics as indicated.  
m. 137-148 Left Hand: At the same time as the above, play precisely or proportionately as indicated.  
(m.139) play fast (proportionate notation does not apply to this figure)

- = indicates accelerando
- = (Big note) repeat the preceding framed section
- = letter of sound block refers to information already indicated by same letter in previous measures
- = repeat information until end of arrow

for m.93-109, 137-143--indicates changes of tempo and dynamics according to the shape

m. 29, 42 (fg) and m. 34 (cl.)--For multiphonics see Bruno Bartolozzi's *New Sounds for Woodwinds*.

m.146--(B.Cl., Fg, Hn, Tb, Vc, CB ) All instruments play the lowest possible note as indicated with the thin arrows, very softly (just audible). In order to produce notes outside the range of the instrument B.Cl. and Fg. use an additional tube; Hn and Tb. play the lowest pedal notes ; and Vc and CB tune down the lowest string.

pno. cont.  
Cadenza; The opening of m.64 gives the character of the following cadenza. (this opening is precisely notated)  
 (echo)= notes are actual pitches and should be heard as an echo. Touch string in the correct position and play on keyboard to produce the harmonic note

Example 2.4.b. Antoniou: *Fluxus II*, preface to the score

Regarding Antoniou's musical language, Leotsakos explains that:

The influences of Christou, Zimmermann and Penderecki and the use of other advanced techniques became evident in the large-scale works of the early 1970s. However, he always maintained his distance from avant-garde excesses, and has developed a highly practical 'synthetic' notation, which represents complex sound structures in an easily assimilable fashion.<sup>84</sup>

Such complex sound structures in Antoniou's works are usually achieved through a great number of *divisi*, in a similar manner as encountered in the work of Xenakis and Penderecki. An indicative example of Antoniou's 'synthetic' notation of the conductor's score can be seen in the excerpt below, which is from Antoniou's *Nenikikamen* (1971), Cantata for Narrator, Baritone, Mezzo Soprano, Choir and Orchestra. Antoniou's texture, in which thick lines are used to represent the movement of clusters, is reminiscent of Krystof Penderecki's way of writing, especially as encountered in his *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima* (1960).

<sup>84</sup> George Leotsakos, 'Antoniou, Theodore', *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Ed. Stanley Sadie, (second edition, Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2001), i, 765-766

Example 2.4.c. Antoniou: *Nenikikamen*, third movement, bars 210-214

In the example above, Antoniou uses a system of six lines instead of the normal staff, consisting of five lines. In Antoniou's system, each consecutive line or space corresponds to a pitch change of one semitone.<sup>85</sup> As far as his piano works are concerned, Antoniou avoids using graphic notation - the only exception being one instance in his *Toccata* from *Prelude*

<sup>85</sup> A detailed analysis of the work can be found in Chardali's thesis.

*and Toccata* (1982).<sup>86</sup> In my view, this is due to the piano's inability to produce a genuine continuum of different pitches in the same way that the human voice, fretless stringed instruments, as well as certain brass instruments (like the trombone) can. Given that, a piano score does not favour lines indicating the gradual ascending or descending movement of pitch.

In Antoniou's oeuvre, the use of various forms of aleatoric elements plays an important role, as well. An indicative example of Antoniou's aleatoric tendencies is the frequent use of arrows in his large-scale scores. These arrows indicate either the successive introduction of instrumental lines one after another, which together build a dense mass of sound, or conversely the step-by-step dissolution of a sound mass through the reverse procedure.

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<sup>86</sup> For further information please refer to the in-depth examination of this piece.

180

185

17"

7"

10"

Wd cresc (ed accel) molto

fg *f* Tempo ma cresc molto

cor

tp

tb<sub>1</sub>

tb<sub>2</sub>

tba

arpa

pno *f* cresc

prc

Na

COFO cresc molto ma tempo

strg Normal cresc (ed accel) molto

IL PIU PRESTO E FORTE POSSIBILE

Every instr. of voice keeps playing the same note during this measure.

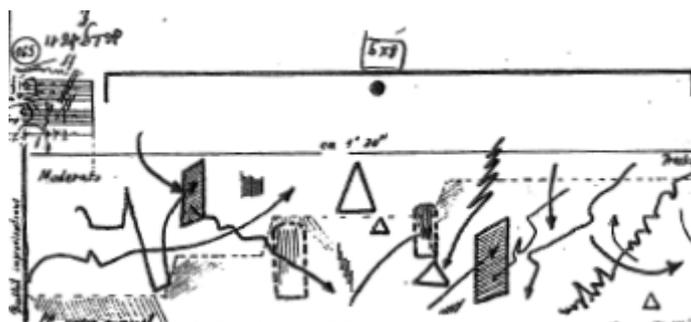
Jedes Instrument oder jede Stimme spielt während Takt 189 die gleiche Note während dieser Maßnahme.

Example 2.4.d. Antoniou: *Nenikamen*, third movement, bars 180-187

A prevailing trend among the avant-garde composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the use of noise as an integral part of their music. Antoniou embraces this trend, as well, in several of his works and achieves this in various ways. In the excerpt above, for instance, Antoniou asks

every instrument in the orchestra to play *il più presto e forte possibile*, which clearly results in the production of noise. Another example is his Concerto for snare drum and orchestra (2012), in which the snare drum soloist is asked to throw a bunch of rice grains on the floor.

The use of pictorial scores was a prominent tendency among 20<sup>th</sup> century modernists, including Antoniou. The excerpt below is such an example; it is taken from Antoniou's work for music theatre, *Clytemnestra* (1967). The shapes seen in the score are indications for the dancers' improvisation in space.



Example 2.4.e. Antoniou: *Clytemnestra*, bar 165

As mentioned by Leotsakos, a composer that played an important role for the formation of Antoniou's musical identity is the Greek pioneer composer Jani Christou (1926-1970), with whom Antoniou had a close collaboration. Antoniou conducted almost the entirety of Christou's work; as well as the world premières of Christou's *Anaparastasis I – the baritone* and *Anaparastasis III – the pianist*.<sup>87</sup> It is important to note that the final version of the score of *Anaparastasis I* (which looked very different from the initial one) was made collaboratively by the two men after the work's première.

Many of Christou's works during the 1960s (including the *Anaparastasis I & III*, meaning re-enactment) had the character of theatrical sketches. It could be argued that his work was close to music theatre; however, Christou avoided classifying his work as such. In this period, Christou developed his own 'shorthand' or pictorial notation,<sup>88</sup> which Antoniou describes as 'comics'.<sup>89</sup> The exchange of ideas between the two composers can be seen in their respective works, as they often use similar types of pictorial and aleatoric elements in their

<sup>87</sup> The premières took place in the Music Academy of Munich in 1968 and 1969 respectively.

<sup>88</sup> George Leotsakos, 'Christou, Jani', *Grove Music Online*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.05716>, accessed 16/8/2019

<sup>89</sup> Theodore Antoniou, 'Ο Θόδωρος Αντωνίου για τον Γιάννη Χρήστου με αφορμή τα ενενήντα χρόνια από τη γέννησή του', ['Theodore Antoniou on Jani Christou at the occasion of ninety years from his birth'], *Polytonon* (magazine of the Greek Composers' Union), Athens, issue 72 (September-October 2015), 13

scores. Furthermore, as Leotsakos points out, Christou perceived music 'as a means of activating primordial shared emotions otherwise hidden by civilised experience, and of achieving mystical states of trance or hysteria.'<sup>90</sup> I find that a similar sense of trance and hysteria is the goal of the performance of various passages in Antoniou's works, despite the fact that they are conventionally notated. Such passages appear in *Syllables*, *Entrata* and *Synaphes*, as will be examined later on.

If a general remark could be made about Antoniou's piano works in comparison with his general musical output for large ensembles, this would be that the piano works stand aside as more 'conservative', in the sense that they use conventional notation. It is of interest that during the 'experimental period' of the composer (from the mid 1960s until the late 1970s, as mentioned before) there is a considerable gap in his production of solo piano works, from *Syllables* in 1965 to *Prelude and Toccata* in 1982. Despite this fact, the piano works are of great interest as they retain the dramatic nature of Antoniou's overall musical output and his conception of Abstract Programmatic Music, as will be discussed later.

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<sup>90</sup> Leotsakos, 'Christou, Janni'

## 2.5. Antoniou's concept of 'Abstract Programmatic Music'

In an attempt to best describe the music of his creative maturity from the early 60's, Antoniou coined the neologism 'Abstract Programmatic Music'. The term sounds rather contradictory, as music is normally divided between 'Programmatic' and 'Absolute' ('Abstract') – depending on whether it employs a 'program' (an extra-musical narrative) or not. 'Abstract Programmatic Music' is a term that can be found in no music dictionary; it is only defined verbally by the composer, as presented below:

I am sure that this term sounds obscure. It is contradictory to what we know about Programmatic Music. Abstract Programmatic Music introduces an abstract underlying scenario, an abstract idea, which controls and defines the four traditional parameters: pitch, volume, duration and timbre. This idea could be, for instance, the possible combinations of the movement of sound in a certain space, a dialogue among people, a different approach in playing a musical instrument etc. The definition of Abstract Programmatic Music is the following: It is the music which, along with the traditional parameters (pitch, volume, duration and timbre) introduces an abstract idea, which controls the four parameters. The concept can be similarly illustrated by the role of a narrative in Programmatic Music. In my music, though, the extra parameter, the extra idea, is abstract. This is why I call it Abstract Programmatic Music.<sup>91</sup>

There is a close connection between Antoniou's music and other arts; this is where an 'abstract idea' comes from. The theatre, painting, poetry and literature, all have a role in Antoniou's artistic conception, with theatre having the most prominent role.<sup>92</sup> Antoniou has produced approximately 150 works related to the theatre. His theatrical sources of inspiration are very diverse and range across the spectrum of dramatic creation, including ancient Greek tragedies and comedies, English renaissance theatre, twentieth century theatre as well as modern Greek playwrights.<sup>93</sup> According, to the composer, his work for the theatre has left a lasting imprint in his musical identity in general.

There is always a hidden plot behind the music I compose; no matter if it is for piano solo or any other combination of instruments, theatre is always in my head. Whenever I compose I have in mind something of a dramatic nature. This is not a specific narrative, like the ones used in the Programmatic Music of the Romantics, but an abstract scenario.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Recorded workshop with Th. Antoniou, 23/6/2016.

<sup>92</sup> A few indicative examples titles for instrumental pieces related to theatre are: *Events I-III*, *Dialogues*, *Celebration I-XV*, *5 Scholia (Comments)*. Furthermore, the titles: *Aquarelle*, *Three Portraits*, *Colors*, *Twelve Drawings*, reveal a relation to painting. Poetry and literature also have a prominent place in Antoniou's oeuvre, as the composer has collaborated with many significant Greek poets and authors, setting their poetry into music, as well as incorporating their writings in his vocal works.

<sup>93</sup> Zagoris *op. cit.* 5

<sup>94</sup> Recorded workshop with Th. Antoniou, 23/6/2016

Antoniou's conception of Abstract Programmatic Music attempts to approach music in a more liberated and personalised manner without being bound by convention. It is a concept which arose in reaction to the strict dodecaphony and the rigid stylistic and structural rules espoused by the Darmstadt School, which Antoniou was attending between 1963-1966. In Antoniou's view there is in fact no 'Absolute Music', as all music contains some sort of an extra-musical parameter. Even if the title of a work by Antoniou is conventional (such as *Sonata* or *Concerto*) there is usually an underlying idea which connects the music with an extra-musical element. According to Wolf-Eberhard von Lewinski:

Antoniou thinks almost always automatically in dramatic categories, at the very least in the sense of an imaginary theatre. In any case, what Antoniou was writing which could be classified as 'Absolute Music' secretly had an underlying idea, if not a kind of plot related to the music [...] An idea for Antoniou may also be a kind of representation such as an intellectual or in particular a literary topic.<sup>95</sup>

At this point it is important to clarify the key difference between Antoniou's concept of Abstract Programmatic Music and the established concept of Programmatic Music, as introduced by Liszt. Roger Scruton argues that:

He [Liszt] defined a programme as a 'preface added to a piece of instrumental music, by means of which the composer intends to guard the listener against a wrong poetical interpretation, and to direct his attention to the poetical idea of the whole or to a particular part of it' [...] Liszt insisted that true programme music had a narrative or descriptive element which was essential to the understanding of it. In other words, for Liszt the subject has become part of the meaning of the music; to listen to the music with false associations was, in Liszt's view, actually to misunderstand it.<sup>96</sup>

In Antoniou's case, other than the texts in his vocal works, he does not include any kind of a published program to support a specific conception of an extra-musical narrative along with his works. As such, the approach of the interpreter is very different to what it would be in the case of such typical examples of piano Programmatic Music as Liszt's *Mephisto Waltz No.1* or Ravel's *Gaspard de la Nuit*. Every musician has to find what the music represents for him personally and to find his own meaning behind each work. In regard to finding a personal meaning behind a work of music, Antoniou states:

I don't believe that Absolute Music exists. Every one of us perceives music in a totally different way that has to do with our background, our education, our

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<sup>95</sup> Wolf-Eberhard von Lewinski, 'Abstrakte Programmmusik von heute: Der griechische komponist Theodore Antoniou' ['Abstract program music of today: The Greek composer Theodore Antoniou'], *Musica* (Germany) Vol. 9 (January-February 1973), 25

<sup>96</sup> Roger Scruton, 'Programme Music', *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Ed. Stanley Sadie, (second edition, Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2001), xx, 396-400

relationships, or with events [...] even in forms of what is considered to be ‘absolute music’, music is related to situations, ideas or theories.<sup>97</sup> [...] Music is the most abstract of all arts and this fact gives it special value, as it engages our imagination. Any sound does not mean the same for every person. Everyone's imagination is employed to give an explanation of what he hears and we [composers] talk with an abstract language that we want to believe makes people better.<sup>98</sup>

The process of finding a personal meaning and establishing a connection with this in music through imagination is a particular challenge in performing Antoniou's piano works. I will attempt to answer in practice the questions that arise from the definition of Abstract Programmatic Music: What can the nature of this ‘abstract idea’ be and how does it define Antoniou's music for piano? How does this conception affect the interpretation and the performance of his piano works?

Before proceeding to Antoniou's music for piano, I think it is important to take a step back and consider a characteristic example of a work which, according to Antoniou, was the springboard for the conception and development of the idea of Abstract Programmatic Music. This work is Antoniou's *Dialogues* for flute and guitar (1962). *Dialogues* consists of 9 short pieces (A, B, Γ, Δ, E, H, ΣΤ, Ζ, Θ – numbered with ancient Greek numbers), each one representing a different form of interaction. Antoniou mentions that ‘it is a set of pieces, based on the possibilities and the variety of ways that a dialogue between two people can occur. [...] It gives the possibility to the performers to express perfectly their virtuosic abilities, like two skilled debaters’.<sup>99</sup>

Further elaborating on such a conception, during one of our workshops he explained: ‘Just observe what is happening right now. I am talking continuously and you are listening, sometimes nodding your head, or making a brief comment. I describe this form of interaction in my *Dialogues*’.<sup>100</sup> I find this conception to be clear in piece ‘A’, in which the flute is the leading figure and the guitar only makes a minor ‘comment’ in the end.

Antoniou continued: ‘I can be absorbed by another activity, while you try to tell me something. In that case, it would take me some time to respond: ‘Did you say anything’? You would react: ‘Never mind’.’<sup>101</sup> The musical text of piece ‘Γ’ clearly describes this kind of dialogue. It consists of brief, unrelated motives separated by long pauses (see example

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<sup>97</sup> Chardali *op. cit.* 157

<sup>98</sup> ‘Θεόδωρος Αντωνίου – Μουσική, η πιο αφηρημένη των τεχνών’, [‘Theodore Antoniou – Music, the most abstract of the arts’], *Μαγικός Φανός* [*Magic Lamp*] documentary, Greek TV channel ‘Vouli’, 7.1.2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eue0MzC6rA8>, accessed 29/6/2019

<sup>99</sup> Chardali *op. cit.* 157

<sup>100</sup> Recorded workshop with Th. Antoniou, 23/6/2016

<sup>101</sup> As above

below). The feeling is that there is no successful communication or fruitful conversation, as the two persons are not paying attention to each other.

Example 2.5.a. Antoniou: *Dialogues* for flute (upper stave) and guitar (lower stave), piece 'Γ'

Antoniou explained further: 'I also describe the imitation of words, repetition, agreement or disagreement and conflict. You may talk to me in a poetic way about your partner or ideal love, while I mock and vulgarise your words'.<sup>102</sup> This is represented in piece 'H', in which the guitar player has to produce deliberately ugly sounds, interrupting the flute's sensual melodic line (see example below). The symbol , used in the guitar part, indicates that the performer has to pull the string vertically upwards and release it, so that it snaps against the fingerboard. This technique, which was introduced by Bartok, is often referred to as 'snap pizzicato'.

Example 2.5.b. Antoniou: *Dialogues* for flute and guitar, piece 'H', opening bars

<sup>102</sup> As above

It is notable that one sort of Abstract Programmatic Music, as presented in Antoniou's *Dialogues* (1962), appears in Elliott Carter's String Quartet No.2 (1959). In his program notes for this work, Carter explains:

In it the four instruments are individualized, each being given its own character embodied in a special set of melodic and harmonic intervals and of rhythms that result in four different patterns of slow and fast tempi with associated types of expression. Thus, four different strands of musical material of contrasting character are developed simultaneously throughout the work. It is out of the interactions, combinations, cooperations, and oppositions of these that the details of musical discourse as well as the large sections are built.<sup>103</sup>

Bayan Northcott argues that the work incorporates the idea of 'a scenario for the players to act out with their instruments' and he continues:

Each of the four instrumental parts is composed from a different selection of basic intervals, rhythms and expressive characteristics: with the first violin given to capricious flights of fancy; the second violin, more laconic and deadpan; the viola tending to expressive scoops and sighs; the cello, to florid, accelerating tirades. The texture is wholly made up of their propositions, responses and disagreements, like four contentious individuals chattering away at one another.<sup>104</sup>

In my view, the idea of each instrument representing an individual person is present in both Antoniou's and Carter's work. In both works I often have the feeling that the instruments' textures imitate the rhythm of speech and the varying pitch of voice; there is also a strong sense of a monologue in many places.

Despite their similarities, these two works present considerable differences. Carter's quartet is performed without pauses among the sections and its texture suggests that things evolve slowly and imperceptibly. The work conveys a general, continuous feeling of opposition, conflict and discomfort through a dense texture. Carter chooses to employ a specific selection of intervals for different sections and instruments, depending on the character each time. Antoniou, by contrast, is not concerned with the intervallic conception as a structural element in his *Dialogues*. He seems to describe abstract conversations in a more onomatopoeic way, by imitating the tone and pace through a thinner texture. He also attempts to describe a larger variety of possible forms of interaction. *Dialogues* is clearly divided in short sections with pauses in-between; each distinct section describing a totally different mood. The division of a larger work into short pieces, each with a distinct function,

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<sup>103</sup> Elliott Carter, Program note, *String Quartet No.2*, Associated Music Publishers Inc, 1959

<sup>104</sup> Bayan Northcott, liner note to Elliott Carter, *String Quartets Nos. 2, 3 and 4*, Pacifica Quartet, (Naxos) 2009, CD 8.559363

is a tendency encountered often in Antoniou's oeuvre, including most of his piano works. Each movement describes a particular mood and conveys a certain message, as in *Dialogues*.

Antoniou incorporates a musical form of dialogue and drama within the textures of solo pieces, as well. An indicative example of this conception is *Stichomythia II* (1977) for solo guitar, which is essentially a transcription of *Stichomythia I* (1976) for flute and guitar. The composer alternatively calls the guitar solo version *Stichomythia for One*, which is a rather contradictory title, as a 'Stichomythia' (Στιχομυθία) is a word used to describe dialogue in ancient Greek drama. Antoniou's idea of representing multiple personages through the medium of one instrument is particularly relevant when we come to consider his piano works, especially his polyphonic pieces Op.4 (1958) and his Sonata (1959).<sup>105</sup>

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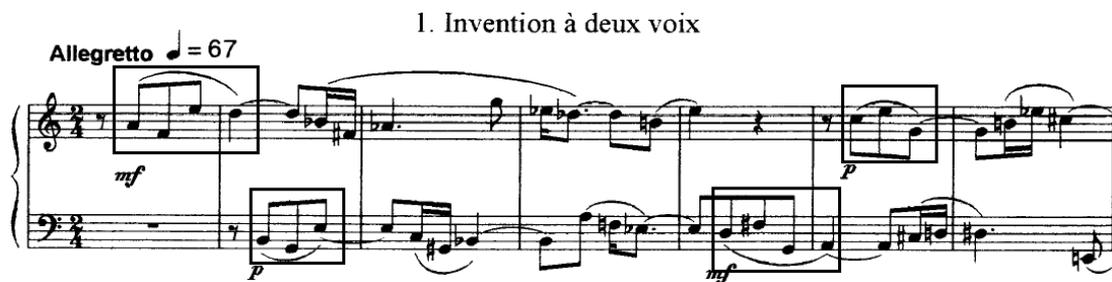
<sup>105</sup> For a detailed examination see 3.1. and 3.3.

### **3. Working on Antoniou's piano works**

### 3.1. *Inventions & Fugues Op.4 No.1 and Inventions, Prelude and Fugue Op.4 No.2* (1958)

These sets of polyphonic pieces are Antoniou's first piano works.<sup>106</sup> At first glance, they look like a collection of contrapuntal exercises. However, Antoniou manages to imbue these pieces with his own, personal musical language and style and carve out a notable work, which exceeds the limits of simple exercises in counterpoint. In my view, *Inventions and Fugues, Op.4 No.1* paves the way for Antoniou's *Dialogues* for flute and guitar (1962) and for the conception of Abstract Programmatic Music.<sup>107</sup> The element of 'dialogue' seems to be channeled through polyphony in *Op.4 No.1*; the sense of speech of a different tone and character is conveyed by the melodic lines of the individual movements. A number of this work's movements have a distinct character, thus giving the impression of a particular mood of interaction among different people, in a similar way to that described in *Dialogues*.

Invention No.1, for instance, bears an affectionate character; this is immediately apparent from the initial motif of the subject (marked below), which is an integral part of the piece, being utilised continuously throughout. The shape of this motif, if interpreted as a gesture, could be likened to an embrace. In order to achieve an affectionate character in performance, I aim to bring out every appearance of this motif and play it in an expressive, lyrical manner.



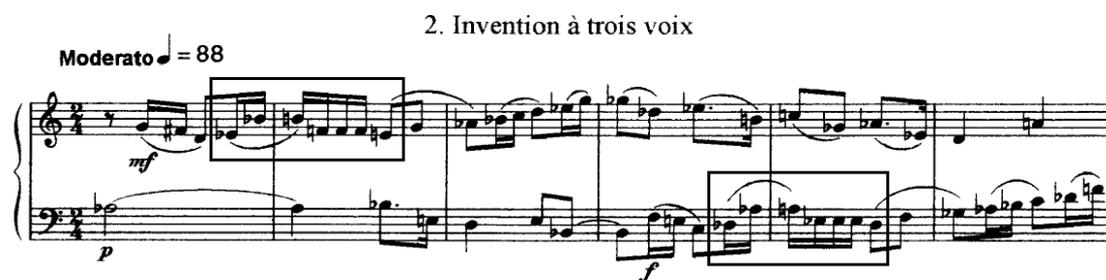
Example 3.1.a. Antoniou: *Inventions and Fugues, Op.4 No.1*, Invention No.1, opening

The most characteristic motif of the subject in Invention No.2, which clearly stands out throughout the piece, is marked in the example below. It consists of angular intervals, which exude uneasiness and give the movement a sharp character. A sense of discomfort can be

<sup>106</sup> He had also composed piano pieces earlier (his first attempts date back in 1950). However, he withdrew them, claiming that he had not yet found his personal musical idiom. Recorded workshop with Th. Antoniou, 5/7/2016

<sup>107</sup> For a more detailed examination of *Dialogues* please refer back to 2.5. Antoniou's concept of 'Abstract Programmatic Music'

felt, with the dialogue among the melodic lines seeming to suggest a quarrel. My own feeling is that a 'direct' kind of attack on the keys is appropriate for this movement.



Example 3.1.b. Antoniou: Inventions and Fugues, Op.4 No.1, Invention No.2, opening

In my view, the main motif in Invention No.4 (marked below), due to its shape, conveys the sense of someone begging for something. Its highest note, being the most expressive of the four, stands out in a similar way that a stressed syllable in a word does. In the excerpt below, the 'begging' builds up in intensity, as the motif is repeated and ascends in register. I feel that the thought of someone begging helped me greatly to find the appropriate expression when practising and recording the piece.



Example 3.1.c. Antoniou: Inventions and Fugues, Op.4 No.1, Invention No.3, bars 30-35

Invention No. 5, with a perceptible *scherzando* and at the same time sarcastic character, seems like the representation of a humorous conversation.<sup>108</sup> In order to convey this through performance, I employ a light and clear articulation, with emphasis on the division of phrases in small groups, according to the slurs indicated.

<sup>108</sup> The numbering of the movements is in accordance with the composition's full version; in the official CD *Invention No.5* is numbered as *No.4* (for further information please refer to 1.3.4. The duration issue and the order of the pieces in the CD).

5. Invention à trois voix

Allegro ♩ = 100

Example 3.1.d. Antoniou: Inventions and Fugues, Op.4 No.1, Invention No.5, opening

The 6<sup>th</sup> movement has a pompous character; its subject, initially appearing in the left hand, could be imagined as a brass fanfare. Thus, my feeling is that a heavy and slightly detached kind of articulation is required for this subject.

6. Fuga

♩ = 96

Example 3.1.e. Antoniou: Inventions and Fugues, Op.4 No.1, sixth movement (Fuga), opening

I personally find the connection between some of the tempo indications and their corresponding metronome markings in this set raises questions. It is widely accepted that *Allegretto* is a slightly faster tempo indication than *Moderato*. Curiously, Antoniou asks for a metronome indication of 67 bpm for the first piece (*Allegretto*), and for 88 bpm for the second piece (*Moderato*). After trying different options, I decided not to put too much emphasis on the expressive indications, opting instead to observe the metronome markings faithfully, as I feel that they are very appropriate for each piece's individual style and mood.<sup>109</sup>

The scores of both sets, Op.4 No.1 and Op.4 No.2, contain very sparse performance indications. Antoniou usually indicates a *forte* (or *mezzo forte*) with every appearance of the subject, often accompanied by a *piano* (or *mezzo piano*) for the countersubject. Other than this, there are almost no dynamic markings. I initially interpreted this as an indication of austerity required in performance. However, Antoniou's reaction after the first time I played these pieces for him was:

<sup>109</sup> Questions of tempo arose in more pieces by Antoniou, most notably in *Aquarelle* and the third movement of the Piano Sonata (see 3.2.3. and 3.3.3. respectively).

You have to add more expression, dynamic changes and freedom in pacing, even though I don't write it. You have to do it the way you feel it, the music has to become 'alive', at the moment it sounds too reserved.<sup>110</sup>

The above quote is very characteristic of Antoniou's conception, regarding the interpretation of his scores. As will be seen in more of his piano works, he prefers the performers to feel free to add their own touch to the music, rather than restricting them.

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<sup>110</sup> Recorded workshop with Th. Antoniou, 20/6/2017

### 3.2. *Aquarelle* (1958)

Antoniou's work *Aquarelle* consists of ten short pieces of different character.<sup>111</sup> When encountering the title, watercolour painting immediately comes to one's mind. Indeed, the composer remarks that 'In Aquarelles I aim to bring out the light and transparent effect of watercolour painting.'<sup>112</sup> Even though the title 'Aquarelle' seems to suggest an impressionistic style, not all the pieces of the set follow this style in a strict manner. Some are very dissonant and dry, as revealed by their expressive indications, shown in the table below (e.g. No.2 *Vivo e secco*, No.6 *Allegro brioso*, No.10 *Allegro barbaro*).

One of the work's defining features is rhythmical experimentation: In *Aquarelle* No.1 Antoniou uses a 2/4 time signature and in every subsequent piece he increases the number of beats per bar by one, thus concluding with 11/8, as shown below.<sup>113</sup> In this way, he forms certain irregular and odd meters, which constitute a major characteristic of the Greek musical tradition.

<i>Aquarelles</i>	Time signature	Subdivisions <sup>114</sup>	Duration: 12:57 <sup>115</sup>
No.1 - <i>Adagio espressivo</i>	2/4		01:19
No.2 - <i>Vivo e secco</i>	3/8		00:49
No.3 - <i>Largo misterioso</i>	4/4		01:28
No.4 - <i>Allegro ritmico</i>	5/8	2+3 (I Δ)	00:57
No.5 - <i>Andante espressivo</i>	6/8		01:45
No.6 - <i>Allegro brioso</i>	7/8	2+3+2 (I Δ I)	00:49
No.7 - <i>Andantino Calmo</i>	8/8	3+2+3 (Δ I Δ)	01:16
No.8 - <i>Presto</i>	9/8	3+2+2+2 (Δ I I I)	00:50
No.9 - <i>Largo amoroso</i>	10/8	3+2+2+3 (Δ I I Δ)	02:36
No.10 - <i>Allegro barbaro</i>	11/8	2+2+2+2+3 (I I I I Δ)	01:00

<sup>111</sup>To avoid confusion, I will refer to the entire set in the plural, as *Aquarelles*, and to every individual piece in the singular, as *Aquarelle* No.1, *Aquarelle* No.2 etc. This is how the composer refers to this work, as well.

<sup>112</sup>Recorded workshop with Th. Antoniou, 5/7/2016

<sup>113</sup>It is interesting to know that a rhythmical pattern similar to *Aquarelles* can be found in the piano work *Rhythmology Op.26* (1969-71) by the Greek composer Manos Hadjidakis (1925-1994). *Rhythmology* consists of six pairs of pieces, the first piece of each pair using an odd rhythm (successively 5/8, 7/8, 9/8, 11/8, 13/8 and 15/8). The second piece of each pair is a *Hasapiko*, a traditional popular dance of Byzantine origin, in duple time and of moderate speed. Danae Kara, liner note to Manos Hadjidakis, *Piano Works*, Danae Kara, (Naxos), 2008 CD 8.570957

<sup>114</sup>In indicating the rhythm for certain odd meters Antoniou often employs in his works a notational technique in which the symbol 'Δ' indicates three counts, while the symbol 'I' indicates 2. Such works are his *Concerto Piccolo* for Saxophone and orchestra (2000) and his *Concertino* for double bass and orchestra (2000). It is interesting to note that Boulez employs the symbols 'Δ' and 'I' for the same purpose in his *Le Marteau sans maître* (1955)

<sup>115</sup>The durations are taken from my official CD recording.

In order to make decisions concerning the performance of the work, the key points to consider are image evocation and exploration of sound colours, as well as the rhythmic aspect as a structural element of *Aquarelles*. Special attention will be drawn to these points at the following text.

### 3.2.1. The relation between Antoniou's *Aquarelles* and watercolour painting

Through the *Aquarelles*, Antoniou attempts to create musical 'pictures'. Connecting music with painting and still pictures has a special place among piano works associated with late romanticism and impressionism. Some of the most famous examples of piano repertoire of this trend include Debussy's *Images* and Rachmaninoff's *Etudes Tableaux*.

Kostis Gaitanos, who gave the first performance of the work,<sup>116</sup> argues that 'Antoniou's titles are abstract. In the case of *Aquarelles*, as he had told me, the title indicates the similarity between the flow of music and the flow of water.'<sup>117</sup> The relation between *Aquarelles* and painting seems to be abstract indeed: following his principle of Abstract Programmatic Music, the composer doesn't indicate any particular painting that inspired him to compose these pieces. In this way he avoids limiting the imagination of the performer or the listener and lets every individual perceive the work with their own way. This seems to be in full accord with the conception that Rachmaninoff had for his own picture pieces, the *Etudes Tableaux*: 'I do not believe in the artist that discloses too much of his images. Let [the listener] paint for themselves what it most suggests.'<sup>118</sup>

My own feeling is that there is a strong sense of 'images' evoked by Antoniou's *Aquarelles*. Inevitably, each individual's perception of music is unique; different images may come to people's minds as they listen to these pieces. However, as a performer I feel I am able to 'lead' the listener towards my own conception up to a certain point. As such, I find that it is helpful to write about my general perception of the mood and the images evoked by this music, as they are critical in shaping my interpretation of this work. I shall avoid relating each piece with a specific artwork; this would be contrary to the composer's intention.

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<sup>116</sup>The premiere took place on 22/6/1961 at the Hellenic Conservatory in Athens, as part of Gaitanos' program for his piano diploma exams.

<sup>117</sup>In conversation with K. Gaitanos, 2/5/2017

<sup>118</sup>Sergei Bertensson and Jay Leyda, *Sergei Rachmaninoff: A Lifetime in Music* (New York: New York University Press, 1956)

I sense the impression of ‘painting’ through music from the beginning of the first piece (see example below). The ‘inactive’, continuous crotchet rhythm in *piano* seems to represent a gentle background on the canvas. Suddenly, on the eighth bar, a new element makes its appearance, like a contrasting, brilliant brush. The gloomy character of the left hand is challenged by the lively tune that springs up in the right hand, with the dynamic being *mezzo forte*. As a result, two different styles are superimposed on Antoniou’s musical canvas.

Example 3.2.1.a. Antoniou: *Aquarelle* No.1, opening

In order to clearly illustrate the contrasting elements, I initially played the right hand tune in a very intense and direct manner, with a great degree of emphasis on the grace notes. Antoniou however insisted that its intensity should not be overemphasised and that everything should be proportionate. He added: ‘Think of the impression you have when you see an aquarelle. It is made of water; the colours are not too heavy, or aggressive.’<sup>119</sup>

A similar sense of a painting in which contrasting elements spring up from an atmospheric background can be felt in *Aquarelle* No.3:

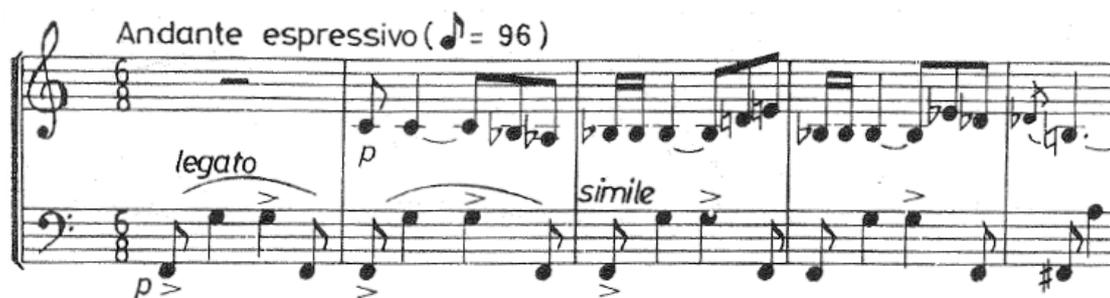
<sup>119</sup> Recorded workshop with Th. Antoniou, 21/4/2017



Example 3.2.1.b. Antoniou: *Aquarelle* No.3, opening

The left hand, slowly crawling through the lower register of the piano, creates a sense of darkness and endless space, which is for me reminiscent of the night sky. The right hand on the upper register comes like stars, bright dots on the black background. To convey that sense of space and atmosphere, I find it helpful to use the pedal in a way that creates overlaps among consecutive notes, resulting in a special, slightly blurred impression, which is reminiscent of the blurred edges encountered in watercolour painting.

In *Aquarelle* No.5 I find it very fitting to conjure up an image of a leisurely stroll on an old river boat, as the piece utilises the very familiar rhythm of the Barcarolle (6/8). As is the case with many Barcarolles of the romantic period, the left hand's rhythm seems to be the gentle rocking of the boat, with the right hand playing the song of the boatman.



Example 3.2.1.c. Antoniou: *Aquarelle* No.5, opening

In order to conceive the particular sound colours for the performance of this piece, I found it useful to examine the orchestration of the second movement, *Cantilena*, of Antoniou's Concertino for Double Bass and Orchestra (2000), in which the exact same musical material is used (see example below).

**II. Cantilena**

*I* Andante espressivo ♩ = 84

The score shows the following parts and markings:

- Flute: Rest
- Oboe I-II: Rest
- Bassoon I-II: *p*, eighth notes with accents
- Solo Cb. in D (solo tuning): *espressivo, malinconico*, *mf*, melodic line with a fermata
- Violin I: Rest
- Violin II: Rest
- Viola: Rest
- Violoncello: *Solo pizz.*, *p*, eighth notes with accents
- Contrabass: Rest

Example 3.2.1.d. Antoniou: Concertino for Double Bass and Orchestra, second movement, opening

The indications *espressivo* and *malinconico* (melancholic) - above the melodic line of the double bass - reveal the general mood of this music. At the same time, the quite unusual choice of the double bass for such an expressive melody indicates Antoniou's intention for a dark tone. Had he used the violin or the cello, the sound would have been bright or sonorous respectively. A gloomy tone is what I aim to apply in the performance of *Aquarelle* No.5, as well. Furthermore, in order to convey melancholy, I feel it is important to avoid any sense of liveliness at the repeated semiquavers and to make a slight diminuendo at the same time.

A string instrument such as the double bass can sustain the sound in a much more efficient way compared to the piano, which is more percussive. As a result a more flowing tempo is appropriate in order to achieve a convincing performance on the piano. This is also reflected

by the fact that the metronome marking for the orchestral version (84 bpm) is slower than the one indicated for the piano (96 bpm).<sup>120</sup>

In the orchestral version, the accompaniment creates a sense of breadth and space, as the second bassoon keeps the bass note throughout the whole bar (see example above). I think that sustaining the bass note in *Aquarelle* No.5 helps towards attaining a similar effect. However, pedaling through the whole bar every time would have a negative effect on the clarity of the melodic line. To overcome this, I physically hold down – ‘finger-pedal’ - the low bass note so that it can be sustained without the melody being compromised. The result of this idea fully satisfied the composer when I performed the work to him.<sup>121</sup>

Whereas *Aquarelle* No.5 refers to the idea of flowing on the surface of the water, *Aquarelle* No.9 seems to refer to water itself in a more distinct way. This is achieved with continuous, broad, arpeggiated chords - a typical technique for composers seeking to create a sense of watery texture. The impression of ripples on the surface of water is created in my mind when playing *Aquarelle* No.9, which is, in my view, the most impressionistic of the set. The piece makes use of imaginative, ‘magical’ harmonies which give it a dreamy, ethereal sense.

IX

Largo amoroso (♩ = 56)

p

l.h. r.h. l.h. r.h.

Example 3.2.1.e. Antoniou: *Aquarelle* No.9, opening

In order to create this ethereal feeling mentioned above, I think it is important to play the bass octave as softly as possible – this requires special care, as most pianos are loud in this

<sup>120</sup> The approach to the tempo markings in *Aquarelles* will be examined in more detail later on.

<sup>121</sup> Recorded workshop with Th. Antoniou, 21/4/2017

register. In addition, my aim is to make the arpeggios sound in a flowing, effortless manner. However, when practicing this piece, I encountered a considerable technical obstacle in the left hand. If played as written, there is an unavoidable gap between the bass octave and the arpeggio, due to the fact that the hand has to shift positions. This disrupts the flow between the bass and the top and results in a fragmented performance. In addition, the abrupt hand position change inevitably results in a nervous and quick movement. This leads to a harsh sound in the bass octave, which goes against the calm nature of the piece. In order to facilitate the leap in the left hand, I experimented with a version in which I rearranged certain notes to be played with the right hand, where possible, as shown below:

Largo amoroso (♩ = 56)

IX

Example 3.2.1.f. Antoniou: *Aquarelle* No.9, redistribution of hands

Whereas this version produced a considerably better result, it still didn't satisfy me fully. The solution that I finally came up with is a complete rearrangement of the distribution of notes between the hands, as shown in the example below. Despite the fact that it is highly complicated and it feels slightly inconvenient due to the hand crossing, I find this to be the best possible way to make the arpeggio flow naturally from the bass to the top. An additional advantage of such a distribution is that it enables me to play the bass notes softly and with a sense of line.

Largo amoroso ♩ = 56

Example 3.2.1.g. Antoniou: *Aquarelle* No.9, opening, redistribution of hands  
(my own version for performance)

### 3.2.2. The sense of rhythm and structure in *Aquarelle*

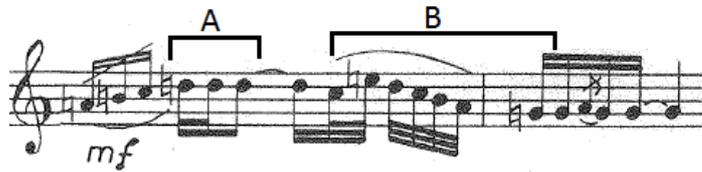
*Aquarelles* nos.1, 3, 5 and 9, presented above, seem to be in full accord with Antoniou's aim for lightness and transparency. However, this is not the case with all the pieces of the set. Nos.2, 4, 6, 8 and 10 employ a strong rhythmic component, with nos.2, 6 and 10 being quite dry as well. As already mentioned, the element of rhythm plays a key role in the structure of the set. In each successive *Aquarelle* the number of beats per bar increases by one; the set starts with a 2/4 time signature and concludes with 11/8, as shown before.

This procedure results in several irregular and odd meters, thus linking Antoniou's work with the Greek musical tradition, as such meters are traditionally associated with certain folk dances. In *Aquarelles*, most of these dances are presented in a more abstract manner, with Antoniou opting to utilise different tempi to those found in traditional dances. Furthermore, the internal subdivision of the odd meters is often altered. Still, the idea of the dance and the dancing character remains clear throughout. According to Antoniou, the rhythmic clarity and the sense of a marked beat in performance are very important, so that the dancing character of the music comes out.<sup>122</sup>

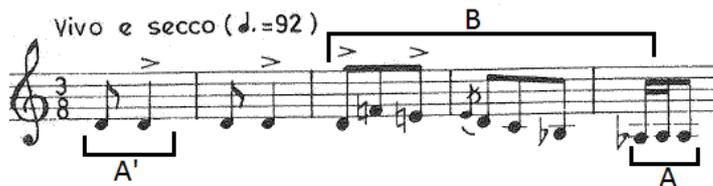
In *Aquarelles* there is an underlying sense of unity throughout the work, as most of its melodic material is based on a characteristic, folk-like tune. As shown below, the tune consists of a set of repeated notes (A), followed by a descending motif (B). It undergoes transformations throughout the work, allowing it to fit in the different time signatures of the

<sup>122</sup>As above

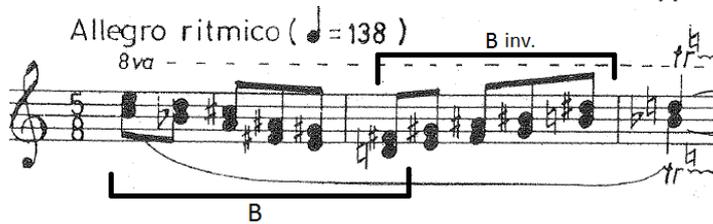
individual *Aquarelles*. I feel that being aware of this fact is important in order to achieve a solid and compact performance; bringing out the thematic element clearly binds the work together.



*Aquarelle* No.1 (bars 8-9):  
The initial theme



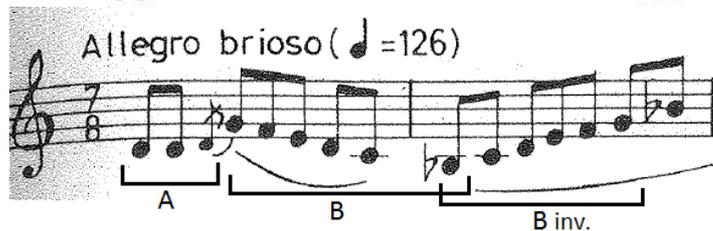
*Aquarelle* No.2 (bars 1-2):  
The theme in 3/8



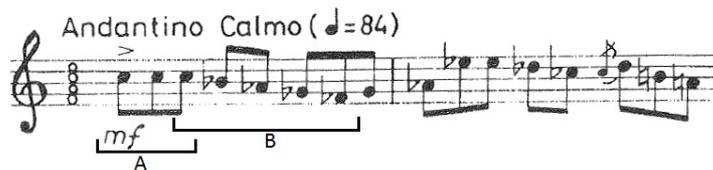
*Aquarelle* No.4 (bars 1-2):  
Use of the motif 'B' along with its inversion



*Aquarelle* No.5 (bars 2-4):  
Extensive use of the motif 'A'



*Aquarelle* No.6 (bars 1-2):  
Constant flow of quavers



*Aquarelle* No.7 (bars 1-2):  
Constant flow of quavers

#### Transformations of the theme in *Aquarelles*

In an attempt to approach these pieces and to properly conceive what Antoniou is describing, it is interesting to note the different ways in which the theme is developed. *Aquarelles* maintains the principle of polyphony, which is present in Antoniou's *Inventions and Fugues* and *Inventions, Prelude and Fugue* that he composed at the same year (1958). The polyphonic pieces of *Aquarelle* have some resemblance to a typical Fugal exposition: the subsequent entrance of the subject in the various parts, often accompanied by a

countersubject. Antoniou’s countersubjects are primarily conceived in terms of rhythm. As can be seen in the examples 2.2.-1 and 2.2.-4, their rhythm is more or less consistent in its different entrances, while the actual pitches and the intervals formed vary considerably on each appearance. Yet, the essential identity of the countersubject is always readily perceptible. The polyphonic nature in *Aquarelles* forms a kind of ‘dialogue’ among different lines, representing the movement of dancers in space. We can trace a relation to the concept of Abstract Programmatic Music - the movement of sound in space.

An example to help illustrate these points can be found in *Aquarelle* No.6 (Allegro brioso) in 7/8 time. It is reminiscent of the traditional Greek dance *Kalamatianos*.<sup>123</sup> Normally, the internal subdivision of the 7/8 meter in *Kalamatianos* is 3-2-2, however in the case of this piece it is 2-3-2. The cyclical motifs of the melodic line, as shown in the example below, reflect the circular movement in dance. The image that comes to my mind is that of three groups dancing and moving at different times. This is represented by the piece’s polyphonic evolution – it unfolds like a 3-part fugue.

In the performance of this *Aquarelle* I feel that it is important to clearly mark the rhythm, by briefly touching the pedal for the first quaver of every group of two or three. I also find it fitting to clearly accentuate and emphasise the grace note, as it is a very characteristic element of the theme and of the dance.

Example 3.2.2.a. Antoniou: *Aquarelle* No.6, opening

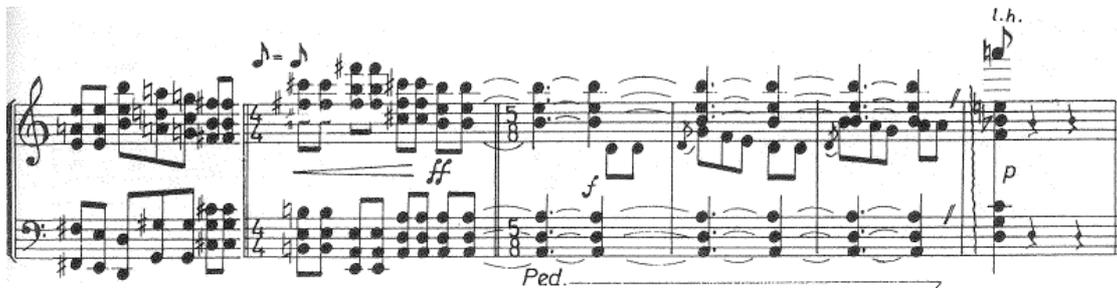
Further on, we encounter a dialogue based on the grace note motif, taking the form of polyphonic strettos (marked below). This could paint the image of various dancers successively jumping around in different directions. Bringing out the grace note, as mentioned before, is particularly important here, as it enhances the sense of imitation of movement.

<sup>123</sup> *Kalamatianos* is a popular Greek folk dance, originating from the town of Kalamata in Peloponnese, south Greece.



Example 3.2.2.b. Antoniou: *Aquarelle* No.6, bars 7-11

In the final bars of the piece, the pedaling requires particular care. Antoniou indicates the use of the sustain pedal (see example below), but I have found that utilising the middle pedal is more efficient, as it allows me to sustain the chords without blurring the melodic line in the middle register. This idea met with Antoniou's approval.<sup>124</sup>



Example 3.2.2.c. Antoniou: *Aquarelle* No.6, ending

The aforementioned process of circular motifs and polyphonic development is also present in the next *Aquarelle*, No.8 (*Andantino Calmo*) in 8/8 (see example below). In this case there seem to be two dancing groups, starting to dance simultaneously, facing each other and switching positions.

In this *Aquarelle* the pulse is less marked than in the previous one, with the melodic lines being longer and broader. To take account of this difference, the pedaling that I use is more sustained and less direct than in the previous piece. However, in order to retain the clarity of rhythm, it is still changed in every group of 2 or 3 notes.

<sup>124</sup> Recorded workshop with Th. Antoniou, 21/4/2017

Example 3.2.2.d. Antoniou: *Aquarelle* No.7, opening

The character of a marked dance comes at the end, in the *più mosso* (see example below). I have opted to sustain the crescendo until the end, even though it is not marked – Antoniou was in agreement with this idea.<sup>125</sup> This crescendo is helpful in creating a better sense of transition towards the following piece. The pause that I make between the two pieces is very brief, in order to keep the intensity.

Example 3.2.2.e. Antoniou: *Aquarelle* No.7, ending

The next piece – *Presto*, in 9/8, subdivided in 3-2-2-2 - is a modified version of the traditional dance *Karsilamas*, its meter being normally subdivided in 2-2-2-3.<sup>126</sup>

Example 3.2.2.f. Antoniou: *Aquarelle* No.8, opening

The very last piece of the set is marked *Allegro barbaro*, which immediately reminds me of Bartok's well-known piece of the same title; both pieces are characterised by a primitive dance element. My approach towards these two pieces is largely similar; I strive for a very direct, percussive sound. Antoniou's last *Aquarelle* is marked *secco*, but it is important to

<sup>125</sup> As above

<sup>126</sup> This dance has its roots in northwest Turkey (*karşılama*, meaning encounter/welcoming/greeting).

see that the notes are crotchets, so playing them very short would be contrary to the text. In order to maintain the dry feeling while also creating a sense of line in the top voice, I find it useful to play the left hand slightly shorter than the right. The result is a more three-dimensional texture which is also faithful to the composer's indications.

X

Allegro barbaro (♩ = 168)

*p e secco*

*f*

Example 3.2.2.g. Antoniou: *Aquarelle* No.10, opening

It was particularly difficult for me to make a decision on how to play *Aquarelle* No.4, in 5/8 (see example below). The rhythm of 5/8 (3/8+2/8) is *Baiduska* from the region of Thrace, a very quick dance with strong accents. *The Allegro ritmico* indication, coupled with the fact that the thirds have to be played legato seemed to be at odds with each other. In addition, the absence of any dynamic indication doesn't help in making an artistic decision about the piece's character. If 'ritmico' is perceived as an indication to clearly mark the rhythm in every group, any sense of legato and long line is destroyed. Antoniou was instrumental in finding the solution in the performance in this piece, as he said that 'ritmico' indicates 'steadiness' rather than accents and that maintaining a long line is preferable.<sup>127</sup>

<sup>127</sup> Recorded workshop with Th. Antoniou, 21/4/2017

IV

Allegro ritmico (♩ = 138)

Example 3.2.2.h. Antoniou: *Aquarelle* No.4, opening

In the end of the piece, even though it is marked *piano*, I have decided to make a crescendo as it seems to me that the thick chordal texture justifies it, and also that it makes for a more effective ending to the piece. Antoniou also agreed that this was a reasonable proposition.<sup>128</sup>

Example 3.2.2.i. Antoniou: *Aquarelle* No.4, ending

<sup>128</sup> As above

### 3.2.3. The approach to tempo markings in *Aquarelle*

The first impression I got when looking at the published score of *Aquarelles* is that Antoniou is strict about the desired tempo for every piece, as he indicates exact metronome markings in all of them. Later on, as I looked at a copy of the manuscript, I discovered considerable differences in the tempo markings in comparison with the published score, as shown in the table below. *Aquarelles* was published in 1967 by Edition Modern in Munich,<sup>129</sup> while the manuscript dates from nine years earlier. Out of the ten pieces, only two (No.6 and No.10) present the same metronome marking. Especially in No.4 the difference in tempo is crucial (92 bpm to 138 bpm). When I asked the composer about the reason for these deviations, he replied:

It could probably be that the pianist who premièred the work suggested a different tempo, so we changed it.<sup>130</sup> You can also add your own touch. Most of my tempo indications are in parenthesis, this means they are just suggestions... The tempo I put on the scores indicates the way I felt at the time of composing. On another time I may feel differently.<sup>131</sup>

Antoniou's statement clearly reveals his flexibility and the freedom he grants to the performer regarding tempo decisions. It also reveals his conception of things changing over time and that a musical work may have many, possibly widely divergent interpretations.

Personally, I was faithful to most tempo indications (as indicated below). My most considerable deviations were in *Aquarelles* No.6 and 8, where I decided on a significantly faster tempo. My feeling was that the *Allegro briosso* (No.6) and *Presto* (No.8) markings necessitated a more lively approach. My feeling for the metronome marking of no. 8 is that it was more conservative because Antoniou might have been concerned about its playability.

Before making my final decisions, I asked the composer to sing *Aquarelles* No.1 and No.4, thus indicating his preferred tempo – these were the pieces for which I wasn't quite sure about the most appropriate tempo. He sang No.1 at approximately ♩ = 90 and No.4 at ♩ = 140.<sup>132</sup> These tempos were in accordance with my own conception, so I decided to use them - despite the fact that the tempo for No.1 was deviating from both the edition and the manuscript.

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<sup>129</sup>Since mid-2014, the catalogs of Edition Modern are represented worldwide by Musica Mundana GmbH.

<sup>130</sup> As *Aquarelles* was composed, premièred and published many decades ago, neither Antoniou nor Gaitanos, who premièred the piece, were able to verify whether the tempo changed in order to accommodate Gaitanos' suggestions. [In conversation with Kostis Gaitanos, 2/5/2017]

<sup>131</sup> Recorded workshop with Th. Antoniou, 28/12/2016

<sup>132</sup> Recorded workshop with Th. Antoniou, 21/4/2017

<i>Aquarelles</i>	Metronome in the edition (1967)	Metronome in the manuscript (1958)	Approximate tempo in my CD
No.1 - Adagio espressivo	♩ = 72	♩ = 66	♩ = 90
No.2 - Vivo e secco	♩. = 92	♩. = 84	♩. = 92
No.3 - Largo misterioso	♩ = 60	♩ = 30 <sup>133</sup>	♩ = 64
No.4 - Allegro ritmico	♩ = 138	♩ = 92	♩ = 144
No.5 - Andante espressivo	♩ = 96	♩ = 116	♩ = 104
No.6 - Allegro brioso	♩ = 126	♩ = 126	♩ = 148
No.7 - Andantino Calmo	♩ = 84	♩ = 92	♩ = 84
No.8 - Presto	♩ = 208	♩ = 176	♩ = 230
No.9 - Largo amoroso	♩ = 56	♩ = 40	♩ = 46
No.10 - Allegro barbaro	♩ = 168	♩ = 168	♩ = 184

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<sup>133</sup>In my opinion, this metronome marking is a mistake; such a tempo would be unbearably slow. Antoniou probably meant: minim = 30, which equals the marking appearing in the published Edition: crochet = 60.

### 3.3. Sonata (1959)

At the time that Antoniou's Piano Sonata was composed (1959), many other important composers had recently made very significant contributions to the genre; among the most notable are the Piano Sonatas by Prokofiev (his first Sonata dating 1909 and his last 1953), Bartok (1926), Hindemith (1936), Carter (1945), Dutilleux (1948), Barber (1949) and Boulez (1946, 1948, 1957). These composers seem to focus all of their creative faculties on composing Sonatas which are most representative of their unique musical language. There is great variety in style among them, and the sonata form is utilised quite freely. As such, it is a unique challenge for a young, evolving composer, like Antoniou, to assert his individuality by composing a Piano Sonata in the middle of such a diverse musical landscape.

My view is that Antoniou's aim was not to challenge the above mentioned composers' sonatas in terms of length and brilliance, but to attempt to channel his abstract creative tendencies within the framework of an established, 'traditional' compositional form. The sonata is a short and quite concise piece of music with four movements (*i. Allegro moderato – ii. Scherzino – iii. Adagio – iv. Presto*). I would describe it as a neoclassical work, which follows the footsteps of 'New Objectivity'. In that sense, I find that it bears some resemblance to the work of Hindemith.

However, Antoniou's Sonata bears a defining feature which makes it unique. Even though the writing might seem quite conventional at first glance, especially to someone who is not well acquainted with the composer's musical perception, the sonata is conceived in accordance with Antoniou's idea of Abstract Programmatic Music, containing abstract narrative elements, as will be demonstrated below.

#### 3.3.1. i. Allegro moderato

The brief first movement redefines the relationship between the two contrasting ideas which would normally serve as a first and a second subject in a traditional sonata form. In the case of Antoniou's Sonata, however, the two ideas are not developed independently in separate sections. Instead, they constantly overlap and interrupt each other. As we can see in the excerpt below, the first idea is the impulsive and energetic rhythmical motif, which is presented in bar 1 and repeated in full in bars 2, 3 and 4. Suddenly, it is interrupted by the second idea (bars 5-8), which is defined by a continuous motion of quavers and which evokes for me a feeling of indifference. This is also indicated by the composer's marking

*meno*, which I perceive as a reduction in intensity. The first idea is unexpectedly reintroduced in bars 9-12, only to be interrupted again, just as unexpectedly, by the second idea in bar 13. As such, there is no sense of constant flow or linearity in the music. In order to clearly convey this in my interpretation, I try to make clear that the two ideas are alternating as if someone is changing masks. Another metaphor that I find helpful is the idea of two contrasting characters or perhaps a two wildly different scenes alternated in a film.

Allegro moderato

f

meno (espress.)

riten.

a tempo

meno

cresc.

Example 3.3.1.a. Antoniou: Piano Sonata, i. Allegro moderato, opening

My above-described view is further supported by Antoniou himself when speaking of the sonata:

My thought is structured around the theatre. It is as if you want to say something, but suddenly you hesitate and stop, only to find the courage to keep moving later...

This sense of uncertainty has to be conveyed... If this music was to be put in words, that would be 'Yes, of course, I will do it... but then again I am not entirely sure!' <sup>134</sup>

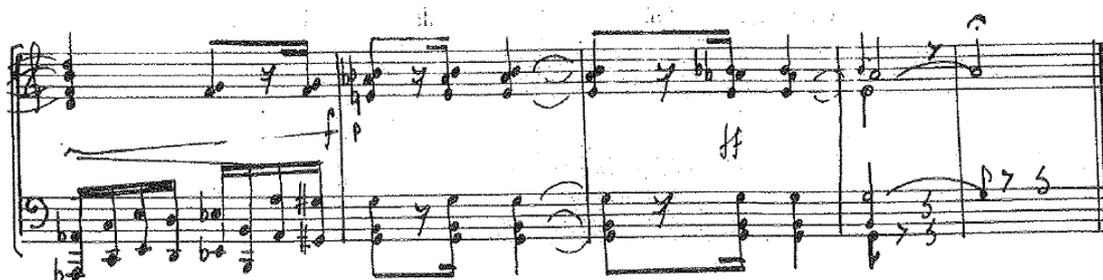
During our workshop, I found it interesting to note that Antoniou's tone of voice got significantly more hesitant as he was uttering the words 'I am not entirely sure'. I perceive it as a very accurate indication about the tone and the character of the second idea of his piano sonata.

This statement by Antoniou also helps us understand some of his markings on the score which might have otherwise seemed quite peculiar, such as for example the *più mosso* indicated over just one bar, without any preceding *accelerando* indicated (see example below).



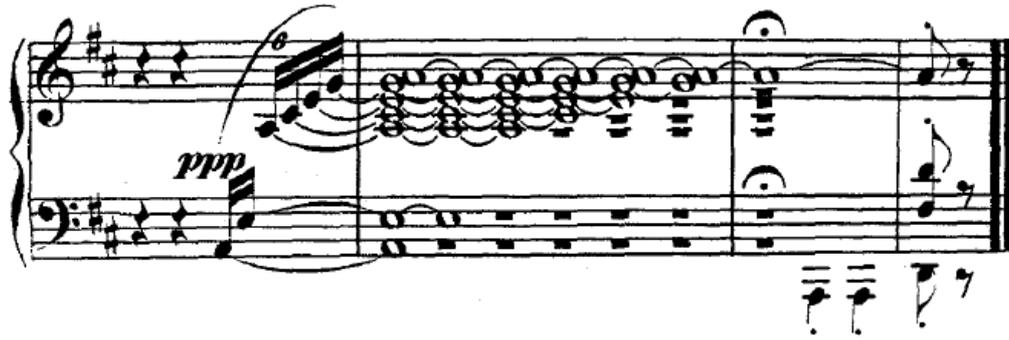
Example 3.3.1.b. Antoniou: Piano Sonata, i. Allegro moderato, page 2, system 3

Going back to the work's form, it is indeed possible to distinguish an exposition – development – recapitulation scheme, which is built almost exclusively on the two ideas which were described above. It is also interesting to note that the movement ends by releasing the keys of a chord one after the other – it almost feels as a tribute to Schumann's piano work Papillons Op. 2, which ends with exactly the same effect, as seen below:



Example 3.3.1.c. Antoniou: Piano Sonata, i. Allegro moderato, ending

<sup>134</sup> Recorded workshop with Theodore Antoniou, 21/4/2017



Example 3.3.1.c. Schumann: *Papillons*, Op. 2, ending

### 3.3.2. ii. Scherzino

The second movement, ‘Scherzino’ follows the classical form of *Scherzo-Trio-Da Capo*. It is a light and humorous movement, which I attempt to convey in my performance with a very light and detached touch in the semiquavers. It is interesting that behind this writing, Antoniou has conceived the following underlying plot: In bar 1 (*forte*) he is thinking of an unruly child making a lot of noise, while in bar 2 (*piano*) his mother is chastising him: ‘be quiet, you will wake up dad!’<sup>135</sup> It is quite unusual for a piece of music to have such a contrast just one bar after its start, and I feel that this enhances the movement’s element of surprise and its charm (see example below).



Example 3.3.2.a. Antoniou: Piano Sonata, ii. Scherzino, opening

<sup>135</sup> As above

The alternation between *forte* and *piano*, as described above, is encountered very often in the second movement. Antoniou asks for very clear and emphasised contrasts in dynamics.<sup>136</sup> In my attempts to achieve his, I ended up playing the first bar (see example above) quite harshly, which went against the general character of the piece. To rectify this, I decided to employ the sustain pedal; in the first bar I leave it fully pressed down, while not using it at all for the second bar. By this means, the contrast can be magnified.



Example 3.3.2.b. Antoniou: Piano Sonata, ii. Scherzino, opening bars of Trio

The *Trio* (with a length of 20 bars) has a very different character if compared to the *Scherzino*. Antoniou did not reveal any particular dramatic analogy here, but for me the texture clearly seems to imply somebody who is limping and cannot walk very well. The constant dotted rhythm with the odd, out of place accents in the off-beats, as seen in the example above, create a rather grotesque and sarcastic atmosphere. To properly convey this, I find it necessary to give play the dotted rhythm more sharply, while also slightly lowering the tempo in comparison to the *Scherzino*.

<sup>136</sup> As above

### 3.3.3. iii. Adagio

Example 3.3.3.a. Antoniou: Piano Sonata, iii. Adagio, opening

Glancing at the third movement of the Sonata (*Adagio*), I clearly feel that the writing is orchestral. The left hand maintains a constant, steady pace resembling a string pizzicato, which serves as the background for the right hand's melodic line to unfold. The right hand, conversely, consists of long notes, which in my view resemble horns, due to the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> harmonic intervals which are formed. The fact that the two hands are conceived as different instrument groups can also be seen by the dynamic markings: in bars 2-3 of the example above, there is a *crescendo* in the right hand leading up to *forte*, with the composer indicating that the left hand ought to remain indifferent in *piano*. This differentiation in character and touch is one of the main challenges which I had to overcome while studying the movement; I tried to acquire a short, sharp and quiet touch for the left, while trying to do the exact opposite with the right hand, aiming for a very deep and long touch.

One of the basic issues that I had to resolve during my study of the movement was the question of tempo. The composer gives us two pieces of information; the first being the marking *Adagio* and the second being the indication ♩=96. While practicing the piece, I felt these two indications to be conflicting with each other. While playing in the given metronome indication, I found that the piece was too fast for an *Adagio*; it felt more like an *Andantino*. The *Adagio* would indeed make more sense if the piece were to be played in half the speed of that indicated, which would mean ♩=96. At that stage it crossed my mind that this is what might actually have been the composer's intention, with the indication for a

crotchet being a careless mistake. But this scenario also did not hold up to scrutiny; why would the composer think of quaver beats in a piece marked 4/4? As such, I started thinking of a tempo that I would choose if I were composing the piece myself. My personal feeling was that a tempo close to ♩=78 would be the most appropriate. But still, I remained undecided.

The question was resolved when I met Antoniou to discuss about the Sonata in person. Before playing to him or speaking about my reservations on the issue of tempo, I asked him to sing the beginning of the Sonata's third movement for me, while I was observing and recording him. He sang it in a tempo of approximately ♩=83, which was very close to my preferred tempo,<sup>137</sup> as such I decided to adopt it. The most important thing that I deduced from this process was that in case of doubt about a piece's tempo, it is better to rely on my instinct, than attempting to follow a tempo indication which is contradictory to my perception of the piece.

Other than solving my issue with the tempo, Antoniou's sung demonstration also served as an indication of the character that I would need to convey through my interpretation. As he was singing, he was conducting in a very illustrative manner. His left hand kept a steady pulse, while his right hand made dramatic gestures, drawing a long line in the air with his arm. He was singing the melodic line very intensely and dramatically; when he reached the *forte* in the third bar he was almost shouting. As such, I decided to illustrate the dramatic elements in the piece clearly. Of course, the intense *crescendo* which Antoniou demonstrated with his voice has proved impossible to reproduce due to the nature of the piano, as the long notes can only decay. Finding a way to render it convincingly was especially challenging, as I was trying to play each chord in the right hand louder than the preceding one while trying to feel an internal *crescendo*. This also helped me get a better sense of *legato* for the line.

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<sup>137</sup> As above

### 3.3.4. iv. Presto

Presto (♩ = 144)

The musical score is written for piano and consists of three systems of two staves each. The tempo is marked 'Presto' with a quarter note equal to 144 beats per minute. The time signature is 5/8. The first system begins with a fortissimo (ff) dynamic, followed by a piano (p) dynamic. The second system starts with a piano (p) dynamic, followed by a fortissimo (ff) dynamic. The third system starts with a piano (p) dynamic, followed by a fortissimo (ff) dynamic. The score features a mix of unison passages and chordal textures.

Example 3.3.4.a. Antoniou: Piano Sonata, iv. Presto, opening

The character of the Sonata's last movement is very dry and percussive; I find that in terms of style it is quite similar to the finale of Prokofiev's seventh Piano Sonata. Thus, I aim for a similar touch to that employed in the aforementioned piece, with very light use of the sustain pedal, so that all the notes on the lower register of the piano can be heard clearly. The piece also reminds me of Bartók due to its primitive feeling, as well as the 5/8 rhythm.

The material of the fourth movement is derived from the first idea (bar 1) of the first movement; both movements begin with the pitches G – E flat – G – A, organised differently in rhythm. There also seems to be a similarity between the Sonata's second and fourth movement, as both have sudden shifts in dynamics, between *forte* or *fortissimo* and *piano*. In the fourth movement, however, we also encounter an additional manner in which the feeling of contrast is created; the alternation between passages played in unison between the two hands (bars 1-3 and 8-10 in the example above) and passages played in chords (bars 4-7 and from bar 11 onwards etc). In order to make the contrast more obvious, I opt to play the chords in a more 'blocky' manner, specifically trying to avoid projecting any individual line which could be perceived as melodic.

In this case I also came across a tempo issue, as the indicated ♩=144 feels too slow for a *Presto* marking. Antoniou pointed out that the metronome markings are only suggestions and should not be taken too literally if they feel unnatural.<sup>138</sup> I asked him to sing the beginning of the movement and observed that his tempo was approximately ♩=168; I perceived this as a “permission” to play it faster than the original tempo. In my recording I ended up playing in a tempo of ♩=184, which Antoniou, being present in the studio, found quite satisfactory.

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<sup>138</sup> As above

### 3.4. Syllables (1965)

In his definition of Abstract Programmatic Music Antoniou mentions an ‘abstract idea’ which defines the parameters of music (pitch, volume, duration and timbre). A clear example of this conception is his piano work *Syllables* (in German: *Silben*) (1965). In this work certain properties of speech are imitated and notes are treated like letters, but not in the typical manner of matching each note to a letter of the alphabet.<sup>139</sup> *Syllables* consists of six short pieces that run into each other, each one offering a musical analogue of a verbal device, as shown in the table below:<sup>140</sup>

<i>Syllables</i>	Duration: 5:10 <sup>141</sup>
I. <i>Parechesis</i> (Alliteration)	1:15
II. <i>Anagramme</i> (Anagram)	0:31
III. <i>Paragogen</i> (Derivatives)	1:10
IV. <i>Epenthesis</i> (the addition of a sound to a word’s body)	0:48
V. <i>Apharesis</i> (Abstraction/Subtraction)	0:59
VI. <i>Synchysis</i> (Confusion)	0:27

In order to make artistic decisions concerning the interpretation and the performance of *Syllables*, I found it useful to draw parallel lines with two major works which employ similar techniques. These works are Theodore Antoniou’s Dramatic Cantata *Nenikikamen* (1971) for Narrator, Baritone, Mezzo Soprano, Choir and Orchestra and Jani Christou’s work for music theatre *Anaparastasis*<sup>142</sup> *I – the Baritone* (1968).

As in *Syllables*, the underlying concept of fragmentation of a word into syllables is apparent in *Nenikikamen*. ‘Nenikikamen’ (Νενικήκαμεν) is the ancient Greek equivalent for the phrase ‘we are victorious’. Legend has it that the word was uttered by a messenger – the first marathon runner- who had run 40km from the lake of Marathon to Athens, to announce the victory of the forces of the Greek City states against the Persian Empire in the battle of Marathon. According to tradition, the runner died from exhaustion just after the delivery of his message to the Athenian public. In Antoniou’s work, during the climactic finale, the syllables ‘Ne-ni-ki-ka-men’ are rearranged in a chaotic fashion, simulating the runner’s inability to pronounce what he had to say clearly because of his exhaustion.

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<sup>139</sup> A few indicative examples of piano works following this trend are Liszt’s *Prelude & Fugue on the name of B.A.C.H.* and Schumann’s *A.B.E.G.G. Variations, Op.1*

<sup>140</sup> In-depth examination of the verbal devices and their relation to the music will take place later on.

<sup>141</sup> The durations are taken from my official CD recording.

<sup>142</sup> This is the transliteration of the Greek word ‘αναπαράστασις’, which means ‘representation’.

In a similar manner, in the beginning of Christou's *Anaparastasis I – the Baritone*, the syllables of the word 'astronkatidhanykteronomighyrin' are taken apart and re-arranged irregularly when recited by the baritone, thus destroying any sense of coherence.<sup>143</sup> Antoniou, who conducted the première of Christou's *Anaparastasis I*, mentions that:<sup>144</sup>

The work [Anaparastasis I] begins with the opening lines of Aeschylus' tragic poem *Oresteia*, which are recited by a guard (the baritone), who has been waiting for years to see fire coming from a mountain top – the announcement for the fall of Troy. Christou describes the psychological reaction of this man, who has been waiting and observing for ten years. When, at last, he sees the sign, he reaches a transcendental state of mind.<sup>145</sup>

Personally, being a performer of Antoniou's *Syllables*, I feel a close connection to the aforementioned roles of the guard and the marathon runner, who are transferred to a state in which they can't control their reactions. The musical texture in *Syllables* suggests a musical equivalent of screams and abrupt gestures rather than a coherent text and flowing speech.

Unlike in Antoniou's *Nenikamen* and Christou's *Anaparastasis I*, there is no specific word which is being processed in the case of Antoniou's *Syllables*. The concept of Abstract Programmatic Music is very clear in *Syllables*: there is no specific text or story behind the work; however, the the existence of an 'abstract idea' plays a decisive role when it comes to interpretative decisions.

It is worth mentioning that *Syllables* (1965) utilises the concept of Abstract Programmatic Music in a very different way to *Aquarelles* (1958): *Syllables* is closely connected with language, while *Aquarelles* with painting. In addition, I feel that the two works require a completely different approach to sound. *Aquarelles* seem to imitate the blurred edges of impressionistic painting, thus requiring lightness and transparency in sound. On the contrary, *Syllables* seem to require a more 'direct' sound and an emphasis on the attack of the notes, which I find to be reminiscent of the abrupt lines encountered in cubism. I believe

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<sup>143</sup> In Greek: αστρωνκατοιδανυκτερωνομήγυριν. This surrealistic word doesn't exist in the vocabulary. It is the result of the merging of the ancient Greek words: ἄστρον κάτοιδα νυκτέρων ὁμήγυριν. These words are taken from the ancient Greek tragic poet Aeschylus' work *Agamemnon*, which is a part of the trilogy *Oresteia*, the English translation is: I have become familiar with the assembly of the stars of night.

<sup>144</sup> Munich, 12/11/1968

<sup>145</sup> Theodore Antoniou, 'Ο Θόδωρος Αντωνίου για τον Γιάννη Χρήστου με αφορμή τα ενενήντα χρόνια από τη γέννησή του', ['Theodore Antoniou on Jani Christou at the occasion of ninety years from his birth'], *Polytonon* (magazine of the Greek Composers' Union), Athens, issue 72 (September-October 2015), 13

that this kind of sound matches the highly dissonant nature of the work, in which the major 7<sup>th</sup> interval is used as the main building block.

Furthermore, I find that this work shares a connection with Expressionism, as defined by David Fanning: 'music, in which an extravagant and apparently chaotic surface conveys turbulence in the composer's psyche.'<sup>146</sup> *Syllables* is clearly reminiscent of the Second Viennese School. Yet, Antoniou does not employ a strict form of twelve-tone rows, focusing instead on the musical representations of the properties of speech.

### 3.4.1. I. Parechesis

The first movement is named 'Parechesis' (in Greek: Παρήχησις). Its English equivalent is 'alliteration' (in the published score - below - it is misspelled as 'Alteration'). When encountered in literature, alliteration is the repetition of initial consonant sounds in a number of words (normally at least three) in the same line of verse.<sup>147</sup> Antoniou utilises a musical form of alliteration, in which the sound group marked in example below recurs frequently, in a similar manner to a recurring syllable encountered in the aforementioned literary device. The repeated sound group remains distinct due to the fact that its position is fixed at the middle register of the piano.

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<sup>146</sup> David Fanning: 'Expressionism', *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Ed. Stanley Sadie, (second edition, Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2001), viii, 472-477

<sup>147</sup> Chris Baldick, 'alliteration', *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 4 ed. (Oxford University Press, 2015), 6

An example of alliteration is the following phrase from the English poet Coleridge: 'The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew'. In this phrase there are two alliterations (of the letters f and b).

I Parechsis (Alteration)

Example 3.4.2.a. Antoniou: *Syllables, I. Parechsis*

The piece's texture is highly dissonant and contains a wide range of dynamics and sudden dynamic changes, representing sudden change of moods. In the first bars, the insistent, loud chords sound like uncontrollable screams, which repeat a particular syllable in an obsessive way. The soft ones that follow represent the reaction, a sudden gesture of thoughtfulness and introversion.

According to the composer's instructions, the soft chords should be barely audible, and played with no sense of attack.<sup>148</sup> The composer suggests that the desired effect is the illusion that in the soft chords the sound comes from somewhere else, far away – the idea of the 'movement of sound in space', a component of Abstract Programmatic Music, is present in this case.

As indicated in the score, there should be overlapping in the pedal: it should be released very gradually so that the first chord fades out onto the second one – there is a small period of time where both chords resonate. This overlapping of pedal is more evident in the manuscript, with the pedal change (asterisks) being marked visibly later in the bar:

<sup>148</sup> Recorded workshop with Th. Antoniou, 12/7/2016

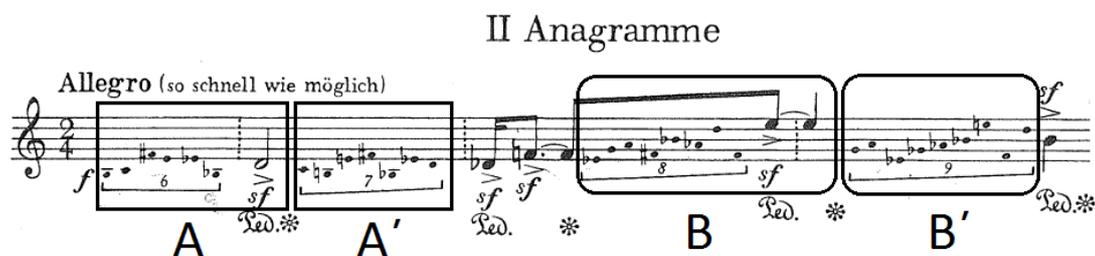


Example 3.4.2.b. Antoniou: *Syllables, I. Parechesis*, bars 1-5 (manuscript)

As shown by the dynamic markings in example 3.2.-1, the principle of building up and releasing tension is present in all the three systems of *Parechesis*, each time with a different manner and pace.

### 3.4.2. II. Anagramme

The second piece is named 'Anagramme' (Anagram) which comes from the Greek word 'Αναγραμματισμός'. In language, an anagram is a form of word play, the result of rearranging the letters of a word to produce a new word, using the original letters once and once only.<sup>149</sup> In this piece it is the position of the notes that is interchanged. As indicated in the example below, the 'anagram' in this case is formed by the fact that the exact same pitches in group A (marked below) are then repeated in the group A', but rearranged in different positions. The same pattern is followed with groups B and B'. While the exact same pattern can't be observed in the rest of the piece, the nature of the texture retains the illusion of an anagram. The piece is organised in quick passages with a varying number of notes which always end on an accented note.



Example 3.4.3.a. Antoniou: *Syllables, II. Anagramme*, bars 1-4

<sup>149</sup> Example of an anagram: dusty - study

The indication 'so schnell wie möglich' – meaning 'as fast as possible' - is included just after the tempo instruction (Allegro). Antoniou, not being a skilled pianist himself, is not concerned about the technical aspect of performing this music: he writes all the notes in one staff, providing no fingerings. To maximise the speed and to achieve an efficient performance, I came up with an arrangement and re-distribution of the notes between the two hands.<sup>150</sup> My own proposed version and fingering suggestions for *Anagramme* is shown at the example below. Finger markings above the notes indicate that they are to be played by the right hand; below the notes indicate the left hand. The symbol  $\times$  indicates that the right hand has to be on top when crossing hands, while the symbol  $\times$  indicates the opposite; this applies until the next change of symbol (see example 3.3.-2).

**II Anagramme**

**Allegro** (so schnell wie möglich)

The score is divided into four systems, each with a hand-crossing symbol (X) above or below it. The first system (treble clef) has a right-hand symbol above the staff and a left-hand symbol below. The second system (treble clef) has a right-hand symbol above and a left-hand symbol below. The third system (bass clef) has a right-hand symbol above and a left-hand symbol below. The fourth system (bass clef) has a right-hand symbol above and a left-hand symbol below. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes. Dynamics include sf, f, ff, and mf. The piece ends with a double bar line and a fermata.

Example 3.4.3.b. Antoniou: *Syllables, II. Anagramme*, fingering suggestions

<sup>150</sup> Arriving to a final decision about the exact nature of the redistribution was quite time-consuming, as possibilities are endless. The fingering I came up with worked quite well in all my public performances, so I didn't have to rethink about a possible re-arrangement.

### 3.4.3. III. Paragogen

*Paragogen*, the third piece, is taken from the Greek word 'Παράγωγα', which translates as 'Derivatives'. This musical piece is based on harmonics, which are essentially 'derived' from the short and loud chords that precede them. The harmonics are clearly notated in white, irregular noteheads (rhombus). The corresponding keys have to be pressed down silently after the loud chords have been played, thus creating a special effect where only the pitch of the harmonic is sustained:

III Paragogen

The musical score for 'III Paragogen' is presented in two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The tempo is marked 'Adagio' and the time signature is 2/4. The score consists of four measures. In the first measure, the right hand plays a half note G4, and the left hand plays a fortissimo (ff) chord. In the second measure, the right hand plays a half note A4, and the left hand plays a pianissimo (ppp) chord with a mezzo-gando (m.g.) dynamic marking. In the third measure, the right hand plays a half note B4, and the left hand plays a pianissimo (ppp) chord with a mezzo-gando (m.g.) dynamic marking. In the fourth measure, the right hand plays a half note C5, and the left hand plays a fortissimo (ff) chord with a mezzo-gando (m.g.) dynamic marking. The harmonics are indicated by white rhombus noteheads in the right hand. There are asterisks under the bottom notes of the chords in the left hand.

Example 3.4.4.a. Antoniou: *Syllables*, III. *Paragogen*, bars 1-4

I find that there is a technical issue in the performance of *Paragogen*: the harmonics sound far too soft. They are barely audible in a hall, and almost not audible at all in a recording. In order to make them audible, I would have to play the *ff* chords with maximal force – and even then, the sound of the harmonics wouldn't be enough. In addition, Antoniou has mentioned that these *ff* chords should not be aggressive and that the harmonics should be strong enough so that they are not drowned out by the *ppp* notes (in the left hand, bars 2 and 3 above).<sup>151</sup> Faced with this problem, I came up with the following solution: the notes of the harmonics should not be pressed silently but actually played, albeit very softly. This creates the appropriate effect, sustaining the sound. After the loud attack of the chord, I aim to make the soft attack not audible, so that the result is faithful to the composer's intentions.

Antoniou has also mentioned that the *ff* chords should be very short. If played as written, the right hand has to shift position, creating gaps between the chords and the harmonic notes. In order to minimize this gap, redistribution is useful: the three bottom notes of the chord can be taken with the left hand, with the right hand taking only the top note, so that it is already in position to play the following note of the harmonic (see example below).

<sup>151</sup> Recorded workshop with Th. Antoniou, 12/7/2016

### III Paragogen

Example 3.4.4.b. Antoniou: *Syllables*, III. *Paragogen*, bars 1-4 with fingering suggestions

For the last bars of *Paragogen*, I find it very helpful to hold down the sostenuto pedal for the G-D harmonic chord. I also repress the keys softly with each left hand chord, so that the sound can be sustained throughout, in the same manner as already described.

Example 3.4.4.c. Antoniou: *Syllables*, III. *Paragogen*, last four bars

#### 3.4.4. IV. Epenthesis

In phonology, epenthesis is the addition of a letter, sound or syllable in the body of a word.<sup>152</sup> Antoniou utilises this idea of ‘addition’ and ‘alteration of sound’ in his piece: he adds a piece of paper on the strings, at the middle register of the piano, thus altering its timbre. It is important to mention that both in the manuscript and the published edition, the placing of a book on the strings is indicated, rather than a piece of paper (see example below). The use of a book on the strings produces a more or less ‘muted’ sound colour, its intensity depending on the book’s weight, which Antoniou doesn’t specify. Despite the

<sup>152</sup> A characteristic example of epenthesis occurs at the declination of the ancient Greek word *ὁ ἀνὴρ* (o anir), meaning ‘the man’. Normally, the genitive clause would be *τοῦ ἀνδρός* (tou anros), meaning the ‘man’s’. However, for reasons of euphony, an extra ‘δ’ is added in the body of the word, thus resulting in: *τοῦ ἀνδρός* (tou andros)



exhaustion is clear as *Epenthesis* moves on: it concludes with a gradual diminuendo and ritardando, while the texture becomes gradually thinner, as well (see example below).

Antoniou: *Syllables*, IV. *Epenthesis*, ending

*Epenthesis* presents considerable technical challenges, so I feel that it is important to make some fingering suggestions for two specific passages. One of them is shown at the example below. The texture of the left hand is highly complicated, due to the leaps and the constant use of the minor 2<sup>nd</sup> harmonic interval.

Example 3.4.5.b. Antoniou: *Syllables*, IV. *Epenthesis*, excerpt with fingering suggestions

The most difficult and acrobatic passage of the work, which comes right afterwards, consists of huge leaps between the extreme edges of the keyboard, with the right hand having to cross over the left. The example below shows my suggested fingering for this passage:



Example 3.4.5.c. Antoniou: *Syllables*, IV. *Epenthesis*, excerpt with fingering suggestions

As can be seen from the score above, the use of the thumb is suggested for all the notes on the black keys, as its bigger surface makes it more secure to strike the correct notes. Conversely, the use of the thumb ought to be avoided on the white keys, as its shape would increase the possibility of pressing a wrong key. While practicing this passage, I realised the important role of the torso's position in its efficient execution. Despite the huge leaps, I find it helpful to remain as stable as possible, as any unnecessary movement would immediately result in a sense of instability and insecurity. The final, vital element for playing this passage is how the eyes work: they have to move very fast from one end of the keyboard to the other. To cope with the extremely high speed of this passage, I fix my eyes on the next note every time, even before the previous one has been played.

### 3.4.5. V. *Apharesis*

The gradual release of tension at the end of *Epenthesis* (example 10) leads to the penultimate piece of *Syllables*, which is named 'Apharesis'. The title is a transliteration of the Greek word 'Αφαίρεσις', which means both subtraction and abstraction. The 'subtraction' is evident by the fact that the texture is sparse, both in terms of material as well as in tempo and intensity. The double meaning of this piece can be explained by its rather abstract nature, containing various seemingly unrelated elements. This short interlude serves as a quiet contrast to the preceding and following pieces, which are quick virtuoso pieces with a strong rhythmic pulse. A mysterious character and a sense of space are achieved in *Apharesis* through a variety of special effects, as shown by the composer's instructions below.

V Aphäresis

Adagio

1. Touch string with fingernail  
2. Pluck with finger  
3. Press key silently  
4. Gliss. across the strings

1. Saite mit dem Fingernagel berühren  
2. mit dem Finger zupfen  
3. stumm niederdrücken  
4. gliss. über die Saiten

Example 3.4.6.a. Antoniou: *Syllables*, V. *Aphairesis*

In the recording session for *Aphairesis*, a considerable amount of time was spent in consultation with the composer, so that we could find a way to create the proper sound for effect no.1 (touch string with fingernail), as I do not have a long fingernail. The solution we came up with was using a metallic pencil sharpener. However, finding the correct amount of pressure on the string requires special attention – the pressure should be very little, otherwise the sound fades away too soon. For effect number 2 (pluck with finger), the solution was to use the piece of a cracked nut to pluck the string, again because of the fact that I lack a long fingernail.

For effects 3 and 4, the indicated technique is a glissando on the strings, while sustaining the harmonic chord in the right hand (bar 5 in the example above). This technique, known as the ‘Aeolian Harp’, reveals Antoniou’s influence by American experimentalists - particularly Henry Cowell, who introduced it in his piano piece *Aeolian Harp* (1923). Unfortunately, in most pianos, there is a piece of iron over the strings, which prevent from executing the glissando in *Aphairesis* without interruption. The solution for this is to use both hands – one in each side of the iron – so that a continuous glissando can be achieved. However, using both hands for the string glissando prevents from holding down the keys of the harmonic note chord. The solution for this is to hold down the pedal after the glissando has been played, silently press down the keys, and then release the pedal

It is also interesting to note that Antoniou wanted the tempo for *Aphairesis* to be extremely broad and the long notes to continue sounding endlessly.<sup>155</sup> This is unfortunately impossible due to the nature of the instrument and the natural decay of sound. However, his intention is indicative of the fact that Antoniou conceives his music as a continuum, without his conception and imagination being restricted by the physical limitations of the piano.

<sup>155</sup> In conversation with Th. Antoniou during the recording session, 3/7/2017

### 3.4.6. VI. Synchrony

The concluding piece of *Syllables* is called 'Synchrony' – 'Σύγχυσις' in Greek, meaning both mixing and confusion. In rhetoric, Synchrony is a technique wherein words are intentionally scattered to create bewilderment, or for some other purpose.<sup>156</sup> In Antoniou's piece the title refers to the mixing – and the resulting confusion – of a characteristic tonal tune which appears amidst atonal motives originating from the previous movements.

The tune gives a vague impression of A minor, while the surrounding material consists mostly of 7<sup>th</sup> intervals – both harmonic and melodic – (often appearing as diminished 8<sup>ves</sup>). They are interspersed around the aforementioned tonal line, creating a variety of sharp dissonances and thus compromising the tonal nature of the tune. The initial sound group first encountered in *Parechesis*, is prominently present here, as circled below.

VI Synchrony (Konfusion)

Presto ♩ = 182

ff

the initial sound group of *Parechesis* in the right hand

Characteristic tune in the left hand

Example 3.4.7.a. Antoniou: *Syllables*, VI. *Synchrony*, opening

Throughout *Synchrony*, a kind of conflict seems to take place between the contrasting tonal and atonal elements, with the tonal tune insisting and reappearing frequently. However, after its last, fragmented appearance, it is eventually assimilated by the atonal element. It is completely extinguished as the piece concludes with a flurry of virtuosic atonal figurations. It is notable that the exact same sound group used in the very beginning of *Syllables* is utilised to conclude the work, thus giving a sense of formal unity (see example below).

<sup>156</sup> Mario A. Pei and Frank Gaynor, 'Synchrony', *A Dictionary of Linguistics* (New York, Philosophical Library, 1954), p.209. An example of synchrony is the phrase: 'Matter too soft a lasting mark to bear' – Alexander Pope, Epistle II. To a lady (1743)

The image displays a musical score for 'Syllables, VI. Synchronisis' by Antoniou. It consists of two systems of music. The first system features a treble clef staff with a bracketed section labeled 'tune' and a bass clef staff with a bracketed section labeled 'fragment of the tune'. The second system features a bass clef staff with a circled section labeled 'sound group'. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and accidentals.

Example 3.4.7.b. Antoniou: *Syllables*, VI. *Synchronisis*, final bars

The sense of agitation and dramatic tension is clear in *Synchronisis*, just like in *Epenthesis*. *Synchronisis* seems to describe a psychological state of inner conflict in the protagonist's soul, represented by the conflict of contrasting musical elements. The characteristic tune reappears frequently, like an obsession of mind. In order to perform *Synchronisis* convincingly I try to bring out the characteristic tune very clearly, by playing it in a slightly higher dynamic level than the rest of the musical material. In addition, I feel that the piece needs a ferocious sound with a strong emphasis on the attack of the notes. Although it employs a totally stable rhythmic pulse, the frequent appearance of off-beat accents creates a sense of agitation. As such, emphasising strongly on the accents is an important aspect of performance.

### 3.4.7. Corrections of the misprints in the published score

*Syllables* was published in 1967 by Musikverlag Hans Gerig of Cologne. The work was included in the second volume of the two-part album 'Neue Griechische Klaviermusik' (contemporary Greek Music), compiled and edited by Günther Bäcker. The published score contains serious misprints, which are corrected below.

In *Synchronisis* there are four places in which the published edition indicates wrong clefs; the correct ones appear in the composer's manuscript. The example below shows an altered version of the published score, containing the clef corrections, which are marked with circles. In the published score a bass clef wrongly stands in places 1) and 2) and the clef

change is omitted in places 3) and 4). By following this mistaken version, the desired effect of continuous minor 2<sup>nds</sup> between the hands would be lost.

VI Synchysis (Konfusion)

Presto  $\text{♩} = 182$

Example 3.4.8.a. Antoniou: *Synchysis*, clef corrections

In *Apharesis*, a treble clef has to be added, as marked in the example below. This treble clef appears in the composer's manuscript.

V Aphäresis

Adagio

1. Touch string with fingernail  
2. Pluck with finger  
3. Press key silently  
4. Gliss. across the strings

1. Saite mit dem Fingernagel berühren  
2. mit dem Finger zupfen  
3. stumm niederdrücken  
4. gliss. über die Saiten

Example 3.4.8.b. Antoniou: *Apharesis*, clef correction

In *Paragogen*, the tie indicated with the arrow in the example below is missing from the published edition, but it appears in the manuscript. The tie is essential, as it indicates that the harmonic note (G) continues to sound.

### III Paragogen

The musical score for 'III Paragogen' is in 2/4 time and marked 'Adagio'. It consists of two staves. The right-hand staff contains a melodic line with notes marked 'm.g.' and 'm.d.'. The left-hand staff contains a bass line with dynamics ranging from *ff* to *ppp*. A tie is shown between two notes in the left hand, with an arrow pointing to it from the text above. Other markings include 'Red.' and asterisks.

Example 3.4.8.c. Antoniou: *Paragogen*, added tie

In the last bars of *Paragogen*, in consultation with the composer,<sup>157</sup> we came up with an amendment in order to reinforce the sustained sound of the right hand chord (G-D). Namely, G and D have to be pressed together and some extra notes have to be added to the left hand chords, which help to reinforce the harmonics. Example 18 shows the amended version, while example 19 shows the original published version.

This musical score shows the final bars of 'Paragogen' with an amended version. It features a right-hand staff with a sustained chord and a left-hand staff with a complex bass line. Dynamics include *ff*, *ppp*, *f*, and *ff*. Annotations include 'press both keys' with an arrow pointing to a note in the right hand, and 'add C natural to the chord' and 'add G to the chord' with arrows pointing to notes in the left hand. Other markings include 'Red.' and asterisks.

Example 3.4.8.d. Antoniou: *Paragogen*, final bars, amended version

This musical score shows the final bars of 'Paragogen' in the published version. It is identical to the amended version in terms of notes and dynamics, but lacks the annotations and the tie mentioned in the text. Dynamics include *ff*, *ppp*, *f*, and *ff*. Markings include 'Red.' and asterisks.

Example 3.4.8.e. Antoniou: *Paragogen*, final bars, published version

<sup>157</sup> Recorded workshop with Th. Antoniou, 12/7/2016

### 3.5. Prelude & Toccata (1982)

As the title implies, the *Prelude* serves as a brief introduction to the *Toccata*, which is a virtuoso piece. Antoniou's *Toccata* is characterised by a motoric texture, rhythmic drive and detached touch. One of its major aims is to display virtuosity; in this regard it bears a likeness to other, popular, toccatas of the twentieth century, such as the ones by Prokofiev (Op.11), Ravel (final movement from *Le Tombeau de Couperin*) and Khachaturian. What makes Antoniou's *Toccata* remarkably different is the fact that there are no bar lines or dynamic changes indicated (with the exception of its lyrical middle section). Given this, it was a special challenge for me to make decisions in terms of rhythm, accentuation and dynamics, as will be examined later.

An important element of the work is the contrast between the *Prelude* and the *Toccata*. In contrast to the dry timbre and the 'moto perpetuo' of the *Toccata*, the *Prelude* explores the piano's resonance and has a fragmented nature; the flow of music is often interrupted by long *fermatas*, during which broad sound masses are sustained with the use of the pedal. Through a further examination of the *Prelude's* pitch material, it is possible to establish a connection with the work of Messiaen. Antoniou himself notes: 'in this work I was experimenting with the application of octatonic scales.'<sup>158</sup> This is immediately apparent in the opening of the *Prelude*: the initial, distinct motif in bar 1, marked in the example below, makes up Messiaen's second mode of limited transposition. As the piece develops, a free rearrangement of intervals gives birth to new octatonic scales (as highlighted below), arranged both horizontally and vertically (as chords).

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<sup>158</sup> Theodore Antoniou, notes on his piano works in Greek, unpublished, found in Antoniou's archive in Athens (my translation)

## PRELUDE

The image displays two systems of musical notation for the opening of a piece titled 'PRELUDE'. The first system is marked 'Presto' with a tempo of 168. It begins with a 5-measure fermata. The dynamics are marked 'ff' and 'mf'. The second system is marked 'Meno' with a tempo of 120. It features a 4-measure fermata and a 'rit.' marking. The dynamics include 'mf', 'p', and 'cresc. ed accel.'. The notation shows complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic changes between the two hands.

Example 3.5.a. Antoniou: *Prelude and Toccata, Prelude*, opening

As can be observed in the above bars, there is no logical sense of form or continuity in the *Prelude*. Antoniou attributes this fragmentary nature to his desire of achieving a theatrical effect, which comes as a result of his conception of Abstract Programmatic Music. When trying to demonstrate how the *meno* section in the above example ought to be interpreted, he would make disorderly gestures, which are translated in the musical text as the apparent 'out-of-sync' rhythmical division between the hands.<sup>159</sup> In transmitting this sense to the public during a live performance, I find that body language is vital, especially during the *Prelude's* opening two bars (*presto*, followed by a long *fermata*). I find that the opening gesture requires an abrupt movement, followed by complete stillness in the *fermata*, in order to transmit and instill a sense of tension. Antoniou's comment when I first performed the piece for him was to hold the fermatas even longer, as this would enhance the theatrical element.<sup>160</sup>

At this point I would like to demonstrate an example from the *Prelude* which I found to be particularly challenging to decipher and learn (*presto e leggiero possibile*, presented below). In order to make it easier to process, I divided it in ten groups of notes, so that the fingering in the two hands would change simultaneously. Afterwards, I made certain markings over each group to help me understand its structure. The 'F-' marking on group 1 means that its

<sup>159</sup> Recorded workshop with Th. Antoniou, 12/7/2016

<sup>160</sup> As above

notes belong to the F minor scale, the 'A-' in group 2 corresponding to A minor, etc. The □ marking stands for a white key on the keyboard, while ■ stands for a black key. Groups 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10 have exactly the same sequence of black and white keys in both hands, making them easier to learn. After deciphering the passage, I practised each group first on each own and then in combination with each other, until I was able to put them all together.

Example 3.5.b. Antoniou: *Prelude and Toccata, Prelude*, final bars

As the resonance of last notes of the *Prelude* fades away (see example above), the dazzling *Toccata* bursts into the scene. It follows an 'ABA' form. Section 'A' is marked *prestissimo* and *fortissimo*; here are no further dynamic markings, bar lines, or a time signature (see example below). Section 'B' serves as a contrasting, lyrical interlude based on asymmetrical meters.

## TOCCATA

Prestissimo  $\text{♩} = 132$

Example 3.5.c. Antoniou: *Prelude and Toccata, Toccata*, opening

The first decision I was faced with in the interpretation of the *Toccata*'s 'A' section was a question of character. I was divided between a dramatic and a 'scherzando' approach; the 'fortissimo' marking indicates a dramatic and heavy approach, while the sparse texture and the grace notes seem to suggest towards a 'scherzando' character. Antoniou's comment was that 'the piece should have a dancing character'.<sup>161</sup> Indeed, we can see from the score that its rhythmical structure is organised in groups of two or three quavers, which is reminiscent of the compound meters encountered in Greek folk music. In order to clearly mark these groups I found it helpful to slightly touch the pedal at the first quaver of each group. However, I found that even after accentuating the groups, a sense of dance does not come out clearly. This is mostly due to the lack of continuity in the phrase structure and the rhythmic unpredictability. Jed Distler argues that 'unpredictable rhythmic detours keep you guessing in the *Prelude and Toccata*'.<sup>162</sup> In the end, I decided to employ the dramatic route, due to the fact that later on in the piece the texture grows thicker and heavier. Still, having

<sup>161</sup> As above

<sup>162</sup> Jed Distler, 'Antoniou, Complete Piano Works', CD review in *Gramophone*, July 2018, 68

performed the piece seven times in public and recorded it I am not fully convinced about which approach is the most appropriate.

There is also a question of tempo arising from Antoniou's metronome indications in the *Toccata*, just as like in the *Aquarelles*, the *Inventions and Fugues* and the *Sonata*. The indication *crotchet = 132 bpm* sounds very slow for a *prestissimo*; as such, I decided to play faster; Antoniou indicated his approval.<sup>163</sup> This is another testament to his flexible conception of tempo.

In term of dynamics, the fact that Antoniou does not indicate anything other than *ff* in the beginning means that within a general dynamic of *fortissimo*, there is still some flexibility for small variations, which are left to the discretion of the performer. In my view, the passages in which the texture gets thicker ought to be performed louder and vice versa.

During practicing the piece, I was also faced with certain imprecisions in the score. One of these instances is the passage marked at the example below. It is notable that this is the only instance in his piano works in which Antoniou employs graphic notation.<sup>164</sup> It is a fact that the nature of this certain passage is quite unpianistic. As a result, I decided to adopt a free approach which emphasises virtuosity: I am playing clusters in both hand over a large part of the keyboard.

The image displays two systems of musical notation. The first system is a standard piano score with a treble clef staff (RH) and a bass clef staff (LH). It features complex rhythmic patterns and clusters of notes. The second system is a graphic notation score, also with RH and LH staves. It uses arrows to indicate fingerings and clusters of notes, with some notes represented by dots and lines. The notation is more abstract and less traditional than the first system.

Example 3.5.d. Antoniou: *Prelude and Toccata, Toccata*, page 3, systems 1-2

<sup>163</sup> Recorded workshop with Th. Antoniou, 12/7/2016

<sup>164</sup> For more information about the employment of graphic notation in Antoniou's oeuvre, please refer to 2.4. Antoniou and musical modernism.

Another instance where the notation is not clear is in the end of the *Toccata's* section 'A' (marked with '1' in the example below). Here, just noteheads are encountered, while stems and beams are missing. Looking at Antoniou's manuscript we can see that it is exactly the same. In consultation with the composer, I am indicating my suggested manner of execution below the staff. In '2', I believe that the use of quavers instead of semiquavers is an oversight on Antoniou's part; as the continuous flow of semiquavers would be inexplicably interrupted if performed as written. I am also indicating my suggested variant below.

The image displays a musical score for a piano piece, specifically the transition from section 'A' to section 'B'. The score is presented in two systems. The first system shows a transition from a 6/8 time signature to a 6/8 time signature. The notation includes a treble and bass clef, with a key signature of one flat. A section of the score is highlighted in light blue and labeled '1)' and '2)'. Below this section, there are two boxes labeled 'suggested:' showing alternative notations for the notes. The second system shows a transition from a 6/8 time signature to a 2/4 time signature. The notation includes a treble and bass clef, with a key signature of one flat. Dynamics markings include 'p cresc.', 'poco', 'a', and 'poco'. The tempo marking 'Meno 92' and 'legato molto' are also present.

Example 3.5.e. Antoniou: *Prelude and Toccata, Toccata*, transition from section 'A' to 'B'

Another issue which came to my attention was the transition from section 'A' (*prestissimo*, *ff*) to section 'B' (*meno*, *p*), as seen in the example above. At first I was attempting to make a *diminuendo* and slight *ritardando* in order to make for a smooth transition. However, eventually I decided to settle for the exact opposite: a sudden cut, after leading all the way to the end of the passage in *ff* dynamic and in tempo. I feel that this greatly enhances the element of suspense. Antoniou had no objections to this while supervising the recoding.

Section 'B' makes for a great contrast to section 'A', due to its regularity in phrasing and rhythm, the *legato* melodic line, the *piano* dynamic and the slower tempo (*meno*). A concern relating to the performance of section 'B' was the use of the pedal. I had initially decided to legato-pedal through each melodic note, in order to achieve a round and sustained texture. This is how I employed the pedal for my performance at the RCM Keyboard Festival.<sup>165</sup> However, I later decided to reduce the amount of pedal so that the quavers in the left hand sound detached, thus creating contrast with the *legato* right hand. This is also the approach

<sup>165</sup> Amaryllys Fleming Concert Hall, Royal College of Music, London, 12/3/2017

that I followed for the CD recording. After listening to both versions, I believe that after all I would go with the initial approach of a fuller use of the pedal.

In the *Toccata's* recapitulation the *prestissimo* is marked *crotchet = 152 bpm*, which indicates that it is meant to be played even faster than its beginning. This amplifies tension and creates the expectation of an impressive, climactic ending. Surprisingly, Antoniou concludes the piece with a gradual fade out effect (with no *ritardando* indicated), as seen in the example below.

The image displays three systems of musical notation for the ending of Antoniou's Toccata. The first system shows the right hand (treble clef) and left hand (bass clef) with a 'dim. sempre' instruction. The second system continues the piece with a '(dim.)' instruction. The third system shows the final measures, including a 'pp' dynamic marking and a 'fine' instruction at the end of the piece.

Example 3.5.f. Antoniou: *Prelude and Toccata, Toccata*, ending

### 3.6. Entrata (1983)

Out of all Antoniou's piano works, *Entrata* (meaning 'Entrance') stands out as the most dramatic. It is a very virtuosic piece with extreme climaxes. In my view, it conveys an intense sense of narration and tragedy and it is one of the most representative examples of Antoniou's conception of Abstract Programmatic Music.<sup>166</sup> *Entrata* shares some of its thematic material with *Prometheus* (Cantata for baritone, narrator, mixed choir and orchestra), which Antoniou composed at the same year (1983).<sup>167</sup> *Entrata* opens with a grandiose, declamatory introduction. Then, the composer creates musical episodes based on the characteristic rhythm of 9/8, in the form of the Greek traditional 'Zeibekiko' dance.<sup>168</sup>

Below is an overview of the piece's structure; the division among the episodes is quite clear, due to long fermatas in between.

Introduction	b. 1-18
Episode A	b. 19-46
Episode B	b. 47-64
Episode C	b. 66-105
Episode B (da capo) & Coda	b. 47-62 & 106-107

The dramatic nature of *Entrata* is immediately conveyed through its opening (see example below), which feels like an announcements of tragic events to come. This impression is given through the use of grand gestures – *fff* octaves – which grab the listener's attention. There is a rhetorical aspect in the opening of the piece; the broad tempo in combination with the off-beat repetitions gives the feeling of a thinker – an orator who speaks with great gravity.

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the opening of 'Entrata' by Theodore Antoniou. The score is written on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). At the top left, there is a tempo marking '♩ = 48'. The time signature is 3/4. The music begins with a series of octaves marked 'fff'. There are various performance markings throughout, including 'Ped' (pedal), 'mf', 'dim', 'molto', and 'ppp'. The title 'ENTRATA 1983' and the composer's name 'Theodore Antoniou' are written above the staff. There are also some handwritten annotations like '2-8' and '3'.

Example 3.6.a. Antoniou: *Entrata*, opening

<sup>166</sup> *Entrata* was premiered by the Greek pianist Yannis Vakarelis in Queen Elisabeth Hall, Southbank Centre, London, 10/6/1983

<sup>167</sup> More details to follow

<sup>168</sup> More details to follow

The first ‘tragic event’ comes very soon in the piece with an intense outburst of dramatic tension in bar 16 (see the next example), which reminds me of one of Antoniou’s general remarks about his musical conception:

Now we are talking nicely and peacefully, but imagine what would happen if suddenly an earthquake burst out. People would scream and run here and there in panic, a total chaos would dominate the scene. I describe this in my music.<sup>169</sup>

For me, the motion towards many different directions in bar 16 represents people running and screaming in disorder – in other words, it represents the ‘movement of sound in space’, as described in Antoniou’s definition of Abstract Programmatic Music. The diagonal line through the corner of the beams indicates that they are all grace notes and that this whole passage should be played as fast as possible. For the performance of this passage, I feel that it is important to give the impression of ‘losing control’ on stage and to being transported to a state of mania.

Example 3.6.b. Antoniou: *Entrata*, bars 13-18

<sup>169</sup> Recorded interview with Th. Antoniou, 23/6/2016

The next intense climax comes after a long build-up of tension and concludes with massive clusters at the edges of the keyboard in bars 34-35 (example below). Through practicing this passage I observed that the individual keys inside the clusters sometimes were not pressed at the exact same time. In order to avoid this, I decided that striking with the palm from above the keys is vital. A further advantage of striking from above the keys is that it maximises tension and produces a desirable violent, metallic sound effect.

Example 3.6.c. Antoniou: *Entrata*, bars 31-36

I think that body language plays an integral part of the performance of the above passage, as playing the clusters results in the characteristic gesture of leaning forward and spreading the hands. Personally, this gesture during performance makes me feel like a protagonist who hits his palms on the ground, as an ultimate expression of anger and despair.

For the performance of *Entrata*, I personally feel that the ancient Greek myth of Prometheus is a very fitting plot to draw inspiration from. According to the myth, Prometheus was the Titan subjected to everlasting punishment by the Olympians Gods for stealing fire from them and donating it to mankind. Antoniou does not clearly indicate that the story of Prometheus

is indeed the primary source of inspiration for the conception of *Entrata*. When I questioned Antoniou about this relation, he did not give a definitive answer.<sup>170</sup> According to the composer's own words however, he 'always had something of a dramatic nature in mind' in everything that he composed.<sup>171</sup> The fact that Antoniou utilises the thematic material of his Cantata *Prometheus* in *Entrata* seems to support my point of view.

In Antoniou's *Prometheus*, the theme is sung by the choir, with the lyrics taken from tragic poem *Prometheus Bound* (line 1067) by the ancient Greek poet Aeschylus.<sup>172</sup> The choir sings in ancient Greek, repeating over and over the phrase 'μετά τοῦδ' ὁ τι χρεὶ πάσχειν ἐθέλω' (transliteration: *metá túd óti hri páshin ethélo*), which, in free translation, means 'I prefer to suffer together with him'. With these words, the humans (represented by the choir), declare their support to Prometheus, despite the wrath and superiority of the Gods. Below is a relevant excerpt from the soprano part, in which this theme can be spotted. At the same time, the narrator, who represents Prometheus, describes his suffering in modern Greek and gives the reasoning behind his actions, giving us information on his character and moral integrity.



Example 3.6.d. Antoniou: *Prometheus*, bars 169-174, soprano part

Below is the same theme, as it appears in *Entrata*: It is presented simply at first. A variation follows, with the theme being embellished with ornamentations and repeated notes which give the impression of imitating the rhythm of speech.

<sup>170</sup> Recorded workshop with Th. Antoniou, 12/7/2016

<sup>171</sup> Recorded workshop with Th. Antoniou, 23/6/2016

<sup>172</sup> In ancient Greek tragedy, the choir (χορός) was representing the public opinion.

Handwritten musical score for piano, Example 3.6.e, showing bars 75-84. The score is in G major and 3/4 time. It features dynamic markings such as *sff*, *p*, *f*, *pp*, and *ppp*, along with performance instructions like "Tempo", "Ped.", and "(Tremolo Rit.)". The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, slurs, and fingerings.

Example 3.6.e. Antoniou: *Entrata*, bars 75-84

The above excerpt in *Entrata* creates great contrast with the turbulent, virtuosic section which precedes it. To me, it serves as a lamenting episode after dramatic tension. In order to convey a mournful mood and to create the feeling of a spoken impromptu, I find it fitting to apply a flexible beat and a heavy and deep touch, aiming for the bottom of the keys. In addition, stillness in body language and a straight torso reinforces the tragic atmosphere during performance.

It is interesting to mention that Antoniou's *Prometheus* and *Entrata* present a further similarity: in bar 328 of *Prometheus* (see next example) the theme appears with the indication 'Lontano'. Antoniou also writes an 'M', which means that the baritone has to sing the theme with closed mouth, a technique known as 'bouche fermée'.

Handwritten musical score for baritone, Example 3.6.f, showing bar 328. The score is in G major and 3/4 time. It features dynamic markings such as *pp* and *M*, along with performance instructions like "Lontano" and "5". The notation includes a melodic line with slurs and fingerings.

Example 3.6.f. Antoniou: *Prometheus*, bar 328, baritone part

The same theme appears in bars 92-98 of *Entrata*. In these bars, the ethereal effect of ‘bouche fermée’ is imitated by the ‘Aeolian Harp’ technique (see example below).<sup>173</sup> The ‘Aeolian Harp’ is achieved by pressing the keys down silently and then executing a glissando on the strings without the use of the pedal. This effect results in the indicated note alone being audible after the glissando.



Example 3.6.g. Antoniou: *Entrata*, bars 92-98

During the recording session, Antoniou indicated that there should be homogeneity in the sound of the individual notes in the above excerpt.<sup>174</sup> Practically, this presented considerable difficulty, due to a piece of iron separating the strings in that specific register. This prevented me from executing the exact same movement for all the *glissandi*. My proposition to Antoniou was to transpose the passage an octave lower to make it more practical, to which he had no objection.<sup>175</sup> Even so, achieving the desired homogeneity was very difficult for the highest notes (D and E flat), due to the space restriction because of a piece of iron on the right of the E flat strings. As a result, this passage required a great number of takes. Cutting anywhere in-between wasn't possible, so I had to keep one take. After many takes, we chose a result that is not fully perfect, but is nevertheless quite satisfactory.

As already mentioned, Antoniou bases most of the *Entrata* on the Greek rhythm of Zeibekiko. This is a 9/8 rhythm (also encountered as 9/4), containing strict metrical subdivisions, which are seen in bar 19 (marked in the example below).

<sup>173</sup> As mentioned earlier, the use of this technique reveals the American experimentalists' (particular Henry Cowell's) impact on Antoniou's work.

<sup>174</sup> In conversation with Th. Antoniou during the recording session, 3/7/2017

<sup>175</sup> As above

Example 3.6.h. Antoniou: *Entrata*, bars 17-24

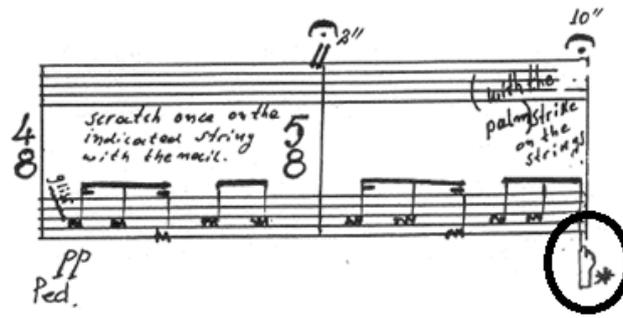
As can be seen in the score, Antoniou uses muted notes for the rhythmic ostinato; in the score he writes: 'l.h.: press strings near the bridge. r.h.: play on the keys'. Antoniou himself indicated that my left hand ought to press down on the strings not exactly near the bridge, but rather about 2 centimetres away from it, as this is the point where the sound becomes darker, muffled and percussive.<sup>176</sup> I found performing the muted notes in bars 19-23 to be very difficult, due to the fact that the left hand is tasked with a multitude of rapid position shifts. Such demands come in contrast with the works of George Crumb, such as *Makrokosmos*, which conveniently places the muted notes in such a manner so that no hand position shift is required. The level of difficulty in performing the muted notes in *Entrata* is also dependent on the specific construction of each instrument. In most Yamaha pianos, a piece of iron is placed inside the soundboard between the G and the C which makes up the *Entrata's* principal Zeibekiko motif (see previous example). This makes its performance considerably more complicated. On the other hand, this is not the case on a Steinway D piano, as these particular notes are not separated by the soundboard iron.

<sup>176</sup> Recorded workshop with Th. Antoniou, 12/7/2016

Regarding the nature of the Zeibekiko dance, one of its main features is its improvisational way of dancing. A main principle is that the steps have to be together with the rhythm and the dancer has to spin a lot around himself. The element of movement in space (as mentioned in his definition of Abstract programmatic Music) is apparent in Antoniou's texture: the left hand ostinato remains stable, describing the dancer's steps. The right hand creates the illusion of an improvisational and consists of circular motives, representing the spinning of the dancer's body (see example below). To bring out the dancing nature of this excerpt, I employ a very strict rhythmic pulse in the left hand and a slightly flexible pacing in the right. In addition, I find that employing slight *crescendi* for the ascending intervals and *diminuendi* for the descending intervals in the right hand helps to bring out the circular nature of the motives.

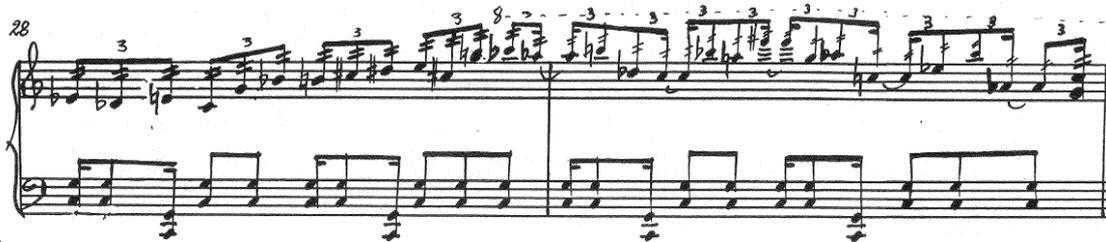
Example 3.6.i. Antoniou: *Entrata*, bars 47-49

A characteristic improvisational move of the Zeibekiko dance, which expresses despair, is the striking of the palm on the ground; this move is often used on the ninth beat. Antoniou utilises a similar move for the performance of *Entrata*: he indicates the pianist to strike the strings in the piano's low register with the palm, on the ninth beat (circled below).



Example 3.6.j. Antoniou: *Entrata*, bars 45-46

Other than the incorporation of the rhythmic dance element, Antoniou also creates a connection to folk music through his use of texture. The repeated notes seen in the example below are typical of the texture and the style of playing of traditional plucked instruments, widely used in Greek folk music, such as the bouzouki and the mandolin.



Example 3.6.k. Antoniou: *Entrata*, bars 28-29

The above spot is particularly troublesome in performance, due to the constant note repetitions in the right hand and the rhythmic complexity. My initial attempt to play the repetitions with the same finger led to a shaky, unrefined result. In order to achieve precision and clarity, I employed a rhythmic distribution and fingering as can be seen below:



Example 3.6.l. Antoniou: *Entrata*, bars 28-29, my own performance version

Another topic that concerned me is how to bring out a sense of compact form during my performance of *Entrata*. As mentioned before, the piece is quite fragmented; long fermatas divide it in distinct sections. After the end of episode C (bar 105, see example 3.6.n), section B is repeated (starting in bar 47, see example 3.6.m.). In the end of bar 105, a glissando on the strings at the low register of the piano creates a broad sound cloud. After having performed *Entrata* in various concerts and having recorded it, I realised that changing the pedal in the beginning of bar 47 was resulting in the fragmentation of the piece. In order to eliminate this, I came up with the idea of keeping the pedal down and sustaining the sound cloud all the way until the end of bar 48; then, renewing the pedal very gradually. At the same time, in bars 47-49 I decided to play as soft as possible, barely audible. This produced an excellent sound effect; it resulted in episode B 'emerging' from episode C and reinforced a sense of long line through the work. After bar 49, I applied a very gradual *crescendo* all the way until the powerful ending of the work.



By self-reflecting on my performances, I concluded that the described differentiation in pedaling and dynamic of section B in its repetition offered considerable variety and improved the sense of structure of the work. This differentiation is not contradictory to the score, as Antoniou doesn't indicate any pedaling in these bars. On the contrary, it is in line with Antoniou's general conception of granting freedom to the performer, as seen in various instances already.

The aforementioned change of my perception of *Entrata*, after having recorded the piece, helped me realise that studying Antoniou's music is an ongoing process, with no definite end and surprises along the way.

To conclude the examination of *Entrata*, it should be mentioned that this work forms the basis for the fourth movement of Antoniou's Concerto for Piano and Orchestra (1998); the concerto's fourth movement is essentially an orchestrated version of *Entrata*.<sup>177</sup> In fact, the practice of self-borrowing material is used very often by Antoniou in his oeuvre. This helped him complete compositions more quickly and to cope with time pressure related to commissions. In my view, the fact that he orchestrates the same material in different ways in different works tells us that Antoniou believes there are many alternative ways in which a single musical idea can be presented.

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<sup>177</sup> A bar to bar comparison of the two works is beyond the purposes of the current text.

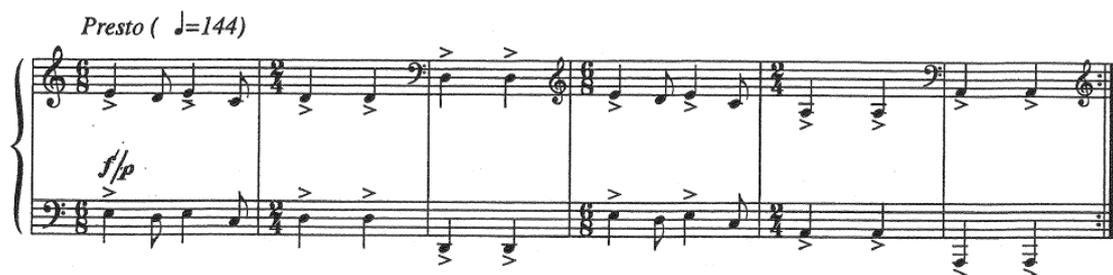
### 3.7. Seven Rhythmic Dances (2000) and Four Mini Canons (2002)

Antoniou notes that ‘the *Seven Rhythmic Dances* and the *Four Mini Canons* have an educational purpose and character. They are written specifically to allow young piano students to broaden their repertoire.’<sup>178</sup> These works’ educational purpose can be easily deduced from their relative ease of performance and their brevity, especially in the case of *Four Mini Canons*. Therefore, it is unnecessary to include a big amount of details relating to their performance in the present text.

It has to be said that the word ‘canons’ in Antoniou’s title is rather misleading. Nowhere in the work is it possible to find a canon employed in a strict form; rather, a freer form of imitation is employed, following polyphonic principles. Out of the four *Canons*, Nos. 2, 3 and 4 are in ‘ABA’ form. No.2 and No.3 employ homophonic textures in section ‘A’, with only section ‘B’ containing polyphonic elements.

In his notes, Antoniou adds that ‘the *Seven Rhythmic Dances* are brief snapshots of a dancing character.’<sup>179</sup> The composer utilises a 4/4 time signature in *Dance No.1* and later on he experiments with compound and asymmetrical meters, which are linked to Greek folk musical tradition. In various dances he actually uses more than one type of meter, as can be seen in the following examples:

### 3



Example 3.7.a. Antoniou: *Seven Rhythmic Dances*, No.3, opening

<sup>178</sup> Theodore Antoniou, notes on his piano works in Greek, unpublished, found in Antoniou’s archive in Athens (my translation)

<sup>179</sup> *loc. cit.*

## 4

*Slow* (♩ = 66)

*mf*

Example 3.7.b. Antoniou: Seven Rhythmic Dances, No.4, opening

## 6

*Allegro* (♩ = 120)

*f*

*f*

Example 3.7.c. Antoniou: Seven Rhythmic Dances, No.6, opening

## 7

*Il più presto possibile*

*p* ————— *f*      *p* ————— *f*

*p* ————— *f*      *p* ————— *f*      *p* ————— *f*

*p* ————— *f*      *p* ————— *f*      *p* ————— *f*      *p* ————— *f*

Example 3.7.d. Antoniou: Seven Rhythmic Dances, No.7, opening

Due to the predominance of the rhythmic element, the *Seven Rhythmic Dances* are often referred to as *Seven Greek Dances*. However, *Dance No.5* is the only one in which a distinctly Greek dance (the Zeibekiko) can be discerned. All of the remaining movements which utilise some form of compound meters do not make use of specific Greek dance rhythms. Given that fact I would personally prefer to use the original title in the composer's score (*Επτά ρυθμικοί χοροί / Sieben rhythmische Tänze*) which translates as *Seven rhythmic Dances*, avoiding the word 'Greek' in the title, as it could be misleading.

It is also of great interest that Antoniou does not quote folk melodies in his dances. This is a vital point that sets Antoniou's *Seven Rhythmic Dances* apart from the work of many other composers, for example the popular *8 Danses des îles Grecques* (8 Dances of Greek Islands) by Yannis Constantinides.

As mentioned before, out of Antoniou's *Seven Rhythmic Dances*, No. 5 is the only dance which is based on a distinctly Greek rhythmical structure, the Zeibekiko, as seen in the example below. In this movement it is also notable that the right hand melody utilises very clearly the Niavent folk mode.

5

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece. At the top center, the number '5' is written. Below it, the tempo is marked as  $(\text{♩} = 60)$ . The score is divided into two systems. The first system consists of two staves: the upper staff is in bass clef and contains a series of chords with accents, and the lower staff is in bass clef and contains a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. A dynamic marking of *p* (piano) is placed above the first measure of the lower staff. The second system also consists of two staves: the upper staff is in treble clef and contains a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure, and the lower staff is in bass clef and contains a rhythmic accompaniment. A dynamic marking of *fp* (fortissimo piano) is placed above the final measure of the upper staff.

Example 3.7.e. Antoniou: *Seven Rhythmic Dances*, No.5, bars 1-4

Out of the rest of the movements, it is notable that No.6 is a strict canon. The material is presented three times (as seen in the score below); this which gives space for variations in dynamics, phrasing and articulation on each repetition. It is quite obvious that the beginning

uses the exact same pitches and a very similar rhythmical structure to the third movement of Beethoven's Sonata Op.13 (*Pathétique*). Jed Distler mentions that 'Antoniou's *Seven Rhythmic Dances* (2000) remain within traditional tonal bounds yet are full of delightful canonic asymmetry, and doesn't No 6's main theme sound like the Rondo from Beethoven's *Pathétique* Sonata on a bender?'<sup>180</sup> Setting aside the pitch material, Antoniou denies any further connection or influence from Beethoven's work.<sup>181</sup>

## 6

*Allegro* (♩ = 120)

*f*

*f*

3

1, 2

3

2 mal wiederholen

Example 3.7.f. Antoniou: *Seven Rhythmic Dances*, No.6

Despite the fact that *Seven Rhythmic Dances* is intended for young piano students, there is one spot which is very difficult to execute as noted, especially by a beginner. In bar 5 of the first movement (marked below) the composer asks for simultaneous glissandos of different

<sup>180</sup> Distler, *op.cit.*, 68

<sup>181</sup> Recorded workshop with Th. Antoniou, 20/6/2017

speeds in the two hands (the right hand covering two octaves, with the left covering one octave). As this passage looks quite unpianistic, my own arrangement is proposed below, so that the desired effect can be achieved without compromising Antoniou's intention.

1

*Con brio* (♩=108)

*f/p*

(i.h.)

7

1 4 3 2 1 3 2 1 5

Example 3.7.g. Antoniou: *Seven Rhythmic Dances*, No.1, opening

### 3.8. Synaphes (2001)

*Synaphes* is Antoniou's only piano work which bears a preface to the score by the composer.

The preface gives a brief description of the piece:

*Synaphes* for piano (2001) was written for the great Greek virtuoso Janis Vakarelis and it is dedicated to him. It is the second work I wrote for Janis Vakarelis.<sup>182</sup> The first one was *Entrata* in 1983.

It is a highly virtuoso piece, using occasionally extended techniques. The piece begins with double octaves in both hands, similar to a virtuoso piano concerto opening, leading to a *molto espressivo* passage, with some new sound-colours, using techniques on the strings of the piano like aeolian harp, muted, pizzicato and "scratched notes". The work develops, interchanging fast and slow passages, with the use of compound and asymmetrical meters. The title *Synaphes* meaning connections, contacts, in this case some ideas from previous pieces are put together and fused with new ones.<sup>183</sup>

It should be mentioned that before Antoniou, the title 'Synaphai' was used by Xenakis in a piece he wrote for piano and orchestra in 1969.<sup>184</sup> Thus, it is interesting to examine how the two composers use the idea of 'connections, contacts', which the title indicates, in their respective works. In Maurice Fleuret's score notes to Xenakis' work it is mentioned that:

The title means «connexities» (connectedness) and refers to the problems of proximity, liaisons, junctions, dependence which are treated in this piece. The piano part is extremely difficult. It is written in ten staves, one for each finger.<sup>185</sup>

Xenakis himself gives the following directions in his score notes regarding the idea of 'connectedness':

The pianist plays all the lines, if he can. «Liquid, legatissimo» indicates maximum connexion (connectedness); «hard, dur» indicates minimum connexion. The parts with maximum connexion are sometimes indicated as glissandi.<sup>186</sup>

A small excerpt, which is presented below, gives a clearer picture of the piano part's texture:

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<sup>182</sup> The first performance of the piece was given by Janis Vakarelis on 11/10/2001 at the Onassis Cultural Centre in New York.

<sup>183</sup> Theodore Antoniou, *Synaphes*, Philippos Nakas (2001), preface to the score

<sup>184</sup> Both Xenakis and Antoniou use very often transliterations of –mostly ancient- Greek words as titles for their pieces. To me this reveals the close attention they paid to Ancient Greek sources, and the inspiration this gave them in their creative efforts, as well as their aim to promote the Greek language internationally.

'Synaphai' and 'Synaphes' are the ancient and modern Greek spellings of the same word respectively. It has to be clarified to the Greek reader that Antoniou, just like Xenakis, uses the word 'Synaphes' in the nominative plural feminine form (οι συναφέες) and not in the nominative singular neuter form (το συναφέες).

<sup>185</sup> Maurice Fleuret, *Iannis Xenakis, Synaphai*, Éditions Salabert (1981), preface to the score

<sup>186</sup> Iannis Xenakis, *Synaphai*, Éditions Salabert (1981), preface to the score by the composer

Example 3.8.a. Xenakis: excerpt from *Synaphai*

As seen in the example, it consists of ten staves, one for each finger, making the piece extremely difficult to read as well as to perform. Each finger makes up a single line, and the issue of connection and interchange among all these lines becomes a big challenge for the performance of *Synaphai*. In my view, Xenakis opted to use ten staves in order to make the score as visually approachable as possible; such overload of information would be impossible to fit in two staves.

Such a level of complexity is nowhere to be found in Antoniou's *Synaphes*. The difficulty in Antoniou's work lies mainly in the technical challenges that the score presents, and not in the complexity of the score. I feel that there is very little, if any, stylistic similarity between the respective works by the two composers, as they use the idea of 'connectedness' in a very different way. In Antoniou's *Synaphes*, the title refers to its connection with other works of his with same musical material, mostly his Concerto for piano and orchestra, which Antoniou composed three years before *Synaphes*. An examination of the scores reveals that bars 111-138 in *Synaphes* are derived from the ending of the first movement (bars 116-143) of the Piano Concerto. In addition, *Synaphes*' final section (bars 139-212) is derived from the concerto's second movement (bars 69-141, with the omission of bars 70-106). The aforementioned excerpts in *Synaphes* are essentially a solo piano reduction of the piano concerto's material.<sup>187</sup>

<sup>187</sup> A note to note comparison between the two scores would be too long to include in the present text.

In *Synaphes* I personally feel that the composer's deliberate aim is to compose a virtuosic piece, which is meant to bring the performer to the limit of his capacity. This element of virtuosity is very apparent right from the opening, with the piece beginning with quick passages including great leaps in double octaves.

written for Janis Vaharelis  
**Synaphes**  
for piano

Theodore Antoniou  
(2001)

**Presto possibile**

5

10

13

16

18

Example 3.8.b. Antoniou: *Synaphes*, opening

While playing the above passage I feel a great surge of dramatic intensity, very similar to the opening of Liszt's Piano Concerto No 1, Grieg's Piano Concerto or Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No 1, where double octaves are utilised in a similar manner.<sup>188</sup> In my view, *Synaphes'* opening should be interpreted as a declamatory recitativo. In order to achieve this I focused in my practice on shaping a fitting sense of rubato while maintaining flexibility in the rhythmic pulse; the opening can easily sound square and mechanical otherwise.

The opening page of *Synaphes* was also the most challenging to record, because of the difficult leaps in bars 14-15. It one of the passages in which I had to record the most takes out of the entire program. While it would have technically been possible to make short takes of just these bars, I preferred to record longer takes, from the top of the page so that I could render it in the appropriate musical mood.

Technical difficulty is present in many sections throughout the work. The example below, within a tempo marking of *Presto Possibile*, is characteristic of the turbulence and the virtuosity of *Synaphes*:

Example 3.8.c. Antoniou: *Synaphes*, bars 114-120

<sup>188</sup> Antoniou's piano concerto also starts with a similar kind of virtuosic double octaves, however the musical material of its opening is different from this of *Synaphes*.

As can be seen in the above excerpt, it is barely achievable to play in exactly the same tempo as well as the same level of precision bar 117 (which consists of single notes), bar 118 (which consists of double notes) and bar 113 (which has 3-note chords in each hand). Concerned about the playability of the passage in bar 119, Antoniou indicates in the score 'if not possible, omit small notes'. This would result in a thinner sound; thus, I do not find this solution to be desirable, as this is a place which requires a build-up in intensity. I therefore had no choice but to play all the notes. I was particularly worried about this passage before the recording session, but surprisingly it worked so well in the first take that I did not even have to attempt to make a second.

The above examples are just two of several in the score of *Synaphes* which are barely within the limits of a performer's capacity. The opening material of the piece is presented in double fourths in the recapitulation, making it extremely challenging to perform. In fact, parallel fourths (in very unusual positions) are used extensively in the piece, in a manner in which has been avoided by most pianist composers in the standard repertoire that I am acquainted with. Keeping in mind that Antoniou was not a professional pianist, my first impression from looking at the score was that it is a badly written, failed attempt at virtuosic piano textures. After working on the piece with the composer and becoming familiar with his musical conception, I eventually came to appreciate *Synaphes*. My conclusion is that its performance has to sound like it is stressful for the pianist; this is what enhances its dramatic element and the feeling of struggle and suffering. Playing in a smooth and effortless manner is not a goal in itself in this particular case. If the writing had been comfortable and fit well-fitted under the hands easily, the sought-after impression of suffering would have been lost.

*Synaphes* often makes me think of Antoniou's own words, as previously quoted in the examination of *Entrata*:

[...] imagine what would happen if suddenly an earthquake burst out. People would scream and run here and there in panic, a total chaos would dominate the scene. I describe this in my music.<sup>189</sup>

This perception of an underlying plot has helped me to realise the connection between *Synaphes* and Antoniou's concept of Abstract Programmatic Music. This was very helpful as a source of inspiration when I was performing *Synaphes* on stage.

At this point I think it is useful to examine the corresponding bars from the last musical example in Antoniou's *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*:

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<sup>189</sup> Recorded workshop with Th. Antoniou, 23/6/2016

Musical score for page 119, featuring woodwinds, brass, strings, and piano. The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Bsn.), Horn (Hrn.), Trumpet (Trp.), Trombone (Tbn.), Percussion (Perc.), and Piano (Pao.). The second system includes Violin I (Via. I), Violin II (Via. II), Viola (Via.), Violoncello (Vcl.), and Double Bass (Db.). The score is marked with dynamics such as *f* and *fp*. The page number 119 is indicated in the top left corner of the first system and the bottom left corner of the second system.



Example 3.8.d. Antoniou: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, bars 119-125

By comparing the corresponding bars in *Synaphes* and in the concerto, we see that in the case of the concerto the musical material is often split between the piano and various sections of the orchestra. At certain points, the orchestra has extra musical material which adds to the sound for dramatic effect, but which was not possible to be included in *Synaphes*. Most importantly, we see that in the piano concerto a very steady pulse has to be maintained, otherwise the coordination between the piano and the orchestra would be problematic. Since the concerto is Antoniou's initial conception, which then passed to *Synaphes*, I decided to avoid excessive rubato in my interpretation. This can be very

challenging at points, especially in bar 118 of *Synaphes*, which corresponds to bar 123 of the concerto: the piano alone has to play all the lines which are allocated to the flute, oboe, clarinet and trumpet in this bar.

Apart from the virtuoso sections in *Synaphes*, another defining feature of the piece is the calm sections and the resulting contrast. In its meditative textures there is a vivid exploration of sound colours through the use of extended techniques. The way the pitch material is used is also of interest. The virtuosic parts make extensive use of the chromatic scale, whereas the calmer parts utilise a variety of scales and modes. In the example below there is a very distinctive eastern mode motif based on the interval of the augmented 2<sup>nd</sup>.<sup>190</sup> In order to support the melodic line and create a rich and sustained sonority at bars 30-32, I decided to hold down as a pedal point the left hand notes created by the ‘Aeolian Harp’ effect.

Example 3.8.e. Antoniou: *Synaphes*, bars 26-36

In the following bars (see next example) we encounter a totally different sound world: an improvisatory chromatic arabesque in the right hand, over an ‘archaic’ left hand ostinato based on fourth intervals. Antoniou’s indications are quite minimal, as there is nothing concerning dynamics or phrasing on the score. However, I believe that the rendering of this passage should be anything but flat and neutral. The two hands are moving up and down, ‘breathing’ in different instances along the way. In my view, the best way to convey this sort of dialogue through my performance is the employment of *crescendi* and *diminuendi*. In the left hand, when the intervals become more open and wider I am feeling intensity, which

<sup>190</sup> The Hijazkiar mode, as mentioned in 2.3 Antoniou’s approach to Greek musical tradition.

dissipates when they become closer again. In the case of the right hand I am thinking of a *crescendo* for the ascending motifs and a *diminuendo* for the descending ones. In order to shape the phrasing of the right hand more convincingly I divided it into shorter phrases indicated by slurs, which I wrote in for my convenience (see example below), always ending on descending motifs.

48 (♩ = 63)

*p*

*poco a poco accel.*  
(until m. 69)

52

56

60

*cresc.*

64

68

*Presto*

*fff*

2 3 5

1 2 5

5 1 1 2 3 4

1 1 1 / 5 5 5 4 2    1 2 / 5    1 5    5 3 2 1

Example 3.8.f. Antoniou: *Synaphes*, bars 48-70 with my markings

As seen in the example above, bar 70 is an instance where I decided to rearrange the composer's distribution of the notes between the hands. The passage requires very open

hand positions if played as written, which prevents speed and compactness in the sound. Thus, after trying out different possibilities, I came up with this arrangement which required the hands to open not more than an octave, thus producing the desired result. In the score, I draw a line going through the passage; the notes that are above it are to be played with the right hand and the notes below it to be taken by the left.

Another instance where I had to do a similar re-distribution of the material between the hands is the one below, in bars 104-106. The same principle with the line applies as before. This re-distribution worked very well in the public performances and the recording session.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for Antoniou's *Synaphes*. The upper system, starting at bar 102, features a grand staff with a hand-drawn line indicating the division of notes between the right and left hands. The right-hand notes are positioned above the line, and the left-hand notes are below it. An '(accel.)' marking is present in the first measure. The lower system, starting at bar 104, is marked 'Presto possibile' and includes detailed fingerings (1-5) and articulation marks (accents) for both hands. The notation shows a complex rhythmic and melodic structure with triplets and slurs.

Example 3.8.g. Antoniou: *Synaphes*, bars 102-105 with my markings

I feel that it is quite interesting to write about the material which makes up the ending of the piece. Despite the fact that the climax of the work is towards the end, it does not end loudly and impressively but conjures up a darker tone. It personally reminds me of the ending of Liszt's Sonata in B Minor – the descending scale in the bass in particular, as seen in the last bar of *Synaphes* in the example below. To me, each note represents a step towards the abyss. The sound fades out slowly through the pedal, making for a pessimistic, enigmatic and dark ending.

202 *rit. molto*

208 *pp* *rit.* 5"

$\text{♩} = 40$

*sed.* *\* sed.*

Example 3.8.h. Antoniou: *Synaphes*, ending

## **4. Working on the contextual repertoire**

#### 4.1. Andreas Pappas: 1•2 (2014) - working towards the impression of 'movement of sound in space'

I chose to include Pappas's 1•2 (2014) in my portfolio as I find that it is related to the 'movement of sound in space', an element which is present in Antoniou's conception and definition of Abstract Programmatic Music. Pappas was not a student or collaborator of Antoniou and therefore it cannot be said that he has been any direct exchange of ideas between the two composers.<sup>191</sup> As such, it is very interesting to examine how an element common to the works of both composers - the 'movement of sound in space' - is treated very differently in their respective works.

Unlike Antoniou, Pappas intentionally seeks to avoid any type of Programmatic element in his works. 'My intention is to concentrate on sound itself and its pure effect on the listener. I want to avoid associations with anything extra-musical'.<sup>192</sup> This approach is obviously different from Antoniou's, whose musical conception is driven by the existence of an underlying plot. However, there is also a similarity: Both composers don't aim to guide the listener towards a specific conception. Pappas goes a step further and avoids the use of any actual words which could help describe his pieces. The titles of his works are totally blank and are formed by two numbers; the title '1•2', for example, indicates that this is his second piece for a solo instrument.<sup>193</sup>

The conception of 1•2 has its origins in Pappas's work 3•o (2009), composed for three church organs (the 'o' in the title stands for 'organs'). 3•o was performed in the Bremen Dom, where three organs are available. The work takes advantage of the fact that the audience is placed in the centre of the Dom, being surrounded by the three organs. As such, the idea of sound coming from three different directions and 'moving around' the audience is vital here. Due to the special notation used both in 1•2 and 3•o, it is important to first go through the explanation of the symbols, as presented in the introductory pages for 3•o - most symbols also apply to 1•2.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Andreas Pappas was born in Athens in 1975. He has studied Philosophy at the University of Athens and at the same time Composition, Harmony, Counterpoint, Fugue, piano and church organ in Greece. From 2005 he continued his studies in Composition with at the Music University in Bremen. He is a member of the 'Enargia' group in Athens and initiator of the 'Ensemble New Babylon' in Bremen. He lives and works as a composer in Bremen.

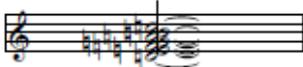
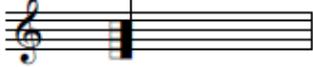
<sup>192</sup> Recorded video call with A. Pappas, 9/12/2016

<sup>193</sup> As above

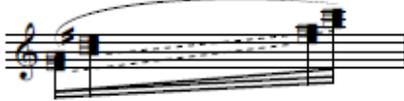
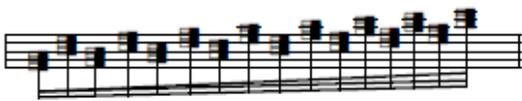
<sup>194</sup> In 1•2 no guide to special notation symbols is included

# I. Explanation of the notation symbols

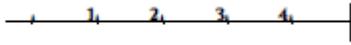
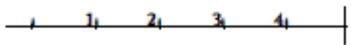
## a) Clusters

	: white-keys cluster -	
	: white and black-keys octave cluster	
	: white and black-keys fourth cluster	

## b) Abbreviations

	=	
	=	
	=	

## c) Space notation indication

		
	≈	
		
	≈	

Example 4.1.a. Pappas: Introductory page to 3•0

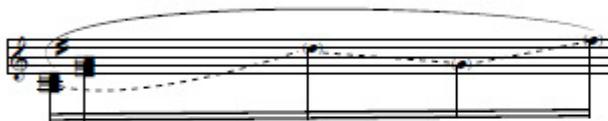
## II. Performance instructions



: The white-keys cluster should be played mainly with the palm, leaving the fingers free to eventually play a black keys cluster. The hand should be positioned on the keys, so that the thumb creates a 0 degrees angle to the keys and that the other fingers remain next to each other and nearly at 90 degrees angle to the keys.



: The fingers which play the black and white-keys cluster should gradually leave the black keys at the indicated direction while the palm is constantly in contact with the white keys of the given white-keys cluster.



: The dashed line shows approximately the direction of the cluster's tremolo, indicating the deeper note of the tremolo's cluster which is played by the left hand's 5th finger.



: The first note of this one-hand tremolo should be played only with the thumb (no matter if it grabs one or two notes) at 90 degrees position to the keys, whereas the other fingers of the hand follow by playing a 4th white and black-keys cluster almost at a 0 degrees angle to the keys.



: The tremolo between the white-keys cluster and a black-keys cluster should be played by both hands at the same ambitus. Both hands should be at 90 degrees angle to the keys, so that there is enough place to play, the one after another. The right hand is to be played first, followed by the left hand.



: A white and black-keys octave cluster must perform a glissando in a way that the one hand that plays remains constantly in contact with the keys in a 90 degrees angle to them, sliding at the same time upwards or downwards as indicated.



: Both hands, play the one after the other the notated tremolo of 4th clusters (first the left and then the right hand), without changing the distance between them so that the whole ambitus of the tremolo remains constantly the same.

### Example 4.1.b. Paparoucos: Introductory page to 3•o (continuation)

Below is a very typical excerpt from 3•o. As seen in this example, the main element of this music is the creation of broad, sustained sound masses. The impression of sound 'moving around' the audience is created by the gradual change of dynamics and registers in the three organs. The listener's attention is captured by elements that come from a different corner of the Dom every time. In the excerpt presented below, for example, these elements are the constant 'fade ins and outs' in the first organ and the change of register in the second organ.



I find that 1•2 for solo piano manages to transfer the same effect to a single instrument in a very interesting and efficient way, by using the following techniques: In order to create a continuous sense of ‘sound cloud’, Paparousos indicates at the very first page that the Pedal has to be kept fully down all the time, unless otherwise instructed (*Pedal die Ganze Zeit, sonst angegeben*). The Pedal remains unchanged during long sections of the piece. This acts as an imitation of the reverberation of the Bremen Dom. The broad sound masses and the sense of ‘continuum’ in the sound is achieved by the wide, repeated and gradually changing chords, which are sustained with the help of the pedal. *Crescendi* and *diminuendi* are indicated at different phases, utilising the various registers of the piano. These give the sense of elements ‘emerging’ and ‘disappearing’, in other words ‘approaching’ and ‘moving away’ in a misty background. According to Paparousos: ‘A sense of space is created from the extreme left (low register) to the extreme right (high register) of the instrument, with the piece changing balance constantly between these two contrasting points.’<sup>195</sup> The following examples help to illustrate the above mentioned points:

Example 4.1.d. Paparousos: 1•2, bars 122-127

Producing the aforementioned effects efficiently was a great challenge for me. As seen in the example above, there are places where four staves are used and every hand has to be divided in two. Some fingers are devoted to making a progressive crescendo while other fingers of the same hand are tasked with a diminuendo. I found this to be a particularly unusual task which helped me develop my technique in non-conventional ways.

<sup>195</sup> Recorded video call with A. Paparousos, 9/12/2016

In terms of a practical approach towards this, my solution was to play the notes I want softer with a more detached, 'staccato' kind of touch, while using a longer articulation in conjunction with arm weight for the notes that I want to bring out more. I raise the wrist and bend it leftwards if I want to project the fingers towards the left part of the hand and rightwards if I want the opposite. A progressive movement of the wrist e.g. from left to right, will also help in transferring the point of the listener's attention from the thumb to the fifth finger of my right hand.

During the whole piece, what I found very difficult was to make effective diminuendos. Since the pedal is kept down, the constant repetition of the chords only serves to add to the sound mass. So, I had to really exaggerate in reducing the volume in order to achieve the effect of a diminuendo. Along with the previous example, the importance of proper *crescendos* and *diminuendos* is seen below:

Example 4.1.e. Paparoucos: 1•2, bars 52-56

In the example above, there are elements in the right hand starting from a soft dynamic, raising in volume and reaching a moderate climax, before being reduced and gradually disappearing. Paparoucos advises that 'the listener should not be able to distinguish when the first and the last note of every group sound.'<sup>196</sup> I found this remark particularly interesting and helpful for my practicing; I was trying to make the first and the last repeated note(s) as soft as humanly possible. It should give the impression of arriving from a distance and then departing, in the big cloud of sound and reverberation created by the pedal.

Apart from the techniques described above, there is another technique both in 3•0 and 1•2 which results in the impression of 'movement of sound in space'. This technique is the

<sup>196</sup> As above

movement of the clusters, which creates the effect of sound waves approaching and receding, as shown below:

The image displays three systems of musical notation for Trompete 8. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef on the top line and a bass clef on the bottom line. The music is written in a style that uses dynamic markings (crescendo and decrescendo hairpins) to create a sense of sound waves approaching and receding. The notation includes various note values, rests, and slurs. Measure numbers are indicated at the top of each system: 2.30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, and 45. A label 'Trompete 8' is placed in a box between the first and second systems. There are also small empty square boxes in the first system, one under measure 41 and another under measure 32.

Example 4.1.f. Paparousos: 3•o, excerpt from page 5

Example 4.1.g. Paparouzos: 1•2, bars 30-35

As we see, Paparouzos applies the clustering technique to the organ and the piano in a similar way. As far as the execution on the piano is concerned, the composer directed that ‘the sound should not have a strong attack, it should be big and broad instead, creating a sound cloud.’<sup>197</sup> In my opinion his remark is quite reasonable, as the purpose is to imitate the continuum and the sustained sound of the organ. At the above passage it is difficult not to get carried away and start ‘drumming’. The natural inclination with such a continuous clustering technique with the palm is a direct attack, so it requires special attention to produce a sound which is ‘not hard’ here. According to the composer’s further instructions ‘it should always be audible that every one of these passages ends with a cluster at a different point of the piano’s upper register. Only the top notes at the upper register should be played in a hard and menacing manner.’<sup>198</sup>

In the above example we also see that the first note of every bar has an accent. To me, if played this way, these accents strongly negate the *crescendo* effects towards the *ff* in the top register. After playing to the composer and discussing the matter, we both came to a consensus to remove the accents and start each passage as softly as possible.<sup>199</sup>

For the performance of 1•2 I had to make markings on the score that direct my eyes while performing.<sup>200</sup> As a result, I developed some ‘eye helping’ techniques that I was not using before. In order to illustrate the chord shapes, I came up with the idea of the drawing the boxes seen below – black boxes stand for black keys and white boxes for white keys:

<sup>197</sup> Recorded workshop with A. Paparouzos, 9/4/2018

<sup>198</sup> As above

<sup>199</sup> As above

<sup>200</sup> Memorising the piece would have been a time-consuming and unnecessary task

Example 4.1.h. Paparoucos: 1•2, bars 12-14, with my markings

In the case that some chord was similar to a chord encountered in tonal harmony, I would make a special mark on the score; for example 'C#-', which stands for 'C sharp minor'. I would also circle certain dynamic 'climax points' and draw lines where there is a dialogue between them, as seen in the example below:

Example 4.1.i. Paparoucos: 1•2, bars 121-123, with my markings

The piece can get quite complicated in excerpts where there is a constant change in the amount of repetitions of notes or chords and the sense of beat is unclear. To facilitate performance, I would draw a relevant number on the score, as seen below. In places where the amount of repetitions exceeded 6, I found it helpful to make divisions in smaller groups of 3 or 4 notes.

Example 4.1.j. Paparousos: 1•2, bars 179-183, with my markings

I personally find that playing this piece in an imprecise way is not a difficult task – by playing a more or less random number of repetitions. I was able to almost sight-read it if I decided that everything would be approximate – usually the result would be a much greater number of repetitions, as I needed time to see what happens next in the score. The composer’s own point of view on this matter is that ‘it is not a great problem if you play one or two repetitions more or less than written. However, the proportions have to be kept as precisely as possible.’<sup>201</sup> I personally think that everything in the piece is very well thought-out, including the number of repetitions, as well as the choice of pitches for each single chord. Performing it in a very precise manner brings out the essence of the work and pays it the respect necessary when dealing with all pieces of music professionally.

My main concern with the piece was that the public might feel worn out, because of its texture of limited progression and evolution, combined with its length. For the composer however, the element of repetition is what gives meaning to this piece. ‘You have to leave yourself to the sound, be absorbed by it. This is what I enjoy. You should not look for progression or evolution; this comes very slowly.’<sup>202</sup>

In my first concert with this piece I attempted to bring out a sense of compact form, by always trying to push the music towards the end of a long line and thinking forward from long rests and fermatas. My goal was not to make it sound too drawn-out. However, while performing on stage, I did not feel that this approach achieved its goal. Conversely, I gradually discovered that the structure of the piece could only be demonstrated convincingly when I felt comfortable to use more time and space on stage during my performance.<sup>203</sup>

Having performed the piece several times and having listened to the recordings of most of them, I discovered that a lot depends on the individual acoustic of each venue. For example,

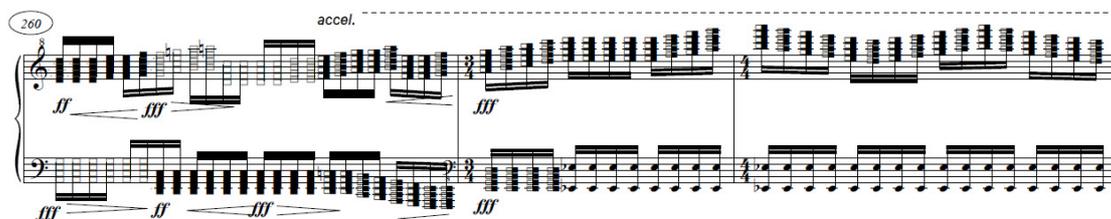
<sup>201</sup> Recorded video call with A. Paparousos, 9/12/2016

<sup>202</sup> As above

<sup>203</sup> For the list of public performances please refer to the appendix

in a radio broadcast (10/4/2018) it would not be optimal to exaggerate the dynamics, so I had to adopt a more ‘reserved’ style of playing. Paparouzos was always insistent that the piece should not be played with a hard and aggressive touch. But, as far as a recording is concerned, this depends a lot on the position of microphones. In *Sala Bulgaria*, Sofia, for instance (26/3/2018), they were too close to the piano, so the tone is quite metallic. The recording of Paparouzos’s *1•2* that I chose to submit together with my thesis is from my recital in the Athens Conservatory on 25/3/2018. I feel happy with this performance and I am also pleased with the recording as the microphones were far enough from the piano.

It is interesting to mention that, despite the fact that Paparouzos categorically denies any kind of extra-musical element or narrative in his conception, he himself has certain images and impressions related to his music. Describing the excerpt below (bars 236-263) he states: ‘Imagine a monster growing, reaching giant proportions and starting walking.’<sup>204</sup>



Example 4.1.k. Paparouzos: *1•2*, bars 260-262

As for the excerpt below, the following conception comes to his mind: ‘Imagine that this is a very angry person in an extremely furious state, shouting to someone.’<sup>205</sup>



Example 4.1.l. Paparouzos: *1•2*, bars 284-286

This does seem to show similarity with the concept of an ‘abstract scenario’, which is present in Antoniou’s way of approaching music. This raises the issue of how to classify a piece as Abstract Programmatic Music or not. This discussion is reserved for the conclusions of the thesis, after the examination of the rest of the pieces in the contextual repertoire.

<sup>204</sup> Recorded workshop with A. Paparouzos, 9/4/2018

<sup>205</sup> As above

If a general comment could be made on the matter of the 'movement of sound in space' is that it is revealed in a more concrete way in Pappasos's *1•2* than in Antoniou's piano works. Apart from some specific places (e.g. in the *Entrata* and *Syllables*, as examined previously) this conception seems to be more abstract in Antoniou's music for solo piano. Antoniou, himself, when mentioning the 'movement of sound in space' as an element of his conception of Abstract Programmatic Music, was referring to his entire oeuvre and not only the piano works in particular.

#### 4.2. Yiorgos Vassilandonakis: *Persistent Outliers* (2014) - Conveying a sense of indeterminacy through precision

One of the pieces that I am including in my recording portfolio is *Persistent Outliers* (2014) by Yiorgos Vassilandonakis, who has been supported and taught by Theodore Antoniou.<sup>206</sup> Thus, it is of great interest to examine whether Antoniou's musical perception might have echoes in the work of Vassilandonakis, who mentions: 'I met Theodore in 2000, and since then he's been a constant part of my life. He has commissioned and premiered more than half of my works composed since then, and has offered his friendship, guidance, advice and unconditional warmth.'<sup>207</sup>

My personal acquaintance with Yiorgos Vassilandonakis and *Persistent Outliers* took place when I was invited to play a recital under the auspices of the Greek Composers' Union on 17 December 2015, at the Goethe Institut of Athens. I was requested by Antoniou, the Union's president, to include this piece in my programme. Two days before the concert, I had the opportunity to meet with Vassilandonakis in my house in Athens, speak about and work thoroughly on the piece; the main points of our collaboration will be discussed below. Vassilandonakis was also present during my performance, which was the piece's world première. It is the live recording of this particular performance that I am including in my portfolio.

Vassilandonakis explained to me that during the composition of *Persistent Outliers* he had been inspired by the actual meaning of the word 'outlier' in the statistics of scientific experiments:<sup>208</sup> 'An outlying observation, or "outlier", is one that appears to deviate markedly from other members of the sample in which it occurs.'<sup>209</sup> In the case of the piece, the role of the 'outliers' is taken up by certain pedal notes, which have to be clearly marked in order to stand out from the rest of the musical material.

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<sup>206</sup> Yiorgos Vassilandonakis (b. 1969) is Associate Professor of Music Theory/Composition at the College of Charleston, Department of Music. In his works, which include chamber, vocal, orchestral, opera, film, electronic & multimedia genres, timbre and sonority of sound itself play a prominent role. Vassilandonakis' music is frequently performed in the United States and Europe. He is also a conductor and supporter of contemporary music.

<sup>207</sup> Yiorgos Vassilandonakis, 'Theodore, the Great', *Yiorgos' Blog* (28/09/2008), <http://yiorgosvassilandonakis.blogspot.com/2008/09/theodore-great.html>, accessed 29/06/2019

<sup>208</sup> Workshop with Y. Vassilandonakis, Athens, 15/12/2015

<sup>209</sup> Frank E. Grubbs, 'Procedures for detecting outlying observations in samples', *Technometrics*, Vol.11 No.1 (February 1969), 1–21

The composer gives the following directions regarding the performance of the piece:

- Working Sostenuto and Una Corda Pedals needed.
- All grace notes and grupetti are played before the corresponding beat.
- Aim for a very resonant sound throughout.
- Observe extreme dynamics, sharp attacks, long Pedals and note durations.<sup>210</sup>

In my view, the main task of the performer is to bring out the work's subtle atmosphere. Within a very resonant background, created by long pedals and mostly low dynamics, a very wide variety of different touches and articulations is encountered in the score, bringing elements to the foreground and background. The treatment of dynamics is particularly interesting, as it can be quite extreme: there are certain sections where almost every note has a different dynamic marking, as seen in the example below.

**Persistent Outliers** Yiorgos Vassilandonakis  
(ASCAP)  
(2014)

♩ = 52, molto resonato 4''

The score shows two systems of music. The first system (bars 1-6) is in 4/4 time. It begins with a dynamic marking of *sfz* and a *sost.* instruction. A box indicates to 'silently hold down with sost.' A specific C sharp note in the middle register is marked with a red line and labeled 'Red'. The score includes various dynamic markings such as *pp*, *p*, *mp*, and *sfz*. The second system (bars 7-12) continues the piece, featuring a 3/4 time signature change and further dynamic markings like *pp*, *sfz*, *(pp)*, *p*, and *mf*. A *sost.* instruction is also present, with a note to '(keep down until m. 71)'. The score includes various articulations and dynamics throughout.

Example 4.2.a. Vassilandonakis: *Persistent Outliers*, bars 1-6

The C sharp in the middle register (moving to the bass in bar 6) predominates at the above excerpt, being the 'persistent outlier'. Based on Vassilandonakis' conception, I aim to make its appearance always distinct in the cloud of sounds created in the background. Extreme variation in the kind of attack, articulation and dynamic for the various occurrences of this C sharp is required. In the first two notes, for instance, Vassilandonakis asked me to play with

<sup>210</sup> Yiorgos Vassilandonakis, *Persistent Outliers*, suoni reali music (2014), preface to the score by the composer

extreme contrast between the rapid *sforzando* semidemi-quaver and the following minim.<sup>211</sup> However, this can be dangerous in practice, as playing the first note extremely fast and loud gives very small time for the key to come up, and it can result in a muffled and unsuccessful repetition. To avoid this, I opt to take a tiny bit of time, making the rhythmic figure slightly less sharp and keeping the emphasis on the articulation. Vassilandonakis agreed with my assertion and added that ‘the priority is to make the repeated notes always perfectly distinct throughout the piece.’<sup>212</sup> He also indicated that ‘the grace notes should be important and sonorous rather than sharp and agitated.’<sup>213</sup> He often marks an accent on the grace note, further supporting this idea, as in the example below.

2

Example 4.2.b. Vassilandonakis: *Persistent Outliers*, bars 14-16

The idea of the ‘outliers’ is utilised quite differently in different parts of the piece. The note which is perceived as the ‘outlier’ varies, and it is also played in different manners, rhythmic figures, and dynamic intensity. In the example below, the E flat at the high register keeps persisting forcefully through constant repetition, giving us a different dimension of an ‘outlier’:

<sup>211</sup> Workshop with Y. Vassilandonakis, Athens 15/12/2015

<sup>212</sup> As above

<sup>213</sup> As above

(forcefully and audibly  
step on  $\text{scd}$  on beat 2)

poco  
allargando

5 3 5 6 7 6 5

loco

mf mp (L.H.: non-cresc) ff ffz

Example 4.2.c. Vassilandonakis: *Persistent Outliers*, bars 23-26

As can be observed from the examples above, as well as throughout the whole piece, the rhythmic organisation is highly complex. In my opinion, the composer successfully eliminates any sense of pulse and ordinary rhythmic structure, in order to convey the sense of spontaneously produced sounds, floating in endless time. A maze of sound which moves slowly, being progressively altered along the way, is the association I make while playing the piece or listening to my recording. If I were to link this music with imagery, I would think of planetary systems, distant galaxies and endless space.

In my view, the rhythmic proportions of the piece are very well calculated with the aim of creating a sense of the indeterminacy described above. Thus, extreme precision in the observance of the rhythmic values throughout the piece is what I aimed for during my practice. After all, the composer specifically indicates this in his performance directions in the printed edition (to 'observe note durations'). In order to acquire this precision, I practiced by repeating short sections many times using the metronome. As the pulse is quite slow, it was often necessary to think in metrical subdivisions in order to decipher the musical text. There are quite a few places where I found it necessary to mark the beats with a pencil on the score (as seen in the next example). These markings proved helpful as a visual cue

when practicing and performing on stage. It must be noted that this was only done to decipher the rhythmic organisation, and not to place any sort of emphasis on the beats.

In the section below we see that the C sharp (our ‘outlier’) forms an almost continuous line, aided by the use of the pedal. However, this line is cut in bar 75, due to the pedal change indicated. As I was working on that section I felt that this break in the line was not ideal. Thus, I proposed to the composer that the C sharp in the 4<sup>th</sup> beat of bar 74 (marked below) should be kept down with the hand during the pedal change, so that it would keep resonating. The composer agreed with this idea and decided to alter the score accordingly in a possible future version.<sup>214</sup>

Example 4.2.d. Vassilandonakis: *Persistent Outliers*, bars 71-75 with m markings

Through my experience with *Persistent Outliers*, I have felt that it is a very well written piece and fits easily under the hands, without imposing any particular virtuosic demands. One of the main performing challenges was achieving a wide variety of touch and sound quality with a lot of detail, especially within low dynamics. This is why I feel that this piece helped

<sup>214</sup> As above

me develop different skills compared to the other pieces in my portfolio, making it a very worthy addition.<sup>215</sup>

Comparing Vassilandonakis' writing for piano with this of his mentor, Antoniou, I find that they follow totally different paths. Antoniou's conception of Abstract Programmatic Music relates to an underlying, undefined dramatic plot, which often results in a sense of energy, action and virtuosity. These are totally avoided in Vassilandonakis' *Persistent Outliers*; the piece is of calm nature and focuses on the sonority of the sound itself and the exploration of sound colours. Antoniou always maintained that he always encouraged his students to find their own unique musical voice and way without trying to impose his own style.<sup>216</sup> In my view, Vassilandonakis is a very good example which proves this point.

At the same time, it is of interest that both composers have applied to their music elements and ideas from other disciplines. Vassilandonakis utilises the idea of an 'outlier' in statistics, as described earlier, while Antoniou finds musical equivalents of properties of phonetics, as seen in his piece *Syllables*.

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<sup>215</sup> I did not attempt to memorise the piece; I preferred to play with the score and to observe all details.

<sup>216</sup> Antoniou mentions this very often in his interviews. Indicatively, during an interview to Kostis Zouliatis, he states the following (the text is my own translation from Greek): 'The only power of a composer lies inside himself. If he doesn't rely on himself, then he starts imitating; and perfect imitation means artistic death. Thus, I give to my students many choices, because when you only have one choice, you can't do differently... I recommend a walk in the nature with a vital question in mind: Who am I? Who do I want to be? What represents me?'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dDkGUrsjkLA>, accessed 21/1/2019.

### 4.3. John Psathas: *Jettatura* (1999) – a collision of styles

John Psathas (b. 1966 in Wellington, New Zealand), the son of Greek immigrant parents, is considered to be one of the most important composers of the Greek diaspora.<sup>217</sup> In the preface to the score of *Jettatura*, published by Promethean Editions, it is commented that:

His 'sound' is difficult to define – the harmony and improvisational feel of jazz, the compelling rhythmic drive and excitement of rock music and the sustained repetitive textures of minimalism are apparent as influences, yet they combine and intermingle with something else more intangible.<sup>218</sup>

Psathas states that his source of inspiration is 'the kind of energy that comes from the collision of cultures and musical styles.' He describes our epoch with the word 'post-genre', further explaining that 'that's the kind of the world that I am living in. It's not about genre anymore.'<sup>219</sup>

Many of the above mentioned elements of Psathas' music are apparent in the construction of his *Jettatura*. The piece is in an A-B-A form, which can be subdivided in sections: A1-A2-B1-B2-A2', each of them having a distinct texture. Examples 4.3.a.-4.3.e. represent each one of these sections respectively. The minimalistic nature of the piece can be seen in these excerpts. In terms of motivic construction, a recurring minor third harmonic interval (marked below) serves as the main cell of the piece, often standing out from the rest of the material.<sup>220</sup> At the same time, the element of jazz is apparent throughout the piece, due to the constant use of off-beat accents. In particular, section B2 creates the impression of a jazz improvisation. As seen in example 4.3.d., an improvisation-like texture is employed in the right hand, placed against a left hand ostinato, which lasts for seventeen bars. This is strongly reminiscent of episode B in Antoniou's *Entrata*, in which the right hand has an improvisation-like character, placed on top of an archaic left hand ostinato, consisting of perfect fifths. As explained in 3.6., I find this texture in *Entrata* to be closely connected with the nature of the Greek Zeibekiko folk dance.

In *Jettatura*, the above features of minimalism and jazz are mixed with elements derived from the Greek musical tradition as well. The pitch material of the piece is exclusively based

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<sup>217</sup> John Psathas is Professor Emeritus of composition at the New Zealand School of Music. His music has been performed by prominent ensembles in more than fifty countries on all seven continents (even Antarctica).

<sup>218</sup> Unknown author, John Psathas: *Jettatura* (1999), Promethean Editions, preface to the score

<sup>219</sup> 'An interview with composer John Psathas', filmed by the Arts Foundation <https://vimeo.com/295715058>, accessed 12/4/2019.

<sup>220</sup> In example 4.3.c. it is not marked, as it is constantly repeated in the right hand

on the following scale: E flat, F, G flat, A, B flat, C, D flat, E flat (with the addition of rapid chromatic figurations in certain passages). These notes form the *Nikriz* makam, which is extensively used in Greek urban folk music. The sense of Greek folk rhythm is also present in *Jettatura*, especially due to the rhythmic nature of left hand ostinato in section B2. The composer originally marks it '5/2 + 3/4'; however, the sense of a compound meter and the alteration of two and three quaver groups within each bar is clearly audible.

**Sempre appassionato** ♩ = 132 - 144

Example 4.3.a shows a piano and left hand part for bars 1-12. The tempo is marked 'Sempre appassionato' with a quarter note equal to 132-144. The music is in 3/4 time and features a complex rhythmic pattern with frequent accents and slurs. The piano part is marked 'f' and the left hand part is marked 'sfz'.

Example 4.3.a. - Psathas: *Jettatura*, excerpt (bars 1-12) from section A1

Example 4.3.b shows a piano and left hand part for bars 21-25. The music is in 3/4 time and features a complex rhythmic pattern with frequent accents and slurs. The piano part is marked 'sfz' and the left hand part is marked 'sfz'.

Example 4.3.b. - Psathas: *Jettatura*, excerpt (bars 21-25) from section A2

44

*pp*

*p sempre*

una corda

46

Example 4.3.c. - Psathas: *Jettatura*, excerpt (bars 44-47) from section B1

69

ect.

70

Example 4.3.d. - Psathas: *Jettatura*, excerpt (bars 69-70) from section B2

95

*sfz*

97

*crescendo poco a poco*

*sfz*

*sfz*

Example 4.3.e. - Psathas: *Jettatura*, excerpt (bars 95-98) from section A2'

In my opinion, *Jettatura* presents a unique combination of minimalistic, jazz and Greek folk musical elements, with a very concise construction, a sense of line throughout as well as a compelling rhythmic drive. A richness of sound colours is achieved through the utilisation of many timbral possibilities afforded by the piano's different registers. All these features make it a very remarkable addition to my portfolio, as well as one of my favourites to perform in public.

In Psathas' musical conception and creative output, percussion instruments play a pivotal role. He very often composes for and experiments with many different kinds of percussion. He mostly avoids composing solo piano pieces,<sup>221</sup> with the piano being usually paired with percussion instruments, both in chamber music as well as in concerto settings.<sup>222</sup> Even in *Jettatura*, which is for solo piano, the percussive conception is obvious. It should also be noted that *Jettatura* has been transcribed for percussion duo.<sup>223</sup>

Given all these, my main challenge with this piece was achieving a percussive quality in the sound. Precision in rhythm, articulation and in different kinds of attacks is very important in this regard. In order to work on rhythmic precision, I had to work with the metronome. The metronome's clicks corresponded with quavers; it would have been impossible to follow crotchet clicks due to the constantly shifting compound meters.

To achieve a clear sense of percussiveness and clarity, I had to maintain a 'non-legato' articulation. This required special care, attention and work, especially in fast passages of semiquavers where speed can easily lead to a more 'legato' approach, which would compromise clarity, especially in the lower registers of the piano. Another very important element for a good performance is the sharpness of the accented notes, which have to really stand out, so I tried to play the material which is not accented more softly, serving as a background. In section A there are no pedal markings by the composer, so I utilise the sustain pedal minimally, just to reinforce the marked accents. In this way, I tried to create a sense of different attacks and an impression of different kinds of percussion instruments and their timbres; this helps bring out the jazzy nature of the work.

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<sup>221</sup> Psathas' only solo piano pieces are *Waiting for the Aeroplane* (1988), *Rhythmic Spike* (1994) and *Jettatura* (1999).

<sup>222</sup> Characteristic examples are: *Matre's Dance* (1991) for piano and percussion, *Drum Dances* for piano and drum kit (1993), *Happy Tachyons* for piano and percussion (1996), *Three Psalms* for piano, percussion, harp and string orchestra (2003) and *View from Olympus* for piano, percussion and orchestra (2001).

<sup>223</sup> The arrangement has been made by Dr. Omar Carmenates.

Looking at the work's title, we can find that there is a programmatic element present. The composer explains that:

Jettatura or *mal occhio*, the evil eye, is the ancient belief that the gaze of strangers casts unwanted magic into the lives of the innocent. The belief is that a person – not otherwise malefic in any way – can harm you, your children or your livestock by *looking* at them enviously and praising them. When I spent time in Greece in the summer of 1998, my family and I experienced such a remarkable sequence of unfortunate mishaps, that some of those around us became convinced we had fallen under the influence of the evil eye. Upon being tested by the local specialist in these matters, it was discovered that I was so utterly hexed my aura was opaque! This piece is dedicated to my sister Tania, who tried in her own way to protect her kid brother from jettatura. *Jettatura* was written for and premiered on the 21st November 1999 by Susanne Achilles in Ludenscheid, Germany, in the 49th concert of the MM::99 Festival, which showcased representative music from every year of the 20th Century.<sup>224</sup>

Therefore, there is an extra-musical narrative in the background, which is reminiscent of Antoniou's way of thinking. At the same time, Psathas differs from Antoniou, as the guiding idea behind the piece is not abstract, but concrete. Despite the existence of a concrete background story, my personal reaction was that this story serves as an abstract springboard of inspiration for *Jettatura* and that there is no firmly established connection between story and music. Psathas, however, was able to direct me towards the connection with the extra-musical idea:

The insistent C-A motif throughout the piece represents the idea of the inescapable evil eye, always looking at you. [...] The programmatic nature of the piece is also expressed through a general feeling of uneasiness, which is created by the bitonality between the left and the right hand and the unstable, constantly changing time signatures. [...] The very high sound is the sound of a mocking bird that makes fun with our bad luck.<sup>225</sup>

By 'very high sound' he means the figurations in the extreme high register of the piano, marked with *15<sup>ma</sup>*. Below is such an example; similar figurations appear in many places throughout the piece, serving as an indication of the 'mocking bird's' persistence.

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<sup>224</sup> John Psathas: *Jettatura*, Promethean Editions (1999), preface to the score by the composer

<sup>225</sup> Filmed workshop with J. Psathas, 27/1/2018

Example 4.3.f. – Psathas: *Jettatura*, bars 65-66

In regards to execution, Psathas explains: ‘I’ve always thought of these sounds with a picking, dry kind of articulation, even if the pedal is down. So, it’s more like a bird pecking. The way of playing it is ‘hand off the keyboard’. Even if some notes are sustained it doesn’t really make any difference with the pedal.’<sup>226</sup> Indeed, this direction led me to change my approach, as I was initially playing these passages with a certain air of elegance. After attempting it to play ‘hand off the keyboard’, actually meaning to brusquely get the hand off the keyboard as soon as the notes are played, the sound changed significantly, resulting in a much sharper articulation.

There are some more instances where Psathas’ instructions made me reconsider my approach. One spot where I had certain doubts was the transition between sections A2 and B1; there is a rest which has been marked in the example below. My initial reaction was to take a little bit of time to clearly separate the powerful ending of section A1 from the beginning of the contrasting B2 section. However, by looking carefully at the score, I realised that the rest equals only one quaver; it is so short that it doesn’t create the feeling of taking time if executed exactly as notated. Psathas replied to my concern: ‘your first instinct is the correct one. This notation here is the result of me having had so many experiences of people taking far too much time, at moments like this. So I thought I have to be very careful not to put a pause, because a pause is a very dangerous thing from the composer’s point of view, because it’s so open to interpretation [...] It’s absolutely possible to take time here.’

<sup>226</sup> As above

Example 4.3.g. – Psathas: *Jettatura*, bars 39-49

A particular difficulty which I had to face was learning section B1 (starting in bar 44, see example above), which bears a 7/4 time signature. As we can see, the rhythm is very complicated; the motifs are quite similar and there is no discernible rhythmic pattern in the figures. In the end, I found it helpful to think of each bar of 7/4 as two bars of 7/8, subdivided as 3+2+2/8, which is the form of the ‘Kalamatianos’ folk Greek dance. Even though the ‘Kalamatianos’ rhythm was not the composer’s original intention for these bars, my way of modeling this passage produced a result that was satisfactory to him, as it enhances the sense of dance.<sup>227</sup>

<sup>227</sup> As above

To conclude the examination of *Jettatura*, would like to note a misprint in the score, which was also confirmed by Psathas.<sup>228</sup> In bar 58, the note A, circled below, ought to be B, so that there is continuity in the 6<sup>th</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 8<sup>ve</sup> intervals of the melody.



Example 4.3.h. –Psathas: *Jettatura*, bars 57-58

In my portfolio I include a live recording of *Jettatura* which took place at the Athens Concert Hall on 26/2/2019. I chose this particular recording as I feel quite satisfied both with my performance and the quality of the recorded sound.

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<sup>228</sup> As above

#### 4.4. Costas Tsougras: 12 Variations (1995) – An ‘antipode’ to Abstract Programmatic Music

What makes Tsougras’s *12 Variations* particularly noteworthy in my portfolio is the fact that it is a very clear case of a twelve-tone piece.<sup>229</sup> As a pianist, I find it very useful and interesting to delve into twelve-tone textures, as it is a very important chapter within the frame of twentieth century music. Studying this piece enabled me to better understand dodecaphony and its manifestations within contemporary Greek compositional trends as well as to further hone my skills as a pianist.

I could describe Tsougras’s *12 Variations* as the antithesis to Abstract Programmatic Music and to Antoniou’s musical conception in general. The first principal difference is that the work of Tsougras is firmly structured in adherence to dodecaphonic compositional principles, which Antoniou consciously avoids. As has been closely examined before, Antoniou’s conception of music is usually based on an abstract narrative element, the portrayal of which takes precedence over any established ‘rules’. It should also be noted that Antoniou, despite his large oeuvre, never attempted to compose variations, preferring a more liberal approach to form.

Another very important distinction between the two composers is that, in contrast to Antoniou, Tsougras avoided mentioning any extra-musical elements or sources of inspiration in order to explain his music during the period of our collaboration. Tsougras describes the concept of his *12 Variations* as follows:

The central theme of the work is derived from two simple rhythmic elements, the succession of two eighth-notes (thesis-arsis) and two sixteenth-notes (arsis-thesis), which create a normative eight-bar period with the use of a symmetrical 12-tone series. The following twelve variations of the theme explore the transformational potentiality of the thematic elements through a diversity of compositional processes, exploiting the sonic spectrum of the instrument through a variety of different pianistic styles. The full circle of the variations concludes with the echoing return of the theme at the end of the piece.

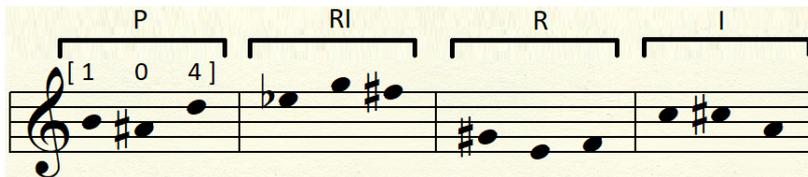
The work is dedicated to Uwe Matschke, who also gave its first performance in February 2000 in Weimar (Germany). The piece is also included in Uwe Matschke’s

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<sup>229</sup> Costas Tsougras (composer, music theorist and accordionist) was born in 1966 in Volos, Greece. He is associate professor of systematic musicology and music theory/analysis at the School of Music Studies of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece, and teacher of music theory and composition at the State Conservatory of Thessaloniki.

CD entitled "Piano Works" (works by J.S. Bach, F. Liszt and C. Tsougras) published in 2011 by the University of Macedonia (Thessaloniki).<sup>230</sup>

Upon closer inspection, we can see that the work is based on a twelve-tone row which is constructed through the procedure of retrograde (R), inversion (I) and retrograde inversion (RI) of an initial trichord (P), as seen in the example below. This tendency of creating a row out of the smallest possible musical core can be seen as an influence from the work of Webern. It is important to mention that the exact same 12-tone row appears in Webern's *Konzert für neun Instrumente* (Concerto for Nine Instruments, 1934)



Example 4.4.a. The 12-tone row of Tsougras's *12 Variations*

The theme and most variations consist of eight bars: the row is presented in the first four bars, with its retrograde form following in the remaining four bars. As a result, the initial trichord (B, A#, D) is encountered both in the first and the last bar, giving a vague impression of B minor. An examination of the theme will clearly demonstrate the above mentioned row structure, as well as what the composer's description, regarding the succession of downbeats (thesis) and upbeats (arsis).

<sup>230</sup> Costas Tsougras, notes on his piano works, unpublished

Theme

## 12 Παραλλαγές

για σόλο Πιάνο  
Αφιερωμένο στον Uwe Mutschke

Κώστας Τσούγκρας  
(Αύγουστος 1995)

♩ = 67 non nervoso

*p*

*mp* *p* *poco rit.*

*mf* *a tempo* *mp* *mf*

*p* *poco rit.* *pp*

Example 4.4.b. Tsougras: 12 Variations, Theme

In the example above it can be observed that the modes of expression are minimal. Tsougras mentions: 'In composing the theme, I tried to envision it as an exercise in musical simplicity. I was trying to use the smallest means, with the simplest idea, to create a large scale work [...] Back then among my models were Skalkottas, Webern, Schoenberg and even Bach, whose work I was studying at the time, and whose influence is evident in my work. But there

are other influences as well, such as jazz music, which I always enjoyed, as well as composers from the romantic tradition, such as Liszt.<sup>231</sup> Indeed, I feel that the beauty in this work lies in the great variety of style and character demonstrated by the different variations, which are built upon a very simple theme. The sense of proportions and architecture is very well calculated, giving the work a feeling of unity. A closer look at the work's structure follows below:

Theme	♩=67 non nervoso
Var. I	espressivo
Var. II	meno mosso
Var. III	più mosso
Var. IV	♩=82 agitato
Var. V	♩=70 con fuoco
Var. VI	♩=67 tranquillo
Var. VII	♩=60 calmo
Var. VIII	tempo rubato
Var. IX	♩=60 energetico
Var. X	con moto
Var. XI	♩=100 furioso
Var. XII	♩=45 melancolico
Coda	♩=50 morendo

In terms of performance, Tsougras mentions: 'It has to feel like a compact work, with each variation morphing into another, without any interruption, in a similar way to Skalkottas's *15 Little Variations* for piano (1927). The dodecaphonic and tightly-knit structure of Tsougras's work, as well as the brevity of the variations is very reminiscent of Skalkottas's variations.

Despite the sense of unity in the *12 Variations*, the work can be divided into two discernible sections. I conceive it as a 'double-arch' structure; each 'arch' slowly builds up the tension, reaches a climax and then fades away. The first section is Theme - Var. VI with the culmination in Var. V (*con fuoco*), and the second section is Var. VII - Coda with the culmination in Var. XI (*furioso*). The composer is in full accordance with such a division.

When working on the piece, I found that the *meno mosso* indication in Var. II interrupts the gradual development of musical tension, so I suggested maintaining the same tempo with the previous variation. Tsougras point of view was: 'Despite the *meno mosso* indication, the sense of holding back should be avoided in Var. II. As such, it is fine to keep the same tempo.

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<sup>231</sup> Recorded video call with C. Tsougras, 19/2/2018

However, I feel that all the 3 against 4 polyrhythms as well as the dialogue between staccato and legato touches are sufficient to create a conflict between the hands, contributing to the desired musical tension and development of the piece.<sup>232</sup> (example below)

Var II  
meno mosso

The image shows the opening of Variation II, marked 'meno mosso'. It consists of two systems of music. The first system begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic in the right hand and a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic in the left hand. The second system features a crescendo from mezzo-piano (*mp*) to mezzo-forte (*mf*) in both hands. The music includes polyrhythmic patterns and staccato/legato textures.

Example 4.4.c. Tsougras: 12 Variations, Var. II, opening

Another passage in which I had a similar discussion with the composer was the transition from Var. XI to Var. XII. Marked *furioso*, Var. XI is the most intense of the whole work. In my view, the work's culmination is to be found in the variation's end, with the dissonant, contrary motion chords in the last bar leading to the *sfff* first chord of Var. XII (marked in the example below). Curiously, Tsougras marks a *diminuendo* to *mp* right before this explosive moment, which compromises the effectiveness of the climax. Upon bringing my concerns up with Tsougras, it was agreed that keeping the crescendo and building up the tension until the *sfff* chord would be more effective.<sup>233</sup>

<sup>232</sup> As above

<sup>233</sup> As above

(♩ = 100 furioso)

*sfz* *ff* *mf* *ff* *rit.*

Var XII

(♩ = 45 melancolico)

*p* *pp* *p* *pp* *poco rit.*

Example 4.4.d. Tsougras: 12 Variations, Var. XI, ending and Var. XII, opening

The collaboration with Tsougras proved to be mutually beneficial, as there were also quite a few instances where he would direct me on how to properly bring out the unique character of certain variations, in which my initial reaction to the music was not according to his intentions. This was the case mostly in variations where I used to play too heavily and dramatically, such as Var. IV and Var. IX (below). Contributing to this approach was my own personality and tendencies, as well as my misconception of the musical text's dissonances as a sign of dramatic tension.

Quoting Tsougras's own words about Var. IV: 'Play a little slower, but without losing your sense of inner tension. It's a rhythmical game, based on a detached touch. The character is lighthearted, like pop, ragtime or dance music, not dramatic. It shouldn't sound anxious [...] maybe the indication *energico* would have been more appropriate than *agitato* in this case.'<sup>234</sup>

<sup>234</sup> As above

Var IV

♩ = 82 *agitato*

Example 4.4.e. Tsougras: 12 Variations, Var. IV, opening

Regarding Var. IX Tsougras mentions: ‘Again, this should not sound nervous. It is not passion that this variation needs, but restraint.’ The contrapuntal nature of this variation makes it stand out from the others in the set, making the influence from Bach apparent, according to the composer himself. It is interesting to note that within the set, Tsougras conceives this and its preceding variation (Var. VIII tempo rubato) as being similar to a Prelude and Fugue.<sup>235</sup>

Var IX

♩ = 60 *energetico*

Example 4.4.f. Tsougras: 12 Variations, Var. IX, opening

<sup>235</sup> As above

Looking back on Tsougras’s stated sources of inspiration and influence, we see that Webern occupies a prominent space. Other than the principles of row construction (as explained previously), this influence can also be felt in the character that has to be brought out during performance, as in Var. VII (see example below). According to the composer: ‘We want austerity, coldness and calmness in the playing, nothing extravagant. Webern’s variations op.27 were an inspiration for me’.<sup>236</sup>

Var VII

♩ = 60 calmo

*p*

*a tempo*

*p* *mf*

*accelerando* *sub rit.*

Example 4.4.g. Tsougras: 12 Variations, Var. VII, opening

An indication of the large diversity of style present in the variations is the fact that the work even crosses into jazz. This can be seen in Var X: ‘It is like Jazz, a walking bass!’<sup>237</sup> As such a sense of rhythmic drive and a strong pulse was a very important element to incorporate in my performance of this variation.

<sup>236</sup> As above

<sup>237</sup> As above

Var X

Example 4.4.h. Tsougras: 12 Variations, Var. X, opening

It has to be mentioned that this work is extremely challenging from the technical point of view, and is, in my opinion, the most difficult work that I am including in my portfolio. As can be seen in the example above, there are quick jumps in chords as well as very rapid passages in uncomfortable positions in the right hand. Adding to the difficulty is the fact that there is no room for rhythmic flexibility, due to the left hand ostinato.

Another example of technical challenge can be seen below. This seems slightly reminiscent of the kind of texture that Liszt might have employed, with an intense romantic tendency:

Example 4.4.i. Tsougras: 12 Variations, Var. V, bars 5-6

The recording which I am including in my portfolio took place in the recording studio of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece on 30/3/2018. Tsougras was present, directing the procedure.<sup>238</sup> My recording method was very similar to the Antoniou CD recording: to decide about the preferred takes immediately after having played them, without having to listen to the recorded material; also, to make long takes. During the editing of *12 Variations*, eleven cuts were made in total, usually in the beginning of the variations; changing takes within one variation was mostly avoided.

While listening and self-reflecting on this recording, I can say that I am quite satisfied with the different colours and characters that can be felt in the variations, as well as with the sense of line and unity in the work. It also sounds impressive from a virtuosic point of view. However, I would like to have played Var. III differently. I feel that the 3:4 polyrhythm as well as the contrasting dynamic fluctuations between the hands could have been projected more clearly (see example below). Choosing a slightly slower tempo would have helped in my view.

Var III

The image shows the opening of Variation III from Tsougras's *12 Variations*. It consists of two systems of two measures each. The first system begins with a piano (p) dynamic in the left hand and mezzo-piano (mp) in the right hand. The second system shows dynamic fluctuations, with the right hand moving from mp to mezzo-forte (mf). The tempo is marked 'piu mosso'. The score is in 3/4 time and features a 3:4 polyrhythm between the hands. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and accents, while the left hand has a rhythmic accompaniment. The score is divided into two systems, each with two measures. The first system starts with a piano (p) dynamic in the left hand and mezzo-piano (mp) in the right hand. The second system shows dynamic fluctuations, with the right hand moving from mp to mezzo-forte (mf).

Example 4.4.j. Tsougras: *12 Variations*, Var. III, opening

<sup>238</sup> The sound engineer was Kostas Kontos.

## **5. Conclusions**

Given the practical character of this study, any conclusions drawn have to be self-reflective. However, seeing that the element of self-reflection is present throughout my thesis, I feel that the process of drawing conclusions is most beneficial if it goes in the direction of summing up some of the most important points.

In the discussion of Antoniou's piano works, I have outlined that the conception of an abstract program – an abstract narrative or idea –helped me greatly in my effort to convey a message through my performance. Throughout my study I have been concerned with the question: what constitutes a piece of Abstract Programmatic Music and what does not? Having completed this study I support the view that it is impossible to definitively classify any piece of music by itself. A black/white categorisation would not be an appropriate approach. Instead, Abstract Programmatic Music is a way of **perceiving** and **interpreting** music. There is no need to define it exactly, especially considering the fact that it is indeed as its name would imply, abstract. I personally feel that, in general, associations with extra-musical ideas and thoughts have aided my own performances. This applies even to Paparousos's *1•2*, which bears a neutral title and avoids any programmatic element. To me, there is a major difference between thinking of impressions related to the music and of a composer publishing them in the form of programme notes or preface to the score. The first seems to be natural and instinctive, while the second would link a work with a particular conception for all performers and listeners.

Through the large variety of styles encountered in the works that constituted my research, I was able to develop a wide arsenal of different skills. The different styles present in Antoniou's music, and especially his application of extended techniques, which I had never encountered before proved to be quite illuminating for me. In Paparousos's *1•2*, the application of unconventional performing techniques, aiming to convey the feeling of the movement of sound masses in space, has been an extraordinary eye-opener for me. Applying a wide variety of touch and articulation, as well as achieving a sense of indeterminacy, through precision in performance, have been the most important challenges of my performance of Vassilandonakis's *Persistent Outliers*. By contrast, treating the piano as a percussive instrument and conveying a strong rhythmic pulse have been the main aspects in Psathas's *Jettatura*. Regarding Tsougras's *12 Variations*, achieving a variety of styles for different variations and at the same structuring the work and creating the sense of continuity have been among the most important points. A quite interesting challenge has been the need to 'reserve' myself and avoid a dramatic way of playing in some of the

variations. My confrontation with all the aforementioned features proved to be unique and exciting challenges which I managed to overcome successfully, becoming, I believe, a more complete pianist in the process.

This study expanded my horizons both as a performer and researcher greatly, because it combined theory with practice. It helped me towards attaining a deeper understanding of the connection between the composer's conception, notation, and the performer's interpretation, all of which are necessary to achieve a successful performance. Thus, this experience enhanced my critical and analytical thinking as well as my skill as a performer.

The special characteristic and the main focus of my research has been my collaboration with the composers during my preparation of their works. I feel that I have gained a significant amount of knowledge through this process. It is indeed very different to be able to communicate with a composer directly about his intentions, compared to relying only on the score. As was demonstrated, the composers' insight was critical in helping me form a clear view of their works and make decisions about interpretation; such insight was particularly helpful in cases where the score's indications proved to be insufficient in communicating a composer's message clearly. The advice that I was given directly affected my interpretation of certain passages in the music, as well as having a more general effect in my understanding, especially when it came to questions of style, mood and approach to sound.

A very important general observation was the fact that the composers, especially Antoniou, exhibited remarkable flexibility in regards to the interpretation of a printed score. Most of the composers were open to even making certain alterations as per my suggestions, as was seen in many specific instances. This was quite surprising for me, as in the beginning of my study I was too quick to assume that, because a score looks very prescriptive on the page, the composers intended the performers to regard it as prescriptive. It turned out after all that the scores of the pieces that I worked on were not as rigid as I thought. This has prompted me to rethink my relationship to the printed score more generally.

Regarding tempo decisions, there is an important thing that I deduced from of my collaboration with the composers, especially with Antoniou: whenever doubts would arise, it is preferable to follow my natural feeling for the music, rather than trying to stick to an indication which feels unnatural.

I consider the most important project included in my study to be the recording of Antoniou's complete piano works. As described in the methodology section at the beginning of the

thesis, my method of recording relied on reducing as much as possible the time listening to the recorded material during and after the sessions, deciding about the preferred takes on the spot and playing long takes. This method proved to be effective, so I do not feel it needs to be changed for future recordings. Two recording sessions of five hours each, in two subsequent days, proved more than enough for a final product of 87 minutes of music. The only disadvantage that I find with my method is that I always have to remember the way I played in great detail after each take; this is an extra burden during the recording session. After the completion of the recording sessions, the editing procedure was simple, as all relevant markings had been made on the score. The end result was satisfying for the composer; there were also very positive reviews of the CD after its release.<sup>239</sup>

During the recording sessions, Antoniou only interjected a handful of times to ask for a take to be repeated. There were also instances where he seemed to be satisfied with a take which I felt had to be repeated. Most of Antoniou's input had to do with the extended techniques on the piano's strings.<sup>240</sup> It was the first time that I had to record pieces calling for mute notes, scratch notes, glissandos on the strings, placing a piece of paper on the strings and striking the strings with the palm. After Antoniou's invaluable input, I realised that in a studio recording these special effects have to be executed more intensely than in a live performance, so that they match the general dynamic level of the rest of the recorded material. In the case of a live performance, they are always perceptible by the audience, however low their dynamic level may be.

It is important to mention here that I don't consider that my recordings are definitive. I believe that this is self-evident because, as I continue performing these pieces in various concerts, it is inevitable that my perception of them evolves through time. This is proven by the fact that, at this point, I am already able to offer examples of cases where I have

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<sup>239</sup> Indicatively:

- Jed Distler, 'Antoniou: Complete Piano Works', CD review in *Gramophone*, (July 2018), 68  
- Alberto Portugheis, 'The complete piano works of Theodore Antoniou performed by Konstantinos Destounis world première recording', CD review in *EPTA Piano Journal*, (August 2018), 37  
- Burkhard Schäfer, 'Theodore Antoniou – Sämtliche Klavierwerke - Konstantinos Destounis, Klavier', ['Theodore Antoniou – Complete Piano Works – Konstantinos Destounis, piano'], CD review in *Piano News*, July 2018, [https://www.naxos.com/SharedFiles/Reviews/GP779\\_Piano\\_News\\_072018\\_de.pdf](https://www.naxos.com/SharedFiles/Reviews/GP779_Piano_News_072018_de.pdf), accessed: 11/5/2019

<sup>240</sup> For detailed information please refer to the execution of the extended techniques in *Syllables, IV. Epenthesis* and *V. Aphairesis*, as well as the 'Aeolian Harp' effect and the 'scratch notes' in *Entrata*.

changed my point of view on my own performance of Antoniou's works, after recording them.<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> Such examples are the recapitulation of section B in *Entrata*, the character of section A of the Toccata in *Prelude and Toccata*, as well as the pedaling of the Toccata's section B. For more information refer to the examination of these pieces.

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### **Workshops and interviews**

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Personal workshops with Theodore Antoniou (Antoniou's residence in Athens, 12/9/2017 and 20/12/2017)

Recording session with Theodore Antoniou (Dimitris Mitropoulos Hall, the Athens Concert Hall Recording Centre, 3-4/7/2017)

Personal recorded video call with Costas Tsougras (19/2/2018)

Personal workshop with Costas Tsougras (Thessaloniki State Conservatory, 29/3/2018)

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## Appendix: List of public performances

### Antoniou's piano works

Inventions, Prelude & Fugue Op.4 No.2 (1958)

Date	Venue	Additional information
24/2/2017	Recital Hall, Royal College of Music, London	RCM Student Spotlight (UK première)

Aquarelle (1958)

Date	Venue	Additional information
8/2/2017	Grove Room, Royal College of Music, London	RCM Chamber concert (UK première)
25/4/2017	Philippos Nakas Conservatory Concert Hall, Athens	<i>Theodore Antoniou's Piano Works</i> , solo recital organised by the Greek Composers' Union (in the presence of the composer)
16/9/2017	Central School of Speech and Drama, London	<i>Collisions</i> festival

Sonata (1959)

Date	Venue	Additional information
3/2/2017	Recital Hall, Royal College of Music, London	RCM Student Spotlight (UK première)
25/4/2017	Philippos Nakas Conservatory Concert Hall, Athens	<i>Theodore Antoniou's Piano Works</i> , solo recital organised by the Greek Composers' Union (in the presence of the composer)

Syllables (1965)

Date	Venue	Additional information
5/6/2016	Amaryllis Fleming Concert Hall, Royal College of Music, London	Artist Diploma final recital (UK première)
25/4/2017	Philippos Nakas Conservatory Concert Hall, Athens	<i>Theodore Antoniou's Piano Works</i> , solo recital organised by the Greek Composers' Union (in the presence of the composer)
19/10/2017	Steinway Hall, London	Concert by the participants of Alberto Portugheis' Masterclass
26/3/2018	Sala Bulgaria, Sofia	Solo recital, <i>The Music of Europe: Greece</i>

		(Bulgarian première)
5/9/2018	Juozas Karosas Hall, Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, Vilnius	Lecture recital <i>'Abstract Programmatic Music: Performing Theodore Antoniou's Piano Works</i> , conference <i>Doctors in Performance</i>
17/4/2019	Trianon, Athens	Event in the memory of Theodore Antoniou

#### Prelude and Toccata (1982)

Date	Venue	Additional information
18/9/2016	Elgar Room, Royal Albert Hall, London	Solo recital, <i>Classical Coffee Mornings</i> (organised by the RCM Creative Careers Centre, UK première)
21/10/2016	St. Mary Abbots, London	RCM Concert
12/3/2017	Amaryllis Fleming Concert Hall, Royal College of Music, London	RCM Annual Keyboard Festival <i>America Calls!</i>
25/4/2017	Philippos Nakas Conservatory Concert Hall, Athens	<i>Theodore Antoniou's Piano Works</i> , solo recital organised by the Greek Composers' Union (in the presence of the composer)
19/10/2017	Steinway Hall, London	Concert by the participants of Alberto Portugheis' Masterclass
26/1/2018	St. James' Piccadilly, London	Solo recital (organised by the Beethoven Society of Europe)
9/2/2019	Homerion Cultural Centre, Chios island, Greece	<i>Winter in Chios</i> , a chamber music concert, <i>Chios Music Festival</i>
23/3/2019	National Music Academy 'Pancho Vladigerov' Concert Hall, Sofia	Solo recital, <i>ppIANISSIMO</i> Festival

#### Entrata (1983)

Date	Venue	Additional information
26/8/2016	Sirene Blue Resort, Poros island, Greece	Solo recital, Poros International Piano Academy
29/10/2016	Pallant House Gallery, Chichester, United Kingdom	Solo recital (organised by the RCM Creative Careers Centre)
5/11/2016	Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki, Greece	Solo recital, <i>Thessaloniki Piano Festival</i>
14-19 /11/2016	Eight performances in North-East England	Eight solo recitals (tour organised by <i>Master Musicians</i> )
25/4/2017	Philippos Nakas Conservatory Concert Hall, Athens	<i>Theodore Antoniou's Piano Works</i> , solo recital organised by the Greek Composers' Union (in the presence of the composer)
26/3/2018	Sala Bulgaria, Sofia	Solo recital, <i>The Music of Europe: Greece</i> (Bulgarian première)
29/3/2018	Thessaloniki State Conservatory Concert Hall, Greece	Solo recital

10/4/2018	Greek National Radio Station (Studio E), Athens	Solo recital in live transmission by the National Greek Radio
25/4/2018	Athens Conservatory Concert Hall	Solo recital, <i>Greek Music Feasts</i> festival
30/5/2018	Lilian Voudouri Music Library, Megaron – The Athens Concert Hall	CD launch, <i>Theodore Antoniou: Complete Piano Works, Konstantinos Destounis [GP779]</i> , (in the presence of the composer)
5/9/2018	Juozas Karosas Hall, Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, Vilnius	Lecture recital ' <i>Abstract Programmatic Music: Performing Theodore Antoniou's Piano Works</i> , conference <i>Doctors in Performance</i>
23/3/2019	National Music Academy 'Pancho Vladigerov' Concert Hall, Sofia	Solo recital, <i>ppIANISSIMO</i> Festival
14/4/2019	Cultural Centre of Patra, Greece	Solo recital
17/4/2019	Trianon, Athens	Event in the memory of Theodore Antoniou

#### Seven Rhythmic Dances (2000)

Date	Venue	Additional information
24/2/2017	Recital Hall, Royal College of Music, London	RCM Student Spotlight (UK première)
25/4/2017	Philippos Nakas Conservatory Concert Hall, Athens	<i>Theodore Antoniou's Piano Works</i> , solo recital organised by the Greek Composers' Union (in the presence of the composer)
4/5/2017	Grove Room, Royal College of Music, London	RCM Chamber concert

#### Synaphes (2001)

Date	Venue	Additional information
17/12/2015	Goethe Institut, Athens	Solo recital, organised by the Greek Composers' Union (in the presence of the composer)
8/4/2016	Dimitris Mitropoulos Hall, Megaron – The Athens Concert Hall	Solo recital, <i>Pianorama</i> cycle
25/4/2017	Philippos Nakas Conservatory Concert Hall, Athens	<i>Theodore Antoniou's Piano Works</i> , solo recital organised by the Greek Composers' Union (in the presence of the composer)
4/5/2017	Grove Room, Royal College of Music, London	RCM Chamber concert

## Contextual repertoire

Andreas Paparousos (b.1975): 1•2 (2014)

Date	Venue	Additional information
7/2/2018	Grove Room, Royal College of Music, London	RCM sign up and play concert (UK première)
26/3/2018	Sala Bulgaria, Sofia	Solo recital, <i>The Music of Europe: Greece</i> (Bulgarian première)
29/3/2018	Thessaloniki State Conservatory Concert Hall, Greece	Solo recital
10/4/2018	Greek National Radio Station (Studio E), Athens	Solo recital in live transmission by the National Greek Radio (in the presence of the composer)
25/4/2018	Athens Conservatory Concert Hall	Solo recital, <i>Greek Music Feasts</i> festival
5/5/2018	APT Gallery, Deptford, London	<i>20 21 Concerts</i> festival
18/5/2018	Recital Hall, Royal College of Music, London	RCM contemporary music competition

Yiorgos Vassilandonakis (b.1969): Persistent Outliers (2014)

Date	Venue	Additional information
17/12/2015	Göthe Institut, Athens	Solo recital, organised by the Greek Composers' Union (world première, in the presence of the composer)

John Psathas (b.1966): Jettatura (1999)

Date	Venue	Additional information
25/1/2016	Thessaloniki Concert Hall, Greece	Solo recital
9/3/2016	Steinway Hall, London	Solo recital (organised by the RCM Creative Careers Centre), UK Première
30/3/2016	Greek National Radio Station (Studio C), Athens	Encore, concert with the Greek National Radio-Television Symphony Orchestra in live radio transmission
8/4/2016	Dimitris Mitropoulos Hall, Megaron – The Athens Concert Hall	Solo recital, <i>Pianorama</i> cycle
5/6/2016	Amaryllis Fleming Concert Hall, Royal College of Music, London	Artist Diploma final recital
17/6/2016	Pyrgos-West Mani, Greece	Solo recital, <i>Mani-Sonnelink</i> festival
18/9/2016	Elgar Room, Royal Albert Hall, London	Solo recital, <i>Classical Coffee Mornings</i> (organised by the RCM Creative Careers Centre)

29/10/2016	Pallant House Gallery, Chichester, United Kingdom	Solo recital (organised by the RCM Creative Careers Centre)
5/11/2016	Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki, Greece	Solo recital, <i>Thessaloniki Piano Festival</i>
14-19 /11/2016	Eight performances in North-East England	Eight solo recitals (tour organised by <i>Master Musicians</i> )
26/1/2018	St. James' Piccadilly, London	Solo recital (in the presence of the composer, organised by the Beethoven Society of Europe)
26/3/2018	Sala Bulgaria, Sofia	Solo recital, <i>The Music of Europe: Greece</i> (Bulgarian première)
29/3/2018	Thessaloniki State Conservatory Concert Hall, Greece	Solo recital
10/4/2018	Greek National Radio Station (Studio E), Athens	Solo recital in live transmission by the National Greek Radio
25/4/2018	Athens Conservatory Concert Hall	Solo recital, <i>Greek Music Feasts</i> festival
6/7/2018	Katakouzenos Museum, Athens	Solo recital (organised by the Hellenic Institute of Cultural Diplomacy)
3/8/2018	Archaeological Museum of Chios island, Greece	<i>Old Photographs</i> , a chamber music concert, <i>Chios Music Festival</i>
9/2/2019	Homerion Cultural Centre, Chios island, Greece	<i>Winter in Chios</i> , a chamber music concert, <i>Chios Music Festival</i>
18/2/2019	Olympia Municipal Theatre Maria Callas, Athens	Annual Award ceremony of the Union of Greek Critics for Drama and Music
26/2/2019	Christos Lambrakis Hall, Megaron – The Athens Concert Hall	Encore, concert with the Greek National Radio-Television Symphony Orchestra
23/3/2019	National Music Academy 'Pancho Vladigerov' Concert Hall, Sofia	Solo recital, <i>ppIANISSIMO</i> Festival
14/4/2019	Cultural Centre of Patra, Greece	Solo recital

Costas Tsougras (b.1966): 12 Variations (1995)

Date	Venue	Additional information
7/2/2018	Grove Room, Royal College of Music London	RCM sign up and play concert (UK première)
26/3/2018	Sala Bulgaria, Sofia	Solo recital, <i>The Music of Europe: Greece</i> (Bulgarian première)
29/3/2018	Thessaloniki State Conservatory Concert Hall, Greece	Solo recital (in the presence of the composer)
10/4/2018	Greek National Radio Station (Studio E), Athens	Solo recital in live transmission by the National Greek Radio
25/4/2018	Athens Conservatory Concert Hall	Solo recital, <i>Greek Music Feasts</i> festival
23/3/2019	National Music Academy 'Pancho Vladigerov' Concert Hall, Sofia	Solo recital, <i>ppIANISSIMO</i> Festival