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Author: Katy Romanou

E-mail: romanoy@otenet.gr

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Katy ROMANO
European University Cyprus

The Enemy's Culture

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This paper is about the foundation of the State Symphony Orchestra and the State Opera in Athens, in December 1942 and February 1944, under German occupation. It is a subject recently treated rather thoroughly by Greek musicologists.¹ It has been shown how late Western music was introduced in Greece; how indifferent politicians and governors have been to the need to establish the institutions for teaching and promoting this type of music; how Greek musicians took advantage of the Germans, during the Axis occupation of Greece in World War II. It has been also shown that the Greeks involved in the foundation of the symphony orchestra and the state opera house had not fully grasped the gravity and magnitude of the Nazi persecution of the Jews, nor of the restrictions imposed on music creation and performance. They believed that contemporary Western composers had rejected Schoenberg's expressionism and atonality and Stravinsky's

¹ Here is a selective list of publications on that subject, in chronological order: Belonis 2004, Romanou 2010a, 2013a, 2013b, Charkiolakis 2013, Economides 2013, Kontossi 2013.

It will be observed that certain Greek names are spelled in two different ways (for example: Demetres Metropoulos/Dimitri Mitropoulos, Manoles Kalomirois/Manolis Kalomiris). This is so, in cases that the persons themselves wrote their name in English, German, French, etc., in a mode that does not conform to our transliteration "rules".

neoclassicism for aesthetic reasons, and that they had adopted modality of their own accord. They considered the German composers performed by the nazi orchestras (Hans Pfitzner, Paul Graener, and Max Trapp, among others) as the “natural” successors of Schoenberg and Stravinsky. They interpreted the invitations to perform Greek music in Germany as a natural outcome of the fact that in their works modality prevailed, and were convinced that Greek art music had finally gained a prominent place within Western music.

Examining the relations between the Germans and the Greeks in the interwar period and during World War II, this paper strives to better understand the behaviour of the musicians involved. It highlights the importance of culture in the formation of one’s inner world; it points out how in that moment of history when nationalism was propagated and held in high esteem, people tried to adopt (and get assimilated in) cultures that had transcended national identities. It shows how in the interwar period and during World War II the Germans hailed their ancient Greek origins, and Greek musicians were eager to see their work performed in Germany by famous German music ensembles. Special emphasis is given to three significant Greek musicians of that period: Dimitri Mitropoulos, Nikos Skalkottas and Manolis Kalomiris.

RELAYING ANCIENT GREEK CIVILISATION: FROM HAZE TO LIGHT

It was in the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games that the nazi concept of Germany being the heir of ancient Greek culture was popularised. Hitler himself associated nazism with the Golden Age of ancient Athens. His admiration for what he considered to be the values of the art of this period led him to buy a Roman marble copy of the bronze statue of Myron’s *Discobolus*, a statue he admired because it mirrored the qualities of the *Herrerasse*, the master race, the Aryan race.

The Berlin Olympic Games began in August 1st, 1936 with the discus throw, and the well-known documentary film of those games, Leni Riefenstahl’s *Olympia*,² shows in its impressive opening Myron’s statue slowly turning into a German disc thrower. The entire introduction of the film is a good interpretation of the Germans’ relations with ancient Greek culture (as seen by the nazis): the relay of the flame from Olympia³ to Berlin is depicted

² *Olympia* by Leni Riefenstahl is accessible on YouTube.

³ The relay of the torch from Olympia to the stadium where the Olympic Games are held first took place at the 1936 Berlin Summer Olympics.

in the film as a flame passing among ancient Greek statues of beautiful masculine and feminine bodies, in a misty atmosphere. Gradually the statues turn into real athletes running through trails in raw land and deserted beaches, still in a hazy atmosphere. As the runners approach Berlin, the picture becomes more distinct, and the light stronger, until the flame is permanently lit in the stadium. The “relay” of the ancient Greek civilisation had thus reached its heir today, about whose identity there seemed to be no doubt among the nazis. Goebbels, in one of his visits on the Acropolis (1939), exclaimed: “Oh, this shattering view! The cradle of Aryan culture.”

The German soldiers who invaded Greece were completely indoctrinated by the nazi propaganda. Having read letters sent to their families, Valentin Schneider observes that most were disappointed to see how different the Greeks were from what they had imagined: “Many believed that the ‘noble blood’ of the Greeks had been corrupted by the Slavonic invasions in the Middle Ages as well as Oriental influences.” (“Greece under the Nazis” 2017). They felt more closely related to the ancient Greeks than to the inhabitants of the country they invaded, and their behaviour showed a superiority complex. The German soldiers in Athens were sleeping in the houses of the Greeks, which they emptied, and ate the food of the Greeks, who died of starvation in the streets. The *Time* magazine (February 9th, 1942) reported under the headline “Greece: Hungriest country” that bread “was priced at \$15 a loaf in Athens last week and there was no bread. There were no potatoes, no figs, no raisins, no tomatoes. There was, in short, famine. The sight of wasted men & women faulting in the street was so common that no one thought anything of it”. Musicologist Minos Dounias, who had studied and worked in Germany, was shocked: “Where is the traditional German honesty? . . . Suddenly with the ‘New Order’ they have all turned into thieves” (Delopoulos 1987: 50). These “thieves” broke into tears visiting some archaeological sites, and experienced elation unfolding the swastika flag on the Acropolis.

Thrasylulos Georgiades, another musicologist living in Athens at that time, met with other Greek musicians who had, like him, studied in Germany or Austria, to discuss the details of the legislation that would turn the symphony orchestra of the Conservatory of Athens (until then very much depending on volunteer work) into the Athens State Orchestra. They collaborated with the German and Greek employees of the “puppet government” of Constantinos Logothetopoulos, and the law was published on December 12th, 1942. It was a very important step towards showing Greek performers the proper professional respect they deserved.

GETTING RID OF A NATIONAL VICE

In Athens, on August 4th, 1936 – three days after the opening of the Berlin Olympic Games – the military officer Ioannis Metaxas, provisional prime minister⁴ appointed by King George II, declared dictatorship, with the King's consent. It wasn't one imposed by force. The numerous small parties that were silenced were samples of what has been called a "national vice": an obsession with politics combined with independence of thought and the striving to impose one's own ideas upon the others, which is a characteristic of the Greek people. This national vice still produces scores of political parties, most of which supported by a newspaper. In 1927, according to Dimitri Pentzopoulos, "Athens with a population of about 453.000 people had 33 daily newspapers" (2002: 172). Between 1924 and 1936 thirty-five political parties (some, in fact, coalitions of parties) participated in six parliamentary elections.⁵ Only the Communist Party had an organized basis, keeping in contact with the people; and Metaxas managed to eradicate and corrode its mechanism through his dictatorial agents (Maurogordatos 2003: 31).

For the sake of the country's economy Metaxas took advantage of the Germans' admiration for ancient Greece. In September 1936, 300.000 marks were donated by the Germans to continue the archaeological excavations in Olympia and, visiting Athens, Goebbels gave 150.000 marks for philanthropy. The exhibition *Kraft durch Freude* was opened in Athens. It included a number of lectures and an exhibition of German books, as well as nazi, anti-communist and anti-Semitic periodicals (Markezines 1994: 93). That same year, Lufthansa founded the first passenger airline in Greece, connecting Athens with Thessaloniki (Markezines 1994: 25). And on May 21st, 1938 Telefunken installed a low-frequency radio station in Athens.

That same year, various cultural exchange programs between Germany and Greece were organised. On November 26th, 1938 began the performance of Wagner's full *Ring*, proposed by the Frankfurt State Opera in Athens. On December 5th, 1938, the director of the Athens Conservatory, Philoctetes Economides, conducted an all-Greek music concert in Berlin. Then, on February 10th, 1940 (six months after the beginning of World War II), the Greek *Ring*, that is, Manolis Kalomiris' opera *The Mother's Ring*, was performed at the Berlin Volksoper.⁶

⁴ Replacing Constantinos Demertzis, who had died suddenly.

⁵ Parliamentary elections in that period were held on November 7th, 1926, on August 19th, 1928, on September 25th, 1932, on March 5th, 1933, on June 9th, 1935, and on January 26th, 1936.

⁶ Detailed information on this performance is given in Romanou 2010a: 52-61.

On October 28th, 1940, Greece became actively involved in the war. The Italian attackers were forced to retreat, but on April 6th, 1941, the Germans entered the country, occupying Athens on April 27th. Metaxas had died in January 1941. Three Greek prime ministers collaborated with the Germans: Georgios Tsolakoglou (April 30th, 1941 – December 2nd, 1942), Konstantinos Logothetopoulos (December 2nd, 1942 – April 7th, 1943) and Ioannes Rales (April 7th, 1943 – October 12th, 1944). Because all political parties had been dissolved by Metaxas' dictatorship, people connected these prime ministers to the occupying forces. The lack of any trust in them was amplified with the devastating hunger and economic disaster in the winter of 1941-1942. Says Mark Mazower: "The tens of thousands of victims who died of hunger in the first winter of occupation testified to the political and administrative impotence of Greek state machine in Athens. In effect, Greece barely existed as a political entity" (2000: 4). Civil servants (that had been working in education, in ministries and in banks, in public transport sector, but also in the police force and the army) became part of the suffering people, ready to man the resistance groups eventually to be led by the Communist party, whose rapid revival was the result of this situation. A small part of civil servants worked for the occupation governments, being admirers either of totalitarianism or of German culture (Elephantos 2003: 85).

The most famous Greek musicians of the first half of the 20th century were immersed in German music: Manolis Kalomiris (1883-1962), whose contribution to the establishment of musical life in Greece is undeniable, Dimitri Mitropoulos (1896-1960), one of the great international conductors in the first half of the 20th century, and Nikos Skalkottas (1904-1949), a Schoenberg student in Berlin, today praised for his dense musical thought and for having absorbed, and turned them into the expression of a personal language, all musical trends he was exposed to.⁷

Having had a German music education, all three were deeply affected by the idea that music equals religion, deserving reason's and feeling's complete surrender. The religious emotion inspired by music opens up the prospect of a purposeful life, of the commitment to some idea through life, highlighting the awareness of being human. This was a feeling deeply embedded in those who had received that education. The problem they faced was that Greece was not well enough equipped to satisfyingly perform the music that gave purpose to their life. Among the three musicians mentioned, Mitropoulos chose to

⁷ Schoenbergian expressionism, Stravinskian neoclassicism and humour, Bartókian folklorism, Kurt Weill's attraction to popular theatre, among others.

stay in the West. Skalkottas would have liked to, but was trapped in Athens in 1933. Kalomiris chose to stay in Athens and work to build in Greece the infrastructure of a Western kind (and level) of musical life.

THE MITROPOULOS CASE

Dimitri Mitropoulos decided to make music in the United States because there (in the interwar period) he found the environment where he could “be morally pure”. As he explains in a letter from Minneapolis to Katy Katsoyanis, dated December 24th, 1938, there he was encouraged to preserve the purity of his feelings for music:

Athens would mean my total ruin, if I were to return for a long while. Here, at least, I feel purified, helped in transforming my weaknesses, because the people are innocent and full of religious feelings. In our country or in Europe people are suspicious and they can make you disgusted of even your purest intentions. They soil you! This way one loses one’s courage.

Here is why America is better. There is everywhere an encouraging breath – for work, for morality. When they see you as a god, an apostle, a leader, you feel the need to be as pure as possible before people who are ready do adore you, to follow you, to respond to you. All these things seem childish in Europe. (Mitropoulos and Katsoyanis 1973: 31-32)

Mitropoulos would soon change his opinion about America.⁸ However, his quest for purity was always paramount to, and inseparable from, his mission as a conductor. “He was a very pure musician of great intensity and integrity. . . . He was very self-effacing, and probably one of the most altruistic people I ever met”, wrote Daniel Barenboim (2003: 48-49).

THE SKALKOTTAS CASE

As mentioned, on December 5th, 1938 Economides conducted an all-Greek concert in Berlin, as part of an exchange program, performing works by

⁸ In a letter written in Minneapolis on December 8th, 1939, when World War II had begun in Europe, his disappointment is obvious. See Mitropoulos and Katsoyanis 1966: 61-62 (the English edition of their correspondence does not include that letter).

Manolis Kalomiris, Petros Petrides, Aemilios Riadis, Antiochos Evangelatos and Nikos Skalkottas. The performance of Skalkottas' music in Berlin – and indeed in the Prussian Academy of Arts where he had been Schoenberg's student – reinforces the view that in Greece the persecutions in Germany were ignored, or, more precisely, that people didn't realise how serious things were. Even later, during the German occupation of Greece, the Greeks were unable to perceive the extent or the rationale of the German atrocities. "Racial philosophies", says Mark Mazower, "were not taken seriously" (1994: 286). The main Jewish community of Athens was well integrated in the Greek life, and the Germans' efforts to foment anti-Semitism failed.⁹

Skalkottas had been in Berlin since 1921. He attended Schoenberg's *Meisterschule* between 1927 and 1930, and was in contact with his teacher's circle up to March 1st, 1933, when he returned to Athens for good.¹⁰ Two months later, Schoenberg also left Berlin permanently,¹¹ going first to Paris (where he spent the summer and where he was officially reconverted to the Jewish faith) and finally to the United States.

Skalkottas' final trip to Athens was most dramatic. As Giorgos Chatzenikos writes, Skalkottas suffered, while in Berlin, from a severe depression in the years from 1931 to 1933 (Chatzenikos 2006: 46). He was in debt and without a job during this period of economic crisis, and could not provide for his and violinist Matla Temko's daughter. He was eventually repatriated by the Greek Embassy. Skalkottas left in Berlin his six-year-old daughter, who had been placed in care, as well as all his belongings and manuscripts. During his first months in Athens he secluded himself in his parents' house. In January 1934 he joined the Orchestra of the Athens Conservatory and got several other opportunities to play and to earn some money.

In a letter written on November 1935 to Matla Temko, who was in Sweden, Skalkottas shows that he had no idea about Schoenberg's resignation nor about the anti-Jewish pogrom, and expresses his wish to go back and meet with Schoenberg again:

⁹ The archbishop Damascenos instructed the priests to tell the congregations that the Jews should be helped, and that the Greek police had often ignored orders to betray Jews that were hiding. See Mazower 1994: 287.

¹⁰ In that period, Skalkottas was in Athens for five months at the end of 1930, and Schoenberg was in Spain, from October 1931 to May 1932, obeying his doctor's advice.

¹¹ Schoenberg resigned from the Prussian Academy of Arts on March 20th, 1933, after the president of the Academy announced "that he was directed by the Minister of Education to proclaim that 'the Jewish influence at the academy must be eliminated'" (see Stein 1965: 116).

For me it would have been much better if I'd remained in Germany and carried on working with Schoenberg. Here, in my humble opinion, the time I spend working is wasted. . . . I just can't get any further. . . . In parting from the Schoenberg-pupils, from my friends, by coming back here, I have lost nearly everything that you could call the existence of a "normal" human being; it's very strange, abroad I found love and a normal life more natural, more a matter of course, than here – and almost with everyone, without exception! Here I'm afraid everything has been stolen from me, I've been properly robbed – if not dirtied from head to foot, perhaps both. It is not very easy to see, so it's probably much filthier in reality than I can describe it to you.¹²

It is remarkable that both Mitropoulos and Skalkottas describe as "dirt" that which impeded their fulfilling the purpose of their lives. I am not aware of any texts by Skalkottas as sincere as the above, speaking about his struggle to cleanse himself from that dirt. But most of the music he wrote, even in his most wretched years, is music of a liberated self.

During the years that Skalkottas appeared to gradually adjust to the level of Athenian musical life he was indeed leading a double life: at night he was composing, showing that Schoenberg's teaching was deeply and firmly inscribed in him. "Anyone who was my student", wrote Schoenberg, "became aware of the seriousness and morality of the mission of the artist; this awareness will, under any circumstances of life, bring him honour if he is able to remain true to it!" (Ennulat 1991: 7).

A great part of Skalkottas' extant works was composed during those nights.

INTERLUDE

In view of the Olympic Games, the nazis begun to abandon the policy of cultural isolation. From 1935 to 1939, the Permanent Council for International Collaboration of Composers (*Ständiger Rat für die internationale Zusammenarbeit der Komponisten*) – founded by Richard Strauss in 1934 as an alternative to the International Society for Contemporary Music which Germany had left in 1933 – organized exchange cultural programs in which

¹² This letter is quoted in translation (from the original German) in Thornley 2002: 214-215.

the style of the Greek National School was welcomed as a “healthy” style of contemporary music.¹³ The composer Petros Petrides, Kalomiris’ collaborator and rival, living most of the time in Berlin, took advantage of this situation in order to promote Greek music, and primarily his own work. A polyglot, Petrides collaborated with quite a number of foreign periodicals. In those years he was *La Revue musicale*’s correspondent from Germany. His efforts were supported by Henry Missir, the magazine’s correspondent from Greece, who after reviewing a Petrides concert concludes that

Mr. Petrides’ works, showing fervor towards the construction of the beautiful edifice of Greek musical art, and the noble example of music he has just given us, can only deserve the warmest encouragement and the recognition of his compatriots. It is now the time for Greek musical art to take its place among the Schools of the West, and for national works, created every day, to bloom in all the great concerts of European centers and of those beyond the Atlantic. (Missir 1937: 223)

Works of the Greek National School were now ripe “to bloom in all the great concerts of European centers”, because modality had defeated the “demolishers” of Western music. The Baden-Baden International Festival of Contemporary Music was inaugurated in 1927 as a continuation of the Donaueschingen Chamber Music Performances that had begun in July 1921. It was cancelled in 1930 because of financial problems and resumed in 1936, the year of the Berlin Olympic Games. It was seen as a German counterpart to the ISCM festivals, and one of the steps taken by the Germans before the Berlin Olympic Games to slacken isolation and to create again ties with other nations (see Levi 1994: 89, 92).

Petros Petrides’ review of the Baden-Baden Festival of April 3rd-5th, 1936 was published in *La Revue musicale* in the summer of 1936 (Petrides 1936). The writer cannot hold his triumphant mood, having realized that Greek composers of the National School were up-to-date with the contemporary trends in Western music. In the Baden-Baden festival eight countries were represented (France, Italy, Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, Yugoslavia, Greece and the host country). Also, oddly enough, in a category of his own, Igor Stravinsky participated. Petrides – whose *Ellenike Suita* [Greek Suite] was

¹³ For a discussion of Germany’s changing policy in those years, see Levi 1994: 92-93.

the Greek work performed – speaks with apparent satisfaction and a commonly used *military* phraseology on the prevailing style in this contemporary music festival:

The period of musical experiments is already over. After the unbridled demolitions of the two past decades, composers (I speak about those who participated in the festival) want to build again, and they are generally doing that rather well. This work of reconstruction is of course done on a level much behind the trenches and the barbed wire of the music known as revolutionary. There is absolutely no trace of atonality, not even in Hindemith's recent sonata for violin and piano. Hardly some incursions, quite harmless, in the bitonal jungle, passing almost unnoticed. . . . These are the attempts to reconstruct made by those among today's composers who were able to escape the revolutionary muddle with their mind and their sensibility intact.

Survivors of “the revolutionary muddle” performed in this festival were Jean Françaix, representing France; Karl Holer, Werner Egk, Wolfgang Fortner, Paul Graener, Ernst Pepping, Wilhelm Maler, Paul Hindemith, Gerhard Frommel, Max Trapp and, curiously, Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari, representing Germany; Gian Francesco Malipiero, representing Italy; Lars-Eric Larsson, representing Sweden; Knudåge Riisage, representing Denmark; Conrad Beck and Albert Möschinger, representing Switzerland; Josip Slavenski, representing Yugoslavia; Petros Petrides representing Greece; and Igor Stravinsky, representing . . . Stravinsky. Besides the two Balkan composers – who should have been exempted from participating, since they hadn't passed through the “revolutionary muddle” –, most composers were writing neoclassical music, more precisely, neo-medieval, neo-renaissance and neo-baroque, which offered them the possibility to display their country's tradition, their contrapuntal technique and their disapproval of music's “demolishers”.

THE KALOMIRIS CASE

The situation described arguably hit Manolis Kalomiris the harder. As said, he remained in Athens, wishing to continue establishing the infrastructure of a musical life analogous to that of Western musical centres, and to this end he put into operation all his vitality and brainpower. Most of the organisations on which Athens' musical life was based, at least in the first half of the 20th

century, were his work. He had to overcome huge local obstacles, and was also obliged to protect his fame in the West as the leader of the Greek composers of "National Music", as discussed above.

In the 1930s, after a succession of national and personal calamities, Kalomiris had lost his optimism. Being very much aware of the importance that the relations with powerful political figures has always had in Greece, he pursued an inconsistent political path: in 1930, under Venizelos' last service as prime minister, Kalomiris was attracted by Alexandros Papanastassiou's efforts for the "complete liberation of the Balkan countries from every Western influence" (*Les Balkans* 1933: 589) and the creation of a Balkan Commonwealth. He thus for a while put aside his aim to integrate Greek music in Western Europe, and seemed to make a compromise with the idea of limiting his ambitions within the Balkans. What is extremely interesting in connection with this change is that he was very much fascinated by Slavensky's *Balkanophony*, a work that he distinguished in a Balkan music concert given in Athens as "the first example of a music that aspired to draw its inspiration from the folk sources of all Balkan music" (Kalomiris 1930: 1).¹⁴ In 1952 and 1953, after the short period of renewed optimism produced by the dictatorship of Ioannes Metaxas and the German occupation, Kalomiris again limited his ambitions to the Balkans; he visited Tito's Yugoslavia and worked for the creation of a Balkan musical amphictyony.¹⁵ Towards the end of this decade, when the Cold War cultural policy had introduced avant-garde music to Athens and the national music school was regarded as old-fashioned, he sought recognition on the other side of the Iron Curtain, visiting the Soviet Union in 1957.

When the Germans left Greece, the last puppet prime minister, Ioannes Ralles, said, announcing his resignation, that he felt at peace with what he had done and that he was "ready to account for his acts in front of competent authorities" (Papastratis 2000: 63). Fanaticism between the Left and the Right, which would lead to the disastrous civil war of 1946-1949, was already high, distrust and suspicion reigning in Athens.

In 1945 Kalomiris published two texts: in one he was defending his actions during the Metaxas dictatorship and the German occupation, in the other he was expressing his deepest thoughts and feelings about his musical world, speaking about himself as a composer and as a benefactor of Greek music.

¹⁴ Kalomiris was the music critic of the daily *Ethnos*.

¹⁵ About this trip of Kalomiris, see Romanou 2010b.

The first text – kept in the Manolis Kalomiris Archive in sixty-seven manuscript pages and forty typed pages in carbon paper copies –¹⁶ was sent to both the Ministry of Education and to the new president of the Lyric Scene (the Athens Opera House whose president Kalomiris was in 1944-1945).¹⁷ He was prepared to present this apology also to the National Liberation Front (branch of the Greek Communist Party), the main resistance group against the Germans, in the bureaus of which people were testifying against nazi collaborators, but was not summoned to make this apology. Kalomiris, who had been a generous father-like figure to many young musicians, some of whom had participated in Leftist resistance groups, was protected by their intervention to the Communist party, as Yannis Belonis' research has shown (Belonis 2004). Defending himself, Kalomiris appears not to have yet understood the real causes of his success in Germany or its temporary nature and to still honestly believe that Greek art music was now included in the repertory of Western music ensembles and in Western Music History. He appears to still ignore that his success was a consequence of politics, of the nazi persecution of progressive music and Jewish musicians, of the nazi propagation of stylistic regression and of the abandonment of Germany's cultural isolation in view of the Olympic Games.

The other text was read at the Union of Greek Composers on March 4th, 1945, in order to announce his intention not to be a candidate for the Union's presidency for another term.¹⁸ As Apostolos Kostios observes, however, it was really meant to be read by a wider public (Kostios 2007: 32), and Kalomiris managed to publish it.¹⁹ Therein, he speaks of the importance music creation has always had in his life, and tries to distinguish musicians into those who make music just to gain money and fame, and those who

feel music as the most inconceivable and admirable transformation of the most refined vibrations of the human soul, a God's gift to mortals in order to convert their tears, their pain and their love into sound flowers; those who . . . see with awe music as a real artistic hierurgy. (Kostios 2007)

¹⁶ They were shown to me by musicologist Myrto Economides, who is in charge of the Kalomiris Archives.

¹⁷ Large excerpts of this text are quoted in Kostios 2007: 58-77.

¹⁸ His speech is given in full in Kostios 2007: 32-36.

¹⁹ Without giving any publication details and baring its title, *Omilia Manoli Kalomiri sti Yeniki Sinelefsi Elinon Mousourgon stis 4 Marti 1945* [Speech of Manolis Kalomiris in the General Assembly of the Union of Greek Composers on March 4th, 1945].

As if wanting to confess all his inner thoughts, he declared: “We must begin to look reality in the face, we must speak the truth, and acknowledge it” (Kostios 2007: 32). Such a truth is, he admitted,

that most of us Greek musicians do not have the flawless musicality that one meets in musicians from other countries with an old musical culture. Among us, unfortunately, as a rule, if one is gifted with a natural musical disposition, as it happens mainly in the Ionian Islands, one will lack in psychological culture. I only know one Greek musician who possesses both, but he lacks the creative breath, and at this time he is unfortunately abroad.²⁰ (Kostios 2007: 34)

Towards the end of his speech, he acknowledges that he has come to the conclusion that himself is a composer “by mistake. . . . I was born a Poet, and I feel and understand music through the lens of Poetry” (Kostios 2007: 35).

Kalomiris was aware that the infrastructure he helped build was shallow, that Western music did not spread to the people, and that therefore the integration of Greek music in the Western culture could not be accomplished. But his whole life was a struggle for that purpose, and he dared to face the truth only in the crucial moments of his career.

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²⁰ The musician he refers to is Dimitri Mitropoulos.

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