

Dimitri Conomos

The Musical Tradition of Mount Athos

The story of music on Mount Athos is fascinating and altogether unique. The Holy Mountain is one of the only places in the world that can boast a continuous recorded musical tradition that stretches back uninterrupted for over a thousand years.

From the beginning of coenobitic life on the Holy Mountain (10th century) till today, the chant tradition fostered by the monks at the Byzantine monastic services has passed through four stages. Music copying, 10th - 12th centuries, marks the first stage. The monks recorded hymns in musical manuscripts that had been set to music in pre-Athonite religious centers: both monastic and non-monastic. There is no evidence at this time of newly composed music on the Holy Mountain.

The second stage, 13th - 15th centuries, the twilight of the Byzantine Empire, marks an era of flourishing cultural and artistic creativity: the so-called 'Palaeologan Renaissance'. Music had its own contribution to make in this revival and Athos can now be seen less as a centre that preserved older musical traditions and more one that produced skilled musicians and composers with a new and innovative style of chant.

The next stage - the third - is the Ottoman period: 15th - 19th centuries, which saw increasing artistic liberalism and even the absorption of oriental musical idioms into certain species of monastic and urban sacred song. New styles emerge and Athonite composers, along with their colleagues in urban centers, embark upon fresh explorations that carry the music forward as a living art into the 18th and 19th centuries.

Finally, the fourth period is that of the present age. With the introduction of musical type in 1820, hand-written manuscripts cease, a standard repertory is widely circulated in printed anthologies (and, more recently, on CDs) and elements of Western European musical theory and practice are wedded to the pre-existing Athonite musical repertory and tradition.

Today there are around 3000 musical manuscripts preserved in the Athonite monastic libraries. The greatest number of them (perhaps 90%) dates from the 16th century and later while the remainders are from the Byzantine epoch proper, the 10th to 15th centuries. It is this 10% that constitutes an important source of documentation, not only for the evolution of the Byzantine musical style, but also for the evolution of Byzantine musical notation and for the evolution of Byzantine liturgy.

Maria Grăjdian

Temporary Authenticity.

Cultural Identity in Takarazuka Revue's Quiet Challenge of Tradition

Nowadays, it is an open secret that Japan is redefining superpower – though as cultural issue; a faithful interpreter of its ambitions is Takarazuka Revue. Alongside its 95-years history, Takarazuka Revue, an exceptionally famous all-female popular music theater and Japan's leading figure in entertainment industry has proved itself a contradictory symbol of the Japanese world, an imaginary battlefield between gender, culture and politics in modern Japan. Concurrently anachronistic in its gender exhibition and progressive in its performance practice, Takarazuka Revue reconstructs in a specific way asymmetric interactions between identity and alterity, challenging traditional concepts such as model and copy, all wrapped up in sparkling tunes,

luxurious productions and gorgeous costumes. While focusing on the postwar period, since the re-opening of the Grand Theater in Takarazuka in 1946, which marked an unexpected tendency in Takarazuka Revue's self-orchestration through the increasing lavishness of its performances and the intensified commercialization of its increasingly androgynous *otokoyaku* figures, it is this paper's goal to underline some of Takarazuka Revue's strategies to implement its – namely the Japanese – historical worldview by means of a new form of cultural imperialism: the staging of identity as simultaneously ideological base and aesthetical superstructure of late-modern conservatism. The transition from ethics to aesthetics and from imagination to ideology reflects Takarazuka Revue's metamorphose from an insignificant socio-cultural medium to a powerful political-economic message in postwar Japan.

Valentina Sandu-Dediu

Romanian Music and Mathematical Procedures

Some Romanian avant-garde composers were fascinated by mathematics and logic. Therefore, they generated compositional systems based on set theory (Anatol Vieru, 1926-1998), on graph theory (Stefan Niculescu, 1927-2008), on Fibonacci sequence and golden ratio (Wihelm Georg Berger, 1929-2003), on thermodynamics, catastrophe theory a.o. (Aurel Stroe, 1932-2008).

Their music could be described mainly as radical modernist, and should be analyzed in the context of the communist Romanian society, such scores being oriented towards the west European avant-garde and not towards socialist realism.

Thomas Beimel

Chaos & Harmony – Homage to the Composer Aurel Stroe

The life of the Romanian composer Aurel Stroe, who died in Mannheim in 2008, can be split into three periods. The works from the first period stem from the time directly after he completed his studies at the Bucharest University of Music. They were the result of a scientific impulse; based on algorithms and the latest computer technology, he generated audacious sound formations that are characterised by a significant distance from any topics of Romanian national music. A complete setting to music of *Orestie* is the central feature of Aurel Stroe's middle period. This work was conceived as the allegorical murder of a tyrant; and as a consequence Stroe left the country. After a stay of 12 months in the USA, he settled in Germany. In his marginalised life on the banks of the Rhine, he devoted himself to the master works of his third period, which are the subject of this homage. These works reflect his life experiences that are characterised by many ruptures. Realising that the various musical practices with which the composer, born in Bucharest in 1932, had come into contact were incompatible and that, in particular, the tuning systems created ideological frames that could not be combined, he began to create large scale symphonic works. They reflect this insight and make it possible for the listener to experience the abyss between different cultures. In works such as *Ciaconna con alcune licenze*, a sober empirical approach is combined with speculation on the universal nature of things. In this way, Aurel Stroe reaches a genesis of a cosmos of sound in which chaos and harmony are kept in balance.