

“Thanatos as Muse”: from German National Romanticism to Greek Contemporary Music

Introduction

“Thanatos”, according to Euripides, the ancient Greek tragic poet, is the God of Death, the son of the Night and the twin brother of Sleep. He is dressed in black, living in hell and either walking among people holding his mortal sword or covering them with his wings. According to Hesiod’s “Theogony”, the Muses were Greek goddesses of inspiration, daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne (Memory) nine in number, representing different forms of poetry, according “Theogony” of Hesiod. Their names: Clio, Euterpe, Thalia, Melpomene, Terpsichore, Erato, Polyhymnia, Urania, Calliope.

Ancient poets were seeking for inspiration on Mount Helicon, where the Muses were occasionally living. In the modern era, poets like Goethe, Kavafis, Elytis, and musicians like Schubert, Hadzidakis, Theodorakis, had “Thanatos as Muse” during a period of their life.

The theme “Thanatos” first appeared in ancient Greek tragedy in the form of infanticide (Euripides’ “*Medea*”), of fratricide (Euripides’ “*Phoenician Women*” or Aeschylus’ “*Seven against Thebes*”) of suicide (Sophocles’ “*Women of Trachis*”), of a heroic death in the battle (e.g. the heroic death of Achilles during the Trojan War in Homer’s “*Iliad*”) and crosses over the centuries, sometimes more and other less obvious in the art worldwide. It emerges again in the literary, artistic or musical works of European Romanticism. For example, it appears in the form of the dead beloved, as in Lamartine’s “*Lake*”, in the form of the dead child as in Goethe’s “*Exotic*”, in the form of murdered Greeks in the battle with the Turkish occupants as in Delacroix’s “*The Massacre of Chios*” (1824, Louvre) or in the form of a funeral procession as in Chopin’s “*Funeral March*”. The constant presence of the theme of “Thanatos” in literature, painting, music worldwide, and over the centuries, only shows the anxiety of the artist towards the finiteness of life and the inexorable ravages of time.¹

The aim of this paper is to deal with Schubert’s Quartet “*The Death and the Maiden*” and the cycle of songs “*Winterreise*” and compare them with contemporary Greek musical works of Manos Hatzidakis, Lena Platonos and Mikis Theodorakis (considered as the “Greek Schubert”), based on poetry by O. Elytis, C. Kavafis, C. Karyotakis, Y. Ritsos etc.

Schubert’s works: “*Der Tod und das Mädchen*” and “*Der Winterreise*”

Of all Schubert’s (1797–1828) great chamber works, the D minor quartet written in 1824 is the most somber. The four movements of “*The Death and the Maiden*” are in minor mode, a startling consequence of Schubert’s dark state of mind at this time. The previous year the first signs of his venereal disease had appeared.² For much of 1823, he was sick with a tertiary stage of syphilis outburst and in May he had to be hospitalized.

The quartet is named by the theme of the second movement, which Schubert took from a song he wrote in 1817 of the same title. He adapted the piano prelude of the song to the theme of the variation movement in his quartet. This theme is a death knell that accompanies the song about the terror and comfort of death. The text of the song is derived from a poem written by the German poet Matthias Claudius (1740–1815). The Maiden tells to the Death to pass her by and not to touch her because she is still young. But Death asks her to give him her hand by saying that he is a friend who did not come to punish her, but to let her sleep softly in his arms:

¹ <http://el.wikipedia.org/ρομαντισμός/λογοτεχνία>.

² Donat, M., *Schubert-Beethoven: String Quartets*. Hagen Quartet. Hamburg, Deutsche Grammophon GmbH, 1992.

The Maiden:
 Pass me by! Oh, pass me by!
 Go, fierce man of bones!
 I am still young! Go, rather,
 And do not touch me.
 And do not touch me.

Death:
 Give me your hand, you beautiful and tender form!
 I am a friend, and come not to punish.
 Be of good cheer! I am not fierce,
 Softly shall you sleep in my arms!

It is set for voice and piano. It begins with an introduction in D minor in the time signature 2/2. The section is quiet and slow and presents the musical theme of Death. [See Example 1].

Example 1

Der Tod und das Mädchen
 Matthias Claudius (1760-1812) Franz Schubert (1797-1828)
 D.531 (Op. 7, No 3, Februar 1817)

Mässig, ♩ = 24
 Singstimme
 PianoForte
pp (sempre con Pedale e Sordina)

Etwas geschwinder.
 Das Mädchen.
 Vor-ü-ber! ach, vor-ü-ber! geh, wil-der Knos-chenmann! Ich
 bin noch jung, geh! Lie-ber! und rüh-re mich nicht an, und
 schön und zart Ge-bild, bin Freund und kom-me nicht zu-stra-ßen.
 Sei gutes Muth! ich bin nicht wild, Sollst saß'n in mei-nen Ar-men schliefen.

Wie oben.
 Der Tod.
 rüh-re mich nicht an. Gib dei-ne Hand, du
pp diviso. *pp*

♩ Franz Schubert: Der Tod und das Mädchen (D.531) ♩

♩ Franz Schubert: Der Tod und das Mädchen (D.531) ♩

fer.

The String quartet No. 14 in D minor, was first played in 1826 in a private home, and was not published until 1831, three years after Schubert's death. All four movements of the quartet recall death, from the violent opening unison to the final *tarantella*. It is characterized by sudden dramatic shifts from *fortissimo* to *pianissimo*, from the lyrical to the compelling and dramatic. A driving undercurrent of triplets is a recurring motif in all four movements³. [See Example 2].

³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Death_and_the_Maiden_Quartet.

Example 2

In 1826, the quartet was played again at a house concert in the home of the composer Franz Lachner (1803–1890) with violinist Ignaz Schuppanzigh (1776–1830) leading. In 1878, Robert Franz (1815–1892) transcribed it for piano duet and Gustav Mahler (1860–1911) arranged it for string orchestra. In the 20th century, the British composer John Foulds (1880–1939) and the American composer Andy Stein made versions for full symphony orchestra. It has also appeared as incidental music in numerous films and inspired other works.⁴

When in 1824 Schubert read Wilhelm Möller's (1794–1827) poems and composed the cycle of songs *Winterreise*, the loss of his health was the main reason of his deep melancholy. Pain and loss in the text are unforgettably reflected in the music.⁵

The twenty-four songs of *Winterreise* are structurally complex and varied. Following his rejection in love, the protagonist ends up resigning himself to the chilling alienation experienced in the last song by “the hurdy-gurdy man”.⁶ They were originally written for tenor voice but frequently transposed to suit other vocal ranges. The cycle of songs was composed in two parts, each containing twelve songs. The first part was composed in February 1827 and the second in October 1827.

In this cycle, Schubert raises the importance of the pianist to a role equivalent to that of the singer. The rhythms of piano constantly express the moods of the poet and offer strong impressions to the nature imagery of the poems; the voices of the elements, the creatures and active objects, the rushing storm, the crying wind, the water under the ice, birds singing, ravens croaking, dogs baying, the rusty weathervane grating, the post horn calling and the droning and repeated melody of the hurdy-gurdy.⁷

³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Death_and_the_Maiden_Quartet.

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ Grob, T. & Esterhazy, C., Schubert in love? In Black, L. *Schubert: Music and Belief*, Great Britain, Boydell Press, 2003.

⁶ Hoffman-Erdrecht, L., Schubert Franz. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musician*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001, Vol.22, pp. 655-730.

⁷ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winterreise>.

This last song *Der Leiermann* (The Hurdy-Gurdy Man) is Schubert's meeting with Death. Many aspects of its composition and even of its performance are directly related to the function and to the droning string sound of the hurdy-gurdy. It is a great programmatic piece that inextricably links music and language. Each musical aspect of the work has some relevance to the text and the text to the music [See Example 3]. From the course of events and from other textual evidence, it seems that our narrator not only sees a human *Leiermann* in this song, but Death personified. The hurdy-gurdy man (Death) is behind the village, wandering in the graveyard. He totters on ice, illustrating the fragility of life, while playing with fingers numbed from cold. No one notices him, as death creeps up unobserved. The hound growls at the unwelcome view of Death, but he is aware of his power and he continues to play incessantly, just as death is incessant. In his depression and desire for death, the narrator asks to go with Death as he plays the songs:⁸

The hurdy-gurdy man

*There, behind the village,
stands a hurdy-gurdy-man,
And with numb fingers
he plays the best he can.*

*Barefoot on the ice,
he staggers back and forth,
And his little plate
remains ever empty.*

*No one wants to hear him,
no one looks at him,
And the hounds snarl
at the old man.*

*And he lets it all go by,
everything as it will,
He plays, and his hurdy-gurdy
is never still.*

*Strange old man,
shall I go with you?
Will you play your hurdy-gurdy
to my songs?*

Even though Schubert sets into music poems of great poets, such as J. W. von Goethe (1749–1832) and F. Schiller (1759–1805), *Winterreise* is the most mature and along with *Die Schöne Møllerin*, they constitute the fundamentals of the German Lied. They have strongly influenced not only the style, but also the vocal method and technique in German classical music as a whole.

⁸ Doublestein, M. G., *Der Lieiermann* by Franz Schubert, *Form and Analysis*, November 6, 2001.

Example 3

WINTERREISE
24. Der Lehrmann.

(Orig. A moll.) *Erstmal langsam.*

SCHUBERT #12

Franz SCHUBERT
Wilhelm MÜLLER

Dieß kein hübsches Döckchen ist, es ist ein
 und nur nur ein Theilgen, dieß ist es, was er kann.
 Ihn hat auf dem Eis er wankt er hin und her.
 und sein klein sein Teil hat. Macht ihm im Winter keine,
 nicht ihm ein-ein kein.

WINTERREISE
24. Der Lehrmann.

(Orig. A moll.) *Erstmal langsam.*

SCHUBERT #22

Kei-ner mag ihn hübsch, kei-ner sieht ihn an,
 und der hat die Lust-ten
 um dieß al-tes Mann.
 Und er läßt es gehen al-les, wie er will,
 dacht, und sei-er Lie-er sieht ihm sein-er will.
 dacht, und sei-er Lie-er nicht ihm sein-er will.
 Was der-er über Al-les,
 Will er mit-er Lied ein-er Lie-er drehen?

Manos Hatzidakis and Lena Platonos: their “Death”

Manos Hatzidakis (1925–1994) was a Greek composer born in Xanthi, Greece. He was one of the leaders of the art-song movement in Greece during the 60's. He set into music poems by the greatest Greek poets like Odysseus Elytis (1911–1996), Constantine Cavafis (1863–1933), Nikos Gkatsos (1911–1992), Dionysios Solomos (1798–1857), even by the ancient ones, such as Sappho (ca. 630/612 BC–570 BC) and Euripides (ca. 480 BC–406 BC). He composed music for films, theater, ballets, piano and orchestra. In 1960, he received an Oscar Award for the Best Original Song for his song “Never on Sunday” interpreted by Melina Merkouri in Jules Dassin’s film “Never on Sunday” which brought him international success and became a worldwide hit.

With his music, his lectures, his action and his personal life, he greatly affected music culture and culture in general in Greece after the Second World War until his death from heart disease and diabetes. He posed a deeper inner voice that had nothing to do with the context of each period, but sensitivity and the personal passion that everyone has for life.⁹

He composed his songs so as to fulfill the gaps of his personal life as he claimed in the introduction of his collection “Romaiki Agora”. Even though his cycle of songs “The C. N. S. Cycle” included in the collection of his personal poems, was a cycle of songs for piano and voice recalling the German lied in its form if not in its style, three songs from other collections are related to the text of *Der Winterreise* and “*The Death and the Maiden*” of F. Schubert; these are: “I Pikra simera” (The bitterness today), “Peribanou” and “I mikri Rallou” (The young Rallou). In the first song “I pikra simera”, given to public in 1970 in poetry by Nikos Gatsos, a man complains, because his beloved rejected him. And now the sky is crying, his dream went up in smoke, the world is empty, it rains and he hides his tears waiting for his beloved to return. In the instructions given by the composer to the singer, it was mentioned that the introduction should be like a pray of a child.¹⁰ [See Example 4]

It is a Greek art song of the twentieth century in 4/4 with piano introduction, two stanzas and a refrain with the Greek musical instrument “bouzouki” at the forefront (piano, guitar, percussions etc.):

The bitterness today

*The bitterness today
does not have a borderline
and you should not have
denied me.*

*Once, alas
in mid-winter*

*I brought you the sun
to get warm.*

*Look how the sky is crying
it is not a celebration anymore.
The dream turned into smoke.*

Tell me why, why.

*Look how the sky is crying
but you, my heart, do not cry
and when the thunder strikes
sing a song.*

*It's getting dark, night is falling
the world is empty.*

*I hide my tears
and I'm waiting.*

*But you are not coming.
It is raining and you are getting wet.
You have given me
a venomous glass.*

⁹ Tsampras G., *Manos Hatzidakis*, in Papyros Larousse Britannica Encyclopaedia, Athens, Ed. Papyros, 2000, vol. 61, pp. 22-23.

¹⁰ Kritsiolis, <http://vinylmaniac.madblog.gr/.../MANOS-XATZIΔAKIS>, 2008.

Example 4

Η ΠΙΚΡΑ ΣΗΜΕΡΑ

Μουσική: Μ. Χατζιδάκις
Στίχοι: Ν. Γκάτσος

The two young girls by Manos Hatzidakis in the poems by Nikos Gatsos are named *Peribanou* and *Rallou*. The first one [See Example 5] came probably from the East, the second one [See Example 6] by a choreographer, friend of Hatzidakis. In the first song, the young lady was fifteen years old. She looked like a seashell at the bottom of the morning star and she wrote her name on the sky's looking-glass with the wing of a drowned seagull. But life's passionate wave swept boats and oars and in the great, indifferent world who is left to remember her? Probably, Death! In fact, it is the song "Noble Dame" from the music album "Reflections" released in 1969 with lyrics written in English for the band "New York Rock and Roll Ensemble". The version with the Greek lyrics was recorded in 1983. It is a song of two stanzas and a refrain in 5/8, a common rhythm in Greek folk songs with an interesting orchestration using some of the main musical instruments of a symphonic orchestra and a harpsichord as well:

Peribanou

*Peribanou the children called her, Peribanou
and she was fifteen years old.
She wrote her name on the sky's looking-glass
with the wing of a drowned seagull.*

*But life's passionate wave
swept boats and oars.
And in the great, uncaring world
who is left to remember her?*

*Peribanou I called her too, Peribanou.
Never mind that no-one ever heard me.
She looked like a seashell at the bottom of the morning star
before my heart turned to stone.*

But life's passionate wave...

Example 5

ΠΕΡΙΠΤΙΑΝΟΥ

Μουσική: Μ. Χατζιδάκις
Λίρες: Ν. Γαλιάνος

In the second song, (The young Rallou) forty brave men (“palikaria”) on the shore of the sea gambled at dice the young Rallou. Nobody knows who will be the lucky one. The moon gets jealous and sends from the mountains the dread horseman who rules us all. He, Death, like a snake, snatched the girl off on a journey without return, to a sunless cave. And the forty brave men lost at dice the young Rallou. Death does not want to solace her like in Schubert’s lied, but to snatch her, showing, once more, his power in front of the forty lion-hearted brave men. It is a song in 4/4 [See Example 6], given to public in 1971 from his music album “Tis gis to chrisafi” (Earth’s gold) with songs on the Greek rhythms of “chasapico” and “zeibekiko” among others and the use of “bouzouki” in his orchestration.¹¹

Young Rallou

*Forty brave men on the shore of the sea
gambled at dice, gambled for little Rallou.
East and west, of the world and everyone in it
they are asking who will win the beauty.
Short is the summer, vast is time,
however nobody does know
who will be the lucky one.
Forty brave men on the shore of the sea
gambled at dice, gambled for little Rallou.*

*Forty lion-hearted brave men
threw the dice one crazy night.
The jealous moon sends from the mountains
the dread horseman who rules us all.*

¹¹ Ibid.

*And Death, like a snake, snatched the girl off
 on a journey without return, to the sunless cave.
 Forty brave men on the shore of the sea
 lost at dice, they lost little Rallou.
 Forty brave men on the shore of the sea
 gambled at dice, gambled for little Rallou.
 East and west, of the world and everyone in it
 they are asking who will win the beauty.*

Example 6



An “intellectual child” of Manos Hatzidakis was Lena Platonos as she had a professional relationship with him for many years and a close friendship. She was born in 1951 in Crete, Greece. She is a pianist and a composer of electronic and art song music. She composes songs, music for theater, for ballets, for the television and pieces of contemporary “classical” music.

In two of her albums she set to music thirteen poems of K. Kavafis and thirteen of K. Kariotakis (1896–1928), two Greek poets whose poems and life were inextricably linked to love and death. The first one died of throat cancer and the second one committed suicide after being infected with syphilis.

The last album by Lena Platonos was that of the songs on the thirteen poems by K. Kavafis in 2010. Songs that speak of love, of lonely wandering and of death with electronic, rock, trip hop and industrial sounds; with a male and a female singer on a guitar, bass, drums and keyboard accompaniment. A modern Kavafis set to music by a composer of the twenty-first century, writing for “candles” that quench the one after the other, as our lives do.

Candles

*The days of our future stand in front of us
like a row of little lit candles --
golden, warm, and lively little candles.*

*The past days remain behind us,
a mournful line of extinguished candles;
the ones nearest are still smoking,
cold candles, melted, and bent.*

*I do not want to look at them; their form saddens me,
and it saddens me to recall their first light.
I look ahead at my lit candles.*

*I do not want to turn back, lest I see and shudder
at how fast the dark line lengthens,
at how fast the extinguished candles multiply.*

Her first album, entitled *Karyotaki* that was supposed to be given to public in 1981, was in poetry by K. Karyotakis (thirteen poems as well). The melancholy that characterizes the entire work of the poet is reflected with the best way in the composition and orchestration of Lena Platonos. A string quartet, an electric bass, a piano, drums and a guitar are the musical instruments used; they ascribe to the poems a deeper and duller color; they are interpreted by a female voice singing for the “dark” coming in poet’s life while “dying”.

Night

*The kids that are playing in the spring’s afternoon
-a faraway yell-,
the wind that is whispering words with the lips of roses
and stays,*

*the open windows that breathe the hour,
my empty room,
a train that it’ll come from a foreign land,
my lost dreams,*

*the sound of the bells that is fading out, and the night that falls
continuously to the city,
to the people’s look, to the sky’s mirror,
now to my whole life...
Dying*

*Hopeless soul in sluggish spring’s evening,
while, being hurt, you will be closing your golden wings,
while you will be waiting something as mercy,
poor heart, mortally but eternal sad;*

*When you will reach the horizon, you will see
love going away like hate, all of your passions become like spleen ,
When it will appears from life’s marvelous flowers
like myrrh the disappointment, my dreamer soul*

*The ultimate moment that you are going to remember
with just a smile just the good and the bad things –
hopeless soul, what are you going to say, to the sea, to the wind?
oh, what are you going to say, narrow heart, in front of the pale sunset?*

“Thanatos as Muse” for Mikis Theodorakis

However, although Karyotakis’ poetry “conveys a sense of futility, of lost and that his attitude is in general counter heroic and counter ideal”¹² the world-renowned Greek composer, thinker and activist, Mikis Theodorakis, who throughout his life advocated and professed the faith in life and the value of the sacrifice for the achievement of high humanitarian ideals, is not only marked by the poetry of Karyotakis, which discovers in 1940 in Preveza, birthplace of the poet, but he is also based on it and he composes a cycle of songs and his first opera between 1983 and 1985.

It is during this period, after having being covered in glory during the first post-dictatorship years, when Greeks worshiped the ‘prohibited’ from dictatorship songs, that Theodorakis faces “exclusion” in its own country, as all the media and the record labels turn against him and pursue his artistic and political extinction. It is during this period that he is officially proclaimed as “anti-Greek”¹³, because he is willing to serve the cooperation between Greece and Turkey. By setting Karyotakis’ poems, Theodorakis tries to “clarify things, despite the conspiracy of silence”¹⁴. More specifically, he sets twelve poems of Karyotakis to music, which belong to the collection of poems “*The pain of humans and things*” 1919, “*Nipenthi*” 1921 [The word nipenthi is of Homeric origin (“nipenthes medicine,” Odyssey, d 221) and means: to banish mourning. Baudelaire described as ‘pharmakon nepenthes’ the opium = to banish mourning, according to a text used by Karyotakis as preface to his collection of poems] and “*Elegy and Satires*” (1927) and he creates the cycle of songs “Poem/ (Karyotakis)” for voice, two bouzouki, flute, oboe, electric guitar, acoustic guitar, classical guitar, two cellos, bass and percussion lock (orchestration: T. Ganoselis, singing: V. Papaconstantinou).

A typical song is “*You were saying to me about your life*” [See Example 7] based on the third stanza of the poem “*Strophes*” (= “*Turns*”) included in the collection of poems “*Nipenthi*”. With this poem, the composer mourns his lost youth when fighting for his homeland:

“You were saying to me about your life”

*You were saying about your life to me,
about the lost youth,
about our weeping love,
about its own death,
and while a humid glimpse
was crossing your eyes,
a pale sunbeam had entered
from the open window.*

This song is one of those in the song cycle “Poem/ Karyotakis” to be included by Theodorakis in the opera “*Kostas Karyotakis / (The Metamorphoses of Dionysus)*” composed nearly in the same period. The opera consists of two acts and it is based on some previously set poems of Karyotakis, on a poem by Kostas Varnalis and on a libretto inspired by the myth of Dionysus, written by Theodorakis himself. This opera is a “bitter satire”¹⁵ of the social reality of that period, based on the ‘opera-buffa’ style. At the same time, “*this is a very lyrical, human, gentle, dreamy, tragic opera... The poet (i. e. Karyotakis) – the central figure of the opera – is in a constant ecstasy. His internal doubts and his awareness of his inability to save the world, to redeem the human being, make him, through his own contradictions, a fragile, wounded, vulnerable person and lead him to overcome oneself, that is to say they lead him to self-destruction, to sacrifice, to death*”.¹⁶

With this opera, Theodorakis “*mourns for his country, Greece that he does not recognize anymore, for which he had sacrificed a lot during his lifetime*”.¹⁷

¹² <http://www.sansimera.gr/biographies/204>

¹³ WAGNER Guy, *Μίκης Θεοδωράκης: μια ζωή για την Ελλάδα* (Mikis Theodorakis: A life for Greece), Greek translation by Eugenia-Christine Grammatikopoulou, Athens, Ed. Typothito, 2002, p. 392.

¹⁴ THEODORAKIS Mikis, *Μελοποιημένη Ποίηση* (Poetry set into music), Athens, Ed. Ypsilon, vol.I/1997, p. 25.

¹⁵ THEODORAKIS Mikis, *Μελοποιημένη Ποίηση* (Poetry set into music), Athens, Ed. Ypsilon, vol. 3, 1999, p. 51.

¹⁶ *Ο συμφωνικός Θεοδωράκης*, (Mikis Theodorakis, the symphonist), Athens, Ed. Patakis, 2008, p. 283.

¹⁷ Wagner Guy, op. cit., p. 392.

Example 7

But if Theodorakis with the above mentioned opera and songs is referring with a figurative way to death as he means the death of his ideals, the futility of his struggles and his disappointment about the plight of his country, there are numerous references to death itself in his various and voluminous work. To death with which he has to be confronted from his early adolescence because of his participation both in the Resistance against the Italian – German forces during the World War II and the Greek Civil War that followed. Nearly two decades later, during the military dictatorship in Greece, he met death again in the detention center of the General Police Station at Bouboulinas street in Athens, in the Averof prison and in the camp of Oropos. Then again, he opposed to Death remotely: for example, by supporting the innocent victims of recent military operations (i. e. the strong support to the Serbian people during the Yugoslav civil war). Nevertheless, he declares that he is reconciled with death and since the 90's, he stated: “*I expect to dance zeibekiko with Grim Reaper!*”

“Elegy No. 2/The death of the fighter” for violin and piano (1945), “The Cemetery” for chorus and string orchestra (1945), “Love and Death/Four Songs for Myrto” for voice and piano (1946-1948), “Elegy and Lament for Vassilis Zannos” for big symphonic orchestra (1948-1949), “Love and Death/Variations of the ballet Orpheus and Eurydice” ballet (1956-1958), “Epitaph” (1958), “The Song of the Dead Brother” (1960-1963), “Prophetic/For the murder of Gregoris Lambrakis” (1963), “Night of Death” (1968), “Liturgy N. 2/For children killed in war” choral music (1982), “Requiem/Sequence for those passed away/Dedicated to the memory of victims in the massacre of Kalavrita” ecclesiastic choral music (1983-1984): those are the operas where the reference to the theme of “Death” (“Thanatos”) is already in the title. This does not mean that into the other works there are not respective references.

Undoubtedly through the musical – poetical analysis of the cycle of songs “Epitaph” in poetry by Giannis Ritsos, with whom Theodorakis launched the “movement of the art-song” in 1958, the analysis of the popular oratorio “Axion Esti” in poetry by the Nobel laureate poet Odysseas Elytis, the analysis of the contemporary popular music drama “The Song of the Dead Brother” in poetry by the composer himself, and of the flow-song “My Sister Athena” in poetry by George Kouloukris (pseudonym of G. Fotinos) we could easily demonstrate the effect of “Thanatos” in the life and the creation of Mikis Theodorakis. But, as the first two works have been analysed in our paper last year during the 10th International Music Theory Conference, the third one has been presented in details during the 7th International Music Theory Conference in 2007 and a detailed analysis of the fourth one has been published in the 8th volume of the Lithuanian Musicology Review in 2007 as well, we have chosen to refer in this paper to mention six songs which are less studied, but especially known and loved in Greece and abroad. It is about: *The first dead, Lament, The brave one, Memorial, Epitaph and the One who's pledged.*

The song “*The Lament*” [See Example 9] in poetry by Georgia Deliyiannis-Anastasiades, is the absolute expression of the ineffable sorrow for the death of the young combatants:

Lament

*The pain is indescribable
And bottomless the abyss.
Hell can't be measured
It's a chaos beyond one's reach.*

*More bitter than poison
There is not, there is not in this world
And all the earth's vipers
Feed on my entrails.*

Example 9

9. Θρήνος τῆς μάνας τοῦ Ἀναστασιάδη
(THRINOS TIS MĀNAS TOY ANASTASIADI)

9. Lamentation de la mère d'Anastasiades

Ποίηση: Γεωργία Δελιγιάννη-Ἀναστασιάδη
Poésie: Georgia Deliyianni-Anastasiadi

Lento Solm Rem La Rem

Ὁ πό - νος λό - για δέν ἔ - χει ἤ
O pó - nos lá - gia dén é - chi hī

ἀ - ἴου - σο τέ - λος δέν ἔ - χει κ' ἤ
á - vis - so té - los dén é - chi k' hī

κό - λα - ση μέ - τρα τό χα - ος εἰ - ναι ἀ - πια.
kó - las - si mé - tra tó há - os i - ne á - pra.

στο - Πιό πι - κρό - χι ἄ - πό φαρ - μά - χι δέν
stó - pió pi - kro - chi á - pó far - má - chi dén

ἔ - χει ὁ κό - σμος δέν ἔ - χει πιό πι - κρό -
é - chi ó kó - smos dén é - chi pió pi - kro -

χι ἄ - πό φαρ - μά - χι δέν ἔ - χει ὁ
chi á - pó far - má - chi dén é - chi ó

κό - σμος δέν ἔ - χει κ' ὅ - λες τῆς γῆς οἱ ὄ -
kó - smos dén é - chi k' ó - les tis gḗs oi ó -

χιές ἴα - γκώ - νουν τὰ σπλά - χνα μου.
hies ía - gkó - noun ta splá - chna mou.

The melody written in re minor and in a lento tempo, is characterized by a step by step movement as a “free imitation of the Byzantine chant”¹⁸. It is divided into two parts: the first one elegiac and mournful, the second one quite rhythmic, “hard”, “wild”, an expression of unbearable pain “biting the bowels”.

¹⁸ Holst Gail, *Μίκης Θεοδωράκης: Μύθος και Πολιτική στη σύγχρονη ελληνική μουσική*, (Mikis Theodorakis: Legend and Politics in contemporary Greek Music, Athens, Ed. Andromeda, 1980, p. 186.

The song “*The brave one*” [See Example 10] in lyrics by Notis Pergialis, describes the lordly hero-fighter in his meeting with Grim Reaper, the personification of Death according to the Greek mythology who came to lead him to Hades:

The brave one

*Like an eagle he was flying over the road
Admired by all from their windows
With his ebony-black eyes lowered
The brave one descended the road.*

*His eyes were darkened by a cloud
A bullet was plunged in his heart
His blood flowing splashed the sun
As now death was leading on.*

*The eyes are shut as are the hearts
Along with the windows
The Charon dashed galloping forth
While the brave one still had a smile.*

*But now today descends to Hades
And whom does the neighbourhood discuss and get alarmed about
Why do mounts and valleys remain dumb?
The brave one was descending the road.*

Example 10

8. Ο Λεβέντης 8. Le Vaillant
(O LEVÉNTIS)

Ποίηση: Νότη Περγιάλης
Poésie: Notis Peryallis

Εάν τόν άη - τό ψτε - ρού.γα.γε στη στρα.τα τόν κα.μα.
Sán tón ai - lá ps-te - rou.ga.ge sti strá.ta tón ka.ma.
λώ νή χει.το.νιάστá πα.ρα.θύ.ρια - μέ χα.μη.λά τά μαύ.ρα του τά
ló ni xi - to.niásta pa.ra.thi.ria - me ha.mi.lá ta máv.ra tou tá
μά.τια Λε.δέν.της ε ε ε ε ε ε ε.ρο.δό.λα.
má.tia Le.vén.tis e e e e e e e.ro.dó.la.
γε - Λέ.δέν.της ε ε ε ε ε ε ε.ρο.δό.λα. γε -
ge - Le.vén.tis e e e e e e e.ro.dó.la. ge -

This melody, “unusual for the theodorakian style”¹⁹ written in si minor, is also in tempo of march (4/4). The songs *Memorial*, *Epitaph* and *The One who’s pledged* belong to the cycle of songs “18 Short Songs of the Bitter Motherland” in poetry by Giannis Ritsos. The 18 poems of this collection of poems were written by the poet in 1968 at Leros, where he had been exiled by the regime of the colonels, and he dedicated them to Mikis Theodorakis. The composer in exile in Paris, received them in 1972, set them to music in 1973 and presented them to the Albert Hall in London as “prophetic songs”.

These are two verses poems written in a simple style that “aimed to touch the soul of the people”²⁰

¹⁹ op. cit., p. 187.
²⁰ Prevelakis Pantelis, *Ο Ποιητής Γιάννης Ρίτσος* (The Poet Yannis Ritsos), Athens, Ed. Estias, 1992 (3e ed.), p.377.

In *Epitaph* [See Example 12], the poet exalts the grace of the brave man who fell heroically in the battle and his way to Heaven:

Epitaph

*The pallikar who has fallen and his head remains upright
Is not covered by the damp ground, no worm is touching him,
A wing on his back is the cross and he keeps surging up high
Intermingling the mighty eagles and the golden angels.²¹*

The melody which starts with a typical introduction of the bouzouki, is written in re minor and in a slow zeibekikon rhythm.

Example 12

14. ΕΠΙΤΥΜΒΙΟ 14. ΕΡΙΤΑΡΗΕ
(ΕΡΙΤΙΜΒΙΟ)

Comme un cri
Εάν κραυγή

ΖΕΪΜΠΕΚΙΚΟΣ (Ζεϊμπέκικος)

Re m Mi Re m

Tó pal - li - ká - ri poú — pes - se — mór - thi tin
Tó παλ - λι - κά - ρι πού — πε - σε — μόρ - θή τήν

Re m Mi Re m Mi Re m

ke - fa - li - - - - - του — dén tó ske - pá - z'i
ke - φα - λί - - - - - τρου — dén τό σκε - πά - ζ'η

La Re m Mi Re m

yis ó - gri — skou - li - ki dén t'a - gi
δής ό - γρή — σκου - λι - κι dén τ'ά - γί - - - -

Mi Re m Re m Re m

zi -
ζει -

Rem La Rem La Si^b

Fte - ró sti rá - hi touσ stav - rós — ki' ó - lo hi
φτε - ρό στη ρά - χη τουσ σταυ - ρός — κι' ό - λο χυ -

La Sol m La Sol m La Sol m

má i t'a - psi lou — ké smi - yi touσ tra - noús — ai -
μάι τ'ά - ψή λου — και σμί - χει τούς τρα - νούσ - άη -

La Sol m La Sol m rit

toús ké toús chris - soús a - gé - - - - - lous -
τούσ και τούς χρυ - σούρ άγ - γέ - - - - - λους -

²¹ Translation by Amy Mims in MITSAKIS K., *Νεοελληνική Μουσική και Ποίηση, Ανθολογία* (Neo-Hellenic Music and Poetry, Anthology), Athens, Ed. Grigoris, 1979, p. 394.

The song *The One who's pledged* [See Example 13] talks about the fate of the Greek man which is none other than the continuing struggle for freedom. A fate that Greeks follow solitary, silently and patiently, along with their dead persons:

The One who's pledged

*Here the birds become silent, the church-bells become silent too
And the bitter Greek becomes silent together with his dead.
And upon the stone of silence, he sharpens his finger-nails,
He is alone and unhelped, the one who's pledged to liberty.*²²

The melody written in mi minor is very slow, like raindrops – in accordance with the composer's remark in the score – reinforcing the meaning of the lyrics.

Example 13

17 Ο ΤΑΜΕΝΟΣ 17. PROMIS
(Ο ΤΑΜΕΝΟΣ)

Très lent, comme des gouttes
Πολύ άργά, σταλαγματιές
Mim

E - dó so - pé - noun tá rou - liá so - pé - noun i kam - bá -
'E - ów sw - paí - noun tá pou - liá sw - paí - noun oi kam - pá -

Mim Rem Lam Rem Lam
nes so - pé - ni kí - ð pi - krós Po - miós ma - zi mé
nes sw - paí - vei kí - ð pi - krós raw - miós ma - zi mé

Lam
tous ne - krós - tou -
tous ve - krós - tou -

Lam Lam Mim Lam Sol Do
ké - pá stin pé - tra
kaí - pá stin pé - tra

Do Sol Lam
tis - sig - pis tá ni - hia toua - ko - ni - zi -
tēs - sig - pēs tá nú - chia toua - ko - ví - zei -

Lam Lam Mim Lam Sol
mo - ná - hos
mo - vá - hos

Do Rem Lam Rem Mim Rem Mim Do Rem Lam Mim Lam
ki - ð - vo - i - thi - tos tis lef - te - riás ta - mé - nos
ki - ð - ðo - í - ðn - tos tēs leu - te - riás ta - mé - nos

²² ibid, p. 396.

Epilogue-conclusions

“Thanatos” as well as loneliness and lonely wandering together with past or unfulfilled love is a common place to all composers and poets mentioned above. As far as poetry is concerned they are “similar”. As far as music is concerned they are so different, with modern sounds in the music of Lena Platonos which, nevertheless, gives the impression that “you are guided to the masterpieces of El Greco”.

On the contrary, the music of M. Hatzidakis on the poetry of N. Gatsos has more in common with Schubert’s music concerning orchestration and harmony. They both use instruments of the classical orchestra, as well as major and minor tonalities. As much as it regards the music of Theodorakis on poetry of Giannis Ritsos, Alekos Panagoulis etc., the influence of Byzantine, Greek folk and popular music is obvious and the songs are slightly reminiscent to the lyricism of Schubert’s music. Moreover, the instrumentation based almost exclusively on musical instruments of the popular Greek orchestra gives to these works a special “couleur locale”.

Santrauka

Tanatas kaip mūza: nuo vokiečių nacionalinio romantizmo iki šiuolaikinės graikų muzikos

Pasak antikos laikų graikų poeto tragiko Euripido, Tanatas – mirties dievas, Nakties sūnus ir Miego brolis dvynys. Jis apsirengęs juodai, gyvena pragare ir vaikštinėja tarp žmonių su mirtį nešančiu kardu arba pridengia juos savo sparnais.

Mūzos buvo įkvėpimo deivės, devynios Dzeuso ir Mnemosinės (atminties personifikacija) dukters, globojančios, pasak Hesiodo veikalo „Theogonas“, įvairias poezijos rūšis. Tai Klio, Euterpė, Talija, Melpomenė, Terpsichorė, Erata, Polymnija, Uranija, Kaliopė.

Antikos laikų poetai įkvėpimo ieškojo ant Helikono kalno, kur neretai apsigyvendavo mūzos. Moderniųjų laikų poetų (Goethe, Kavafis, Elytis ir kt.) ir muzikų (Schubertas, Hatzidakis, Theodorakis ir kt.) viso gyvenimo mūza – Tanatas.

Šio pranešimo tikslas – išnagrinėti F. Schuberto kvartetą „Mirtis ir mergelė“ bei dainų ciklą „Žiemos kelionė“ ir palyginti juos su šiuolaikinių graikų kompozitorių M. Hatzidakio, L. Platonos ir M. Theodorakio (vadinamo „graikų Šubertu“) kūriniais pagal O. Elyčio, C. Kavafio, C. Karyotakio, Y. Ritso ir kitų poetų eiles.

1824 m. sukurtas Kvartetas d-moll yra pats niūriausias iš visų didžiųjų Schuberto kamerinių kūrinių. Keturios „Mirties ir mergelės“ dalys yra minorinės, tarsi jaudinamas to laikotarpio kompozitoriaus vidinės būsenos atspindys. Prieš metus Schubertui buvo pasireiškę pirmieji venerinės ligos simptomai, ir, jam besigydant lignoninėje, gimsta kelios dainos, kurias kompozitorius vėliau įtraukė į ciklą „Gražioji malūnininkė“, pasakojantį apie tragišką meilę. Labiausiai kompozitorių jaudino anksčiausiai parašyta daina, kurioje pasakojama apie ankstyvą mirtį. Ją kompozitorius ir pasirinko Kvarteto lėtosios dalies pagrindu. Jo mūza buvo Tanatas.

Tanatas buvo jo mūza ir cikle „Žiemos kelionė“ pagal W. Mullerio poeziją – mirtis greta meilės, vienvėsių ir vienišų klajonių. Herojus klajoja tais pačiais keliais, kuriais klajojo kadaise su savo mylimąja. Tačiau dabar šis kelias padengtas sniegu, ašaros rieda herojaus skruostais. Jis atsigula pailsėti. Virš jo galvos sklendo varnas. Beliko tik vienas kelias, kuriuo atgal niekas nebesugrįžta. Šis kelias veda į kapus, traukiančius pavargusį keliautoją į savo šaltą prieglobstį. O už kaimo rylininkas jau apsirengęs pritarti savąja ryli keliautojo dainoms. Visa tai atsispindi L. Platonos kūriniuose pagal C. Kavafio ir K. Kariotakio poeziją. Jų mūza buvo Tanatas, kaip ir vienvėsių bei klajonės su praėjusia, neatsakyta meile.

Poetine prasme šie kūriniai yra panašūs. O muzikine prasme – visiškai skirtingi, turint galvoje L. Platonos modernią muzikos kalbą, kuri tarsi primena El Greco šedevrus.

M. Hatzidakio ir M. Theodorakio kūriniai pagal O. Elyčio, G. Ritso ir kitų poetų kūrybą, priešingai, orkestruotės ir harmonijos prasme turi daugiau bendra su Schuberto muzika. Visi jie naudoja klasikinio orkestro instrumentus, mažorines ir minorines tonacijas, tačiau kompozitoriai graikai neretai įveda graikiškų instrumentų ir dermių ir taip sukuria specifinį „tautinį koloritą“.

Pranešimo tikslas – per poetinę ir muzikinę visų pasirinktų kūrinių analizę atskleisti Tanato kaip mūzos koncepciją ir kai kurias kitas Tanato traktuotes (pvz., Tanatas ir vienvėsių, Tanatas ir vienišos klajonės), o vėliau išryškinti šių kūrinių panašumus ir skirtumus, remiantis poetiniais ir muzikiniais faktoriais. Taip pat aptariama šių idėjų įtaka poetų ir muzikų gyvenimams.