

The image shows a page of handwritten musical notation on aged paper. At the top, there is a single staff of music with several measures of notes and rests. Below this, the page is filled with multiple staves of music. The notation includes various note values, rests, and bar lines. Red ink is used for annotations, including arrows pointing to specific notes and markings on the staves. At the bottom of the page, there is a line of text in a non-Latin script, likely Greek, which appears to be lyrics for the music. The overall appearance is that of a historical manuscript or a score with editorial markings.

A Patch to Western Music History

Serbian & Greek Art Music

Edited by Katy Romanou

ε-καρπυμ γγβς, Καν' ποταμωγμς Δ' ογπα νετε ο-εα ημυ αββς κεν.

Serbian and Greek Art Music

Serbian and Greek Art Music A Patch to Western Music History

Yannis Belonis, Biljana Milanović, Melita Milin,
Nick Poulakis, Katy Romanou, Katarina Tomašević

Edited by Katy Romanou



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Foreword

This book is about the assimilation and development of western art music in Serbia and Greece during the 19th and 20th centuries. It gives information on music education, music life and music creativity in the two nations, since they gained their freedom from the Ottomans. It relates the efforts of local musicians to synchronise their musical environment with the West and achieve the inclusion of Serbian and Greek music in western music history: an aim that seemed consistent with overall progress and, at various historical stages, attainable.

One may certainly talk of a terminal failure, because both “art music” and the “history of Western music” have deeply changed their meaning in current musicology and this aim has not been accomplished.

However, it is some of the causes that have brought this irreversible change of context in “music history” and “art music” (such as globalisation aesthetics or overflowing academic fields and swarms of doctoral dissertations) that account for current interest in the Balkans. This interest compels us, local musicologists, to narrate in English the story of western music’s assimilation in our countries; after all, we are convinced that what is not said in English is as if not said at all.

So, this book may be seen as mending an unfulfilled aim; or else, as a patch to western music history.

Being part of the Balkans, Serbia and Greece belong to the European area that was the latest to be westernised. Under the Ottomans for long centuries, they won their independence early in the 19th century and founded their tiny states with the intervention of major European powers interested in the area; they also postponed the expectation for a great Greece and great Serbia and foiled the dream of the union of all Balkan Christians. The new tiny states, inhabited by a small percentage of nationals living in surrounding and far remote areas, went through their race of westernisation with the conflicting sentiments of an awareness of inferiority compared to western powers and a fear of losing the “eastern” qualities of their identity.

Traditional music, developed in those areas during their isolation from the West, consists of folk music and the music of the Orthodox church (a purely vocal art music, with its own theoretical system and notation, which the Serbs have replaced by stave notation,

but the Greeks continue to apply to this date). Both had attracted the interest of western scholarship since early in the 18th century, being European traditions singularly untouched by western institutionalised art music. Folk music of those areas was appealing because of its uncommon richness and diversity and because it strongly suggested originating from ancient Greek music. Béla Bartók, writing in 1942, attributes this wealth to “racial impurity” (that in our *ethical* age might be called “racial enrichment”), produced by the political (and military) upheavals that divided and dislocated peoples of numerous ethnicities forcefully or subtly in dense frequency, varying in pace, neighbours and influences.

But this racially impure – or rich – treasure was used by urban composers to demonstrate national unity. Because it is in urban music that national antagonism and politics in general are reflected. To bring in again Béla Bartók’s experience from his contact with neighbouring peasants of different nationalities in 1943: “there is not – and never has been – the slightest trace of hatred or animosity against each other among those people”.

Privileged with rich, still functional local music traditions, Serbia and Greece developed a corpus of art music that bore from its earliest examples interesting marks of national identity. The aim as well as the problems of uniting the traditional with the progressive (or the eastern with the western), motivated all initiatives in music education, music life and creativity, and this is a theme reverberating in nearly all chapters of this book.

Serbs and Greeks have been the lesser adversary among Balkan nations; one could even say the friendliest. Their common historic process continued in the first half of the 20th century, where they fought on the same side in both World Wars and in both Balkan Wars. It was the Cold War and recent globalisation policies that brought the two nations into opposition.

However, these latter policies have not hindered friendships and teamwork. The authors of this book have been in close collaboration since 2002, when we participated as a team in the International Musicological Society’s Conference in Leuven.

The Serbian musicologists of the team are affiliated to the Institute of Musicology of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Belgrade, and the Greek musicologists, to the Music Department of the University of Athens.

In the first part of this book the history of Serbian music is unfolded. Biljana Milanović writes on stage and symphonic music in Serbia. She describes the complex political situations since the 19th century that caused continuous population movements in the area, clarifying the situations and the influences that moulded the Serbian national music idioms and the composers’ personal styles. Katarina Tomašević gives a comprehensive account of the history of the most important Serbian institutions of music education, performance and dissemination in the first half of the 20th century. Melita Milin has a chapter on the significant female composer Ljubica Marić, the centenary of whose birth is celebrated this year. Melita Milin has also contributed with a chapter on the trends that attracted Serbian composers in the second half of the 20th century, and on the political situations and dramatic events (including the 1999 war) that moulded and filtered their expression.

The second part of the book relates three successive stages of recent Greek music history. Katy Romanou describes musical life in the Ionian Islands: the sole area of Greece that was not under the Ottomans and which developed, in the 19th century, a music culture nearly identical to that of neighbouring Italy. Yannis Belonis transports us to Athens and Thessalonica, the cultural centres in the 20th century. Speaking on the composers dominating the scene, he skilfully interweaves the crucial political events of the period and their impact on society and culture. Following is a chapter on Nikos Skalkottas, who died sixty years ago and whose music is recently gaining recognition. (We have not included in this book chapters on Maria Callas, Dimitri Mitropoulos and Iannis Xenakis, who are already vastly explored in western bibliography.) In the final chapter of this book, Nick Poulakis writes about Greek music after World War II. He develops his subject through the paradigmatic cases of three composers who adopted different music trends from a stylistic and a philosophical point of view: Jannēs Chrēstou, Michalēs Adamēs and Periclēs Koukos.

Achieving homogeneity in the footnotes, bibliography and various aspects of language within this book was a task undertaken by the Greek musicologist Alexandros Charkiolakēs of the Music Library of Greece “Lilian Voudouri”. Knowing the great difficulties he faced, I consider his contribution of supreme importance and thank him for his great care.

Katy Romanou
Athens, 13 May 2009

A Note on the Transliteration of Names

Serbs widely apply the Latin alphabet, with diacriticals, and this is how all Serbian names are written in this book.

Transliterating the Greek alphabet is a problem to which no solution may be practised consistently, without irrational results.

We chose the ALA Standard System because so many Greek names and words are spelled in English according to it; whereas the phonemic system does not show the connection between Greek and other European languages (it is doubtful if one could connect Omiros to Homer, Aggelos to Angel, Psikhi to Psyche and so on).

Greek names in bibliography are given both in Greek and in their transliterated form. The names of certain Greek authors might appear in two slightly different ways (Demertzis and Demertzēs). This is so in cases where the person is author of a Greek and a foreign edition (where another system of transliteration is followed).

Greek spelling is missing in names that were originally in some other language, as is the case with names of most early composers in Corfú, where Italian was the language spoken by educated Greeks. We write their names in Italian, instead of proceeding to a double conversion, which does not lead back to the original (for example: Manzaro – Μάντζαρος – Mantzaros).

In the index – uniform for all chapters in this book – Greek names are written in the Latin alphabet only.

The chapters of this book are signed as the authors themselves spell their names in English.

Katy Romanou