

Ancient wisdom in modern music: Yannis A. Papaioannou's 4 Orphic Hymns as challenge of renewal and revision in postwar conception for the sound interpretation of the Greek ancient Orphic sacred hymnology

Konstantinos D. Kakavelakis

Free University at Stoa Vivliou, Athens, Greece, isophon@otenet.gr

Abstract: Yannis A. Papaioannou composed his 4 Orphic Hymns after an official commission of the Greek Association of Contemporary Music Ε.Σ.Σ.Υ.Μ in the year 1971 for the festivities of the Athens 4th *Week of Greek Contemporary Music*. The composer had decided to point out by this opportunity signs of deeper change in relation to the common way of musical expressions and forms to the ancient sacred music traditions in Greece. Renouncing of the one-dimensional method of sensibility Yannis A. Papaioannou applies in this composition modern modifications and features giving a musical outline with discrete distances between "passion" side, and "thought" side. The avantgarde elements in this composition are focused on the expanding the frontiers of aesthetic experience and renewing traditions by reconstructing mythologies and techniques. Yannis Papaioannou reveals to us here the "emotional-equivalent of mind". The sacral art is developed by aesthetic criteria which reflect a close connection between moral judgment and a revised way of seeing. The composer's outstanding orphic approach find echoes and bindings in modern thought and contemporary theories in which the secret meaning of the words lies in their methodic use. The speech-behavior in Papaioannou's *four Orphic Hymns* is the key of a pioneer's systemic game which can only be applied after careful research and with certain rules and customs. The composer informs us through programmatic notes that the general sound atmosphere associates with the concept of ancient "*Anakrousis*". In some cases *Anakrousis* behaves as an ultra compact mass and in other circumstances like a transparent humid apparition. The narrator speaks after a very idiomatic way moving in the neutral zone. Every rhythmic or sonic transformed microstructure of each phrase appears as a mode of action showing a tendency to become a melody but without defined frequencies. As the composer marks, the music does not appear as a background concept and does not describe something. The composition builds progressively a supernatural mythological context which draws speech and music together reexamining in a modern way the technicalities of the voices of Greek orphic mythology. The synthesis interprets the hymns through a music-poetical redefinition. The author presents a detailed analysis of composition's morphology and techniques describing the way in which Yannis A. Papaioannou through this specific work separates himself definitely from the older music movements in Greece trying to avoid the weaknesses - difference between instrumentalism and aestheticism. The composer indicates also his own approach to the secret ancient music rituals in connection to the harmony of the dome with the specific selection of the orphic hymns to *ouranos*, to *stars*, to *sun* and the *moon*. His abstract symbolic but precise music framework seems to work like an enactment of new proposals, exercising our imaginative capacities necessary for redefining and reexamining sound-moral understanding.

CV: Konstantinos D. Kakavelakis studied music theory, composition and piano in the Hellenic Conservatory in Athens, Greece, under the supervision of Yannis A. Papaioannou, Theodore Antoniou and Ida Rosenkranz Margariti. In 1982 he settled in Germany in order to continue his studies in *composition*, *musical electronic applications*, and *historical musicology* with subsidiary subjects in *Byzantinology*, *philosophy*, and *communication research* at the Conservatory of Cologne and the University of Bonn under Bojidar Dimov, Martin Zenck, Erich Trapp, J.Simon Wolfgang Kluxen und W. Hess. He continued intensive studies in the area of historical musicology, with emphasis on the German modernism, and philosophy of music, at the University of Hamburg under the supervision of Constantin Floros, Peter Petersen., Christos Axelos. Free research studies in USA. In 1989 he was awarded the Kuenstlerische Reife Pruefung completing his circle of studies in composition, at the Robert Schumann Music Academy in Düsseldorf under Dimitri Terzaki, Guenther Becker and Helmut Kirchmeyer. Konstantinos Kakavelakis is now affiliated with the Hellenic Free University at STOA VIVLIOU.