

Aspects of neoclassicism within post-war Greek musical avant-garde: the violin concertos by Dimitri Dragatakis (1969), Yannis A. Papaioannou (1971) and Yorgos Sicilianos (1987)

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Abstract: Avant-garde trends of the 1950s-'60s are generally evaluated by today's history and criticism as the norm of that period, as regards art and culture being cultivated into social and political reforms. Musical genres and aesthetics of the first half of the 20th century (or prior) that were incorporated into a new stream after 1950, are nowadays examined either under a touch of academic conservatism, or as new prospects of experimentation within the very trends of avant-gardism.

The violin concerto encompasses a 200-year period of continuous development within tonal traditions of Western music, ranging from the late Italian baroque period to belated romanticism of the early 20th century (Sibelius, Glazunov). Between 1920-1950, it was reintroduced as a paradigm of neoclassicism within new tonalities (Bartók, Prokofiev, Stravinsky, and many others), and also as a trend of atonal expressionism (Berg, 1935 and Schoenberg, 1936). After World War II (and particularly after 1970) many composers consecutively employed the genre of violin concerto, involving miscellaneous aspects of form, notation and performance practice that sometimes resulted in impressive and innovative works. As concerns the post-war context of neoclassicism within concerto form, it was expanded, restrained, innovated, misinterpreted or even post-modernly reapplied.

Greek avant-garde composers also delivered exceptional examples. Dimitri Dragatakis' (1969), Yannis A. Papaioannou's (1971) and Yorgos Sicilianos' (1987) violin concertos are reviewed, in order elements of compositional structure, texture, aesthetics and style to be defined into (*or out of*) the avant-garde norms of the period. Moreover, through a personalized approach on each composer's musical language, special aspects of Greek art music after 1950 are being reconsidered.

The ending of World War II and its aftermath, the beginning of the Cold War era, comprised transitional historical periods that many European and American composers experienced under a pervasive feeling of weariness and desolation. As a result, a significant number of them were led on to partial reaction in favour of the radically new.¹ New politics and upcoming social reformations also induced ambiguous interactions among arts, letters and post-war cultural trends.² Total serialism became a symbol of incorruptible purity, a formalistic doctrine that dealt with 'purely musical' relationships only, without bearing any 'extramusical' considerations of expression and thus incapable of being commandeered for purposes of any propaganda.³ The influential character of relevant writings⁴ and the subsequent institutionalizing of teaching,⁵ performing and commissioning of new music⁶ led on post-war innovative and radical trends to become the mainstream in serious composition.

On the other hand, "milder", more moderate trends never stopped coexisting with the radical ones, even in the 1950s and 60s. Cultivation of traditional genres of absolute music as well as opera carried on after World War II. Shostakovich's late symphonies and quartets and Britten's operas are exceptional examples of such a sustained level of creative achievement for nearly 30 years after 1945. Although accepting an element of revitalization from contemporary serial techniques,⁷ neither Shostakovich nor Britten ever took the decisive step of abandoning rooted harmonic centrality or suppressing neoclassical generic and structural principles in form.⁸ The coexistence of post-war 'moderate mainstream' with the already established and prevailing 'modernist mainstream', during the 1950s and 1960s, was preserved under criteria that included public accessibility (audience, concert halls, promoters, discography and media), individualism in style, and surviving pre-war musical institutions.⁹

The violin concerto has been acknowledged as a landmark of Western music, especially in Germany and Italy between 1700-1900. From Bach to Vivaldi and, later on, Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms, to name only the foremost, every single major composer from that period contributed, if not a concerto, at least an important number of chamber works including a solo violin. It was only the piano, represented by its mythical virtuosos of the 19th century, that superseded the preeminence of violin in chamber and orchestral music. Piano concertos, especially after 1830, were regarded as the high-profilest subspecies of the genre.¹⁰ A reintroduction of the violin concerto was about to become perceptible under the trend of *neoclassicism*,. As a result of oscillation between tradition and innovation around 1920, neoclassicism was generally comprehended by composers as striving for a new unity between classicism and modernity in music by resource to its past.¹¹ The need for a fundamental rejection of the aesthetics of romanticism, after the catastrophic ending of World War I, was another reason that urged composers to elaborate forms and genres of the 18th century in contemporary music. Consequently, violin concertos of the 1920s and early 1930s tended to rebel against the expansive and effusive style of the pre-war period, being more economically scored, more rhythmically charged and more edgily dissonant than earlier works.¹² Stravinsky involved baroque titles of movements (*Tocatta, Aria I-II, Capriccio*) in his *Violin Concerto in D* (1931) while applying a vivid contrapuntal duet of solo violin with another solo violin of the orchestra into a chamber ensemble orchestration. Though indirect, the suggestion of Bach's *Concerto for two violins* in D minor (BWV 1043) is apparent.¹³ The famous triple stop of the solo violin, at the beginning of each movement, followed by three aggressive down-bowed chords, comprised Stravinsky's "passport" to the concerto.¹⁴



Figure 1. Igor Stravinsky. *Violin Concerto in D* (1936). I. Toccata (beginning)[© Boosey & Hawkes]

Concertos from the mid-1930s through to 1950 frequently combined characteristics of post-romanticism and neoclassicism. They were typically longer, more lyrical and more fully scored than works of the 1920s, but also more dissonant or tonally ambiguous than those written before World War I: such examples comprise the violin concertos by Bartók, Prokofiev, Britten and Hindemith, written between 1935-1939. A similar, but belated, neoclassical example is Shostakovich's *Violin Concerto no. 1*, op. 77 in A minor (1947-48, presented as op. 99 in 1955),¹⁵ followed by the composer's also belated attempt to experiment with 12-note rows in the finale of his *Violin Concerto no. 2*, op. 129, twelve years later (1967).¹⁶ Speaking of rows, Schoenberg's *Violin Concerto* op. 36 (1936), one of his first works after moving to America, was intended as a purely twelve-tone work, which resulted in combining the virtuoso shaping of the violin part with the rich and colourful serial multi-layerings of the thematic process.

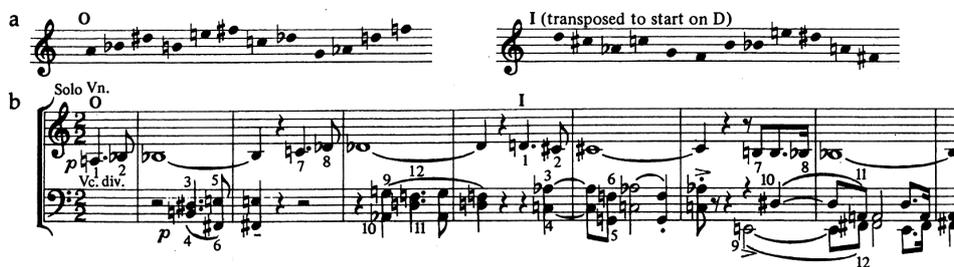


Figure 2. Arnold Schoenberg. *Violin Concerto* op. 36 (1936). I. Poco Allegro: (a) tone row – original (O) and inverted with transposition (I) – (b) mm. 1-8 [© Schirmer Books]

Alban Berg's *Violinkonzert* (1935) still remains one of the most acclaimed examples of the genre for the first half of the 20th century; an expressionistic masterpiece that involves twelve-note technique, tonal material (a Carinthian ländler-style folksong and a chorale tune), dramatic gestures and pure lyricism.¹⁷

As regards the presence of violin concerto in European and American music after 1945 and its incorporation into contemporary movements, one has to take cognizance of a number of criteria:

- The extraordinary diversity of stylistic and structural initiatives in composition – old, new, progressive, regressive – that formed post-war musical culture in its widest sense
- the preserving prosperity of institutions suited to the regular presentation of traditional western art-musical genres such as concerto, symphony, quartet and opera
- the constant craving of classical music audiences and record buyers for brilliant virtuoso display
- the intention of well-known solo performers of a non-modernistic repertoire to master new works by contemporary composers.

Postmodernism's principles of individualism, pluralism and accessibility that contradicted with the general negation and radicalism of modernist mainstream, led on traditional - and fringed at the time - genres of 'absolute music' to a revival, from 1970 onwards.¹⁸ Writing for violin with orchestra became prolific again, attracting composers even from the core of post-war avant-garde, with astonishing results. Krzysztof Penderecki (b. 1933), one of the leading central-European composers of the second half of the twentieth century, became widely known in the early 1960s by focusing on sound and dense tone-clusters with mass glissandi and new techniques of sound producing. However, his *Violin Concerto no. 1* (1976, written for Isaac Stern), is tracing music history backwards by applying material of the late tonal era in a highly chromatic, post-romantic style.¹⁹ Another example comes from Sofia Gubaidulina's (b. 1931) *Violin Concerto, Offertorium* (1980), a work recalling J. S. Bach's *Musical Offering*, in which she incorporated *Klangfarbenmelodie* technique by deconstructing and rebuilding the 'royal theme' in a set of variations that ended up resembling a Russian Orthodox hymn.

Hans Werner Henze's (b. 1926) eclectic and quite personal style embodies his past inside the circles of strict serialism during the early 1950s, along with lyricism and expressiveness, a natural flair for drama and strong political interests, especially towards socialist communism. Such tendencies are diversely explored, not only on Henze's stage works, but also in more conventional instrumental genres (symphonies and concertos). Theatrical enactment and dramatic gestures of Henze's style are quite apparent in his *Concerto no. 2 for Solo Violin, Bass-Baritone, 33 Instruments and Electric Tape* (1971). A recitation of the poem *Hommage à Gödel* by the German socialist Hans Magnus Enzensberger is included, while the soloist's entry on the stage soon after the beginning of the work is theatrically indicated: he is wearing a tricorne hat with feather, a flowing red lined opera cape and he makes several false attempts to begin playing his part, all along the first movement (I. *Presentazione*). The integration of indeterminacy is evident in the following example, regarding rhythm and pitch notation, while the soloist is also asked to recite verses of the poem through a neck microphone.

II teorema
(he suddenly raises violin and begins to play)

Solo Vln. ↑

p *f* *pp* *f* *p*

(the following sentences are either spoken by violinist [perhaps with neck mike] or played on tape)

„In jedem genügend reichhaltigen System lassen sich Sätze formulieren,“
„In any sufficiently rich system of axioms, propositions exist that have a meaning“

Figure 3. Hans Werner Henze. *Violin Concerto no. 2* (1971). II. Teorema (beginning of solo part) [© Edition Schott].

Collage techniques that involve borrowed tonal material are also employed into this extended six-part concerto, which shows Henze's appreciation for musical tradition and its integration within the means of a contemporary musical language: in part IV (Divertimento), mandolin, guitar and harp players are performing fragments of "My lady Hundson's Puffe" and "Lachrimae Antiquae Pavan" by John Dowland (1563-1626). A brief citation of the "Pavan" is also incorporated in part II (Teorema).

As a descendant of the first generation of post war avant-gardists, Peter Maxwell Davies (b. 1934) evolved a personal musical language including disparate elements such as overt expressionism, serial techniques, early chant, popular music and theatrical devices. His *Violin Concerto* no. 1 (1985) brings together two streams in his music: symphonism and folk fiddling. In its strongly developed substance, thematic process coexists with reminiscences of Scottish folk-tunes and rhythms, particularly in the middle movement based on a bagpipe tune from the Highlands. Davies' obsession with Scottish traditional fiddle music and the nature's musical depiction also resulted in a very recent second violin concerto, entitled "Fiddler on the shore" (2009).

So far, the deployment of thematic material into a broad structural design that involved a diversful harmonic and rhythmic elaboration, was never out of the question. To conceive concerto form into a musical language whose main attractions are simplicity, repetitiveness, static tonal structures and additive rhythms, may sound impossible. Philip Glass' (b. 1937) *Violin Concerto* (1993) is an exemplar of such textural consistency and transparency, despite lacking dramatic incidents or development goal.²⁰ John Adams' *Violin Concerto* (1993) is far more centralized on the soloist, than Glass' (who prefers a *grosso* conception). Although thematic distinctiveness is more acute in the first movement, the toccata-style finale builds a cumulative, truly symphonic excitement led by the sizzling *moto perpetuo* ostinato-style part of the violinist, albeit conceived by pure minimalistic principles.²¹

In the beginning of the 1990s, and in keeping with the continued institutional support for the larger scale and the virtuosic, the very notion of postmodernism is in question while the failure of post-war avant-garde to establish a single and stable progressive way of radicalism has already been painfully realized by the newest generation of composers. Such a skepticism runs through Alfred Schnittke's (1934-1998) prolific late output of solo concertos (from the mid-1980s till 1997), where the composer seems engaged in serious dialogue with earlier traditions.²² On the other hand, György Ligeti's (1923-2006) *Violin Concerto* (1990/92) is a belated example of archetypal modernism that emphasizes on diverse layerings and superimpositions of linear texture, timbre and rhythms, effective tuning and performance novelties. In the second movement "Aria, Hoquetus, Choral", the purely melodic design is often presented in additive chords, revealing a profound expressionistic character. The 'properly' virtuosic solo part expresses all the density and moving energy that typifies Ligeti's musical language.²³

Figure 4. György Ligeti. *Violin Concerto* (1990/92): (a) II. Aria, Hoquetus, Choral, mm. 73-80 – (b) V. Appassionato, mm. 80-82 [© Edition Schott].

Greece, lacking a pre-war historical background on modernism, experienced an abrupt rise and flourish of the contemporary musical trends during the 1950s and 1960s, as subsequent results of the turn of cultural politics in almost all European countries after World War II and the ideological confrontations that accompanied the opposing sides of Cold War polarity (the western and the eastern).²⁴ Although avant-garde music concerned a small percentage of audiences in Greece, it was heavily promoted by primarily American and German institutions [such as the United States Information Services' educational branch (U.S.I.S.), the Ford Foundation and Goethe Institute] in collaboration with the Greek State.²⁵ A young generation of Greek composers painlessly adopted, and some of them evolved, the most progressive trends introduced from Darmstadt, Donaueschingen or Warsaw. Among the leaders of this massive movement were Iannis Xenakis (1920-2001, settled in France, for political reasons), and Jani Christou (1926-1970). Although both of them were radical innovators, they submitted concerto-style works (but in a wider sense).²⁶ A posthumous reputation of the important pre-war modernist Nikos Skalkottas (1904-1949) was established within indigenous avant-garde circles and also abroad, mainly through the writings and activities of the controversial musicologist and pianist John J. Papaioannou. Among the central figures were also Dimitri Dragatakis, Yannis Andreou Papaioannou and Yorgos Sicilianos. Their violin concertos are to be reviewed, in order elements of their compositional style to be defined within the context of neoclassicism and modernism in Greek art music after 1950.

The lack of interest from eminent Greek soloists of the first half of the 20th century to include new works in their repertoire, resulted in insignificant cultivation of concerto form by native composers before 1945. Manolis Kalomiris (1883-1962), the founder of Greek National School, submitted only two concerto works, one for piano and one for violin, by incorporating folk elements into either strict polyphonic elaboration or in a freer rhapsodic style. Dimitri Mitropoulos (1896-1960), although an accomplished pianist and composer of noteworthy solo and chamber music with piano, he never submitted a piano concerto. In the final movement of his orchestral *Concerto Grosso* (1928) a demanding piano part is however included. Still, the foremost example of the pre-war period is Nikos Skalkottas' *Violin Concerto* (1938), a highly dramatic expressionistic work where the incorporation of twelve-tone rows is constantly reforming thematic material, harmonic structure and counterpoint lines, thus providing a inner cyclic character of motivic relations and transformations within sonata forms (in movements I and III). It is important to denote that Skalkottas' *Violin Concerto* was written at almost the same time as Berg's (1935) and Schoenberg's (1936) concertos, leading us to consider late 1930s as perhaps a period of enhanced '*concertante expressionism*'.

After 1945 the concerto medium seems to gain a growing proportion among the genres of modern Greek musical composition, especially from older and more conservative representatives, still active at the time. Petros Petridis (1892-1977), a member of the Greek National School and a genuine neoclassicist, contributed his second piano concerto (in 1948), a violin concerto and a concerto for two pianos (both in 1972). Konstantinos Kydoniatis (1908-1996), an advocate of tonal tradition and folk idioms even until the 1990s, produced eight solo concertos (1965-1991), although none for violin. Since the 1960s composers of disparate styles and technique have continuously been cultivating the genre, while collaborating with acclaimed soloists of mainstream classical repertoire. There is no doubt that Greek modernists aimed at greater (and perhaps more conservative) audiences and, of course, at a very high level of performance. Theodore Antoniou (b. 1939) has been the most prolific post-war Greek composer of the genre with 23 solo, double, triple, and even ensemble, concertos (1959-2008), five of them for (or with) violin. The revised version of his *Concerto for Violin and Strings* (1995) was performed by its dedicatee, the world-class violinist Leonidas Kavakos. Recent examples from the beginning of the 21st century include the composers Christos Samaras (b. 1956), Yorgos Koumentakis (b. 1959), Michalis Lapidakis (b. 1960) and Nestor Taylor (b. 1963).

Dimitri Dragatakis' (1914-2001) began his compositional career in his mid-forties, partly because of his intense political activation during World War II and Civil War years in Greece

(1940-49). His inclination towards the newly introduced trends of radicalism is not yet evident in works like *String Quartet no. 1* (1957) and *Symphony no. 1* (1959), where a belated Shostakovich-like neoclassicism is still being explored. A large number of his later works involve neoclassical genres (6 symphonies, 11 concertos, 5 string quartets, sonatas, trios, etc.). Influenced by both Greek folk musical tradition (and especially his native land's, Epirus) and ancient Greek drama, Dragatakis developed a free atonal idiom in which very disparate elements were combined into homogeneous and solid structures. After about 1970 his style became more direct and incisive, while combining expressiveness and restraint. Subsequently his musical vocabulary began to expand, incorporating indications of tonality and a clear sense of linearity.²⁷

Dragatakis' *Violin Concerto* (1969) was directly associated with Tatsis Apostolidis (1928-2009) an enthusiastic advocate of new music and a very talented violinist. As the composer himself denoted on the program of the work's first performance "...it was a mutual desire for both of us (Dragatakis and Apostolidis) to produce a work associated with our common native land, Epirus. This work employs all the harshness of our land, beginning from 'moirologia' (mourning songs) and local rhythms. The traditional form of the Concerto is thus renovated. Actually, it's a violin monologue with orchestral intrusions that in the first draft were to be performed only by timpani. Nevertheless, the percussion section is integral to the orchestration of the final score".²⁸

The concerto is structured in two movements: I. Adagio – II. Allegro. In the *Adagio* movement the linear texture is of an improvisatory athenatic character, especially in the violin part. The strident style of the solo performance is definitely intended by Dragatakis; the soloist is impersonating a peasant fiddler of Epirus. As the fiddler plays in local fairs for hours, he eventually gets tired and tends to hold his instrument in a peculiar way, which results in constant glissandi of his left hand in order to achieve the right tune.²⁹ This imitation is very obvious, even from the first entry of the violin and under a pentatonic modal ambience.



Figure 5. Dimitri Dragatakis. *Violin Concerto* (1969). I. Adagio, mm. 5-7 (violin entry) [© Ed. Philippos Nakas].

Violin passages are quite reminiscent of polyphonic *moirologia* from Epirus. A dialog with the orchestra is initiated, and then followed by alternations of massive sound blocks in high and low registers, diverging instrumental timbres and use of ostinati patterns. Elaboration of specific intervals (of 2^{nds}, 7^{ths} and 9^{ths}), open strings as pedal notes and fierce chromaticism on additive chordal sequences, are also conducive to the overall structure.

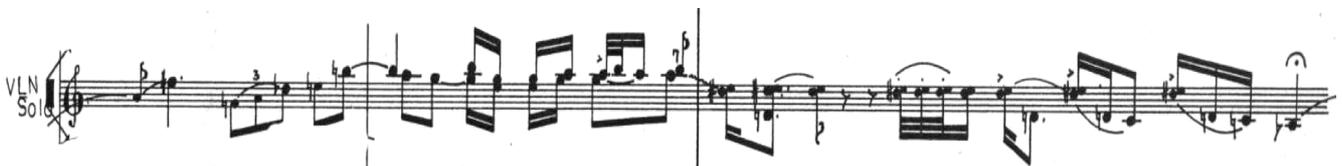


Figure 6. Dimitri Dragatakis. *Violin Concerto* (1969). I. Adagio, mm. 11-13 [© Ed. Philippos Nakas].

Dragatakis utilizes the pattern of "cut-out score" for instrumental part writing, a trend originated by Stravinsky that was mostly in use in the 1960s and 1970s and not so much nowadays.

Figure 7. Dimitri Dragatakis. *Violin Concerto* (1969). I. Adagio, mm. 85-88 [© Ed. Philippos Nakas].

As regards the second movement of the concerto (Allegro), the previously discussed fundamental compositional principles of Dragatakis are still in use. Renewing elements include a more concrete rhythmic organization of motivic patterns, less changes in time signatures, restraint on improvisatory effects and a more intense use of percussion instruments.

The overall impact of Dragatakis' *Violin Concerto* reflects a return to the origins of folk tradition by incorporating the means of a contemporary musical language. The composer expresses an 'original primitivism' or else a sonic portrayal of his vernacular, musically. The generic mould of concerto, especially in its pre-war neoclassical revival, is probably not represented here; but neither are the mainstream modernist trends of post-war avant-garde. Dragatakis produces an experimental idiom that evokes tradition and folksong, but without the listener perceiving any actual tune, not even once. His musical language is highly individualized in terms of inner-structure and form, aiming at educing emotion and remembrance.

In 1965, Yannis Andreou Papaioannou (1910-1989) was regarded by Nicolas Slonimsky as a fine craftsman of music making, more reflecting the influence of his teacher Honegger than perhaps Schoenberg, while bridging the period between Skalkottas and a young group of Greek musicians (some of them being his pupils).³⁰ But in the same year, and in another article, Slonimsky, oddly enough, addressed Papaioannou as a serial composer, whose music "deploys angular intervallic schemes where tonal connotations disappear, rhythmic figures branch out in asymmetrical patterns, and the instrumentation assumes a spastic character".³¹ A rapid change of style by the composer, or a prematurity of assumptions by the critic? Anyhow, the impressive compositional output of Papaioannou, consisting of over 200 works, is stylistically divided into distinct chronological phases. This chronological diagram was first presented in the 1990 edition of Papaioannou's catalogue of works and was then revised in the subsequent 1999 edition.³² Table 1 presents the 1990 and 1999 diagrams.

The 1990 'I.E.M.A.' Catalogue		The 1999 'I.E.M.A.' Catalogue	
1932-38	Towards impressionism	1932 - ca.1944	Towards impressionism
1939-43	Towards folklore and "national identity"	ca.1944-1952	Towards folklore and "national identity" - Elements of Byzantine music
1944-52	Elements of Byzantine music		
1953-62	Incorporation of atonality, 12-note technique – use of eastern modes	1953-65	12-note and other contemporary techniques
1963-65	Towards serialism and "metaserialism"		
1966-89	The formation of a completely personal language	1966-89	The formation of a completely personal language

Table 1. Comparative diagrams of stylistic compositional directions in Papaioannou's *Catalogue of Works* (1990 and revised version of 1999).

Papaioannou's *Concerto for Violin and Chamber Orchestra* (1971) was commissioned by conductor Dimitris Agrafiotis and involved Tatsis Apostolidis as soloist, once again.³³ At a glance, this concerto can literally be characterized as an "étude pour le timbre". It's a five-movement work primarily structured by constant superimpositions, alternations and mixtures of tone-colour, deriving from extended contemporary (or even extreme) instrumental performance techniques. The first and second movements (I."Prologue" – II."Address-Dialogue") serve as introduction and development, respectively, of the elements that constitute the idiosyncratic sonic climate that predominates the whole work. Random pitches, extreme high-range tremolos, pizzicatos, *col legno*, *sul tasto* and *sul ponticello* bowings comprise some of the performance practices employed in the strings' section alone.

The image shows a musical score for the string section of the Violin Concerto (1971), II. "Address-Dialogue", mm. 33-34. The score is written for five staves. The first staff is marked "Behind the bridge" and "con forza". The second staff has "trem." written above it. The third staff has "c.l.b." written above it. The fourth staff has "pizz." written above it. The fifth staff has "trem. fluido (irregular accents)" written above it. Three blue boxes highlight specific techniques: (a) tremolo behind the bridge, (b) rhythmic pattern in "col legno battuto" bowing, and (c) tremolo "fluido" with irregular accents. A red arrow points from the first staff to the second, and another from the second to the third.

Figure 8. Yiannis A. Papaioannou. *Violin Concerto* (1971). II. "Address-Dialogue", mm. 33-34 (string section). Three different tone-colour sequences: (a) tremolo behind the bridge, (b) rhythmic pattern in "col legno battuto" bowing (VI. I-II, Vle), (c) tremolo "fluido" with irregular accents (Cb.) [© Ed. Nomos].

Only six instruments complement the woodwind and brass subsection (flute, clarinet, bassoon, horn, trumpet and trombone), while the rest of the ensemble includes piano and a group of percussion instruments, mainly of indefinite pitch (temple blocks, tambourine, tom-toms, suspended cymbal, tam-tam). Sequences of concrete and static or more kinetic sound blocks, produced either by sustained dissonant chords on the wind section or by string glissandi moving upwards and downwards, use of piano clusters and open string glissandos, as well as of ferocious percussive rhythmic patterns, all develop a strong sense of a restless fluidity. There is not much to say about thematic construction within the ensemble, as there are hardly any clear motivic elements, at least in the first two movements of the concerto. However, the recitativo-like beginning of the solo violin in the second movement (II./A. "Address") slowly unfolds autonomous phrases in an atonal pitch structure and in a freer, quite improvisatory rhythmic progression. Tone-colour elaboration on the solo violin is quite restrained here, while emphasis is given onto structuring small motivic fragments, since the composer aims at

unifying linear structure within the upcoming three movements of the concerto. Such fragments are characterized by wide upward leaps (above the interval of 6th) in varying rhythm, sometimes including double-stops and single-dotted patterns.



Figure 9. Yiannis A. Papaioannou. *Violin Concerto* (1971). II. "Address-Dialogue": a fragment of the solo violin introduction [© Ed. Nomos].

The third movement (III. "Intuition") is a calm and stochastic larghetto that resembles the middle slow part in the traditional three-movement pattern of the concerto. All the tension slowly seems to be absorbed here. The ensemble is progressing through a long sequence of low dynamic sustained pedal notes in an additive structure. On the other hand the violin continues to recite, while employing some of the timbral elements that were used in the string section during the previous two movements. This is also a preparation for the highly dramatic fourth movement (IV. "Contrast") where all the previously discussed structural elements of the work are brought together into a homogeneous mixture of sonic clashes, alternating rhythmical patterns and tone-colored linearity on the solo part. This is a movement of a more concentrated structural development. The need for resolution leads to the final part (V. "Epilogue"). It starts with a violin cadenza that, although virtuosic, is not bearing the dramatic impact of the previous movement. Familiar superimpositions and alternations of tone-colour are still in use by most instruments, but harshness and primitivism of static and kinetic sound masses are much more normalized now. The employment of low dynamics and the use of a vibraphone, for the first time here, provide a sustained tranquil atmosphere within the ensemble.

The concerto concludes much more introvertly than expected. The fluidity is dispersed among the fading sustained notes of the strings, the flattening rhythmic patterns of the percussion instruments, and the final high-pitched «aerial» (as the composer indicates) tremolo of the solo violin.

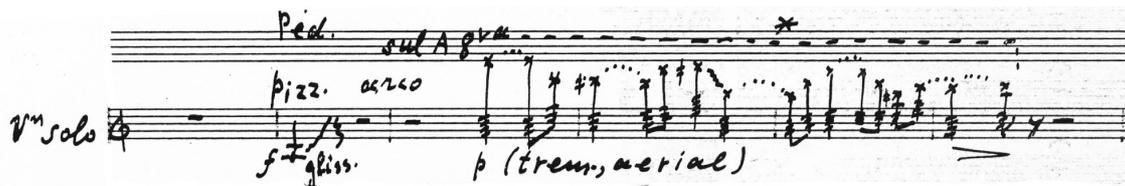


Figure 10. Yiannis A. Papaioannou. *Violin Concerto* (1971). V. "Epilogue", mm. 66-71. Ending of the violin part [© Ed. Nomos].

The use of extended notation and performance practices in Papaioannou's violin concerto may inevitably lead us to the assumption that this is also a work of pedagogical repercussions, than merely a submission to a compositional commission. It was written in the early 1970s, a period where Papaioannou was very active as a teacher of composition (Hellenic Conservatory, 1954-1976), while being the prime introducer of the post-war avant-garde musical trends to the younger generation of Greek composers. He'd already been appointed President of the Greek section of the *International Society for Contemporary Music* (I.S.C.M.) in 1964 and of the *Hellenic Association for Contemporary Music* (E.Σ.ΣΥ.Μ.) in 1965. Both institutions were involved in organizing all five important Greek avant-garde music festivals entitled *Greek Weeks of Contemporary Music* (1966, 1967, 1968, 1971, 1976).³⁴ As Papaioannou was on the

core of activities that disseminated post-war avant-garde musical trends in Greece during the 1960s and 1970s, it comes as no surprise that a pedagogical aspect of those activities maybe was activated within his compositional principles. Moreover, the beginning of the 1970s was a period that Papaioannou had already begun experimenting with new notations and advanced techniques of producing new instrumental timbre.³⁵

Yorgos Sicilianos (1920-2005) was one of the prominent advocates of musical modernism in Greece after World War II. In the beginning of his compositional career he also approached folk modality and idiom, but only for a while, and probably this is not why Nicolas Slonimsky called him "the Greek Bartók"; this was only for Sicilianos being dissociated with Jani Christou that was called "The Greek Ives".³⁶ Between 1957-1975 Sicilianos incorporated 12-note technique, total serialism, post-serialism, electronic media and indeterminacy, but he finally settled into a milder, quite eclectic atonality.³⁷ Although he was highly acclaimed by Greek modernist cycles and his works were regularly performed, his music does not reflect the total negation that mainstream post-war avant-garde represented. The underlying academic nature of his musical style perhaps justified a comment like Slonimsky's, but mainly in order to define aesthetic differences between Sicilianos and genuine Greek nonconformists like Christou, and not in a negative sense at all. A pupil of Pizzeti in Rome, of Piston in Harvard, of Blacher in Tanglewood and of Persichetti in New York, Sicilianos developed a solid neoclassical style, lucidly polyphonic, that texturally reinterprets atonality and serialism and often expresses literary ideas (especially after 1980).³⁸ Symphonies, concertos, sonatas and quartets are a substantial part of his output. He achieved an early great success with the performance of his *Symphony no. 1* by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra under Dimitri Mitropoulos, on March 1, 1958.

The inclination of Sicilianos to write music for/with violin is not irrelevant to the fact that a significant later part of it was associated, to a degree, with another important Greek performer of new music, the violinist Georgios Demertzis. The prime example of that collaboration has been Sicilianos' *Violin Concerto op. 51* (1987),³⁹ a work that embodies all the maturity and eclecticism of the composer's style and technique, blended with literary ideas that occurred from the incorporation of Samuel Beckett's play *That Time* within musical structure.

That Time is an one-act play by Samuel Beckett, written in 1975. It received its first performance, on the occasion of Beckett's 70th birthday celebration, at London's Royal Court Theatre on May 20, 1976. On stage, the audience is confronted with the head of an old man about ten feet above the stage and slightly off-centre; everything else is in darkness. The actor responds to three sets of reminiscences, as voices that come at him from all sides according to a predetermined sequence. Those voices describe a life of self-induced isolation and retrospection and, as Beckett specified, they come from three different locations; from the left, the right and from above the actor. Voice A is that of maturity. Voice B is that of youth. Voice C is that of old age. Beckett initially wrote continuous prose for each of the three voice-aspects, but then divided them into 36 verse paragraphs.⁴⁰

A ₁	C ₁	B ₁	A ₂	C ₂	B ₂	A ₃	C ₃	B ₃	C ₄	A ₄	B ₄	PAUSE + BREATH (3'' + 7'')
C ₅	B ₅	A ₅	C ₆	B ₆	A ₆	C ₇	B ₇	A ₇	B ₈	C ₈	A ₈	PAUSE - BREATH
B ₉	A ₉	C ₉	B ₁₀	A ₁₀	C ₁₀	B ₁₁	A ₁₁	C ₁₁	B ₁₂	A ₁₂	C ₁₂	PAUSE- SMILE

Table 2. Samuel Beckett, *That Time* (*Cette fois*, 1975). Order of the 36 verse paragraphs.

Sicilianos read the Greek translation of Beckett's play.⁴¹ What impressed him the most was that the text "...had an exceptional musical response into the musical form, if one would try to re-establish theatrical structure within musical structure".⁴² He preserved only the outer common features of the traditional concerto form, which are the three-movement mould and the cadenza at the end of the first movement. As regards inner-structure, Sicilianos utilized three autonomous musical units that corresponded to Voices A, B and C of Beckett's play, in order progression and alternation of musical units to coincide with the numbered order of the text's 36 verse paragraphs.⁴³

The continuous change of tempo markings constitutes a set of distinct subsections into each movement of Sicilianos' *Violin Concerto*, which, at a glance, should directly correspond to Beckett's division of the text into verses. This means that each movement of the concerto should include twelve distinct subsections with alternating tempo markings. Such a supposition seems natural at first, and an easy task for analysis, but unfortunately this is not how Sicilianos designed structure and progression of the musical material. In the first movement of the concerto, for example, the distinct subsections are less than twelve and one has to study the score thoroughly in order to understand the form and function of individual musical units. Each musical material that corresponds to voice A, voice B and voice C, is not of a mere linear texture, or just rhythmically oriented. It comprises an autonomous unit where linearity, rhythm, polyphony, tempo and dynamics are homogeneously integrated. Unit 1 (corresponding to Voice A) is a mysterious, dark Adagio that begins with an upbeat and unfolds slowly.

Figure 11. Yorgos Sicilianos. *Violin Concerto* op. 51 (1987). I. (Adagio), mm. 9-13.

Voice B symbolizes youth. The corresponding musical unit (no. 2) is much more vivid, sarcastically humorous and is progressing through alternating time signatures, either in 9/8 [♩.=76] or in 4/4 [♩.=76].

Figure 12. Yorgos Sicilianos. *Violin Concerto* op. 51 (1987). I. (Allegretto comodo), mm. 27-29.

Musical unit 3 that corresponds to Voice C (the voice of old age) is compiled by superimposed slow melodic lines that form a sheer, chorale-like polyphony.

Figure 13. Yorgos Sicilianos. *Violin Concerto* op. 51 (1987). I. (Andante), mm. 93-97.

In order to comprehend a sense of *narrativity*, especially from the violin part, it is essential that we examine linear pitch direction, chromaticism, inspissation or dilution of rhythm, even phrasing and bowing. For example, a *ritenuto* conclusion of a musical period from the solo violin, leading to a change of tempo and texture, could correspond to the end of a text verse. Unfortunately, in *That Time*, punctuation marks such as comma, period and parenthesis tend to extinct. Nevertheless, a diagram of macroscopic correspondence between music and text, in Sicilianos' concerto (movement I) and Beckett's play (verses 1-12) respectively, based on the above issues of texture and narrativity, is presented hereupon.

Verses	A ₁	C ₁	B ₁	A ₂	C ₂	B ₂	A ₃	C ₃	B ₃	C ₄	A ₄	B ₄
Movt. 1	Adagio			Allegretto comodo			Andante - Allegretto comodo (4/4)			Andante	Cadenza	Coda
mm.	1	9	15	27	51	73	89	98	117	122	145	166

Table 3. Correspondence between text verses 1-12 and musical units / subsections in the first movement of Sicilianos' *Violin Concerto* op. 51 (1987).

In Beckett's text, common features of his late dramatic plays are deployed: Voice is literally disengaged from the Body, characters are withdrawing to the deepest of the Inner Self, and Time and Space are constantly disoriented and redetermined.⁴⁴ Moreover, Beckett tends to muddle up the boundaries of textual narrativity and stage enactment, exploring typical motives of his dramatic idiom: the lonesome passage through the field of fragmented memories, the corrosive power of time passing by and the incapability of the actor to speak in first person. What Sicilianos may have apprehended in a more personal or even autobiographical manner, from Beckett's play, is difficult to determine. Perhaps one should consider Voice C, the voice of old age, which concludes the play by evoking and interpreting the whole course of the actor's life: the actor, seated in a desk of a public library, surrounded by books covered in dust, deduces that all his wandering through art and books was hopeless and unavailing.⁴⁵ But this is just an assumption yet to be determined.

The violin concertos of Dragatakis, Papaioannou and Sicilianos comprise three different aspects of Greek modernism after World War II. All three composers are prominent figures of the first Greek post-war generation of the avant-garde (born between 1910-1920), fully active in the 1950s and 1960s. Dragatakis' modernism is idiosyncratic, individualized, not easy to categorize. His concerto reveals a highly idiomatic conception of the musical material, along with several textural particularities. His references to folk tradition are neither melodic, nor rhythmic. Any impact of such reminiscences is provided by the outer harshness and primitivism of music, a very detailed intervallic elaboration and a strict timbral structure

enhanced by dramatic percussive effects. Although the 2nd, the 7th and the 9th comprise the prevailing intervals in Dragatakis' concerto, the athematic linear progression results quite differently than i.e. the main theme in 4^{ths} of Bartók's second violin concerto, thus resembling Peter Maxwell-Davies' folk fiddling implications much more. Papaioannou demonstrates, in his violin concerto, a series of performance and notation techniques that were developed in Western music in the early 1960s. The cumulative character of those applications provides common threads between structure and timbre that result in a homogeneous mixture of textural elements. Overall form is constituted as a progression of sonic material constantly redefined. Larger sections (movements) are diversified by the impact of dramatic tension, provided by the orchestral ensemble, and the narrative, somehow isolated character of the solo violin. Sicilianos remains traditional both in notation and performance, if compared mainly to Papaioannou and less to Dragatakis. His writing, very detailed in any aspect (thematic elaboration, harmony, instrumentation, phrasing, dynamics, tone-colour), is the work of a real craftsman. His concerto could easily be regarded as the most neoclassical of all three. Textural progression and development are quite reminiscent of Berg's violin concerto, occasionally enriched with rhythmical patterns and dramatic percussive effects of a "bartókian" nature. But under this free atonal wandering through the traditional three-movement concerto mould, the mysterious textual interpreting of the words of an avant-garde writer (Beckett) is concealed, and a whole new inner dimension within this musical work is unfolded.

As regards modernism, "moderate" or "mainstream", it is not very clear which category each concerto should be placed at. Sicilianos' violin concerto is coming from the late 1980s, a point where postmodernism had long overcome the negations and restrictions of post-war mainstream avant-garde.⁴⁶ This is an illustrative example of a composer that integrated and reformed the principles of post-war modernism, while being able to apply them into a renewable neoclassical context. Dragatakis' and Papaioannou's concertos are chronologically closer to a period where mainstream avant-garde ideals were still powerful in Europe and America and intensely promoted in Greece. In that sense, Papaioannou's concerto is more instructive and thus preserving a sense of pedagogy. Texturally, it is an archetypal example of "mainstream" modernism, but more in content and less in style (i.e. Penderecki's romantic evocations in his first violin concerto are so belated for the time of composition, 1976, that could oddly be regarded as more "avantgardistic" than perhaps Papaioannou's timely suggestions of timbral innovation). Papaioannou's neoclassicism, though denoted in structural design and overall form, is less concrete than Sicilianos', but more persuasive than Dragatakis'. Athematic atonality, obsessive exploitation of intervallic cells, solid block chords and percussive ostinatos, all comprise elements of the latter's austere, introvert and laconic musical language in the 1960s. Through the impersonation of a fiddler from Epirus, the solo violinist acquires even a theatrical status in Dragatakis' concerto that is also incorporated, more extrovertly though, in Hans Werner Henze's second violin concerto, written two years later (1971).

Music and musicians in Greece after 1945 cannot be merely subjected to categories of groups, movements, generations or trends. Post-war assimilation and floruit of musical avant-garde are nowadays co-examined within indigenous fluidity of the socio-political, economic and cultural situation from the early 1950s to the mid-1970s.⁴⁷ Classifications and generalizations of compositional language, texture, style and ideology may be attainable into a comparative context, provided that the status of artistic individuality is always taken under consideration, whatever the artistic norms or prevailing aesthetics of a certain period may be. As Adorno quotes from 1951:⁴⁸ *"Modernity is a qualitative, not a chronological, category. The less it can be reduced to an abstract form, the more necessary is its rejection of the conventional superficial context"*. And this is a good incentive for future research.

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Endnotes

¹ Whittall 2004, 365.

² For a complete historical and critical review of the political, ideological and cultural background in Western Europe after 1945, see: Taruskin, 2005, 1-22. Regarding Eastern Europe and its particularities, see: *ibid.*, 8-13. See also: Griffiths 1995, 3-20.

³ Taruskin 2005, 17.

⁴ The first post-war publication on the work of the Second Viennese School in a language other than German (and the first anywhere after the rise and fall of Nazism) was Rene Leibowitz's, *Schönberg et son école: L' état contemporaine du langage musical* (Paris, 1946). The writer's authoritarianism proved to be quite influential in contemporary European musical circles of the late 1940s. Even more influential was Theodor W. Adorno's, *Philosophie der neuen Musik* (Tübingen, 1949) [see Albright 2004, 272-275].

- ⁵ An illustrative example of such an institutionalization were the composition classes led by Pierre Boulez, Bruno Maderna and Hans Werner Henze in the *International Summer Courses for New Music*, at Darmstadt (early 1950s).
- ⁶ Early examples of post-war institutionalization of contemporary music: the festivals held in Darmsadt and Donaueschingen, the *Warsaw Autumn*, as well as the incorporation of Radio studios in Germany, France, Italy and the U.S.A. into experimental music-making, from 1950 onwards. For an ethnographic and critical review of a later paradigm (IRCAM), see: Georgina Born. 1995.
- ⁷ Albright 2004, 223 (Britten); Schmelz 2004, 306-321 (Shostakovich).
- ⁸ Whittall 2004, 380-392. See also Hermann Danuser's remarks about "die gemäßigte Moderne" and "die radikale Moderne" (Danuser 2008, especially the subsection "Die pluralistische Musikkultur: Tradition, Moderne, Avantgarde", pp. 285-298).
- ⁹ Whittall 2005, 161.
- ¹⁰ Lindeman 2005, 93, 104-112.
- ¹¹ Danuser 2004, 264.
- ¹² Schneider 2005, 140.
- ¹³ Steinberg 1998, 468-472.
- ¹⁴ Roeder 1994, 355.
- ¹⁵ We might add here an also belated, purely tonal example of a work that immediately entered the standard repertoire. Erich W. Korngold's (1897-1957) *Violin Concerto* (1945) comprises a work that combined the sophisticated classical music training of its composer, romanticism and Hollywood film music.
- ¹⁶ Schmelz 2004, 306-309.
- ¹⁷ See also: Roeder 1994, 377-380.
- ¹⁸ Taruskin 2005, 411-417.
- ¹⁹ Roeder 1994, 409. See also: Whittall 2005, 167.
- ²⁰ Morgan 1991, 423.
- ²¹ Whittall 2005, 171. See also: Bernard 2003, 117-118.
- ²² Whittall 2003, 122.
- ²³ Whittall 2005, 168.
- ²⁴ Poulakis 2009, 189.
- ²⁵ For a thorough critical review, see: Romanou 2008, 77-85. Also see: Svolos 2009, 171-195.
- ²⁶ See, for example, Xenakis' *Synaphai* for piano and orchestra (1969) and Christou's *Toccata* for piano and orchestra (1962).
- ²⁷ Romanou 2006, 260. See also: Leotsakos. «Dragatakis, Dimitri», *Grove Music Online*.
- ²⁸ Cited in Kalopana 2008, 135.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 136.
- ³⁰ Slonimsky 1965^b, 169.
- ³¹ Slonimsky 1965^a, 230.
- ³² H. Xanthoudakis – K. Moschos (ed. & comp. for the Institute for Research on Music and Acoustics – I.E.M.A.). 1990. *Yiannis A. Papaioannou. Complete Catalogue of Works*. Athens: Philippos Nakas. Ag. Deniozos (ed.). ²1999. *Ibid.* Both diagrams cited in: Demertzis 2004, 40.
- ³³ The world premiere of the work was given on February 4, 1972 at Baden-Baden (a recording for the SWF-Radio), with Tatsis Apostolidis (violin) and the Wüttembergisches-Philharmonie Orchester conducted by D. Agrafiotis. Two months later Apostolidis premiered the work in Greece with Athens State Orchestra under Andreas Paridis (April 17, 1972).
- ³⁴ Svolos 2009, 183.
- ³⁵ In the exhibition *Yannis A. Papaioannou: The Composer, the Teacher, the Quest and the Pioneer*, that was organized at Benaki Museum, Athens (2004), showcase no. 13 (entitled "New sounds-new notations") included works and manuscript sketches from Papaioannou's experimentations with instrumental timbre and notation in the early 1970s. The whole content of the particular showcase is described in full detail, in: Chardas 2004, 163.
- ³⁶ Slonimsky 1965^a, 228.

³⁷ Christopoulou 2007, 18-21.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 23.

³⁹ Demertzis 2007, 130. Georgios Demertzis delivered the concerto's first performance on April 17, 1989 (exactly 17 years after the Greek premiere of Papaioannou's concerto!) with Athens State Orchestra conducted by Karolos Trikolidis [Christopoulou 2009, 374].

⁴⁰ Libera 1988, 91-92.

⁴¹ Nasos Detzortzis (trans.). 1995. *Five plays of Samuel Beckett (in Greek)*. Athens: Gavrielidis.

⁴² Anon. 1989.

⁴³ Christopoulou 2009, 254.

⁴⁴ Rozi 2007, 35.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁴⁶ Born 1995, 61-63.

⁴⁷ Poulakis 2009, 189.

⁴⁸ Adorno 1974, 218.