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5 Greek dances for orchestra (2000)

The 5 Greek dances for orchestra consist of music by Greeks of the Diaspora and are dedicated with "divine love to all hostile nations". I quoted from the Symposium of Xenophon, where Socrates speaks about divine love, which is sent to us for our soul, the friendship and good acts.

In the Greek speaking parts outside Greece different nations live together and the influence of their cultures between them is obvious and natural. Here I would like to distinguish between the authentic and demiurgic influence to the Greeks of the Diaspora and the Greeks living in Greece in the 20th century, which falsify the Greek music tradition. On the one side from East (Anatolia) with foreign scales, foreign dances, and an other way to sing (see the later development of the "Rembetiko", or the pseudo-laicistic music production today), and on the other side from Northern Europe with the harmonization of the melodies in the major-minor-tonal system and the electronic devices of today.

The Greek authentic folk music is monophonic, except of the chant in North-Epirus. When the melody is played by more than one instrument simultaneously, the heterophony arises, i.e. the same melody is played differently, according to the possibilities of each instrument (with decorations, passing notes, rhythmically enriched etc.). Often it is accompanied by a rhythmic pedal. This technique (which also Plato speaks about) is applied in this dances, in contrast to the Ethnic School and to Skalkottas, who harmonized the melodies based on the major-minor-tonal system.

The formal structure follows principals of classical music. The sources I used were mostly acoustical from authentic recordings, which I wrote down and worked with in the piece.

The first dance from Cappadocia is a "Leilaloum", a female dance at Eastern. It consists of three parts with each 6 bars, 5 bars and 4 bars, which are repeated often.

The second dance from Cyprus is a succession of 5 different "Phones" (voices), which are songs with 2 verses. Each "Phoni" has an instrumental introduction and follows the "giusto syllabique bichrone" (Brailoiu), i.e. with the rhythmical durations of long and short (as in Ancient Greece), in this dance notated with irregular bars (2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4).

The third piece is a succession of 6 polyphonic chants from North Epirus, again connected with an instrumental section (Zwischenspiel): the tuba in dialogue with the violas. Special techniques of epirotical polyphony are applied, e.g. the solo of the "Partis" (the "taker" = he takes i.e. he begins the chant), or the cephalic voice of the "Jiristis" (in the French horns and viola), staying on the interval of a second etc. In total there are 12 sections, containing all possible pentatonic scales (or anhemitonic as Samuel Baud-Bovy notes).

The fourth piece has two dances which are sounding simultaneously. A quicker in orchestra I (strings and harp) and a slower in orchestra II (wood wind and piano). It has three sections: In the first, the quicker dance is leading, whereas the slower is part of the quicker motion in the bar. In the second part, orchestra I and II are exchanged and the slower dance is leading, whereas the quicker is part of the slower motion in the bar. Last, in the third section where both orchestras play their dances together, the leading part is changing between the dances.

In the fifth dance I selected as a slow introduction the carsilama-dance (7/8) from East Thrace and as quick part a free change between the paidouska-dance (5/8) and the zonaradiko-dance (6/8), finishing with the singathisto-dance (9/8).