

# Music in/of the Mediterranean: Selected Papers from the Third Biennial Mediterranean Music Conference, 19–21 September 2013, University of Nicosia

## Introduction

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The seven articles comprising this edition of *Mousikos Logos* were all originally presented at the Cyprus Music Institute's Third Biennial Mediterranean Music Conference, held at the University of Nicosia, 19–21 September 2013. Instead of a unifying theme, the papers chosen for publication here reflect the eclecticism of the conference itself. This eclecticism is suggested by the conference's intentionally ambiguous name, in which it is unclear whether the modifier 'Mediterranean' applies to the 'Music' or the 'Conference'. And this ambiguity in turn reflects the peculiar circumstances of Cyprus's nascent musicological field. Although Cyprus now boasts three ten-year-old music departments, they are inevitably small and therefore have little chance of constituting a self-contained musicological community. Consequently, Cypriot scholars are generally required to present the greater part of their work in foreign outlets to remain connected to their respective academic fields. (Indeed, many Cypriot music scholars live and work outside of Cyprus and have little professional connection to their native country.) Ironically, by concentrating their efforts to remain connected to the outside world, Cypriot musicologists risk becoming intellectually isolated from each other. The Cyprus Music Institute was founded in 2007 to help overcome this double isolation, and the inauguration of a biennial conference was conceived as an initial step towards accomplishing that goal.

This plan to address a practical, local problem immediately gave rise to questions of a more conceptual nature. Notwithstanding the small population of musicologists on the island, by 2007 we already represented all of the standard sub-disciplines: historical musicology, ethnomusicology, theory and analysis, and composition, to which could be added music education, instrumental pedagogy, and performance studies. For a recurring conference to be successful, it would have to accommodate these disparate specialisations while offering something to the international community that it would not have access to elsewhere. This led us to formulate the conference's purpose as fostering a sense of community between scholars interested in music *of* the Mediterranean and musicologists of all types who happen to be based *in* the Mediterranean region. In this way, musicology *of* the Mediterranean – understood to encompass any category or research relating to any Mediterranean music culture, past or present – would be brought into direct dialogue with musicologists *in* the Mediterranean, who, by mere virtue of their geographical location, were active contributors to the on-going development of Mediterranean musical culture. For its first two instalments (2009 and 2011) the conference bore the name 'Euro-Mediterranean', a term commonly used at the time to appeal to a broad audience. Upon reflection we realised that dropping the 'Euro-' from the name would better communicate the intended 'in/of' ambiguity.

True to our intentions, the papers presented at the first three meetings attracted a truly international group of scholars whose work reflected a wide range of disciplinary interests. It is therefore rather unexpected that all seven of the articles in the current volume relate explicitly to music *of* the Mediterranean. This is not by design, but results from the double-blind selection process. Still, as may be ascertained from a cursory inspection of the articles' titles, the category '*of* the Mediterranean' admits of considerable disciplinary variety, although I have organised the articles around three topics: (1) History and Historiography of Sicilian Music, (2) Social History of Music Modern Greece, and (3) Contemporary Cypriot Musicians' Engagement with Tradition. I would also add that, while the articles collected here were not chosen to address a specific theme, I believe they are indicative of the type and level of musicological activity that currently exists in/of (and in association with) Cyprus. I hope the readers will find this, in itself, to be worthy of interest.

The volume begins with Ilaria Grippaudo's history of musical activity at the Palermitan monastery of San Martino delle Scale during the Renaissance. Founded on a bedrock of extensive archival research in Palermo's State Archives, Grippaudo's account of the abbey's musical establishment demonstrates its centrality to the city's musical life at the dawn of the baroque period. Remaining with Sicily, Francesco Del Bravo offers a critical assessment of the work of Alberto Favara, an early collector of Sicilian folk songs who also made the first effort to situate the repertory in its historical and cultural context. As Del Bravo compellingly demonstrates, Favara's account ultimately becomes incoherent because of his incompatible claims about Sicilian folk song's inextricable link to the island's idealized Greek past and its generative role in the emergence of a generalised Italian national-cultural identity.

Del Bravo's work makes a fortuitous segue to the two articles on music in Modern Greece. Taken together, the contributions of Athina Fytika and Anna Papaeti add an important layer to our understanding of this period by revealing the degree to which the Greek musical-nationalist discourse relied upon traditional conceptions of male superiority. As Fytika shows, in the early part of the century the Athenian musical press aggressively acted to forestall the compositional career of one of Greece's most promising young female musicians, Rena Kyriakou. Under the aesthetic influence of Greece's principle musical-nationalist composer, Manolis Kalomiris, male and female critics alike wrote scathingly negative reviews of Kyriakou's works, generally citing her gender as an insurmountable obstacle to her compositional ambitions. Anna Papaeti's troubling narrative of the various ways that the Greek Junta employed folk music to exercise power, including using it as a medium of torture, underscores the regime's association of folk music with purportedly superior masculine virtues. Understanding how masculinity was idealised in the Greek nationalist discourse, especially as it related to musical signification, reflects back on the Athenian critics' assertions of Kyriakou's dismal prospects as a female composer.

On a rather more uplifting tone, each of the three articles on the work of living Cypriot musicians explores the various ways they have attempted to engage local traditions from a modern creative perspective. Nicoletta Demetriou's evocative report on the career of the Cypriot folk music band Monsieur Doumani contextualises their modernised performing style within the competing exigencies of established perceptions of folk music in Cyprus on one hand, and the recognisable features of contemporary 'world music' on the other. In the process she shows how Monsieur Doumani's updated performance style and offbeat collective stage persona contribute to modifying the way that Cypriots themselves perceive the relation between local musical traditions and their aspirations to modernity. In contrast to Demetriou's ethnographic perspective, Vasilis Kallis submits the music of another contemporary Cypriot, Andreas Georgiou, to a detailed formal analysis. Kallis reveals how Georgiou has created an original sound by drawing pitch material from traditional scales while employing formal functional principles of the Western art music tradition. Finally, Cypriot composer Haris Sophocleous presents a detailed analysis of his own recent work, *Metabolos* for string quartet. Sophocleous's

piece represents an amalgam of various procedures of spectral composition that have evolved since the 1970s, as well as his own interest in psychoacoustic processes and the use of software to generate the basic materials of his work. As a spectral composition, there is little here that explicitly evokes traditional Cypriot music. Nevertheless, the composer's choice of the Greek title *Metabolos* would seem to imply a desire, at some level, to connect his Greek-Cypriot identity with his explicitly modernist, cosmopolitan compositional methods.

Although it is not customary for journal introductions, I do feel a few words of acknowledgment are in order. I would first of all like to thank Panos Vlagopoulos for giving me the opportunity to serve as guest editor for this volume and for his support for all our efforts with the Biennial Conferences. I would also like to offer my sincerest thanks to the seven authors of this volume for their diligence and patience. It has been a genuine pleasure and a privilege for me to collaborate with them. And finally, on behalf of everyone involved with the Biennial Conferences, I would like to express our gratitude to all the local and foreign scholars for their participation. Without them neither the conferences nor this volume would have been possible.

### **About the Editor**

Kenneth Owen Smith is a historical musicologist and Head of the Department of Music and Dance at the University of Nicosia. As founding president of the Cyprus Music Institute, he has led the organising efforts of the three Biennial Mediterranean Music Conferences. The majority of his publications have been on topics related to French baroque music, most notably his monumental edition of the *Airs of Sébastien de Brossard* (Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles, 2012). He has also contributed an entry on the musical life in Cyprus to *Grove Music Online* and a chapter on Cypriot art music organisations for the recently published book, *Music in Cyprus*, edited by Jim Samson and Nicoletta Demetriou (Ashgate, 2015).