



ΝΙΚΗΦΟΡΟΣ ΡΩΤΑΣ
Τραγούδια Καβάφη - Αντιφωνίες

NIKIFOROS
ROTAS
Kavafis songs
Antiphonies



NIKIFOROS ROTAS

Kavafis songs Antiphonies

«KAVAFIS' SONGS»

SIDE 1

1. The footsteps	3'05"
2. The walls	1'40"
3. The horses of Achilles	3'50"
4. Chè fec... il gran rifiuto	2'10"
5. The city	3'30"
6. The satrapy	3'10"
7. For them to come	1'40"
8. Trojans	2'20"

SIDE 2

9. In a famous Greek colony 200 b.c.	3'45"
10. On painting	2'50"
11. John Kantakoujinos triumphs	4'20"
12. From the school of the renowned philosopher	3'30"
13. A young man skilled in the art of the word	3'50"
14. Of colored glass	2'40"

«ANTIPHONIES»

SIDE 1

Antiphonia I	7'30"
Antiphonia III	11'10"

SIDE 2

Big Antiphonia	20'40"
----------------	--------

In «Kavafis' Songs» the composer himself sings and plays.

The «Antiphonies» are electronic music.

The child singing is Katerina N. Rotas.

The poem «Swallows» is by Vasilis Rotas.

The phrase heard «Man, know thyself!» is from Aeschylus' «Prometheus bounds».

The painting on record folder is by P. Tetis.

Study and supervision of the folder is by E. C. Casdaglis.

Nikiforos Rotas was born in Athens in 1929. He graduated from the Music Academy of Vienna in 1960. Since then, he has been living in Athens.

The pieces contained in these two records are part of his work from 1967 and after. The first record presents songs based on some of Kavafis' poems. The second record presents three pieces of electronic music under the general title «Antiphonies».

«KAVAFIS' SONGS»

Precise expression, prose-like, seemingly beyond space, ultimate care for each external detail hold well curbed and guide securely, reflectively, two thoroughbred, soaring tendencies: refusing, urging. In his erotic poems where the poet functions individually (upon himself), he confuses these two tendencies, gives in, loses himself in bitter, mauve and yellow lyricism.

For the refusals his weapons are mockery, irony, satire, sarcasm —a razor which traces death without pity. He wants to tear down, he strikes vitally and with the precision of an electric shock. For urging he uses sincerity, efforts for repentance, outspokenness, daring, belief in the beautiful and great.

His lyricism is usually one of decay, of the body, and is often undiscernible.

Kavafis shows care for society, he sees a lot «rotten in the state of Denmark», a lot of decadence. At this he aims with fighting spirit, he pin-points it, he puts it in quarantine, and all this with economy and humour.

The foregoing is not a critical evaluation of Kavafis, for this, others are competent. It is the way in which the composer of this music views Kavafis. Nikiforos Rotas has two versions of Kavafis' songs. The first one without accompaniment. In this record is presented the second version. The singing voice is accompanied sometimes by piano, sometimes by guitar, sometimes by drum, sometimes by mechanical or electronic sounds. Piano and guitar are often played in a particular way so as to give a distorted voice. Sings—and plays—the composer.

Kavafis' songs were composed in 1972.

«ANTIPHONIES»

(ANTIPHONIA I — ANTIPHONIA III — BIG ANTIPHONIA)
Antiphonies used to be called those pieces of music (usually in the church) which were sung alternatively by choirs standing opposite one another. This constituted a kind of dialogue, a mutual co-operation.

In this record the title «Antiphonia», without losing the sense of internal dialogue, does not mean voices standing opposite one another but opposing voices, acting against one another, or both together acting against something that is not heard.

ANTIPHONIA I

At the beginning and end one hears, purposely distorted, the phrase: «MAN, KNOW YOURSELF». In the middle of the work a child's voice is heard singing a song (the poem, «Swallows», is by Vasilis Rotas):

*Swallows, swallows!
Laugh, March, so that the sun may rise
and come, April, with your roses
for the flowers to blossom,
for the birds to sing,
for a nightingale to sing
which is in a cage enclosed
alone, plaintive.*

The child singing is Katerina N. Rotas.

ANTIPHONIA III

Is also on the same side of the record.

BIG ANTIPHONIA

Is on the other side of the record and lasts for more than 20 minutes. This perhaps makes it especially difficult to follow. The public is not used to electronic music, however, here it is called upon to follow for more than twenty minutes something which may sound strange to it right from the beginning. But such is the time the work demands. Perhaps if one listens to it many times, one may gradually begin to find it each time in logical accordance with itself.

Antiphonia I was composed in 1967. The Big Antiphonia and Antiphonia III were composed in 1973 and 1974. The composer uses electronic sounds or sounds electronically treated.

Both in Kavafis' songs and in Antiphonies, the composer works with two or three elements only (he avoids spreading himself over a wide range of impressions). Because of this, there is danger of obtaining a first impression of monotony or repetition but the interest of the listener must not be lead towards the elements—then he is listening to the sounds, not to the music. One's interest should be led to the building process and finally to the building itself. The building must be sturdy, masterly, and contain spirit. And this spirit must not be hindered by unnecessary weights, even if these initially appear as ornaments. What is important is the space created by the walls and not the walls themselves. Within this space the spirit of the work must live.

Nikiforos Rotas is an admirer of Thucydides who mentions in the beginning of his history that he makes «an eternal possession rather than a work to be heard frivolously».

No recommendation, description, suggestion, message, slogan,

solution, relief, modernising is intended by this music. It appears motionless, slow to develop, monotonous. I hope it is none of these.

DEDICATION

I feel I have a great deal of respect for children. I think this happens because they are innocent and enraptured, uncompromising, curious, honest, with faith in goodness, well-meaning, willing for new beginnings, for efforts, for darings, with limitless imagination (they confuse dreaming with reality), they are interested only in the essence of things, they learn readily, they know how to communicate with one another (this is what «playing» means), they constitute the courage of human life, they are new, they are full of love. And all this with complete seriousness, even in joking. I do not believe that light children ever existed (which also applies to masterpieces of the arts). What has existed is non-children and these we should call bad children. When I lose my respect for children I understand that they are no longer children, nor am I a child any longer. And we become children again as soon as we repent; that is why I believe, very strongly, in repentance which means renewal, correction, adjustment, music, living together. But the child must never repent; the non-child must repent—regardless of age.

NIKIFOROS

6

ROTAS

Kavafis songs

Antiphonies

«KAVAFIS' SONGS»

SIDE 1

1. The footsteps	3'05"
2. The walls	1'40"
3. The horses of Achilles	3'50"
4. Chè fece... il gran rifiuto	2'10"
5. The city	3'30"
6. The satrapy	3'10"
7. For them to come	1'40"
8. Trojans	2'20"

SIDE 2

9. In a famous Greek colony 200 b.C.	3'45"
10. On painting	2'50"
11. John Kantakoujinos triumphs	4'20"
12. From the school of the renowned philosopher	3'30"
13. A young man skilled in the art of the word	3'50"
14. Of colored glass	2'40"

«ANTIPHONIES»

SIDE 1

Antiphonia I	7'30"
Antiphonia III	11'10"

SIDE 2

Big Antiphonia	20'40"
----------------	--------