

N. SKALKOTTAS  
(1904 - 1949)

SMALL SUITE FOR STRING INSTRUMENTS

“KLEINE SUITE für STREICHINSTRUMENTE”

N. ΣΚΑΛΚΟΤΑ  
(1904 - 1949)

“ΜΙΚΡΗ ΣΟΥΙΤΑ ΓΙΑ ΕΓΧΩΡΔΑ ΟΡΓΑΝΑ”

ORCHESTRATION:

- 16 I Violins, 16 II Violins,  
14 Violas, 12 Cellos, and 10 Double-Basses.

SMALL STRING ORCHESTRA:

- 6 I Violins, 6 II Violins  
4 Violas, 4 Cellos and 3 Double-Basses

ATHENS, FEBRUARY 1952.

# N. SKALKOTTAS: "SMALL SUITE FOR STRING INSTRUMENTS"

1. DATING. The date of composition of this work is not exactly known. In the catalogue published by the French Institute of Athens in their edition of the score of 4 Greek Dances—where the composer gave his dates somewhat carelessly—1942 is mentioned as year of composition. No other concrete indication as to dating is available; style and other considerations, however, seem to justify the assumption of the work having been composed either within that year, or, in any case, very near it.

2. FORM OUTLINE. Broadly speaking, the sonata form is used, but with many new refinements and a number of modifications, which probably induced the composer, taking also into account its conciseness, to use the term "suite", as he did for a number of other works in 3 or 4 movements, using the sonata form as a basis.

Generally, the various sections of this work are very clearly determined by marked changes in writing, making the overall form especially explicit and perspicuous.

Subsidiary elements, through their repetitions and combinations, stress this overall scheme, with the variation principles extensively and delicately used; imitations and canons, both strict and free (preserving only melodic contours, rhythm, or other partial features), are in constant use.

The first movement, in highly polyphonic treatment, is in the sonata form, the recapitulation being a condensed variation of the exposition. As development within the exposing section is very elaborate, the middle development section, joining elements from both subjects, is short and of transitional character.

The two subjects (first, bars 1 and 56; second, bars 29 and 69), very homogeneously treated within themselves, are in very marked contrast to each other.

The second movement consists of nine three-bar periods conditioning its form. The main subject is exposed three times, its closing exposition being the recurrence of the initial one; dissociation of its two main parts and differentiated transpositions are used as elements of variation treatment. This original form could be said to constitute a sort of transformation of the lied form after the variation and the rondo.

The third movement is in slightly modified rondo form; the last exposition (bar 73), to the contrary of the first movement, is an enlarged version of the initial one, and is extended through a coda ending in monophonic presentation of the main thematic element of this movement. The middle expositions serve either as delimitations of the couplets (bar 21), or as developing sections (bar 38).

Towards the middle of this movement (bar 55) a reminiscence of the beginning of the first movement is cited.

3. STYLE. The work belongs to the "middle" period of Skalkottas's style evolution (1939-1945), when the composer, besides using his familiar strict 12-tone technique in a group of works, was equally exploring the possibilities of a new compositional technique (used in the present "small suite"), embodying a number of features of the strict 12-tone system, but in a seemingly free form, which kept almost unaltered, however, the general harmonic and, most usually, the writing characteristics of his "a time" 12-tone works.

In both systems, the composer, during that same period, was frequently using a writing technique, already apparent in the present suite, where one voice, markedly predominant, is supporting and leading the overall form as a central tense line, the remaining ones interwoven around it in a counterpoint providing the harmonic interpretation of that median line; this is in contrast to his—practically—equiponderance and economy between the various voices.

Generally, this suite is one of the most interesting examples of the composer's treatment of the short orchestral form; concentration, unity, and, at the same time, great variety are among the essential qualities of the work; refinements, such as the anticipatory preparation of coming themes within the concluding sections of the preceding ones, or the development of broad melodies from seemingly unimportant nuclei, first appearing only within appoggiatures in small notes, are also in frequent use here.

Lastly, the setting for strings, highly divided, (up to 15 or 17 different voices), and differentiated as to performing techniques, provides that warm shimmering, in the orchestral string sound, which is so characteristic of this work.

4. DURATION (approximate). [After the editor's metronome indications]:

1<sup>st</sup> Movement: 1 min 50 sec's. 2<sup>nd</sup> Mvt.: 2 min's 50 sec's. 3<sup>rd</sup> Mvt.: 1 min 40 sec's.

TOTAL DURATION: about  $\frac{7}{4}$  minutes.

## EDITING NOTE

1. Sources. Four copies of the original handwritten score have been preserved, and one incomplete set of parts, containing, however, at least, one copy for each of the 5 string instruments.

Of the scores, Source A is probably the initial one, written in pencil (18 pages).

Source B is more carefully written in ink on 32-stave paper (8 pages).

Source C is a true copy of B (same format, pages, bars and lines in exact correspondence), in ink.

Source D is probably a later copy of B, in ink (47 pages on 12-stave paper) more clearly, but less carefully written than B.

Source E (the parts) were to form one set with source D, but seem mostly copied from B.

2. Editing and records. Sources A, B, D, and E were readily available and have been used for the editing. It is probable that source C, being an exact copy of B, would have added little new information; it also used.

All differences between the sources have been reported on one blueprint in different colours; another blueprint was used to report all decisions as to choice of originals, corrections and additions.

In editing, adherence to the originals was the basic principle; Source B was used as the main guide, versions of the other manuscripts being adopted only when presenting visible advantages; corrections to the originals were limited to the minimum that seemed to provide a coherent and consistent picture of the text; slight differences between similar passages, in the successive appearance of the same groups, were usually retained, unification being attempted only in cases in which it seemed self-imposing.

Additions concern mostly dynamic and other performing indications missing in the original, and are shown in brackets (see below).

3. Presentation. (a) All editing additions or changes (dynamics, bow-strokes, etc) are shown in brackets. Only in the case of added ♩'s or repeated ♫'s or ♭'s within the same bar brackets have been usually omitted, in order not to encumber the text excessively.

(b) Regarding alterations — which are not very uniformly used in the originals — the rule was followed that their validity extends to the coming notes in the same bar, stave and octave; a number of redundant alterations (usually the ♭) have been retained, or added, for greater ease of reading.

(c) Added <, > or — signs are shown crossed, thus: ✕, ✕, ✕.

(d) The most important cases of controversial passages are referred to in a separate summary text revision notice.

(e) Differences in handwriting style (both for the notes and signs, and for the indications in words) are accidental and should not be taken to bear any editing meaning.

(f) "Divisi". As the number of instruments may be greater or smaller (see cover), it is not the number of desks which is prescribed, but the number of groups into which each body of instruments has to be divided; this is shown with the composer's indications « a 2, a 3, ... » (i.e. in two, three [or more] more or less equal groups) — instead of the more correct Italian expression « (divisi) in 2, in 3, ... (gruppi). » Usually, double and multiple stops are avoided, chords being shown to be played "a Divisi".

(g) Language. Titles in the originals are in german and greek. The various performing indications are mostly in german; these have been only kept in german (with an added italian translation), when bearing some particular expressive significance; otherwise — in the case of ordinary conventional terms — only the italian equivalent has been given.

(h) Pedalwork indications. These are missing in the originals. Those given by the editor (in brackets) are purely indicative, and show on which foot the duration of this work was calculated.

4. Orchestration. The orchestration possibilities prescribed by the composer are shown on the cover of the present copy.

# SMALL SUITE FOR STRING INSTRUMENTS

Allegro (MM. J=152-160)

I

5

N. SKALKOTTAS

I Violini

II Violini

Viole

Cellos

Bassi

(10)

(15)

This image shows a handwritten musical score for a string quartet (two violins, viola, and cello/bass). The score consists of four staves, each representing a different instrument. The music is written in common time, with various key signatures and dynamic markings such as  $\text{f}$ ,  $\text{p}$ , and  $\text{mf}$ . Measure 20 begins with a complex rhythmic pattern of sixteenth-note chords. Measures 21 and 22 continue with sixteenth-note patterns and include dynamic markings like  $\text{f}$  and  $\text{p}$ . Measures 23 and 24 feature eighth-note patterns with slurs and grace notes. Measure 25 concludes the section with eighth-note patterns and dynamic markings like  $\text{p}$  and  $\text{mf}$ .

Handwritten musical score for two cellos, page 30. The score consists of two systems of music. The first system starts with a dynamic (mf) and includes a tempo marking Tempo. It features various note heads with accidentals (flat, sharp, double sharp, double flat) and rests. The second system begins with a dynamic (p) and includes a tempo marking Tempo. Both systems include performance instructions such as pizz., arco, rit., and espz..

Handwritten musical score for two staves, measures 1-10. The score consists of ten measures, divided by vertical bar lines. Measure 1: Staff 1 has a whole rest. Staff 2 has eighth-note pairs. Measure 2: Staff 1 has eighth-note pairs. Staff 2 has eighth-note pairs. Measure 3: Staff 1 has eighth-note pairs. Staff 2 has eighth-note pairs. Measure 4: Staff 1 has eighth-note pairs. Staff 2 has eighth-note pairs. Measure 5: Staff 1 has eighth-note pairs. Staff 2 has eighth-note pairs. Measure 6: Staff 1 has eighth-note pairs. Staff 2 has eighth-note pairs. Measure 7: Staff 1 has eighth-note pairs. Staff 2 has eighth-note pairs. Measure 8: Staff 1 has eighth-note pairs. Staff 2 has eighth-note pairs. Measure 9: Staff 1 has eighth-note pairs. Staff 2 has eighth-note pairs. Measure 10: Staff 1 has eighth-note pairs. Staff 2 has eighth-note pairs.

Handwritten musical score for orchestra, page 35. The score consists of six staves of music with various dynamics, articulations, and performance instructions like "Col legno" and "arco". The score is written on a light-colored background with black ink.

A handwritten musical score page, numbered 40 at the top left. The score consists of six staves, each representing a different instrument or voice. The instruments include a woodwind instrument (with dynamic ff), a brass instrument (with dynamic f), three string instruments (violin, viola, cello), and two voices (Soprano and Alto). The music is written in common time, with various key signatures (F major, B-flat major, G major, D major) and accidentals. The vocal parts have lyrics in German. The score includes dynamic markings like ff, f, (mf), (div.), pizz., and arco, as well as performance instructions like 'nur' and 'sehr'. The handwriting is in black ink on white paper.

Handwritten musical score for orchestra and piano, page 45. The score includes parts for 1st and 2nd violins, viola, cello, double bass, and piano. The piano part features complex chords and arpeggios. The score is annotated with dynamic markings like 'poco' and 'molto espress.' and performance instructions like '(sempre div.)' and '(pp)'. Measure numbers 45 and 46 are indicated.

A detailed handwritten musical score for a string quartet, consisting of four staves. The score includes dynamic markings such as (f), (ff), (mf), (pp), and (p), as well as articulations like pizz., arco, and ff. Performance instructions like 'sempre la metà' and 'poco meno pp.' are also present. The score is divided into sections by measure numbers 60, 65, and 70. The handwriting is in black ink on light-colored paper.

(75)

(80)

Andante ( $\text{♩} = 56-63$ )

II

6

Handwritten musical score for section II, measures 1-4. The score consists of four staves for string instruments. Measure 1: 6/8 time, 4 sharps. Measure 2: 6/8 time, 4 sharps. Measure 3: 6/8 time, 4 sharps. Measure 4: 6/8 time, 4 sharps. Various dynamics and performance instructions are included.

(5)

Handwritten musical score for section II, measures 5-8. The score consists of four staves for string instruments. Measure 5: 6/8 time, 4 sharps. Measure 6: 6/8 time, 4 sharps. Measure 7: 6/8 time, 4 sharps. Measure 8: 6/8 time, 4 sharps. Various dynamics and performance instructions are included.

(10)

Handwritten musical score for section II, measures 9-12. The score consists of four staves for string instruments. Measure 9: 6/8 time, 4 sharps. Measure 10: 6/8 time, 4 sharps. Measure 11: 6/8 time, 4 sharps. Measure 12: 6/8 time, 4 sharps. Various dynamics and performance instructions are included.

(15)

Handwritten musical score for section II, measures 13-16. The score consists of four staves for string instruments. Measure 13: 6/8 time, 4 sharps. Measure 14: 6/8 time, 4 sharps. Measure 15: 6/8 time, 4 sharps. Measure 16: 6/8 time, 4 sharps. Various dynamics and performance instructions are included.

20

Musical score page 20. The score consists of four staves. The first three staves are in common time, while the fourth staff begins in common time and ends in 2/4 time. Measure 1 starts with eighth-note patterns in common time. Measures 2 and 3 continue with eighth-note patterns, with measure 3 ending in 2/4 time. Measure 4 begins with a dynamic of  $p$ , followed by sixteenth-note patterns.

Musical score page 21. The score consists of four staves. The first three staves are in common time, while the fourth staff begins in common time and ends in 2/4 time. Measure 1 starts with eighth-note patterns. Measures 2 and 3 continue with eighth-note patterns. Measure 4 begins with a dynamic of  $p$ , followed by sixteenth-note patterns.

25

Musical score page 25. The score consists of four staves. The first three staves are in common time, while the fourth staff begins in common time and ends in 2/4 time. Measure 1 starts with eighth-note patterns. Measures 2 and 3 continue with eighth-note patterns. Measure 4 begins with a dynamic of  $p$ , followed by sixteenth-note patterns.

Allegro Vivace ( $\text{♩} = 138-152$ )

8

三

A handwritten musical score for two voices, labeled '1.' and '2.', on ten staves. The score includes various musical markings such as dynamics (e.g., forte, piano), articulations (e.g., accents, slurs), and performance instructions (e.g., 'pizz', 'arco'). Measure 1 starts with a treble clef, 2/4 time, and a key signature of B-flat major. Measure 2 begins with a bass clef and continues in 2/4 time. Measures 3-4 show a transition to 3/4 time with a key signature of A major. Measures 5-6 continue in 3/4 time. Measures 7-8 show another transition, starting with a bass clef and 2/4 time. Measures 9-10 conclude the section with a treble clef and 2/4 time.

A handwritten musical score for a string quartet (two violins, viola, cello) on five staves. The score includes dynamic markings like 'f', 'mf', 'p', and 'pp', and performance instructions like 'arco' and 'pizz'. Measure 10 begins with a dynamic 'f' and a tempo marking of '10'. The score shows complex rhythmic patterns and harmonic changes throughout the measures.

A handwritten musical score page, numbered 15, featuring five staves of music. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p*, *(P)*, *(mp)*, *arco*, *(poco)*, and *(poco)*. Performance instructions like *sempre* and *acc.* are also present. The music consists of measures with various note heads and stems, typical of a string quartet or similar ensemble.

20

(a2)

25

(30)

(35)

(40)

(50)

Handwritten musical score for two staves, page 55, featuring dynamic markings (e.g., ff, f, p, pp), time signatures (e.g., 2/4, 3/4, 4/4), and performance instructions (e.g., rit., arco, pizz., ponticello). The score includes a tempo instruction: (Tempo) (ma un poco più lento del Tempo I) (♩ = 132-138).

A handwritten musical score for orchestra, spanning pages 60 through 65. The score consists of five staves, each representing a different instrument or section. The notation includes various clefs (G, C, F), key signatures, and time signatures. Dynamic markings such as 'pizz sf', '(pizz) ff', '(pizz) sf', '(mp)', '(f)', '(p)', '(mf)', and '(sf)' are present. Performance instructions like 'Ponticello' and 'ordinario' are also included. The score features complex rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth-note figures and sustained notes. Measure numbers 60 and 65 are circled at the top of their respective staves.

**70**

(ordinario)

**Tempo I** ( $\text{d} = 138-152$ )

**75** (sempre arco)

11

*Stringendo*

(tutti) arco  
2(p) cresc.  
arco  
1. arco (div.)  
2. arco cresc.  
arco  
arco cresc.  
arco

*Presto* ( $\text{J} = 160-168$ )

95

100

*Stringendo*

(Sempre string. ac.) → **Prestissimo** ( $\text{d} = 184-200$ )

**105**

**110**

**115**

Fine

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