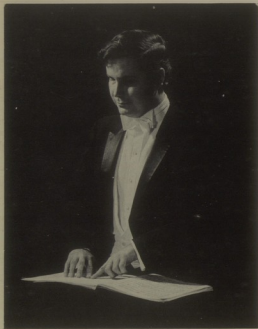


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TWENTIETH-CENTURY
GREEK PIANO MUSIC

MANOS HADZIDAKIS
For A Little White Seashell

NIKOS SKALKOTTAS
Suite for Piano, No. 3

GEORGES PONIRIDY
Rythmes Grecs



Nicolas CONSTANTINIDIS, *Piano*

TWENTIETH-CENTURY GREEK PIANO MUSIC

Side I:

MANOS HADZIDAKIS

FOR A LITTLE WHITE SEASHELL

Études and Dances for the Piano, Op. 1

- I. March
Syrtos
- II. Conversation with Serge Prokofiev
Tsimikos
- III. Mandinada
Ballos
- IV. Nocturne
Calamitanos
- V. Pastoral
Big Sousta

Manos Hadzidakis was born in Xanthi in Macedonia in 1925. He is one of the most popular and beloved composers in Greece. His first major contribution was made at the age of 19—a musical score for Eugene O'Neill's play, "Mourning Becomes Electra." Since then, he has written for all media of musical ballet, opera, theater, popular music, including bouzouki, and films. One of his greatest international successes was the score for the film "Never on Sunday," motives from which can be heard in "For a Little White Seashell." His style is a synthesis of Greek and Oriental folk melodies and rhythms and Byzantine liturgical music fused with a characteristically dissonant idiom.

The Suite, "For a Little White Seashell," Op. 1, is a set of 5 pairs of preludes and dances. The flavor here is highly reminiscent of Prokofiev, with frequent use of polytonality, multi-rhythms, and sudden, unprepared modulations. However, the use of specific Greek folk and popular dance rhythms gives this piece a unique charm. The first prelude is a march in 4/8 time. A reminder of the influence of the Orient is the occurrence of augmented seconds in the melody. The repeated notes, played with alternating hands, are reminiscent of the favorite stringed instrument of Greece—the bouzouki. The Syrto is a kind of Greek popular dance. The word itself means "dancing together." The piece reflects the irregular accents which are characteristic of this dance.

"Conversation with Serge Prokofiev," is the second prelude. Here the composer seems to be imitating, using his debt to Prokofiev. A *tsimikos* has a characteristic rhythm of 2 2 2 2 2 2 in 6/8 time; however, Hadzidakis notated this in 3/4. The *mandinada* is a dialogue, both words and music composed contemporaneously to suit special occasions. The *Mandinada*, marked *Andantino*, cantabile and rubato, is typical of this sort of Greek song. It is a popular in Crete and the surrounding islands. The dance following, *Ballos*, is a lively contrast to the lyrical and searching *Mandinada*.

The Nocturne is improvisatory in style and Impressionistic in texture. The next dance, a *calamitanos* in 7/8 time (divided 3 plus 2 plus 2), is one frequently encountered throughout Greece.

The Pastoral, a lovely, cantabile prelude, makes use of multi-rhythms and tempo changes which, unexpectedly, combine to produce a smoothly flowing, sensuous sound. The *sousta* is a dance often associated with the island of Crete. "Sousta" means "spring," a movement which occurs frequently during the dance. This brings the piece to a robust conclusion.

Nikos Skalkottas (Greece, 1904-1949) was definitely the most advanced and ultimately the most internationally recognized Greek composer. His first serious study of music began with his uncle and father, in 1916, he graduated as a violinist from the Conservatory of Athens. Owing to the generosity of a wealthy patron, he was able to study, with Willy Hess and composition with Kurt Weill and F. Jarnach,

Side 2:

NIKOS SKALKOTTAS

SUITE FOR PIANO, No. 3

Minuetto—Thema con Variazioni—Al

- Funeha—Finale
- GEORGES PONIRIDI
RHYTHMS GRECS
- I. Rhythme Smyrniote
- II. Rhythme Thessalioite
- III. Rhythme Pontique
- IV. Rhythme Thanaïote
- V. Rhythme Epirote
- VI. Rhythme Cretois
- Nicolas CONSTANTINIDIS, Piano

From 1927 to 1931 he studied with Arnold Schoenberg, becoming an outstanding pupil. D. Mitropoulos has said that for a brief period Skalkottas succeeded in moving to Berg among his disciples. In 1933, Skalkottas, forced to leave Germany after Hitler's seizure of the government, returned to Greece where he was serving as an orchestral player while continuing to compose. The musical climate was not encouraging, however and he found little audience for his works.

Except for arrangements of folk songs, which he found little antithesis for his works.

After his death over 150 compositions were noted. He wrote symphonies, concert, string quartets, sonatas, and many smaller works. He also made 36 settings of Greek dances. Skalkottas, unlike the other composers represented on this record, received little public recognition during his lifetime.

Suite for Piano, No. 3, atonal not serial, is a work which demonstrates his tendency toward classical forms. The first movement, *Minuetto*, is multimeteric—an unusual occurrence for a traditional triple-metered piece. The texture is richly polyphonic. The theme is *minuet*, trio, da capo *minuet*.

Thema con Variazioni is based on a popular Greek theme presented in a Lento tempo. The tempo of each of the four variations is increased until it finally culminates in a Presto for the fourth variation. A colorfully expressive, more "Impressionistic" and somewhat more imaginative way. The entire movement is without meter.

The third movement, *Marea Funeha*, is marked *Moderato*. This music, at once lyrical and contrapuntal, is very dramatic and moving.

The dynamic finale is characterized by unusual melodic contours demanding first class pianists and melodic rhythms as well as the psychical for which he seemed to have a predilection.

Georges Poniridi was born in 1892 in Constantinople of Greek parents. He studied violin and wind instruments and played in the Lyceum of France. In 1910, he moved to Belgium to further his studies at the Conservatory of Brussels. He won first prize in violin and received his diploma in 1912. At the Schola Cantorum in Paris he studied composition with A. Roussel and Vincent d'Indy. He remained in France, studying modern Gallic compositional techniques, until 1938 when he went to Greece, where he still lives. In 1943, he was appointed Director of the Music Department of the University of Education.

His style, similar to that of Hadzidakis in some respects, incorporates folk ideas from the music of Crete, the Aegean, Asia Minor, Thessaly, and other Byzantine music. He differs from Hadzidakis in texture, Poniridi writing in a much more linear style. His works include symphonic music, chamber music, incidental music to ancient Greek plays, and arrangements of Greek folk songs.

"Greek Rhythms" was written in score was published, the composer is

owed to a small degree. The changes in the second and final movements. Each of the movements in this suite describes a dance from a region of ancient or modern Greece. No 1—Rhythm of Smyrna. A leisurely, contrapuntal dance, slightly dissonant, showing some Byzantine melodic influence. All movements are in ternary form (ABA) with a somewhat modified return of the A. No. 2—Rhythm of Thessaly. A vivo tempo. In the middle section there is a very effective use of hemiola. As in the early Baroque and in the Byzantine tradition, Poniridi frequently ends on a dominant-sounding chord, varying an unresolved feeling. No. 3—Rhythm of Pontus. 8/8 time, *Moderato*. Rather relaxed tempo. Middle section bears some similarity to the singing of the Alleluia in the Greek Orthodox Church. A psalms (coarse) stings in a melismatic style over a tone akin to a pedal point sung by the deepest basses. No. 4—Rhythm of Thera. The first section "A" is very Oriental sounding, with frequent augmented seconds. There is also a very skillful use of inverted counterpart. While the first part is an extraordinarily singing style, the second section is emphatically rhythmic and is based on the Dorian mode. No. 5—Rhythm of Ipirus. In 9/8 time, the dominant rhythmic pattern throughout this dance is the unusual and refreshing division of the 9/8 meter into 6 plus 2 plus 2 plus 3. No. 6—Rhythm of Crete. In this dance are reflections of vigor and toughness—characteristics traditionally attributed to the people of this beautiful but harsh island of the Mediterranean. As to the musical aspects, there are Oriental influences as in most of the other dances, interesting synopacted rhythms, harmonic dissonance and an emphasis on movement of the melody in parallel fifths and octaves with dissonant harmonies in the accompaniment. Recently, after discussion between the composer and pianist of the original ending, a coda was added.

The presentation of these three outstanding 20th-century Greek composers for the first time on record, is a truly very well done composer. All influenced by the same national music elements of Byzantine and popular Greek music can, nonetheless, each take separate and independent roads to a definite, individual style.

Rosalie and Nicolas Constantinidis

Born in Camé, Egypt, of Greek parents, Nicolas Constantinidis faced, at the age of six, what he believes is an inconvenience not a handicap—the loss of his sight. After earning a Licentiate with distinction from the Royal Academy of Music (London), he came to the United States to accept a full scholarship at Baldwin-Wallace College. Although at that time English was not engaged in his studies, in less than a year this young man had achieved a Bachelor of Music degree cum laude and a Master of Music degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music.

Nicolas Constantinidis has received accolades from audiences and critics around the world. He has distinguished himself as an actor and a writer, appearing on National Educational Television (U.S.A.), Voice of America, (U.S.A.), English, Radio and Television (U.S.A.), (Switzerland), RIAS (Germany), ORTF (France) and Vienna Radio (Austria).



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