

Solon Michaelides

I first met Solon Michaelides, in London, in July 1972 when he was, I think, on his way to the International Musical Eisteddfod in Wales, which he attended regularly. A mutual friend and fellow conductor, Adrian Sunshine, had suggested he paid me a visit. This meeting led eventually to the publication by Fabers, early in 1978, of his magnum opus, The Music of Ancient Greece - soon to be awarded a special prize by the Athens Academy. Its fame has since spread as far as Vladivostok, from where a Russian scholar has recently written enquiring about it, and it has come to be regarded as a major authority, perhaps the major authority, on the subject.

Solon rapidly perceived that he had found the right publisher, as I was not only a classicist myself with knowledge of the Greek language and Greek literature but I was passionately interested in music of all periods and regions, and had actually had a go at deciphering some of Aristoxenus' theoretical writings on music, without much success, I admit. He told me how the idea of writing the book had occurred to him in London in 1946 - he had earlier been a student at the Trinity College of Music. The reading room at the British Museum was to become a welcome warm refuge during the arctic winter of 1947. His two other main sources of information and stimuli to research over the years were the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris and the National Library in Athens.

It was only after we had met several times that he revealed to me the full distinction of his perennial activities as conductor, composer, musicologist and musical administrator. I was greatly privileged to have known such a remarkable man.

Giles de la Mare

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