

THE EVOLUTION OF MUSIC IN MODERN GREECE.

Modern Greek Music⁽¹⁾ begins with the liberation of Greece (appr. 1830), and may fall into two periods: (a) the initial stage, and b) the Contemporary School.

The first period covers the whole of the 19th century and perhaps the first decade of the 20th. Musical life in the broad sense of the word was not existent in Greece until late in the 19th century. As was natural, there was nothing, as regards especially Art-Music, in a country liberated but ruined, after a dark slavery lasting for over three centuries, and a struggle of about nine years following the National Rising of 1821. A very rudimentary musical movement began in Nauplia, the first capital of liberated Greece, with the encouragement of the first Governor John Kapodistria. Kapodistria tried to create some interest in music by inviting foreign musicians; the first instrumental group formed was a military Band, under a German musician. With the transfer of the capital to Athens (15th December, 1834) the musical movement was concentrated in the ancient City. The chief musical entertainments were the concerts of the Bavarian military Bands. King Othon (Otto), second son of the King of Bavaria, who was elected first King of Greece after the assassination of Kapodistria, was a music-lover by tradition and encouraged the development of music. With the Government's assistance the first Theatre was built in Athens and began in 1840 the first series of performances with an Italian operatic Company. Since then Italian companies regularly visited Greece, and the Italian Operas with their arias were the principal medium which acquainted the Greek people with European music. A somewhat concrete stage in shaping the musical life at Athens began in 1871 with the foundation of the "Conservatoire of Athens", which played an important part in the evolution and progress of music in Greece.

The first Greek composers came from the Ionian islands; almost all of them studied in Italy and their art was influenced by the Italian School. Three of these composers deserve a special mention: the first, Nicholas Mantzaros, was the composer of the Greek National Anthem. Born in Corfu (1795, where he died in 1875), he was a sound theorist, a great ideologist and teacher, but as a composer, though considered by some Italian writers⁽²⁾ as original, he was indeed more Italian than Greek. The second of the three, Paul Carrer (1829-1896) from Zante, also greatly influenced by Italian music, succeeded nevertheless in freeing himself at certain moments to write some original music. The third, Spizo Samara⁽³⁾ is the most interesting of all the Greek composers of this period. He was born in Corfu in 1863 and

(1) Greek music may be divided roughly into three great periods: a) The Ancient, b) the Mediaeval, chiefly Church (Byzantine) music, and c) the Modern. It is difficult to define chronological limits. The Mediaeval period, however, ends with the fall of Constantinople (1453); between this and the last-named period there is a gap (appr. 1453 - appr. 1830) covered by Folk-music.

(2) "Dizionario Universale del Musicista"; Milano, 1937, vol. 1 p. 763.

(3) See Grove's Dictionary (1940) vol. IV, p. 516. Also "Dizionario dei Musicisti", vol. 11, p. 439.

died in Athens in 1917; he studied in Paris with Leo Delibes and was chiefly an operatic composer. Many of his operas met with success in Italy and France where he spent most of his life; of his operas, "Flora Mirabilis" (Milan, 1886), "La Martire" (Naples, 1894) and "Ahea" (Florence, 1908) may be mentioned. His style was bright, very often graceful, and his art sincere but not profound. In his latest works he makes some use of Greek folk-songs. Stamara was the first Greek composer to be recognised on an international scale.

From the Ionian islands continued to come forward other composers, who now tried to draw their inspiration from inside Greece, from the folk-songs, from the national legends and traditions. So the Greek School began to evolve and develop in this direction, after the example set first by the Russian School with the group of the Five, about the middle of the 19th century. Of course here, as is also the case with other Schools, there is no question of imitating the folk-art, but of seeking inspiration within the country with a view to achieving development on higher level of the elements found in popular art. Among these composers from the Ionian islands we should mention two, Denys Lavrangas, from Cephalonia (1864-1941), a pupil of Massenet and George Lambelet from Corfu (1874-1943). Both died during the German occupation. Lavrangas devoted his whole life to the creation of the National Hellenic Opera. He composed besides orchestral works and a great number of songs, several operas, among which he felt a particular affection for "Dido", a musical tragedy. G. Lambelet was the first to study with devotion and enthusiasm the Greek folk-song, on which he published several studies. Special mention must be made in this connection of his rich collection, of harmonized songs "The Greek Folk-Music" in French (see the List). As a composer he was chiefly a song-writer with a clear and noble style. His brother, Napoleon (Corfu 1864), was also a composer and had lived a great part of his life in London, where he died in 1932.

With these two composers we enter the contemporary school in which there is no more trace of Italian influence. The Greek composers make now their studies in the Country itself, in Germany or mostly in France. The French School has exercised a considerable influence on modern Greek music; this phenomenon may be explained of course. The French School, after having been influenced by Mussorgsky and the Russian Masters, succeeded in influencing in its turn many other schools by impressionistic aesthetic movement, by the development of exotic means, the harmonic methods, the bright art of orchestration, and generally by the particular spirit so characteristic of the French Art. For the Greek composers, besides all these reasons, there was also some relation of temperament, a sort of aesthetic affinity more profound perhaps than with other countries.

Of the composers of the pre-war generation (we mean the first world war, 1914-1918) there were two distinct groups, one working inside Greece and the other outside, especially in France. Of those belonging to the first group Manolis Kalomiris has offered the most considerable national services. From 1910 he has been the leading figure in the movement, trying with his compositions, his articles and books, and his teaching, to encourage the creation of Greek music. Born in Smyrna (1883) he studied in Vienna and had been for 4 years a professor at the Conservatoire of Harkov in Russia (1906-1910). He served as professor at the "Athens Conservatoire" (1910-1919) and as Principal of the "Hellenic Conservatoire" (1919-1926); he is now the head of the "National Conservatoire" which he founded in 1926. He is a prolific composer. His

many works include three operas (the second of which was given in Berlin in 1940), two symphonies, two orchestral suites, a symphonic poem, a Piano Concerto, a Rhapsody (orchestrated by G. Perné) and a considerable number of works for chamber music, piano solo, songs etc. Many of his works have been performed in Paris, Berlin, Brussels, Warsaw etc.

In connexion with the same group Riadis, Margaritis and Sklavos must be mentioned. Emil Riadis (Salonica, 1892-1935) was a pupil of Ravel. He was of Polish descent on his father's side; his name is derived from his mother's maiden name, Eleftheriadis. After his studies he worked as Professor, until his death, at the "Conservatoire of Salonica". His style is a compromise of strong oriental feeling with modern - chiefly French - aesthetics. Chiefly a song-writer (a very delicate and original one) he left in the rather short span of his life about 200 songs; he composed also a Byzantine Mass (of St. John Chrysostom), incidental music to "Hercuba" etc. Loris Margaritis (Patras, 1895) better known as a pianist (he is professor at the Conservatoire of Salonica) composed works for orchestra, piano, and several songs. George Sklavos (Vraila of Rumania, 1888) studied at the Conservatoire of Athens, of which he is now a Professor. He composed orchestral works and two Operas.

Of those who lived and worked mainly outside Greece and made a name for their country and themselves the principal composer is Petro Petridis; he is the most widely known of Greek composers. Petridis was born in Nigde (Asia Minor) in 1892 and was sent to Paris to study law and political sciences, but gave them up for Music. In Paris he was acquainted with some other Greek composers studying there, such as Riadis, Varvoglis, and especially Spathis, who introduced him to Albert Wolf. He took lessons first from A. Wolf and later from Albert Roussel. He was for a time Paris correspondent of the "Musical Times". Petridis is chiefly a symphonist; among his numerous symphonic works we may mention: four symphonies (of which the 4th had its first performance in Brussels on the 8th of January 1942), two piano concertos, a cello concerto, two suites ("Greek" and "Ionian"), an Opera, and a concerto grosso. His works are regularly played in many musical centres.

Special mention should be made of Mario Varvoglis, an Athenian (1884) and excellent composer, who after living for 20 years in Paris established himself at Athens; he is now co-director of the "Hellenic Conservatoire". Varvoglis belongs to a family of warriors in the great War for Independence (1821); he also studied painting at the Athens Polytechnic, and then music in Paris with Xavier Leroux, Coussade and d'Indy. His works include an Opera, a symphonic poem, a Pastoral Suite for strings, music to the ancient tragedies, "Agamemnon", "Medea" and "Persians" and works for chamber music.

Another composer of this group is George Poniridy (Constantinople 1892); he studied first at the Brussels Conservatoire and later in Paris at the Schola Cantorum with d'Indy (composition) and Amédée Gastoué (Gregorian music). He lived for over 20 years in Western Europe, where many of his works have been performed. His works include: two symphonies, a "Symphonic Triptych", 6 "Byzantine Songs" for soli, chorus and orchestra, a Cantata ("Kassiani") and chamber music; also many piano works (sonata, Greek Dances, Attic Suite etc). He is now Head of the Music Department of the Ministry of Education. Dimitri Levidis, President of the "Union of Greek Composers", is another important figure. He was born in Athens (1886) and studied at Lausanne and Munich (with Mottl and R. Strauss); he then established himself in Paris, where he lived 22 years and gave most of his works (Straram, Colonne etc). Levidis became known with his ballet "The Shepherd and the Nymph"

(Concerts, Colonne, 1924) ; he composed also a Poem for Violin and orchestra (Straram, 1927), a symphonic poem (1926) and many other works. He wrote also for the "Musical Waves" (Ondes Musicales" Martenot) some important works performed in Paris. Levidis has an unpublished book (3 vols) with the title "Grand treatise on the technique of Modern Musical Art, based on the principles of natural laws governing the sounds and the colours." Theodore Spathis belongs to the same group; he was a pupil of Faure at the Paris Conservatoire, and composed symphonic works and many songs.

All the composers of this group, Petridis, Varoglis, Levidis, Poniridy, Spathis and also Riadis are more than other Greek composers affiliated with the French School.

The youngest of this generation is Dimitre Mitropoulos, the eminent conductor, born at Athens (1896). Mitropoulos studied in Athens (Armand Marsick), in Brussels (Gilson) and later in Berlin with Busoni. He was for many years the permanent conductor of the Athens Symphony Orchestra; after having conducted with success in almost every European country he established himself in the U.S.A., where he is now the permanent conductor of the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra. His compositions include an Opera, a "Christ" symphony, a Concerto Grosso, a "Greek Sonata" for piano, a Violin sonata and other works.

THE YOUNGER GENERATION.

25 December, A pleiad of younger composers strengthens the hopes for the future of Greek music. Autiochos Evangelatos (Cephalonia, 1903) an excellent composer with sound technique; co-director of the "Hellenic Conservatoire" and conductor at the "Lyric Theatre". He went to Germany to continue his studies in Law, but decided to devote himself to music and studied at the Leipzig Konservatorium; later he had lessons from Weingartner in Basle. His symphonic works include a symphony (1930), an Epitaph (1931), a suite (1934, Prize of the Academy), an "Overture to a Drama" (Athens 1937; performed also in Berlin, Frankfurt etc). He composed incidental music to the ancient tragedies "Persians", "Electra", "Hecuba", and chamber music. Andreas Nezeritis (Patras 1897) was a pupil of Lavrangas. He composed, amongst others, two "Greek Rhapsodies" for Orchestra (Berlin 1938, Wiesbaden 1939), a violin Concerto, a Suite on Cyprus folk-songs, a Musical Tragedy, a Musical Legend, and many songs. Nicos Skalcotas, a pupil and disciple of Schonberg, composed many works in the twelve-note system (two Piano Concertos, Suite etc) and effectively arranged for orchestra many Greek dances. Alecos Kontis (Athens, 1899), who studied in Munich, has given some interesting works.

1903. Among those of the youngest generation there are many promising composers; some of whom have already written important works. We should mention: Theodore Karyotakis (Argos), a pupil of Mitropoulos and Varvoglis; his first works were characterized by an aggressive style, but in his later works he found a calm and serene mode of expression. His works include: "Symphonic Study" for orchestra, "Epic Song", "Ballade" for piano and orchestra, Sinfonietta for strings, music to Euripides' "Ion", a violin sonata (1947) etc. George Kazasoglou (Athens 1910) with a strong personality and a noble style. Works: Symphony (1947), Triptych, Symphonic Preludes, incidental music for the ancient tragedies "Andromache", "Medea", "Ajax" and many modern plays, a violin Sonata (1947)

and a series of expressive songs. John Papaioannou (Kavalla, 1910), another very promising young composer: Symphony (first performance, April 1947) in Byzantine modes, a Symphonic poem, a Piano Concerto, a Dramatic Idyll, also chamber music. Ch. Perpessas a pupil of Mitropeoulos, wrote symphonic works ("Symphony", "Dionysus' dithyrambs"); Leonide Zoras (Sparta, 1905), conductor at the "Lyric Theatre", gave interesting orchestral works and songs; George Georgiadis who studied in Salonica and Paris, composed a "Symphonic Poem", a violin Sonata, 12 Preludes for piano, a Trio and songs; St. Prokopiou several songs; Menelaus Pallantios (Piraeus, 1914) studied in Italy and gave two orchestral suites, a "Prayer on the Acropolis" for orchestra, a sonata and a suite for violin etc; also G. Platon, R. Kyriakon, M. Koutoungos and others.

To this list must be added the well-known critic and musicologist, Michael D. Calvocoressi. Although he was born in Marseilles (1877) and lived all his life outside Greece, he was nevertheless a Greek musician. He was an authority especially on Russian music and published books on Musorgsky, Glinka (also on Liszt, Schumann etc). He contributed in the Grove's Dictionary, in the "Encyclopédie de la Musique" and in other Encyclopaedias and Music Magazines. Worthy of mentioning are his numerous translation of important books, operas, folk-songs collections ("Boris Godounov", Korsakov's "100 Chants Nationaux Russes", Bartok's "The Hungarian Folk-Music" etc). Calvocoressi died in February, 1944.

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MUSICAL INSTITUTIONS.

The principal musical centre is, of course, Athens, where there are three main Conservatoires. The oldest is the "Conservatoire of Athens" (Director: Spiros Farantatos) established in 1871 during the Premiership of Alexander Coumoundouros, who took an active interest in its foundation. It has been the principal institution which cultivated and encouraged the development of music in Greece. In 1893 it founded its Orchestra, a small body at the beginning, soon completed into a Symphony Orchestra, whose concerts have played the same educational rôle in Greece as Henry J. Wood's Promenade Concerts have in England. It became little by little a body of high standard, and has been conducted at times by such composers and conductors, as Saint-Saens, Richard Strauss, Weingartner, Bruno Walter, Pierné and others. The other two Conservatoires are the "Hellenic Conservatoire" (1919) and the "National Conservatoire" (1926), which have also Local Centres throughout Greece, in Egypt and Cyprus. The first of the two is a continuation of another Institution founded by Mrs. Lottner in 1899. All subjects from Composition to instrumental music are taught in these High Schools, including classes for Dima, Eurhythmics, and Byzantine Music. Average number yearly of each is between 800-1000 students; this number is considerably augmented by the Local Centres.

Athens has also a "Lyric Theatre" (National Opera House) established in 1940 (Director G. Sklavos; Conductors: L. Zoras, A. Evangelatos) giving almost daily performances with Greek and foreign operas of the international repertory. The "State Symphony Orchestra" (which is the old orchestra of the Conservatoire, taken up by the State in 1943) gives weekly concerts throughout the year; the concerts in summer are given in the ancient open-air Theatre of Herodes Atticus at the foot of the Acropolis (Permanent conductors: Economides, Vavayannis and Lycoudis). Besides the Orchestra, Athens have the "Athens Choir" (established in 1916) giving with the Orchestra great Choral

works (Director Economides).

There are also other Choirs, the "Palladios", the "Choir of Greece" (dir. S. Vassiliades) and the excellent Choir of the "Lyric Theatre". During the last few years there has been created an interest in the music of the Renaissance, and concerts of old music have been given first by the Choral Group of Minos Dounias, and later by the "Quartet of Ancient Instruments" of Spiros Skiadaressis. Many recitals (piano, violin, song etc) are also given by Greek and foreign Artists. old

Salonica is the second musical centre of Greece. It has the "Conservatoire of Salonica" (Founder Director: Alexander Kazantzis) established in 1915; it is the only State Conservatoire in Greece, and has Local centres in other Macedonian towns. Average number of students yearly, 500. > Salonica has a symphony Orchestra (conductors: Kazantzis, Flores, Theophanous and Kotsarides); also a "National Choir" (dir. Flores) and the "Thermaic Choir" (dir: Theophanous).

Other towns and centres, such as the Piraeus, Volo, Patras, Corfu, Crete and other islands have also their Musical Institutions.

Orchestras

Choral Bodies

Musicologists Calvoreson M.

Soloists : G. Kachauer

2 Singers: Callas
E. Souliotes

Secundo
K. Paschalis

O. Lappas

Ar. Goudas: Xenakis, Antoniou, Kounadis,
manoyakis, ^{Papadimitriou}