

## Angelina Sotiriou – Independent Researcher

**Mikis Theodorakis (1925-2021)** was an inspiring figure: his life and musical output are inextricably linked to left-wing politics and the struggle for democracy in postwar 20<sup>th</sup> century Greece.

Theodorakis began his career as a classically trained composer: his purpose was to write symphonic works. He was involved in the resistance against the Nazi occupation of Greece having strong affiliations to the left and the Greek Communist Party. This resulted to persecution, exile, and torture during the Greek Civil War. After his release he studied in Paris and produced his first acclaimed works.

By the early 60s however, the composer shifts towards a new direction: his objective is composing works for the masses and merging his political ideas with music, and the musical and poetic traditions of Greece with high art and poetry. Setting the poem *Epitaphios* to music was a point of departure for Theodorakis and a point of controversy for the audiences that eventually idolized and worshipped him.

This paper intends to examine the composer's constant engagement with Politics Music and Song by mainly focusing on the essence of his output: a type of work referred to as ***Laiko Oratorio*** (Popular Oratorio), a term the composer himself coined, subsequently labelling as metasymphonic.

***Laiko Oratorio*** is an attempt to combine the Hellenic musical traditions and Western Art music. This resulted to a unique genre bearing deep political meaning that only exists within the boundaries the Hellenic world until today.

We will examine the background and creation of the genre, it's characteristics and context, its reception by audiences and how it was later embraced and further developed by composers that are considered Theodorakis' followers in Greece and Cyprus creating a small yet important corpus of works of extreme popularity that still constitute a landmark within the Hellenic culture and society.

Angelina Sotiriou received a Bachelor's degree in Music from Goldsmiths College, University of London (2000) and subsequently focused on

Ethnomusicology, studying at Master's Level (2000-2) with Professor John Baily. She also holds a Diploma at Arts Management from Birkbeck College (2007).

Being active in research within the area of Cypriot and Greek Music, she has presented papers in various local and international conferences (Yale, University of Athens, University of Nicosia, ARTE Music Academy et al.). Her main interests include the sociocultural analysis of Hellenic traditional songtexts, Music and Gender, Music and Place, Urban Ethnomusicology, Manos Hadjidakis, Mikis Theodorakis and Music and Politics.

As an Ethnomusicologist she has been involved in effective efforts to register Cypriot musical elements and genres as UNESCO intangible cultural heritage (2015).

Apart from researching and performing, she is active in teaching, vocal training, and arts production and management in collaboration with leading organizations of the island

**Angelina Sotiriou – Independent Researcher**

[gelinguzel@hotmail.com](mailto:gelinguzel@hotmail.com)