

**Sibyl's Leaves:**  
**understanding musical performance issues in Jani Christou's**  
***Anaparastasis III and Epicycle.***

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## **Abstract**

This thesis deals with performance issues that are raised in the late works of Jani Christou (1926-1970). Christou was a Greek composer whose works demonstrate great interest in terms of their challenging of the conceptual margins of musical performance. His output was widely appreciated while he was still alive, but since his premature death there have been very few performances of his music. Because of a general lack of published sources on Christou, a significant part of my research material comes from the Jani Christou Archive, in which the composer's unpublished commentaries on his works can be found.

The issues that are examined in this thesis mainly revolve around original musical concepts, which were articulated by the composer and characterise his late works. The content of these concepts as well as their function in two of Christou's late works, *Anaparastasis III: The Pianist* and *Epicycle*, are observed on two levels. On the one hand, their relation to postmodern thought, psychology and philosophy is interrogated on a theoretical level, especially through research into the work of Carl Jung and Ludwig Wittgenstein, whose student Christou was. On the other hand, the behaviour of these concepts in practice and the performance issues which are raised through their use are studied through personal reflections on my own realisations of *Anaparastasis III: The Pianist* and *Epicycle*.

This thesis is one of the few pieces of writing to deal with Christou's work critically and on both a theoretical and a practical level. Therefore, one of its greatest values lies within the possibility of a new appreciation of Christou's pioneering contribution to contemporary music, which can function as a creative impetus towards an innovative perspective on the evolution of musical performance.

Through this research I aim at identifying the performance issues that stem from the particularity of Christean concerns, such as 'metapraxis' and 'protoperformance'. I investigate the conceptual framework within which these ideas developed, and I attempt to formulate an effective theoretical and performative attitude towards them, in order to reach a deeper theoretical understanding that will lead to successful performances of Christou's late works.

## **Table of Contents**

<b>Abstract</b>	2
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	5
<b>Chapter I - A Prologue</b>	
1. Introduction	6
2. Biography and List of Works	
• Biography	8
• List of Works	9
3. The Logos of the Soul: Evangelos Christou and Jungian psychology	14
4. The Mother	16
5. Christou as Seen by his Contemporaries	19
6. Christou Today: including performance issues	22
<b>Chapter II – Research Sources</b>	
Introduction	26
1. The Jani Christou Archive	26
2. Anne-Martine Lucciano	
<i>Jani Christou: the works and temperament of a Greek composer</i>	29
3. Giorgos Leotsakos	30
4. Carl Jung and Archetypal Psychology	31
5. Evangelos Christou	
<i>The Logos of the Soul</i>	32
6. Ludwig Wittgenstein and Bertrand Russell	34
7. Postmodern Thought, Music and the Performing Arts	35
8. Ancient Myths and Literary Works	37
9. Interviews, Articles, Reviews	38
Conclusions	40
<b>Chapter III – Metapraxis-Protoperformance-Transformation</b>	
1. Metapraxis	41
2. Protoperformance	44
3. Transformation – A Credo for Music	48

Conclusion	51
<b>Chapter IV – Anaparastasis III: The Pianist</b>	
Prologue	56
1. Jani Christou and <i>The Pianist</i>	57
2. The Conceptual Framework of <i>The Pianist</i>	
• Metapraxis and the Struggle with Language	61
• Protoperformance and Ritual	65
• Christou and Kagel: theatricality or beyond?	68
• Systems and Anti-Systems	71
• Synopsis and Conclusions	75
3. Performing <i>The Pianist</i>	78
<b>Chapter V – Epicycle</b>	
Prologue	91
1. The Fifth Period (1966-68): metapraxis and continuum	92
2. Christou and <i>Epicycle</i> : the composer’s ‘voluntary abdication’	97
3. The Conceptual Framework of <i>Epicycle</i>	98
4. <i>Epicycle</i> as a Performance	
• Arriving at the Basic Concepts	106
• The Continuum	112
• Events of the Epicycle	113
• Reflections	123
<b>Chapter VI – An Epilogue</b>	
1. Introduction	124
2. The Patterns	124
3. The Pattern Behind the Patterns	128
<b>Appendices</b>	132
<b>Bibliography</b>	155

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## CHAPTER I A Prologue

### 1. Introduction

This thesis deals with the music of Jani Christou (1926-1970), a Greek composer whose work was widely appreciated while he was still alive. The works on which the thesis is focused are two of his late ones, *Anaparastasis III: The Pianist* and *Epicycle*. The first chapter includes some general biographical information about the composer and introduces the reader to some general features of his life and personality that had an impact on his compositional attitude. In the second chapter, the sources that were used for the purposes of this research are presented. Because of a general lack of published material, a substantial part of my research material was found in the Jani Christou Archive in Athens, and mainly consists of unpublished, personal writings by the composer.

Especially in his last works, Christou experimented with some musical concepts that were his own inventions and can be regarded as his most significant contribution to contemporary music. These original concepts are examined in the third chapter. Because of his background in philosophy and psychology, the connections between his musical concepts and the work of philosophers and psychologists are also investigated.

The fourth and fifth chapters deal specifically with *The Pianist* and *Epicycle*; each chapter includes a presentation of the work, an identification of the function of the original 'Christean' techniques in it, an investigation of the general conceptual framework within which the work developed, an exposition of the performance issues that arise during the process of its realisation, and an attempt at discovering solutions to those issues through academic research and performance practice.

The final chapter summarises the conclusions reached regarding the performances of Christou's music of this period and the essence of the two late works I deal with. The conclusions reached in this thesis can prove beneficial for a re-appreciation of Christou's contribution to the evolution of contemporary music. It is among the first pieces of writing that deals with the composer's work on an analytical and critical level but also tackles performance issues from a practitioner's point of view. Therefore it can function as a valuable guide for musicians who would like to approach Christou's works seriously and it can offer them creative stimulation and a deeper insight into these

works' conceptual content, which can lead musicians to successful performances of Christou's late works.

It is in the work of Jani Christou from the island of Chios that I found the most original talent and the greatest musical courage. In his music is combined an intellectual precision and an emotional warmth that solves the conflict in a completely convincing manner.

(Lee Finney, 1965: 170)

This is how the composer Ross Lee Finney concluded his report on the 'reawakening of the arts in Greece' for the journal *Perspectives of New Music* in 1965. He had only listened to one work by Jani Christou and this made him eager to explore the composer's work further. The words 'original', 'intellectual precision' and 'emotional warmth' are terms which have been often used in order to describe Christou's musical idiom. The validity of such characterisations will be examined in depth throughout this project. However, the first chapter will be a brief presentation of biographical information, including details that had a substantial impact on the composer's creative profile.

The initial chapter summary of Christou's life, exposes the major events that affected his artistic activity. The ensuing list of works uses the periods into which these have been divided by the composer himself, according to their differences in style. Then references will be made to specific people who have influenced Christou's thought, idiosyncrasy and artistic beliefs, techniques and aims. Some descriptions of Christou by people who met him or worked with him will follow. The chapter will end with a short discussion on the subject of how relevant Christou's music can be today and how relevant is the manner in which it has been performed (since his premature death in 1970) to the content of his music. The approaches to tackling a performance of a work by Christou are one of the major issues with which my whole project will deal, through academic research and practice.

## **2. Biography and List of Works**

- **Biography**

Jani Christou was born in Heliopolis, Egypt, on the 8<sup>th</sup> of January 1926 of Greek parents and grew up in Alexandria. His father was the owner of a chocolate factory and his mother had various artistic interests. He started studying the piano in 1931 and at some point studied with the famous pianist Gina Bachauer, who was also the one who introduced him to music theory. In 1945 he went to England in order to study at King's College, Cambridge. This is where he met Ludwig Wittgenstein and Bertrand Russell, with whom he studied linguistic logic and symbolic logic respectively. He acquired a Bachelor of Arts Cantabriensis in 1948. During the same period he studied counterpoint and composition with H.F. Redlich, who was a student of Alban Berg, at Letchworth. He also attended the summer composition seminars of the Academy of Chigiana in Siena with Vito Frazzi (1947, 1948) as well as orchestration and film music composition lessons with Francesco Lavagnino in Rome (1949, 1951 and 1953).

In 1950 he returned to Alexandria, where he organised his studio and devoted himself to composition. During the period 1951-54 he attended some of Carl Gustav Jung's lectures in the Jung Institute of Zurich, where his elder brother, Evangelos, was studying psychoanalysis with Jung himself. In 1956 he got married to his childhood friend, Theresia Choremi, a painter, with whom he had three children. His brother was killed the same year in a car accident.

In 1960 he settled down in Greece, where he was planning to build a complex of buildings with an open theatre (on the island of Chios), which would be used for contemporary music festivals. During this period, his works were frequently performed all over the world (London, Oxford, Copenhagen, Oakland, Munich etc.).

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of January 1970 he died in a car accident in Athens, after celebrating his birthday with some friends and his wife. His wife also died 16 days later. His works are kept at the Jani Christou Archive in Athens, which is managed by his daughter, Sandra Christou.



- **List of Works**

Jani Christou's works were divided into six periods by the composer himself. I find this catalogue of works quite interesting in two ways. First of all, the – probably unique – fact that Christou actually periodised his output in such a fashion shows that he was fully aware, on the one hand, of the unity of his compositions and, on the other hand, of the manner in which they evolved and transformed. This demonstrates how conscious Christou was of his style of composing. It reveals his concern with a stable intellectual foundation to all his works, no matter how emotionally charged or instinctively creative these works were. Also, I find the titles of the works in this catalogue very interesting and I regard them as a kind of 'glossary' of the composer's philosophical tendencies and sources of inspiration in each period. I believe that all his artistic obsessions can be detected in this catalogue solely through the titles of his works, contrasting the timeless world of myth and the ruthlessness of human history down to the present. Giorgos Leotsakos, in his entry on Christou in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, divides Christou's output in three broader categories. However, I preferred to use the categorisation that was made by Christou himself and can be found in the *Dictionary of Greek Music* (2001). The brief descriptions that accompany each period also belong to the composer.

### **Early Works**

(Works which Christou regarded as immature and insignificant)

*Fantasia* for piano (lost?), 1943,

1st performance: Hans Hickman, Cairo, Oriental Hall, 26th January 1944

*Sonata for two pianos* (lost?), 1st performance: Jani Christou, Gina Bachauer, Alexandria, Cinema Royal, 4th June 1944

*Everyone Sang a Poem* for soprano and piano, 1944

*Prelude and Fugue* for two pianos, 1944

*Allegro Quasi una Fantasia [Fantasia]* in E flat major for piano, 1944

*Untitled* piece for ensemble and two pianos (date unknown)

### **First Period (1948-53)**

(‘Twelve-tone system towards serialism’. According to Giorgos Leotsakos’ entry in the *New Grove Dictionary*, Christou also characterised his first two periods as ‘freely atonal’)

*Phoenix Music* for orchestra - five movements, 1948-49

1st performance: New London Orchestra, conductor: Alec Sherman, Royal Opera House, London, 5th March 1950

*Symphony No. 1* for mezzo-soprano and orchestra, 1951

1st performance: S. Houston, soprano, New London Orchestra, conductor: Alec Sherman, Royal Albert Hall, London, 29th April 1951

*Latin Mass* for mixed chorus, brass and percussion, 1953

(see also *Symphony No. 2*), 1st performance: Salonika Chorus, Greek Contemporary Music Group, conductor: Yannis Mandakas, Athens, Rex Theatre, 26th Sept. 1971

*Psalms of David* for baritone, chorus and orchestra, 1953

*The Conception of St. Anne* for mezzo-soprano (lost?), chorus and orchestra, 1955

*La Ruota della Vita (The Wheel of Life)* Trilogy of Operas (libretti: Domenico de Paulis)

1 - Una mamma

2 - Savitri

3 - Il trionfo della morte (The Triumph of Death)

### **Second Period (1953-58)**

(‘Twelve-tone system towards serialism’)

*Six Songs on Poems by T. S. Eliot* for piano and mezzo, 1955, orchestrated 1957, 1st performance: Alice Gabbai (mezzo soprano), Piero Guarino (piano), The British Institute, Alexandria, 13th Jan 1956

*Gilgamesh* oratorio (lost), 1955-58

*Symphony No. 2* for orchestra and mixed chorus, 1954-58,

1st performance: The Symphony Orchestra and Chorus of the Hellenic Radio, conductor: Miltiadis Caridis, Herod Atticus Theatre, Athens, 4th August 1987

### **Third Period (1959-64)**

(‘Meta-serial technique of large forms and introduction of electronic music’)

*Patterns and Permutations* for large orchestra, 1960, 1st performance: Athens State Orchestra, conductor: Andreas Paridis, Athens, Rex Theatre, 11th March 1963

*Symphony No. 3*, 1959-62

*Toccata for Piano and Orchestra*, 1962, 1st performance: Georges Pludermacher (piano), Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, conductor: Elyakum Shapira, Oxford Town Hall, 23rd April 1971

*Piano Concerto*, 1962, (score lost - probably became the Toccata above)

*The 12 Keys* (based on medieval alchemical texts) for mezzo-soprano and ensemble, 1962

*The Ship of Death* for mezzo-soprano and orchestra, 1963

*The Breakdown* opera, 1963-64

*The Testament* for mezzo-soprano, flute, double-bass and piano, 1964

*Prometheus Bound* for orchestra, tape and actors, 1963

1st performance: Epidaurus 16th June 1963

*Greece: the inner world* music for the T.V. programme by Robert Graves, 1963

*Agamemnon* for orchestra, tape and actors, 1964,

1st performance: Epidaurus, 27th June 1965

*Tongues of Fire* for soloists, chorus and orchestra, 1964, text - Greek New Testament,

1st performance: Irma Kolassi (mezzo-soprano), Gerald English (tenor), Kostas Paschalis (baritone), English Bach Festival Chorus and Orchestra, conductor: Piero Guarino, Oxford, St. Mary, 27 June 1964

#### **Fourth Period (1965-66)**

(‘Composition with patterns and wide use of electronic music’)

*The Persians* for instruments, tape and actors, 1965

1st performance: London, Aldwych Theatre, 20th April 1965

*Mysterion* oratorio for narrator, three choruses, tape, orchestra and actors, 1965-66,

1st performance: Athens 13th June 1974

*The Frogs* after Aristophanes, 1966,

1st performance: Athens, Theatre of Herod Atticus, 19th July 1966

*Praxis for 12* for 11 strings and one pianist/conductor, 1966,

1st performance: Accademia Musicale Napoletana Chamber Orchestra conductor: Guarino, Athens, Zappeion Building, 18th April 1966

*Oedipus Rex* (Sophocles) film score, 1967-68, for the film directed by Christopher Plummer, featuring Orson Welles, Christopher Plummer and others

### **Fifth Period (1966-68)**

(‘Free composition with patterns’. Some techniques which are supposed to belong in the Sixth Period, are contained in *Anaparastasis III* and *Epicycle*)

*The Strychnine Lady* for solo viola, five actors, instrumental ensemble, tapes, toys and a red cloth, 1967, 1st performance: Rhoda Lee Rhea (viola), Hellenic Week of Contemporary Music Ensemble, conductor: Dimitris Agrafiotis, Athens, Hilton Hotel, 3rd April 1967

*Anaparastasis III: The Pianist* for actor/pianist, instrumental ensemble and tapes, 1968, 1st performance: Grigoris Semitecolo (pianist), Studio für neue Musik, conductor: Theodoros Antoniou, Munich, Musikhochschule, 12th November 1968

*Anaparastasis I: astronkatidhanykteronomighyrin (I have become familiar with the nightly concourse of the stars)* for baritone, viola and instrumental ensemble, 1968, 1st performance: Spyros Sakkas, Studio für neue Musik, conductor: Theodoros Antoniou, Munich, Musikhochschule, 12th November 1968

*Epicycle* variable instrumentation, 1968,

1st performance: Zouzou Nicoloudi Dance Group and others, Athens, Hilton Hotel, 20th December 1968

### **Sixth Period (1968-70)**

(‘System of programmed permutations and synthesis of para-musical patterns’)

*Oedipus Rex Electronic*, 1969

*Epicycle II*

*Enantiodynamia*, 1969-70

*Oresteia*, 1967-70, a large scale contemporary opera based on Aeschylus's *Oresteia*. Due to the composer's premature death it was left unfinished. The work would have received its world premiere at the English Bach Festival in London in April 1970, with further performances scheduled for France, Japan, America and Scandinavia.

List of *Anaparastases* (120 in total, 33 of which the composer considered to be finished)

*Re-enactment of an Event* for instrumental ensemble, 1966

*Stoning I (Lapidation I)* for instrumental ensemble, 1966

*The Ship* ritual music based on ancient Egyptian customs for instrumental ensemble, 1966

*Walk I* for instrumental ensemble, 1966

*Advertisement* for instrumental ensemble, 1966

*Continuity* for instrumental ensemble, 1967

*Anaparastasis II* (the ritualisation of eating) for instrumental ensemble, 1967

*Clock* for one actor and instrumental ensemble, 1967

*Dream* for instrumental ensemble, 1967

*Aspirin* for one actor and instrumental ensemble, 1967

*Water Music* for electronic music and instrumental ensemble

*Piano I* for one pianist-actor, 1968

*Lecture I* for one male speaker and tapes, 1968

*Lecture II* for one pretty female speaker and instrumental ensemble, 1968

*Stoning II (Lapidation II)* for film (optical sound), 1968

*Piano II* for one pianist-actor, 1968

*Anaparastasis IV (The Screaming Mother)* for two actresses, 1968

*Consecration* without music, 1968

*Prosodion* with or without music, 1968

*Pattern* for instrumental ensemble, 1968

*Pattern and Antipattern* for singer-actor and instrumental ensemble, 1968

*Piano III* for one pianist-actor, 1968

*Dissociation* for instrumental ensemble, 1968

*The Death of Calchas* for two actors and instrumental ensemble, 1968

*Have you cut off her hands?* for instrumental ensemble, 1968

*Pendulum* for instrumental ensemble, 1968

*Walk II* for instrumental ensemble, 1968

*Music Evoked* for one actor, 1968

*Praxis and Metapraxis* for solo pianist (based on Toccata of 1963), 1968

*Silent Praxis* for instrumental ensemble, 1968

*Let me try, too* for two actors-musicians (Sins for a group of actors)

*Moving my arms in an unusual way* for instrumental ensemble, 1968

### **3. The Logos of the Soul: Evangelos Christou and Jungian psychology**

Christou's elder brother, Evangelos, had a significant impact on the composer, as he considered him to be his mentor (he was the man who initiated him in Jungian psychology, which had an immense influence on his work). While Evangelos (or Evi) studied at the Jung Institute in Zurich, Jani visited him and attended some of Jung's lectures.

According to Giorgos Leotsakos (a musicologist, critic and close friend of Jani Christou), the lectures the composer attended at the Jung Institute constituted the main inspiration for some of Christou's works (Leotsakos, 2000). Leotsakos travelled in Zurich and London in order to collect information mainly about Christou's 'lost works' and in the course of this research he managed to meet three out of the four psychoanalysts who had met and analysed the two brothers. One of them, Dr Mari-Denise Tuby (whom Leotsakos met in London), pointed out that Jani Christou's work *Enantiodromia* was inspired by Evi's PhD dissertation at the Jung Institute. Evi was thinking of writing his dissertation on the subject of Herakleitos' 'the way up is also the way down' for a year, but finally decided to write *The Logos of The Soul*, which the composer published in 1963 after his brother's death. Also, Tuby claimed that Christou's lost opera *Gilgamesh* must have been inspired by a seminar on the ancient Mesopotamian Epic poem, which took place at the Institute, and was attended by the composer's brother.

Furthermore, Dr James Hillman, who knew the two brothers quite well and also worked on the publication of Evi's book with Jani, confirmed Jani Christou's great interest in Jungian psychology, and especially Jung's writings on alchemy.

Tuby's information regarding the two brothers' personalities (she was analyzing both of them for years), is also quite interesting. According to Leotsakos' paper

Evi was a warmer person than Jani. He had a capacity for human communication which was extraordinary. [...] Jani was vulnerable. [...] There was a great difference of feeling among the two brothers, although they belonged together - almost like twins. Evi had an absolute implicit belief that his brother was a genius. I do not know what Jani believed about his brother's creativity.  
(Leotsakos, 2000)

Apparently, the influence of Evi on Jani was not restricted only to a human level. The bonds of affection between the brothers were indisputably very strong, according to all the people who had met them. It is obvious that Jani was tremendously influenced (directly and indirectly) by his brother on an intellectual level as well. The combination of this deep emotional and intellectual bond with Evi's tragic death resulted in a great shock and – according to people who were close to him – to the development of a darker as well as mystical aspect to his music.

Leotsakos, in one of his lectures in 1970, even hinted at the possibility of the composer desperately seeking a way to communicate with his dead brother (Lucciano, 2000: 122). No matter how irrational this might sound, Tuby also left similar hints during her conversation with Leotsakos and also claimed that Evi had foreseen his own death in a letter he had written to her a month before his accident. While talking about the effect his brother's death had on the composer, Leotsakos says in his aforementioned lecture:

In this death more than any other event in his adult life, we see the greatest single factor that affected Christou's entire subsequent development. The memory of his brother was more than sacred to Jani Christou. Throughout the entire duration of our friendship (7 years), I never once heard him mention his name, even in the course of what one might call intimate conversations between us. His portrait held pride of place in the studio where he worked. Indeed it would not be absurd to consider the descent into the nether world that occurred during the final period of Christou's creative output as an attempt to complete a poignant and dangerous spiritual journey he had embarked upon with the dearly beloved deceased.

(Leotsakos quoted in Lucciano, 2000: 122)

If we leave aside the risk of the absurdity such a statement would put us into, we can definitely keep the certainty of the immeasurable grief that Evi's death caused to the composer and the impact this loss had on his work. The composer himself, in his last interview, when referring to his unfinished opera *Oresteia* demonstrates a similar mood:

The panic in the face of the lack of a solution to the problem of existence never wanes. The fall of Troy represents an event that Orestes cannot understand. There is no concrete and definitive solution to the human drama; not only do the Erinyes not change into Eumenides, as in the conventional Aeschylean 'Happy End', but on the contrary, they multiply: evil grows, panic spreads, the solution doesn't come.

(Christou, 1970: 6-7)

It appears as if Christou could not find the Aristotelean ‘catharsis’ in his life and as a result could not include it in his version of the *Oresteia* by Aeschylus. The Erinyes, as he says, the evil spirits of guilt that pursued Orestis because he had murdered his mother, never transform into Eumenides (the protective, positive version of the Erinyes); they multiply. This sense of utter desperation and pointlessness is common ground among Christou’s (especially last) works, and started becoming increasingly concrete and extreme after his brother’s death.

As a conclusion, Christou’s appreciation of Jungian psychology, which – as I will examine in detail later on – was initiated by his brother and it also seemed to constitute some sort of hope for relief from the great pain Evi’s death had caused to him. Throughout his late works, the world of myths and archetypes unfolds with great power, and it seems that his readings of Jung’s work triggered the articulation of many of his original compositional techniques and concepts, which will be presented in the third chapter.

#### **4. The Mother**

Another person who had influenced Jani Christou and also played a mysterious role in the issue of his ‘lost works’ was his mother, Lilika Tavernari. She had artistic interests herself (literature and theatre), but according to people who were close to Christou and met her as well, she was a rather negative influence for the composer.

Leotsakos very vividly describes many anecdotes he witnessed after Christou’s death, which reveal the profile of a rather domineering and shallow woman. However, what is of great interest for this project is chiefly her possible association with the disappearance of ten of Christou’s unpublished works from the Archive immediately after his death.

The missing works (according to Leotsakos) are:

*Psalms of David*, for baritone (David), tenor, mixed choir, orchestra, 1953

*The Conception of Saint Anne*, for mezzo-soprano, mixed choir, orchestra, 1955

*La Ruota della Vita* (text by Domenico de Paulis): I. Una mamma, II. Savitri, III. Il trionfo della morte, trilogy of short operas. The libretto is dated July 1955

*Gilgamesh*, opera/oratorium on the Assyrian epic poem, for soloists, 6 narrators (3 men, 3 women), mixed choir, orchestra, 1955-57

*Third Symphony*, for orchestra, 1959-62



*Concerto*, for piano, orchestra, 1962 (perhaps the same as the *Toccata*)  
*The 12 Keys* (on medieval alchemical texts), for mezzo-soprano, flute, oboe, violin, viola, piano, 1962  
*The Ship of Death* (text by D. H. Lawrence), for mezzo-soprano, orchestra, 1963  
*The Breakdown* (text by Jani Christou), in 3 Acts (12 scenes), ‘space opera’, 1964 (Libretto dated 8<sup>th</sup> of December 1956 and sixteen clearly written pages of the score in pencil)  
*The Testament* (on medieval alchemical texts), for flute, double-bass, piano, 1964 (Leotsakos, 1999: 16)

Dr Hillman (mentioned above) confided to Leotsakos that his colleague, Dr Layard, who was also a psychoanalyst Christou used to visit, had described his impression of the composer’s mother as ‘the great Mediterranean castrating mother goddess’ (Leotsakos, 2000). Leotsakos believes that this description could be easily associated with the main character in Christou’s work *The Strychnine Lady*.

After the composer’s death, Christou’s meticulously organised archive was exclusively managed by his mother. It was during that period that the ten unpublished works disappeared. Many theories have been expressed regarding this. For instance, some claimed that the composer himself destroyed those manuscripts – for unknown reasons – before the accident. However, it is very unlikely that this theory could be valid, as Christou was obsessed with keeping all his manuscripts and notes, even the trivial ones, and archiving them. In his Archive one can find notebooks (very precisely dated) with descriptions of his dreams (or ‘the dream files’), small pieces of paper with only a couple of lines written on them, even (according to his daughter) the letters he wrote to Santa Claus as a child.

According to another theory, such complete manuscripts did not really exist, but the works survived only in the form of notes and sketches. This is also quite unlikely, as there are several testimonies (according to Leotsakos’ research) of people, such as Christou’s secretary and other friends of the composer, who claim that they had seen the manuscripts (for instance, the composer Manolis Kalomoiris, who stated that he had seen a score of *The Psalms of David*), or that the composer had clearly told them that he had finished these works. Also, it is quite improbable that the composer had given these manuscripts to someone before his death, as this was a big bulk of work that he probably would not give to anyone without at least keeping copies.

Of course, these are all scenarios based on the hypothesis that the works were actually finished, something which cannot be proven indisputably. For instance, Anne-Martine Lucciano, the musicologist who did extensive research into Christou's archive and published a book on him (and – unlike Leotsakos – did not know the composer personally), believes that the works were never finished (Lucciano, 2000: 121).

In the event that the scores really existed though, it is quite clear that the main suspect for their mysterious disappearance is Christou's mother, as she was the only one who had access to the Archive for the period during which these works appear to have vanished. Leotsakos clearly blames her for this (and also for the disappearance of other objects from the composer's office, which occurred during the same period), without, however, being able to justify the reason why she would do or assist something like this or to discover what exactly happened to the manuscripts. One of her motifs might be the fact that after her son's death, and because of the very strict Greek laws on inheritances, she was left penniless and desperate, as the entire property of Christou (who was supporting her financially) was passed to his three children, without her having any right to claim anything from it. On the other hand, it is quite unlikely that the works were sold to a collector who would wish to present Christou's works as an invaluable piece of a manuscript collection, because they would have had to explain how the manuscripts were acquired, as Christou's music is presently under copyright law until 2040. Therefore, it seems as if the only way for anyone to gain some money from these scores was to sell them to someone who would present them as their own, since they were the only copies.

In any case, this is an issue which is extremely difficult to solve. However, it is worth considering the tremendous influence a woman such as Lilika Tavernari might have had as a mother on Jani Christou and also the source of inspiration her enigmatic figure might have been for his works. Leotsakos, after witnessing a fight (immediately followed by a shockingly melodramatic and unexpected reconciliation) between Christou's mother and mother-in-law (after the death of Christou and Christou's wife), noted that 'only a gifted creature, whose psyche had been exposed to the violence of such scenes while still a child, could have conceived of the idea of metapragmis' (Leotsakos, 2000).

## **5. Christou as Seen by his Contemporaries**

It is remarkable how the descriptions of Christou by people who met him, either as friends, colleagues or both, have striking similarities and share an exceptional affection towards the composer's memory and an admiration towards his personality and work. But what is also remarkable is the proximity between the impressions the performances of his music would leave on most people who had the chance to attend one while Christou was still alive.

For instance, Lee Finney's appreciative text about Christou's talent (quoted at the beginning of this chapter), where he talks about 'original talent', 'musical courage', 'intellectual precision' and 'emotional warmth' (Lee Finney, 1965: 170), brings to mind several phrases that musicians of Christou's time said in appreciation of his work.

One of the most significant people who praised Christou's work, already at the very beginning of his attempts at composing, was the composer Manolis Kalomoiris, one of the most important musicians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century for Greece, not only as a composer, but also because of his contribution to the construction of the system of music education in the country. In a text of his, written in 1973, he describes their encounter (in 1950 or 1951) as follows:

I had the pleasure of becoming acquainted with Jani Christou last summer through Gina Bachauer and Alec Sherman. They told me about a new composer of exceptional talent on whom Greek music may pin great hopes. The following day I had the opportunity of listening to a recording of one of his symphonies (no. 1). This symphony, from what I heard, is certainly not an 'apprentice' work. I realized with great surprise that this young man was an artist who possessed all the secrets of the new music, and, at the same time, revealed an extraordinary aesthetic and spiritual maturity that is difficult to find even in artists with a long creative past. One has the impression that Jani Christou does not attempt to compose according to recipes or formulae. Rather he controls the formulae and recipes of the new music to perfection. In his music, novelty fulfils a psychological need; his modernism appears natural and pure, without any affectation or effort whatsoever. I had the good fortune to meet this young composer recently in the wonderful Cypriot countryside of the village of Platres, and just as I experienced the pride of being the first to predict the genius of Dimitri Mitropoulos and to introduce him to the press, so today I am proud to introduce this young composer who I am sure will before long arouse much interest in the musical world.

(Kalomoiris quoted in Lucciano, 2000: 123-124)

Kalomoiris was probably the man with the most power in especially the academic musicians' community in Greece for a long period during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The fact that he was so enthusiastic about Christou's music, although it did not resemble the style of Kalomoiris' music at all (he was the leader of the Greek National school), must have meant a lot at that time, at least within Greek musical circles. However, when Christou settled down in Greece in 1960, according to Giorgos Leotsakos, 'he kept his distance from the state musical establishments and the world of conservatoires', but 'he had an incalculable influence on the Greek progressive circles and their first official manifestations, such as the Workshop of Contemporary Music of the Goethe Institute (1962) and the Greek Association of Contemporary Music (1965)' (Leotsakos, 1999). In other words, he kept the profile of a rather independent and anti-conformist composer, but this did not result into an exclusion of his music from the large scale venues of Greece, such as the Herodeion or Epidaurus, presumably because of its recognition on an international level.

This is a rather interesting observation (perhaps with a shade of irony); it appears that Christou never desired to belong in the established and well-connected musical community of Greece while he was alive, so he created a nucleus of musicians that was at the time regarded as anti-mainstream. Nevertheless, some of the people who constituted this nucleus have gradually transformed into a quite powerful musical circle in Greece, which probably plays a role similar to the one that the musical circles Christou was avoiding used to play in the 60s (especially as far as contemporary music is concerned).

Indeed, Christou is described by his contemporaries as a 'lonely' figure in terms of his work. In the *International Biographical Dictionary*, Leotsakos makes a parallel between him and the main character of Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus*, Adrian Leverkühn. He does not hesitate to compare him with Wagner, and describes him as 'a figure so tragic in the identification of his existence with his creation' (Leotsakos quoted in *International Biographical Dictionary*, 1988). He relates his philosophy with the pre-Socratic philosophers, Aeschylus and the Alchemists. About Christou's works Leotsakos states the following:

Nearly in all his works, these protozoic materials are multiplied in compulsive, almost 'biological' procedures. Thanks to very deeply examined and detailed

elaborations, they are organised initially in remarkable musical forms (along with) philosophical suggestions, which are nevertheless bursting with terrifying endogenous powers that, as his creation is evolving, are released, gradually violating the integument of form into world-shaking outbursts, bearers of horrifying messages which relieve, upset the subconscious: the sonic material is transformed into released energy, which, however, through redemption, leads to the tragic apprehension of the failure of humanity.

(Leotsakos quoted in *International Biographical Dictionary*, 1988)

What is generally most significant about Christou's music – as Leotsakos repeatedly stated in almost all his comments on it, and as will be further discussed in the following chapters – is the interrelation and interaction between his philosophical thought and his musical creation, which seem to be undivided and as a result affect the listener on a deeper subconscious – and not merely aesthetic or cognitive – level.

As Nelli Semitekolo, his friend and colleague for the last two years of his life, stated in an interview in 2002:

I don't know if Christou's music is easily comprehensible. But it is definitely fascinating. In this sense, I am not sure whether any sort of listener will understand it. But I have no doubt that he will feel it deeply. And this is what the composer himself wanted anyway.

(Semitekolo, 2002: 7)

Semitekolo believes that Christou very rightfully deserves the title of the 'pioneer', exactly because of this intricate bond between his philosophical thought, his work and his intriguing personality. When referring to the uniqueness of Christou's music she says:

We live in an era that allows the co-existence of everything: there are societies which are primitive, developing societies, societies of affluence. We have concentrated all the history of humanity. Christou's music contains all this: myth, legend, ecstasy, mysticism. His creation had stable philosophical bases, as he believed that one creates art only out of an inner necessity.

(Semitekolo, 2002: 7)

Again here, we come across the motive of a deep philosophical basis, which is repeated in almost all the descriptions of the experience of Christou's music. Nelli Semitekolo was the pianist who worked with Christou from 1968 until 1970, and also witnessed his death in the car accident, in which she was herself severely injured. Regarding their

collaboration, she says that ‘Christou was a man who, without preaching, had the gift of liberating you, making you transcend your limits’ (Semitekolo, 2002: 7).

After his death, Semitekolo, her husband Grigoris, and the composer/conductor Theodoros Antoniou, were the people who made the most significant effort to keep Christou’s music alive in Greece, through memorial concerts, tributes etc. Furthermore, many Greek and foreign composers wrote works in his memory. Some of them are: *Laments* by Michalis Adamis, *The Laments for Jani Christou* by Theodoros Antoniou, *En Pyri (In the Fire)* by Stephanos Vasiliades, *Metaplates B* by Giannis Ioannides, *Funereals in Memory of Jani Christou* by Nikos Mamagakos, *Lamentations for Jani Christou* by Richard Felciano, *Pranam* by Giacinto Scelsi and *Impromptu* by Giorgos Kouroupos. However, there does not seem to be as much interest as one would expect – judging from how highly acclaimed his work was while he was still alive – in Christou’s music. And I believe the relevance and value of Christou’s music in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is something worth considering.

## **6. Christou Today: including performance issues**

As mentioned above, Christou’s close collaborators were the people who made – and still make – attempts at reviving public interest in Christou’s work (especially in Greece). On the other hand, such attempts have been made in other places of the world as well. One of the most substantial ones took place in September 1993 at the Hamburg Festival, where Christou was the ‘composer of the year’ along with Brahms and Schoenberg.

A report on this tribute – during which almost all of Christou’s works were performed by German musicians – is given by Giorgos Leotsakos, who was disappointed by the performances.

In Hamburg there were performances of almost all his works with reasonably greater emphasis on the ones written after 1965 (Anaparastases). This is when the confirmation came, unfortunately, of what I was afraid of, while observing, after his death, all those (Theodoros Antoniou, Spyros Sakkas, Grigoris Semitekolo) whom he had taught, to repeat with praiseworthy yet futile precision, everything they had assimilated, and as a result through their stylisation. Something to which Christou himself would be the first person to have objected. Nevertheless, the more he sacrificed specificity and semiological

precision for the sake of indeterminacy and the uncontrollable of catalytic dramatic explosions, the more problematic the revival of these sensational psychodramas became in his absence. Thus, in Hamburg it became apparent that each of these, in order to come back to life, would demand the (essentially unrealistic) collaboration of a conductor such as Boulez with a director such as Grotowski.  
(Leotsakos, 1999)

At this point Leotsakos makes a crucial observation regarding the issue of performing Christou's music today. The composer always preferred to work with a specific core of musicians and performers, with whom he collaborated closely and to whom he 'taught' (as Leotsakos puts it) each work. In other words, he explained the philosophical framework and directed the works with great precision. On the other hand, his last works are distinctly open in terms of form and content, strictly musically speaking. He was mostly interested in the impact the work would have on the spectator, and the atmosphere it could generate, rather than an indisputable faithfulness towards the 'score'.

I totally agree with Leotsakos' opinion that Christou's works should under no circumstances be 'stylised'. After all, this is a practice the composer had openly denounced. However, I do not share his view that only a Boulez or a Grotowski would be capable of realising Christou's late works. Christou has left an invaluable and very helpful legacy of detailed commentaries on his works, which can function as a priceless apparatus for the achievement of their effective performance. The possibility that the people Christou had taught failed to understand this does not necessarily reveal a defect of the works, but more probably a failure of these people to comprehend, or their incapability to make use of the composer's concepts. After all, Christou's disapproval of stylisation was extremely clear, and the fact that these people ignored it after his death, might demonstrate even their mere indifference towards the composer's wishes. I think it is irrational to characterise a musical work as problematic, just because it is not easy to be performed by absolutely everyone, especially when its composer has provided the performers with all the information which is necessary for its successful performance.

Leotsakos also notes that:

it was difficult or almost impossible for the fabulous German musicians to communicate through the score with the psychological current that, especially

during the April Dictatorship, was bringing the works to life sometimes at the Hilton and other times at the Greek-American Association, and elevated them into perhaps the most powerful spiritual stimulus for Greek music and art lovers during that time.  
(Leotsakos, 1999)

In this case, Leotsakos is putting the blame for the poor performance of the works on the incapability of ‘the Germans’ to understand the social dimensions implied in them, as they were composed and first performed during the period of the Dictatorship of the Colonels (whose relation to and impact on Christou’s music will be examined in the fourth chapter). I think this belief is also slightly underestimating the power of these works and also of the composer to create pieces of music which could last and be relevant regardless of the specific social circumstances during which they would be performed. Christou had told Leotsakos in a private conversation on the 9<sup>th</sup> of June 1967 (a few months after the beginning of the Greek Junta) that he believed that ‘music is dead. Man has failed’ and Leotsakos cannot help associating this statement with the monstrous crimes the Dictators committed against the Greek people (Christou and Leotsakos quoted in Lucciano, 2000: 119). And he probably is partly right about this, as it is more than understandable for Christou to be deeply affected by the terrifying state of his country.

But again, after examining Christou’s writings one does not notice many direct references to specific social, national and economic situations or events; on the contrary, the composer is always talking about the general human condition which has been and still is similar in its basic manifestations all over the world. Christou was referring to something extra-cultural, regardless of space-time but at the same time absolutely anthropocentric. After all, in many of his commentaries he is juxtaposing historical to mythical/unhistorical time, and shows his interest in the latter.

Therefore, I believe that Christou’s works are very relevant to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, either because of the human condition at the moment, or owing to the fluid nature of these works. It is definitely a challenge for the performer to try to discover the ways in which the effectiveness of a work can be re-invented according to circumstances, but in my opinion this can be achieved with some extra effort, which should involve studying at least the philosophical commentaries that accompany Christou’s musical scores. In my view, this process – in the case of Christou – should be regarded as inseparable to the



process of the technical ‘practising’ of one’s musical part. One of the reasons why Christou’s music is special is the fact that a performer needs to get in contact with a whole world of expressive possibilities while preparing for its performance. The composer is requesting this transformational aspect of his music to be taken into account and exploited, and this makes a performance of his music harder to set up – this is probably why it is not performed frequently – but perhaps more rewarding in terms of the expansion of the performer’s creativity, which is in a controlled, but liberating manner recognised as his right and obligation by the composer. After all, as Semitekolo said, Christou was liberating his performers without preaching (Semitekolo, 2002: 7).

As a conclusion, it appears that one of the crucial issues about Christou’s music is the matter of the ‘right’ way of dealing with a performance of one of his (especially) late works. The discovery of a ‘solution’ to this problem will be one of the main objectives of this project, through the examination of Christou’s scores, commentaries and influences on a theoretical as well as a practical level, via the realisation of two of his late works, *Epicycle* and *Anaparastasis III: The Pianist*. One of the things I intend to prove through this project is that Christou’s music can still be relevant today, perhaps even more relevant than it was while he was still alive. All that is required for its effective performance is respect to the composer’s conceptual concerns and being prepared as a performer to be chiefly concerned with the aim of the performance rather than producing a hollow ‘anaparastasis’ (whose literal translation from the Greek is ‘re-enactment’) of the Christean *Anaparastasis*. One can get away with producing a ‘copy’ of a good performance of a work in the case of many composers; however, Christou requires more from a performer, and this (without the composer’s active guidance) might pose problems to musicians – who, today more than ever perhaps, are used to reproduce mechanically rather than create with passion. Several audiences have been touched deeply by the performances of Christou’s music while he was still alive, and therefore an effort to unveil ways of keeping this source of a unique musical experience alive is worth it.

## **Chapter II**

### **Research Sources**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter will be a presentation of the sources used in the course of my research regarding Jani Christou's work. What is interesting about them is the variety of disciplines involved in what I would consider a comprehensive overview of the composer's influences. This variety itself reveals the interdisciplinary nature of Christou's oeuvre.

Also, the fact that Christou is still a relatively virgin field for research presented me with some difficulties. For example, there is very little published material on the composer and his output. This made research harder but on the other hand more rewarding; as a researcher I was not just supposed to browse through already processed information, out of which I could pick the most interesting parts. I had to deal with a lot of raw material, and the process of my work could be compared with collecting the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle and trying to put them back together. Very often, the published material which is dedicated to the composer remained merely descriptive and informative, therefore the in-depth analysis of Christou's works had to be based almost entirely on my own judgement of what is and what is not relevant to my subject.

In this chapter I will try briefly to present the sources which were most substantial for my research as well as their function and contribution in the project itself.

#### **1. The Jani Christou Archive**

The Jani Christou Archive is based in Athens, at the house of the painter Sandra Christou, who is the composer's daughter. All the scores, notes, diaries, recordings and tapes of the composer are archived in a small room in this apartment. Sandra Christou is responsible for all the material found there and the archive can only be accessed through booking an appointment with her. Visitors are not allowed to borrow anything from the Archive, but there is a photocopier that they can use in the premises.

In my first visit I was treated in a typically Greek hospitable manner by Sandra Christou and a fellow researcher, who was doing a project on the mystical aspects of Christou's

music. Ms Christou had asked her to come and assist me with browsing through the material, as she was already familiar with the archive. After an informal discussion on my project, we ended up sharing some homemade tsipouro (a traditional drink) and talking about the composer's unfinished work, *Anaparastases*. I confessed my desire to stage a realisation of some of these at some point and Ms Christou expressed her scepticism regarding such an attempt. Especially when I referred to my thought of combining the unfinished sketches of *Anaparastases* with the 'dream files' (archived diaries containing the composer's dream descriptions), she very firmly refused to permit access to this material and characterised it as 'too personal'.

During my attempt to discover the reason why her reaction was suddenly almost hostile, she admitted that she was probably judging from some bad experiences she had in the past. She referred to some incidents of unpublished material confided to visitors of the archive and then disappearing. I understood that she took the responsibility of her father's archive very seriously and I actually was delighted with this, as this would prevent any further 'disappearances'. She also mentioned another attempt at realising two of the *Anaparastases* by a German conductor/composer and friend of hers, whose name she did not mention. She was clearly disappointed at the result and told me she had come to the conclusion that it is probably impossible for anyone else but her father to complete these works.

I had to agree on the fact that attempting to reproduce exactly what Christou had in mind was futile, and I then described to her what the philosophy of such a project would be for me. For a realisation of *Anaparastases* I would use the structure provided in the sketches (which I had not seen yet) along with material found in the dream files (which I had not seen either) that would be appropriate for each piece. I believed that was a reasonable idea, as Christou had drawn inspiration from his dreams on many occasions, especially during his last period. I stated that this would clearly be my own attempt at interpreting Christou's sketches through some of the composer's additional personal material and – unavoidably – through my personal experience of this material. When I said that this would ultimately be closer to a kind of tribute to the composer, rather than a claim that this is probably the way he would have done it, Ms Christou's attitude switched to a friendlier tone and she immediately handed me the sketches of the *Anaparastases*, while she kept asking me more details about my thoughts on such a project in a very interested manner.

The conversation led to the conclusion that what I would try to do with *Anaparastases* - as a decipherer of Christou's thoughts - was closely related to what a musician is expected to do when realising *Epicycle*, although in the case of the latter work the material is the artist's own inspiration. This was when it occurred to me that a realisation of *Epicycle* was something worth including in my project and Ms Christou encouraged me very enthusiastically to do it, as she found my attitude towards this work totally appropriate. She also provided me with photocopies of the scores of *Epicycle*, the *T.S Eliot Songs* and *Anaparastasis III: The Pianist*. Later on, her assistant kindly posted to me a CD copy of the tapes for *The Pianist*.

The material found in the Archive has proven to be of vital importance for my project; Christou was one of the few composers who has written a great deal *about* his work in a very sophisticated and well-phrased manner. His private commentaries on his pieces have functioned as a very illuminating tool as far as some ambiguous areas of them are concerned; for instance, some of his personal notes dated 'summer 1968' (a few months before the composition of *Epicycle*) were very helpful in my attempt to 'decode' the score of *Epicycle* (see appendices 1, 2, 3 and 4). The innumerable possible interpretations of this score were somehow narrowed down and the composer's relevant notes were an invaluable guide to the intentions of the piece. Of course, the score would have been enough intuitively to draw my own conclusions on an artistic level; however, the material mentioned above was of great importance for the justification of my interpretation.

Moreover, the sketches and notes on Christou's final, unfinished project (*Anaparastases*) present great interest, as they manifest a mature stage of his musical attitude which was never fully expressed because of the composer's sudden death. All the concepts of his last period (metapraxis, protoperformance) are brilliantly embodied in these short projects, which would add up to a bigger one. Their artistic quality is very relevant to *Anaparastasis I and III*, *The Strychnine Lady* and *Epicycle*, and the composer seems to be finding his absolutely personal way of putting his musical philosophy in practice.

Finally the website [www.janichristou.org](http://www.janichristou.org) is strongly connected to the Jani Christou Archive; it has been set up by some admirers of the composer and its content is drawn

from the Archive. The people who are currently responsible for the Archive (Sandra Christou's assistants) have already started transforming this website into an electronic form of the Archive. Of course, this project is estimated to be completed only in a few years' time, but some basic material is already available on the website. What is most important is that this material is very reliable, as it is thoroughly checked by the keepers of the Archive.

## **2. Anne-Martine Lucciano**

*Jani Christou: the works and temperament of a Greek composer*

This book was written by Anne-Martine Lucciano in 1987 and is the only published source exclusively concerning Christou's music and life. The author is a musicologist and a professor of History of Music, Musical Aesthetics and Analysis at the Conservatoire d' Aix-en-Provence. My first contact with this volume was in its Greek version (1987), but there is also a more recent English translation of it (2000). It contains the essential information about the composer, which is very well organised and collected mainly from material found in the Jani Christou Archive.

I mostly treated this book as a source of information (quotations by Christou, reviews written about his pieces, information about his life etc.), as Lucciano does not offer a very deep look into the composer's late works. She has gathered a lot of the information given by the composer concerning the more radical concepts of his last period; however, she does this mostly in an introductory rather than in a critical way. For example, although she thoroughly analyses the *T.S. Eliot Songs*, she only dedicates one paragraph to *Epicycle* and only six pages to the whole of Christou's last period; or another example is the chapter with the promising title 'Jungian Aspects', which only includes a text written by the composer himself without comments by Lucciano.

Nevertheless, the book contains valuable stimuli for further research. For instance, Jung's influence on the composer's thought is especially highlighted and many of the composer's relevant texts are quoted; however, one needs to be familiar with Jung's theories in order fully to appreciate their importance for Christou's philosophy. Therefore the book can be an exceptionally useful source of information, as it actually constitutes a more organised version of the basic material of the Jani Christou Archive and it draws the researcher's attention to the right direction for further reading; however, it does not offer a lot of constructive criticism or academic discussion from

which an in-depth study of Christou's late works would benefit. On the other hand, one should appreciate the fact that the author generally avoids jumping to conclusions on matters that she appears to be puzzled about and restricts the text to an informative level.

### **3. Giorgos Leotsakos**

Giorgos Leotsakos is a music critic in Greece, and one of the people who have tried to keep Jani Christou's music alive and appreciated. Leotsakos is a very educated and notoriously fastidious critic and also a huge admirer of Christou who praised all his works (apart from *Epicycle*). He has done extensive research in the Jani Christou Archive (he was temporarily responsible for it, after the composer's death) and was quite close to the composer himself. There is nearly nothing published on Christou in which Leotsakos has not been involved. Lucciano mentions his invaluable assistance during her research at the archive in the acknowledgments of her book and quotes him several times.

Leotsakos has written articles and presented lectures on the composer's work and life. Also, he has written the *New Grove* entry for Jani Christou. In contrast to Lucciano, Leotsakos tends to be very critical in all his writings. Along with a lot of information, which he has gained through his acquaintance with the composer, he provides the reader with his personal views on Christou's compositions. However, his tendency to get carried away and write in an abstract and often overly subjective manner can create problems for a researcher.

Leotsakos' feelings of affection towards the composer and his legacy sometimes make him cross the line of academic writing. For instance, this is very apparent in his lecture *The Strychnine Lady and The Great Mediterranean Castrating Mother-Goddess ... or: some formulating factors of the psycho-synthesis of Jani Christou and the enigma of his 'lost' [?] works ...*, presented at the Ionian University in 2000. Leotsakos' obsession with the disappearance of Christou's works made him get involved in a research project, which gives us a lot of interesting information about the composer and his work. However, after a point the lecture almost turns into a detective story, in which the composer's mother is presented as a monster who is directly accused by Leotsakos (in the role of the detective) of stealing the work from Christou's archive. In the course of

this, Leotsakos uses a lot of incidents that he had witnessed as proof of what a horrible person Christou's mother was. It is totally understandable that a person so directly involved in Christou's life would become very emotional about the composer and anyone who might have harmed him; however, the information given by Leotsakos often tends to be justified only through his personal experience and I was sometimes unable to use it as a tool in order to form an argument.

Nonetheless, through his research I gained access to information regarding Christou which, filtered through scepticism, proved to be quite valuable, and also representative of the impact Christou's work had on his contemporaries. An example is Leotsakos' review of *Epicycle*, which was the only time Leotsakos wrote a bad review of a work by Christou. The issues he raises in this review (especially the issue of authorship) and his objections to the work, proved to be very useful as they provoked the composer to reply to him with a letter, in which he explains the conceptual framework of *Epicycle* very clearly. This debate between composer and critic enriched my discussion of the issues I raise regarding *Epicycle* in my fifth chapter and also guided me to the solutions I gave to practical issues when it came to performing *Epicycle*.

#### **4. C.G. Jung and Archetypal Psychology**

As mentioned above, Christou had attended some of Jung's lectures in Switzerland and his brother, Evangelos, was a student of Jung himself. Jung's theories had influenced Christou's thought a great deal and the composer has even written commentaries with direct references to Jung, such as *The Lunar experience* (Christou, June 1968). Also, Jung's influence is very obvious in many of his personal notes, where he uses Jungian terms rather frequently.

Furthermore, his interest in alchemy and the occult in general is a rather obvious influence in itself. Therefore, apart from the basic bibliography (*The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, Man and his Symbols etc.*), I had to become familiar with Jung's later books (especially *Psychology and Alchemy* and *Mysterium Coniunctionis*), in which I discovered many ideas which clarified Christou's general musical philosophy and also provided possible explanations concerning his artistic choices and concepts. For example, the relationship between the alchemical symbol for salt ('sal' was illustrated as a square contained in a circle) and the score of *Epicycle* is a discovery I

made in *Mysterium Coniunctionis*; through the discovery of this interrelation I arrived at valuable conclusions concerning the conceptual essence of *Epicycle*, which will be analysed in chapter V.

A post-Jungian book which proved extremely relevant, as far as my arguments on the nature of Christou's music are concerned, was Bettina Knapp's *Music, Archetype and the Writer: a Jungian approach* (1988). Knapp is a professor at the Department of Romance Languages of City University in New York. In this book she uses the theory of Archetypes in order to interpret musical and literary works which are interrelated; for example, the influence Wagner's operas had on Baudelaire's poetry is explored. What is extraordinary about Knapp's book is the fact that she uses the term 'archetypal music' when referring to musical pieces which can be approached with the Jungian method, and – in this manner – bear a lot of similarities with Christou's music. Her thoughts on archetypal music, its effect on the listener and its characteristics are very often similar to the thoughts I had while studying Christou's music. This was a pleasant surprise for me, as her book provided me with some necessary academic back-up of the points I make, regarding the archetypal aspects of Christou's works.

## **5. Evangelos Christou**

### *The Logos of the Soul*

*The Logos of the Soul* was meant to be Evangelos Christou's – Jani's brother – dissertation, while he was studying at the Jung Institute in Zurich. Evangelos died in a car accident on June 30, 1956 on his way back to Alexandria from Marsah Matrouh, where he had been working on this book. As a result, the unfinished manuscript was found scattered at the scene of the accident. It was then handed to Jani Christou, who took care of the reconstruction of his brother's notes into order and of the publication of the final transcript. It was edited and introduced by Dr James Hillman, a renowned psychoanalyst, graduate of the Jung Institute himself, with several published books, one of which, *Re-visioning Psychology*, was short-listed for the Pulitzer Prize in 1975.

Hillman speaks very highly of *The Logos of the Soul* and its author in his introduction. He does not hesitate to call him a genius and he finds his premature death 'archetypal'. The tone in which he speaks of Evangelos' work and personality bears striking similarities with the tone in which Jani's contemporaries speak of the composer. And he



– just as Leotsakos did with Jani Christou – draws a parallel between Evangelos and the ingenious but damned alchemist, who is pushing the limits of his art too far and perishes because of this.

This book was a revelation in two different ways. Firstly, because one cannot but appreciate the ground-breaking wisdom it contains, as well as its eloquence and simplicity. Evangelos seems to be taking Jung's ideas further and introduces notions which were – and perhaps still are – quite challenging for psychoanalysis, which then was still a relatively new discipline. In his notes – found in the last pages of the book – Evangelos even proposes a practical way of relating to Jungian archetypes, which could be of great use for psychoanalysis. He believes – unlike Jung – that archetypes do not need further explanation; on the contrary he suggests that 'an archetype is itself the best explanation we can give of the experiences we are dealing with' (E. Christou, 1963: 132). Departing from this point, he speaks of the possibility of *conditioning* the archetypes, of controlling the archetypal patterns that occur in our everyday lives consciously, and therefore gaining a different quality of control over our lives (E. Christou, 1963: 133-135).

Secondly, Jani Christou's substantial affection for and admiration towards his brother were totally understood, when I discovered an outstanding similarity between their 'obsessions': both brothers were intensely interested in the same issues, although they were seeking solutions to them in different fields. Evangelos took the path of science and Jani the path of art but they shared this attitude which consists of a unique mixture of bright analytical intellect and deep intuitive awareness.

For example, the main issue around which Evangelos' book is rotating is the fact that 'the soul has its own logic' (E. Christou, 1963: 21), therefore contemporary psychology should 'formulate a language' (E. Christou, 1963: 18), and aim at 'the development of a logic of a new conceptual approach to reality' (E. Christou, 1963: 14). He insists on the issue of the inadequacy of the 'language' currently used in psychology, analyses his thoughts on this subject, and attempts to find the route that leads to a language which will correspond to the nature of the soul. The issue of the inadequacy of language is also very essential in the work of Jani Christou, and this persistence probably stems from the two brothers' encounter with Wittgenstein's philosophy, while they were studying in Cambridge. Wittgenstein's philosophy is probably also one of the reasons why both

brothers demonstrated a dislike towards ‘presuppositions’ of all sorts and a tendency to challenge any established system.

Evangelos also claims that dreams, fantasies, myth and archetypes can provide the psychoanalyst with invaluable material on which true psychological experience is based and which offers a deeper understanding of the structures of the language of the soul. He also showed great interest in the occult, just like his brother. While reading the book and discovering all these similarities between the two brothers’ thought, I became more and more convinced that many of Jani’s original concepts (praxis and metapraxis, continuum and protoperformance, which will be examined in the third chapter) are very likely to have developed as responses to his brother’s work.

My encounter with *The Logos of the Soul* cast light on new aspects of Jani Christou’s music, and enforced my belief that his music is deeply and intentionally archetypal, or perhaps the composer’s way to ‘condition’ the archetypes in the context of his conceptual framework. A characteristic sample of the intellectual connection between the two brothers and Jani’s possible desire to invent the language of the soul, which Evangelos was struggling to discover, is the juxtaposition of the two following phrases: ‘The function of music is to create soul, by creating conditions for myth, the root of all soul; where there is no soul, music creates it. Where there is soul, music sustains it.’ (see appendix 4, Jani Christou, 23/8/1968) and ‘The lack of a logic of the soul means that our age is full of the dread (Angst) of a soul, our age has lost its means of recognising and of expressing that soul’ (E. Christou, 1963: 46).

## **6. Ludwig Wittgenstein and Bertrand Russell**

As mentioned above, Christou was a student of both Ludwig Wittgenstein and Bertrand Russell in Cambridge. Therefore, it was only natural that a restless mind as his would find a fertile ground to flourish in the two philosophers’ work.

Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Logicophilosophicus* proved especially illuminating regarding Christou’s original concepts, such as metapraxis. Wittgenstein’s ingeniously simple language, which strives to overcome the impotence of language itself and creates an effortlessly unique expressive ambience, could have easily been an inspiration for the composer on a conceptual and a practical level. I detected many similarities between the

modes of thinking of Christou and Wittgenstein and, on many occasions, it looks as if the composer's musical decisions were the product of extensive meditation on several phrases found in *Tractatus*. Therefore, *Tractatus* constituted a key to a thorough philosophical interpretation of Christou's musical choices. For example, in *Anaparastasis III: The Pianist*, which will be presented in detail in the fourth chapter, the core of the piece's implications can also be seen as some of Wittgenstein's sentences in the guise of a chain of performed images.

In the work of Bertrand Russell I spotted a more remote, but still visible connection to Christou's thought. His logical integrity and his insightful perspective on social issues must have influenced the composer. I found great interest in the book *Authority and the Individual*, which is written in the form of a series of lectures. Especially in the third chapter, titled 'The Role of Individuality', Russell's view on the role of art and the artist in industrialised societies, as well as his scepticism towards aesthetic excellence, are all issues that can also be found throughout Christou's commentaries and musical works. Russell suggests that the survival of art will not take place in solemn academic institutions but can only happen 'by recapturing the capacity for wholehearted joys and sorrows which prudence and foresight have all but destroyed' (Russell, 1949: 39-40); this unavoidably brings in mind Christou's insistence on a type of music which is experienced rather than merely appreciated on an intellectual level and also his abhorrence towards aesthetics and music whose function is exclusively ornamental.

To sum up, I consider the study of Wittgenstein's and Russell's writings as a very useful and enlightening tool for a deep understanding of Christou's philosophical and artistic idiom. These two thinkers seem to constitute the basis on which Christou's thought is grounded, although the manner in which it unfolded was also influenced by other thinkers and artists of his time.

## **7. Postmodern Thought, Music and the Performing Arts**

Postmodern philosophy and art of the kinds to be found, for instance, in the work of Antonin Artaud, Jacques Derrida and Heiner Müller, was articulated by people who were writing about Christou's time or were concerned with similar issues to his. Derrida's and Müller's Deconstruction theory and practice, respectively, as well as

Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty, seem to share some common ground with Christou's musical practice.

Artaud's *Theatre and its Double* (1958), Derrida's *Writing and Difference* (1978) and the thoughts on musical deconstruction in Rose-Rosengard Subotnic's *Deconstructive Variations: music and reason in western society* (1996) are some of the books I found relevant while I was looking into the relationship between postmodernity and Christou. Also, Roland Barthes' 'Death of the Author' from *Image-Music-Text* (1972) and Friedrich Nietzsche's intriguing perspective on Tragedy (and art in general) in *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music* (1872) are demonstrating an intellectual relationship with Christou's artistic thought and practice. Through my readings I have come to the conclusion that, as Christou was above all deeply cultured and very intellectual, he must have been strongly influenced by the intellectual movements of the past and of his time.

Also, composers who challenged the boundaries of musical performance, such as the avant-garde movement, the fluxus events, John Cage and Mauricio Kagel present conceptual and practical approaches which often are similar to Christou's. The fact that Christou's late works, with which I dealt in my research, seem – technically speaking – to blur the boundary between music and performing arts (although Christou clearly stated that he did not consider his compositions as performance-art pieces) initiated my attempt to compare the work of Kagel and Christou. Bjorn Heile's book *The Music of Mauricio Kagel* (2006) was extremely helpful for this attempt and offered all the essential information for a comparison whose aim was mainly to detect what it is that makes Christou's compositions different to the works of Kagel and the avant-garde movements of his time in general. The reason why I focused on Kagel's works was due to the fact that the way he incorporates extra-musical elements in the actual music seems at first glance very similar to the way Christou does this.

As far as performance theorists are concerned, I focused my research on Jerzy Grotowski and Richard Schechner and especially on their views on the ritualistic essence of theatre. Christou's concept of protoperformance is strongly related to ritual, and in the work of the two aforementioned theorists I found some similarities concerning the technical aspects of such a concept. Especially Schechner's *The Future of Ritual: writings on culture and performance* (1995) was very useful regarding the functions of ritual and its position in contemporary performance. What is most

interesting is the fact that some passages of Schechner's book could easily be used as interpretative tools for *Anaparastasis III* and Christou's concept of protoperformance in general, although it was written in 1995, twenty-five years after the composer's death. The relevance of all the aforementioned postmodern influences to Christou's work will be closely examined in both my fourth and fifth chapter, in relation to *Anaparastasis III* and *Epicycle* in specific.

## **8. Ancient Myths and Literary Works**

A significant part of the literature I looked into during my research included non-academic books; mainly books on world mythology (especially ancient Greek and Egyptian), as well as some literary works. I considered the reading of such books as essential for a deep comprehension of Christou's patterns of thought; but they also provided me with material for the realisation of *Epicycle*.

The significance of mythology in a research project on Christou should already be quite clear. Mythology was the field into which Jung looked throughout his research on the collective unconscious; Christou on his part, very frequently mentions mythological characters, events and states in his commentaries and tends to directly connect them to his musical creations. A very characteristic example is the one of his work *Mysterion*; among the composer's personal notes, I found a note by the composer, which is a sort of a general plan for the piece and it actually narrates the story of the Egyptian god, Osiris and its philosophical/psychological implications. Also, the text for *Anaparastasis I: astronkatoidanykteronomygin (The Baritone)* is the fourth verse of Aeschylus' tragedy *Agamemnon*, and the dramaturgical development of the piece is based on the psychological profile Christou attributes to the guard who is saying this phrase in the original tragedy.

As Bettina Knapp suggests, 'the incomparable thing about myth is that it is true for all time, and its content, however compressed, is inexhaustible throughout the ages' (Knapp, 1988: 46). An understanding of Christou's passion for this compressed content is very substantial for a comprehension of the conceptual and practical aspects of his work. As far as the practical aspect is concerned, an illustrative example would be my performance of his work, *Epicycle*, which I am presenting in the fifth chapter; because of the composer's insistence on the value of the timelessness of myth, I built the

structure and content of my realisation on mythology or literary works with mythological qualities.

For the purposes of my realisation of *Epicycle*, I drew material from very diverse sources, which nevertheless shared the aforementioned characteristics. Some of the books I found really useful include Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the *Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, many ancient Greek tragedies and Hesiod's *Theogony*, Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass*, ancient Greek philosophers such as Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Plato and Socrates, Milorad Pavic's *The Dictionary of the Khazars* and *First Love in Constantinople*, Boris Vian's *The Heartsnatcher*, the *Song of Songs*, alchemical passages, T.S. Eliot's *Waste Land*, Shakespeare's *Tempest*, Greek folk songs and many others. The sources were obviously quite diverse, but in their diversity they demonstrated the timeless nature of myth.

Finally, I believe that sufficient acquaintance with ancient Greek philosophy can be very helpful for a comprehensive study of Christou's work. He was very fond of ancient Greek philosophy and often mentions it in his commentaries. For instance, his work *Enantiodromia* is based on Heraclitus' concept of 'the way up is also the way down', as the composer himself states in his introductory note to the score (Christou, 1969).

Another example is the fact that the more I was involved in Christou's works as a performer, the more I realised how close the requirements that Christou had for performers are to the Platonic concept of 'methexis' (=participation) as opposed to the Aristotelian 'mimesis' (=imitation). In the course of the preparation of my performances of *Epicycle* and *Anaparastasis III*, the realisation of the importance of this distinction proved to be essential. I believe that any performer – regardless of their acquaintance with Plato's or Aristotle's work – would finally arrive at similar conclusions, due to the construction of the works by Christou. Nevertheless, some familiarity with ancient Greek philosophy would probably ground the performer's experience of Christou's works in a rich conceptual context.

## **9. Interviews, Articles, Reviews**

While Christou was still alive, his pieces were performed not only in Greece, but also around the world. One source of information regarding the reception of these

performances are a few reviews found in musical periodicals, such as the *Musical Quarterly*. Also, some Greek newspapers, such as *Ta Nea* or *To Vima*, included reviews of some performances of his works in prestigious festivals.

Furthermore, the magazine *Epoches* includes one of the most important texts written by the composer, 'A Credo for Music' (February 1966), which was exceptionally useful as an orientation tool in the composer's general and specific beliefs about musical creation. Also, some articles on Greek music of the 60's and 70's in periodicals such as *Perspectives of New Music*, *Tempo* and *Notes* were a very interesting source of information regarding the perspective of foreign musicologists of Christou's time on the performances of his late works.

Nelli Semitekolo's interview in the newspaper *To Vima* (2002) was also especially interesting and provided me with a lot of information about the way Christou was seen by his colleagues. Semitekolo was one of the composer's closest friends and collaborators and talks about the way Christou worked and rehearsed, as well as what he demanded from and what he offered to his musicians.

Another interesting book is *Im Dunkeln Singen*, a collection of papers presented in a symposium about Christou, which was held in Hamburg in 1993. People who presented papers included Giorgos Leotsakos, Anne-Martine Lucciano, Klaus Angermann, Klaus Trappmann and Yannis Papaioannou. Because of my poor knowledge of the German language I must express my gratitude to my German friend Jenny Bredull, who helped me immensely by translating some fragments of the book, which were relevant to my research.

Unfortunately, although their titles are quite promising, most of the papers deal with Christou's work in a rather informative but slightly emotional way. In general, after reading them, I was under the impression that their content aimed mostly at presenting Christou to an audience that was uninformed or semi-informed of his music. The book definitely offers useful elementary information on Christou's compositions and concepts. However, most of the writers often tend to conclude by simply expressing their awe towards Christou's works, without managing to deal with them in a more analytical way. Nevertheless, Klaus Trappmann's paper, titled 'Mythos and Ritual in Christou's Late Works', proved to be very relevant to my research and especially to the

ritualistic and mythical aspects of the works with which I dealt. His rational, sober and intelligent thoughts offered some valuable insight on the subject.

### **Conclusions**

A general characteristic of the sources I used throughout my research was their diversity. This is due to the fact that there is not much published material on Christou, and as a result I had to find the information that is necessary to a seriously analytical approach to his music, mostly in bibliography that dealt with the issues raised in Christou's music rather than with his music itself. This led me to a selection of writings from a large variety of disciplines, which in my opinion correspond to Christou's work on a deeper conceptual level.

Throughout my research, I had to discover the artistic/philosophical issues, which are challenged in the works I focused on. The next step was to explore the work of theorists, philosophers and artists who were concerned with these issues and demonstrate the relation of their approach with Christou's approach. The discussion which derived from this process led to my conclusions on the conceptual basis and practical challenges of the works on which I concentrated in my research project.

Finally, I have come to the conclusion that Christou's music consists of an almost paradoxical mixture of musical intuition and very careful analytical thought. Perhaps more than in the case of most composers, constructive research in the conceptual foundation of his works greatly benefits the quality of their performance as much as an accurate musical instinct.



## CHAPTER III

### Metapragis- Protoperformance- Transformation

In his works, especially the late ones, Jani Christou introduced some musical concepts which were quite original and he was very concerned with explaining his ideas about music as elaborately as possible. His multi-faceted education gave him the privilege of having a rather kaleidoscopic view on musical matters. In this chapter I will deal with three basic 'Christean' concepts which appear in *The Pianist* and *Epicycle*: metapragis, protoperformance and transformation. As all these concepts are not absolute, but relative by nature, the composer experimented with them while trying to discover their limits in his works. As a result, the way metapragis appears in *The Pianist*, for example, is quite different to the way it appears in *Epicycle*. In this chapter, I will i) present these concepts through Christou's own commentaries, and ii) speculate on the composer's presentation of these concepts. Detailed exploration of their limits and their 'transformations' in *The Pianist* and *Epicycle* will be made in chapters IV and V, which will deal with those works individually.

#### 1. Metapragis

In a commentary included in the score of *Praxis for 12* (1968), Christou discusses the ideas of praxis and metapragis; he tries to define them as clearly as possible and the result is a rather postmodern definition which actually states that praxis and metapragis cannot be clearly defined.

So, according to the composer, 'praxis stands for action belonging to a certain logic. Metapragis stands for action which threatens that logic, perhaps transcends that logic. They are opposites and imply each other' (Christou, 1968). He goes on to very detailed definitions of praxis and metapragis, while he also tries to pin down what is *not* metapragis.

Any living art keeps generating an overall logic fed by a collectivity of characteristic actions. Whenever an action is purposefully performed to conform with the current overall logic characteristic of the art, that action is a 'praxis', or a purposeful and characteristic action. But whenever an action is purposefully performed so as to go beyond the current overall logic characteristic of the art, that action is a 'metapragis', or a purposeful non-characteristic action: a 'meta-action'. Thus, in the performing arts, any action which requires its performer to go beyond the current logic of the medium to which he belongs, requires him to go beyond the logic of his world of action, as it were. That action is a 'metapragis', and it is purposefully 'non-characteristic'. Conversely, an action

which does not conform purposefully with the current logic of that medium is a 'praxis' as long as it is purposefully 'characteristic'. For instance, a conductor conducting during a concert is a praxis, but if he is also required to walk about, speak, scream, gesticulate, or perform any other action not strictly connected to conducting, that could be a metapraxis [...] On the other hand, if an actor, say or a dancer, is called upon to perform during a 'mixed-media' piece, and he is required to scream, laugh, move about, dance, gesticulate, or whatever, he could merely be performing a praxis, and not a metapraxis.  
(Christou, 1968)

Here it appears that metapraxis can only be performed as opposed to praxis. Thus, what constitutes a praxis needs to be extremely clear in order to define the exact content of the metapraxis that corresponds to this specific praxis. Also, as the composer says later, metapraxis cannot refer or relate to actions which are embodied in the praxis of a work of art; it does not imply an *extension* of the expressive media used in a work of art, but a *challenge* of expressive conventions.

The last example suggests that a metapraxis is not a function of mixed media. A metapraxis is an implosion, a tension under the surface of a single medium which threatens that medium's meaning barrier. An assault on the logic of the performer's relationship to his own particular medium. A violation within a single order of things. Or, a subtle pressure against the barrier of meaning which any system generates for its own preservation.  
(Christou, 1968)

Thus, as the nature of praxis itself is elusive, it follows that the nature of metapraxis must be elusive as well. The expressive media which were regarded as a challenge of the *order* of musical performance in the 1960s might be considered common or even outdated in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. 'The implication is, of course, that as the logic of the medium keeps changing in sympathy with the dynamics of the worldwide parameters of history, the manners in which metapraxis could be expressed must be constantly readjusted' (Christou, 1968). According to this, then, Christou would probably have no objection to contemporary musicians performing metapraxis in his pieces in ways which are different to the way metapraxis was performed when the pieces were first performed. Actually, such an attitude would be much more loyal to Christou's ideas, rather than a mere reproduction of the performances that he had set up when he was still alive.

At this point in the text, the composer presents us with a parallel which is very illuminating regarding the manner in which praxis and metapraxis relate to each other:

One can put it in various ways. For instance, the relationship between praxis and metapraxis corresponds to the relationship between physics and metaphysics. This is not to say that metapraxis is 'metaphysical', only that just as metaphysics cannot be experienced in terms of the logic of physics, so metapraxis cannot be experienced in the terms of the logic of praxis. Metapraxis is 'beyond' praxis, yet not independent of praxis. And this points to the conclusion that just as metaphysics, if at all meaningful, is so only because of the 'opposite' concept of physics, so metapraxis is meaningful only by virtue of its 'opposite': praxis. Another instance of opposites illuminating each other or, at least, implying each other. And here one could add this: just as physics, when provoked, has a tendency to break through into metaphysics, so praxis, when provoked has a tendency to break through into metapraxis.  
(Christou, 1968)

In other words, Christou places metapraxis beyond praxis, although in constant connection to it. He finally brings the concept of metapraxis to its limits through an attempt to imagine a sort of 'alchemical wedding' between praxis and metapraxis:

Continuing the parallel, an ultimate realisation could be the identification of praxis with metapraxis in a union of opposites, so that a metapraxis has no further reason to be any different to 'praxis'. The statement, of course, is an obvious target for questions of this type: 'then why this whole business of metapraxis in the first place?' To which the only answer is, just as obviously, silence.  
(Christou, 1968)

To sum up, metapraxis is a rather indefinite concept, which is hard to pin down via specific rules, but its content depends on parameters such as the historical, social and artistic context within which it is performed. One could come to two interesting conclusions through this: i) Christou was probably the first person who tried to define this function in the creative arts and also to use it consciously in his works. But metapraxis has definitely occurred many times in the history of art, whenever the expressive means of a form of art were challenged. For example, when Thespis stepped out of the Tragic Chorus and instead of singing the Dithyramb along with them, recited a text, he was performing a metapraxis. This metapraxis was gradually embodied in this form of art, and the Dithyramb gradually transformed into a new form of art, the Tragedy, where the actors' spoken text is combined with the Chorus' chanted text. And the action previously regarded as metapraxis became a praxis.

This thought leads to the second conclusion: ii) What Christou attempted to do was to use, according to his own will and in an 'instant' sort of way, a procedure of artistic metamorphosis which through the history of art has usually been of a rather gradual and slow nature. Metapraxis seems to be something like a condensed form of the whole story of artistic evolution, which Christou embodied in his works in compact doses. Therefore, it would be reasonable to expect from the performers of his pieces to maintain the same concern and to adjust metapraxis to the praxis of their time/space/personality, and not just copy previous performances of these works. Christou anyway seems to support this idea when he states the following:

the same type of action which did not function as a metapraxis in one work may simply work as such in another, or even in the same work within the same overall period and conventions, but under different circumstances. When a metapraxis 'works' there is no formula specifying why it should have worked. (Christou, 1968)

And in this manner, Christou performs his metapraxis as a composer each time one of his works is performed with a new perspective.

## **2. Protoperformance**

Another term invented by Christou, and very crucial for most of his late works, is protoperformance. In *The Lunar Experience*, dated June 1968, he analyses exhaustively the whole concept of protoperformance; he states that the term protoperformance refers primarily to the rituals of renewal which were performed by primordial people and specifies their characteristics, purposes and effects. In this text Christou is talking about the time *before* history, the time during which the Jungian archetypes of the collective unconscious were being formed, the era of *myth*.

The early archetypal point of view did not know history. Instead, it looked upon everything that took place, whether processes of nature close to man, or in the environment at large; whether single activities of individual men, or the compounded activities of many men; whether the fate overtaking some single individual, or the fate overtaking the group as a whole; it looked upon all of these as repetitions of some aspect of a numinous original, an archetypal pattern - or MASTER-PATTERN, even to the point of identification. Under such circumstances nothing had any meaning, or any proper existence, unless it could be considered as a repetition of the master-pattern, or as a component of such a pattern; of a master-pattern being and action existing both in time and in the centre of every moment in time. This certainly is not what history is about. But it is what myth was about. And it is also what rituals of renewal were about. These were PROTO-PERFORMANCES - re-enactments of the original proto-pattern -

the master-pattern; re-enactments in terms of corresponding mythic imagery; key-performances re-vitalising the master-pattern, when its cycle was exhausted, through forms of sacrifice, life for life, keeping it going. Because the pattern simply had to keep on renewing itself, if man and nature were to do the same. (Christou, June 1968)

Christou very clearly relates protoperformance to myth as opposed to history. Because of its ritualistic quality, it is directly connected to everyday life. Protoperformance refers to the root of art, which is intertwined with life itself and does not follow any aesthetic, social or political rules similar to the ones of the 'civilised' eras of human history. Therefore, protoperformance contains the sense of instinctive expression as opposed to stylised expression; its aim is the release of expressive and creative energies, rather than an aesthetically acceptable artistic product:

Such rituals were vital acts of re-affirmation, of participation and identification with the master-pattern. Through these 'protoperformances' man related - connected - by activating a process of feed-back between the numinous and himself; not for his own benefit only, but for the benefit of the total environment in which he lived and of which he was part. So, with this feedback fuelled by sacrifice during ritual, life continued. Life passing into the master-pattern from that which was sacrificed in ritual, and back-lashing a thousandfold as life renewed for all. Bio-cosmic cycles did not of course depend upon man's rituals for their renewal, but something was being renewed, nevertheless: this was man's positive relationship with all that came within the range of his experience, therefore providing him with the renewed energy for life. And in this sense rituals were effective, and the renewal of life a reality. Or, in another terminology, the feedback activated during man's proto-performances managed to activate his psychic energy: man would first invoke the symbols representing the archetypal forms of his myths, then these symbols, in their turn, by constantly exciting and attracting his attention, would mobilise his psychic energy, making it abundantly available for some life-task, or for life in general. A transformation of dormant psychic energy into available power. But man's rituals were effective only in so far as they could activate a positive feed-back between himself and the symbols drawn from the depths of his mythic experience. And I propose to use the term PROTOPERFORMANCE only in connection to such effective forms of ritual - or performance. (Christou, June 1968)

After this thorough analysis, it is quite apparent that the term protoperformance refers not only to the aforementioned rituals of renewal but also to any performance which shares this effect of releasing and receiving energy from the cosmos of primordial symbols. At this point, we find the first sort of more specific definition of protoperformance, which is, however, quite abstract. Christou, though, later on in his text, attempts to clarify the content of his definition of protoperformance with the

example of the 'lunar experience' (as he calls it) as an archaic form of protoperformance in Nature, and the effect that the repeated lunar cycle has had on the form and meaning of rituals, protoperformances and subsequently performance and art in general:

For countless generations the renewal of vital processes has been experienced according to a common basic pattern of: generation - growth - destruction - cessation, repeated on and on. The pattern of renewal. In the depths of man's prehistory it was the moon's monthly performance that originally drew attention to this pattern. So lunar mythology suggests. So a large luminous object in a dark sky, visibly waxing and waning, and disappearing altogether - to reappear only days after, for a repeat performance - must have made a point thousands of years before man could ever have had the opportunity of recognising the pattern at work in vegetation. For originally he was a hunter, and an incredibly long stretch of time had to pass before he could settle down to agriculture, upon which his survival was eventually to depend. But the moon was there always. And there is this suggestion too: that there was an epoch, sometime within the range of human experience, when the moon was closer to the earth than it is now. Perhaps much closer. If so, its enormous appearance must have dominated the night-sky, overwhelmingly, and its luminosity may have rivalled that of the sun itself. Even if the moon did not provide man with his first experience of the pattern of renewal, it must have certainly given him one of his first awe-inspiring experiences of this pattern. Not only because of its nocturnal setting in the sky, and of the night-dark that follows the extinction of its light; and of the way with which man reacts to darkness, relating with what cannot be known - or with what may be lurking in the dark; therefore relating darkness with fear, sometimes with wonder, or both. But also because it is not hard to imagine the state of alarm provoked by the spectacle of a giant moon decaying into total extinction, and the anguished stirrings screaming for expression in minds still not separated from a hostile nature.

(Christou, June 1968)

Here, Christou is identifying the roots of ritual and protoperformance as a human expressive reflex to Nature itself 'performing' its repeated patterns. His next comment, though, refers to a crack in this regularity of repetition; and this is a concept he insists on including in many of his works. That is the concept of the 'eclipse', as an irregularity in the comfort of repetition, with which (as he states later on) the contemporary world can easily identify; either as in the sense of an unknown danger which is approaching and will strike unexpectedly, or in the sense of a generally unbalanced condition into which humanity has passed after the transition from the era of myth to the era of history. The state of eclipse is identified with a state of panic and psychological agony. And also, at this point we can find some common ground between the eclipse (as a possible part of a protoperformance) and metapraxis. Metapraxis might also be an 'eclipse'; for instance in *Anaparastasis III*, the pianist's inability actually to play the piano is a

metapraxis (in a technical sense). This metapraxis, however, is a form of an eclipse, in the sense of an unexpected irregularity during the 'normal' course of a piano recital.

Nor is it hard to picture what the response of those minds could have been to the moon's most spectacular performances of all: its eclipse. For early man, with nothing even remotely resembling a sense of primitive astronomy, this was an IRREGULARITY and it could have caused much terror, even panic. While the threat of yet another eclipse must have hung like some dread prospect in the firmament of man's dawning consciousness, a constant menace of sudden doom, impossible to tell when it would strike next. There seems to be a good case for selecting the lunar eclipse as the archetypal image of some calamity which one fears, and fears the more because there is no telling when it may break out. A root image for the feeling of impending doom on a giant scale. If the normal succession of the moon's phases can serve as the image of the general phenomenon of the regular renewal of bio-cosmic processes, then the term LUNAR PATTERN may be used to describe this phenomenon, i.e. the pattern of renewal: generation followed by growth followed by destruction followed by cessation, repeated endlessly. Or in lunar imagery:



the nascent moon becoming the full moon becoming the dying moon swallowed up by dark, in regular succession, on and on.  
(Christou, June 1968)

What Christou was seeking in protoperformance was perhaps a salvation from the 'eclipses' of his time. He believed that music could provide people with this relief, and that is why he searched for his materials in a time where patterns had not yet been distorted through the terrifying realisation that humanity is probably incapable of understanding or explaining the most important facts in the world; not being able to explain was not an issue, and the cure to fear was not pure intellect, but psychologically soothing spells, myths and rites that gave hope to the community. The condition of protoperformance is not explanatory or commentarial, it is instinctive and imaginative.

We may have come a long way since man's prehistory, having travelled down paths of the spirit and down paths of the mind to get to where we are today, but there are times when all our achievements really do seem to add up to so much litter along our journey through history, monumental irrelevancies, because most of the indications are that maybe we have not been travelling down at all; or perhaps, yes, a round trip, back to square one, looking up again at the moon in a dark sky, wondering whether it will be renewed after being swallowed up by the dark, and all the time afraid of that constant menace - very real now - a sudden and total eclipse. As never before perhaps, we are all in the grips of the LUNAR EXPERIENCE, and there simply does not seem to be much we can do about it,

except perhaps to take refuge in fantasy (myth's poor relation, or substitute). Fantasies about ideal societies and technological paradises. Fantasies about controlling the course of our political evolution, and fantasies about controlling our environment through science. But occasionally some of us may be allowed to retaliate, by attempting to recreate something of the climate of effective myth. Not a mere descriptive activity involving the invocation of fossilised myths, but activity itself, with its energy, like the energy released by those deeper dreams which somehow do not need to be explained rationally in order to be understood. Because effective mythic activity is man's spontaneous response to the numbing terror of his lunar experience: nature's way of coming to terms with nature's terrors - or man's terrors. And what lies at the root of his natural response of nature at work in man is his natural capacity for soul. One could say that soul formation and myth formation are aspects of the same thing, the same process, both emerging out of man's deepest experiences acquired through his confrontation with the facts of living and the facts of dying throughout countless thousands of years. The capacity for soul means the capacity to experience these facts in depth, to feel the weight of humanity's compounded experience bearing down on one's own individual experience. And these are the indelible impressions which stamp man's soul with the substance of myth.  
(Christou, June 1968)

Christou's conclusion appears to be that protoperformance might be connected to primitive rituals, but this does not mean that it is a condition which is gone for ever and impossible to approach again in our time. Its patterns have always been and still are around us and in our collective unconscious. The only requirement is to break away from the conventions of history and embrace myth; the composer, of course, is not suggesting a mere reproduction of rituals, but a redefinition of performance in general, its reattachment to the needs of contemporary people, its return to its function as a cure for the cruelty of everyday life.

### **3. Transformation - A Credo for Music**

In 1966, Christou published his 'credo', as he called it, for music in the magazine, *Epoches*. In this relatively short text he managed to give all the basic information regarding his general perception of music and also his personal attitude towards composition and performance. In this text, he also attempted to explain the way he used the term 'transformation' as a musical term, by actually explaining it as a type of shift of perspective.

In elaborating these thoughts concerning music, which, as I write, constitute for me part of my deepest convictions, I will endeavour to be as brief and concise as possible. In the lines that follow it may be seen that I often refer to the question of 'transformation' and this concept may be interpreted very vaguely as a synonym of evolution, or at least as related to it. I nevertheless believe that a



fuller explanation is necessary: The logic of transformation cannot be explained in terms other than those pertaining to itself. It is very difficult because the validity of such descriptions depend on whether or not we are talking or listening from experience. But an image can help. Let us take as a basic concept space-time. An object can be considered as situated in ordinary space-time, that of everyday experience. That same object can be considered not from this point of view, but from a wider sense of space-time (namely, solar space-time). We can even go further and consider the object as occupying space-time within space-time, when we reach out to galaxial space-time dimensions. We can go on into intergalaxial dimensions. That same object assumes vastly different meanings, yet it is the same object. If we now think in terms of acoustical objects or events, we can perhaps, by analogy, see how the same events can have ever deepening implications. Transformations in music do just that. Absence of transforming powers keeps the acoustical events on one level, thus catering only to our sense of decoration. Art which does not rise above this level may be craftful, but is no longer meaningful. [I think there is a much greater interest] in art that is of a liberative nature than in art which is of a decorative nature; liberative in the sense of liberating us from the common space-time continuum, pointing to other areas of experience.  
(Christou, 1966)

Once more here, Christou insists on the importance of a type of music that is not simply aesthetically satisfactory, but goes beyond its 'decorative' function and achieves a closer contact with the audience, through musical transformation. The composer's change of perspective towards sounds leads to the spectator's change of perspective towards listening to a piece of music.

Christou then summarises his views on music in ten brief points. I consider this text a very important source of information regarding all the late works by Christou. His concerns with the importance of 'transformation', the role of aesthetics, the meaning of the musical movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (towards which Christou seems to be both sceptical and encouraging) are all issues he mentions in these ten points he makes.

I will try to classify my views in ten points here:

- (i) I am concerned with the transformation of acoustical energies into music.
- (ii) Basically the meaning of music is a function of our possibility of experiencing such transformations. Music which is meaningless for one person may not only be valid for another, but can also strike him with the force of revelation (for example, a person may listen to a piece of music without being able to relate it to anything he has heard previously. He nevertheless feels that something has moved him).

**(iii)** The points of interest in a composition are those at which these transformations take place, although the demarcation lines are never fixed.

**(iv)** For both listener and composer the danger is of being seduced by the whore of decoration and aesthetics.

**(v)** Most of the music written in the course of the historical period of music has succumbed to these temptations in varying degrees. And this includes the period stretching from the early polyphonic school with permutatory devices right up to the present day of shoots of serialism and the schools of chance, as well as those of computer-calculations.

**(vi)** Decoration and aesthetics have been and are powerful negative factors in music.

**(vii)** A manipulation of acoustical events which fails to generate the transformatory energies achieves nothing other than the more or less aesthetic and decorative saturation of acoustical space. Even 'beautiful' music can leave one nauseated.

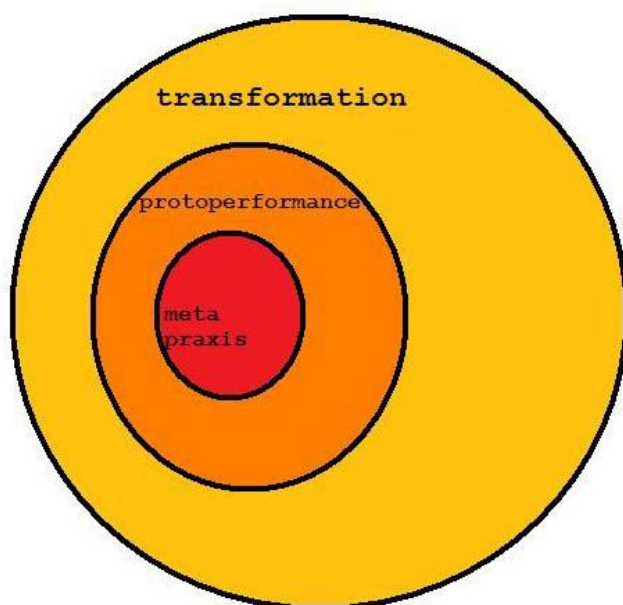
**(viii)** Every age experiences transformations within an aesthetic characteristic of that particular age.

**(ix)** The obvious transplantation of an aesthetic of one age to another or even a generation to a generation is not only futile and invalid but is also a declaration of spiritual bankruptcy.

**(x)** Contrary to what is commonly held against music of our day, its frequent jarring and shock-provoking methods can be symptoms of the necessity for liberation from an inherited aesthetic and worn-out patterns of thought.

(Christou, 1966)

One could conclude that the concept of 'transformation' is what is most crucial in Christou's work and that the aforementioned concepts of metapraxis and protoperformance are the compositional tools he used in order to achieve transformation. Both these concepts include a shift of perspective, as the concept of transformation does; metapraxis refers to an action during performance, protoperformance refers to the general character, form and purpose of a performance, and transformation constitutes the abstract idea of a procedure of generalised metamorphosis in music. Therefore, it appears that metapraxis and protoperformance are 'incarnations' of the purely intellectual idea of transformation; its 'material' apparition in practice, that is in a musical score or on stage. Perhaps a schematic illustration of the three concepts would look like this:



### **Conclusion**

To sum up, the concepts that were articulated by Christou and discussed above, all share a common characteristic; they all draw their content from archaic concepts and on the other hand reach out to contemporary art. That is, Christou did not transplant some classic ideas into contemporary music, as he himself regarded such an attempt as futile. Nevertheless, his belief that the solutions to the dead ends that contemporary music seems to be approaching might be discovered in the primordial state of humanity urged him to search for his material there. On the other hand, he favoured transformation as opposed to reproduction and therefore was concerned with the metamorphotic mechanisms in music, one of which is clearly metapragmatics. Furthermore, he believed that these transformational processes could be effective only as long as their ultimate purpose was the 'protoperformative' condition, which demonstrates art primarily as a genuine form of human expression that is inspired from and directed to the deepest psyche.

All these concepts are closely related to the philosophy of Christou's mentors, Ludwig Wittgenstein and Carl Gustav Jung. The insistence on the quality and meaning of myth and the benefits humanity can gain from it as well as the processes of transformation can be found in plethora throughout Jung's work. The generalised change of perspective along with the refusal to conform to 'inherited' truths and axioms constitute the basis of Wittgenstein's tutelage. This intriguing relationship between Christou's, Jung's and

Wittgenstein's ideas will be thoroughly explored and juxtaposed to different manifestations of the basic Christian concepts in the chapters referring to *Epicycle* and *Anaparastasis III*.

According to Anne-Martine Lucciano, the 'lunar pattern', as opposed to the 'phoenix principle', constitutes a key-concept for the comprehension of Christou's late works. She believes that there is a 'change of approach' between the first and last works by the composer himself, as the phoenix principle (endless cyclic renewal) is substantially different to the lunar cycle, because of the 'supplementary component' of the *eclipse*, 'that is, the symbol of an irrational interruption in the activity of a pattern, a basic image of the potential threat that hangs over every form of action' (Lucciano, 2000: 101). Christou's early works (1949-1965) 'are governed by the praxis approach, according to the Phoenix principle. On the other hand, the 'meta-action' approach that begins with *Mysterion* demands a complete abandonment of all previous European or Western culture' (Lucciano, 2000: 100). Thus, the axis around which the late works of Christou revolve is metapraxis, in the sense of this 'abandonment', which becomes possible through the recognition of the possibility of the eclipse. Lucciano also notes the vital relationship between eclipse and metapraxis and states that 'the eclipse sets in motion the function of metapraxis' (Lucciano, 2000: 101).

All this complexity and openness that characterise the closely related pair of concepts, metapraxis and eclipse, could lead to the conclusion that this might merely imply the inclusion of chance operations in a musical piece, and that Christou was only over-complicating the whole matter. However, in my view, and as Christou was definitely aware of the techniques of chance operation that were being used while he was still alive, the fact that he chose the word eclipse (instead of another probably more technical and less abstract one) is not something he did by accident. His mode of expression in his writings is always too composed and detailed to allow us to assume something like this. I believe that he used the metaphor of an eclipse with full awareness of its meaning and as the best example he could find to illustrate the condition that leads to a metapraxis.

An eclipse is a phenomenon found in nature, which bears a double character; one side of it is scientifically foreseeable and explicable, considered as completely normal and, consequently, without any underlying meanings or ominous suggestions. But there is also a dark side to it, lying in the human collective unconscious, the one which stems

from the prehistoric times and is connected to the era of myth, when people did not have the resources and knowledge to explain it, and an eclipse was perhaps their first encounter with the fact that ‘it is inconceivable not to be able to conceive of the inconceivable’ (Ionesco, 1975: 56). After all, let us not forget that part of this irrational and inexplicable nature of the eclipse is still reflected today on astrological predictions, which many people believe in. The attitude of contemporary astrologers and their followers towards an upcoming eclipse shows remarkable resemblance to the attitude of a prehistoric tribe towards this phenomenon they could not grasp.

It looks like the collective unconscious is still searching for omens and signs in order to conceive of the inconceivable, although in this case scientific logic has fully conceived of the inconceivable. In other words, the eclipse stands for a condition where the rational and the irrational co-exist in laocoonic entanglement and form a complex whose functions and processes can only be approached in a double way.

This suggests that metapraxis does not imply the purely illogical, as praxis does not imply the purely logical. Or as Lucciano also points out

it obeys a logic different to that of Praxis, according to one’s perception of the question. In Christou’s view, however, one may not venture into the domain of the illogical without first having considered every logical implication of a possibility and having penetrated the laws of logic in general. In this respect, the composer recognised the utmost importance of his studies with Russell and Wittgenstein.  
(Lucciano, 2000: 101)

At this point it becomes apparent that this system of praxis and metapraxis conceived by Christou was a projection of the combination of Jung’s unconscious symbolisms and Wittgenstein’s conscious logic in the musical process. Christou was attempting a union of opposites here, a ‘mysterium coniunctionis’ in alchemical terms. The element of chance is of course contained in this process but, as Lucciano also notes

it would be incorrect to assume that the musical patterns that constitute the framework of Christou’s music are no longer controlled due to the intervention of the aleatory element. On the contrary, the chance factor, which is always limited, permits better ‘feed-back’, a sort of mutual exchange between the performer and his pattern, thus developing the performer’s creativity.  
(Lucciano, 2000: 101)

Thus, the unpredictable is included in the Christean condition, but it would be a mistake to regard its chance aspect as more substantial than the countless other possibilities that can be included in such a condition. The way the unpredictable functions is through ‘the multiplication of the patterns and every parameter of the work; it thus opens the way to a kind of music that makes use of extra-musical elements’ (Lucciano, 2000: 101). And the extra-musical is not necessarily artistic; in this case it cannot exclude any human function as long as it is filtered through the processes of transformation, eclipse and metapraxis.

Therefore, there is no absolute randomness in Christou’s works, as an eclipse is not an absolutely random phenomenon. This is where the role of the composer comes in and this is the manner in which the combination of amorphous instinct and square logic is carried out by Christou. He was aware of this as it becomes evident in his own words:

Abrupt cessations; abrupt resumptions; fragmentations; exaggerations; distortions: ECLIPSE. And these activities may take place not only in conventional areas of performance but anywhere, depending on the work: outside the auditorium, in public squares, in the streets of a city, anywhere. Attempts at protoperformance outside conventional cultural strongholds. But there is no validity in any of these processes unless the components come together in SYNTHESIS, because otherwise there is no ‘music’. This is a synthesis which may work for some, while for others it may not. No rules can ever be written. Like alchemy: the ingredients may be common: but the manner of their synthesis remains obscure. Or like ritual: which works for some while not for others. And for those for whom it does not work, ritual, at best represents mere ceremony. Again, as in some rituals of participation, whatever substance there may be to this music can only be conveyed by the actuality of the physical action of its performance and the communication of the tension, the energy and the psychoid factors involved. But unlike ritual, this sort of synthesis has no formality of structure. Not that some of the components cannot have a strict formality of their own. Even so, components are not synthesis, they are only material; and there is a vulnerable type of formality, anyway, which can be shaken up and violated at any moment (constantly menaced by an ‘eclipse’).  
(Christou quoted in Lucciano, 2000: 150-151)

It is then up to the composer to perform the synthesis of possibilities, up to the performer to read them and express them, and up to the audience to accept them or reject them. After all, the possibility of an eclipse cannot be excluded. Christou’s music is the music of transformation that takes place in the moment. From my point of view as a performer, Christou’s music is a music which is *aware of itself* in a double way; of its power and of its frailty. It blends the intellectually calculated and the instinctively

generated action in a unique manner and it keeps the performer constantly interested and challenged by its complexity and proximity to human nature.

Apart from that, transformation is in itself an intangible term, a word used to describe the condition of change, the moment of change which cannot be captured. Christou's music happens in the space in between the realms of the defined and the unpredictable, in between the solid state *before* the change and the still undefined state *after* the change. The performer is acting within the cleft between these two realms; the creative process is taking place between the hallucinatory and the definite. And because of this, the interchangeability of these two states is revealed; the hallucinatory aspect of the defined is unveiled and vice versa. In my view, this awareness of power and vulnerability of the moment of performance has the potential to offer a unique perspective both to the performer and the audience.

## Chapter IV

### Anaparastasis III: The Pianist

#### Prologue

This chapter will be focused on Christou's work, *Anaparastasis III: The Pianist*, and the central ideas expressed in the work will be explored. The main sources used in this attempt will be the score of the composition, the composer's personal diaries, and writings by other thinkers - who lived before, during and after Christou's time - which might illuminate some of the work's complicated aspects.

The *Pianist* shows great artistic and philosophical richness; this will be presented in the first part of the chapter from the composer's point of view, mainly through the information he himself gives us about the piece. The published score (see appendix 12) is accompanied by very thorough directions to the musicians (see appendix 7), which proved to be very helpful for such a task. I also got hold of the 'proto-score' (the term used by the composer himself) of *Anaparastasis III* (through the Jani Christou Archive), which is a quite rough sketch drawn by Christou, and was used for the first three performances of the piece (13/11/1969, 28/11/1969, 28/09/1970). According to Nikos Avgeris, the editor of the published score of *Anaparastasis III*, this proto-score, combined with the extensive notes taken by Grigoris Semitekolo (the soloist in the three first performances, see appendix 9) during the rehearsals of the piece, was the fundamental material from which the published score derived (Christou, 1971).

In the second part of the chapter, the philosophical and artistic ideas discussed above will be further investigated through their relation to the work of philosophers (especially Ludwig Wittgenstein, whose student Christou was) and artists who seem to share – at least to some extent - some of his techniques or concepts. What will be explored is what it is in this piece which can be identified as 'influence' from other artists, and what is unique and formulates the personal idiom of the composer. Because of the use of extra-musical elements in this piece, which are common in performance-art, the potential connection of *Anaparastasis III* with the writings of performance artists and theorists will also be investigated. The aim of this connection is also the foundation of an ideologically supported approach to the performance issues raised in the piece. Finally, the socio-political dimensions of *The Pianist* will also be briefly examined.



The third part will deal with the practical problems and questions that appeared during the preparation of my performance of *Anaparastasis III*. Also, the ways in which such issues – now from a performer’s point of view – were tackled will be presented. This part will be an attempt to summarise all the previously discussed theoretical/practical issues as they are manifest within the context of an actual performance of *The Pianist*.

### **1. Jani Christou and *The Pianist***

*‘We are struggling with language.  
We are engaged in a struggle with language’  
Ludwig Wittgenstein, ‘Culture and Value’*

*Anaparastasis III: The Pianist* was first performed in Munich in 1969, with Grigoris Semitekolo as the ‘soloist’, and was the last work Christou completed. It belongs, along with *Anaparastasis I*, to the cycle *Anaparastases*, which was left unfinished due to the composer’s unexpected death. According to the published score the piece is written for ‘soloist, conductor, instrumental ensemble (8-15 instruments and optionally four more performers ‘to reinforce vocal participation’) and continuum (3 tapes)’ (Christou, 1971). The score is also accompanied by a sketch by the composer, specifying the seating arrangement (for the performers, the conductor, the soloist, and even the audience) and the lighting.

The piece could be divided into three parts (according to the soloist’s actions); at first, the soloist sits on the piano stool and looks as though he will play something but starts sobbing instead. While still sobbing, he strikes the highest and lowest keys of the keyboard very violently. Then he repeatedly bangs the keys and produces rhythmical groans in between the sounds of the piano, while the musicians produce ‘mysterious sounds’. This leads to a ‘piercing scream’ by the soloist, which is followed by a section (called ‘stoning’ by the composer) during which the soloist continuously bangs the piano keys and groans, while the musicians with the conductor (required to encourage this frantic atmosphere by playing a gran cassa or tam-tam) produce a sound-scape of pandemonium.

The second section of the piece starts with the soloist ‘smashing down the lid of the piano furiously’ and falling to his knees. The composer calls this section an ‘attempt at communicating with the piano’; this includes caressing, kissing, licking and murmuring

to the piano, giggling, and using postures of begging, or even threatening the instrument. The musicians have to produce mysterious sounds again and the conductor speaks a text written by the composer. When the soloist eventually stands up in 'terrified immobility', the musicians and the conductor 'shriek and scream piercingly'.

The third section contains what is called by Christou the soloist's 'attempt to communicate with the audience', through 'slow ritualistic movements' and 'occasional cries of intense effort'. This attempt is repeated three times and is accompanied by an immense *accelerando* and *crescendo* by the musicians, conductor and tapes. The soloist finally remains motionless, the outbreak of the orchestra is stopped abruptly and the tapes fade out slowly (Christou, 1971).

Anne-Martine Lucciano's description of the *Pianist* reads as follows:

At first sight, this work may be described in very simple terms: a pianist comes on stage to perform his piece. He tries to play, but an insuperable barrier of incommunication separates him from the instrument. Both the dramatic tension created by the soloist-actor and the musical tension reach their climax in a *crescendo* that rises to the utmost intensity, ending in defeat and dissolution. (Lucciano, 2000: 112)

The element of 'incommunication' can also be recognised in Christou's *Anaparastasis I: astronkatidhanykteronomighyrin* (1968), where the text is taken from Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, 'words that the baritone seeks to express, but is unable to pronounce them. They appear only in a distorted, unintelligible form' (Lucciano, 2000: 112). Thus, it looks like the baritone in *Anaparastasis I* and the pianist in *Anaparastasis III* share this struggle and inability to communicate, or express themselves through a musical medium. Lucciano suggests that both pieces seem

more like psychodrama, unfolding in a theatrical spirit of ritual, a sort of laying bare of the human soul [...] these acts of theatrical ritual may induce a feeling of fear in the spectator, but it is a sacred fear comparable to that produced by the effect of catharsis in the theatres of antiquity. (Lucciano, 2000: 112)

Apparently, *Anaparastasis III* contains three basic concepts formulated by Christou: continuum, metapraxis and protoperformance. From a technical aspect, it appears that *The Pianist* is a piece that demonstrates a general metapraxis by all the performers participating in the piece. The soloist is required to play the piano, but instead performs

all these extra-musical actions described above; the conductor speaks, screams and plays percussion, and the musicians produce sounds with their voices as well. The composer specified the content of metapraxis in his commentary for *Praxis for 12*, as mentioned in the previous chapter. Here I include again a short fragment of this text, which I believe is mostly relevant for *Anaparastasis III*:

A metapraxis is an implosion, a tension under the surface of a single medium which threatens that medium's meaning barrier. An assault on the logic of the performer's relationship to his own particular medium. A violation within a single order of things. Or, a subtle pressure against the barrier of meaning which any system generates for its own preservation.  
(Christou, 1968)

A pattern described as System and Anti-System is present in *Anaparastasis III*; the composer himself in his notes on the scores clarifies this, by characterising the conductor and the orchestra as a System:

SYSTEM: The conductor and his team belong to a world which, although it wants to be controlled by some 'system', cannot manage to ignore the events that threaten the coherence of this system.  
(Christou, 1971)

Whereas the pianist constitutes the Anti-System:

ANTI-SYSTEM: On the other hand the soloist, with his activities and efforts at the end of the work to make an explanatory gesture, aims at breaking through the barrier of coherence of the 'system', and capture a meaning beyond the 'system'. This gesture is the signal for the 'scatter' that urges the members of a team, who are bound to a prearranged course, to perform their 'programme' in their own fashion. But since, perhaps, such an initiative is a false illusion of freedom, the gesture is never completed.  
(Christou, 1971)

Once more in Christou's work we find the pattern of the opposites in two pairs (a very Jungian concept): a system and an anti-system within which praxis and metapraxis are performed. And all this action is taking place on top of the sustained sound of the tapes, which represents what Christou calls the continuum. The continuum (as in *Epicycle*) stands for an independent element, which 'represents the neutral ground on which a system and an anti-system that opposes the system, confront one another' (Lucciano, 2000: 113); it is structured as a very subtle, gradual and ruthless crescendo, which generally seems to reinforce the actions of the performers, but ultimately proves to remain uninfluenced by the actions performed on stage, and is the element which marks

the beginning and the end of the piece. Furthermore, if we take into account that the conductor's spoken text for *Anaparastasis III* consists of notes made by the composer for *Enantiodromia* (where he is dealing with Heraclitus' phrase: 'The way up is the way down'), we can trace not only one more manifestation of the play of opposites in *The Pianist* but also an implication of the continuum as a symbol of the untouchable and the infinite or, as Christou would say, 'perhaps the most ruthless pattern of all' (Christou, 1969).

Apart from metapraxis, protoperformance seems to be a central issue in *The Pianist*. As mentioned in chapter III, Christou had defined protoperformances as 'the root of all art' and 'rituals of renewal' (Christou, June 1968). The ritual quality of the performers' actions in *The Pianist* is very explicit, and the word 'ritual' is mentioned by the composer in the score several times. Thus, metapraxis unfolds in the manner of protoperformance and with the assistance of the continuum.

From a practical point of view, all the concepts discussed above, in the case of *Anaparastasis III*, are expressed through this previously mentioned impossibility of expression. Giorgos Leotsakos, in his review of the work, characterises the soloist as 'psychologically handicapped [...] the symbol of psychological castration' (Leotsakos, 1969). Music has been widely regarded as a means of expression (this function of music is supposed to be what makes it similar to language) and a musical instrument as a musician's medium of communication with an audience. Here, though, what is communicated with the audience is the *inability* of communication. At this point, there seems to be a subtle connection to Wittgenstein's philosophy, which was dominated by an obsession with the insufficiency of language as an expressive medium and an ultimate failure to invent or discover ways of efficient expression through language. Wittgenstein's words, 'we are struggling with language. We are engaged in a struggle with language' (Wittgenstein, 1980: 11), could be referring to any form of language, and could become the motto of *The Pianist*; or perhaps, *The Pianist* could be viewed as a re-enactment of Wittgenstein's dictum.

## 2. The Conceptual Framework of *The Pianist*

‘Piano playing, a dance of human fingers’  
Ludwig Wittgenstein, ‘Culture and Value’

- **Metapraxis and the Struggle with Language**

The conceptual framework within which the ideas and practices of *The Pianist* can be included seems to suggest many references to the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein. These references could be divided into two categories: first of all, the essential matter of the struggle with a language which is constructed in order to express and fails to do so (introduced in the previous section), which seems to be the root issue from which the ways of tackling an artistic/philosophical ‘problem’ stem. These practical ways of encountering the problem of language could themselves then form the second category of references to Wittgenstein’s work within *The Pianist*. And these practices seem to take the form of a shift in the conventional perception of the medium (language for Wittgenstein, music for Christou): a scepticism towards all common practices, which suggests a fresh look at the very roots of the medium and leads to the construction of a system of expression that is free from conventions and commonplace features.

In *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*, Wittgenstein is performing this task as far as language is concerned, and after questioning and analysing all the components and logical mechanisms of language, he concludes as follows: ‘whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent’ (Wittgenstein, 1922: proposition 7). Through this final statement he accepts the fact that the expressive potential of language is limited. In the case of *The Pianist*, Christou seems to be playing with this idea and applying it on a situation where the ‘language’ is music and the person who is experiencing this realisation of expressive impotence is the soloist. In the case of Wittgenstein, the medium is words, and in the case of *The Pianist* the medium is the sounds produced by the soloist through the piano; or rather, the sounds the soloist is *expected* to produce through the piano. The piano, then, seems to be a symbol of language, a means of expression whose logical restrictions fail the person who wants to communicate through it. The pianist at first uses it and remains dissatisfied with the result, as if it is something which does not correspond to his expressive purposes, and gradually seems to treat the piano not as if it was a medium, an instrument or a tame animal, but rather as if it was an almost sly and unbreakable enemy, an obstacle, a bird that refuses to sing, a creature with a personality of its own, which is constantly objecting to the pianist’s expressive

needs. During the soloist's subsequent attempt to communicate with the audience in a way other than playing the piano, he fails to use verbal communication as well and utters unintelligible sounds instead, finally remaining immobile and *silent*; the reference to Wittgenstein's seventh and final proposition from the *Tractatus* seems to be rather explicit – or even literal – here.

Thus, the soloist fails to use musical language in *Anaparastasis III*, and it is made clear in the score (through the soloist's rhythmical banging of the keys) that there is a struggle to use some sort of musical language in the beginning of the piece; therefore it is probably this struggle, condemned to failure, which Christou is depicting through this work. The soloist's metapraxis develops as a natural consequence of the insufficiency of language, and the ending of the work could perhaps be summarised with Wittgenstein's words again: 'in art it is hard to say anything as good as: saying nothing' (Wittgenstein, 1980: 23).

Of course, the attempt to invent a new musical language is an issue that has concerned composers especially during the 20<sup>th</sup> century; the fact that Arnold Schoenberg's serialist movement was clearly influenced by *Tractatus* cannot easily be considered a coincidence (Wright, 2005). Christou admired Schoenberg, and apparently they shared a concern with the boundaries of musical language, although they dealt with it in a completely different way. According to Wright, part of the philosophical core of the Vienna Circle movement was the fact that

to attempt to use language to address metaphysical propositions concerning values and aesthetics is to misuse language and to fail to understand the limits of its reach [...] many of the traditional claims of music theory fall under the category of metaphysical propositions.  
(Wright, 2005: 155)

This was one of the ideas – which work as a transplant of Wittgenstein's concepts into musical composition – that lead Schoenberg to the invention of a new musical language through serialism. Christou, on his part, seems to have taken this further than replacing tonality with a new musical system which still consists of the traditional basic 'ingredients' of a musical score. In the case of serialism, only one element of the previously inherited concept of music is absent (tonality); however, the rest of the musical 'expectations' one would have from a score in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century remain, and the tonal system is actually only substituted by a totally artificial system, invented

by an individual. One could argue in this case that it is slightly paradoxical to try to liberate music from axiomatic inherited musical systems through the invention of a new system, which might (and for many people did) inevitably end up becoming another inherited and rather strict system, such as tonal harmony.

The concept of metapraxis, on the other hand, seems to be one of Christou's practical techniques of transcending the conventional borders of musical expression, without hesitating to use extra-musical elements as a way to connect with the intellectual, expressive and metaphysical aspects of his works with as much sincerity as possible. But he is doing this on all possible levels: he is looking for his personal expressive truth, without taking any artistic stereotypes for granted, through scepticism towards all the possible elements that constitute the procedure of art making, and without abiding to any rules apart from the necessities dictated by his desire to communicate his ideas. His attitude seems to accord with Jonathan Swain's speculation on 20<sup>th</sup> century music: 'Serious composition in our century [became] one more exercise of the intellect. Composition supersedes the mere fashioning of sounds and becomes the fashioning of ideas' (Swain, 1997: 119).

The question that is raised now, however, is whether – from a practical point of view – metapraxis is in the final analysis tautological with theatricality (in the sense of stressing the dramatic aspect of a musical performance). Several composers, especially during Christou's time, used theatrical elements in their musical pieces (e.g. Cage, Kagel, the Fluxus events etc.), and it was only reasonable for him to be influenced by the progressive ideas of the avant-garde movement. However, Christou provided us with very detailed descriptions of the content of the techniques – which were then regarded as 'new' – that he invented and used in his works. For instance, metapraxis is described by him in a rather meticulous manner; what is made exceptionally clear in his 'definition' of metapraxis is the fact that its content cannot be strictly defined and is dependent on the definition of praxis. Thus, it cannot be the same as theatricality or, in other words, merely the use of theatrical elements in a musical work. In Christou's time, and especially in Greece, praxis in a musical performance, as far as a pianist was concerned, could only contain piano-playing. Therefore, Christou was loyal to his own description of the term of metapraxis and disturbed the concept of the musical praxis of his time by introducing – in the case of *The Pianist* – 'theatrical' elements in his piece. However, since the use of such elements in contemporary music is not only common

but also even expected by the spectator nowadays (in other words they often tend to become praxis), Christou's metapragmatics would, and in my view, should in our time probably be manifest in different ways in order to disturb the musical praxis.

The pianist's metapragmatics could be also summarised as a shift of perspective towards musical performance in general. This is also a rather Wittgensteinian attitude, and it could even suggest a reversal of the philosopher's phrase: 'sometimes a sentence can be understood only if it is read at the right tempo. My sentences are all supposed to be read slowly' (Wittgenstein, 1980: 225). Here, Wittgenstein does not hesitate to use musical terms when referring to his philosophy/language; this is a direct shift of perspective towards the comprehension of philosophy through the use of art. One would expect that understanding philosophy exclusively depends on one's intellectual capacity, whereas Wittgenstein offers a completely new point of view by suggesting that it depends on *tempo*, something that traditionally lies outside the borders of philosophy, although – if one thinks twice – it is part of reading, even if it appears in an entirely 'internal' way and not in an obvious one – as it would during the performance of a musical piece.

In a way, Christou's *Pianist* is based on a similar shift of perspective towards a piano performance; the pianist is actually required to do everything a pianist would *not* be expected to do during a piano performance and makes use of only 'extra-pianistic' practices in order to express himself. Also, just as Wittgenstein sees piano playing as 'a dance of human fingers' (Wittgenstein, 1980: 36), Christou sees it as an attempt at human expression and overlooks all expectations, conventions and aesthetic objections for the sake of this. This also brings to mind Barthes' idea of evaluating a musical performance without falling into the trap of merely descriptive/subjective language and seeks the solution to this problem in the 'grain of the voice', in other words 'a dual posture, a dual production – of language and of music' (Barthes, 1972: 179). Although Barthes' thought is primarily based on vocal music, he later mentions that

the 'grain' - or the lack of it - persists in instrumental music; if the latter no longer has language to lay open *significance* in all its volume at least there is the performer's body which again forces me to evaluation. I shall not judge a performance according to the rules of interpretation, the constraints of style [...] but according to the image of the body (the figure) given me. I can hear with certainty – the certainty of the body, of thrill – that the harpsichord playing of Wanda Landowska comes from her inner body and not from the petty digital scramble of so many harpsichordists [...] As for piano music, I know at once



which part of the body is playing – if it is the arm, too often, alas, muscled like a dancer’s calves, the clutch of the fingertips [...] or if on the contrary it is the only erotic part of a pianist’s body, the pad of the fingers whose ‘grain’ is so rarely heard.

(Barthes, 1972: 189)

Here, Barthes is seeking a different point of view for the spectator of a musical performance; the direction of musical evaluation changes from the exclusively intellectual to the bodily. It could be argued that in *The Pianist* a very similar change of direction in musical representation is taking place, in such a way that the spectator has almost no alternative than adjusting his perception of the performance to a different mode of musical expression; and this shift of perception contains a very explicit bodily element in the case of *Anaparastasis III*.

- **Protoperformance and Ritual**

The performance of *Anaparastasis III* most resembles a ritual which is, however, performed within the context of a piano recital. From this point of view, it could be argued that Christou is utilising the conventional part of a musical work in a way that reinforces even more the metapraxis performed by all the musicians. And ultimately – from a spectator’s point of view – although the musicians, and especially the pianist, are usually not acting like musicians at all, the spectator does not cease to regard the whole event as a musical (rather than a theatrical) performance. This fact alone empowers the main aim of the work, the illustration of an expressive impotency, which – almost ironically – Christou seems to have found an extremely effective way to express. Wittgenstein claimed that ‘everything ritualistic ... must be strictly avoided, because it immediately turns rotten. Of course a kiss is a ritual too and it isn’t rotten, but ritual is permissible only to the extent that it is as genuine as a kiss’ (Wittgenstein, 1980: 8); the way this ritualistic quality is expressed in the score of *Anaparastasis III*, with its lack of extreme stylisation and its proximity to the human psychology of a musician who performs, gives the work all the potential for a ‘genuine’ performance and, as a result approaches a ritual that is not ‘rotten’. The connection between Christou’s ideas about protoperformance and Jerzy Grotowski’s following statement is remarkable:

The Performer, with a capital letter, is a man of action. He is not a man who plays another. He is a dancer, a priest, a warrior: he is outside aesthetic genres. Ritual is performance, an accomplished action, an act. Degenerated ritual is a spectacle. I don’t want to discover something new but something forgotten.

Something which is so old that all distinctions between aesthetic genres are no longer of use.  
(Grotowski, 1988: 36)

People who witnessed the first performance of *The Pianist* by Grigoris Semitekolo – during which he damaged his vocal chords while he was screaming – describe it as a sort of hair-raising ritual, and the composer’s daughter in a private conversation told me that Semitekolo would not have considered his performance genuine enough if his hands were not bleeding after the end of it. This information, of course, does not necessarily imply that the composer *required* such extremities from the performer (the directions in the score are very general), but rather that the limits of a performance of this piece are left open in the score intentionally, in order for each performer to filter them through his personal limits. And in this way, it looks as though Christou is trying to achieve the elimination of the convention of the soloist performing a character outside himself. The soloist is sharing his *personal* experience of expressive impotence with the audience, while the ritualistic role of the rest of the musicians is the performance of their *personal* experience of the system which generates such impotence and also provokes such an outburst of despair by the soloist. The fact that the composer uses the word ‘stoning’ in the score in order to describe the musicians’ and conductor’s effort to provoke the expressive explosion of the soloist bears a rather ritual shade itself.

As a conclusion, the substantial ritual dimension of the piece necessarily requires a special treatment of the score by the performers. That is, when it comes to performing *The Pianist* one should never overlook the ritual quality his role as a performer has. The soloist is asked to drop his performance mask (i.e. his musical instrument) and actually to re-enact this process in front of an audience. According to Richard Schechner, the pattern of representation in the theatre is normally:

**[victim]→character→actor::audience←[society]**

whereas ‘in a ritual like the Eucharist, a layer of representation is stripped away from the actor’s side. There is no character.’

**[victim]→actor::congregation←[society]**

And he goes on to say that the only case of a direct meeting between ‘society and victims’ is rituals where an actual sacrifice takes place:

**victim::celebrants←[society]** (Schechner, 1995: 234).

If we follow Schechner's route of thought, in a conventional piano concert the pattern usually looks like this:

**[victim]→pianist→piano::audience←[society]**

In *The Pianist*, the pattern looks more like this:

**[victim]→pianist::audience←[society]**

Here, the symbol '::' could perhaps (Schechner is not defining it) stand for an unsuccessful effort to connect, as if the 'deleted' element of the piano is already so deeply rooted in the pianist's psyche that it keeps somehow 'haunting' the whole performance. The performer of *The Pianist* must not forget this unusual relationship with the audience and also the fact that the ritualistic aspect of the piece allows him/her everything within his/her role in it. René Girard claimed that 'the function of ritual is to 'purify' violence' (Girard, 1977: 36), and Schechner sees human rituals as 'ready-made answers to deal with crisis [...] a relief from pain [...] the ritual process opens up a time/space of antistructural playfulness' (Schechner, 1995: 233). In *The Pianist*, the performer is given the opportunity to experience the cathartic qualities of art in a very direct way.

One should also not forget Freud's belief that 'there can be no doubt that art did not begin as art for art's sake. It worked originally in the service of impulses which are for the most part extinct today. And among them we may suspect the presence of many magical purposes' (Freud, 1962: 90). In *Anaparastasis III*, Christou is blurring the barriers between art and ritual and is seeking out the way back to protoperformances and the emotional/psychological impact they had on their participants. As Klaus Trappmann states:

Back to my initial scepticism about myths and rituals in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Christou gives his dream-rituals, his protoperformances a sacred meaning. Although it is about destruction, it is also about renewal, because the destruction of structures and abandonment of orders should at last lead to a new, higher order. However, the present task of music is firstly the destruction of a foolish optimism and an erroneous concept of reality. 'To shatter through reality' is the formula he used in various interviews. Thus – and I think luckily – what presents itself is his purposeful re-sacralisation as de-sacralisation of the established concert business and his archaisation as radical modernism.  
(Trappmann quoted in Angermann, 1993: 69)

Christou is making a journey back to the era of original rituals in order to bring back the possibility of a new, liberating perspective on musical performance to musicians and audiences with the hope of restoring this ‘original originality’.

- **Christou and Kagel: theatricality or beyond?**

At this point, the issue of ‘theatricality’ in *Anaparastasis* and whether it is just this that is required from the performer in this work becomes clearer. It looks as if *Anaparastasis* does not require ‘theatricality’ from the performer, but a real *experience* of the score, something that goes beyond the practices of the avant-garde movements of Christou’s time, which usually exploited extra-musical elements in music as alternative expressive tools, an extension of expressive technique. Of course, technically speaking, *The Pianist* bears some resemblance to the musical avant-garde of his time; ‘the principles of the avant-garde. One of these principles is the overcoming of barriers [...] language, movement, light – all became part of composition’ (Heile, 2006: 107). These are all extra-musical elements incorporated in *The Pianist*. But it appears that the purpose of their incorporation is not merely to overcome artistic barriers only for the sake of the creation of an original artistic object; the composer’s intention to create a condition where the overcoming of barriers is happening very naturally and is hardly perceptible during the performance is very present. Because of this partial disconnection of the piece from ‘art’ – in the 20<sup>th</sup> century western society sense – and its conceptual/experiential connection to protoperformance, the presence of extra-musical elements in *Anaparastasis III* cannot be regarded as a matter of aesthetics but as a matter of expressive necessity.

However, there seems to be an especially interesting connection between Christou’s work and the work of Mauricio Kagel. First of all, the issue of the alteration of perception of a musical performance is very present in Kagel’s pieces as well. He also practically achieves this through the use of ‘theatrical’ elements in his pieces, although an apparent difference between his and Christou’s work is the fact that his compositions do not seem to leave the sense of rituals but rather of musical happenings (or, as they are called, ‘instrumental theatre’), which sometimes demonstrate some ritual aspects. It could be argued that the same term could be used for Christou’s pieces; however, it appears that Kagel’s pieces in their vast majority lack this mystical/mythical dimension,

which is fundamental in Christou's compositions, and mostly bear an ironic and often humorous character, which is not the case in any of Christou's pieces.

For instance, Kagel's *Entführung im Konzertsaal* (1999) is a composition where extra-musical/theatrical elements are very intelligently incorporated into the music. However, the seams between the disciplines remain very visible, as they would in a musical theatre performance. One could assume that one of the reasons why there is this difference between Kagel and Christou is the fact that in this piece by Kagel for example, what is expected from the musicians is theatricality, a demonstration of some dramatic abilities; in the case of *Anaparastasis* though, the composer is not providing the musicians with the supplementary 'mask' of theatricality. Christou is not adding more layers of expressive techniques on the musicians; on the contrary, he is trying to strip them of any meretricious technicalities that interfere with the ultimate target of the piece, which is the performance of a cathartic artistic ritual. Also, in order to perform the role of the pianist in *Anaparastasis*, one does not need to be anything more than a musician who is prepared to overcome his social or personal restrictions of performing in a concert. The musicians only need to follow the score and let themselves get carried away by the energies produced by the team and the continuum. In the case of the *Entführung* though, the musicians (and especially the conductor) are required to have at least a minimum theatrical talent; they must be prepared to mask themselves in a double way (act as musicians and actors), instead of transcending the conventional limitations of musical expression through musical expression itself (act as musicians who are humans).

Therefore, both Christou and Kagel made use of extra-musical material with different intentions. However, one could recognise a similarity (at least on a more 'external' level) in both the composers' work: both of them produced musical works which were 'not intended for the ear alone' (Heile, 2006: 38). Kagel's works are intended for our other senses as well, and so are Christou's works; and during their performances 'watching is not an illicit indulgence but an indispensable activity' (Heile, 2006: 38). Several issues are addressed through this attitude; one of them is the fact that Christou's and Kagel's pieces remind us of the not exclusively sonic dimension of a musical performance, its performative dimension, the fact that it is also a spectacle. As Kagel points out,

music has also been a scenic event for a long time. In the nineteenth century people still enjoyed music also with their eyes, with all their senses. Only with the increasing dominance of the mechanical reproduction of music, through broadcasting and records, was this reduced to the purely acoustic dimension. That's why my music is a direct, exaggerated protest against the mechanical reproduction of music. My goal: a re-humanisation of music-making!  
(Kagel, 1970)

It is very obvious that Christou's works share this perspective as far as musical performance is concerned. Many of his late works – and especially *The Pianist* – sound only 'incomplete' when just listened to. This demonstrates how essential 'the visual and kinetic nature of performance, the physicality of music-making, the bodily presence of the performers, the three-dimensional space of the stage, the spectacle of stage events' (Heile, 2006: 37) are in Christou's works. What Heile also recognises in this aspect of Kagel's music is an attempt 'to rediscover what has been lost in Western classical music' and also 'the sense of ritual' in a musical performance; while he stresses that 'no other culture conceives of music as disembodied sound' (Heile, 2006: 37). These are all characteristics and ideas which are manifested in *Anaparastasis III*.

Another characteristic which appears to be common in Kagel's and Christou's works is the fact that listening to such works is transformed from an action which is defined by aesthetics into a function determined by semantics as well. Especially in *The Pianist*, Heile's remark on Kagel's works seems to be quite valid:

they blur the distinctions between theatrical and musical performance, semantic and aesthetic listening [...] the mixing of different modes of perception creates a surreal, dream-like atmosphere, as the performers take on double identities (as both musical performers and actors who mime musical performance), and double-identities, or the switching between different identities, are typical of dreams.  
(Heile, 2006: 39-40)

Indeed, in *Anaparastasis III* the switching between different identities is accomplished on two levels. On the one hand, the soloist is switching between the identity of a typical pianist and the identity of a 'real' (i.e. without the safety-net of his piano) person (victim?) in great psychological anguish. Also, the conductor and the musicians are switching from the identity of a conductor and an orchestra to the identity of a group of almost ecstatic people (celebrants?) and their leader (high priest?), whose task is the reinforcement of the pianist's anguish; and this rite is enveloped by the continuum

which is switching from the identity of an electronic sound to the identity of an unstoppable current of anguish, which seems to be the ultimate source of this general disturbing atmosphere. On the other hand, the spectator is switching from purely aesthetic listening (i.e. listening to the sound as he would in a piano concert) to a semantic listening of the piece within the context of the identity transformations of the performers, which is also combined with the perception of the sensual totality of the performance.

The aesthetic/semantic identity game, described above, results in an exceptionally engaging form of musical performance. Not only in terms of the emotional/psychological impact on the performers/spectators, but also in terms of the social content a musical performance acquires; the expressive directness – which occasionally touches upon the realm of brutality – of the performance consequently establishes a social connection to the audience, which is exceptionally powerful. The audience is almost *forced* to try to ‘understand’, to solve the riddle of the musicians’ metapraxis and actually to connect with them on a human level, as well as an aesthetic/artistic level. *Anaparastasis III* also shares this quality with Kagel’s works; Christou’s piece ‘serves as a reflection on music and its role in society: his composing is a form of intellectual analysis’ (Heile, 2006: 108).

- **Systems and Anti-systems**

Of course, one should also not overlook the specific social circumstances in Greece at the time the piece was performed. The country was then going through a political crisis, the seven-year Dictatorship of the Colonels (1967-74). This period was of so great significance that traces of its impact are still evident today on the psychology of Greek society.

One of the most oppressive aspects of the dictators’ policy was the general restriction of free speech for all citizens; this control was operated (apart from the army and the police) by paid citizens who were spying on their fellow-citizens (sometimes friends or relatives of theirs) who were suspected of anti-governmental ideology. People would end up in prisons, in ‘exile-islands’ or concentration camps (mostly deserted small islands in the Aegean, such as Leros and Yaros, were used as concentration camps for ‘traitors’), or even dead, if someone just reported them to the police without even having to provide any evidence for their accusations. After the concentration camps of

Leros and Oropos were shut down, the prisoners were forced to exile in other small islands or towns around the country, such as Kythera, Samothraki and Sparta; this was called 'disciplinary residence', and in those cases the 'traitors' were supposed to live in small houses under inhumane conditions, without the right to work in the local community, without medical care and with a ridiculously low sum of money provided by the state for their living expenses.

Furthermore, artistic censorship was massive, and many artists who were considered dangerous for the political situation, either left the country or were sent to prisons and exile-islands. The dictators promoted mostly folk and nationalistic music (on radio and TV channels) or generally music that looked 'harmless' to them; citizens would be punished even if they were caught listening, for instance, to Mikis Theodorakis' songs, which were considered revolutionary and communist. The only forms of protest through the arts (especially popular songs and commercial films) in Greece at that time was inevitably very carefully disguised through vague symbolisms, which could not be deciphered by the dictators, but formulated a common code of understanding among the oppressed. In this context, one could not exclude the possibility of *The Pianist* bearing some sophisticatedly concealed anti-dictatorship messages.

A very clear and vivid image of the dictatorship era can be found in the *Black Book: the Greek Junta stands accused*, which consists of a compilation of testimonies by people who suffered the crimes of the dictatorship, official documents and photographic material related to them; the great bulk of texts was collected and published by the Central Committee of the Patriotic Anti-dictatorship front, during the dictatorship (first volume 1971, second volume 1972). 'It has been written by the people's martyrs themselves who have suffered and continue to suffer during the four years of the military dictatorship. It is the black book of terror, written literally with the blood of the junta's victims' (*Black Book*, 1971: 7). According to the *Black Book*, the political situation during the first four years of the dictatorship (1967-71) demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Military law is still in effect. The courts of appeal still sentence on the basis of Law 509.
- Political parties are prohibited
- All democratic organisations of the people are also prohibited
- The press is still gagged



- The prisons still hold over 670 political opponents of the junta, patriots of the most varied political views – Communists, Centrists, Conservatives, Royalists, plain democrats, civilians and military personnel

- The junta's propaganda says that it has closed down the concentration camps for humanistic reasons. It lies. It was forced to shut down 3 camps under pressure from the Greek people and the outcry of world public opinion, but the institution of 'exile' has been retained [...]

The junta has kept about 100 'exiles' in places of 'compulsory residence' where they are allegedly free to live with their families. These are Communists and other democratic citizens who had previously spent 15, 20 and 25 years in prisons, whose health has been ruined; there are also others, democrats and royalists, civilians and military personnel.

*(Black Book, 1971: 8)*

Of course the worst fear constantly hanging over every Greek citizen's head at that time was that of the notorious tortures to which the victims of censorship were imposed. And this was an everyday fear, a part of the Greek people's daily routine, somehow resembling the menace of an 'eclipse' Christou was so obsessed with.

Torture against the dictatorship's opponents continues, and it continues to be the daily and favourite method of the tyrants. The security police building on Bouboulina Street, Nea Ionia, the ESA 'Dionysos' torture camp, a whole wing in Korydallos Prison [...]

The list of the tortures is endless [...] The 'falanga' (bastinado). Beating on the soles of the feet until the victim's feet are swollen. Arm twisting with iron or other hard instruments. Hurting and damaging the genitals in men and women. Repeated electrical shock on all parts of the body. Running the cordon: the prisoner is forced to run inside a circle composed of torturers who beat him each in turn as he passes. Dance of the rapists – by Security Police sadists around a naked woman prisoner whom they constantly manhandle. Psychological and mental torture, chiefly by letting the prisoners listen to the screams of others being tortured, continued threats, mock executions etc. one result of these frightful tortures is that not a small number of the victims have gone mad.

*(Black Book, 1971: 9)*

This list of tortures is confirmed by hundreds of testimonies of people who had been arrested by the Police between 1967 and 1969. These texts reveal the inconceivable brutality, the utter absurdity and the murderous attitude of the Police very intensely. Furthermore, in the second part of the book, dedicated to prisons and concentration camps, one can find a very long list of places which were used as such, and also many appeals by the prisoners, for instance to 'the four Great Powers: U.S.S.R., U.S.A., Great Britain and France' (*Black Book, 1971: 63*); in these texts the living conditions are described very dramatically, and the desperation of these people is more than apparent. Thousands of people arrested, even during the first hours of the 21<sup>st</sup> of April 1967, state

that ‘the dictatorship described our arrest as preventative and our detention as temporary’ (*Black Book*, 1971: 128), while they had already been held for three years by that time, in concentration camps where 90% of the prisoners suffered from a grippe epidemic and were refused medical treatment in spite of their many appeals to the state and to foreign countries.

‘The whole of Greece is one great concentration camp’ (*Black Book*, 1971: 65); *Anaparastasis III* was composed in this context of a general fear of free expression. It seems that the work is influenced by this and it could also be seen as a protest against censorship. The pianist’s inability to express himself could be a very explicit parallel to the condition of the Greek citizens (including the composer) at that time. Also, the figure of the conductor seems to have an oppressive touch; according to the score, when he speaks, his reading has to be simple and clear, ‘he must not colour his voice at all. It must be a dry reading, such as that of a newscaster’ (Christou, 1971). I would assume that this description of the conductor’s voice would inevitably bring to any Greek citizen’s mind at the time of the performance, the completely expressionless voice of Georgios Papadopoulos, the chief dictator, who enjoyed making public statements, intended for axioms by the Greek people. Furthermore, the conductor’s text itself has a rather domineering and oppressive shade:

Although you are a member of a group caught up in the same pattern, you are nevertheless on your own. Perform with individual abandon, mindless of the others, contributing as much of your own individual inventiveness as possible within the limits set by the specifications for the pattern.  
(Christou, 1971)

This text sounds like the voice of an indisputable power talking to the lonely figure of the soloist, and actually giving him orders or making statements about him. Let us also not forget that the composer calls the conductor and his group ‘SYSTEM’ and the soloist ‘ANTI-SYSTEM’; the implications of the use of these terms could also have a sociological content, with the ‘SYSTEM’ being the established power and the ‘ANTISYSTEM’ being the opposing, powerless individual. The fact that the individual finally fails to communicate with the audience could be indicative of the composer’s personal view on the socio-political situation in his country at that time, and the role of the individual in it. The public was paralysed from fear at the time of the dictatorship

and their majority was mostly interested in saving themselves rather than considering their fellow-citizens or a possible way to save the country.

However, the socio-political comment the composer might be trying to make should not be restricted in the state of affairs in Greece. The global political situation at that time was governed by fear, violence and censorship as well (Berlin Wall, Vietnam War, May '68 in Paris etc.) and there is evidence in Christou's writings that he was in the final analysis concerned about the state of the entire human race (see appendix 2). After all, the composer never showed evidence of narrow or shallow thought in his writings; contrary to that, he had the tendency to attempt to trace the deepest roots of events and the connections between them.

- **Synopsis and Conclusions**

It is evident that *The Pianist* seems to draw on a variety of philosophical and artistic tendencies. The diversity of the sources used above for the purposes of approaching the piece indicates the diversity not only of the influences Christou might have had as a composer, but also of the ways in which *The Pianist* can be interpreted by a spectator or a performer. After all, as Rose Rosengard Subotnik has observed, 'everyone has cultural and emotional responses to music. These characteristics and responses are not uniform or immutable but as diverse, unstable, and open-ended as the multitude of contexts in which music defines itself' (Subotnik, 1996: 175).

In *Anaparastasis III* we detected traces of Wittgenstein's mode of thinking and especially the concern with language and its inefficiency, an issue which has concerned many musicians of the past century. Apparently, *The Pianist* presents many external similarities to the techniques of the avant-garde of his time, especially as far as the embodiment of extra-musical elements in his music is concerned. The main difference with Christou's approach (and consequently his music's effect on the spectator) is the deep philosophical dimension of *Anaparastasis III* and its very substantial ritual aspect. These of course are characteristics we come across in avant-garde pieces too (e.g. Cage), although most of the times avant-garde works of Christou's time connected to extra-musical ideology in a more loose way and seemed to have been mostly focused on a struggle to revitalise musical expression and liberate it from outdated conventions, and also - very often - to return to the conception of musical performance as entertainment. For instance, George Maciunas once said about Fluxus that 'lot of Fluxus is gag like.

That's part of the humour, it's like a gag ... A high art form? No. I think it's good, inventive gags. That's what we're doing' (Friedman, 1998: 196). Christou's pieces, on the other hand, seem to *spring out* of his philosophical ideas, and this becomes evident when one attends a performance of *The Pianist*, for example. A performance of this piece definitely raises questions as far as the purely musical part of it is concerned, that is, the means of expression which are used in the piece; however, on a deeper level, one cannot help wondering what is the inner motive for the use of such means and it looks as though even the smallest particle of the piece is so well backed up by an expressive objective, that the conceptual aspect of *The Pianist* acquires more importance in the spectator's perception than the technical part of it.

A very close connection was also detected between Kagel's 'instrumental theatre' and *The Pianist*, especially as far as their ritual aspect is concerned. The re-discovery of the physical aspect of musical performance and its re-definition in relation to space is common in both the composers' works. However, again, Kagel's works are most of the times always somehow connected to the activities of music making and do not step out of this realm (*Match*, for instance, is stage-wise set up as a wrestling match but the musicians only compete in musical terms, they do not literally beat each other), which is not the case in Christou's pieces, where metapraxis occupies an important place. As a conclusion, it appears that what is included in Kagel's works is theatricality, whereas Christou's metapraxis is something more, or even opposite to it, as it aims at an attempt to bring the performers/spectators closer to protoperformance (ritual), which involves the abolition of the representative attributes of mere theatricality.

Regarding Christou's general connection with his era, his late works are built up with components which can be detected in most of the artistic movements of the 60s.

Trappmann also notes this in the clearest way:

I think here it becomes obvious how much of a composer of the 60s Jani Christou was. I am saying this without any intention to render his work relative or to denounce it as fashionable. But his protest against the established concert business, refusal, deconstruction, decollage, manifestos against aesthetics, and the decorative perception of art, provocation and the slogan of anti-art or of the death of literature or music, the transgression of rituals, all these were elements of Neo-dadaism, Fluxus, Conceptual Art, Action-art Happenings and Performances, theatre music and multimedia experiments. All central keywords of the 60s find their correspondences in Christou's work. They are central categories in Christou's last works: violence, madness, fear, body and politics. As they emerge for example in

Peter Weiss' *Marat/De Sade* piece, in the theatre experiments inspired by Grotowski and Artaud or in Japanese Buto.  
(Trappmann quoted in Angermann, 1993: 69)

Nevertheless, it is a fact that the mode of 'synthesis', as Christou himself used to say, of these components is not only unique in terms of the composer having a distinct idiom, but also in terms of his remarkably protean creative attitude depending on each work and the expressive objectives involved in it. Christou would not follow any aesthetic movement and at the same time he would not attempt to initiate an aesthetic movement himself. And this does not imply a type of 'aesthetics of anti-aesthetics', but a versatile creativity stemming from creative independence and sincerity.

Furthermore, a substantial aspect of *Anaparastasis III*, although Christou has not stated this clearly, might be political; it is very possible that the work was a comment on the muzzling of the Greek people by the dictatorship of the colonels. However, the way this idea is elaborated in *The Pianist* takes the work beyond its time and makes it opportune for several social contexts of our time.

Additionally, the ritual aspect of *The Pianist* bears a profoundly mystical sense, on which performance theory can be quite illuminating. What could be said about *The Pianist* as a very general conclusion is that the work is balancing between intellectuality (or conceptualism) and physicality (or the raw, almost violent impact on the spectator/performer not exclusively through sound). Schechner believed that 'performance doesn't originate in ritual any more than it originates in entertainment. It originates in the binary system efficacy-entertainment which includes the sub-set ritual-theatre' (Schechner, 1988: 141), and also that 'whenever we look, and no matter how far back, theatre is a mixture, a braid, of entertainment and ritual. At one moment ritual seems to be the source, at another it is entertainment' (Schechner, 1988: 146).

*Anaparastasis III* is an example of this in the field of music, as it combines entertainment and ritual, spectacle and mysticism in a manner which is in accordance with the composer's time but also carries his personal mark, as well as the marks of global and timeless human issues, and remains contemporary even forty years after its first performance. As Nicolas Slonimsky had remarked as early as 1965, 'all these traits of Christou's music look and sound familiar, but their ensemble is unique. Perhaps his

‘medieval alchemy’ led him inadvertently to the philosopher’s stone that transmutes the base metals of common devices into musical gold’ (Slonimsky, 1965: 228).

### **3. Performing *The Pianist***

In this section I will try to document the process I followed towards my performance of *Anaparastasis III*. I will demonstrate the performance issues that I had to tackle and the reasons why I arrived at conclusions or took certain decisions. The basic material that I used in order to prepare for my performance of *The Pianist* includes:

- the proto-score and the published score of the piece
- a CD recording of the original tapes that were used as the continuum for the piece
- a recording of the first performance of *Anaparastasis III*
- a video recording of a more recent performance of the piece (Lübeck Opera, 2002, pianist: Hartmut Lange, conductor: Alexis Agrafiotis), found at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FVKGjaTp7AA&feature=related>)

I believe that the purposes of the section will be best served through the exhibition of fragments of the proto-score and the published score, and a parallel commentary on what, in my view, each fragment suggests to and requires from the performers (and especially the soloist).

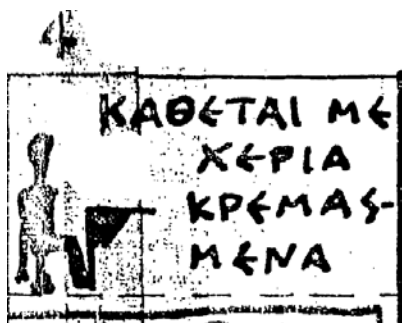
To begin with, I must say that my contact with the proto-score proved to be more helpful for an efficient performance than did the published score. As I mentioned above, the score that was used for the first three performances of the work was the proto-score. The composer was intending to work on a ‘neat’ version of it but died before having a chance to do so. The published version of the score is actually the outcome of a combination of the proto-score and the descriptions of the rehearsals and performances by the musicians participating in the first three performances of the piece.

In my opinion, the published score seems to be extremely loyal to the proto-score and more user-friendly for the purposes of a rehearsal or public performance, as it is very tidy and clear. It also contains information that the proto-score does not include, which are presumably the elements that were incorporated in the piece during the rehearsals and through the collaboration of the composer with the musicians. This is also obvious

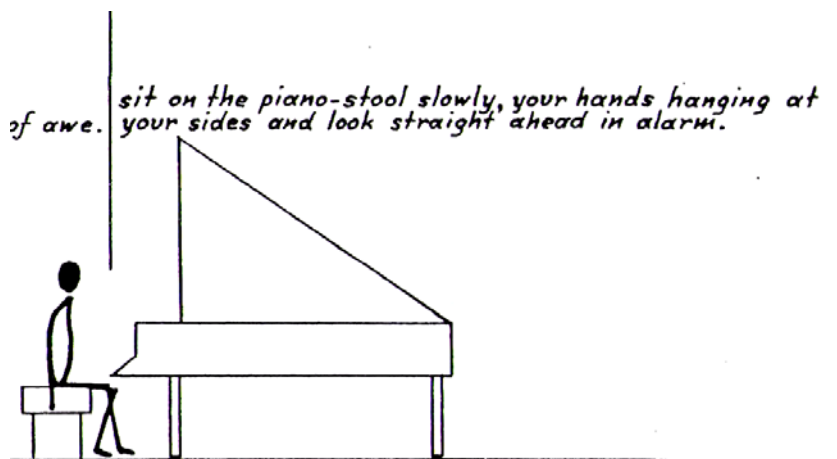
in some directions which are extremely detailed and must be a form of transcription of the composer's directions to the soloist during the rehearsals. However, there are other – seemingly trivial – pieces of information which appear in the proto-score but never do in the published score, and which I consider essential for a deep understanding of the piece. These are single words or short sentences, the omission of which does not alter the content of the work dramatically. However, it seems to me that the performers should be aware of the proto-score and benefit from its laconic sketchiness, which sometimes implies some kind of automatic writing on behalf of the composer. The roughness of the handwritten proto-score bears an expressive power that I found beneficial for an immediate comprehension of the psychological fluctuations of the work.

My own conclusion is that one should not favour either version of the score, but I am convinced that they complement each other. On the one hand, the directions in the proto-score are very general but sketched in a manner that I find more engaging emotionally. On the other hand, the published score combines the essential information which is found in the proto-score with the composer's directions to his collaborators; although perhaps the danger of the collaborators' subjectivity is lurking inside this combination, I cannot overlook the fact that these elements of the published score can function as valuable suggestions regarding the specification of the expressive route that can be followed by the performers.

In order to demonstrate the above I will juxtapose some sections from both versions of the score. (The proto-score is written in a mixture of Greek and English. In the following examples I have translated the Greek sections myself). For example the description of cue 4 in the proto-score reads as follows: 'sits with arms hanging' ('κάθεται με χέρια κρεμασμένα'). The same cue in the published score contains the following directions for the soloist: 'sit on the piano slowly, your hands hanging at your sides and look straight ahead in alarm'.



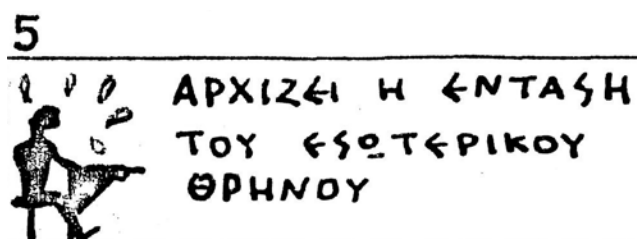
cue 4: proto-score



cue 4: published score

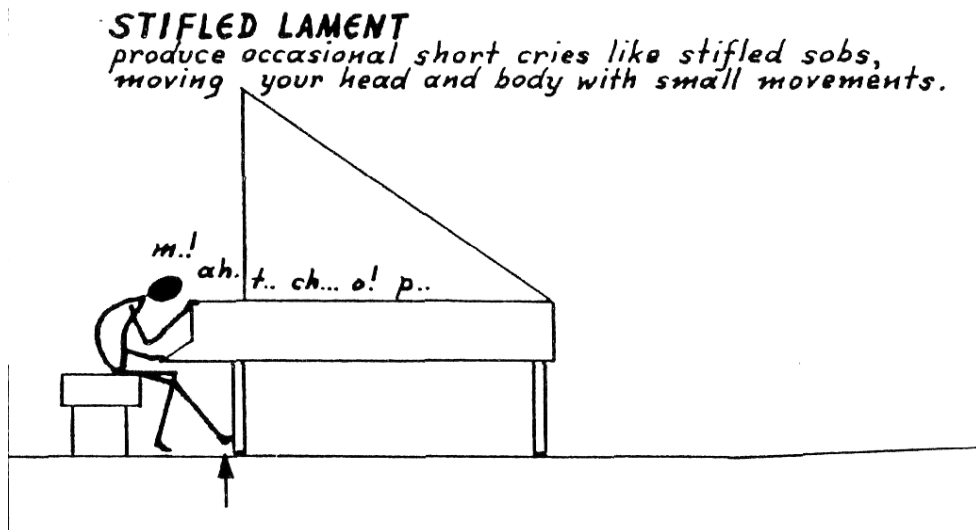
The direction given in the published score is very exact compared with the direction of the proto-score. In this case the published score gives one extra piece of information to the soloist (look straight ahead), which can be treated as a useful direction that seems to be compatible with the general atmosphere of the piece. Presumably, this is one of the directions that Grigoris Semitekolo received from Christou. This should also be the case with the specification of the soloist's psychological state ('in alarm'). However, this is probably one of the directions that can be looked at in a more liberal way, according to each soloist's reading of the initial short direction of the proto-score. For instance, my interpretation of the direction of the proto-score would not necessarily include alarm, but it could manifest boredom or desperation. Therefore, it appears that this is one of the points of the score that should be tried out in rehearsal, in order for the soloist to arrive at a psychological state that is most effective for his idiosyncrasy.

A similar example is cue 5, which in the proto-score is just the sentence: 'the tension of the internal lament begins' ('αρχίζει η ένταση του εσωτερικού θρήνου'), whereas the published score reads: 'STIFLED LAMENT. Produce occasional short cries like stifled sobs, moving your head and body with small movements'.



cue 5: proto-score

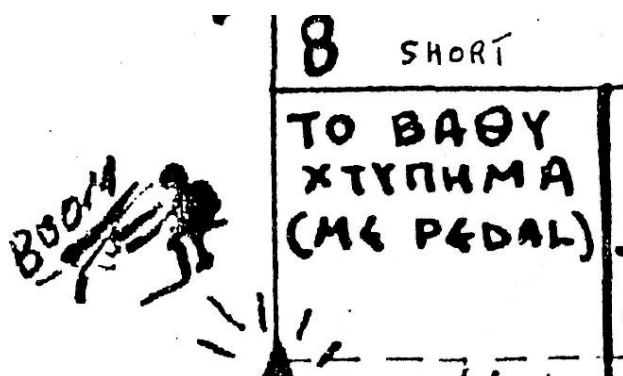




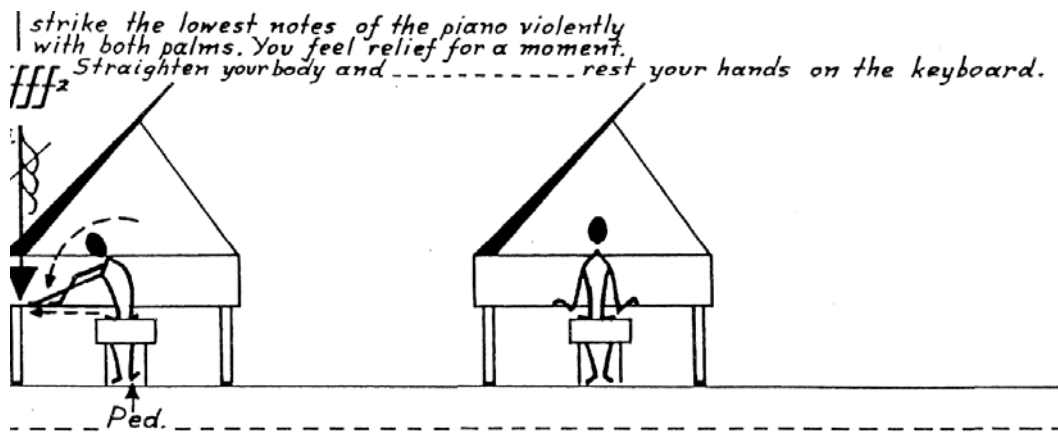
cue 5: published score

What is interesting about this cue is the fact that the lament is described as ‘internal’ in the proto-score and ‘stifled’ in the published score. My interpretation of ‘internal’ would not necessarily include any sounds produced by the soloist. The published score, however, clearly requires this from the soloist and in the recording of the first performance of *The Pianist* we can hear Semitekolo producing soft sounds of smothered crying.

In cue 8 something similar is happening; it also seems as though in this case both the scores are essential for the interpretation of the piece. Cue 8 is described as ‘the deep strike (with pedal)’ (‘το βαθύ χτύπημα (με pedal)’) in the proto-score. However, the published score demands the following from the soloist: ‘Strike the lowest notes of the piano violently with both palms. You feel relief for a moment. Straighten your body and ... rest your hands on the keyboard’.



cue 8: proto-score



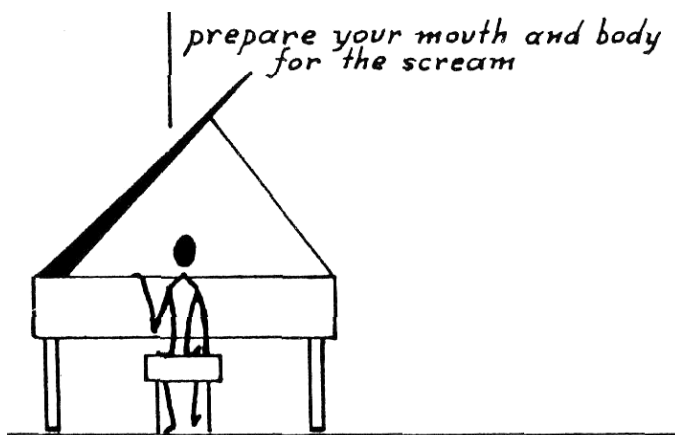
cue 8: published score

Although the clumsy sketch of the pianist in the proto-score shows that he is required to strike the low keys with both palms, the fact that the published score clearly states it too makes things easier for the performance. Apparently the direction regarding the straightening of the body and the resting of the hands on the keyboard must have developed in the course of rehearsals. This might be the case with the comment that reads ‘you feel relief for a moment’. This comment nevertheless specifies the exact nature of the action of striking the keys; it defines this action as a way of relieving the soloist’s inner agony. In this instance the proto-score leaves the implications of the striking totally open; for example, the action could be regarded as an act of plain violence towards the instrument, or as a demonstration of the soloist’s surrender. Therefore, I believe that again this is one of the points in the piece where the soloist should be allowed to experiment with the implications of the proto-score during rehearsals and arrive at his conclusions.

Cue 10 in the proto-score reads just: ‘(he) freezes’ (‘παγώνει’), but in the published score the direction reads: ‘prepare your mouth and body for the scream’.



cue 10: proto-score



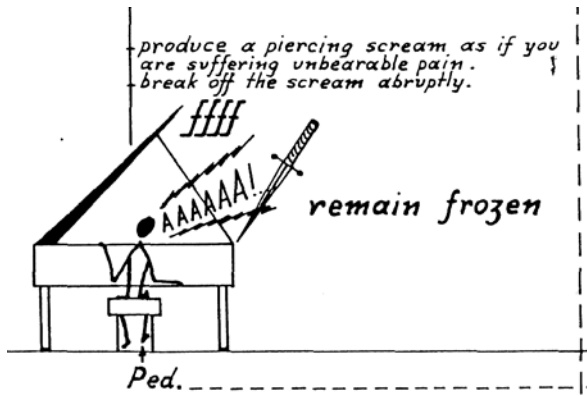
cue 10: published score

Again here there is a danger of spoiling the soloist's psychological state if the direction of the published score is followed very loyally. The quality of freezing, which is required from the soloist according to the proto-score, might be negatively affected in case the soloist concentrates too much or too long on the preparation of his body and mouth for the upcoming scream. Also, the 'freezing' would make the scream rather unexpected for the spectator, and this element of surprise might also be jeopardised by a very long or thorough preparation of the soloist for the scream.

There is also a difference between the two descriptions of the scream that the soloist is supposed to produce in cue 11. The proto-score, again very economically, states: 'scream-frost' ('κραυγή-παγωνιά'), a phrase which is followed by the sketch of a sharp knife. In the published score this cue reads: 'Produce a piercing scream as if you are suffering unbearable pain. Break off the scream abruptly'.



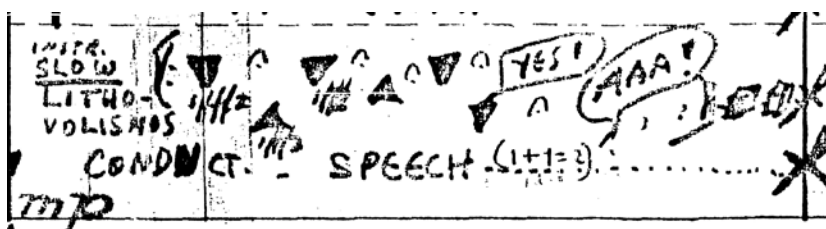
cue 11: proto-score



cue 11: published score

The implications of the Greek word for frost (παγωνιά), which is used in the proto-score, are double; the word can describe freezing weather conditions but it has also been used in a metaphorical sense (especially in poetry) in order to describe a psychological state of utter loneliness and numbness. I think that this is a piece of information that slightly alters the interpretation of this scream; it is not only about ‘unbearable pain’ but also about loneliness, or perhaps this loneliness is the source of the unbearable pain that causes the scream. Therefore I believe that the proto-score can offer the soloist a deeper reading of the piece in this case.

An example that clearly shows how over-explanatory or dangerously interpretative the published score can sometimes become is cue 13, where the ‘stoning’ takes place. According to the score, the term ‘stoning’ stands for ‘loud notes as of stones falling’. The proto-score simply describes this cue (for the instruments) with the words: ‘Instruments slow. Lithovolismos (=stoning). Conduct. - Speech (1+1=2)’. The published score, though, says that the conductor should ‘signal the beginning of this passage by striking the gr. cassa. The sound of the orchestra must come in the intervals between the soloist’s groans and hammerings’. It also suggests that ‘the orchestra must not produce more stonings and screams than those contained in the picture’.



cue 13: proto-score

stoning and screams

13 20" 14

stoning: loud notes as of heavy stones falling (like from above, gr.cassa, piatti, stamping on the floor, beating a chair on the floor, discordant accord's etc). screams: short high-pitched and piercing cries of frightened woman

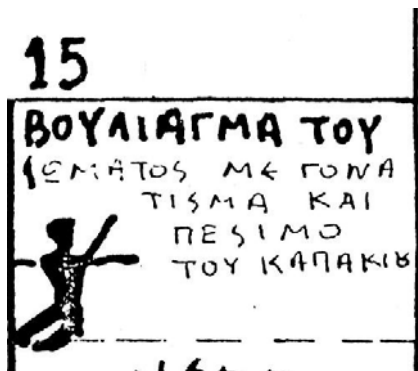
M conductor: SPEECH

-signal the beginning of this passage by striking the gr.cassa. The sounds of the orchestra must come in the intervals between the soloist's groans and hammerings.  
-the orchestra must not produce more stonings and screams than those contained in the picture.

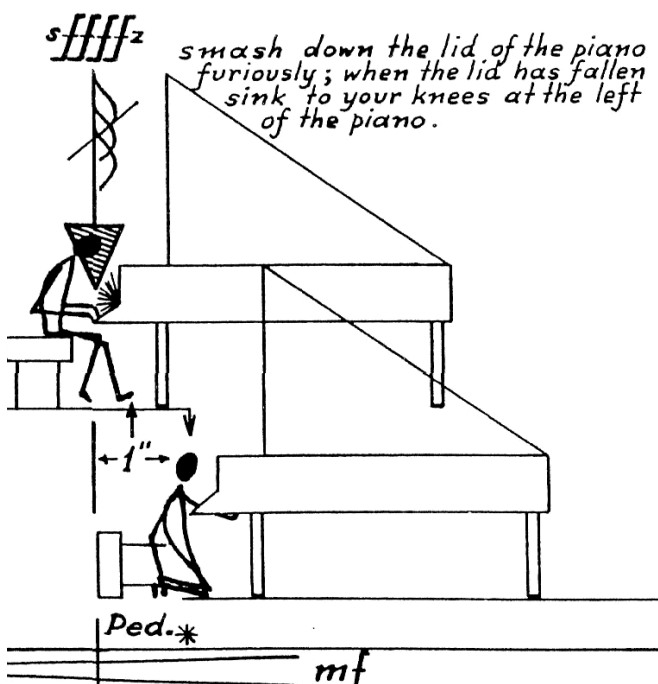
cue 13: published score

The difference between the two scores in this case is rather significant, as it is also obvious in the images above, and lies in the tendency of the published score to restrict the broad interpretative potential which is implied by the proto-score. It appears that this specific direction might be a practice at which the composer and performers arrived through rehearsals: a manner of performing this section, which proved to be effective and satisfactory for the composer. Nonetheless, in the recording of the first performance the manner in which this is done is much more improvisatory and sounds random. The specific point of the piece is one of the most chaotic ones and I believe that Christou would have granted the performers the freedom to experiment with the quite elastic boundaries of the simple directions of the proto-score. After all, the word 'stoning' bears too many extra-musical and strongly ritualistic references to be restricted to a technical, sterile sound effect, such as the one which is so strictly described in the published score. Especially the fact that the orchestra is actually 'forbidden' by the published score to produce more stonings than the ones contained in the frame of the specific cue sounds almost like an oxymoron. According to my experience of Christou's writings on the concepts of metapraxis and protoperformance, a score that aims at limiting rather than liberating the expressive potential that is contained in the material of the work would conflict with Christou's general attitude as a composer.

A similar difference between the two scores, which also increases the risk of over-stylising the piece, can be detected in cue 15, where, according to the proto-score, the soloist is required to perform a 'sinking of the body with kneeling and fall of the lid' ('βούλιαγμα του σώματος με γονάτισμα και πέσιμο του καπακιού'). In the published score, the direction for the soloist is: 'smash down the lid of the piano furiously; when the lid has fallen sink to your knees at the left of the piano'.



cue 15: proto-score

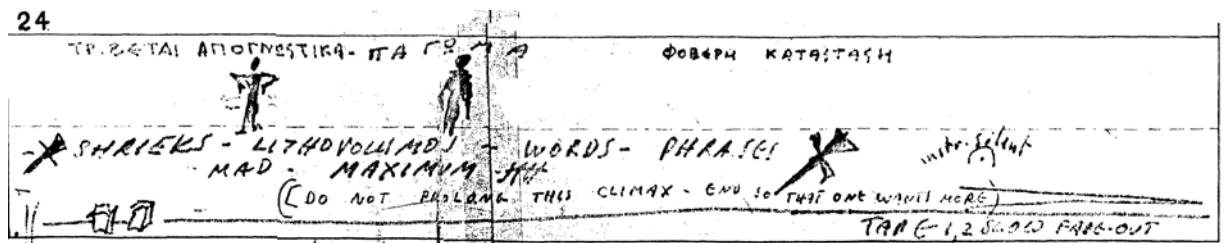


cue 15: published score

Here again, the published score seems to be over-interpreting the proto-score. The direction of the proto-score implies surrender, despair and weakness, and the closing of the lid is not described as violent, whereas in the published score the soloist is asked actively to smash down the lid ‘furiously’. These are obviously two completely different states, and I believe that the best practice would be to discover which of the two directions would be more efficient in the process of rehearsals.

Finally, another characteristic point where the published score is over-descriptive and the proto-score is over-implicative regarding what is required from the soloist can be

found in cue 24, the final cue of the piece. Here, what the proto-score states is: ‘rubs himself desperately – freezing - **horrible situation**’ (‘τρίβεται απογνώστικά – πάγωμα - **φοβερή κατάσταση**’). On the other hand, the published score describes this final part of the piece as follows: ‘**PERPLEXITY**: desperate rubbing of the hands against your thighs, sides, waist with small movements and an expression of total defeat. **FREEZE**: a state of crushed slackness, but in your eyes there is a faint expression of **release**’.



cue 24: proto-score

cue 24: published score

Thus, the ending of the piece is simply described as ‘horrible situation’ in the proto-score, whereas the published score seems to be adding a slight sense of relief in the final part. Of course this does not necessarily mean that the ‘horrible situation’ of the proto-score leaves no room for some sort of ‘release’. However, I believe that this should be something left up to the soloist to decide; the published score is trying to predetermine

the impact the experience of the piece will have on the soloist. I think that this cue is one more characteristic example of the published score containing too much information, as opposed to the proto-score, which is sometimes too brief.

As a conclusion, it often looks like the proto-score is addressed to musicians who can read between the lines of the brief directions which are found there. It is obvious that Christou was intending to extend it and enrich with more details. However, I believe that the published score passes to the other extreme; it comes across to me as a score which is addressed to people who are not required to interpret, but merely to execute its instructions in detail. The first performance of the piece was not particularly loyal to the published score; this might mean either that many different things which are included in the published score were small alterations made by the composer himself or that these detailed descriptions of the cues are partly the way in which some of the composer's directions were perceived by his collaborators.

On the other hand, the 2002 video recording presents some interest too, as the performance is much more loyal to the published score but – in my opinion – it is not effective at all. And it looks as though the proto-score was not taken into account at all for this particular performance. An example of a section of the work that is performed rather unsuccessfully is the 'stoning' by the orchestra in cue 24. In the published score, the duration of this part is set to last approximately 120 seconds. In the proto-score, the duration is left open, but there is a direction that gives the musicians the following advice: 'do not prolong this climax – end so that one wants more'. In the 2002 video, this climax lasts a bit longer (approximately 160 seconds), but it lacks the genuinely frantic quality it should have according to the proto-score (it is described simply as 'mad – maximum ffff'), and this gives the impression that it lasts too long, and therefore did not leave me wanting more as a spectator. I believe that if the proto-score was taken into account in this case, this disappointing climax might have been avoided through the simple advice that the proto-score offers about its duration and the sense it should leave to the audience. Another interesting piece of information regarding this final section of *The Pianist* is that it lasts approximately 80 seconds in the recording of the first performance and really achieves this quality that leaves the spectator wanting more.

Another point I would like to make about this video from the 2002 performance of the piece is the fact that it generally follows the published score quite strictly but fails to



accomplish the ritualistic and constantly threatening atmosphere intended by the composer. In my view, it is this over-stylisation that strips the piece of its methectic nature; the musicians seem to be *acting* (mimesis) and not *participating* (methexis) in the piece. The role of the soloist is performed by Hartmut Lange, who is a professional actor and not a pianist. Grigoris Semitekolo was not a pianist either, but was in constant close contact with Christou and with a pianist's mentality (as he is the husband of Nelli Semitekolo, Jani Christou's pianist). Lange's performance is technically correct; the score is followed, his posture always resembles a pose and it is obvious that everything he does has been very thoroughly rehearsed. However, for most of the video I was more inclined to laugh, rather than feel the terror of the soloist. I believe that this partly stems from the fact that Lange is not a pianist and therefore failed to experience deeply the often emotionally over-charged relationship between a pianist and his instrument. I am not suggesting that the role of the soloist should only be performed by actual pianists, but I believe that a close relationship of some sort with the instrument is necessary. I believe, in fact, that in Lange's case what makes his performance ineffective is not so much the fact that he is not a pianist; I think that the fact that he is an actor is what makes his performance too technical and detached from the general musical atmosphere of the piece. It often looks as though he is too absorbed with doing everything correctly, and this apparently prevents him from really being immersed into the terrifying sonic environment by which he is surrounded. He remains in a theatrical context and does not go beyond theatricality, as the piece really requires. The total opposite is happening in the recording of the first performance, where I could experience this horrifying atmosphere, although the actual image of the performance – which is a rather essential element – is missing.

The above examples demonstrate that what we can detect in the published score of *Anaparastasis III* is a tendency to over-stylise the piece through very thorough description and definition. This insistence on detail often restricts the interpretative horizons, which are offered to the musicians by the proto-score. Also, what we can understand from the examples of the two performances mentioned above and their loyalty or disloyalty to the score in relation to their effectiveness is the fact that the piece seems to be resistant to strict stylisation by nature. It appears that it has been constructed in order to be performed in a relatively loose manner according to the specific parameters that characterise each performance. The published score is a valuable source of information, but, if the concept of metapraxis is as elusive as

Christou had defined it, it cannot be regarded as a set of directions that need to be followed rigidly.

To sum up, I believe that the core of a performance of *Anaparastasis III* should be the material included in the proto-score. Any additional material (contained only in the published score), and especially any directions of extreme detail, should be dealt with sceptically. The aim of the performance of *The Pianist* should not be restricted by technical details which tend to over-stylise the work; this is not in accordance with the essence of metapraxis, which in its turn is the essence of *Anaparastasis III*. Hence my suggestion is that a combination of the two scores is as essential as the consideration of the particular circumstances of each performance, such as the space, the social context, the physique or the gender of the soloist (up to now only one woman has performed the role of the soloist, but stayed with a rather stylised version of it), the audience etc. There is no doubt that Christou's detailed directions to the first performers of the work are valuable, but not because they represent the exact way in which he wished the piece to be performed; in my view, they represent only *some* of the ways in which its performance would be effective in a specific context and they can reveal the *dynamic* that Christou wished to be generated in every performance of *The Pianist*, regardless of its context.

## CHAPTER V

### **Epicycle**

#### **Prologue**

This chapter is a presentation of Jani Christou's piece *Epicycle*, as well as an attempt to look into some of the basic artistic concepts contained in this work. In this attempt, I will draw information primarily from the composer's own writings on his work and music in general, as well as from other people's approaches to his music or to issues which are raised through this work.

The first part will be a general presentation of the work as well as of some significant ideas that constitute its essence. Furthermore, I will try to put *Epicycle* into the context of the composer's fifth creative period, where it belongs chronologically, and recognise the main elements that dominate the composer's thought during this penultimate period in the piece.

The second part will be focused on *Epicycle* and the way in which the concepts discussed in the previous part, as well as other ones, are exploited in this specific work. Several conceptual matters and performance issues are raised while examining the piece, which lead to connections with Christou's contemporary artistic thought and practice.

This contextualisation of *Epicycle* will be the subject of the third part. The references to postmodern thought, as well as philosophy and psychology, seem to be unavoidable and in accordance with the composer's personal view on art, which was influenced by the above disciplines.

The fourth part will be a presentation of the procedure of the realisation of *Epicycle*. This will include a description of the performance as well as an exposition of the artistic tools and concepts which were used during this realisation as a response to the performance issues one has to tackle when dealing with *Epicycle*.

## **1. The Fifth Period (1966-68): metapraxis and continuum**

*Epicycle* was composed in 1968 and belongs to the fifth period of Jani Christou's creative activity along with *The Strychnine Lady*, *Anaparastasis I: astronkatoidanykteronomigirin* and *Anaparastasis III: The Pianist*. During this period, the composer expanded his most significant concepts about music composition.

First of all, the concept of metapraxis, which was initially articulated by the composer in his previous work *Praxis for 12* (1966), seems to be fully developed in his last works. In the commentary added by the composer in the end of the score of *Praxis*, Christou is describing the functions of metapraxis, as mentioned in chapter III. Here is a short extract from the composer's text, which was fully quoted in that chapter:

Whenever an action is purposefully performed to conform with the current overall logic characteristic of the art, that action is a 'praxis', or a purposeful and characteristic action. But whenever an action is purposefully performed so as to go beyond the current overall logic characteristic of the art, that action is a 'metapraxis', or a purposeful non-characteristic action: a 'meta-action'. Thus, in the performing arts, any action which requires its performer to go beyond the current logic of the medium to which he belongs, requires him to go beyond the logic of his world of action, as it were. That action is a 'meta-praxis', and it is purposefully 'non-characteristic'. Conversely, an action which does not conform purposefully with the current logic of that medium is a 'praxis' as long as it is purposefully 'characteristic'.  
(Christou, 1968)

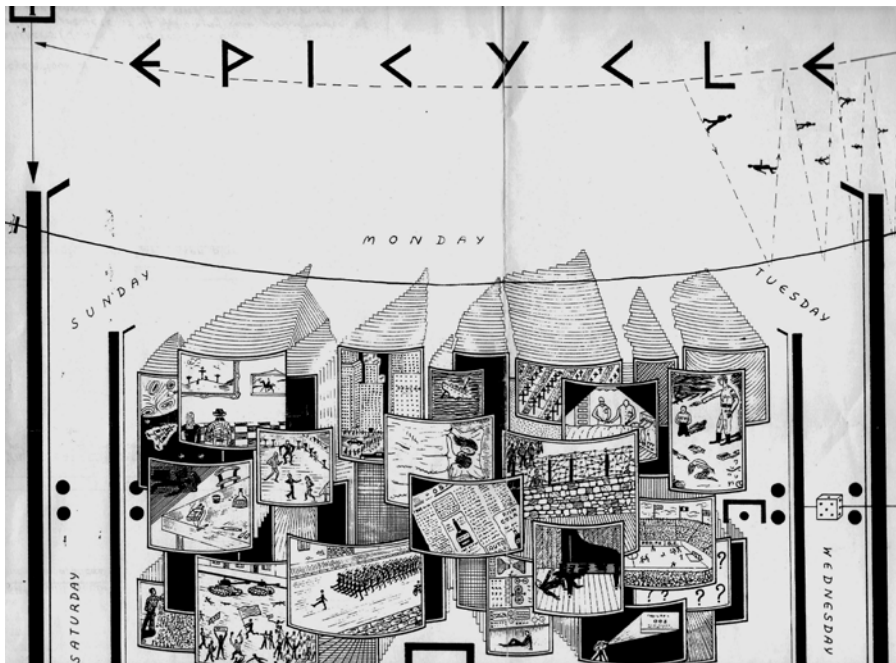
So, the central performer in *The Strychnine Lady* for example, is a female viola player who 'kneels while she is playing - and falls down in order to be silent, covered by a red cloth, while over her, the three musicians in a circle, with a slow and ceremonious movement and eerie sounds, are calling her again to the light' (Anogeianakis, 1967). Also, the piece starts with an announcement by one of the musicians that the performance will not take place due to technical difficulties, followed by a set-up argument between the musicians and some performers who are sitting amongst the audience.

In *Anaparastasis III* – which was examined at length in the previous chapter – the pianist is required to relate to the piano in various ways; for example, he whispers to it, talks, screams, kisses it, licks it, bites it, but he never actually plays. The conductor is also required to play percussion at some point and recite a text.

The element of metapraxis is extremely present in the aforementioned pieces, as well as the element of the continuum which had been expressed by the composer much earlier (1961), but during this period is taking a broader shape and content; it is no longer just a continuous sound, which is always present, whether almost inaudible or nearly deafening, but it seems to acquire a deeper philosophical content, which is expanded to any action, event or situation that takes place in every day life, 'like breathing, eating, sleeping etc., that are repeated indefinitely at regular intervals' (Lucciano, 2000: 110). This new, extended version of the continuum is what especially characterizes the conceptual framework of *Epicycle*.

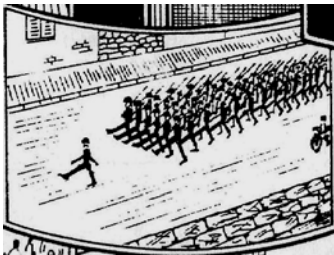
After the initial feeling of bewilderment a musician might experience in a first encounter with the score, and after really seeing the score in its entirety and detail at the same time, Christou's last concept of the continuum – as demonstrated in *Epicycle* – is unfolded in a brilliantly simple, although necessarily complex manner. The continuum is represented by a slightly curved line, a possible reference to the axis of time that stretches to infinity when sketched in a mathematic diagram, although this slight curve also seems to be a reference to the ancient Greek architectural ideal of the absolutely straight line as an unnatural notion, as well as to Einstein's idea of the sheet of time being slightly curved.

It is this simple, yet eloquent sketch of the continuum that contains the actual 'epicycle'. The word 'epicycle' in Greek is a mathematical term and stands for a circle which is contained in a bigger circle. In Christou's *Epicycle*, the epicycle is a set of events of an apparently different nature which are contained in the continuum; however, they are all just the contents of one small 'slice' of the continuum, whose size is implied as infinite.



Part of the score of *Epicycle*: the curved line of the continuum and the images that represent the events of the epicycle can be seen.

All the events represent scenes of everyday life and most of them seem to relate especially to Christou's contemporary social/historical circumstances. For example, one cannot help noticing the multiple military images, which probably refer to the recent Dictatorship of the Colonels, which had commenced in Greece in 1967 and lasted until 1974.



Detail from the score of *Epicycle*.  
Military parades were very frequent during the dictatorship of the colonels in Greece.

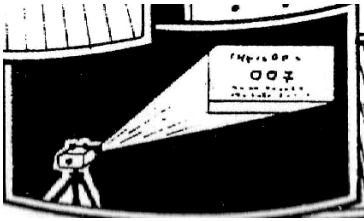


Detail from the score of *Epicycle*.  
A space travel image.

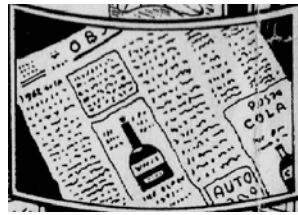


Detail from the score of *Epicycle*  
A violent demonstration: also very frequent during the dictatorship.

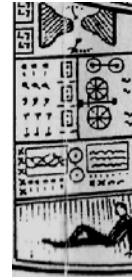
Also, a projection of a James Bond film, an advertisement of Coca Cola in a newspaper or a set of skyscrapers with one of them bearing a sign which reads 'Genera (l)' (the end of the phrase is not visible in the sketch, but it probably implies the company 'General Electric') are presumably references to the phenomenon of mass-consumption of imported, popular products, which was a quite recent practice in Greece at that time.



Detail from the score of *Epicycle*.  
A projection of a James Bond film.



Detail from the score of *Epicycle*.  
Coca-Cola Advertisement on newspaper.

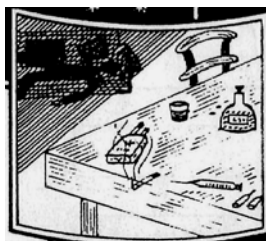


Detail from the score of *Epicycle*.  
A man 'defeated' by the machines.

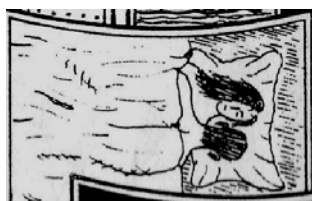
Another interesting detail in the score is the fact that the epicycle is connected with and followed by the sketch of a newspaper (*The Times*). Christou seems to be using this particular newspaper intentionally; he plays with the word 'time', in the same way in which he plays with the concept of time in his work. Simultaneously, the image of the newspaper brings to mind the Greek word for newspaper, which is 'ephemerida'; this word, strictly according to its etymology, means 'referring to one day'. However, the word 'ephemeron', which comes from the same root, stands for something which happens within one day, or lasts for one day, but in modern Greek has acquired a broader meaning; it refers to something which does not last for long, something short-lived, something ephemeral. If the composer had this in mind when he was drawing this sketch, this might be implying many different things about the nature of *Epicycle*. For instance, it could be simply suggesting that the events included in the epicycle should resemble the events included in a newspaper; events that are every-day, usual or unusual, boring or exciting, interesting or uninteresting. Or it could be implying that these events must be realisations of the concept of the 'ephemeron', which is actually a concept which governs human life, not only in its existential/philosophical, but also in its practical/simple dimension.

I think that a very detailed analysis of the images contained in the epicycle is unnecessary here, as their references are very clearly expressed, without, of course, this implying that their implications are exhaustible, and beyond the limits of the composer's contemporary circumstances. What is also interesting, however, is the fact that these images overlap each other; there are also others which are half or almost entirely hidden by other ones. The implication of this visual 'depth' of the set of events seems to be their simultaneity but also the wide range of their intensity, which in the last

analysis relies on the subjective reception of the reader of the score and, as a result (when the score is performed on stage), of the spectator of a performance of *Epicycle*.



Detail from the score of *Epicycle*.  
A table with drugs, cigarettes and alcohol.



Detail from the score of *Epicycle*.  
A couple in bed.



Detail from the score of *Epicycle*.  
A pianist 'defeated' by a piano.

Furthermore, the fact that the 'slice' of the events is contained within two repetition marks and is followed by a sign of a dice (the composer defines it as 'random') clearly expresses (as the composer again explains on the score) that all the events 'keep repeating' at first and then 'keep permutating at random' (according to the composer, permutation 'stands for the general process of multiplication of musical matter through the reorganization into different tonal and structural combinations of a given number of factors' (Christou quoted in Lucciano, 2000: 44).). In other words – or in a more philosophical mood – the epicycle seems to be infinite itself, although it is obviously only a small part of the really infinite continuum, and consists of a material that behaves in the same way as the material of the human perception and experience of life.

To sum up, what Christou seems to be aiming at with *Epicycle* is an artistic manifestation of human life with all its contents and implications as a part of human history, human history as a part of the history of the world and the history of the world as part of time, a notion which cannot be clearly grasped by a human being caught in the structures of the epicycle and the continuum. Repetition, contradiction, variation, resemblance, difference and all the human concepts based on relativity are all 'submerged by the rising waters of the continuum' (Lucciano, 2000: 48).

As a conclusion, *Epicycle* seems to be the most deeply philosophical work of Christou and probably – if one takes into account his great interest in metaphysics, psychology and religious studies – one of his most representative ones.



## **2. Christou and *Epicycle*: the composer's 'voluntary abdication'**

On a practical level, *Epicycle* demands great artistic open-mindedness as well as an understanding of the creative responsibilities passed from the composer to the performer, the director and the audience. Lucciano believes that with all his last works including *Epicycle*, the composer expands all his concepts in connection with any 'extra-musical activity' in order to create 'a new form of lyrical and theatrical expression' (Lucciano, 2000: 107).

When the piece was first realised by the composer himself as part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Hellenic Week of Contemporary Music (Athens, November 1968), it included a jazz band, a performer frantically tearing newspapers, jugglers and various other events, while the role of the continuum was taken by a set of tapes as well as the projection of a film by the painter, Cosmas Xenakis, which functioned as scenery throughout the full length of the performance. The audience was invited to participate in the events, and the events themselves had a rather improvisatory nature (see appendix 8).

In his explanatory notes which accompany the score, Christou is actually leaving the possibilities of realisation of this piece very open (number of performers, improvised or structured events, duration, type of space etc.). He even reaches the point of proposing that 'the possibility that no events will take place, not even the event listed as final, is a built-in possibility' (Christou, 1970, score). In this manner, he seems to be directing the performer's attention to the score. As a matter of fact, according to a letter of his concerning the performance of *Epicycle*

The other point I wish to make is that both the symbolic re-enactments of events, as well as the spontaneous events contributed by the public, occurred within a conceptual framework: the concept supplied by the SCORE of *Epicycle*, with the un-historical (not relevant to history) continuum dimension carrying the historical dimensions of 'events' in time.  
(Christou quoted in Lucciano, 2000: 111)

This letter was written by the composer as a response to the rather negative review of the premiere performance of *Epicycle* by Giorgos Leotsakos, who has been and still is one of the most dedicated admirers and active supporters of Christou's music. In this

review, Leotsakos claimed that this ‘self-canceling of the composer’ could only have negative results (Leotsakos, 1968).

However, exactly this ‘voluntary abdication’, as Christou himself stated (Christou quoted in Lucciano, 2000: 110) from the role of the composer in the conventional sense, is what makes this work especially intriguing and raises many issues, which had not been raised in Greek art up to that point, probably because of an isolation (due to sociopolitical circumstances) from the European postmodern tendencies that were flourishing in art at that time. When Christou talks about a resignation from his role as a composer ‘in the sense of the organizer of a set of parameters within the limited stretch of conventional performance-time’ (Christou quoted in Lucciano, 2000: 110), and at the same time claims to be fully aware of all the possible negative aspects of this gesture, one cannot help noticing the references such a statement has to the artistic thought and practice of that era.

This does not come as a surprise because, as mentioned before, Christou had studied in England under Wittgenstein and Russell and had also attended some of Jung’s lectures; although he exploited his Greek origin and culture to a maximum level, he could not deny his cosmopolitan and deeply ground-breaking nature as a thinker and artist. He was in constant contact with the latest artistic developments in the rest of the world, and at the same time evolved a very personal attitude of his own towards music and art in general. Thus, his thought was nourished by contemporary intellectual tendencies and reached a level of individuality which was achieved by few composers of his century. The following section will deal with several similarities found between Christou’s beliefs and some of the most significant thoughts which have been expressed by different thinkers and artists of various eras, and also the particular way in which Christou exploited them and adapted them to his personal vision in *Epicycle*.

### **3. The Conceptual Framework of *Epicycle***

As mentioned in chapter III, in 1966 Christou wrote the article ‘A Credo for Music’, which could be characterized as his manifesto. It is one of the most important texts the composer has written about his music, along with a text he wrote in 1969, which is titled *A Music of Confrontation* and can be found in the composer’s Archive in Athens.

Both these texts offer a rather clear and analytical presentation of his beliefs about art as they had been formed during the last years of his life.

If these texts are taken as a starting point for the discovery of the conceptual framework of *Epicycle*, one cannot help identifying several similarities to concepts which have been articulated by other thinkers. One of the first ideas Christou outlines in *A Music of Confrontation* is his general view about music and what its aim should be:

I am therefore concerned with a music that confronts; with a music that wants to stare at the suffocating effect, even terror, of much of our everyday experience of living; with a music that does NOT seek to escape the relentlessness of patterns in which this experience keeps unfolding. With a music that not only does not attempt to escape this experience, but that seeks out its forms – and eats them up, and throws them up again, just as dreams do.  
(Christou, 1969)

The resemblance of these phrases to Nietzsche's beliefs about the purpose of tragedy is astonishing;

Not in order to escape from terror and pity, not to purify one's self of a dangerous passion by discharging it with vehemence – this is how Aristotle understood it – but to be far beyond terror and pity and to be the eternal lust of becoming itself – that lust which also involves the lust of destruction.  
(Nietzsche, 1964: 120)

Both Christou and Nietzsche seem to question the Aristotelian perception of 'catharsis' (the ultimate purpose of tragedy) as a state being achieved via the *overcoming* of pity and terror ('eleos' and 'fivos') but both of them suggest, rather, that through a full experience (even a painful one) of these passions, a meaningful and rich experience of art can be reached, in the sense that Artaud gave to art (again through doubting Aristotle and – in this case – the concept of 'mimesis'). Artaud claimed that 'art is not an imitation of life, but life is the imitation of a transcendental principle which art puts us into communication with once again.' (Artaud, 1970: vol. 4, 310); or, as Christou had said, 'the function of music is to create soul, by creating conditions for myth, the root of all soul. Where there is no soul, music creates it. Where there is soul, music sustains it' (see appendix 4, Christou, 23/8/1968).

Christou was concerned primarily with the impact that music should have and consequently with the practical ways in which a composer can manipulate this impact. In his 'Credo for Music' he claims that he is concerned with the 'transformation of acoustical energies into music', that 'decoration and aesthetics have been and are powerful negative factors in music', and finally that an absence of these 'transforming powers' in a work of art results into an art that is solely intended to our 'sense of decoration'. He believed that this kind of art might be 'craftful but is no longer meaningful'; his interest was in an art that is of a 'liberative' and not 'decorative' nature. This leads back to Artaud's intention of connecting to this 'transcendental principle' through art; or as Christou phrased it, a liberation 'from the common space-time continuum, pointing to other areas of experience' (Christou, 1966).

Thus, as I have already noted, there seems to be an intellectual connection between Christou and postmodern thought on the practices of theatre and art in general. This special connection between a musician and the theatre should not seem awkward, since many elements that touched upon the theatrical field, were embodied in Christou's late works. This interdisciplinary nature of his work came as a natural result of his attempt to discover practical ways of fulfilling his artistic philosophy, as it was discussed in the previous chapters. The 'Theatre of Cruelty', especially, seems to have a deep intellectual relation with Christou's music. Christou himself stated that he was not 'advocating a music of violence, although a part of it may often appear to be just that' (Christou, 1969). What he offers as an explanation of his compositional practice is 'a quiet picking at the threads of reality; a loosening of the fabric; a soft collapse into pictures of distortion; a slow disintegration: maybe a glimpse into the void beyond – or at nothing' (Christou, 1969). Thus, it seems that Christou was aware of the technique of deconstruction in art, as a concept expressed and analyzed mainly by Jacques Derrida and also as a practice used by artists such as Antonin Artaud and Heiner Müller, who represent the 'Theatre of Cruelty'.

Deconstruction, in my opinion, was a natural consequence of the genesis of psychoanalysis in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and was created as an artistic equivalent of this dive into the depths of the human soul; Christou's music might be considered as a very successful example of this idea. When Jung talks about a 'confrontation' with one's 'shadow' as the most courageous and frightening thing to do and that most people avoid

it and prefer ‘to cut the Gordian knot instead of untying it’ (Jung, 1959: 21), I cannot help connecting this idea with the ‘music of confrontation’ and the *unweaving* of the threads of reality, as expressed by Christou above. It seems that Jung had great influence on the composer, and very often in his writings one can find direct or indirect references to the great psychologist; this frequently leaves the impression of an attempt by the composer to apply practically many Jungian ideas in musical performance. As I have mentioned previously, he showed great interest in international mythology – as well as Jung – and conceived of myth as the ‘root of all soul’, which is a very Jungian idea, as one of the primary sources of Jung’s research was international mythology. In the process of his research, the psychologist discovered the ‘archetypal images’ of the ‘collective unconscious’, these ‘primordial types [...] universal images that have existed since the remotest time [...] in the primitive tribal lore [...] myth and fairytale’ (Jung, 1959: part I). Furthermore, Artaud described his theatrical practice as one of an ‘archetypal, primitive theatre’ (Artaud, 1958: 50).

Christou’s text on the ‘lunar experience’, as a Jungian ‘pattern of renewal’ – examined in chapter III – can offer some valuable insight to the concepts contained in *Epicycle* as well as to their connection to Jung’s concepts. Towards the end, Christou states that ‘effective mythic activity is man’s spontaneous response to the numbing terror of his lunar experience’ (Christou, June 1968) and notes that

today we no longer have real myths and on each one of us depends the re-discovery of our soul’s natural language, our myths. For this purpose we have to ‘undo’ all the other ‘languages’, and all the other forms of communication we have inherited and this is beyond any dispute. In art, perhaps for some people, this means that we need to escape absolutely from history and return to the circumstances of PROTOPERFORMANCE – where the luxury of aesthetics or the wrap do not matter, but what matters is the content with the urgent (symbolic) re-enactments of the master-pattern of experience, in an attempt to relate to these experiences in depth.  
(Christou, June 1968)

This concern with language and its ‘undoing’ connects us again with Artaud’s ideas about theatre and the language of the stage; according to him ‘it is not a question of suppressing the spoken language, but of giving words approximately the importance they have in dreams’ (Artaud, 1958: 94), and this is an idea expressed and quoted above by Christou. The composer found great interest in dreams in general and applied this

idea of a language of dreams in art in a very literal way; for instance, the title and subject of *The Strychnine Lady* was based on a dream he had (contained in one of his many dream-diaries in the Jani Christou Archive) as well as a dream included in Jung's *Psychology and Alchemy*.

In the case of *Epicycle*, the concern about musical language is prominent as well but expressed in an even more deconstructive way. Here, Christou by choosing not to use a conventional score, intentionally breaks the notion of the musical score in its linguistic dimension; a set of symbols, which stand for musical sounds, actions or events. Of course, this is not the first time that something similar happens in the history of music; for instance, graphic scores are based on the concept of not using traditional semiotics (e.g. a music score could be representing a very general idea of the mood, the style, the pitch, the duration, the volume etc. of a piece according to given parameters instead of actually providing the performer with the exact notes he must play, which is the case in 'traditional' Western notation). In the case of graphic notation, the composer invents a new system of semiotics, sets its rules and/or decides which dimensions of the work will be left open. However, in *Epicycle* Christou uses several images as signs of *events* and leaves all the implications of what actually all these signs represent absolutely open, so that eventually the 'sign' no longer signifies *something* set by the 'author', but ends up representing *anything* the reader of the score chooses; as a result the sign completely loses its role as a sign, since the sign is a sign because it signifies either something specific or at least a relatively restricted number of things. Consequently, the essential mechanism of language (in this case musical language) is disturbed; the main concept on which every language is based – that is, a set of signs that stand for a certain sound or meaning etc. – is undermined and replaced by a more primitive and liberating – instead of restricting – 'language'; a more personal and simultaneously more universal form of communication.

Especially in *Epicycle*, the composer applied his ideas about a new musical language through protoperformance and metap Praxis in an apparently extreme (but not unnecessary) way, and achieved the creation of a work of art which stands as a very explicit manifestation of the fundamental concepts of postmodern art. The absence of authorship, as Christou claimed in his letter about *Epicycle*, for instance, is a matter that has concerned many postmodern thinkers and artists. Derrida has outlined the

characteristics of the 'stage' as it had been conceived before the appearance of artists like Artaud, Cage, Müller, and many others and it is exactly these components of art that postmodern artists have tried to see from a different point of view, play with, mock or even destroy. Derrida believed that postmodern artistic practice 'inhabits or rather produces a non-theological stage' (Derrida, 1978: 235) and that

the stage is theological for as long as it is dominated by speech, by a will to speech, by the layout of a primary logos which does not belong to the theatrical site and governs it from a distance. The stage is theological for as long as its structure, following the entirety of tradition, comports the following elements: an author-creator who, absent and from afar, is armed with a text and keeps watch over, assembles, regulates the time or the meaning of representation letting this latter represent him as concerns, what is called the content of his thoughts, his intentions, his ideas. He lets representation represent him through representatives, directors or actors, enslaved interpreters who represent characters who, primarily through what they say, more or less directly represent the thought of the 'creator' [...] Finally, the theological stage comports a passive, seated public, a public of spectators, of consumers, of 'enjoyers' – as Nietzsche and Artaud both say – attending a production that lacks the volume or depth, a production that is level, offered to their voyeuristic scrutiny. (Derrida, 1978: 235)

In *Epicycle* one can easily spot the destruction of all these elements of a theological stage. The audience was asked to, and actually did, participate spontaneously in the performance directed by Christou. In *Music of Confrontation* he dreamt of a kind of performance where the performers can be 'musicians and non-musicians; actors and non-actors; dancers, and plain people' (Christou, 1969). In his letter about *Epicycle* he stated that he 'was concerned with a confrontation with chaos, not in its 'composed' or decorative sense (which is the most sure, conventional dealing with the matter) but in its negative sense, the 'non-artistic' one' (Christou quoted in Lucciano, 2000: 111). He saw this contact with chaos as a route to a beneficial artistic experience, or as Artaud said

the essential drama, the one at the root of all the Great Mysteries, is associated with the second phase of Creation, that of difficulty and of the Double, that of matter and materialisation of the idea. It seems indeed that where simplicity and order reign, there can be no theatre nor drama, and the true theatre, like poetry as well, though by other means, is born out of a kind of organised anarchy. (Artaud, 1958: 50-51)

As far as the element of the lack of authority is concerned, this is probably the most essential idea in *Epicycle*, and the concept from which the general nature of the piece

derives. Barthes' idea of the 'Death of The Author' illuminates another aspect of the piece and the way in which it is related to the composer. According to Barthes

the Author when believed in is always conceived of as the past of his own book: book and author stand automatically on a single line divided into a *before* and an *after*. The Author is thought to *nourish* the book, which is to say that he exists before it, thinks suffers, lives for it, is in the same relation of antecedence to his work as a father to his child. In complete contrast, the modern sriptor is born simultaneously with the text, is in no way equipped with a being preceding or exceeding the writing, is not the subject with the book as predicate; there is no other time than that of the enunciation and every text is eternally written *here* and *now*.

(Barthes, 1977: 145)

Here, Barthes is mostly talking about a written text, a work of literature and its author; however, his idea could be referring to any form of art. The main focus is on the author and the way in which he relates to his text on the axis of time. In the case of music (an art which is enjoyed by its audience when performed), time has a more crucial role rather than in the case of literature; a musical work is written in order to be performed and the text, i.e. the musical score, is written in order to be read (like a text of literature) but mainly in order to be used as a text for performance. Thus, the text itself relates to time in a double way. When we see the musical score as a text which represents a performance, a work of art that *depends* on time, which happens and ceases existing constantly at the moment of its performance and also *creates* its own internal time (which is different to 'real' time), we can realise in which manner a musical score is different to a novel, as far as its relation to time is concerned.

Christou, in *Epicycle*, created a text (i.e. a musical score) in which the purely musical symbols are replaced by images or signs which – as mentioned above – bear or acquire a very broad and simultaneously very personal symbolic content, according to the hermeneutic intentions of the performers, the director and the audience. The fact that the symbolic images that constitute the score not only contain an enormous number of interpretative possibilities but are also consciously left open by the composer, eventually transforms the text into something that seems to pre-exist and is only discovered and presented by the composer; the text/score is placed *above* and *before* anything else; because of its complicated and domineering nature, it acquires the quality of an archetype, or as Christou would say, a 'master-pattern'. Therefore, if I take Barthes' idea into account, I could argue that in the case of *Epicycle*, since the text



represents something which pre-exists in the collective unconscious and this pre-existence is intentionally recognised as essential to the score, while the author takes the role of the person who ‘discovers’ it (and hands his role as an author over to the performer), somehow *the author is created by the text*.

In other words, Christou seems to be regarding himself – or rather his music - as a mediator between a contemporary audience and the previously mentioned archetypal proto-performances or, in his own words,

re-enactments of the original proto-pattern – the master-pattern; re-enactments in terms of corresponding mythic imagery; key-performances revitalising the master-pattern, when its cycle was exhausted [...] Such rituals were vital acts of re-affirmation, of participation and identification with the master-pattern. (Christou, June 1968)

As discussed in Chapter III, Christou talks about ‘a transformation of dormant psychic energy into available power’ in these proto-performances and finally argues that these rituals

were effective only in so far as they could activate a positive feed-back between himself (the primitive human being) and the symbols drawn from the depths of his mythic experience. And I propose to use the term proto-performances only in connection to such effective forms of ritual – or performance. (Christou, June 1968)

Now we can connect the ideas above with the composer’s claim that *Epicycle* is ‘similar to proto-performances where the actions have meaning only because they belong to a broader perspective and not because of their decorative nature or because they function as parameters in ‘art’ (Christou quoted in Lucciano, 2000: 112), as well as with the following statement about *Epicycle*:

the role of the composer has been devalued in order to allow whatever elements were available at the time to behave as symbols of events, and certainly not as ‘artistic events’, nor as synthesised events. This is a dangerous game, I know, but it is essential if one is to get to the roots of proto-performance, the root of all art (in the last analysis this reflects a questioning of the validity of history itself, and of historical societies which make ‘art’ meaningful). (Christou quoted in Lucciano, 2000: 111-112)

The conclusion is that Christou in *Epicycle* reaches a point where he tries out in practice some of the most significant postmodern concepts, like the ‘Death of The Author’ and deconstruction, very consciously and with quite clear intentions. The piece, when regarded as the result of this effort, acquires great interest and importance for an understanding of post-modern art as a true ‘incredulity towards meta-narratives’ (Lyotard, 1984: xxiv).

In my opinion, and according to the discussion above, there is no absolutely right or wrong way of setting up a performance of *Epicycle*. However, in my attempt to do so, I took into account all the ideas, questions and thoughts presented above, in order to create a personal view of what *Epicycle* actually is in a practical way and how I would realize it. The following section deals with the process of creating a performance of *Epicycle* and the reasons why I made the choices I made as far as the creative part is concerned; therefore the opinions expressed in this part are mostly personal, yet explained.

#### **4. *Epicycle* as a Performance**

- **Arriving at the Basic Concepts**

To begin with, the main source of inspiration during the creation of the performance of *Epicycle* was for me the score itself. On a practical level, the score specified the structure of the performance; a procession of various short performances which are happening within a ceaseless continuous sound. From the first moment I thought that this structure was clearly indicated by the score. The second thing I thought that was clearly indicated was the great variety of the short performances; variety in style, mood, structure, means of expression etc. This idea resulted in the creation of an interdisciplinary performance, where Christou’s concepts of metap Praxis, protoperformance and transformation (see chapter III) would be exploited. Therefore, I decided to use music of different styles (classical, popular, avant-garde, contemporary etc.) and also various forms of art, and I tried to give each part a very different atmosphere.

Another question was: how would the audience be involved? This seems to have concerned Christou a great deal when he was setting up his performance. The composer's daughter, Sandra, in one of our meetings described to me a more recent performance which took place in Germany, where the audience was involved in the performance although they were not aware of this. Actually, during the performance, a group of performers, dressed as policemen, entered the space, 'arrested' the audience and tried to lead them to jail, because they were supposedly too noisy, and nobody realised that this was included in the 'script'. Thus, the question for me was whether the audience should be involved voluntarily or involuntarily.

What I came up with was a way to include the audience in both ways; at the beginning of the performance, before the audience enters the space, one of the performers has the role of a 'reporter', who asks the members of the audience one question and their answers are recorded. This is the part where the audience is aware of their participation in some way, and they do so intentionally. However, at a later point of the performance, this recording will be heard in the space of the performance, and this constitutes the part where the audience participates in a way they themselves would probably not expect.

The next step was to try and define the continuum and the epicycle. The starting point was the concept of the 'ephemeron' (explained in the previous section) as it manifests itself in life in a double way. The 'ephemeron' which is trivial and repeats itself but usually constitutes the bigger part of human life, and, on the other hand, the 'ephemeron' which creates the 'cleft', the unexpected in this routine and is usually what people prefer or tend to remember from their lives. I keep hearing from most of the people who listen to Christou's music that his music sounds very 'metaphysical'. In my opinion though, it is metaphysical in the sense in which everyday life is metaphysical; most people tend to undervalue everyday routine and value only the extra-ordinary events that occur in their lives and break this routine; these events seem important to them and it is mostly because of these events that they tend to rediscover the 'metaphysical' aspects of their lives. But they do not believe the same for the biggest part of their lives. However, it seems to me that the most 'metaphysical' element of human life is this entrapment in an everyday cycle, the 'lunar cycle', as Christou had said. The fact that human life is organised in circles of birth-growth-death-renewal and all human beings are trapped in this pattern is something I always found terrifying. As

mentioned in chapter III, Christou, in *The Lunar Experience*, describes this lunar cycle as the first contact primitive human beings had with this eternally repeated pattern of renewal and points out how an interruption in this pattern, that is, an eclipse, seemed like the greatest irregularity in this routine, and was consequently perceived as an event which caused terror or even as a bad omen (Christou, June 1968).

In my view, this terror at the sight of an eclipse, in modern Western societies has been transformed into awe when one is confronted with events out of the norm in their everyday lives. For me, the repeated patterns of everyday life are a form of a continuum and any event which disturbs this pattern is an event of the epicycle. The continuum is almost inaudible, with very gradual and discreet increases of volume, as Christou suggests in the score of *Epicycle*; it is this everyday life a person lives and is so caught up in patterns that it does not draw any attention, not even by the person who leads this particular life.

It seems to me that the continuum works in a way which is very similar to time; it is always there, we rarely pay attention to it but it eventually consumes everything. My intention in my performance is to demonstrate how the continuum very gradually increases in volume without being noticed and reaches a point when it consumes everything, just like time does; the myth of Saturn (in Greek, Kronos, a word which is an ancestor of the word 'Hronos', which means Time), who was swallowing his own children, could be a metaphorical illustration of the relationship between the continuum and the epicycle in my performance.

During the process of the definition of the continuum and the epicycle as the everyday/real and the unexpected/metaphysical respectively, I was also concerned with the matter of dreams. The state of dreaming could be regarded as a situation in between the situation of the real and the unreal, between the usual 'pattern' and the 'crack' in reality. It is also a state in which anyone can exist without any effort (even in a nightmare) or responsibility, and a world where there is no place for the terms 'real' or 'unreal'. This time I thought of Cassandra, the cursed prophetess who could foresee the future but nobody believed her; it occurred to me that she was a person trapped in a nightmare while she was awake, something like a permanent sleepwalker. Therefore, I thought that the use of a language of dreams in at least one of the scenes of the

performance would be appropriate, perhaps in a scene where all the people are Kassandras, maybe in a garden with serpents that lick their ears (according to one version of Cassandra's myth, she gained the ability of prophesying when the sacred snakes of Apollo licked her ears) and birds that talk (like the birds in Greek folk songs or the birds Saint Francis used to talk with).

After also taking Jung's concept of the opposites, which always appear in pairs, into account, I arrived at the conclusion that the pair 'epicycle-continuum' should bear the characteristics of clichéd pairs of opposites. At this point I was ready to define the continuum as something wet, dark, slimy, slightly blue, warm and cold at the same time, bitter and sweet, like a mother's womb or the belly of a giant fish. On the other hand, the epicycle is something dry, unbearably hot and freezing, blindingly bright, something which is in continuous decay without ever disappearing, a desert which is crowded with bodies, sounds, images, thoughts, deafening, annoying, whispering, incomprehensible, frantic and motionless, constantly transforming and unchanging. In the midst of these two poles, the performers and the audience are caught in a state of 'awake dreaming' and perform the epicycle until they are consumed by the continuum.

Furthermore, I decided to create the 'text' of *Epicycle* by combining artistic material by different authors (musicians, writers, poets), in order to minimise the sense of authorship in the conventional sense. The references of the material used in the performance are either directly to Christou's concepts or to concepts expressed by people who influenced his artistic attitude, like Jung for example. In order to close the circle of 'mythical' time, I also included material by people who lived after Christou (including myself) but bear some conceptual connection to Christou's thought.

What I would like to point out is that all these personal thoughts, which specified the conception of my performance, were driven by some of Christou's thoughts; these thoughts seemed to be key-concepts, as far as *Epicycle* and his music in general is concerned. What is also worth mentioning is the fact that all these thoughts were written down by the composer in 1968, a few months before his performance of *Epicycle*.

The idea of giving the performance a ‘mythical’ dimension, especially through the use of myths and fairytales or characters, situations and clichés taken from myths, was triggered by Christou’s phrase; ‘the function of music is to create soul, by creating conditions for myth, the root of all soul. Where there is no soul, music creates it. Where there is soul, music sustains it’ (see appendix 4, Christou, 23/8/1968). This concept was combined with Jung’s theories about the collective unconscious and the result was a tendency to use myths which are archetypally connected to each other, and in this way ‘paralyse’ the linear concept of time or, a state characterised by Christou as an ‘abolition of history’ (see appendix 2, Christou, 26/6/1968).

Moreover, my idea of defining the continuum and the epicycle as two different elements opposed to each other, which also contain opposing elements themselves, was influenced by Christou, writing: ‘war, conflict, confrontation between two ATTITUDES. A factor which must be given some attention!!’ (see appendix 2, Christou, 26/6/1968).

In addition to these, on a merely schematic level, the score of *Epicycle* consists basically of a set of squares, which are contained in a (partly imagined) circle. It is exactly this shape that Christou calls the epicycle. This purely schematic dimension of the epicycle can have very interesting references; the square inside the circle (two shapes which were believed to be symbols of wholeness) was also the alchemical symbol of salt (sal). According to Jung, the alchemists thought that salt

above all is an ‘ens centrale’. For Khunrath salt is the ‘physical centre of the earth’. For Vigenerus it is a component of ‘that virginal and pure earth which is contained in the centre of all composite elementals or in the depths of the same’. Glauber calls salt the ‘concentrated centre of the elements’ [...] it is the ‘quintessence, above all things and in all creatures’.  
(Jung, 1963: 190)

And as the alchemists believed that a single grain of salt could contain the material out of which the world was made, so *Epicycle* – from the perspective of the thoughts above – seems to transform from a usual set of symbols into a material out of which a world *can be created*.

To sum up, the score of *Epicycle* contains ‘all potentialities’, exactly like the ‘*massa confusa*’, the chaos of the conflicting opposites (Jung, 1963: 197). As a musician, during the process of realising this score, I had to come up against the chaos of the Macrocosm on the one hand, but also of my personal Microcosm on the other, and I tried to attribute a very broad and simultaneously a very personal content to the symbols of the score. What followed was an attempt to trace the concepts that were hidden behind some of the basic elements of the performance; this would lead to my response to the main performance issue raised in *Epicycle*, that is, the issue of decoding a score of a protoperformance.

At this point, one might argue that the phrase ‘score of a protoperformance’ is somehow an oxymoron; the nature of protoperformance is so elusive that it is almost impossible to be pinned down to a score. However, Christou designed the score of *Epicycle* in a way that captures the general structure and concept of the work, without stylising its content, which is an attitude that corresponds to the nature of protoperformance, and does not betray the characteristics attributed to it by the composer.

Throughout the process of my realisation of *Epicycle*, I constantly thought how this specific work by Christou could be regarded as the work which is most connected to Jung’s theory of archetypes and is an artistic incarnation of this theory. I was then very amazed to discover some traces of my thoughts in Bettina Knapp’s book *Music, Archetype and the Writer: a Jungian view*, in which the author introduces the term ‘archetypal music’. According to Knapp:

Archetypal music reveals ‘inherited possibilities of presentation’ while also exploring certain predispositions, potentials and prefigurations – what Henri Bergson called the *éternels incréés*. It embodies not only such figures such as the Wise Old Man, the Child, the Great Mother, the Animus/Anima, the Shadow and the Ego but situations as well: sacrifices, initiation, ascent, descent, contest, heroism, rites of passage, and so forth.  
(Knapp, 1988: 4)

Jung himself had also stated that ‘music should be part of every (psychological) analysis. It reaches deep archetypal material that we can only sometimes reach in our analytical work with patients’ (Jung, 1977: 275), and he had also referred to ‘the musical movement of the unconscious’ (Jung quoted in Knapp, 1988: 1). Knapp’s and Jung’s ideas enforced my confidence in my idea of creating a performance of *Epicycle*

out of material which would correspond to archetypes, especially in the form they are found in myths, as a source which is ‘inexhaustible throughout the ages’ (Knapp, 1988: 46). Furthermore, my contact with Knapp’s analyses of examples of archetypal music, confirmed my impression that Christou’s late works, and especially *Epicycle*, could be characterised as ‘archetypal music’.

The way I would describe the process of deciphering the score of *Epicycle*, resembles Knapp’s description of the mechanisms used by writers to decode archetypal music:

archetypal music may be looked upon as a data processor – a way of coding and decoding what exists inchoate in a space-time continuum, or the fourth dimension, which is the collective unconscious. The writer, like the data processor, transforms the sound waves leaping up from within his collective unconscious into words endowed with their own auditory, rhythmical, and sensory motifs. If music is archetypal for the author, it is manifested as a complex of opposites: it is both concrete and abstract, causal and acausal, linear and mythical, visual and audible, alive in an eternal present, the now, the future and an inherited past.  
(Knapp, 1988: 4)

Therefore, it appears that Christou created a score that contains the musical, artistic and conceptual ‘prima materia’ necessary for a performer to put together the pieces of a protoperformance, which lies within his unconscious and is stimulated by the score. Following Christou’s, Jung’s and Knapp’s writings, I developed my ideas about the nature and content of the continuum and the events of the epicycle, which are described in the following section.

- **The Continuum**

In my realisation of *Epicycle*, the nature of the continuum was defined by a general idea of finding the mythical dimensions in everyday life incidents, situations and conditions. The continuum is a recording which starts sounding before the entrance of the audience in the main space of the performance. In other words, it *pre-exists* for the audience.

The recording consists of two different recordings which are electronically mixed during the performance. One of them is a recording in busy Oxford Circus on a Sunday afternoon, around the time the shops are closing. Voices of people walking past the recorder and the ceaseless noise of the traffic constitute the ‘sound of the city’. In a



way, the space of the performance is defined by sound through this recording, and this space is the city, or rather a metropolis. I had to stand on one spot for about half an hour, and although this might not sound long enough to record something very characteristic of a metropolis, the crowd was so huge that the sense of a place without a specific cultural or ethnic identity was very clearly recorded; for instance during this half hour one can hear a great variety of languages, tones of voice and even sounds of footsteps. This recording refers to the Jungian ‘*massa confusa*’, the chaos of conflicting opposites.

The second recording is one of an old man who used to play the violin in front of Stratford Underground station every Friday. This man was sitting on a wheelchair and his figure brought to my mind many crippled heroes of Samuel Beckett; also, I could not help associating him to Orpheus for whom the myth says that he played his harp to Cerberus (the terrible three-headed dog who was the sleepless guard of the Gate of the Underworld) and the fierce beast fell asleep for the first and only time in his life, tamed by the exquisiteness of Orpheus’ music. While I was working on *Epicycle*, the more I saw of the old man the more he seemed to be transformed into some kind of Orpheus into his 21<sup>st</sup> century, crippled, and stripped of anything ‘heroic’ – in the ancient Greek Tragedy sense – version, in front of the gates of a modern underworld. His figure – which had become a part of my everyday routine – seemed to acquire a mythical dimension and to transform into a ‘hero’ after the phase of his catastrophe/catharsis and in this figure I could discover the connection between Beckett’s characters and the ancient Greek heroes in this stage (for example the self-blinded Oedipus). All the associations above led me to the inclusion of the old man’s performance in the continuum, as an everyday-life element which bears archetypal weight and loses its historical quality because of its mythical dimension.

- **Events of the Epicycle**

**-0. promenade/continuum**

As I mentioned above, the first event of the epicycle is the ‘interview’ of the audience before they enter the space of the performance. The continuum is already audible inside the space, as it represents something whose point of beginning or end is not known. The audience is asked two questions; ‘would you like to take part in this performance?’ and

‘what did you dream of last night?’, and their answers are recorded in order to be heard in the actual space later in the performance.

The choice of questions was not random; the first question was quite ironic, as I already knew that the audience would ‘take part’ in the performance later on, when their recorded answers would be heard. In this way I am playing with the concept of ‘tragic irony’, an important element in ancient Greek Tragedy, which implies that all the characters of the play know something very important concerning the hero, but the hero is the only one who is not aware of it.

The second question was influenced by Christou’s obsession with dreams and also by the aforementioned idea of the state of dreaming being a state in between consciousness and unconsciousness, an idea which runs through the whole performance.

It is worth mentioning that most of the members of the audience answered that they were not really sure whether they would like to participate in the performance and that they could not recall any dreams. I believe that these answers related to the main elements of the performance very well, as they might imply some kind of disconnection from the unconscious (as far as their dreams are concerned) and also some unwillingness to be exposed to something completely unknown (as far as their participation is concerned).

## **1. garden**

The first event to take place in the actual space of the performance is the ‘garden’. The set consists of objects hanging from the ceiling; feathers, real fish and fruit and some sketches of imaginary plants from Edward Lear’s *Nonsense Botany*. The main element in this scene is four different texts which are spoken at the same time. Its function is quite introductory, as the texts include key-concepts which reoccur throughout the performance; for instance, the garden, the talking birds, the person who was swallowed by a fish, drowning, petrification, the tree, the snake. In this scene there is a demonstration of the ‘myth’ of the performance, as a thread that runs through all the quoted passages and therefore functions as a ‘new’ time, other than ‘time’ in the

conventional sense; it is, as Christou suggests, 'mythical' as opposed to 'historical' time (Christou, June 1968).

This explains the choice of texts which is a combination of texts written by Hans-Christian Andersen, Salman Rushdie, Carl Jung (mostly quoting ancient and medieval passages), Edward Lear, Lewis Carroll and myself. The texts are drawn from ancient time until today and their inter-relation establishes this new time-relation which functions in terms of meaning/feeling/sensing instead of a merely mathematical/practical/calculative way.

The space of the performance is also settled in this scene. The space is a garden which is loaded with all the meanings/atmospheres such a place has acquired during the centuries; the garden of Eden, the princess' pleasure garden, a floating garden, a garden of death, a garden where lovers meet secretly, the garden of betrayal in Gethsemane, the garden of talking flowers in Wonderland, the garden as a place where you *meet* things, animals, birds, people or, as it is frequent in myths, your destiny. As I mentioned above, one of the clues Christou gives on *Epicycle* is the war of opposites; the Garden is the illustration of the Jungian 'massa confusa', the chaos of conflicting opposites.

This chaos of opposites in this performance could be contained in two pairs of opposites; one of them is the Bird and Fish axis, which contains height and depth, above and below, flying and sinking, hanging and drowning, sound and silence, light and heavy, bright and dark. The second one is the Metamorphosis (a key concept for Christou, as discussed in chapter III) and Crippleness axis; this pair could be illustrated by the Tarot Cards – which, according to Jung (Jung, 1959: 38), are very vivid representations of archetypal symbols ('archetypes of transformation') – of Death and The Hanged Man.

In Tarot Cards, Death stands for metamorphosis, a transformation into something extremely new, which refers to the journey to the underworld, in a vessel or in the belly of a fish, - what Jung calls the 'night-sea journey' (Jung, 1959: part II) - that was taken by many heroes in myths of various cultures (Orpheus, Jonah, the tin soldier by Andersen, Ulysses, Dante, Jesus, Osiris, Dionysus etc.) and led to their glory or to their establishment as heroes. The Hanging Man on the other hand stands for paralysis, an

inability to move, be set free or act in any way. This again brings to mind a phrase I have mentioned above and was told by Christou to Leotsakos one year before he composed *Epicycle*;

Music is dead. Man has failed. I hear more and more people talking about their anxieties, their nightmares, nightmares with a clearly castrating meaning – they say they lose a tooth or some other part of their body ... the fear of impotence ... man has failed.

(Christou quoted in Lucciano 2000: 119)

This phrase by Christou was one of the reasons why I chose to use the motif of impotence – as an opposite to transformation – in the performance. Throughout the events there is always a pattern connected at least to one of these two concepts.

These two pairs of opposites constitute the skeleton of the whole performance, always contained in the larger context of the continuum, an illustration of inconceivable infinity. Thus, this scene can be seen as an exposition of the material that will be used in the whole performance.

## **2. flying lesson**

The second event is the ‘flying lesson’, a combination of live music, recorded text and performance. A girl is standing still, blowing bubbles to the audience, while Erik Satie’s *Valse ‘Je Te Veux’* is being performed on the piano. At the same time, a recorded extract from Douglas Adams’ *Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* is heard; the extract is actually a lesson on how to fly. The voice gives the instructions in a very serious and dull way but the music gives a sense of lightness, which – when combined to the bubbles flying around the room – is transformed into weightlessness. The girl remains motionless until the moment she climbs some stairs and falls from the top. The light is turned off and the music is interrupted exactly at the moment she jumps, before she reaches the ground.

In this scene the audience never finds out whether the girl falls down or flies eventually. My intention is to play with these two possibilities, and actually I am trying to create a dream-like atmosphere, where someone talks very seriously about absolutely absurd flying techniques for humans, and people remain motionless and play with bubbles

instead of dancing when a waltz is played. In this way, I intend to encourage the audience to consider the option of the girl flying (unreal) instead of falling (real), although the fact that she *can* actually fly is never directly suggested during the scene; in other words, what I am trying to achieve is a transformation of the unrealistic into a possibility just by creating the circumstances of a dream. What will – hopefully – happen is that the spectator will wonder whether the girl ‘flew’ just because the voice is talking really seriously about flying and the scene is ending with a question-mark; will she be crippled or transformed? This question-mark in the end of the scene is also connected to the dice symbol on the score of *Epicycle*; leaving all the possibilities open to randomness.

During the black-out, a recorded text is heard; an extract from *A History of the World in 10 and a half Chapters* by Julian Barnes, which is supposed to be a true story about a sailor who was swallowed by a fish and survived. The pattern of the fish which swallows a person reoccurs here (it first appeared in the ‘garden’), and is directly connected to the archetypal image of ‘the night sea-journey’; the journey of the living hero to the underworld or in the belly of a fish in order to be reborn, is – as mentioned above – a pattern found in many different myths and, in this case, this text is supposed to be a real testimony by a person who really had this extraordinary experience, which can only be accepted within the borders of myth or fairy-tale.

What happens here is an extension of what happened in the previous scene; in the ‘flying lesson’ the unreal became a real possibility and here the mythical metaphor becomes a real experience. Barnes takes Jung’s idea of the archetypal images found in myths to its extreme;

for the point is this: not that myth refers us back to some original event which has been fancifully transcribed as it passed through the collective memory; but that it refers us forward to something that will happen, that must happen. Myth will become reality, however sceptical we might be.  
(Barnes, 1990: 181)

Barnes’ text brings back the Cassandra motif – as the woman caught between fantasy and reality – and gives it an entirely new dimension.

As mentioned above, this game with the concept of myth is not random; it is directly connected with Christou's interest in myth. Coincidentally, in my first visit to the Jani Christou Archive, I discovered that Christou was very fond of the myth of Cassandra and he was working on a performance (one of his *Anaparastases*) based on this myth, which remained unfinished because of his sudden death. There are several references to myths and fairy tales throughout the performance and this is a conscious attempt to connect the performance to its initial author, Christou, and the origins of *Epicycle*.

### **3. never clean enough never dirty enough**

The third scene is called 'never clean enough never dirty enough' and is in an entirely different style, but still connected to the previous scene. After the several references to myths comes actual story-telling. A woman who is telling the story of her kiss that stuck on a piece of chewing gum, which was swallowed by a fish and, after a number of adventures, ended up back in her hands. The motif of the night sea-journey reappears.

The woman's story-telling is accompanied by a soundscape produced by some performers sitting around her. This is a word play (with crescendos and diminuendos) on Socrates' most well-known phrase; 'εν οίδα ότι ουδέν οίδα' ('I know one thing, that I know nothing'), which is deconstructed - in terms of meaning - and reconstructed into sound.

Between this and the next scene, a recording of an extract from Boris Vian's *Heartsnatcher* is heard; this time, a dialogue – as opposed to the recorded monologue which follows the second scene. It is a dialogue between a psychiatrist and a person whose job is to fall in the river and fish people's guilt with his teeth. The motif of water is extended even further. Again, this is related to one of Jung's archetypes, the 'Shadow', the dark, animal side of the psyche (Jung, 1959: 20-21); the dialogue could be regarded as a reference to a dive into the depths of the unconscious and a confrontation with the 'Shadow'.

### **4. death by water**

The previous text leads to the fourth scene, which is titled 'death by water'. This is also the title of one of the 6 songs (for mezzo-soprano and piano) on the poetry of T. S.

Eliot, composed by Christou. In this scene, the music of Christou and the poetry of T. S. Eliot are combined with a short text by Virginia Woolf (*The Watering Place*) and an extract from William Shakespeare's *Tempest* accompanied by an extract from Beethoven's Sonata, *The Tempest*.

The transformations of a myth about transformation are demonstrated in this scene. Phlebas the Phoenician (whose body is transformed underwater), Ariel's song (about someone's body transforming underwater), the lonely recitativo in the first movement of Ludwig van Beethoven's *Tempest* piano sonata (which could be representing Ariel's voice), Woolf's citizens of the *Watering Place* (who resemble sea-creatures), Woolf's actual suicide by drowning, and finally Eliot's poem and Christou's song constitute the succession of transformations. The motif of water is almost exhausted in this scene and consequently the atmosphere and subject of the next scene is completely different.

### **5. vogel als prophet**

After this long parade of fish and oceans, the motif of water is replaced by the motif of the bird. The fifth scene is named 'vogel als prophet', after a piano piece from Robert Schumann's *Waldszenen*, which is the main event in this scene. The pianist starts performing the piece and at some point, she is just pretending that she presses the keys; at the same time people whistling like birds are heard instead of the sound of the piano. This starts happening for just a few notes and gradually the voices of birds replace entirely the sound of the piano, while the pianist is still pretending to play. In this case the pianist performs a metapraxis, and this action has a strong connection to Christou's work, *Anaparastasis III: The Pianist*.

This scene also contains a reoccurrence of the motif of Cassandra, this time in the form of Saint Francis, who was supposed to be talking with the birds. In this case, the voices of birds swallow the sounds made by humans, or the voice of the pianist (the sound of the piano) is transformed into the voice of a bird. There is also a reference to Greek folk songs, where birds talk with a human voice and bring news or make prophecies. Also, the transformation of the sound of the piano into the voice of a bird is a reference to the transformation of tormented people into birds by the gods in ancient Greek myths, as an act of pity.

In the video that follows this scene (an extract from an episode from the ‘Roadrunner Show’), the motif of the bird is almost ridiculed, through a funny pop version of it. However, I did not make this choice just to lighten up the atmosphere of the performance; the figure of the coyote – for whom the laws of nature never seem to function – always chasing a bird and never being able to catch it, could acquire a broader meaning in the context of this performance.

## **6. déjeuner du matin**

This concept is further developed in the next scene, ‘déjeuner du matin’, which is named after a poem by Jacques Prévert. During this scene, a couple is having breakfast without looking at each other or talking to each other. Whenever someone tries to talk to the other, a deafening sound of an alarm sounds and nobody can hear the speaker’s voice. During the silent parts of the act, Prévert’s poem is heard. This is a pantomime of human loneliness and the incapability of communication, a subject that had concerned Christou a lot, as I have mentioned above. The motif of impotence and mutilation is very directly illustrated in the video projection that follows; a video projection of a tooth extraction.

## **7. pea-party**

This video leads to one of the main characters of the next scene, the cripple-knight on his wheel-horse. The scene is called ‘pea-party’ and has direct references to fairy tales. A woman talks about the knight of her dreams who spends his time in an eternal tea party (reference to the mad-hatter’s tea party from *Alice in Wonderland*) instead of visiting her in hospital. The woman finds peas under her chair and throws them at the audience throughout the whole scene (reference to Andersen’s *The Real Princess*), while she describes the place where she is trapped as the ‘desert of the squeezed toothpaste tubes’. The elements of immobility to the extent of petrification (the knight who never comes, and the woman who waits eternally), solitude and impotence reappear in this scene. The human figures are gradually transformed into cripples, as in the texts of Samuel Beckett (e.g. the blind Pozzo in *Waiting for Godot*). The musical accompaniment is a piano four hands version of the second movement of Mozart’s *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*.



After the end of this scene, the lights fade out and the recorded answers of the audience are heard in the dark. As Christou said; 'a composer is not an entertainer! Previously he was required to entertain his audience! Now, his audience entertains him. His audience performs for him - and his audience is not necessarily the concert audience. His audience is the world. The world performs, the composer looks on' (see appendix 3, Christou, 27/6/1968). It is the audience's time to perform (unintentionally in this case) and I must note that during my performance this part seemed to involve emotionally the performers, myself and especially the audience to a very high degree.

### **8. bluebeard blues**

After a gradual fading in of very soft lights, the motif of impotence and petrification is developed in the eighth scene, 'bluebeard blues'. This is a song written by myself in a popular blues style, sung by a woman in a wheelchair (the same woman of the second scene), expressing her inability to act in any way. It is a moment of absolute loneliness, as in this scene we go back to the presence of just one person on stage (as in the 'flying lesson'). The text has direct references to the mummified wives of Bluebeard and, in contrast to the girl in the second scene; the audience here cannot expect anything at all to happen to the singer, either real or unreal. The elimination of expectations is achieved and one can now trace the thread of gradual destruction of possibilities that runs through the performance.

The mythical dimensions of the character in this scene relate to the Tarot card of the Moon and Persephone (for whom Dante says that her face is reflected on the full moon), the Queen of the Underworld. The myth says that Persephone (the daughter of Demetra, the goddess of Earth, and a personification of springtime) was abducted by Pluto, the King of the Underworld. When Pluto was forced to return her to her mother, he put a grain of pomegranate in her mouth before letting her go, and since that moment Persephone desired to return to him after a while. The pomegranate seemed to have a paralysing effect on her will. The girl on the wheelchair is a postmodern version of Persephone and her song gives the signal for the beginning of the end of the lunar cycle.

## **9. planet sobstic**

The ninth scene is a manifestation of this lack of possibilities, the eternal immobility, the petrification of the human soul. In the seventh scene the woman is immobile but is still expecting. In this scene, called 'planet sobstic', there is no central character. An expressionless voice describes a planet where people do not even attempt to communicate and remain locked in their houses for ever, while a woman is talking about a shadow of a lover who resembles 'a figure from a pack of cards' and some musicians among the audience are chewing bubble-gums (reference to the bubbles in scene 2 and the chewing gum in 3) literally in the faces of the spectators. The refrain of a distorted song is repeatedly heard; 'give me the words that tell me nothing, give me the words that tell me everything'. The performers are trapped in the continuum. The speaker turns out to be the only homeless inhabitant of planet Sobstic who lives all alone in the streets. The inhabitants of the planet are supposed to live on flying-fish, a creature that represents the union of the two opposites of the Bird and the Fish, which keep appearing throughout the performance.

## **10. garden**

### **+0. continuum**

At this point, the cycle is about to be completed and the continuum is gradually becoming louder as we pass to the final scene, which is a repeat of the first scene of the 'garden' spoken live by the performers whose voices were heard in the recording that was played during the first scene. This time the continuum is already loud and is becoming as loud as it gets to a point when the text of this scene is not audible and is covered by the continuum; although the performers can be seen talking, nobody can hear their voices. The epicycle ends, the lights fade out, but the continuum remains in maximum volume after the end of the performance and it is not turned off before the audience leaves the space. The audience never witnesses the end of the continuum, as they never witnessed the beginning of it. (In the actual performance in Goldsmiths College, the continuum was turned off prematurely because of the health and safety regulations of the College.)

- **Reflections**

When I take a look at my version of *Epicycle* I realise that, through this work, Christou gave the chance to musicians to be liberated by the traditional concepts of ‘musicianship’, or, rather he tried to establish a new version of the ‘musician’ in a much broader sense; he was more interested in the expressive ability of people rather than in their virtuosity or their talent in the narrow, technical sense.

For instance, when I, as a pianist decided to perform *Epicycle*, I realised that I actually had to create my performance almost from scratch and also I was provoked by the score to include my conventional piano performance in a context which suited the ideas of Christou. The participation of other people and the use of many different forms of art were very useful tools for the achievement of a certain atmosphere, which would be in accordance with the one the score imposed to me.

Throughout the whole process I felt that I was constantly directed by the score, which was an inexhaustible source of inspiration. I literally felt that I was an author created by a score.

I presented this performance as a pianist who performs a metapraxis on two levels; a pianist who firstly - at the time of the performance - apart from playing the piano, sings, speaks, moves; and who secondly - at the time of the preparation for the performance - apart from practising, directs, writes texts, composes, reads books, makes collages of other people’s texts, shoots videos and invites more people to perform a metapraxis.

The previous part of this chapter, where I am describing the process of the realisation of *Epicycle*, should not be regarded as an ‘analysis’ of the performance , but rather as a short guide to the performance; a guide to the reasons why I made the choices I made, while I was still driven by Christou’s score. The archetypal quality of the score should not be taken away from the performance and the spectator should be left free to make his assumptions concerning the ‘meaning’ and the implications of the whole event. My intention was to create something that could be conceived in many different ways, as the score of *Epicycle* can be realised in many different ways.

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **An Epilogue**

#### **1. Introduction**

In this final chapter I will try to recapitulate the basic points that were made throughout my thesis and present some possible general conclusions regarding my approach to Jani Christou's music. It is obvious that my research has been based on two main sources: Christou's own writings and the mostly extra-musical writings of others which somehow seem to relate to Christou's work. This is because the main target of my research has been not to 'interpret' Christou's music in a strictly theoretical sense but rather to discover the extent of its limits, if any, from the perspective of a performer who is encountering an obscure musical world and is trying to find out whether her own limits can be included in the context of Christou's musical thought.

Throughout my research, I kept stumbling on some specific conceptual patterns which seem to repeat in Christou's penultimate period. For practical reasons, I decided to divide these into two broad categories: the ones that relate to *mythical time* and the ones that relate to *historical time*. In this chapter I will attempt to present again some of the patterns I dealt with in the previous chapters through the prism of this dichotomy of time, which seems to be of significant importance especially for the two works that I performed (*Epicycle* and *Anaparastasis III: The Pianist*). This dichotomy itself is connected to the Jungian theory of archetypes and refers to the consciousness of a double identity/content/meaning of an action, depending on whether it is defined from its historical (referring mostly to the present, or at least to a specific point in time) or mythical dimension (referring to its archetypal, therefore timeless implications).

#### **2. The Patterns**

Metapraxis is obviously one of the basic patterns discovered in Christou's last works. As mentioned in previous chapters, the implications of this concept are manifested very clearly in *The Pianist* and are further extended in *Epicycle*; the pianist who cannot play the piano and is struggling with his instrument and the composer who confronts the chaos of an uncreated work and intentionally abandons his creative role. Of course in the case of *Epicycle* the composer's metapraxis creates a sort of 'metapraxis domino effect', because the role of the composer (at least to some extent) must somehow be taken by someone else (apparently the performer(s) or/and the audience).

In *The Pianist*, metapraxis is mostly expressed as a struggle with language, an inability to communicate with the instrument, with the audience and with music in general. As discussed in chapter IV, the struggle with language is a basic theme in Ludwig Wittgenstein's philosophy and Evangelos Christou's psychoanalytic theory as well as a general issue in the most prominent artistic and philosophical movements of Christou's time. Also, the inability to 'speak' and express oneself possibly reveals a connection with the censorship conditions in Greece during the Dictatorship of the Colonels (1967-74). From this point of view, metapraxis relates to historical time, as it can be regarded as a tool the composer is using in order to define the space the work is occupying in his era.

However, *The Pianist* also generates a connection between the musicians' metapraxis and the unhistorical anxiety of the lonely human being during the confrontation with the hostility and inflexibility of an organised system. This is quite directly expressed especially through the conductor's spoken text:

Although you are a member of a group caught up in the same pattern, you are nevertheless on your own. Perform with individual abandon, mindless of the others, contributing as much of your individual inventiveness as possible within the limits set by the specifications of the pattern.  
(Christou, 1971)

From this perspective, metapraxis carries a sense that is mythical and loses its historical specificity.

What it also brings to mind is the prehistoric fear and anxiety of humanity in relation to the eclipse of the moon cycle or the abnormality in any natural pattern (a concept with which Christou is dealing in his text, *The Lunar Experience*, discussed above). This is a pattern which can easily be detected in the score of *Epicycle* too. The shape of the score and its images can somehow be regarded as illustrations of 'patterns' and 'eclipses', which also bear both historical and mythical dimensions: images of a contemporary world, which can easily be seen as projections of ancient states that repeat through time.

Furthermore, the ways in which I used metapraxis in my realisation of *Epicycle* share the aforementioned characteristics. This is something which derived naturally from my

experience of the score and therefore must be contained in the material the composer provided me with. Thus, it appears that both in *Epicycle* and *Anaparastasis III* metapraxis is a concept that relates to time in a double way.

Another pattern I came across, both in *Epicycle* and *Anaparastasis III*, was the insistence on the ritualistic aspects of musical performance. This is also something which stems from and leads to the simultaneous experience of the two facades of time. It refers to the apparition of everyday routine actions as rites. The action in both the aforementioned works happens in the present and is simultaneously projected in the past and future. For example, the pianist in *Anaparastasis III* is performing his role as an ordinary pianist; however (especially through metapraxis), his actions acquire an unhistorical shade, which is common and essential in the conditions of a ritual.

The same is happening in *Epicycle*; in this case though, it is harder to specify with full certainty the way in which the actions transform into parts of a ritual. This is probably because of the nature of the piece and its almost totally open content. In the case of my realisation, I can be certain that the selection of the material of the performance is consciously aiming at a transformation of the actions into rituals. This is also something that was confirmed by several members of the audience of the first performance of *Epicycle*, who characterised their experience of the performance as ritualistic and the essence of the realisation as mythical, although they were all completely unfamiliar with the work and unaware of my intentions.

However, there is one element which remains stable in *Epicycle*: the continuum. Although the composer does not specify its nature, the continuum is the only 'requirement' for a performance of the work. Christou suggests that it might be any sustained sound, a silent gesture or anything that is continuously sustained in time. Therefore, the continuum appears to be the unifying element in *Epicycle*, and also the element which is not dependent on time. It might even be regarded as a form of time itself, a type of time that creates the events of the epicycle and remains uninfluenced by them; a form of time that is a blend of mythical and historical time. It follows that the component of *Epicycle*, which is crucial to the achievement of a consciousness of the biformity of time, is the continuum. The fact that the tapes of *Anaparastasis III* are also constantly present and – as in *Epicycle* – exist before the beginning and after the end of the rest of the actions enforces the above assumption. In the case of *Anaparastasis III*

the tapes seem to play the role of the continuum, although here the continuum provokes and emphasises the rest of the actions that happen on stage, without however – again – being affected by them.

This duality itself is another recurring pattern throughout Christou's final works. The antithesis of opposing elements is another Jungian concept, which is fundamental for the theory of archetypes, as it is also found in alchemy, religion, philosophy and practically everywhere around us. The chaos of conflicting opposites (see Jung's *Mysterium Coniunctionis*) is perhaps the main ingredient of the events in *Epicycle*. As discussed in the previous chapter, the score resembles a chart of the 'massa confusa', the primordial soup of opposites before the creation of the world, archetypal couples fighting inside the psyche. In *The Pianist* the multiple oppositions (between pianist and orchestra, pianist and piano, musicians and tapes, conductor and pianist) are conceptually very significant for the piece. Giorgos Leotsakos had characterised Christou as a 'Doctor Faustus', and as Goethe's Faust says:

Two souls, alas! reside within my breast,  
And each withdraws from, and repels, its brother.  
One with tenacious organs holds in love  
And clinging lust the world in its embraces;  
The other strongly sweeps, this dust above,  
Into the high ancestral spaces.  
(Goethe, 2005: 40)

The quotation above, the statement of a scientist and alchemist, could be the motto for both *Anaparastasis III* and *Epicycle*. What the performer is asked to grasp is the multiple nature and meaning of all actions on stage and finally of the music itself. The double relationship of the performance to time can be realised when the performer is conscious of the manifold depths of the content of the work and his role as a musician. As I mentioned in chapter V, Christou produced 'archetypal music', according to Bettina Knapp's thoughts, and in my opinion the performer should be aware of this quality, not only for the benefit of the standard of the performance but also for the benefit of the audience and himself. What Knapp suggests is that:

Archetypal music expands consciousness in that it reveals the psyche's potential in distilled, proportioned and measured tonal messages, disclosing to the creative artist ways of using energies which might otherwise have been diffused into oblivion.  
(Knapp, 1988: 2)

Thus, a full sense of the archetypal qualities of Christou's late works can offer a unique experience of their performance to the performer and, consequently, the spectator. Knapp is referring to musical works that do not contain extra-musical elements, but the extra-musical actions that are included in Christou's late works seem to be aiming at an enrichment of the experience she is describing above; it appears that the composer is making the multiple layers of his works more accessible through the use of extra-musical actions. In this case, I believe that the actions in question would be more accordingly characterised as *meta-musical* rather than extra-musical, as they are tightly entangled with the musical process; they seem to arise as a natural consequence of the music, without necessarily being strictly musical themselves, but, rather, types of gestures that are induced by the music.

### **3. The Pattern Behind the Patterns**

What is of particular interest is the fact that the patterns that persist in Christou's music share a common characteristic; they all relate to time in *both* a mythical and an historical manner. The seemingly opposite concepts of mythical and historical time co-exist. The performance connects to reality in a very direct and powerful way and simultaneously transforms into a projection of an ageless succession of actions. In my view, the performer's awareness of this duality is essential for the achievement of its communication to the audience. According to my experience, performances of Christou's late works that lacked this awareness did not manage to give the actions and the music the full dimensions implied by the composer and left the audience with a sense of need for this extra dimension.

The same thing often happens with the performance of ancient rituals in a contemporary context, where the participants fail to engage with the ritualistic actions on a deeper level, and as a result the ritual can look futile, purposeless and even ridiculous. Therefore, performing one of Christou's late works requires the creation of the conditions for 'methexis' – as opposed to 'mimesis' – in other words, a psychological/physical participation in the depth of the actions performed and not a mere execution of them.

After looking into Christou's work for nearly four years, I have come to the conclusion that this methexis is possible for any performer who is aware of its need and for any



spectator who is exposed to the appropriate conditions for its occurrence. The composer has left a bulk of commentaries on his works that can function as very helpful guidelines for an attitude leading towards effectively performing his late works. It appears that what we have inherited from Christou is a set of works that consist of semantically overcharged symbols, which we – as performers – are expected to decipher.

The required awareness of the multiplicity of layers and the double connection of the performance to time (mythical and historical) are elements I also discovered in the music of the young Greek composer, Thanasis Deligiannis. This is the reason why I decided to include his work *Lefkippi* in my final recital along with Christou's *Epicycle* and *Anaparastasis III*. Deligiannis is a great admirer of Christou and has done a lot of research on a theoretical and practical level in Christou's work.

The work is written for piano, string quartet, bass clarinet and alto flute. The instrument with the most central role is the piano and, according to the composer, the pianist (who has to be female) is the character of the title, Lefkippi. The pianist is required to play the piano and simultaneously to speak (and occasionally sing) very fast in Greek. The order of the words is mixed up in the sentences and some words are also repeated, so that the text is totally nonsensical grammatically, but somehow makes sense instinctively. I had to work on the piece in close collaboration with the composer for its second performance in Amsterdam in 2008. The process of its preparation as well as the rehearsals with the rest of the ensemble presented a striking affinity to the procedure of the aforementioned meta-musical awareness that I have found essential for a performance of a work by Christou.

For instance, Deligiannis' first advice regarding the performance of the piano part was that the pianist is somehow playing the role of Lefkippi, a character from Greek mythology; Lefkippi was one of the three Minyades, three sisters who disputed Dionysus' divinity and were punished with madness by the god. The three women chose to stay at home and loom instead of worshipping Dionysus on the mountain with the rest of the women. During her manic state, Lefkippi killed her little son, Ippasos, after mistaking him for a deer.

The composer considered my acquaintance with this myth of really vital importance, as he sets the 'mythical' time of the performance at the moment when Lefkippi has started recovering from her mania and is gradually realising that she has killed her own child. This piece of information specifies the style of the recitation of the text (which should be almost breathless) and also the texture and structure of the sound of the piano and its relation to the text. In the first rehearsal, Deligiannis was not satisfied with my playing of the first clusters on the lowest register of the piano. The way he described to me the manner in which they should be played was that I should treat the keyboard as the neck of my dead son whom I am trying to strangle. This was a totally extra-musical remark, which however specified my psychological state and physical posture as well as the sound of the clusters in a very precise way; it therefore affected the purely sonic aspect of the performance.

Deligiannis used numerous similar remarks throughout the preparation of the performance, which all had a very specific effect on the atmosphere and the sound of the piece. This unavoidably reminded me of my aforementioned observations about the interrelation of mythical and historical time in works by Christou that is reached via meta-musical paths. In the case of *Lefkippi*, mythical and historical time co-exist in an intricate manner. The spectator might not be aware of the underlying myth and the pianist's role as Lefkippi. However, the work done during the preparation of the performance defines its atmosphere in a manner, which is in such a degree of accord with the mythological background of the piece, that the ritualistic quality of the performance becomes rather prominent. The chaotic, overwhelming and loud climax is followed by the solitude of the pianist playing with thimbles on her fingertips that strike the keys and produce a nearly inaudible sound. As a performer, the performance of the piece always affected me on a very deep level psychologically and physically. It felt as if the ensemble was creating the conditions for metapraxis and methexis, in a manner that resembles the way in which an ecstatic atmosphere is created around the pianist by the tapes, the ensemble and the conductor in *Anaparastasis III*.

Another statement I wish to make through the inclusion of *Lefkippi* in a recital with works by Jani Christou is that Christou's musical philosophy, its special methectic quality, can pass in the present through the work of new composers, one of which is Deligiannis. The tools that are used in order to fulfil this musical attitude might be transformed according to the present historical conditions, but the conceptual

(unhistorical) essence, which is contained in Christou's work, remains unaltered and can feed the future of musical performance with creative ideas.

Christou used myth as a means of exorcising the angst and sterility of his (and our) contemporary human condition and managed to formulate an attitude towards musical performance that can become one of the ways in which contemporary music can evolve and re-connect with audiences in an unforced and genuine way; a type of music which is transforming the past into a fertile future. Christou claimed that music sustains the soul through the creation of the conditions for myth. I think that among the new generation of musicians there is an urge to nurture this concern with sustaining the soul of human creativity through the production of effective musical performance.

When I started my research into Christou, the process at first resembled the effort of a visitor in the legendary Sibyl's cave, who is trying to put the scattered leaves, where her prophecy is written, in order. His scores seemed perplexing at first, but the more I got involved with his commentaries, I felt like I could return to the scores with the confidence that their 'truth' was no longer a secret. In his musical world, intellectual thought constantly informs artistic action and vice versa. The protean nature of his work makes his output stand outside the frame of time and remain relevant; a material which can transform into a force that will encourage musicians to engage with his musical philosophy by putting it into practice.

## Appendices

1. Note from the Jani Christou Archive (23/6/1968)
2. Note from the Jani Christou Archive (26/6/1968)
3. Note from the Jani Christou Archive (27/6/1968)
4. Note from the Jani Christou Archive (23/8/1968)
5. Note referring to *Anaparastasis III* from the Jani Christou Archive
6. *Epicycle*, Performance Flyer (26/06/07)
7. Specifications from the published score of *Anaparastasis III*
8. Photo from the first performance of *Epicycle*
9. Photo of Grigoris Semitekolo performing *Anaparastasis III*
10. Photo of Evangelos and Jani Christou from the Jani Christou Archive
11. Photo of Evangelos and Jani Christou from the Jani Christou Archive
12. Published score for *Anaparastasis III* (10 pages)

**App. 1** Note from the Jani Christou Archive

29 June 1968

Man knows that conflict of  
subs

inevitable - [according to the  
MILLENNIA of EXPERIENCES]  
(487)

& the knowledge that TOTAL  
DESTRUCTION is now possible  
with further AWGULS.

ARCHETYPAL MAN COULD BEAR HISTORY  
& HISTORIC PROCESS BECAUSE HE COULD  
IDENTIFY THESE WITH STAGES OF  
ARCHETYPAL DRAMA IN WHICH  
A FINAL STAGE IS ABSOLUTE  
VICTORY OF GOOD WITH WHICH HE  
IDENTIFIED

[ tendency to mythologise EVENTS - is tendency  
maybe to give REALITY to EXPERIENCES  
- to come to terms with both 'pleasure' & 'pain']

WAR, CONFLICT, 26 June 1967  
CONFRONTATION BETWEEN TWO ATTITUDES  
a factor which must be given  
some attention is what  
happens, as today, when  
a fundamentally HISTORICALLY  
oriented civilization [U.S.A.]  
confronts an archetypal civilization  
[VIETNAM-CHINA (in spite of their extreme  
& communism)] -

in with the archetypal outlook comes an  
INDIFFERENCE TO setbacks,  
to defeat, and a conviction to continue  
- because defeat is unimportant and reversible.  
with the hitherto - attitude [U.S.A.]  
difficulties and defeat are not reversible.  
They may be offset - but the almost  
fearless tenacity to hold on, the PATIENCE,  
may wear out -

\* re Communism - or any other 'HISTORIC-POLITICAL' concept -  
This is just as ineffective for the MATTEL - on the occasion of  
"BACKSLIDING" in MESSIANIC ISRAEL - to BAAK - i.e. back  
to archetypal 'realities' which refer to valourous history -  
even HISTORY as moments of THEOPHANY (Gods with in  
history & in time) - BACK to Conflict Resolution IN TIME & ABOLITION  
OF HISTORY

27 June 1989.

A ~~man~~ computer is not an  
entertainer!

Previously he was required to  
entertain his audience!

Now, his audience entertains  
him. His audience  
performs for him - and  
his audience is not  
necessarily the correct audience.

His audience is the  
world. The world performs,  
the computer looks on.



App. 4 Note from the Jani Christou Archive

The function of music is to create  
soul, by creating conditions for  
myth, the root of all soul.

where there is no soul, music creates  
it. where there is soul, music  
sustains it.

Chios, 23 Aug.  
1968.

©  
p.4.

ANAPARASTASIS "THE PIANIST" 15/1/6  
INSTRUMENTAL ACTIVITY

### CONDUCTING SIGNS

(cont: PSYCHOLOGICAL QUALITY OF LIVE EVENTS)

THE CONDUCTOR SHOULD DEFINE EACH PATTERN TO THE PERFORMERS AND TEACH THEM THE CORRESPONDING CONDUCTING GESTURE WHICH HE WILL USE AS SIGNALS ELICITING THE RESULT THAT HE REQUIRES

FOR THIS PURPOSE THE SCORE BESIDES NAMING THE PATTERNS SHOULD ALSO EXPLAIN THE PSYCHOLOGICAL QUALITY AND ~~PRO~~ GIVE A CORRESPONDING CHARACTERISTIC PICTORIAL REPRESENTATION (SYNTHETIC NOTATION)

EX: THREAD PATTERS: AN OUTSTRETCHED HAND WITH FINGERS AS THOUGH PULLING OUT THIN THREADS DELICATELY FROM THE AIR.

THE GHOSTLY SOUNDS: THE CONDUCTOR IMITATES THE MANNER OF THEIR PRODUCTION.

App. 6 *Epicycle*, Performance Flyer (26/06/07)

1 ← P I K Y K L → 2

by Jani Christou

SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

A Performance by Andriana Minou

Goldsmiths College Studio 1  
26 July 18.30

with:  
Eirini Kartsaki  
Nikos Stavlas  
Mirto Loulaki  
Grigoris Emfietzis  
Angelina Kartsaki  
Charis Saslis  
Andriana Minou  
Polyxeni Stavrou

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## App. 7 Specifications from the published score of *Anaparastasis III*

2

### SPECIFICATIONS

- ORCHESTRA
1. The composition and size of the orchestra are not precisely defined. The work can be performed with eight to fifteen instruments. Apart from these, three or four more performers are needed to reinforce the vocal participation (breaths, shouts, shrieks, stoning and mysterious sounds). These performers need not necessarily be musicians. A typical orchestra might consist of: 1 piccolo, 1 flute, 1 horn, 2 trombones, 1 tuba, 2-3 percussionists, 1-3 violins, 1-2 violas or celli, and 4 members for the vocal participation.
  2. The orchestral parts are the same for all instruments.
  3. The musicians must be equipped with the objects or instruments necessary for performing cues 3, 9 and 16.
  4. The musicians' dress must not reflect the light. Black suits and dark shirts are preferable.
  5. The musicians must remain motionless during the performance when, of course, they are not actually playing.

- CONDUCTOR
1. Apart from his normal functions, the conductor is required to speak, shout, play the *gr. cassa* or *tan-tan* etc (see *Metapraxis* onward below). His participation, of course, does not contribute to the sound, but his movements or grimaces impose themselves on the musicians and help them in releasing the maximum of their energy.
  2. In cues 13 and 16 the conductor reads the text\* simply and clearly. He must not colour his voice at all. It must be a dry reading, such as that of a newscaster (*Moderato, mf*).
  3. The points of appearance of the tapes and their change in volume must be signalled by the conductor.
  4. The time duration of the cues are approximate. However, the work must not exceed 18 minutes.

- SIGNS
1.  - area mark: It marks the beginning of each area of duration and encloses its cue number. The duration of each area is given in seconds.
  2.  - synchronise: The sign calls for synchronised delivery.
  3.  - stop-dead: The cut must be sudden, with no trailing of unfinished material; an abrupt and total 'switch-off'.
  4.  - metapraxis: The performer is required to carry out an action (praxis) which takes him 'beyond' his normal function. This action is specified (cues 3, 9, 13, 14, 16, 18 and 20).

For further information on the notation of J. Christou, see "Praxis for 12" and "Enantiidromia" (J. & W. Chest: London). See also magazine "Source" (No. 9, 1969, Sacramento, California).

"Although you are a member of a group caught up in the same pattern, you are nevertheless on your own. Perform with individual abandon, mindless of the others, contributing as much of your own individual inventiveness as possible within the limits set by the specifications for the pattern".

**App. 8** Photo from the first performance of *Epicycle*



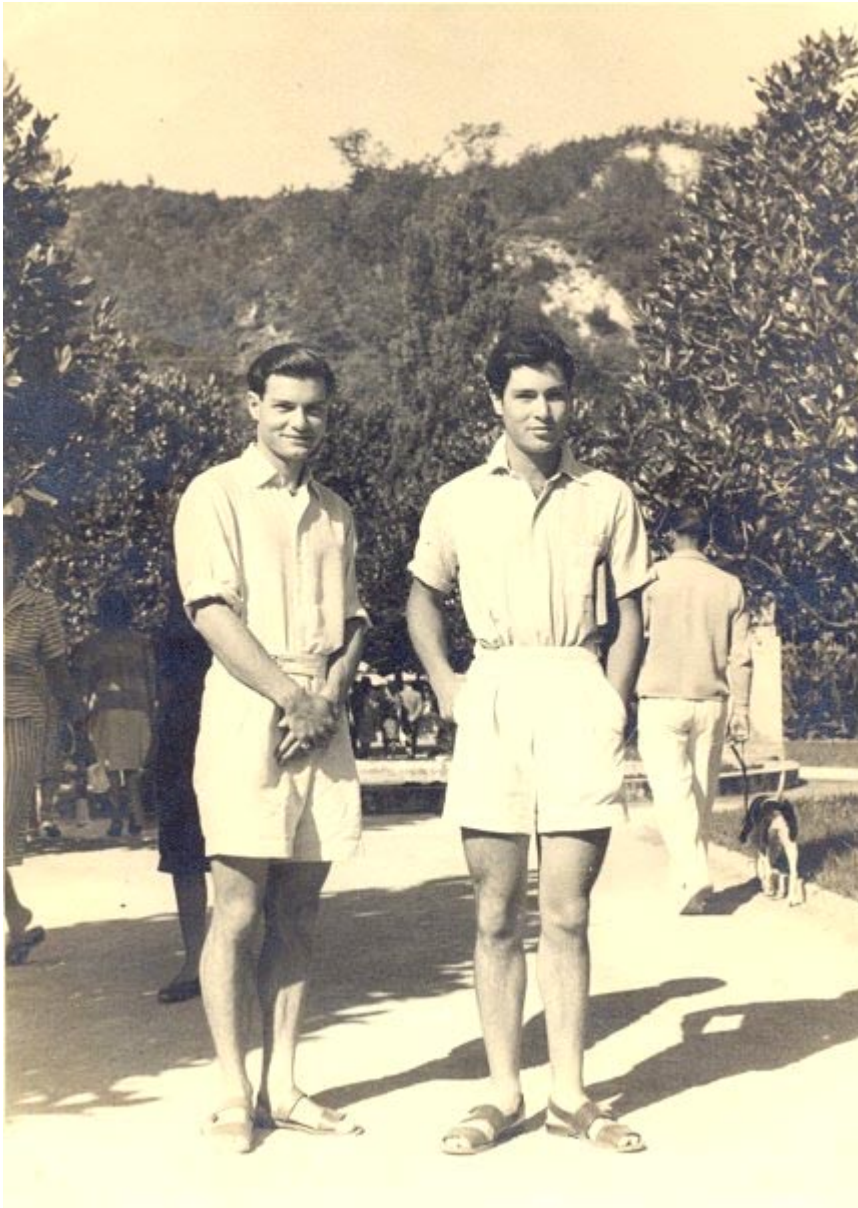
**App. 9** Photo of Grigoris Semitekolo performing *Anaparastasis III*



**App. 10** Photo of Jani and Evangelos Christou from the Jani Christou Archive

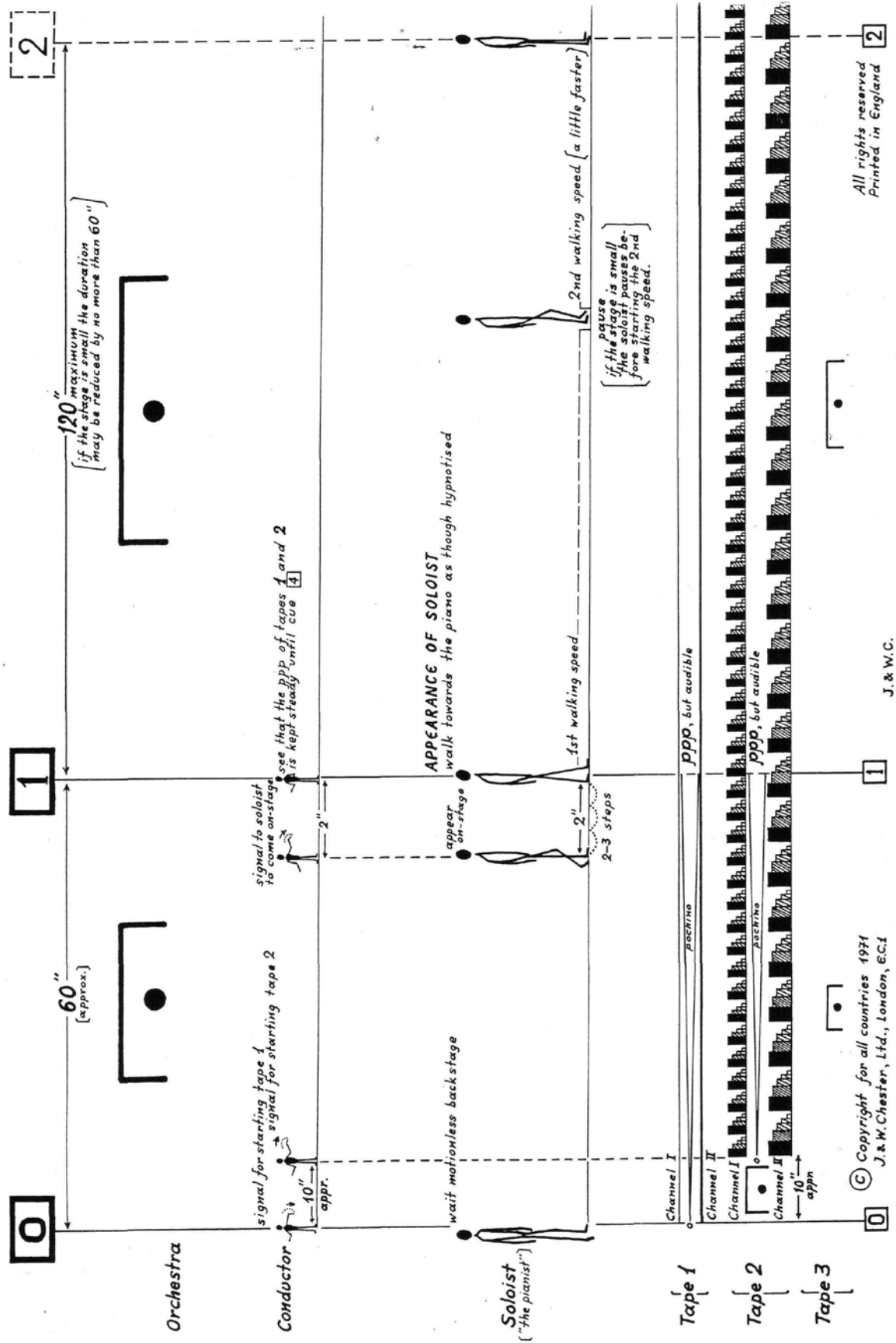


**App. 11** Photo of Evangelos and Jani Christou from the Jani Christou Archive





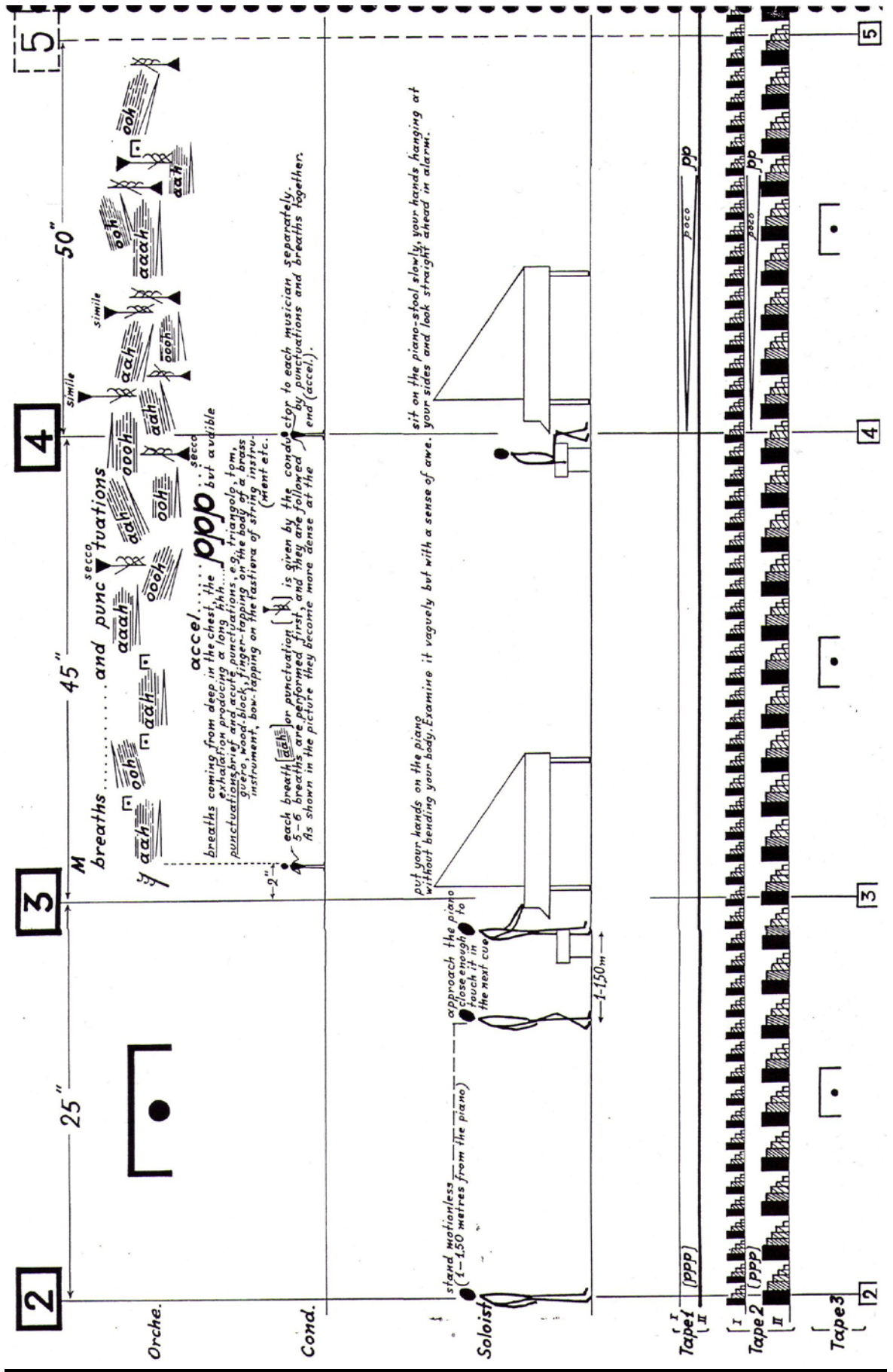
App. 12 Published score for *Anaparastasis III* (10 pages)

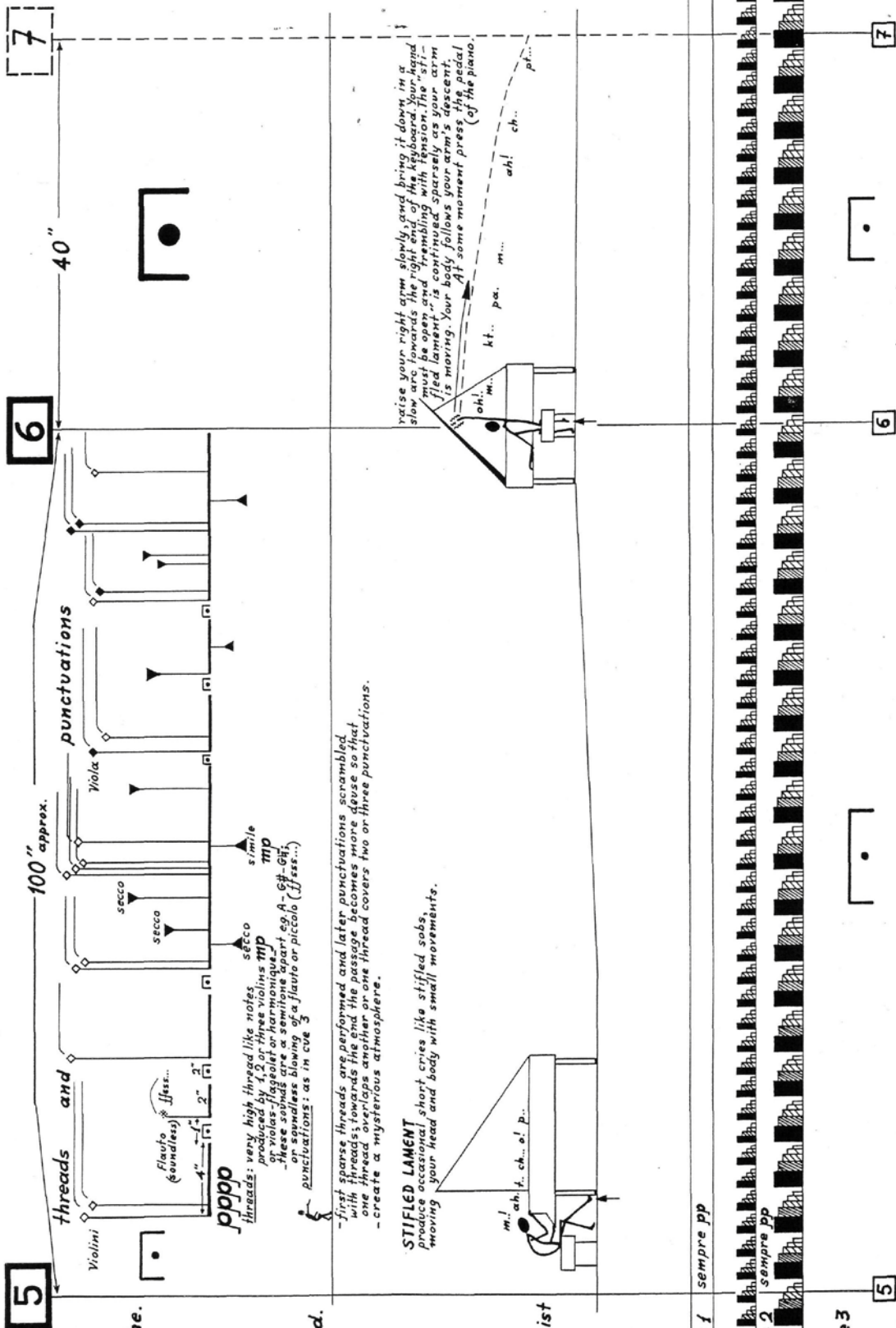


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7

6

5

100" approx.

40"

pppp

threads

and

punctuations

Flauto (soudiers)

Violini

Viola

secco

secco

secco

smile

mp

mp

threads: very high thread like notes produced by 1, 2 or three violins *mp* or violas-flageolet or harmonique...  
 -these sobs are a semitone apart eg. A - G# - G#...  
 or soundless blowing of a flauto or piccolo (*ff*sss...)  
 punctuations: as in cue 3

first space threads are performed and later punctuations assembled with threads: towards the end the passage becomes more dense so that one thread overlaps another or one thread covers two or three punctuations.  
 -create a mysterious atmosphere.

STIFLED LAMENT

produce occasional short cries like stifled sobs, moving your head and body with small movements.

raise your right arm slowly, and bring it down in a slow arc towards the right end of the keyboard. Your hand must be open, and trembling with tension. The stifled lament is continued sparsely as your arm is moving. Your body follows your arms. At some moment press the pedal (of the piano).

m! ah! t. ch... o! p...

kt... pa. m... ah! ch... pf...

Tape 1 sempre pp

Tape 2 sempre pp

Tape 3

5

6

7

25" 45" 9

**Orche.**

EXPLOSION: a deafening accord from all the orchestra, synchronized with the soloist's percussion, plays any note on whatever instrument (chiefly percussion).

EXPLOSION: as before after the orchestra's accord has exploded (two or three distinct, sharply defined strings, held a different note each like an echo of the explosion).

**Cond.**

watch the soloist carefully in order to synchronize his striking the piano with the explosion. Assist in this effect with the gr. cassa.

*(gr. cassa)*

**Soloist**

strike the lowest notes of the piano violently with both hands. You feel relief for a moment. Synchronize your body and rest your hands on the keyboard.

begin moving your right arm in an arc tensely towards the left end of the keyboard with your palm open. (The "stified lament" continues)

strike the last two keys with the edge of your palm (as in karate); feel relief for a moment.

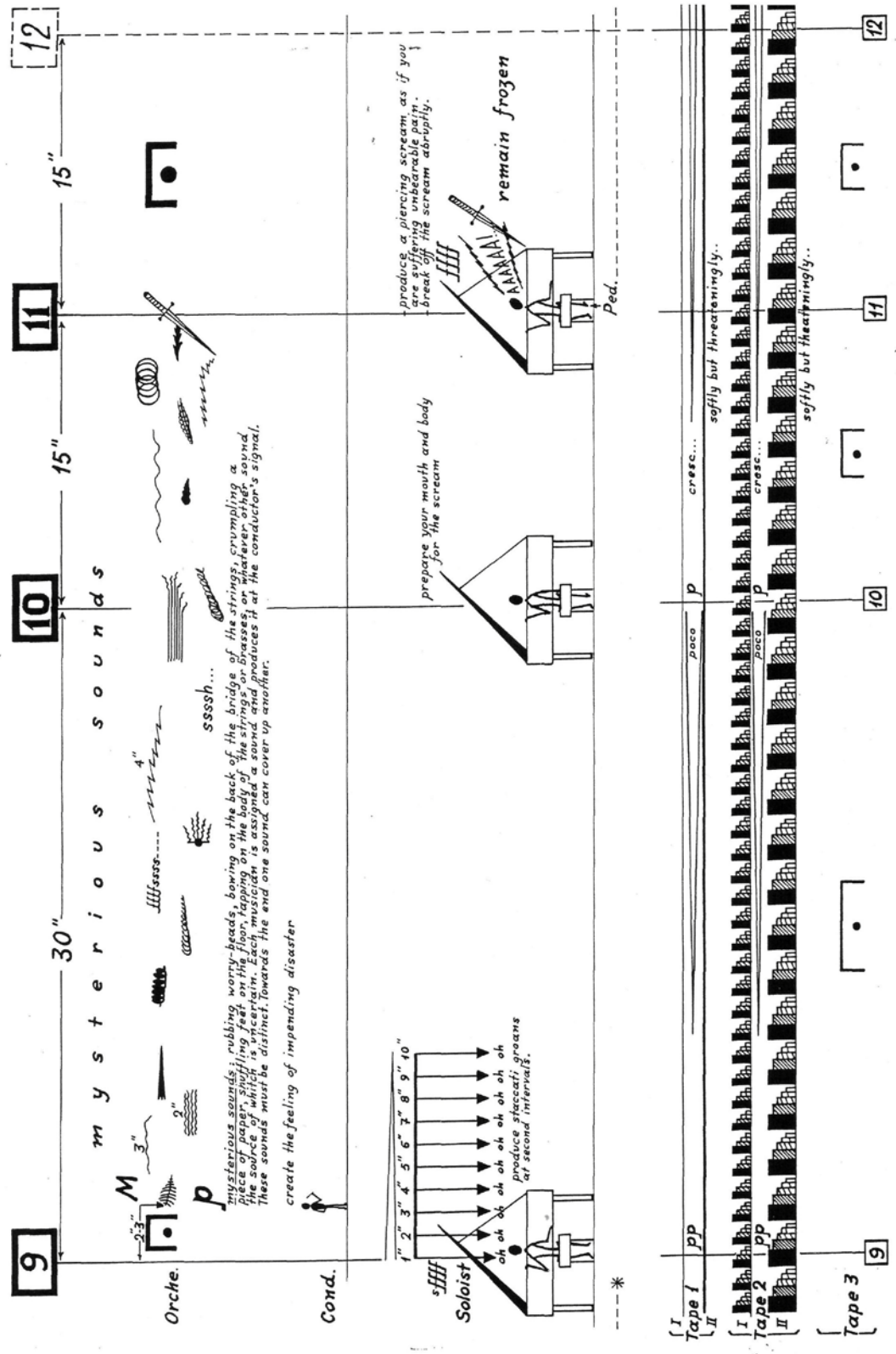
Ped. Ped. Ped.

I Tape 1 sempre pp  
II

I Tape 2 sempre pp  
II

I Tape 3  
II

7 8 9



**12** 40" **13** 20" **14**

**Orche.** *stoning: loud notes as of heavy stones falling (tuba, trombone, gr cassa, piatti, stamping on the floor, beating a chair on the floor, discordant accord. etc). S.C. stoning, plucking, piercing cries of frightened woman*

**Cond.** *stoning and screams*  
 M *3,5 approx.*  
 M conductor: **S P E E C H**  
*- signal the beginning of this passage by striking the gr cassa. The sounds of the orchestra must come in the intervals between the soloist's groans and hammerings.*  
*- the orchestra must not produce more stonings and screams than those contained in the picture.*

**Soloist** *slow arching movement of the right arm without tension to the right. A robot-like movement.*

**Tape 1** *crescendo al div*  
**Tape 2** *crescendo al div*  
**Tape 3**

**Timeline:** 1" 2" 3" 4" 5" 6" 7" 8" 9" 10" 11" 12" 13" 14" 15" 16" 17" 18" 19" 20"

**Performance Notes:**  
 - hammer the last keys of the keyboard, raising the arm (right) high as though it is an axe.  
 - produce groans (cue 9) but not synchronised with the hammer blows.



17

18

19

20

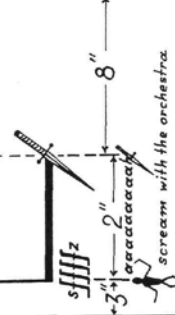
30"

15"

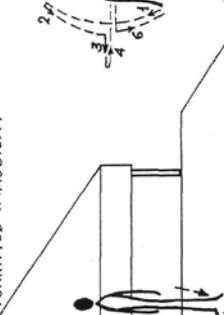
20"



M shrieks  
 all shriek and  
 scream piercingly  
 hysterically  
 scream with the orchestra.



get to your feet suddenly, pause shortly, then walk in a daze towards the audience.



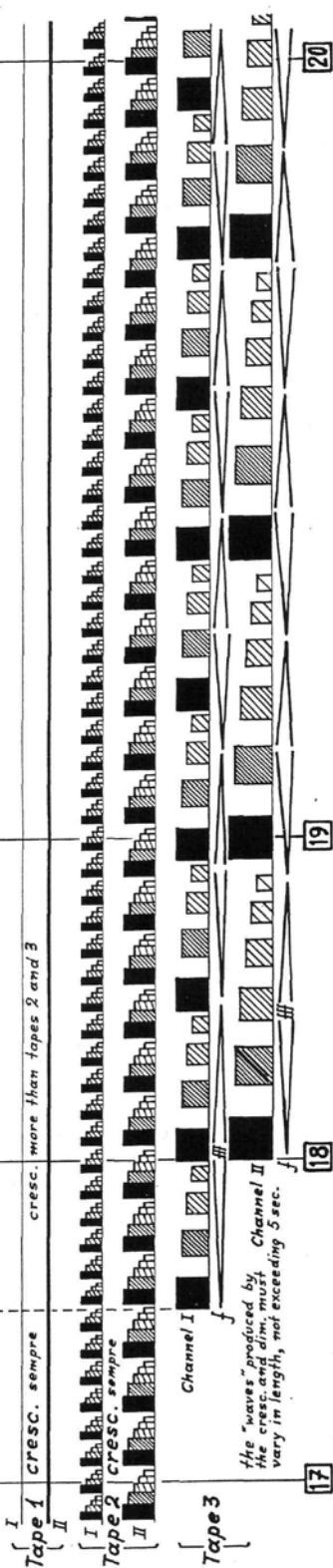
ATTEMPT TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE AUDIENCE with the right arm make the gesture of the "scatter" with slow ritualistic movements; produce occasional cries (just audible) of intense effort.

oh m kt f ah s mm... th... oh

Orche.

Cond.

Soloist



the "waves" produced by the cresc. and dim. must vary in length, not exceeding 5 sec.

20

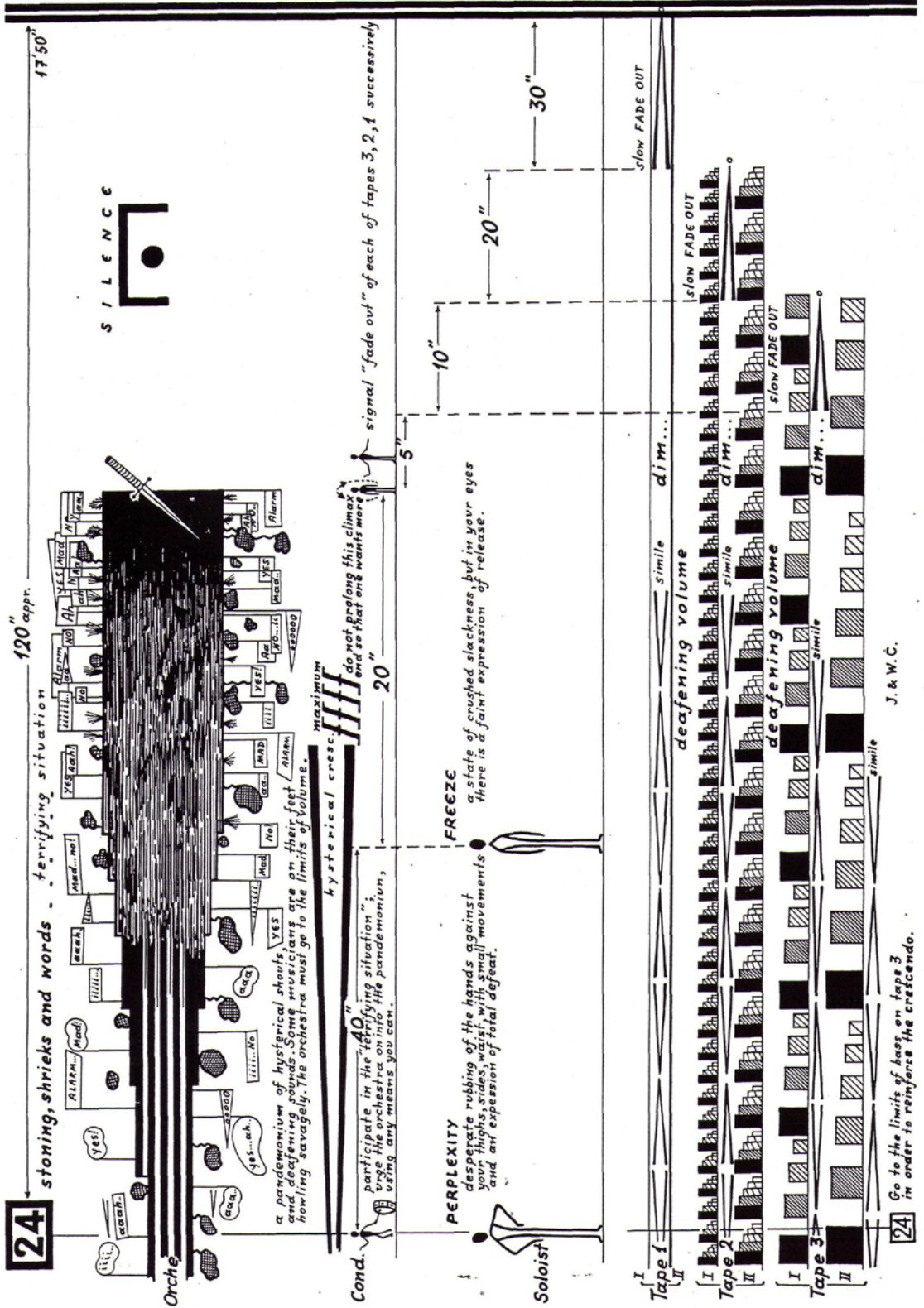
19

18

17







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