

## **1912-2012, Music life and musical Education in the 100 years of liberated Thessaloniki**

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The music life in Thessaloniki at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, before the liberation of the City from the Turks in 1912, is relatively restricted. In the city were created certain artistic societies and associations, such as the philharmonic “Apollo”, “The Association of the Macedonian Friends of Education”, “The group of the friends of music”, “The club of the amateurs” “Orpheus” and the society “Apollo”, most of which had sections of philharmonic orchestra, choir and mandolin orchestra, contributing to the musical activity in the city but also serving national aims. For example, the philharmonic “Apollo” collected money from its concerts for the Macedonian Struggle (Themelis 1985: 456; Kazantzis 1985: 222; Mandakas 1963: 640; Leondief, 1991: 12).

At the same time various touring melodramatic companies, Greek and foreign, gave opera performances in Thessaloniki. Already since 1880 visited Thessaloniki the Italian melodramatic companies of Kastagna, Labruna, Di Giorgio, Messini Castelano, the Armenian-Turkish Couvegian Company and since 1905 the Greek Melodrama of Dionysios Lavrangas (Tsaousidou, 2010: 29-43).

With the liberation of the city the musical activity is intensified with the creation of orchestras, choirs and musical ensembles, cultural societies, concert halls and with the stipulation of cultural institutions. At the same time, are created bodies of musical education (Conservatories, musical Gymnasium/Lycée, University Music Departments) contributing substantially to the education of the Greek musicians.

## **1. Music life**

### **Philharmonic Orchestras (orchestras of wind instruments), symphonic orchestras, mandolin orchestras, choirs, operas, ensembles of chamber music**

The philharmonic orchestras, especially until 1960, played a significant role in the music life of the city. In 1903 was created the Papafion Orphanage, in which, with model the orphanages of Napoli and Venice in the baroque period, which operated for the inmates as conservatories as well, special attention was given to the teaching of music. In 1909 – 1980 functioned the philharmonic orchestra of Papafi as a complete orchestra of wind instruments. The orchestra, which participated in all the religious and cultural manifestations of the turk-administered Greek Community, welcomed in 1912 the liberating Greek troops. Since then it gave a large number of concerts for the entertainment of the citizens and also took part in various religious and national manifestations (Themelis, 1985: 457).

In 1912 was founded the military band of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Army Corps.

In 1937 was founded and in 1938 first operated the Philharmonic Orchestra of the Municipality of Thessaloniki, which is actively present until today in the various manifestations of the community, in parades, litanies and open air concerts, entertaining the people. As conductors of the orchestra served various important musicians, such as K. Panagopoulos, Em. Aekaterinis, Ep. Floros, N. Astrinidis and others. In 1937 was created the Philharmonic Orchestra of the music-gymnastic Society “Thermaikos” of the Trainmen of Thessaloniki under the conductor Em. Aekaterinis, which operated till 1951.

In 1944 was created the band of the National Institution “Aristotle” and in 1955 the band of the Police (Themelis 1985: 485; [http://www.thessaloniki.gr/portal/page/portal/Dioikitikes Ypiresies](http://www.thessaloniki.gr/portal/page/portal/Dioikitikes_Ypiresies); Album, 2007: 9, 11 – 14; Album, 2006, 138).

The first symphonic orchestra in Thessaloniki was the orchestra of the establishment White Tower (in 1919) with its conductor the musician Evripidis Kokkinidis. It consisted of approximately 20 musicians and it was reinforced with other musicians according to the demands of the repertoire. In the concerts were presented works of European Music of various eras, among

them concerts for solo instruments and orchestra, as well as extracts of operas and operettas.

The creation of a permanent symphonic orchestra in Thessaloniki constituted a permanent demand both of the musicians and the music loving audience of Thessaloniki, and various attempts were made towards this end.

In 1959, thanks to the efforts of the then Director of the State Conservatory Solon Michailidis, was created the Symphonic Orchestra of Northern Greece as part of the State Conservatory. In 1969 the orchestra became an independent state organization under the name State Orchestra of Thessaloniki. It comprised 70 musicians, whereas today it has almost 100. Distinguished musicians served as its conductors, in chronological sequence: Solon Michailidis, George Thymis, Alkis Baltas, Karolos Trikolidis, Kosmas Galileas, Constantinos Patsalides, Leonidas Kavakos, Mikis Michailidis, Myron Michailidis and Alexandros Myrat. With the orchestra have cooperated notable Greek and foreign conductors and soloists (Themelis, 1985: 464 – 466; [http://www.yppo.gr/1/g\\_1540.jsp?obj.id=833](http://www.yppo.gr/1/g_1540.jsp?obj.id=833))

At the end of the 1950s the Municipality of Thessaloniki created a symphonic orchestra with Epaminondas Floros as conductor, which, however, could not operate for a long time because of financial difficulties. In 1987 is created once again the Municipal orchestra with Kosmas Galileas as its conductor. Its following conductors were the distinguished musicians Dimitris Agrafiotis, Vyron Fidetzis and Charis Iliadis. The orchestra has a rich artistic activity and with it cooperated many notable conductors and soloists, whereas it has presented to the public several works of Greek composers (Themelis, 1985: 464; <http://www.thessaloniki.gr/portal/page/portal/Dioikitides/Ypiresies>).

In Thessaloniki were also founded some Mandolin orchestras. The most ancient and with a 20 years artistic activity was the Mandolin orchestra of Thessaloniki which was established in 1915 by Michail Chadjimichail and operated also as a school of music. It also comprised an 80 member choir. In 1935 the school stopped functioning and its members were incorporated into the choir and the Mandolin orchestra of the Thermaikos society (Xanthopoulou, 1991: 28 - 29). The choir of the music-gymnastic society Thermaikos of the trainmen of Thessaloniki was established in 1925 and then

followed the establishment of the mandolin orchestra, which successfully operated until 1951.

Generally speaking, Thessaloniki showed a particularly rich artistic activity with respect to choirs. Actually it is considered as the city with the largest number choirs in Greece. During the decades following the liberation of the city (1912) were founded and thrived choirs of Conservatories, of musical schools, educational institutions, musical corporations and societies, Municipalities and Districts of the city of Thessaloniki, Church Choirs, children choirs and various others. Many of these choirs present a significant artistic activity with many concerts both in Greece and abroad, and with the participation in various competitions and choir festivals (Album, 2006:135 - 145). Indicatively are mentioned: the choir of the State Conservatory of Thessaloniki (1916 - today), the choir of the musical section of the University Clubs of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (1953 - today), the Choir of the American College "Anatolia" (1924 - today), the choir of the Trinity Church (1967 - today), the choir of the Municipality of Thessaloniki (1955 - 1998), the Mixed choir of Thessaloniki (1987 - today), (Xanthopoulou 1991: 16-20, 104; [http://www.koa.gr/?i=koa.el.koa\\_artists.354](http://www.koa.gr/?i=koa.el.koa_artists.354))

In the area of Byzantine Music, Thessaloniki has to show remarkable activity with the creation both of classes of Byzantine Music and of Choirs. Especially important is the presence of the Association of Church singers of Thessaloniki "Ioannis Damaskinos", which has operated since 1818 until today.

Concerning Opera, various institutions and persons organized occasionally opera performances in Thessaloniki. The Society of the Friends of Music developed a melodramatic movement in the City (around 1905), the State Conservatory of Thessaloniki organized melodramatic performances, Sotos Vasiliades organized, in cooperation with the National Opera of Athens, a Lyrical Week in 1952, whereas in recent years the National Opera gave each year performances in Thessaloniki. In 1978 was created by the Director of the State Theatre of Northern Greece [STNG] Spyros Evangelatos an Opera Section within the STNG, which was dissolved after his departure from the Direction of STNG. The Chamber Opera of Thessaloniki was created in

1997 with the initiative of the organization “Thessaloniki Cultural capital of Europe 1997” as an independent section of STNG. In 2002 the Ministry of Culture renamed it to “Opera of Thessaloniki” granting its financial autonomy, but in 2011 it was revoked as an independent section and was incorporated into the State Theatre of Northern Greece. The Opera presented various performances of the international repertoire, with significant Greek and foreign performers. Important productions of opera has realized the Thessaloniki Megaron of Music since 2001 and on with great appeal to the public of Thessaloniki.

An important role in the musical events of the city played the numerous personal recitals and concerts of chamber music realized since the foundation of the State Conservatory of Thessaloniki (1914) until the present.

These concerts, given by Greeks – mostly Thessalonians – and foreign distinguished musicians, were organized mainly by educational and musical institutions, artistic associations and cultural societies of the city. Thessaloniki showed during the decades excellent instrument soloists and singers, as well as many remarkable ensembles of chamber music (duo, trio, quartets etc.).

### **Cultural associations - cultural societies, concert-halls, cultural institutions, music competitions**

The founding of cultural associations and societies gave new impetus to the cultural development in the city.

In 1922 was founded the Association of Musicians of Thessaloniki, which for decades contributed to the musical activity of the city.

In the decade of 1950, after the postwar abatement, begins an important effort for musical development, with the creation of the “Society of the friends of Theatre and Music”, the “Association of conservatories graduates of Thessaloniki” and the “Macedonian Cultural Society “Techni (Art)”. The “Association of conservatories graduates of Thessaloniki”, established in 1953, organized up to date numerous concerts, seminars, lectures etc. It also created in 1953 the Strings Orchestra of Thessaloniki, comprising 20 musicians with Stavros Papanastasiou as its Conductor. From 1985 to date it organized a musical competition for instruments and singing,

originally meant only for students of Northern Greece while later it became state wide (Mandakas, 1963: 642; <http://www.orpheusoloists.com/saoth.htm>).

The Macedonian cultural Society "Techni" was established in 1951 with the objective of cultivation and dissemination of letters and Arts. With respect to the development of music it created the Choir "Tasos Pappas" and the "Ensemble of old music". It organized a musical competition for instruments and singing and organized numerous concerts and lectures (Themelis, 1985: 467; <http://www.tehnithes.gr/texni/istoriko/>).

Musical performances were organized also by the foreign cultural institutes, such as the German Goethe institute, the French institute, the Italian institute, the British council and the American Centre.

The most important cultural institution in Thessaloniki is "Demetria". The Institution started in October 1966 by the Greek Tourist Organization, whereas since 1973 the organization was undertaken by the Municipality of Thessaloniki. In 1995 "Demetria" was enlisted in the European Union of International Festivals. Today it constitutes the second greater Festival of the country, after the Greek Festival of Athens and Epidaurus Festival, and comprises numerous cultural manifestations, among which also important musical activities (Themelis, 1985: 471; <http://el.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demetria>).

In 1969 was organized for the first time the "Music week of young artists" at the initiative of certain talented young musicians of the city and with the support of the Thessaloniki International Fair. This institution underwent various changes, until it was shaped in 1983 into the "International music days". Within the framework of these musical activities, was also organized the international competition of chamber music of the Hellexpo International Fair.

In 1983 begins the functioning of the "Vafopoulian Cultural Centre", a donation of George and Anastasia Vafopoulou to the Municipality of Thessaloniki. In this Centre are organized every year numerous artistic activities, of fine arts, music, prose, theatre etc (Album, 2008 – 2009:8). Referring to music, significant is the organization mostly of personal recitals and of concerts of chamber music.

The municipality of Thessaloniki created in 1985 the Centre of Music, which operates since 1992 as the Direction for Musical Activities with two sections, the section of Musical Education [see § 2. Musical Education] and the section of Municipal Musical Ensembles. To the second section belong the Municipal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Municipal Choir (dissolved in 1998), the 5 children choirs of the Municipal Districts (they operated from 1987 to 1998), the Ensemble of Traditional Music (operated from 1989 – 2001, when its operation was canceled) and the Symphonic Orchestra. Also in the Centre's Activities Hall are realized many concerts and musical manifestations.

In 2000 is created after yearlong expectation and demands both of the musicians and the music loving public of Thessaloniki, the Megaron of Music of Thessaloniki (first building) which gave different breath to the artistic life of the city. Later on was completed the second building, which encompasses a smaller hall of Activities. The main activities of the Organization of Megaron of Music Thessaloniki, which operates under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture are three: the creation of in-house cultural productions, the hosting of cultural productions of other Institutions as well as the hosting of congressional and other similar manifestations (Nestor, 2003:11).

Remarkable musical manifestations are organized by the Department of Music Science and Art (MSA) of the University of Macedonia in its ceremonial Amphitheatre and in other halls of Thessaloniki and other cities of Northern Greece. Since May 2009 was established the cultural Institution of "May Methexis" with the organization of concerts, seminars, lectures and congresses. The Department MSA also organizes three musical competitions: the Musical competition of Composition, the Musical competition of Chamber Music and the competition for the best interpretation of a concert. The Department of Musical Studies of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki also organizes concerts, often with works of contemporary Thessalonian composers. Besides, both University Departments are active in the organization of congresses.

## **Composers**

In Thessaloniki were born or/and were active remarkable composers, such as:

Dimitris Lalas (1844 - 1911), Emilios Riadis (1880 - 1935), Loris Margaritis (1895 - 1953), Vasilis Theophanous (1895 - 1984), Solon Michailidis (1905 - 1979), Sotos Vasiliadis (1905 - 1990), Nickos Astrinidis (1921 - 2011) and the contemporaries Dimitris Themelis (1931), Kostas Nikitas (1940 - 1989), Sarandis Kassaras (1948), Alkis Baltas (1948), Ilias Papadopoulos (1951), Anastasios Vasiliadis (1955), Christos Samaras (1956), Thanassis Zervas (1959), Michalis Lapidakis (1960), Dimitris Papageorgiou (1965), Evangelia Kikou (1965), Leontios Chadjileontiadis (1966), Kostas Tsougras (1966), George Kyriakakis (1967) and others.

## **2. Musical Education**

### **Conservatories**

The first institution of musical education in Thessaloniki was the Music Section of the Papafion Philharmonic School, in which studied through the years over three thousand wind instrument players [see over Philharmonics]. These musicians became members of military bands, philharmonic and military orchestras and further on of the three state orchestras (Athens State Orchestra, Thessaloniki State Orchestra and the National Opera Orchestra).

The Graikos Conservatory, founded in 1911 by Sotiris Graikos student of the composer Dimitris Lalas, was the first conservatory of the city. It comprised classes of piano, violin and other instruments. In it taught distinguished musicians, as the Italians Tiberio and Marchesini, Euripidis Kotsanidis, Epaminondas Floros and others (Themelis, 1997: 298).

In 1914 was founded the State Conservatory of Thessaloniki, the only up to now State Conservatory in Greece. Inspirer for its establishment was the then Prime Minister of Greece Eleutherios Venizelos, whereas the introduction for voting the law in the Parliament was made by the then Education Minister Ioannis Tsimokos. The organization and direction of the conservatory were entrusted to the distinguished musician Alexander Kazantzis, who had studied and worked as violin and chamber music professor at the conservatory in Brussels (Themelis, 1985: 485 - 459). In the State Conservatory operated the

following classes: Theoretical Preparatory, Preparatory for instruments (since 1921), Instruments, Singing and Melodramatic, Theoretical and Byzantine (Leondief, 1991: 23). In these classes taught many distinguished musicians of international renown, such as Theo Kaufmann, Emilios Riadis, Loris Margaritis, George Vakalopoulos, Vasilis Theophanous and numerous others. Later Directors of the State Conservatory were the distinguished musicians, composers and musicologists Solon Michailidis (from 1957 to 1971), Dimitris Themelis (from 1971 to 1985) and others. In the State Conservatory operates a Symphonic Orchestra and a Choir. Generally the State Conservatory was for many decades the main bearer of musical development and education in Thessaloniki and in it studied remarkable musicians of Greece many of which with international career (Album, 2007a; Themelis, 1997: 299; Diamantopoulou, 1991: 37 – 38; Kopsachilis, 1994: 31).

In 1926 was founded by Epaminondas Floros the Macedonian Music School, which in 1927 was renamed into the Macedonian Conservatory. Within its framework operated the Macedonian choir and the Macedonian Symphonic Orchestra.

In 1930 entrusted Manolis Kalomiris to Sotos Vasiliadis with the task to organize and direct an Annex of the National Conservatory of Athens in Thessaloniki, which operated until 1939, when Vasiliadis went to Athens (Symeonidou, 1995: 67).

In 1942 Ioannis Mitsopoulos founded a music school, which in 1973 became an Annex of the National Conservatory of Athens and since 1976 operates as the Conservatory of Northern Greece.

From 1970s up today were founded several Conservatories, such as the Music School of Thessaloniki (1976), the Music School of Lazaros Delidimos (1976), the New Conservatory of Thessaloniki (1979), an Annex of the Attikon Conservatory of Athens (1983), Synchronon Conservatory of Thessaloniki (1985), the Conservatory Music College (1990), the Conservatory Philippos Nakas (1997) as an Annex of the correspondent Conservatory in Athens and others.

Since the 1980s and on were also established several municipal Conservatories. Initially were founded the two municipal Conservatories of Thessaloniki, the first in 1988 and the second in 1993. In December 2011 was

founded the Municipal Center of Music and Dance of Thessaloniki with the parallel function of two sections – the Municipal Conservatories and the Municipal School of Dance. Municipal Conservatories were also founded in Themi (1994), Kalamaria (1999), Ambelokipi, Polichni, Stavroupoli, Neapoli – Sykies (2001) and others. All the Conservatories of Thessaloniki are not classified to any educational degree.

### **Second Degree of Music Education**

The new bearer of the music education constitute the Music School of Thessaloniki, Gymnasium and Lycée, that was founded in 1992. In it operate the directions of European, Traditional and Byzantine music. Several instruments of the two first directions are taught, such as piano, violin, violoncello, saxophone, oboe, horn, traditional clarinet, tampuras, kanonaki, percussions. Also operate an orchestra, a choir and several music ensembles. The teaching staff of the school comprises approximately 120 members and in it study approximately 320 pupils.

### **University music education**

Turning point for the musical education in Greece constituted the founding in 1989 of the Department of Musical Studies at the School of Fine Arts of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Thus, for the first time in Greece was created a bearer of University music education. The Department started operating in the academic year 1985 – 1986. In 2002 it moved into the new building of the University campus at Themi. Within the Department operate two directions of studies: musicology – music pedagogy (the two directions of studies are not yet separated into independent directions) and composition. The Teaching and Research Faculty of the Department comprises 20 members, the Special Laboratory Teaching Personnel comprises 3 members and the teaching instructors under the presidential Decree 407/80 11 members. Moreover, in the Department teach five members of other Departments (<http://www.mus.auth.gr>).

In 1996 was established at the University of Macedonia the Department of Music Science and Art, which started operating in the academic year 1998 – 99. In this Department operate today four directions of

studies: European (classical) music, Byzantine Music, Greek Traditional (demotic) music and Contemporary Music. Thus, for the first time in Thessaloniki are served Applied Music Studies at a University Education level. The Teaching and Research Faculty of the Department comprises 26 members, the Special Laboratory Teaching personnel 3 members, the Special Technical Laboratory personnel has 1 member and the teaching instructors under the presidential Decree 407/80 29 members. The Department has a symphonic orchestra, a choir and a large number of musical ensembles both of European as of Traditional Music (<http://www.uom.gr>).

As it is shown by the above historical retrospective, the music activity and education in Thessaloniki followed an upward course, with culmination especially in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is to be wished that this activity would continue without any hindrance, despite the present economic crisis, from which so hardly suffers Greece. Because culture offers people a dream and quality of life.

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