Abstract: This article is focused on Nikos Mamangakis, one of the most ambiguous art-popular composers in Greece. His compositions for cinema are also quite provocative. Mamangakis’ cooperation with Finos Film (the major Greek film production company in post-war era) and, on the contrary, his collaboration with Nikos Perakis (one of the most well-known contemporary film directors) vividly illustrate the transformation of film music from the so-called Old to the New Greek Cinema. Through an overall analysis of two of Mamangakis’ most important film scores, I hope to reveal the transition process from a realistic modernist perspective to a postmodern one. A second goal is to present critically the general ideological shift in Greek socio-cultural sphere following the seventies change of polity. This paper underlines the perception of Greek music culture as a special case of Western music, which however holds its very distinct stylistic idioms, cultural practices and ideological functions.

Keywords: Nikos Mamangakis, Greek film music, art-popular music, ethnomusicology, anthropology

Somehow, they [i.e. film directors] are right! Somehow, they can hear what their film needs better than you do. They don’t know how to describe it, that’s true. However, it’s them who know exactly what their movie wants.

Nikos Mamangakis

First of all, I would like to comment on the key theoretical concepts that underline the main orientation of this paper. I conceive the terms

1 I would like to thank the musicologists Dr. Ekaterini (Katy) Romanou and Dr. Melita Milin for organising the panel Into Modernism and out of It: The Balkan Rites of Passage, during the 18th International Musicological Society Congress Transitions (University of Zurich, 10–15 July 2007), where I presented a draft copy of this article, as well as for their endorsement concerning the research project about Greek and Serbian music culture through a Balkan and European perspective. I would also like to thank my colleagues, the members of the Greek musicological team from the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, for their collaboration within the above project. Finally, I would like to mention the Propontis Foundation and the Hellenic Culture Organisation for financially supporting this assignment.

'modernism' and 'postmodernism' not as contrasting, as they are usually regarded, but as existing in a dialogical continuum, where each one stands only by the other’s presence. Therefore, ‘modernism’ refers to the culture of modernity, which is the pre-industrial and industrial era covering the late sixteenth until the mid-twentieth century. During this period, rationalism, materialism and capitalism dominated the western world. On the other hand, since postmodernity ranges from the late twentieth century until today, ‘postmodernism’ is used to describe the way of life after the modernity era and implies aspects of contemporary cultural, socio-political and economical areas, such as commercialisation, consumerism, fragmentation, globalisation and the critique of authorities. I also use the term ‘rites of passage’ in its anthropological sense to describe those rituals that indicate a person’s transition from one stage of cultural status to another. For me, ‘rites of passage’ stands for any symbolic liminal change that goes beyond the margins of binary constructions. By means of post-modern logic, this paper deals with a complex ‘rite of passage’ involving personal, theoretical, performative and historical dimensions. Namely, it is the first written-in-English presentation of my ongoing work about Greek film music; it adopts an ethnomusicological-anthropological approach to film music; it deals with an eccentric film composer; and it is connected with a crucial historical period in Greece.

Film musicology was established as a discipline in the mid 1980’s, but it was introduced in Greece only recently. It compounds several methodologies borrowed from different areas such as cinema, music and cultural studies and aims towards analysing the relationship between music and the screen. My methodology is not restricted to the content

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analysis of films or to a pure functionalistic study of their music but emphasizes the context that formulates the filmic soundscape. In other words, I deal with cinema and its music not as absolute artwork but as an open-ended text. Furthermore, I consider cinema to be a locale for several representations and negotiations. My attempt is to portray the ways in which film music contributes to the shaping and projecting of various personal preferences and cultural confrontations by underlining the performativity of film music practice and questioning the filmic audiovisual representation. In such an ethnomusicological-anthropological approach to film music, concepts such as ethnic identity, cultural policy, intercultural influences, and socio-cultural transitions are critically explored and assessed.\(^6\) As the anthropologist William O. Beeman states, film music is related to music as an aspect of society’s culture in general. Thus, the consideration of film music practices formulates a broader model for the study of cultural morphemes of a particular society. And vice-versa, the status of music as a part of a society’s performing art culture provides a conception of the function of music as a filmic practice.\(^7\)

The ideological confrontations between the western and the eastern bloc of the cold-war polarity represented a nodal point in the turn of cultural politics, regarding both its artistic and its educative dimensions in European countries after the end of the Second World War. Under the circumstances of political propaganda, international forces founded institutes in various countries that became systematically active in the fields of the fine arts and sciences. More specifically, during the early post-war years the base was laid for new, pioneering quests and experimentations in western art music. The extensive use of atonality in combination with the unavoidable transition to total serialism, the use of aleatory techniques, the birth of electronic and electro-acoustic music,

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along with the spread of music theatre and multi-art works produced novel creations and dialects within a web of musical universalism.\(^8\)

During the same period in Greece the socio-political, economic and cultural situation was characterised by great fluidity and successive mutations, at least until the 1970’s change of policy. The rise of the urban population along with modifications in the structure of production, the change in consumer practices and thus of personal expectations, the boosting and the thickening of the political course on the level of formal institutions and mass politics transformed the image of Greek society and culture into different ideological and material preferences.\(^9\)

Specifically, in the case of contemporary Greek music from the 1950’s onwards, a vivid mobility was evident both within Greece and abroad. Greek art composers shaped modern tendencies through the fusion of indigenous (local or national) tradition with elements of western music culture. The composers’ adjustability to the demands of current musical creation was related to the fact that the innovations adopted by western pioneers included features that were very coherent to those of the Greek musical tradition, such as the use of micro-intervals and modes, free or controlled improvisation, as well as various special techniques of vocal and instrumental performance.\(^10\)

In Greece, the popular song began to flourish along with avant-garde music. Music fusions in this field started with the challenge to bind together ‘western’ and ‘eastern’ elements, but not in the same way that avant-garde also attempted this. Various personalities in Greek musical and cultural life in general became involved in this process one way or another. The point of reference turns out to be the ‘Mikis Theodorakis vs. Manos Hadjidakis’ contrast. Beyond these two composers, whose

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work and attitude deeply influenced their current as well as following
generations of musicians, some others moved towards a similar frame-
work, each one with distinct personal aesthetic, ideological and socio-
political beliefs. More particularly, the so-called ‘art popular songs’ be-
gan to shape a new music genre. Its main characteristics were the inner
ambiguity – as is shown through the combination of the terms ‘art’ and
‘popular’ in its name –, the composer’s formal music education, the use
of poetic lyrics, and its massive acceptance by audiences.11

This article is focused on Nikos Mamangakis, one of the most am-
biguous art-popular composers in Greece. His compositions for cinema
are also quite provocative. Mamangakis’ cooperation with Finos Film
(the major Greek film production company in the post-war era)12 and, in
contrast, his collaboration with Nikos Perakis (one of the most well-
known contemporary film directors) vividly illustrate the transformation
of film music from the so-called Old to the New Greek Cinema.13 Through an
overall analysis of two of Mamangakis’ most important film scores, I hope
to reveal the transition process from a realistic modernist perspective to a
postmodern one. A second goal is critically to present the general ideologi-
cal shift in Greek socio-cultural sphere following the 1970’s change of pol-
icy. This paper underlines the perception of Greek music culture as a special
case in Western music, which however maintains its very distinct stylistic
idioms, cultural practices and ideological functions.

Nikos Mamangakis was born in Crete. He studied classical theory in
Athens and composition with electronic media in Munich. He has written
many pieces for these types of music but he has tried to maintain a rather
personal musical idiom regarding Greek folk music features, sound organi-
sation and structural methodology. Besides that, he has worked on operatic

11 See Kostas Mylonas, *Istoria tou Ellinikou Tragoudiou* [Greek Song History] (Athens:
Kedros, 1985), vol. II and Gail Holst-Warhaft, ‘Song, Self-Identity and the Neohel-
12 For a detailed history of the Finos Film company, see Iasonas Triantafyllidis, *Tainies
gia Filima: Ena Aferoma ston Filopimena Fino ke tis Tainies tou* [Films for Kissing: A
Tribute to Filopim Finos and his Films] (Athens: Exantas, 2000) and Stelios
Kymionis, ‘I Viomichania tou Kinimatografikou Theamatos stin Ellada: I Periptosi
tis Finos Film’ [‘Film Spectacle Industry in Greece: The Case of Finos Film’] in
Christina Agriantoni and Lida Papastefanaki (eds.), *Tekmiria Viomichanikis Istorias
[Records of Industrial History]* (Athens: Greek Section of the International Commit-
13 For a useful discussion on the periodisation and the main characteristics of Greek
cinema, see the collective volumes, both edited by Diamantis Leventakos, *Opseis tou
Neou Ellinikou Kinimatografou* [Aspects of New Greek Cinema] (Athens: Centre of
Audiovisual Studies, 2002) and *Xanavleontas ton Palio Elliniko Kinimatografo
[Reviewing Old Greek Cinema]* (Athens: Centre of Audiovisual Studies, 2002).
forms as a distinct part of popular melodrama, paying special attention to the use of voice and to song forms. He has also composed for various festivals and concerts, as well as for television series in Greece and abroad. Mamanagakis has always been eccentric in dealing with his double participation in Greek music culture: the avant-garde and the mainstream.\textsuperscript{14}

I Daskala me ta Chrysa Mallia [The Golden Haired Teacher] was released in 1969 during the first years of the military occupation in Greece. It was produced by Finos Film under the direction of Dinos Dimopoulos. Thematically it concerns a love story that evolves during the Greek-Albanian war.\textsuperscript{15} It is about a young teacher who takes over a primary school in the Greek countryside. The schoolmistress truly enjoys her profession. She recommends a brand new pedagogical system for educating the pupils but her attitude is opposed to that of the children’s parents. She later falls in love with the son of the president of the village council but during their marriage ceremony they separate from each other due to the outbreak of the war. The soldier’s later comeback will be heartbreaking.

Perhaps the most important thing about this movie is the appearance of two of the most popular Greek actors of this period, Aliki Vougiouklaki and Dimitris Papamichael.\textsuperscript{16} Although both Vougiouklaki and Papamichael were famous for their realistic singing in other films of the Old Greek Cinema, this time they were led by Mamangakis beyond a pure diegetic musical sequence (that is music as a part of the narrative sphere of the film).\textsuperscript{17} It might be that the composer did not want the spectators subliminally to identify the film’s music with previous scores of other similar movies.


\textsuperscript{15} Lydia Papadimitriou analyses this movie from a different perspective. According to cinema studies – and especially ‘genre theory’ – the film is considered to be a ‘female war melodrama’. See Lydia Papadimitriou, ‘Greek War Film as Melodrama: Women, Female Stars and the Nation as Victim’ in Yvonne Tasker (ed.), \textit{Action and Adventure Cinema} (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 297–308.

\textsuperscript{16} For more information about the Aliki Vougiouklaki’s nationally renowned persona, see Lydia Papadimitriou, \textit{The Greek Film Musical: A Critical and Cultural History} (London: McFarland, 2005), 123–140.

\textsuperscript{17} The distinction between the ‘diegetic’ and the ‘non-diegetic’ role of music in film was first cited critically in Claudia Gorbman, \textit{Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music} (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 11–30.
Most of the film’s music plays a non-diegetic role – it is neither visible on the screen nor is it implied to be present in the action– and employs the basic stylistic and aesthetic principles of the western classical background score. Mamangakis prefers symphonic orchestration with emphasis given primarily to strings in order to create a stable harmonic frame but also transparent melodic lines. Secondly, he uses rhythmic percussion to establish the beat section as well as wind instruments and melodic percussion for the specific colouring of the music. Moreover, the composer applies the leitmotif technique to make a distinction between the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’ characters of the film and some choral parts for a more realistic effect.  

The presence of non-diegetic music is dominant, just like a classical Hollywood film score. Furthermore, Mamangakis tries to merge western

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film music clichés (stinger\textsuperscript{19} for sharpness, string pizzicato for lightness, string tremolo for continuous agony, military band orchestration for marching rhythms, solo flute for lyric passages, solo violin and harp for melodramatic scenes, solo cello for erotic incidents, bass ostinato for pending seriousness, aleatoric and atonal style for misty atmosphere) with ethnic/national ones (folkloristic music and dance groups, art and popular music and dance aspects mixture, traditional instruments like santour and lute, modal melodies in five-tone scales, chimes, flute, violin and xylophone for the Greek rural soundscape).\textsuperscript{20}

The music of Nikos Mamangakis reveals a modernistic mode of filmic representation, especially through the way that he musically visualises the static dipoles of Greek culture of this period, such as ‘good vs. bad’, ‘urban vs. rural’, ‘male vs. female’, ‘love vs. war’ and ‘art vs. popular’. All these attributes aim towards an elitist and moralistic ideology of the Greek bourgeoisie together with the militaristic and nationalist orientation of the colonels of the military junta. The superiority of the non-diegetic music is actually evident in this movie. It is related to Anahid Kassabian’s distinction regarding the two categories of audience identification with film music: the ‘assimilating’ and the ‘affiliating’.\textsuperscript{21}

During the assimilating identification, the audience perceives music as a strictly controlled condition. See, for instance, the original background scores that reproduce aspects of the hegemony of the post-romantic and neoclassic Hollywood tradition. In contrast, through affiliating identification spectators relate to the film’s music by means of an open, totally subjective and emergent procedure. This association, which principally involves compilation scores, supports the creation of a multiform experience and it has to do with popular songs along with various cultural projections. As it appears, Mamangakis’ music in this film functions through the assimilating identification process.

Nikos Perakis’ *Loufa kai Parallaghi* [Loafing and Camouflage] was shown in Greece in 1984, ten years after the end of the dictatorship, and had great artistic and commercial success. The film’s soundtrack was released two years later, in 1986. The series of the musical pieces in the

\textsuperscript{19} In film music theory, *stinger* indicates that the action has taken a surprising turn. This is usually presented by a sforzando chord or sharply marked short gesture.


album is not the same as in the film itself and this creates a different internal structure and the special dynamics of the film’s music.22

Loufa kai Parallaghi [Loafing and Camouflage]  
(Nikos Perakis, 1984)

The film’s story starts a few days before the 21st of April of 1967, when a group of colonels initiated military rule in Greece. It is about a team of soldiers who face the dictatorship in the course of their military service. The main characters, a soldier (a professional cinematographer) as well as his associates, who all served in the army at the Greek borderlines, are transferred to Athens to support the recently founded Armed Forces Television. The Cinematographic Unit of the Greek Army produced propaganda films and newsreels and it was responsible for entertaining the troops and other charity organisations with movie screenings. While being close to their relatives and friends, these soldiers never stopped being subject to questioning by their senior officers for their controversial political beliefs.

The film’s narration combines its own cinematic temporality with other heterochronic elements. It mixes reality with fiction and socio-political events with everyday life. The narration is not limited to a detailed approach to the exact facts but it also refers to more specific and subjective topics such as military service, family, friends and other interpersonal affairs, cultural and political stereotypes. This film—in connection with its music—constitutes an utterance of irony, contradiction, ambiguity and parody that emerges through the postmodern discourse of both the director and the composer.  

In this particular case, the postmodern character of Mamangakis’ music is not only a matter of contemporary art conception, but stands out as a political statement. In other words, the critical perspective articulated by the composer should not be reduced to a stylistic expression. Mamangakis’ and Perakis’ political discourse rests on a straightforward critique of the representation itself. The satire and irony of postmodern discourse do not reflect ahistorical and apolitical artistic forms, as it is usually believed. This film transfers the concept of the construction of the past from an all inclusive, general and absolute notion of History to a more dialogical and reflective view of life-stories.

The main music theme is heard for the first time during the film’s opening titles as a non-diegetic military march. But it is not just a usual march. Mamangakis’ music is not conventional in this movie. He seeks new ways to go beyond traditional impressions and interpretations: the lack of symmetry as interference to the regular rhythmic movement; the syncopation as destabilisation of the consistent accents; the appoggiaturas and other ornaments as transformation of the flat melodic lines; the unexpected endings and the sophisticated connections as interfusion of the main harmonic structure.

Concerning the film’s soundtrack, the music as a whole serves a meta-diegetic function. The form of character variations (meaning various stylistic transformations of the main music theme) is perhaps the most frequently used one in the film’s music. This is similar to the form of fantasia, in which the main theme becomes the starting point for a series of free—almost improvised—variations. The film’s main music

23 One of the functions of diegetic/realistic music in film is its power to create ironic atmosphere in a more natural way that non-diegetic/non-realistic music does. See Gorbman, Unheard Melodies, 23. Feminist and postmodern studies theorist Linda Hutcheon suggests that irony, satire and parody may be critically used as a means of historical consciousness and cultural dynamics. See Linda Hutcheon, ‘Irony, Satire, Parody’, Poétique 46 (1981), 140–156. For an anthropological approach of postmodern irony, see James W. Fernandez and Mary Taylor Huber (eds.), Irony in Action: Anthropology, Practice and the Moral Imagination (University of Chicago Press, 2001).
theme appears in two groups of ‘character variations’: a) the ‘nostalgic’ variations with solo guitar instrumentation, which refer sentimentally to the past and b) the ‘ironic’ variations with Greek popular music (bouzouki and folk clarinet) orchestration, which mix up the military with the traditional (urban and rural) expression. The most interesting part of the realistic popular songs in this film is the satirical and metaphorical commentary of their lyrics, implying the Greek folk and suburban traditions of the demotika and the rebetika songs.24

Mamangakis and Perakis also simulate the stereotyped uses of western music in films. Hence, the music of Richard Wagner (The Ride of the Valkyries) is presented as colossal and glorious, accompanying war documentaries and propaganda films while, on the other hand, the music of Maurice Ravel (Boléro) is used as background in the sensual scenes of a Greek erotic movie. In addition, the film satirises the outdated practice of film song play-back through the composers’ intertextual self-references. Mamangakis uses an older melodramatic song of his in other ironic contexts, such as ‘lounge music’, ‘dining music’, ‘tragic music’ or ‘humorous music’, creating a kind of musical self-parody.25

Before closing this presentation, I would like to make some comments that I think are useful and which I believe summarise Mamangakis’ pathway in the field of Greek film music production as well as his position at the post-war music scene in Greece. I think that Mamangakis succeeds in blending some of the ‘formal’ and the ‘traditional’ aspects of Greek music culture with the ‘unofficial’ and the ‘popular’ ones. Thus, he creates new hybrid musical forms and soundscapes, putting forth a dialectical critique. By blending together high and popular styles, he proves the way for the transition from modernism to postmodernism. Mamangakis presence continues to be regarded as controversial and vague, although personally he does not see any paradox in making music within the art and the popular music system at the same time and allowing or even seeking an osmosis between them.

The film music scholar Claudia Gorbman has suggested that ‘we need to start listening to the cinema’s uses of music in order to read

24 For various models of textual analysis of popular music, see Richard Middleton (ed.), Reading Pop: Approaches to Textual Analysis in Popular Music (Oxford University Press, 2000).

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My personal research concerning the practice of film music is based upon Gorbman’s above recommendation. Using a film’s music as a starting point, I try to explore critically the broader context of the movie, but not relying solely on a narrow musicological analysis. Film anthropology considers cinema to be an ethnographic practice and as a vehicle for cultural critique, putting special emphasis on the relationship between power and representation. It is also about how music is transformed into a lived experience for cinema spectators through filmic narration. Working in the field of the anthropology of film music, I take cinema and its music to be not simply artistic creations but cultural performances. Moving away from the positivistic and analytical techniques of classical film theory, according to which filmic images are seen as motionless and soundless pictures, I focus on films as juxtapositions of textual (i.e. audiovisual) and dialogical (i.e. critically reflexive) discourses.

Ник Пулакис

‘ПОСТ’ У ‘МОДЕРНОМ’: ГРЧКА ФИЛМСКА МУЗИКА И ДЕЛО НИКОСА МАМАНГАКИСА
(Резиме)

Студија је посвећена Никосу Мамангакису, једним од најсложенијих композитора уметничко-популарне музике у Грчкој. Његова филмска музика управо је провокативна. Мамангакисова сарадња с филмском кућом „Финос“ (вођећим грчком филмском продуцентском компанијом после Другог светског рата), и његова сарадња с Никосом Перакисом (једним од најпознатијих савремених филмских редитеља), живо илуструју преобрађање филмске музике од тзв. старог до новог грчког филма. Кроз обухватну анализу двеју Мамангакисових најзначајнијих филмских партитура желим

26 Gorbman, Unheard Melodies, 2.
да опишем процес промене од реалистичке модернистичке перспективе до постмодернистичке. Други циљ јесте критичко представљање опште идеолошке промене у грчком друштву и култури, пратећи политичке промене из седамдесетих година. Мислим да је Мамангакис успео у повезивању неких „званичних“ и „традиционалних“ видова грчке музичке културе с „не-званичними“ и „популарними“. Тако он ствара нове хибридне музичке форме и звучне пејзаже. Мешајући високе и популарне стилове, он показује пут промене од модернизма до постмодернизма.

Овај рад наглашава перцепцију грчке музичке културе као посебног случаја западне музике. Наиме, грчка музика поседује своје веома дистинктивне стилске идиоме, културне праксе и идеолошке функције. Моја методологија није ограничена на анализу садржаја филмова нити на чисто функционалистичку студију музике у тим филмовима; она ставља нагласак на контекст који обликује филмске звучне пејзаже. Другим речима, ја се бавим са филмом и филмском музиком, не као апсолутним уметничким делом, већ као „отвореним“ текстом. Осим тога, ја филм посматрам као место неколико репрезентација и посредовања. Настојим да прикажем путеве којима филмска музика доприноси обликовању и изградњи различитих личних склоности и културних конфронтација, наглашавајући перформативност филмске музичке праксе и испитујући филмске аудиовизуалне репрезентације. У таквом, етномузиколошко-антрополошком приступу филмској музici, критички су испитани и оцењени појмови као што су етички идентитет, културна политика, међукултурни утицаји и социо-културна транзиција.

(Превод с енглеског: Александар Васић)

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