



**WARS &  
WORDS**

**46<sup>th</sup> International  
Byron Conference**

**Welcome Mini Concert**

Pianist:

**Athanasios Papasiou**

**Monday 28 June, 20.00-20.30**

## Welcome Mini-Concert

### “Epirotikos dance”

The first piece you will hear tonight is a personal piano transcription of the “Epirotikos dance,” one of the “36 Greek Dances” composed by Nikos Skalkotas in 1933. Skalkotas (1904-1949) was a gifted Greek classical music composer and a fervent advocate of musical Neoclassicism. He wrote in the tonal, atonal, and twelve-tone systems. His “36 Greek Dances” is undoubtedly the best known and most emblematic work of Greek classical music. However, most of the “36 Dances” are practically unknown to the public. In terms of form and musical materials used, “36 Greek Dances” is a radically original work and differs greatly from those of other composers as it is not a mere orchestral arrangement of already existing folk pieces. Nowadays, “Epirotikos dance” is considered to be the most characteristic and recognisable example of classical music based on motifs of Greek traditional music.

### “Marche Hellenique de Nauplie”

The next piece is “Marche Hellenique de Nauplie” by French composer Ferdinand Maurice Bourdin D’ Entremont. Composed in 1887, it is the fruit of the philhellenic musical movement in France. Philhellenism manifested itself in the form of public support in favour of the Greek cause. The Greek Revolution coincided with the transition from Classicism to Romanticism and thus philhellenic works included elements from both periods. Most of the French philhellene songs were original compositions, while others were arrangements adapted to the poetic text of an older melody. Their composition period begins a few years before the Revolution and finishes near the end of the 19th century. There is a plurality of philhellene songs simply imbued with exotic, romantic or adoring elements of the ancient Greek culture, especially in the earlier years of their composition. However, after the end of the War of Independence, names and words like Navarino, Nafplion, Athens, Leonidas, Klephtus, Hellenes, Spartans, Giaour, and Crete started to appear more often in song titles, salon works for piano, and military marches. Apart from the songs which luckily were printed, many others remained handwritten or had been composed for a specific performance. Even though there was a legal obligation to deposit printed music, very few records can be found in libraries.

### “Eglogue”

The next piece is “Eglogue” from Franz Liszt’s *Années de pèlerinage* (Years of Pilgrimage). *Années de pèlerinage* is a three-suite composition for a piano solo. Much of it derives from Liszt’s earlier work and his first major published piano cycle, *Album d’un voyageur*, composed between 1835 and 1838 and published in 1842. *Années de pèlerinage* is widely considered to be the masterwork and summation of Liszt’s musical style. “Eglogue” is the 7<sup>th</sup> piece of his 1<sup>st</sup> suite “Première année: Suisse” (First Year: Switzerland), composed between 1848 and 1854 and published in 1855. “Eglogue’s” caption is from Lord Byron’s *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* (Canto III, stanza 98): “The morn is up again, the dewy morn, / With breath all incense, and with cheek all bloom, / Laughing the clouds away with playful scorn, / And living as if earth contain’d no tomb.”

## “Echi marini”

Finally, “Echi marini” (The Whispering Aegean) is a prelude from the Opera *Il corsaro* (The Corsair) by Giuseppe Verdi. *Il corsaro* is a three-act opera from a libretto by Francesco Maria Piave, performed for the first time at the *Teatro Grande* in Trieste on 25 October 1848. The libretto was based on Lord Byron’s poem *The Corsair: A Tale*, a semi-autobiographical verse tale dedicated to Thomas Moore. *The Corsair* tells the story of Conrad, a wild Aegean pirate chief, a lonely tragic hero who is destined never to enjoy peace or happiness. Byron’s poem was an immediate success, selling over ten thousand copies on its first day of publication, February 1, 1814. In “Echi marini” Verdi imitates the sound of the waves and the air around an unknown island of the Aegean Sea where the Opera is set.



*Athanasios Papaisiou* was born in Thessaloniki. He received a Law Degree from Aristotle University and many graduate grants from the National Fellowship Foundation. He holds a master degree in Sociology of Law with the highest score (10/10). He was a lawyer for twenty years. He also studied piano at the State Conservatory of Thessaloniki (class of Nora Loukidou). He received a Diploma (Excellent and 2nd Prize). He continued his studies at the London College of Music (Department of Thessaloniki - class of George Thymis) and obtained the Diploma of Licentiate and the Diploma of Fellowship (Master).

Furthermore he studied harpsichord and piano accompaniment. He worked as a piano teacher and piano accompanist at many conservatories of Thessaloniki. He participated as a pianist in the Thessaloniki Chamber Opera and in concerts of several orchestras. He was the pianist of many Choirs of Thessaloniki. In the context of the above activities he gave solo recitals and participated in concerts in Greece and abroad (Austria, Spain, South Africa, Hungary, Turkey, etc.) He speaks English, Italian, and German, and reads French and Spanish. He is married and works at the State Conservatory of Thessaloniki.