

## The Ancient Greek *March* by Nikos Skalkottas: A Contribution to the Expansion of the Original Greek Music Repertoire for Wind Orchestra

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### Abstract

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It is widely accepted that most of the original works by Greek composers for wind ensembles are seldom performed, either in Greece or worldwide. Even works with high aesthetic value, despite the international recognition of their composers, have not succeeded in forming part of a “canonic” wind orchestra repertoire. Access to most of them remains difficult, since they exist mostly in manuscript form, often in private collections; their scores include many mistakes, omissions or are difficult to read; recordings are few, of bad quality, or old; finally, there exists no annotated bibliography or a system of gradated difficulty. The present article discusses Nikos Skalkottas’s works for wind ensembles, focusing especially on his *Ancient Greek March* and in particular on its transcription for wind orchestra by the composer himself. Issues of editing and performance practice, including instrumentation, dynamics, articulation and assignment of musicians and parts are also discussed.

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**Keywords:** Skalkottas, Ancient Greek March, Wind orchestra, Wind band, Concert Band, Greek music.

The present article discusses Nikos Skalkottas’s works for wind ensembles, focusing especially on his *Ancient Greek March* and in particular on its transcription for wind orchestra by the composer himself.

It is widely accepted that, despite the global and domestic recognition of Skalkottas’ work, the largest part of his compositional output, with the exception of a small selection of the well-known *36 Greek Dances* for symphony orchestra, is rarely performed and therefore remains more or less unknown not only to the general public, but also to scholars and professional performers. Of the *36 Greek Dances*, only a few selections are usually performed, comprising no more than 1/3 of the collection. For many, Skalkottas is considered even today an inaccessible composer, and in the circles of composers and scholars his prestige was for years more connected to his particular serial system of composition than to other virtues of his technique, such as the incorporation of traditional folk melodies in symphonic genres, his instrumentation technique etc. His works pose great performing difficulties for soloists, orchestras and conductors. It is characteristic that the premiere of the 3<sup>rd</sup> *Concerto for piano and 10 wind instruments*, directed by the late George Hadjinikos in 1969, required no less than three different soloists—one per movement—for its performance and recording (Hadjinikos, 2006). On the other hand, an equally large part of his compositional work was not being performed for years due to its alleged conventionality. Even today, the lay reader that researches the otherwise voluminous literature on Skalkottas, stumbles in several works, which he has never heard of, either live or in recording, and this despite the fact that a large part of Skalkottas’s works have been recorded in recent years (Hadjinikos, 2006). And yet, he is recognized as Greece’s “national” composer.

In the field of wind ensemble repertoire, the case is even worse. It is surprising that Skalkottas wrote a considerable amount of works of great importance and compositional variety and also that he transcribed some of his own works that were at the time considered popular. Among these pieces one finds an arrangement of nine of his *36 Greek Dances* for wind orchestra (hereafter: *Nine Greek Dances*). Despite their supposed popularity, even this version of the work is seldom performed in its original form (at least not in Greece).

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A rough survey on the internet and in the collections of the Music Library of Greece is enough to convince anyone that most of the composer's works for large wind ensembles have not been recorded by any Greek ensemble in their original form. There exist recordings of some of the *36 Dances* by smaller wind ensembles, but they are based either on their original version for symphony orchestra or on transcriptions made by the composer himself for piano or for strings. When it comes to these recordings it is also not possible to ascertain whether the source of the performance is some commercial edition or the manuscripts of the composer (Music Library of Greece, 2016).

Some of the reasons for this poor performing and recording activity of works for wind ensembles could be:

- The absence of a professional symphonic wind ensemble in Greece, along with all the difficulties involved in meeting the required instrumentation and filling all the relevant positions with highly competent performers,
- the relatively low esteem in Greece of wind bands and their repertoire (wind bands in Greece mostly focus on marching-band than concert activities),
- issues of copyright which, together with the grim financial situation in Greece, prohibit hiring and performing expensive music material,
- the reluctance by many professional musicians to penetrate into “off the beaten track” repertoire,
- the technical difficulty of many of these works,
- the lack of readable editions, since a great part of the repertoire exists in manuscript form. The *Nine Greek Dances* seem to be an exception to the last factor: there exists a single commercial performance edition by Schirmer Music —formerly Margun Music— arranged by the late Gunther Schuller (Skalkottas, Schuller, 1991).

It seems that the Greek public, Greek musicians, and the academic community ignore the fact that the composer devoted a significant part of his creation to the wind instruments. Except from the well-known “Cycle Concert”, a series of works conceived and written for oboe, bassoon, trumpet, and piano (*Concertino for oboe*, *Sonata for bassoon*, *Concertino for trumpet* and the two Quartets for the above three instruments with piano), with the purpose of all being presented together at a concert, as well as the *Octet for string quartet, flute, oboe, clarinet and bassoon*, all of which belong to the field of chamber music, there are many other compositions, mostly for large sets of winds, and also transcriptions by the composer himself of his works for wind ensembles. All of these works are listed in Table 1 below. We will briefly deal with them before proceeding with the main subject of this article. Needless to say, Skalkottas skillfully used the timbre and technical qualities of the winds in his other symphonic works as well.

Title	Catalogue Number	Original / arrangement	Year of composition	Type	Performances / Recordings of the original version of the work	Publication / Publisher
Concerto for wind instruments	Lost	Original	1929	Wind Orchestra? Wind ensemble?	First (and only?) performances in 1929	-
Octet	Lost	Original	1929	Chamber music (mixed ensemble)	-	-
Octet	30/31	Original	1931	Chamber music (mixed ensemble)	Various	Universal
Nine Greek Dances for Wind Orchestra	11a	Arranged by the composer	1934-36	Suite	“The President’s Own Marine Band”; The Royal Northern College of Music Wind Orchestra; The Cincinatti Music College Wind Orchestra; etc.	Margun Music, Gunther Schuller
Concerto for violin, viola and wind orchestra	25	Original	1939/40	Concerto	There is no evidence that the work has ever been performed / recorded	Critical edition by G. Zacharias, after 2009
Concerto no. 3 for piano and 10 solo wind instruments	18	Original	1939	Concerto	1969, English Bach Festival Ensemble, Hadjinikos, Binns, Smalley, Rajna; Madge, Christodoulou	Margun Music
Concertino for oboe and piano	28	Original for oboe & piano. Also, arrangement for oboe & chamber orchestra / strings by Gunther Schuller	1939	Chamber music	Various	Margun
Concertino for trumpet and piano	68	Original	1941-43	Chamber music	Various	Margun
Sonata concertante for	67	Original	1943	Chamber music	Various	Margun

Bassoon and piano						
Quartet no.1 for oboe, bassoon, trumpet and piano	40	Original	1941-43	Chamber music	Various	Margun
Quartet no.2 for oboe, bassoon, trumpet and piano	40a	Original	1941-43	Chamber music	Various	Margun
Classical Symphony in A	9	Original	1947	Symphony	Recorded: ERT 1975	Universal
Incidental Music for "Henry V "	-	?	1948	Excerpts with parts of woodwind and brass instruments	?	?
Ancient Greek March	11e	Arranged by the composer	1947-48	March. Stage music?	Premiere: Department of Music Science and Art Wind Orchestra, 2015.	

**Table 1: Table of works by Nikos Skalkottas for winds in chronological order (sources: see reference)**

Of the works listed above, the relatively well-known *Octet*, under list number 31, was composed in 1931 (Mantzourani, 2011, p. 381). It is one of the works that were composed in Berlin during the composer's studies and was discovered by George Hadjinikos in an antique shop (Hadjinikos, 2006). The hitherto lost *Concerto for wind instruments*, premiered in Berlin during the composer's studies in 1929, was included in the first concert given by the composer at the Athens Conservatory, together with other works, on November 23, 1930 (Mantzourani, 2011, p. 44, 380). This was the first (and probably only, since the work has been lost) performance of the work in Greece, at the "Olympia" Theater. In both Berlin and Athens, the composer directed his own works (Romanou, 2009, pp. 168-169). The conservatism of some Athenian critics found an opportunity to manifest itself at the presentation of this very work, if we consider the relevant musical reviews in the press of the period (Mantzourani, 2011, p. 45). Mantzourani reports that the work was composed in 1929, bears the list number 6, and mentions its parts: *Allegro con brio*, *Andante cantabile*, *Allegro ben ritmato e moltovivace*, also suggesting that the manuscript is lost.

Mantzourani mentions another work in the composer's list of works, which is also lost: the *Octet* for flute, clarinet, bassoon, trumpet, trombone and piano trio, composed also in 1929 (Mantzourani, 2011, pp. 35, 381).

The *3rd Concerto for Piano*, a work of major technical difficulty, was composed for piano and 10 solo wind instruments, presumably following the template of the corresponding work of Igor Stravinsky.

On the other hand, the works of the so-called "Cycle-Concert" are supposed to be composed as a complete program of a separate concert, and they were meant to be played by certain soloists (Kiraly, 1986, p. 596), (Demertzis, 1998, p. 3). It is doubtful whether the musicians of that time had the technical background to play these works, namely the *Concertino for oboe and piano* (1939), the *Sonata Concertante for bassoon and piano* (1943) and the *Concertino for trumpet and piano* (1941-1943). The *Concertino for oboe* has been transcribed by Gunther Schuller in two versions, one for string orchestra and one for small symphony orchestra (Mantzourani, 2011, p. 381).

The two quartets for oboe, bassoon, trumpet and piano that complete the “Cycle Concert”, written in 1940-43 in atonal style with an intense humorous element, do not present major technical difficulties. Their first performance took place in Germany in 1968.

The *Classical Symphony in A*, the only “real” symphony written by the composer, stands out of the remaining works of the composer for wind ensembles. This work was composed around 1947. It is written for a very large wind orchestra including 4 flutes, 3 oboes, english horn, clarinet in e-flat, 3 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 6 horns, one cornet, 3 trumpets, 4 trombones, tenor and bass tubas, 2 harps and 8-10 double basses, while percussion includes timpani, bass drum, snare drum, cymbals, xylophone, glockenspiel and marching drum (this group of percussion is also used with slight variations in the *Nine Greek Dances* and in the *Ancient Greek March*). It is notable that the only existing recording of the work is by the ERT Orchestra (Greek Radio Television Orchestra), despite the fact that the work has been published and is therefore accessible. It was recorded in 1975, presented on the 3rd radio program, commented by Ghiorgos Leotsakos and released on CD in the 1990s. It seems that not only Greek but also foreign wind orchestras, as well as musicologists and analysts, avoid in engaging this work, despite its high aesthetic value. According to Papaioannou, whom Leotsakos quotes, the second and third part of the symphony had been performed during Skalkottas’s lifetime (Leotsakos, 1997).

Of the *36 Dances*, Skalkottas selected the following nine, which he transcribed—presumably in various periods—for wind orchestra: *Peloponniakos*, *Makedonikos*, *Kritikos*, *Epirotikos I*, *Kalamatianos*, *Sifneikos*, *Mariori mou–Mariori mou*, *Pedia ke pois to petaxe*, and *Enas Aitos*. According to some scholars, the transcriptions were made in 1933 but this information must be incorrect (Associated Music Publishers web page, 2016). The ‘work’—it seems more than a series of symphonic dances selectively arranged by Skalkottas—is apparently based on the first version of the *36 Dances* for symphony orchestra; there exists a second, revised version of the 1948-49 original work which does not present changes at a compositional level, but it features significant changes in orchestration (Papaioannou, 1990). It appears, from evidence written on the files of the Skalkottas Archive which are kept at the Contemporary Music Research Center (hereafter: CMRC) in Athens, that the piece was transcribed after commission by the conductor of the Markopoulo Wind Band, Yannis Hassiotis, on the occasion of its foundation in 1938. However, there is no evidence that the piece was ever performed during the composer's life (Papaioannou, 1991), although some band parts were recently discovered in the archives of CMRC (Y. Sambrovalakis, personal communication, 2017). Moreover, it seems that no Greek symphonic ensemble has succeeded in completing a full recording (or even a performance) of the cycle, the duration of which is approximately 21 minutes. It is not flattering for a country proud for its contribution to the world culture, that there are no recordings of so many works of its “national” composer by domestic ensembles. The only recordings of the piece which the writer was able to retrieve are by “The President’s Own Marine Band”, by the Royal Northern College of Music Wind Orchestra and by the Cincinnati Musical College Wind Orchestra (Music Library of Greece, 2016). The first two recordings (if identical) are also available on youtube (United States Marine Band, 2016 & Royal Northern College of Music Wind Orchestra, 2016; both sites bearing mistakes in their titles). The recognition of the aesthetic content and the appreciation with which other countries and ensembles embrace works by both their native and foreign composers, especially regarding university curricula and repertoire, should serve as an example.

Skalkottas also composed a *Concerto for violin, viola and wind orchestra* in atonal style. A copy of its score is available in the Music Library of Greece. According to Mantzourani, the years of composition / processing are 1939, 1940 and 1942 (Mantzourani, 2011, p. 383). The work is in two movements: *Allegro vivo*, *Andante ben ritmato*. This work has probably never been performed, let alone recorded. It may have been composed on the example of Kurt Weill’s *Concerto for violin and wind orchestra*. It is well known that Skalkottas was influenced not only by Arnold Schoenberg, with whom he studied composition in Berlin, but from other notable composers of the period as well (Stravinsky, Hindemith, Prokofieff etc.). We also do not know for whom it was composed. The doctoral thesis of George Zacharias includes the first critical edition of this work (Zacharias, 2018).

Kostis Demertzis considers the available excerpts of the incidental music for the radio broadcasting of “Henry V” (1948), which consists of parts of woodwinds, horns and trumpets (Demertzis, 1998, p. 85) in the works of Skalkottas for wind instruments. As mentioned above, these works are extremely rarely performed if at all. On the websites of the respective foreign publishing houses one can see the recent performances of these works (given that the material is borrowed and consequently the corresponding performances are recorded). There are only three reports of performances of the full cycle of the most popular work, the *Nine Greek Dances*, between 2009-2010 by the Royal Northern College of Music Wind Orchestra and the University of Washington Wind Orchestra in Seattle.

The last work with which we will deal in more detail is the *Ancient Greek March* and especially its arrangement by the composer for wind orchestra. The work, along with some other works of the period, such as the *Classical Symphony*, belongs to a series of “modal” compositions. The original version (no. 11 d) (Mantzourani, 2011, p. 386) was written in 1947 for the Lyceum of Greek Women, for a small symphony orchestra (as Skalkottas himself mentions in the manuscript); however the instrumentation takes advantage of all the sounds of wind instruments, along with percussion and harp. It seems that the composer himself transcribed this work for a wind orchestra in 1948 (no. 11 e), for unknown reasons. Both works are being kept in the Skalkottas Archive under file number 591. The file includes a handwritten full score of the original version of the work, the orchestral parts of this version (by an unknown copyist: K. Mantzoros, personal communication, 2016) and the manuscript of the full score of the composer’s arrangement for wind orchestra (with no instrumental parts). Both the original version and its wind orchestral arrangement seem never to have been performed before the Wind Orchestra of the Department of Music Science and Art first presented the arrangement on April 30, 2015 in the Amphitheatre of the University of Macedonia.

Much has been written about the relationship of the composer to traditional music, but his relationship with the music of ancient Greece has not been researched thoroughly. Why did the composer use the title “Ancient”? The work is written in the phrygian mode, in the scale of c sharp minor (with a d natural). File 572 of the Skalkottas Archives includes a handwritten musical text titled “Hymn to Dionysus: Parodos of the Bacchae by Euripides – Music; Rhythm: ionic la minore”. This extract is also written in the phrygian mode, albeit starting from d instead of c sharp. The source of the extract is not clear, and neither is evident if it was used as material for another composition. It features constant metric changes and performance indications (e.g. metronomic speeds). At the bottom of the page it is written in german: “Please remind me tomorrow during orchestration to select the required instruments”. This probably means that the excerpt was written in Germany or shortly after the composer’s return to Greece. Certainly more scholarly research is needed in this field.

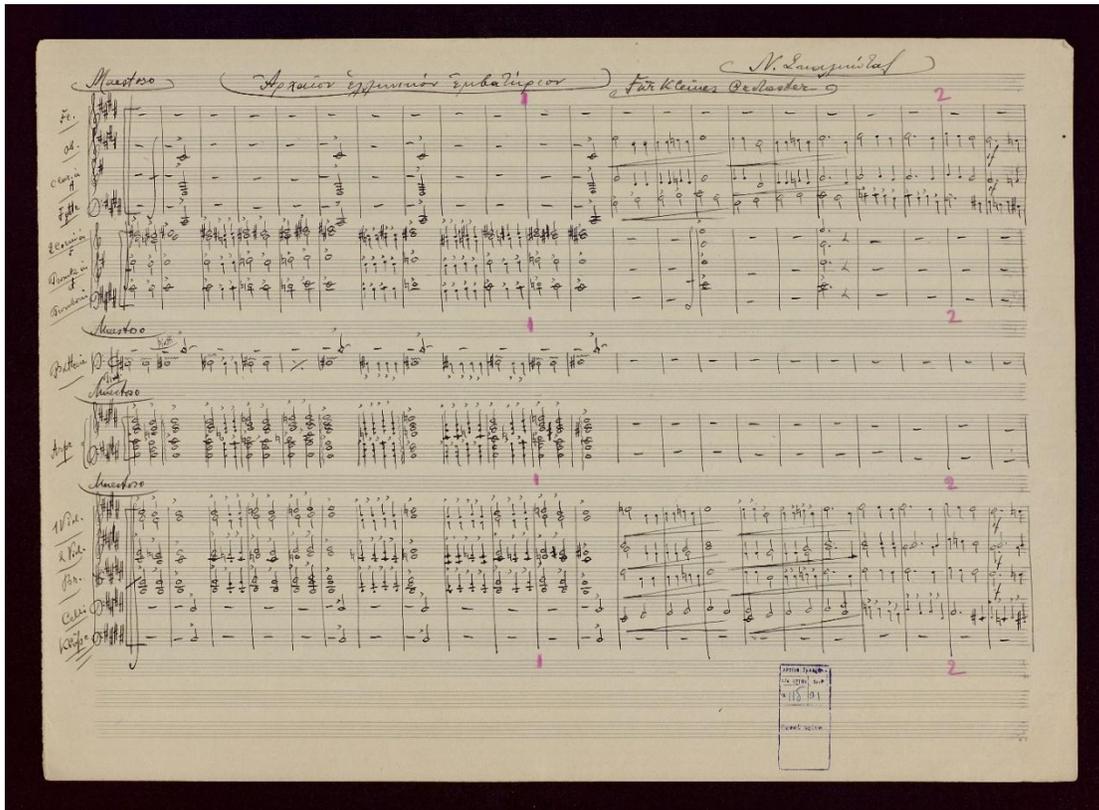
A peculiarity of Skalkottas’ writing is that he follows a somewhat inconsistent policy in writing for transposing instruments. Thus, instruments such as clarinets in B flat and trumpets in A are written with the transposing key signature, while instruments such as horns in F and clarinets in E flat are written without key signature and the composer makes the transposition with accidentals in the text. In other similar compositions (as, for example, in the *Nine Greek Dances*), he follows a different but still inconsistent policy.

We are now proceeding to the examination of the work in terms of orchestration. We will attempt to compare it both to the original version for symphony orchestra and to some other works of the composer for wind ensembles, i.e. to the *Nine Greek Dances* and the *Classical Symphony*. The original version of the work is written for 1 flute, 1 oboe, 1 clarinet in A, 1 bassoon (although the composer uses the plural “Fagotte” in the score, there is only one independent line), 2 horns in F, 1 trumpet in A, 1 trombone, 1 harp, percussion and strings. The part of the double bass is almost identical to that of the violoncello. There is a possibility that this work was intended as stage music (Demertzis, 1998, p. 4). There is no metronomic indication, while the metrical indication is “alla breve” and the only interpretive instruction is “maestoso”. Fig. 1 shows the first page of the original version full score. Table 2 shows the most significant differences between this original work and its adaptation for a wind orchestra.

SMALL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA VERSION (Original)	WIND ORCHESTRA VERSION (Transcribed by Skalkottas)	OBSERVATIONS	ADAPTATION TO A CONTEMPORARY WIND ORCHESTRA
-	Piccolo	It augments the flute parts in forte & fortissimo, one octave higher.	As it is
1 Flute (changes ad libitum to piccolo in bar 59-?)	2 Flutes	It is not clear whether bars with one line imply duplication or not.	As it is
1 Oboe	2 Oboes	Lines shared with flutes	As it is. In the case of two lines, they are shared with

			the flutes
-	2 Clarinets in E flat	It is not clear whether bars with one line imply duplication or not.	Could be condensed to one E flat clarinet player
1 Clarinet in A	2 Clarinets in A	Melody shared with clarinets in E flat	Transposition to 2 clarinets in B flat
2 Bassoons	2 Bassoons	Exclusively play in unison or octaves.	Transposition according to distribution in tenor and baritone saxophones (if no bassoons available)
-	Contrabassoon	Frequently a separate line from the 2 bassoons	Transposition for a second tuba or double bass
2 Horns in F	4 Horns in F	The transcription uses the voices in horns 1-2. Horns 3-4 play an octave lower and in parallel fifths	As it is
1 Trumpet in A	3 Trumpets in A	Often movement in parallel fifths	Transposition for trumpets in B flat.
1 Trombone	3 Trombones	Often movement in parallel fifths. In some bars it is unclear whether trombones 1, 2 play unisono or if only one performer is needed.	As it is
-	Bass tuba	Basically it duplicates / augments the 3 <sup>rd</sup> trombone.	As it is
Timpani	Timpani	E, A, F sharp, C sharp.	As it is
Cymbals (crash)	Cymbals (crash)	Two indications: "Piatti" & "Doppelbecken". Independent movement from the other percussion instruments.	As it is
Snare Drum	Snare Drum		As it is
-	"Tamburo": probably means field drum.	It reinforces either the timpani or the snare drum.	If not available, may be replaced by a tenor drum / larger tom.
Bass Drum	Bass Drum	Independent movement from the other percussion instruments.	As it is
Harp	Does not exist in the wind orchestra arrangement.		If available, it would be useful for reinforcing the harmonic modal element.
Double Basses	Do not exist in the wind orchestra arrangement.		If available, it/they would be useful for reinforcing the harmonic modal element. Could also be used as substitute to contrabassoon.

**Table 2: Differences in orchestration of the *Ancient Greek March* between the original and the arrangement for Wind Orchestra**



**Fig. 1: First page of the *Ancient Greek March* for Symphony Orchestra (Source: CMRC, Skalkottas Archive).**

The instrumentation of the wind orchestra transcription is: 1 piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets in E flat, 2 clarinets in A, 2 bassoons, 1 contrabassoon, 4 horns in F, 3 trumpets in A, 3 trombones, 1 bass tuba, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, snare drum and field drum. Percussion instruments are divided in two staves and it needs a lot of care to distinguish which instrument is playing each time. Fig. 2 shows the first page of the full score of the work for wind orchestra. As in other manuscripts of Skalkottas, the text is extremely difficult to read. There are no saxophones or other brass instruments that Skalkottas often uses in the *Nine Greek Dances* (such as alto / tenor horns, the so-called “Efonia”, cornets, English horn, bass clarinet, harp and double bass). The absence of the harp is interesting; its use in the original version would suggest that the composer knew that both a musician and an instrument were available at the time; in addition, Skalkottas uses two harps in the *Classical Symphony*, which was written about the same period as the *Ancient Greek March*.



Fig. 2: First page of the *Ancient Greek March* for wind orchestra (Source: CMRC, Skalkottas Archive).

A “tamburo” has been added to the group of the percussion instruments in the wind orchestra version, which reinforces the lines of either the snare drum or the timpani. Although Demertzis states that “percussion instruments in Skalkottas’s works do not differ from one piece to the other ... percussion [in the *Greek Dances*] go from one writing to the other without change”, this does not apply in the case of the *Ancient Greek March*. In bars 25-34, 36 and 40, the rolling of the drum in the original is duplicated by the harder rolling of the “tamburo”. In bars 59-71 the “tamburo” duplicates the part of the snare drum of the original, while the same is true of the last two bars of the fermata. The composer probably implies the use of a field or a tenor drum of some kind, with a different, darker color than the snare drum.

Tonality remains the same, despite the intonation difficulties posed for wind instruments. As a result, the transpositions of the instruments employed vary from one sharp (for the clarinets in A) to up to 7 sharps (for clarinets in E flat). Cymbals are notated at the beginning of the work as “piatti” and at the last page as “Doppelbecken”. This alternation between Italian and German terminology is common among other manuscripts of Skalkottas. It seems that in both cases the composer wants them to be used as crash cymbals. The absence of at least a double bass is surprising for several reasons: it is an instrument that Skalkottas uses intensely both in the *Classical Symphony* and in the *Nine Dances*, where he specifically indicates his desire to use more than one instruments. For example, in many cases there are two distinct parts in the double basses. In addition, the double basses are utilized in the original version of the work for small symphony orchestra.

The respect and variety with which the composer approached the art of orchestration, is obvious not only in his compositions, but also in relevant articles authored by him, as can be seen from the texts “Treatise on instrumentation”, “The orchestration”, etc. quoted in Demertzis (1998, pp. 303-305). This obliges us to treat the orchestrations in his arrangements with the same respect as in the original works. His choice of orchestrating *The Burial* by D. Mitropoulos and the *Nine Greek Dances*, leads us to speculate on the importance he attributed to the *Ancient Greek March*. It is not clear why the composer chose the tonality of c sharp minor for this work, and especially for its transcription for wind orchestra, which actually presents extraordinary intonation difficulties for wind instruments.

The fact that Skalkottas uses wind instruments in an exclusively “symphonic” way in other works and ignores the usual practice of transcribing symphonic works for wind orchestras in “easy” tonalities, and the fact that the *Nine Greek Dances* are also transcribed by maintaining their original tonalities, without taking into account the difficulty of execution, may suggest that Skalkottas believed in the particular “color” of every tonality or in any case did not care about the technical difficulties posed for the performers. We could furthermore speculate that the choice of orchestration (clarinets in A, trumpets in A, etc.) was not made according to the ensemble that commissioned the work (if such an ensemble really existed) or to the instruments available among performers in Athens at the time, or even to simplify execution, but for timbre reasons purely. At this point it is interesting to quote a discussion I had with the late George Hadjinikos in 2009, when the symphony orchestra of the Department of Music Science and Art performed Nikos Skalkottas’s *Mayday Spell* in its original version; in a section of the work with the traditional dance, Skalkottas suggests the use of a clarinet in C. Hadjinikos confided to us that this use was intentional and aimed to bring out the special sound of the traditional clarinet, with which the clarinet in C fits more than with clarinets conventionally used in symphony orchestras. Thus, the use of two clarinets in E-flat in the *Ancient Greek March* may seek to achieve a higher contrast between their bright sound as opposed to the warm sound of clarinets in A. Table 3 shows the differences in orchestration for the composer’s works for large wind ensembles. Note that the use of two E-flat piccolo clarinets in wind bands was not an unusual instrumentation practice at this period. Evidence shows that, during the period that Skalkottas was studying in Berlin, two E-flat clarinets were standard in military bands of the region (Habla, 1990, I, p. 177).

Instruments	Ancient Greek March	Classical Symphony	Concerto for violin, viola & wind orchestra	Nine Greek Dances: <i>Peloponnesiakos</i> & <i>Macedonikos</i>	Nine Greek Dances: remaining
Piccolo	1	2	0	0/3	1
Flutes	2	4 (2 + 2)	3	3	2
Oboe	2	3	2	3	2
English Horn	0	1	1	0	1
Clarinets E flat	2	1	1	0	1
Clarinets	2 in A	3 in B flat- A	3 in B flat	4 in B flat	4 in B flat
Alto Clarinet	0	0	0	0	0
Bass Clarinet	0	1 in B flat- A	1 in A	1	0
Bassoons	2	2	2	2	2
Contrabassoon	1	1	1	1	0
soprano saxophone	0	0	1	0	0
Alto saxophones	0	0	1	0	2 ‘in B flat’
Tenor saxophone	0	0	1	0	1 in C
Baritone saxophone	0	0	0	0	0
Horns in F	4	6	6	4	4
Alto horns ‘in B flat’	0	0	0	0	2
“Eufonia” in F	0	0	0	0	2
Cornets in B	0	1	1	0	2

flat					
Trumpets	3 in A	3 in B flat- A	3 in C	4 in C	2 in B flat, 2 in E flat or C
Trombones	3	4	4	3	6
B-flat “Bass”	0		0	0	1
Tubas	1	2	2	3	3
Double Bass	0	8-10	YES	0	in plural
Timpani	1 player	1 player	1 player	1 player	1 player
Cymbals	1	1	1	1	1 (and suspended)
“Tamburo”	1	1	1	0	0
Snare Drum	1	1	1	1	1
Bass Drum	1	1	1	1	1
Xylophone	0	1	0	0	0
Glockenspiel	0	1	0	1	0
Tom-tom	0	0	0	0	0
Harp	0	2	0	0	0

**Table 3: Instrumentation of Nikos Skalkottas’ works for Wind Orchestra**

Note on the information listed in Table 3 that for some of the instruments mentioned in the manuscript further research is needed to determine what exactly Skalkottas meant with the selected names. One of the interesting cases are the “Efonía in F” which are not the modern euphoniums but probably a type of saxhorn at the alto or tenor section of the band.

And a few words on the issue of critical performance of the original: in my opinion, a critical interpretative approach on behalf of the editors should initially preserve the existing text information, as much as possible, without attempting to interpret or homogenize the symbols. The editor should not get carried away by the fact that the piece is a march, a genre in which arrangers often do not pay particular attention to timbre details. On the contrary, emphasis should be placed on the fact that the work was arranged by the composer himself and, as a matter of fact, for a wind orchestra and not for a marching band. However, it is obvious that the make up of wind orchestras and bands universally is not established, as is the case with symphony orchestras; therefore the final editorial procedure should aim in clearing the text and emphasizing in practical issues.

Apart from the consistency with the text and the composer’s goals, the ultimate purpose of every respective research should be the final performance. Byron Fidetzis, a conductor who has contributed significantly in promoting the work of Greek composers, said that “music that is not listened to, does not exist” (Fidetzis, 2016). In the framework of this discussion, the question arises, in what type of instrumentation the work should be performed, if the available ensemble does not fully meet the given requirements (as will often be the case). A brief glance at Table 3 shows that the works listed feature great differences in orchestration, which could mean that the composer had a very good knowledge of the timbre characteristics of the instruments of each family. Although Demertzis argues that the *Nine Greek Dances* arrangement must be due to some professional co-operation, on the evidence of the different instrumentation of each band (Demertzis, 1998, p. 11), more research is needed on this topic.

Important information can be gathered at this issue from Motsenighos; the research should include information on the composition of Athenian and other provincial Greek wind bands in the period of 1930-1950, both in terms of distribution and capacity (Motsenighos, 1958, pp. 349-359 & 381-395):

The progressive collapse of the Wind Orchestra in [Athens] had its fatal impact on all Wind Orchestras of the State... The teaching of wind instruments in most musical institutions is unfortunately done in the most unscientific way... and in the Municipal Philharmonic of Athens itself... the overall artistic level is at a very low level (p. 381)... generally the composition of the Greek Wind Orchestras (civil and military) is done on the basis of the Italian ones... [referring to the Municipal Philharmonic of Athens]... the crazy faction of insignificant mediocrities... forced [the conductor] Jannetis to leave... so that [the band] immediately lost its brilliant glamor...

The Orchestra of Winds, technically and aesthetically, is comparatively in a complete decadence... No one is moved by the Wind Orchestra anymore... for about twenty-five years or so there are no longer good... Wind Orchestras in the capital... This decline of the Wind Orchestras... had a striking effect on the Wind Military Orchestras.

On the other hand, the absence of any testimony that these works were actually performed and the fact that Skalkottas' compositions were often more grandiose in terms of orchestration than their corresponding commissions (see for example *Mayday Spell*, *The Sea*, etc.) could lead to the conclusion that the chosen orchestration satisfied more the inner aesthetic concerns of the composer than the practical needs of the respective ensembles. Moreover, even if we could establish the synthesis of a particular ensemble, we must acknowledge that a composer is flexible to distribute the various musical lines as desired, to induce possible duplications etc. If we compare the instrumentation of the *Ancient Greek March* and the *Nine Greek Dances* with an informal composer's note for band orchestration, which Demertzis presents in his thesis, we establish significant differences: this informal composition by the composer includes 1 flute, 1 clarinet in E flat, 3 clarinets in B flat, 2 cornets in B flat, 2 flugelhorn in B flat, three horns in E flat, one alto horn in B flat, an unspecified number of euphoniums in B flat, two "gravitone euphoniums" (B-bass), 3 trombones, a bass [tuba], 2 trumpets in E flat and percussion instruments (Demertzis, 1998, p. 84). This instrumentation barely matches the ones in the existing works of the composer for wind orchestras. Finally, there is a notable excerpt from the composer's *Orchestration Treatise*, quoted by Demertzis (1998, p. 333):

As in contemporary music works written for wind instruments we find that the general sound is awful, horrible [sic], and thunderous and even causes headaches—yet the composer's own perception and pretention is totally opposite and particular to the sounds of the orchestra of the work that he writes and hears.

For example, in the *Ancient Greek March* there are two clarinets in E flat and two clarinets in A, instead of the conventional instrumentation for one E flat clarinet, three clarinets in B flat and a bass clarinet. Also, the majority of the dances include parts for cornets, trumpets in B flat, and trumpets in E flat or trumpets in C, instead of a single group of trumpets (see Table 2). In conclusion, Skalkottas' instrumentation of his works for wind ensembles presents significant variations from work to work. In any case, when it comes to performing and presenting a musical work, any capacity limitations should not be a barrier; the conductor should seek to render the spirit of the musical text as much as possible.

A further problem for the critical editor or a conductor is the number of musicians who are supposed to perform a single part. This is an important question related to the general discussion on the advantages and disadvantages between a wind orchestra and a symphonic wind ensemble. Unfortunately, the manuscripts of the composer are rather vague on this subject. In some cases the score seems to imply the number of musicians per part, as in the case of the *Epirotikos*, where the indication on the score requires six musicians in the trombones but where most of the work requires only three independent parts. Gunther Schuller, following the American tradition in the composition of wind ensembles, suggests in the introduction of the edition of the *Nine Greek Dances* that "for reasons of balance, there should be at least two musicians in every part of the clarinet, or ideally three". It is not clear however if Skalkottas wanted something like that and, careful reading the score of the *Ancient Greek March* and the *Nine Greek Dances*, shows that even in cases where there is evidence for at least two musicians (e.g. Clars. 2-4), there is only one line in most of the work; as a matter of fact, Clarinets 1-3 and 2-4 play either identical parts or with a difference of an octave.

Another problem is the vagueness of the score when it comes to the question of the duplication of voices. In some groups and bars it is clearly written that duplication is required, while in others it isn't. Most groups of instruments are structured by 2 (2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets in E flat, etc.). But while in the oboe and clarinet in A staff it is quite clearly marked—at least in the first bars—that the two oboes should play together in unison, the same is not true for the parts of the flutes and clarinets in E flat (see. bars 12 etc.).

At bar 6 there is the indication "à 2" only for the two bassoons, at a point where the duplication seemingly fits to all groups of woodwinds. Also, in some parts there is a clear differentiation in playing (see part of trombones 1-2, bars 13-18), while in others there is not (same group, bars 19-24). There are also many other elements that require a critical interpretative approach, such as speed, dynamics and phrasing. In these cases the composer's instructions are largely unclear or inconsistent. As far as dynamics is concerned, the piece begins with a "forte" indication written per group of brass instruments playing the theme, but the dynamic indication is absent in the woodwinds and percussion section.

We could assume that these groups have to imitate the intensity of the brass instruments, however bar 13 starts with a crescendo on all woodwinds, and it is not clear if it has to begin from “piano” or from the previously notated dynamics. In addition, this opening does not appear consistently in other groups that also play the same theme (e.g. horns). This opening is repeated after three bars in the same groups of instruments and it is also unclear if Skalkottas wanted the same opening to begin again from “piano” or to continue from the intensity level of bar 15. Other groups of instruments complete the harmony with chords that are accented in bar 15 while in bar 18 they are not. Similar problems appear in bars 36, 40, 42 and so on, where the harmonic completion of the melody with resonances in the second part of the bar from the horns 2-4 has no accent, while the trombones and percussion that play the same chord at exactly the same position have an accent.

Another problem is the interpretation of accents themselves. Thus, if we look closely at the line of the bassoons (p. 2 of the manuscript, bars 19-34), we notice that all quarter notes have accents up to bar 23. And if we assume that this interpretation should continue until the end of the passage, it is difficult to decide the same for the quarter notes appearing in the other parts; should they also be played with an accent or not?

In conclusion, the aspirant transcriber has a series of decisions to make; instrumentation, number of musicians per position and duplication of the written parts, and ultimately the dynamics, articulation and phrasing. In any case, the main issue at stake must be a legible, consistent text for the performer, which helps to communicate the work to the listener and thus to highlight its aesthetic content.

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