

## *Erotokritos* into music\*

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*Για τον πάλαι ποτέ “Κορνάρο”*

The passage of *Erotokritos* into music is certainly only one of many facets of its reception. Two of the intersecting circles into which Kornaros’s romance has spread, namely theatre and folk culture, involve music. We shall not be concerned here either with music written for dramatic performances of the work or with its folk tune, although, predictably enough, we shall come across the latter. We shall further limit ourselves to an attempt to track down individual compositions related to *Erotokritos* by composers who, having studied and worked on classical music, employ various, mostly classical, musical forms. Not being a musicologist, I could not possibly aspire to present these compositions for what they are; it has been disappointing, though, that I have not been able to listen to most of the works in question, as few are available on record – and some of them are lost. Therefore, I can only hope to offer a hint of the extent to which the seventeenth-century Cretan romance has provided a challenge, as in so many other domains, to “learned” music.

It is only fair to begin by mentioning the Phanariot *Νέος Ερωτόκριτος* by Dionysios Photeinos, published in Vienna in

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\* Preliminary research – and much of the information reproduced here – was based mainly on Aleka Symeonidou, *Λεξικό Ελλήνων συνθετών. Βιογραφικό–εργογραφικό* (Athens: Filippos Nakas 1995). I am indebted to George Tsontakis, as well as to Eleni Karaindrou, for information on their respective compositions on *Erotokritos*; my gratitude also goes to conductor Vyron Fidetzis for his most willing response to my queries on the earlier works in question, those by Katakouzenos, Kalomoiris and Albertis, and definitely not least to Giorgos Kouroupos, who first came to my rescue.

1818. This two-volume work runs to 13,233 lines of an unprecedented metrical variety, more than a quarter of which has nothing to do with the original Cretan text. The major additions, interacting with a great amount of “emphatically lyrical”<sup>1</sup> transformations of chosen passages of *Erotokritos*, are carefully planned to enhance, as well as to renew, the balance of the overall structure: a considerable number of songs and other self-contained passages in the first part, two symmetrical sets of dialogues around which evolves the third part, various laments, of course, and a brand new *finale*, a “Gran Finale” as George Savidis has accurately pointed out.<sup>2</sup> The songs grafted into *New Erotokritos*, which include some of the “hits” of the period (both oriental and westernising), are combined with various “arias” throughout the adaptation; both the inner structure of these self-contained passages and their position in the work evoke opera. In addition, besides the familiar structure of the dialogues (which, needless to say, are interspersed with “arias”), there are four passages in the central and one in the final part obviously meant as proper “duets”, with their lines or even half-lines rapidly alternating between the lovers. The Poet’s well-known digressions commenting on the plot, to which a few more are added, also stand out as “arias”: called “Παραρτήματα” by Photeinos, they are metrically and typographically distinguished from the narration. There are also “roles” for small groups, such as the defeated soldiers in the first part, which emphatically depart from the narration or the speeches by means of their metre. Another striking feature of *New Erotokritos* is the characterisation of each minor person by his peculiar metrical form, his peculiar “tune”. Last but not least, the very form of the “Gran Finale” (everyone “on stage” together with choruses and semi-choruses) clearly shows that “Photeinos’s

<sup>1</sup> Cf. G. P. Savvidis, “Και άλλη φαναριώτικη διασκευή της «Θυσίας του Αβραάμ»”, in: Κωνσταντίνου Δαπόντε [...], *Η Θυσία του Ιεφθάε και Ιστορία της Σωσάννης*, φιλολογική αποκατάσταση και τυπογραφική ερμηνεία Γ. Π. Σαββίδη (Athens: Istos 1993), p. 188.

<sup>2</sup> G. P. Savvidis, “Αναλυτικά περιεχόμενα του *Νέου Ερωτοκρίτου* Διονυσίου Φωτεινού του εκ Παλαιών Πατρών”, *Τόμος Τιμητικός Κ. Ν. Τριανταφύλλου* (Patras 1990), p. 418.

musical experience was not confined to Byzantine chant and oriental *makams*, and that his innovative adaptation of *Erotokritos* was not irrelevant to Italian opera”.<sup>3</sup> The tastes of the public *New Erotokritos* aimed to satisfy undoubtedly included opera – as well, it seems, as the reading of librettos.<sup>4</sup>

The dramatic qualities of *Erotokritos* – emphasised for the first time not only by the structure Photeinos worked out for his adaptation but also by means of the lavish layout of his book<sup>5</sup> – have led to an increasing number of stage productions since the first decades of the twentieth century. It should come as no surprise, however, that the Cretan romance first emerged in the nineteenth century – and repeatedly since – as a challenge to the *lyric* theatre.<sup>6</sup> So it was that the first in a succession of compositions related to *Erotokritos* was a proper opera.

### **1. Alexandros Katakouzenos, *Η Αρετούσα των Αθηνών* (opera, 1861)**

*Aretousa of Athens*, one of two operas by Alexandros Katakouzenos, appears to have been performed in Odessa in 1861.<sup>7</sup> Of a notable Smyrna family, grandson of Konstantinos Koumas,

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Charisios Megdanis, for example, in his *Καλλιόπη παλινοστούσα ή Περί ποιητικής μεθόδου* (Vienna 1819), pp. 45, 47, 62, 63, quotes several examples from operas ([στίχοι] “έκτινος Μελοδράματος του Ορφέως ληφθέντες”, “έκτινος Μελοδράματος ληφθέντες”, “έκτινος Μελοδράματος ανεκδότου”) – in Modern Greek.

<sup>5</sup> For some details concerning *Νέος Ερωτόκριτος* see Natalia Deliyanaki, “To Gran Finale της φαναριώτικης στιχουργίας”, *Κονδυλοφόρος* 6 (2007) 11-36.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. note 10.

<sup>7</sup> Th. N. Synadinos, *Ιστορία της νεοελληνικής μουσικής. 1824-1919* (Athens 1919), p. 196; however, according to a probably unreliable note by Spyros G. Motsenigos, *Νεοελληνική μουσική. Συμβολή εις την ιστορίαν της* (Athens 1958), p. 313, it was the other opera by Katakouzenos, *Αντώνιος Φωσκαρίνος*, which was performed instead. On Katakouzenos see also Symeonidou, op. cit., p. 182 and Dimitris G. Themelis, “Η μουσική συλλογή από την ιδιωτική βιβλιοθήκη του Όθωνα της Ελλάδας”, *Ελληνικά* 31 (1979) 463-5.

Katakouzenos was born in Trieste in 1824 and studied music in Paris and Vienna. He stayed on in Vienna for seventeen years as the choirmaster of the Greek church (1844-61), contributing in his turn to applying western four-part harmony to Byzantine music; he then took a similar post in the Holy Trinity Greek church of Odessa (1861-70), until he was appointed by Queen Olga as choirmaster of the newly established palace chapel in Athens, with the task of officially introducing polyphony into Greek Orthodox church music. His interest in opera never waned: he encouraged the first attempt to set up an opera company in Greece and translated a number of librettos from the Italian. He died in Athens in 1892, having also composed “a large amount of colourless verse”<sup>8</sup> as well as many songs and poems for children, including the all-time classic “Το αρνάκι” (“Αρνάκι άσπρο και παχύ...”).

What was it that drove Katakouzenos, in the mid-nineteenth century, to compose an opera based on *Erotokritos*? The fact is in itself remarkable given the “discredit” into which the romance had fallen “in enlightened parts of Greece”, as W. M. Leake put it in 1814;<sup>9</sup> on the other hand, of course, there had been at least sixteen reprints of the work between 1800 and 1860, not to mention its Phanariot adaptation, already translated into Romanian verse and about to appear in its third Greek edition.

It is worth noting the title of this opera for two reasons: first, because of the way it shifts the emphasis from the hero to the heroine, indicating that the composer and his librettist were aware of Kornaros’s chief interest in Aretousa or, at least, that they were chiefly interested in her; and, secondly, because it projects the name of what had become the capital of the young Greek state. But how did Katakouzenos handle his opera? Which text did he work on, to begin with? Would it have been based on the original in one of its numerous Venetian reprints or might the whole enter-

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<sup>8</sup> K. Th. Dimaras, *Ιστορία της νεοελληνικής λογοτεχνίας. Από τις πρώτες ρίζες ως την εποχή μας* (Athens: Ikaros 1985), p. 301.

<sup>9</sup> William Martin Leake, “Erotocritus”, *Researches in Greece* (London 1814), p. 116.

prise have something to do with *New Erotokritos* (if we disregard the fact that Photeinos, unlike Katakouzenos, opts for the formal “Areti”)? If Katakouzenos did not employ an Italian libretto (and we simply do not know), then *Aretousa of Athens*, and not Spyridon Xyndas’s *Ο υποψήφιος βουλευτής* (1867), would be the first opera by a Greek composer to have been composed in Greek.

We may never find out anything more about this work. The libretto and its author remain unknown to us,<sup>10</sup> as does the opera as a whole. However, the instrumental parts of its Overture have recently been discovered at the Athens Conservatoire (which Katakouzenos was actively involved in establishing and running); they have been restored and put together, and what remains of the first Erotokritian opera was performed by the Thessaloniki Municipal Symphony Orchestra conducted by Vyron Fidetzis on 29 January 2003. The conductor, who has readily provided information on the fate of this opera, has described its Overture as a composition somewhere between Schubert and Rossini.

## **2. Manolis Kalomoiris, *Ρωμαίικη σουίτα για μεγάλη ορχήστρα* (1907, revised 1910 and 1936)**

Manolis Kalomoiris, the chief proponent of the “National School” of Modern Greek music, also came from Smyrna, where he was born in 1883. He continued his musical studies in Athens, Constantinople and Vienna. Before assuming his long and imposing career in composition and music education in Athens, where he died in 1962, he worked for a time as a piano teacher in Kharkov

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<sup>10</sup> Ch. Anninos had heard of the opera but knew nothing about its libretto; see Charalambis Anninos, “Παράστασις του Ερωτοκρίτου (Ἔθιμον των Απόκρεω)”, *Ἐστία Εικονογραφημένη* 1 (1890) 119: “Ἡδύνατο δεξιός τις εκ των παρ’ ἡμίν δραματικῶν συγγραφέων να αρυσθή εξαίρετον ὕλην προς καταρτισμόν δραματικῆς ἔργου εκ του ποιήματος αὐτοῦ και μουσουργός τις επιτυχέστατον θέμα προς συγγραφὴν μελοδράματος. Ἦκουσα ὅτι ο κ. Κατακουζηνός επεχείρησε τοιοῦτο τι ἄλλοτε και συνέθετο μελόδραμα ὑπὸ τον τίτλον Αρετούσα, αγνωώ επί τίνος libretto, ἀλλά δυστυχῶς ἡ επικρατούσα αμουσία και ἡ περί τα πάτρια αξιοκατάκριτος αστοργία δεν επέτρεψαν μέχρι τούδε ν’ ακούσωμεν αὐτό ἀπό της σκηνῆς του θεάτρου ὅπως και πολλά ἄλλα αξιόλογα προϊόντα νεωτέρων Ἑλλήνων μουσουργῶν.”

(1906-10), where he had the chance virtually denied to him in musically conservative Vienna to study closely the music of the new Russian School – a main influence on his work along with the German/Wagnerian model. It was during this period that he composed his *Ρωμαίικη σουίτα*.

The *Greek Suite* was first performed on 11 June 1908, dedicated to Psycharis, in an arrangement for two pianos by the composer: “αφιερωμένη του μεγάλου Δασκάλου της Ρωμοισύνης Ψυχάρη (βόλεμα για δυο πιάνο από το συνθέτη)”.<sup>11</sup> This was Kalomoiris’s first concert in Athens, at the Athens Conservatoire, which also included shorter pieces for piano and song-settings of poems by Malakasis, Palamas, Pallis and himself. A sworn demoticist, Kalomoiris wrote and published the programme in demotic, causing an uproar; as a compromise the programme was eventually handed out in French to a reluctant audience who replied: “Thank you, we have the Greek one.”<sup>12</sup> It contained what is regarded as the manifesto of the “National School” of Modern Greek music:

The composer who today presents, for the first time, a small part of the beginning of his work has dreamt of creating a truly national music, based on the one hand on the music of our pure folk songs, but decorated on the other with all the technical means given to us by the ceaseless work of musically advanced peoples, and first of all of the Germans, French, Russians and Norwegians.

In order to achieve the harmonic close-knit of these dissimilar elements, the artist thought it right to rely upon our living literature. [...]

It is important to note that [he] avoids direct borrowing of folk-song melodies in his work, because he believes that

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<sup>11</sup> From the programme of the concert as published in *Ο Νουμάς* 299 (8 June 1908) 5.

<sup>12</sup> For an account of the concert and the reactions to the programme (a typical title, in Pop’s newspaper *Αθήναι*, was “Συναυλία με κοτσίδες”) see Manolis Kalomoiris, *Η ζωή μου και η τέχνη μου. Απομνημονεύματα 1883-1908* (Athens: Nefeli 1988), pp. 143-52, first published in *Νέα Εστία* 398-431 (January 1944-June 1945).

systematic borrowing from national melodies scarcely helps a national music to develop; but the themes in some of his large-scale works (*Greek Suite*, *Ballads* and others) and the melodies in some of his songs have been built on the rhythm, the scales and the character of our folk songs. [...] This has to be the aim of every truly national music, to build the Palace for the *national soul* to dwell!

Now, there's no harm in the artist using foreign material alongside the local stuff in order to build his palace, provided that his palace is founded on Greek soil, made to be enjoyed by Greek eyes, to be regarded as a genuine Greek palace.<sup>13</sup>

The central piece of the concert, the *Greek Suite*, was clearly meant to illustrate all this; the titles of its movements speak for themselves:

Από τα παραμύθια της γριάς (From the old woman's tales)  
 Σαν παιχνίδι και σα νανούρισμα (As a game and as a lullaby, a  
 movement removed in later revisions)  
 Από τον Ερωτόκριτο και την Αρετούσα (From Erotokritos and  
 Aretousa, with a motto from the third part of the romance)  
 Σα χορός και σα χωρατό (As a dance and as a joke)  
 Το παλάτι (The palace)

Kostis Palamas, who had urged the case for a critical edition of *Erotokritos*, in *Noumas* in 1906, the same year that Kalomoiris started working on his *Greek Suite*, and on whose poetry – and Psycharis's – the last movement was based, saluted the young composer in a poem published immediately after the concert on the front page of the same demoticist bastion, concluding with the poet's ideal:<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> “Λίγα λόγια”, *Ο Νουμάς* 299 (8 June 1908) 4, now also in Kalomoiris, *Η ζωή μου και η τέχνη μου*, pp. 145-6.

<sup>14</sup> See respectively: Kostis Palamas, “Σούτσος και Κορνάρος”, *Ο Νουμάς* 195 (23 April 1906) 1-3 and “Στο μουσικό Μανόλη Καλομοίρη”, *Ο Νουμάς* 300 (15 June 1908) 1.

conveniently reprinted in 1930,<sup>18</sup> perhaps with some minor changes. The four-act structure remains, as does the Prologue, discreetly criticised by Lalaouni as rather lengthy.

In its printed form at least, Synadinos's *Erotokritos* incorporates the fourth part of the romance, up to Aretousa's imprisonment, in the third act, and in the final, fourth, act presents a very brief account of the war and the Athenians' victory over the Vlachs thanks to Erotokritos, who soon enters and asks for Aretousa's hand; the play, and in all probability the opera too, ends with the recognition scene. The Poet's role is confined to the Prologue and his final identification, whereas the narration is taken over by the characters (some of them invented to this end) who comment on or summarise the plot.

What about the music? Composer Antiochos Evangelatos was among the few present at the performance and, as his son Spyros Evangelatos has told Vyron Fidetzis, recalled it as an interesting though rather flat composition. Alexandra Lalaouni provides a few more clues:

Albertis was right to seek his inspiration in Cretan folk songs, to envelop the poem with music inspired by the same environment whence sprung this magnificent hymn to Love, Faith and Beauty. And he sought his inspiration in our Cretan mountains and poured it into music which is new, fresh, refreshing and original, into new orchestral combinations, into an undreamt-of variety of rhythms. And it is strange that he managed to compose music worthy of the work, to depict the medieval atmosphere, to render Kornaros's decapentasyllable

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<sup>18</sup> Th. N. Synadinos, *Θέατρον. V. Διασκευή του κρητικού έπους του Βιτζέντζου Κορνάρου Ερωτόκριτος. (Δράμα σε τέσσερα μέρη)*, έκδοση δεύτερη (Athens: Ekdotika Katastimata "Akropoleos" 1930). Cf. N. Cartoijan, "Le modèle français de l'Érotokritos", poème crétois du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle", *Revue de Littérature Comparée* 16 (1936) 266: "en 1929, le dramaturge si populaire qu'est Th. N. Synadinos en a tiré une pièce de théâtre. Le succès de cette adaptation à la scène a provoqué l'émulation d'un compositeur, M. Albertis, qui a fait un opéra sur le livret de Synadinos; composition chantée l'hiver dernier à l'Olympia d'Athènes."



with innovations both in song and orchestra, which employed saxophones and *viololyres* made by the composer himself to convey the sound of the Cretan lyra.<sup>19</sup>

Lalaouni particularly singles out the accompaniment to the Prologue, Erotokritos's "matinata", the duet of Aretousa and Frosyni, the lovers' duet in the third act, and the third act as a whole. Sadly, we shall never know for ourselves.

**4a-c. Nikos Mamangakis, *Ο Ερωτόκριτος του Βιτζέντζου Κορνάρου. Μπαλλάντα για τρεις φωνές και πέντε όργανα* (1964), *Ο Ερωτόκριτος, σουίτα μπαλέτου για πέντε όργανα* (1967) and *Ballade d'Érotokritos* (2006)**

**5. Nikos Mamangakis, *Ερωτόκριτος* (ballet, 1965)**

Our next composition appears in 1964, this time in an LP issued by "Lyra", a record company also noted for its series of poets' reading their own poetry.<sup>20</sup> It is a "Ballad for three voices and five instruments", the first *Erotokritos* by Nikos Mamangakis, which inaugurates a stream of compositions related to the romance by composers of Cretan descent.

Born in Rethymno in 1929, Mamangakis studied at the Hellenic Conservatoire in Athens and at the Music Academy of Munich, with Carl Orff among others. He has employed various techniques and achieved remarkable combinations of sound and rhythm in a "characteristic structural balance".<sup>21</sup> His compositions include two "Cretan Renaissance" operas, *Erofilis* and *Erotokritos and Aretousa*, to which we shall return, and many works of vocal, orchestral, electronic and chamber music, and music for solo instruments, as well as music for the stage, television and cinema.

<sup>19</sup> Lalaouni, op. cit. This violin-shaped type of lyra was actually developed in the 1920s, a period coinciding with Albertis's first stay in Crete.

<sup>20</sup> It is worth noting that George Seferis, who was among them, kept in his copy of Xanthoudidis's edition of *Erotokritos* an invitation to hear the recording of Mamangakis's work, to be introduced by G. Leotsakos, at the Technology Institute of Athens on Tuesday 8 December 1964.

<sup>21</sup> Symeonidou, op. cit., p. 248.

- I. Φαντασία – Ομηρικός ύμνος (Fantasy – Homeric hymn)
- II. Νυχτερινό – Ραψωδία – Ρωμαίος και Ιουλιέττα (Nocturne – Rhapsody – Romeo and Juliette)
- III. Μπαλάντα – Εμβατήριο του Ερωτόκριτου – Στα δίχτυα του έρωτα (Ballad – Erotokritos’s march – In the nets of love)
- IV. Θέμα και παραλλαγές για τον Τρωίλο και τη Χρυσήδα (Theme and variations for Troilus and Cressida)

### 8. George Tsontakis, *Erotokritos*. An Oratorio-Drama (1982)

On 15 May 1982, George Tsontakis’s *Erotokritos* had its full-house premiere in New York, at the Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center. Tsontakis, a Juilliard School doctoral candidate in composition at the time, was born in Astoria in 1951. A highly acclaimed composer and the recipient of numerous commissions, fellowships and major distinctions in classical composition, such as the recent Grawemeyer Award (2005) and Charles Ives Living (2006), he has composed music for chamber ensembles, solo instruments, orchestra, choir and soloists, which is frequently performed and increasingly recorded by eminent musicians in the USA and Europe.

On his first visit to his grandparents’ native Crete, he kept hearing a tune his grandfather used to sing: the *Erotokritos* “hymn”, as he calls it relating it to Byzantine chant, was to open and occasionally recur in the composition he soon embarked on, sung “in the style of folk singers” by the only soloists in the work, representing Erotokritos and Aretousa – Grigoris Maninakis and Elli Paspala in the New York performance. The two lovers were also each represented by an actor and a dancer. The others parts were played by actors only, who “conversed” with almost continuous orchestral and choral music. This 90-minute performance was a collaboration of the Metropolitan Greek Chorale, the Greek Theater of New York and the Phaestos Chamber Symphony, conducted by the composer and directed by Loukas Skipitaris, who had jointly adapted the “script”. The original Cretan text was “effectively condensed [...] to a dramatic skeleton treated in 11

scenes”,<sup>23</sup> with a prose narration in English incorporating lines from the translation by Theodore Ph. Stephanides, who had granted permission for its use before publication.

What is this modern oratorio-drama like? According to Tsontakis, the conception is rather abstract: “What’s left out of the oratorio is the solos, and what’s left out of the drama is the plot and continuity. It’s all reconciled by music.”<sup>24</sup> “The unusual fusion of spoken Greek poetry rendered dramatically, English narration, choral commentary in the ancient Greek manner, dance as a symbolic enactment of the plot and music brought to mind such modern hybrids as Stravinsky’s *Oedipus* and Penderecki’s *Paradise Lost*”, says a reviewer, the music – the choral settings in particular – having a “ring” of Schoenberg and the second Viennese school. “One suspects that there is an opera-in-progress underneath the surface of this *Erotokritos* and that such a treatment might be well suited to the material”, he concludes.<sup>25</sup>

It is interesting that a New York reviewer, who had understandably failed to see in the elusive Cretan romance much beyond “an entertaining story”, should make this connection. And, although George Tsontakis has assured me that he did not have anything “historical” in mind, I cannot help thinking that his *Erotokritos* may also be “winking” at the time when oratorio actually was opera’s twin.

### 9. Dimitris Kapsomenos, *Τρία προελούντια, για εννέα εκτελεστές* (1983)

An interlude between large-scale compositions is offered at this point by Dimitris Kapsomenos (1937-1994), who grew up in Chania and studied first there, and later in Athens and Italy. He composed vocal, orchestral, choral, stage and chamber music, and experimented with unusual instrumental combinations. The last of

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<sup>23</sup> Theodore W. Libbey, “Oratorio: ‘Erotokritos’ by Tsontakis”, *The New York Times* (17.5.1982).

<sup>24</sup> Theodore W. Libbey, “Chorus to sing Crete’s love epic”, *The New York Times* (14.5.1982).

<sup>25</sup> Libbey, “Oratorio: ‘Erotokritos’ by Tsontakis”.

*Three preludes for nine performers*, which he composed in 1983, is entitled “*Erotokritos*”, the previous ones being “*Μνήμες*” (“*Memories*”) and “*Βυζαντινό*” (“*Byzantine*”).

**10. Nikos Mamangakis, *Ερωτόκριτος και Αρετούσα* (opera, 1985)**

Nikos Mamangakis’s *Erotokritos and Aretousa*, an opera “of a new concept” in five parts, was commissioned by the Municipality of Heraklion, was performed at the Heraklion Summer Festival in 1985 (and shown live on local TV), was recorded in October of the same year and was soon released as a double LP produced by Manos Chatzidakis’s “*Seirios*”; a new recording came out in 2006.

In 1985, the Poet’s part was shared by Manos Moundakis and Spyros Sakkas, who also performed the role of the King; those of Aretousa and Erotokritos were interpreted by Savina Yannatou and Yannis Samsiaris; Nena was sung – very appropriately – by Nena Venetzanou, and the parts of Polydoros, Pezostratos and Aristos by Panos Zacharatos. The 2006 Poets A and B are Yannis Idomeneos and the composer; Erotokritos shifts from tenor to the baritone Tassis Christoyannopoulos, Foteini Darra sings the part of Aretousa and Angeliki Kathariou that of Frosyni.

The libretto, by the composer, with the assistance of Vassilis Nikolaidis, is a selected one tenth of Kornaros’s text. Of his compositions back in the ’60s Mamangakis employs only the “nucleus” of Aretousa’s two songs, the Prologue, and the joust theme; the rest of a total of 55 musical pieces, as well as the structure as a whole, are new. Four choruses are added, sung in 1985 by the Heraklion Municipal Choir – their natural Cretan accents discreetly exploited. A string quintet and three wind instruments (clarinet, trumpet and trombone) are used alongside a mandolin “decorating” the Poet’s part and a harpsichord is employed throughout the work as a kind of *continuo*.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> See the composer’s note on the sleeve of the LP.

In the description of musicologist Yannis Papaioannou, this opera seeks to combine, more systematically than ever before in the composer's work, original Cretan folk elements, joined to Cretan Renaissance ones, with a daringly atonal, abstract idiom, occasionally even approaching twelve-note music, to create a harmonic whole of Mamangakis's own.<sup>27</sup>

**11. Yannis Drossitis, *Τριλογία πάνω στον "Ερωτόκριτο", για παιδική ή γυναικεία χορωδία "α καππέλλα" (1990)***

Yannis Drossitis was born in Heraklion in 1957; he studied piano and composition at the National Conservatoire of Athens, as well as Byzantine and traditional music at the Simon Karras school. His works include a *Trilogy on "Erotokritos"*, composed in 1990, to be sung *a cappella* by a children's or women's choir.<sup>28</sup> It comprises three more or less slow two- to four-part pieces, thankfully employing non-predictable passages of the work: "Τση μέρας τ' άστρο" (B 517-20), "Το μαύρο νέφαλο" (B 2125-32) and "Η μέρα η λαμπυρή" (E 1503-8).

**12. Yannis Markopoulos, *Ερωτόκριτος και Αρετή (2000/2003)***

In 1996, the former song-writer Yannis Markopoulos addressed the 8th Cretological Congress in Heraklion on the subject of a "A musical approach to *Erotokritos* for the composition of an opera".<sup>29</sup> Four years later, on 19 and 20 September 2000, at the Herodeion, he collaborated with Nikos Koundouros to present a "multiform" *Erotokritos* combining music and theatre, as well as dance, in two parallel sets of singers and actors. The performance as a whole was poorly received by the press, but the music did eventually result in a double CD in 2003.

<sup>27</sup> See Papaioannou's note on the LP sleeve.

<sup>28</sup> It is published in the collection: Antonis Kontogeorgiou, *Για τις χορωδίες μας* (Athens: K. Papagrigoriou-Ch. Nakas 1993), pp. 234-7.

<sup>29</sup> See *Γενικό-Αναλυτικό Πρόγραμμα, Η' Διεθνές Κρητολογικό Συνέδριο, Ηράκλειο, 9-14 Σεπτεμβρίου 1996*, Εταιρία Κρητικών Ιστορικών Μελετών, p. 104; Markopoulos's talk never took the form of a published paper.

*Erotokritos and Areti* is described by the composer as an opera in two acts: “My intention is to illustrate the link between two philosophical concepts – Love and Virtue – which here become personified”, he notes.<sup>30</sup> The libretto, by Markopoulos, reduces the original text to 800 lines, with a division between parts three and four. (The joust is briefly dealt with by the orchestra playing a “dance”, which concludes with an old Cretan tune.)

The parts of *Erotokritos*, *Areti*, the King, Nena and Pezostatos are sung by tenor Antonis Koronaios, soprano Mata Katsouli, baritone Tassis Christoyannopoulos, mezzo-soprano Sophia Michailidi and baritone Kostis Konstandaras respectively. The last is the founder of the Fons Musicalis vocal ensemble, which also takes part. The other singers, such as Vassilis Stavrakakis, Kostas Makedonas, Manolis Lydakis or the Pyx-lax group leader Manos Xydous, come from backgrounds as diverse as Cretan folk music, what is tantalizingly called “έντεχνο” and “λαϊκό” song, even pop. An “ensemble” of eight Cretan lyra-players and singers, and a ten-member orchestra of Renaissance and Greek instruments, conducted by the composer, interact with the Flemish Radio Orchestra and Choir, conducted by Michel Tilkin.

In this ambitious composition a “recitative” functions as a “persistent theme that changes melodically in accordance with the personage or musical ensemble interpreting the role of the poet”,<sup>31</sup> interspersed with so-called arias, duets, choral and orchestral pieces – a shadow, I’m afraid, both rhythmically and melodically, of the fascinating Markopoulos back in the ’60s and early ’70s.

### 13. Giorgos Koumendakis, *Ο μικρόκοσμος που άκουγε* (2000)

*Four approaches to Erotokritos* (*Τέσσερις δρόμοι για τον Ερωτόκριτο*, “Lyra”) were presented in 2000 by four very different and interesting musicians. Three contributions, those by Loudovikos

<sup>30</sup> See p. 9 of the booklet accompanying the CD.

<sup>31</sup> The musicologist Alexandros Stoupakis, writing in the same CD booklet, p. 11.

of Anogia, Nikos Xydakis and Psarantonis, will be awkwardly left out, but the one by Giorgos Koumendakis meets the limiting conditions of this paper.

Born in Rethymno in 1959, Koumendakis, perhaps more widely known for the music he wrote for the opening ceremony of the Athens Olympics, studied music in his hometown and in Athens, and also attended seminars by Boulez, Ligeti, Xenakis and others. His work (dance, opera, vocals, chamber, solo and choral music, music for the stage and classical drama) is distinguished by his peculiar handling of detail in his variations and by his close study of ancient Greek music.<sup>32</sup>

His approach to *Erotokritos* is *The Microcosm that listened*, three short pieces for harpsichord played by Alexandra Papa-stefanou: the “Fly”, the “Dragon-fly” and the “Little lizard”. As the composer comments: “The microcosm of my childhood castle, now an ally, accompanies me along the paths of *Erotokritos* and helps me submit my own brief improvisation.”

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A rather unsuspected wealth of music inspired by Kornaros’s romance has emerged from the lame and disproportionate list given above; the range and quality of this music could only be fully brought out by a musicologist, who would also have to take into consideration compositions this paper may have missed, as well as any other kind of music sung to, written for, or referring to *Erotokritos*.

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<sup>32</sup> Symeonidou, op. cit., p. 198.