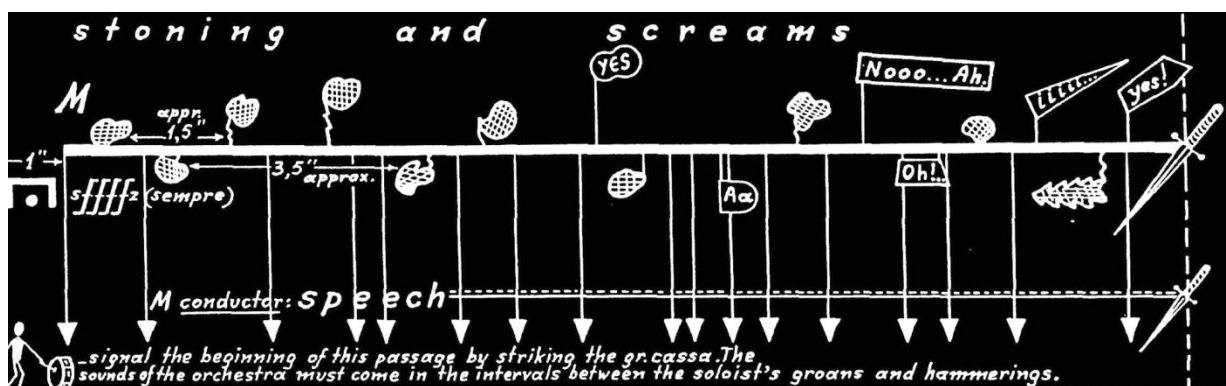


# JANI CHRISTOU CONFERENCE 2013

## GOLDSMITHS UNIVERSITY OF LONDON



# SATURDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2013

## CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

*CONFERENCE DIRECTOR: Maria Yerosimou*

*Special thanks to:*

*The Hinrichsen Foundation, to Marina Tourkolia, Alexandros Yallouros, and a generous donor, who wishes to remain anonymous, for their financial support*

*Keith Potter for his immense, multi-dimensional support and omni-directional help with organising this conference*

*The Jani Christou Archive and Goldsmiths Music Department*

*All the people who supported or participated in this conference*

**Registration and welcome 09.30 – 10.00**

Location: RHB Small Hall Cinema

**Paper Session 1: "PROTOCONFERENCEING" 10.00 – 12.00**

Location: RHB Small Hall Cinema

**Chair: Paul Attinello**

Ianos Eliadis

'Down to the Underground: an exploration of the archival sources for Jani Christou's *Mysterion*'

Varvara Gyra /Kostis Karpozilos

'"War, Conflict, Confrontation": Jani Christou's politics of confrontation'

Mimis Sophocleous

'When Jani Christou met T.S. Eliot: the six songs on T.S. Eliot's poetry as a pre-critical work'

**Coffee break 12.00 – 12.30**

**Paper Session 2: "METACONFERENCING" 12.30 – 14.00**

Location: RHB Small Hall Cinema

**Chair: Keith Potter**

Paul Attinello

'Time, Dream and/or Archetype in the Musical Work'

Elfriede Reissig

'"In the Cycle of Epidauros": Janis Christou and Giacinto Scelsi'

Anne LeBaron

'Situating Jani Christou in Concert Theater'

**Lunch break 14.00 – 15.00**

**Jani Christou's *Epicycle* workshop 15.00 – 17.00**

**Location: RHB 167**

**'When I grow up I want to be a Demiurge'**

A two-hour workshop, coordinated by Andriana Minou and members of the *Diseaux Bizarres* ensemble. This will start with a short introduction aimed at familiarising the participants with the score of Jani Christou's *Epicycle* and the concepts used by the ensemble in order to create their own version of the work. The practical part of the workshop will have the structure of a creative game, in which all participants will take an active role. Through this process, the previously discussed concepts will be practically explored and challenged. The creative product of the workshop is intended to be incorporated in the performance of *Epicycle*, which will take place the same evening. Participants should be aware that part of the workshop might be recorded for this purpose.

**Break 17.00 – 18.00**

**Screening of the documentary *Anaparastasis: life and work of Jani Christou (1926-1970)***

**18.00 – 20.00**

**Location: RHB Small Hall Cinema**

Presentation by Costis Zouliatis, director.

'The documentary attempts to illustrate the personality and the spirit of this great thinker of art and to follow the path of his short life, which was always interwoven not only with art but also with his concerns for humanity and civilization. Through the presentation of the composer's works and rare audiovisual documents, as well as interviews with all the members of the creative and friendship circles to which Christou was linked, the film seeks to bring us closer to the mystery that this great artist left behind and to provide a context for the great moments of art that historical circumstances sometimes hide in their shadows.' (Costis Zouliatis)

After the screening, the audience will have the chance to discuss the film with its director in a short Q&A session.

**Break 20.00 – 20.30**

**Concert Performance 20.30 – 21.30**

**Location: RHB 167**

*Epicycle*

*Anaparastasis I – The Baritone*

*Anaparastasis III – The Pianist*

Performed by the Oiseaux Bizarres ensemble

## **ABSTRACTS**

**Ianos Eliades, 'Down to the Underground: an exploration of the archival sources for Jani Christou's *Mysterion***

*Mysterion*, an oratorio for actor, three choruses, orchestra and tapes, based on ancient Egyptian funerary texts, was written in 1965-66 for the Danish Broadcasting Corporation under the direction of Miltiadis Karidis. After the Copenhagen rehearsals, the composer made some changes and additions, and created a work file to enable the eventual projected publication of the score to include those changes. This publication was never completed. The material contained in this file was subsequently used to create a critical edition of the work, which is part of my doctoral thesis. This paper will present the re-design of the graphic score, the original score and the additional material. In addition, it will explore the composer's thinking, the use of his musical language to present the contents of the unconscious and the mystical participation of music and unconscious events.

**Varvara Gyra/Kostis Karpozilos, "'War, Conflict, Confrontation": Jani Christou's politics of confrontation'**

The work of Jani Christou has attracted considerable interest over the years, thus generating a series of studies that focus on his philosophical and psychoanalytical conceptualizations, the multi-disciplinary prism that lies behind his output and the distinctive musical notation of his compositions. This paper aims to discuss these issues in close connection with the turbulent political and social setting of the 1960s. More particularly, it highlights the formative ideas of three of the composer's major works of the late 1960s – *The Strychnine Lady* (1967), *Epicycle I* (1968) and *Enantiadromia* (1969) – and illustrates the appearance and representation(s) of themes, images and debates deriving from the contemporary social and political atmosphere that manifest themselves in Christou's musical notation and in his unpublished writings. Paying particular attention to the notion of confrontation, we seek to highlight the dialectic between the politics of confrontation, ranging from the Vietnam War to the fear of the Atomic Bomb, and

the formulation of the composer's own philosophical reflections. This alternative reading of Jani Christou contributes to a broader understanding of key issues in his work, such as the concept of praxis-metapraxis, the notion of anaparastasis and the conceptualization of the happening.

### **Mimis Sophocleous, 'When Jani Christou met T. S. Eliot: the six songs on T.S. Eliot's poetry as a pre-critical work'**

*The human kind cannot bear much reality* (T. S. Eliot – *Burnt Norton* 1)

This paper explores the result of a creative moment in the early stages of Jani Christou's work: namely, the musical setting music of six poems by T.S. Eliot. The importance of music in thematic and formal terms is essential in understanding Eliot's poetry and is equally important to an understanding of music of Christou that is based on poetic texts. The paper suggests that both artists, in their own ways, were productively engaged in popular culture in some form at every stage of their career, despite the fact that many of their critics considered them as elitists. Both artists tried to close the gap between high art and popular culture through a new type of public art: contemporary popular verse drama for Eliot (see *T. S. Eliot and the Cultural Divide* (2003) by David E. Chinitz) and 'thinking music' for Christou.

The six poems by Eliot that Christou set to music in 1955 constitute a unique part of his output. Although there is enough discussion elsewhere of musical settings of Eliot, especially after the poet's death in 1965, only a few mentions have been made of these six songs that Christou set at a very early stage of his musical career. In setting Eliot's poetry at all, Christou might be said to have been entering a minefield, due to the fact that Eliot, after 1949 (as a laureate for the Nobel Prize for Literature), was considered as a model poet regarding the way in which he interpreted the notion of music in poetry. Eliot was, after all, the poet who had written about understanding music in poetry at a theoretical level.

During the period in which he worked on Eliot's poetry, Christou was looking for new alternatives to enrich his compositions. Considering that his music is not about expressing feelings and messages, but about extending them in multi-levelled ways, Christou's music might itself be conceived of as a poetry of meditation based on experience and not on metaphysics. The starting point for such an argument is the 'movement of the speech' that he supported initially just with the piano and later, in 1957, developed further in a rich orchestral arrangement.

I am inclined to think that the way in which Christou interpreted, word by word, Eliot's poetry is hardly to be used in connection with Eliot's verse at all; the effect of sound is neither that of music nor that of poetry that can be set to music. There is no reason why verse intended to be sung should not present a sharp visual image or convey an important intellectual meaning, for it supplements the music by another means of affecting the feelings. What we get in Jani Christou is an expression by sound, which could not possibly associate itself with music. For what he gives is not images and ideas and music, it is one thing with a curious mixture of suggestions of all three. The paper explores these suggestions.

### **Paul Attinello, 'Time, Dream and/or Archetype in the Musical Work'**

Jungian archetypal theory has a number of focal points – pictorial, symbolic, mythological – that derive from Jung's own broad spectrum of interests. However, his limited interest in music, and his focus on still images as the immanent reflections of archetypes, create difficulties for any attempt to extend archetypal theory into time-based art works.

Even more problematically, most (if not all) analysts do not recall dreams in experiential time, but instead in various forms of timelessness – tableaux, multiple simultaneous perceptions, or successively quasi-frozen, non-continuous situations – suggesting that most (if not all) subconscious experiences operate outside the awareness of a temporal flow.

As a result of these problems, the archetypal analysis of music itself is often regarded as difficult or impossible – figures in stage works can be interpreted as temporally present, moving images of archetypes that ‘really’ exist in the timeless eternity of the subconscious, but most Jungians proceed as though temporally mobile musical processes cannot be directly linked to the archetypal world. Despite these concerns, two notable twentieth-century composers, Michael Tippett and Janis Christou, have attempted to compose music in archetypal terms. Tippett’s operas and vocal works often include archetypal/transcendental figures (from *The Midsummer Marriage* to *The Vision of St. Augustine*) that are intended to connect with the worlds of dream and vision, and many of his most important instrumental works overlap time scales to create a symbolically fused subconscious/transcendental timescape. Christou takes a more modernist approach, but tries to create a less referential, more immanent music – at times referring to Jungian processes (*Enantiodynamia*), at others suggesting dream and archetypal experiences. It may not be possible to entirely connect the conscious musical world with the (perceivable) world of the archetypal, but the question seems well worth asking.

### **Elfriede Reissig, “In the Cycle of Epidauros”: Jani Christou and Giacinto Scelsi’**

In the late 1960s, Janis and Sia Christou and the Italian composer and aristocrat Giacinto Scelsi met in Greece for the first time; and from then onwards their friendship was affected by mutual esteem, not only personal but also regarding their extraordinary outputs as composers. In Greece, Scelsi wrote, ‘I had the opportunity to get to know a young couple, full of enthusiasm, who [became] veritable friends of mine: he, a very talented musician, she charming and of great class.’

Conspicuous analogies and parallels can be made not only biographically but also in the aesthetic dimension of their compositional work. Both were concerned with existential questions of the inner world of the individual, as well as the creative process and philosophical approaches to music and art as an attempt to overcome European tradition, especially of the academic avant-garde after World War II. The musical transformation of cyclic processes, embodiment and the experiment with time-levels – one contextually in relation to the ‘Eternal’, the other with great consciousness of the continuum – showed two distinguished and differentiated ways of dealing with musical form and complexity of sound.

Two works will be presented during this lecture: Christou’s *Phoenix Music* for orchestra (1948-49) and Scelsi’s *Trilogy* for cello (1957-65). The essential aspect of ‘indeterminacy’, by giving space for improvisation, especially in Christou’s composition, can be seen as an act of ‘liberation of the individual’, and this gives his output high relevance and significance in the global world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Anne LeBaron, ‘Situating Jani Christou in Concert Theater’**

Jani Christou has come to occupy a central role in Concert Theater, a graduate-level course that I teach at the California Institute of the Arts. While primarily designed for composers and performers, this year-long course also attracts actors, directors, designers, dancers, writers and filmmakers. Initially, we investigate the ongoing resonance of the Fluxus movement, performance art, and improvisatory practices on works orbiting in and around concert theatre – a genre where environments are created to foster a synthesis of various art forms in which music is but one

element. Subsequently, the notational, conceptual and theatrical experiments of the composers Mauricio Kagel (instrumental theatre), György Ligeti (absurdist humour), and Heiner Goebbels (para-ritual forms), along with works by Stockhausen, Berio and Grumb, are closely examined.

Emerging as a potent figure who is now included in this group of composers, Christou expands the 'concert theater' genre by his intense idealistic wish, supported by concepts he developed through deep research into spiritual and philosophical realms, to liberate his audience from the 'common space-time continuum'. During the past decade, Christou's music, notation and philosophical writings have had a profound impact on several of the students in my class, who are now embarking upon their own careers. In particular, his concepts of praxis and metaprxaxis, enlivened by the notion of an irrational interruption - the 'eclipse', in Christou's terminology - serve as compelling inspirational modalities for adventurous young composers searching for a framework to assist in expressing their creative ideas.

I will illustrate, via video, audio and score excerpts, how Christou's research, philosophies and notational developments, by exerting significant influence on a new generation of composers, continue to be relevant in our world. The student works I will discuss include *Romance for Piano*, depicting an explicitly abusive relationship between the pianist and his/her instrument; *Chain* for mobile chamber ensemble with a blindfolded cellist; and *John Cage Open*, a parody of a golfing competition with a detailed graphic score. By vaporizing boundaries of conventional concert performance, each of these works resonates with Christou's expressed intention to elevate the experience of a concert to one where music, liberated from mere decoration, becomes a powerful force of evolution.

## BIOGRAPHIES

**Ianos Eliades** was born in Nicosia in 1976. He completed his undergraduate music studies with a major in Music Technology at the Department of Music Studies of the Ionian University. From 2002 until the present he has developed an interest in contemporary and electronic music in Greece. For his MPhil thesis he studied Jani Christou's *Mysterian* for triple chorus, orchestra and mixed media. He has continued this research as a PhD candidate. For his doctoral thesis he redesigned the graphic score of this work as well as the sound objects.

**Varvara Gyra** was born in Ioannina, Greece, and has been living in Paris, France, since 1998. She studied the guitar in Paris with Roland Dyens and Francis Kleynjans, graduated from the Ecole Normale de Paris and has been awarded scholarships by the Academy of Athens and the Onassis Foundation. She holds a PhD. in Musicology (University of Paris VIII) with a thesis on the work of Jani Christou. She has recorded three CDs, won four international prizes and performed in various countries all over the world.

**Kostis Karpozilos** is a historian. Currently a postdoctoral fellow at Columbia University, New York, he has taught at the University of the Peloponnese and at the Sciences Po Euro-American Campus in Reims. He is the scriptwriter and historical consultant for the documentary *Greek-American Radicals - the untold story*, while he is currently working on a book manuscript entitled *The Ex-Communists: Cold War 'Turncoats' and 'Redeemers'*, which addresses the transfer of allegiances, the interrelation of the political and the personal, and the multiple ways in which radicals and revolutionaries become 'exes'.

**Mimis Sophocleous** is at present the Academic Director of the Municipal Museum and Historical Archives of Limassol. He studied Philosophy at Athens University and holds his postgraduate degrees from La Trobe University and the University of Queensland, in Australia. He taught at the University of Melbourne (1983-85) and RMIT University from

1986 to 2002. From 2004 to 2008 he was Vice-President of the Cyprus University of Technology and coordinator of the Department of Multimedia and Graphic Arts.

**Paul Attinello** is a Senior Lecturer in Music at Newcastle University; he has taught at the University of Hong Kong and UCLA, and is now studying at the Jung-Institut in Zürich to become a Jungian analyst. He has published in *Contemporary Music Review*, *Radical Musicology*, the *Journal of Musicological Research*, *Musik-Konzepte*, *Musica/Realta*, the revised *New Grove* and in essay collections and reference works. He is co-editor of volumes of collected essays on reinterpreting the Darmstadt avant-garde and on music in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Current projects include a monograph on music about AIDS and a collection on the contemporary composer Gerhard Stäbler.

**Elfriede Reissig** was born in 1966 in Graz, Austria. She studied European ethnology and philosophy at Karl-Franzens-University, and choral conducting and singing at the University of Music and Dramatic Arts, both in Graz. She holds a Doctor of Philosophy from the Department for Music Aesthetics there; having undertaken several research visits to the Archivio Luigi Nono (ALN) in Venice, Italy, her dissertation, *Luigi Nono, Das Atmende Klarsein: Text – Music – Structure* (has just been published by Pfau-Verlag, Germany, with her Rigorosum Examination passed with Excellence. She is also founder of the a cappella ensemble, Chiaroscuro, which specializes in contemporary choral music. From 2010 to 2012, she worked on the research project 'Giacinto Scelsi and Austria', including several visits to the archive of the Fondazione Isabella Scelsi (FIS) in Rome, Italy; this research has resulted in the publication *Incontri: discussions about Giacinto Scelsi* (Wolke, Germany). Teaching assignments have included aural training and performance practice in contemporary vocal music, at the Department of Music Theory, Composing and Conducting (University of the Arts).

**Anne LeBaron's** compositions embrace an exotic array of subjects encompassing vast reaches of space and time, ranging from the mysterious Singing Dune of Kazakhstan, to probes into physical and cultural forms of extinction, to legendary figures such as Pope Joan, Eurydice, Marie Laveau and the American Housewife. Widely recognized for her work in instrumental, electronic and performance realms, she has earned numerous awards and prizes, including a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, the Alpert Award in the Arts, a Fulbright Full Fellowship, an award from the Rockefeller MAP Fund for her opera, *Sucktion*, and a 2009-10 Cultural Exchange International Grant from the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs for *The Silent Steppe Cantata*. Also an accomplished harpist, LeBaron is renowned for her pioneering methods of developing and implementing extended harp techniques, electronic enhancements and notation in compositional and improvisational contexts. She currently teaches composition and related subjects, such as Concert Theater and HyperOpera, at the California Institute of the Arts.

**Constantinos Zouliatis** (aka Costis Zouliatis) was born in 1979 in Athens and up to now he has kept himself busy only with music and images. He studied Music at the Ionian University (Corfu), where he is also a PhD. candidate (his subject, Jani Christou's life and philosophical thought). He is founding member of several musical bands, including [Night On Earth](#) and Paracroussis, for which he composes music and participates as a musician and improviser, while he also gives solo piano performances. He has contributed to theatrical performances as a pianist and musical supervisor, composed music for short films and documentaries and directed/produced short video films and music videos, included a short portrait of the contemporary Greek composer Dimitris Dragatakis. His study in cinematography concerns the work and teachings of Ed Wood, Andrei Tarkovsky and Caravaggio, and a staggering masterclass by the cinematographer Christopher Doyle as well. As a researcher, he has worked for many years on Christou's life and work. He has also written the following published essays: 'A Musicological Approach to John Coltrane's "A Love Supreme" and its Importance as an Expression of Spiritual Passion' (2000), 'Politics and Music in the Works of Luigi Nono' (2003), 'Symbolism in Alban Berg's Music' (2004), 'Jani Christou – T. S. Eliot – Peter du Sautoy: seven letters for six songs' (in the journal of the Greek Music Workshop of the Ionian University, 2010) and 'Jani Christou: Alchemist of Dreams' (in the journal *Difona*, also 2010).



**Andriana Minou** was born in 1982 in Greece and has been living and working as a musician in London since 2004. She holds a BA in Piano Performance (University of Macedonia, 1999), an MA in Performing Arts (Middlesex University, 2005) and a PhD in Performance (Goldsmiths, University of London, 2010), the latter including a thesis on the late works of Jani Christou. She completed both her MA and PhD with a scholarship from the Onassis Public Benefit Foundation. As a soloist, performer and a founding member of the Vladimir & Estragon Piano Duo (with the pianist Nikos Stavlos) and the Diseaux Bizarres Ensemble, she has performed in the UK, Greece, France, Norway, Northern Ireland, India, Switzerland, Germany and Bulgaria. She also works as a writer/librettist and many of her texts have won prizes in competitions and have been published in literary journals, such as *Rattle Journal*. Her first book, *Children's Noirs*, has just been published in Greece by Strange Days Publications.

**Diseaux Bizarres** is an ensemble that consists of musicians and performers, all with PhD or other postgraduate degrees, based variously in London, Amsterdam, Berlin, Barcelona, Thessaloniki and Canberra. The ensemble was 'officially' founded by Andriana Minou for the purpose of her final PhD performance at Goldsmiths, University of London in 2010. However, the core of the ensemble first met and started working together in Thessaloniki, back in 2002. Their initial creative impetus was – and still is – a passion for interdisciplinary musical performance. So far, the ensemble has presented performances of pieces by Jani Christou and Thanasis Deligiannis in London and also in Belfast (Sonorities Festival 2012).