

Elena Pavlea THE SHAPE OF FREEDOM

GREEK ORCHESTRAL & CHAMBER WORKS

SIMON CHALK directs SOUTHERN SINFONIA with LONDON PIANO TRIO

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Inspiration, The Quest, Realization

The impetus behind composing the piano preludes **Inspiration** in G minor, 2010, **The Quest** in G minor, 2014, and **Realization** in G sharp minor, 2014, came from reflecting on the idea of 'act of creation' of an original work of art. The process of the 'act of creation' is the process of bringing to life something from the formless and immaterial, which, with time, is realized and given expression through music, dance, painting, or sculpture. For me, this process of creating something from the formless and immaterial is the very essence of being.

By embracing the utterly humane creative part of our selves, and identifying with the fascinating process of creation, we are brought closer to this primitive state of 'being' or 'existence', which is filled with infinity. As a composer, I discovered that the admiration and appreciation of a complete and finalized work of meaningful art, (a result of the individualized craft of an artist), could be or become the fundamental idea or inspiration behind my musical improvisation and composition. With this in mind, I started reflecting on what could be composed to express and highlight the process of creation in personal and psychological terms.

The improvisatory musical form of the piano prelude seemed appropriate here, as one through which recurrent musical ideas associated with emotions and motives could be expressed. The choice of minor tonality for each of these pieces was made to enhance and to strengthen the impulsive emotional imprint of the creative process itself.

Primarily, **Inspiration** expresses the inward compulsive desire for creation to happen. It reflects the need behind the spontaneous expression of emotion, as well as the necessity to communicate an arbitrary sensation of the past or the present. The music seeks to convey this driving inner energy, this endless unrestrained and limitless force resembling if not identifying with the power of life itself. **The Quest** is an effort to convey the emotional and mental process of the artist's journey to artistic discovery.

Realization is inspired by the final stage of creation, which encompasses all the feelings and impressions of the original idea and expresses them in a well-defined and unambiguous form of teleological content. The world of perception is, after all, an idea perfectly realized into the reality that we experience.

Blue-Sky Reverie: i. Ingenious Lights ii. Whispering Clouds iii. Diligent Rain

Blue-Sky Reverie Is dedicated to *L'Anima String Quartet* and was premiered and recorded by them in 2016. Lasting around ten minutes, it is composed in three movements. Each has its own personality. Compositionally, there was no deliberate effort made to connect them musically with reoccurring themes or melodies. This being said, the visual theme of the exploration of the sky, runs through the set and somehow unifies it.

Ingenious Lights seems to be E minor, at times, and is written with a sense of a modal touch in 3/4 time, with an accelerating tempo indication throughout the different sections of the piece, apart from the end, which returns to the initial larghetto. Light finds inventive ways to reach us and engage with reality. It is penetrating, elusive, powerful and at times evasive as it integrates itself with natural elements and objects. Sunlight becomes the lens through which we experience the world, and the sky the palette on which we amalgamate our fantasies of the blue.

Whispering Clouds is more firmly in E flat minor and is marked adagio in 3/4 time. Recurring motives and themes throughout this movement create a mystifying atmosphere with an overall tendency to amplify the intensity of the sound world created though the movement. A reccurring solo violon-

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cello theme, which begins the piece, symbolizes the persistent yet beautiful appearance of the clouds in the sky. The music expresses the tendency of the clouds to appear and disappear, ensuing the wind whilst gathering all together towards a climax, built with a crescendo, as the rain falls from the sky. My experience in observing clouds has always been to appreciate them and a connection with them in a mystical context, and I have tried to convey that sensation here as clearly as possible.

Diligent Rain is set in B minor and in 4/4 time, with a tempo which gradually builds in pace, supported by dance-like melodies and pizzicato themes. It is the final movement of the string quartet, and it expresses the diligence and thoroughness of rainfall. The repetitive, rhythmical and dance-like movement of raindrops is something that always fascinated me. There is accuracy, tenderness and a climactic sense in the falling of the rain, which is reflected here musically.

Winged Victory of Samothrace

Winged Victory of Samothrace is set in G sharp minor, in 4/4 time. It was composed in 2021 and premiered in the summer of the same year in the Greek island of Samothrace at the Nikolaos Fardis Cultural Center, with mezzo soprano, Ioanna Vrakatseli. It is a composition dedicated to Violetta Maradou Pavlea, my mother and author of the book, "Nike of Samothrace and

Maradou Pavlea, my mother and author of the book, "Nike of Samothrace and the Kabeirian Mysteries". The work was originally composed for mezzo soprano, string quartet, piano and flute, while a movie for this specific song was created under the title "Nike of Samothrace – The Return". A second instrumental version was later arranged, with the flute imitating the original vocal part. This has been included on the CD as a tribute to the Greek statue of Nike.

The music here is inspired by the beauty and the spiritual virtues of the marble Hellenistic statue of the "Winged Victory of Samothrace", the Greek goddess of victory. The glorious posture of the statue and the perfectly shaped bodily appearance, the translucent dress and the triumphal motionless movement of the wings, expose the in-depth integrity of the ancient Greek ideals and morals. The flute, takes on the melodic line, (mostly playing in high register), and this is the musical representation of the victorious spirit of the Winged Nike. The characteristic features of the statue of Nike are reflected through the variation of tempi and contrasting musical ideas. Nike, is a representation of the victorious human soul, a remembrance of the undefeated human spirit.

Karpon Spondi & The Offering

The original music for the orchestral setting **Karpon Spondi**, was composed in 2014 and premiered as a chamber musical composition on the same year at the *Lefakis Gallery* in Athens, accompanying a silent movie by the director *Alessandro Spiliotopulos* under the





same title. The music was inspired by the artworks of the sculptor *Panagiotis S. Papadopoulos* and by the nine Greek Muses that were the ancient deities who gave individuals the inspiration to create. In 2020, in a collaboration with the *Ert Contemporary Music Orchestra*, an orchestral version of the piece was presented in the second program of the Greek radio show under the direction of *Andreas Pylarinos*. A final orchestrated version of the piece was completed as part of this recording project.

Karpon Spondi is set in G minor, in 4/4 time, for orchestral forces, with timpani playing a prominent role throughout the work. Beginning with a mysterious adagio, the melody shifts into an eminent and continuous melodic motive played by the winds and strings respectively, at times creating tension between the different orchestral sections. Dance-like motives appear shortly after, mostly presented by the wind instruments, the marimba and the piano. In the final section, a new piano melodic theme is introduced before the vigorous finale. While composing the music, I had a story in mind — the intention was to create a simple and expressive dialogue between the Soul and the Ancient Greek Muses, in which the Soul is inspired into an ecstatic dance. This is followed by the Soul giving thanks to the Muses, as the source of its inspiration.

The Offering is set in G sharp minor, in 4/4 time, for violin and piano. It is a piece in which some of the key melodic motives from the orchestral version re-emerge in a different form and context. The intention here was to create an intimate yet animated narrative and passionate dialogue between the violin and the piano.

This piece is dedicated to my husband *Panagiotis Papadopoulos*.

Euterpe: Giver of Delight, Ourania & Thalia

Euterpe: Giver of Delight, Ourania and Thalia, were initially composed for

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string quartet, piano and flute and were premiered in 2014 at *Lefakis Gallery* in Athens being part of a project, titled "Karpon Spondi". This was re-worked into an orchestral version, that was premiered in 2020 by the *Ert Contemporary Music Orchestra* under the direction of *Andreas Pylarinos* on Greek radio. The orchestration has been adapted slight for this recording project.

Euterpe: Giver of Delight is set in G minor, 3/4 time, and is a tribute to the ancient Greek muse of delight, Euterpe, often depicted holding a flute. Regarded as the Muse of Music, she is closely associated with wind instruments. A solo cantabile viola theme marks the start of the composition, and this theme is developed later on by the string section. There are various alternations in character and tempo throughout the work, including, notably, the 6/8 section where a fresh dance-like theme is introduced. This helps reflect the delightful presence of the muse Euterpe. The piano's

prominent semi-quaver accompanying theme is often doubled (in different register) by the wind instruments. Xylophone and Marimba also help to enhance the rhythmical sense of the piece, while the strings generously provoke veiled emotions and passionate reactions to this delightful rhythmic ingredient.

Ourania in G minor and 4/4 time refers to the ancient Greek muse Urania. Often pictured holding a celestial globe or a compass she is considered to be the muse of astronomy. The vocal part in this orchestral piece is essential and depicts the ethereal and delicate abilities of the muse. Urania. could predict the future and read the stars. Having this sublime and unique ability among the muses, she was considered a very powerful goddess. The contrasting broader and sparser instrumental texture here as well as use of both lyrical and powerful melodic themes reflects Urania's expansive character. The harpsichord

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acts as a universal clock advocating melodic themes as well as rhythmical patterns and with it helps reflect the balance of the empyrean harmony of the cosmos.

Thalia is set in G minor, in 4/4 time, and it is dedicated to the muse of idyllic poetry and comedy. Thalia is often portrayed as a young woman crowned with ivy. The 'flourishing' (or thriving) connotation of Thalia is depicted through the brisk and heterogeneous harmonic character of the composition, as well as through the fast tempi used throughout the piece. The harpsichord at times creates a tragic-comic element. Around this, different instruments play small melodic themes that almost act as independent solo passages. These themes are intended to bring out the individual characters of each instrument. (After all, humour is all about wit and spirit.)

This composition is dedicated to my professor, Yannis Avgerinos, for his

wonderful idea to use harpsichord instead of piano throughout the composition.

Tears of a Firebird

Tears of a Firebird is written for cello and piano, in B minor, in 4/4 time, and is one of my favourite compositions. It was composed in 2006, while I was still an undergraduate music student at the American College of Greece, and was premiered around the same time as part of a student performance. It is dedicated to my special friend Anna Economopoulos, who always loved listening to this composition. Special thanks go to my former music professor Alexandros Dionatos for his valuable support and advice regarding the writing of this composition.

The music depicts my strong faith in every individual's ability for spiritual rebirth following any devastating situation they are faced with in life.

The phoenix, an immortal bird in Greek mythology, related to the sun,

regenerates from its ashes, and is being reborn again and again. The solemn introduction of the piece is associated with the dark and desolate side of *Psyche* in times of turmoil, trouble, and confusion. The sorrowful but expressive cello melody accompanied by a firm and steady piano part, intimately preserve this sense of despair and regret.

The Shape of Freedom

The Shape of Freedom was originally composed as a piano prelude in 2015. I always felt it would work best for orchestra. While it has been arranged and presented by various ensembles, this recording project provided me with the opportunity to set it for larger musical forces.

Beginning in G minor scale in 4/4 time, this piece shifts to C minor scale and 3/4 time, and the work concludes in C minor. Initially, the English horn begins with a melodic theme, which is later undertaken by the strings and wind

sections, followed by the piano. Temporally speaking, the adagio switches into a more flexible andante section as the music develops.

The inspiration for this music came from experiencing the beauty that we find in fleeting experiences in life. Long melodic lines and sentimental phrases express a person's intention of communicating their individual experiences in life, through music, as well as transmitting their passing impressions of unprecedented beauty.

Rainy Days, Narrow Streets & Means of Escape

Rainy Days set in G minor, 4/4 time, Narrow Streets set in E minor, 4/4 time, and Means of Escape set in G minor, and again, 4/4 time, were all composed in 2015. The main melodies from these works, were used in the film, titled "Rainy Days", directed by Alesandro Spiliotopulos. The idea behind reworking the

music into these three independent orchestral works, came from the need to exploit the pre-existing emotional impact of the music and transfer it into a larger orchestration. The script of the film "Rainy Days" is contemporary in every sense. After the significant financial crisis in Greece in 2010, many people at the time, who were well educated, leading ordinary lives, were left homeless. The story of the film concentrated on these heart-breaking social issues and the music tried to relate to the emotions. and experiences of the protagonists. Amongst other things, the narrative themes addressed include love. rejection, loneliness, intimacy, hope and the power of will.

Means of Escape is a powerful yet sensitive composition, based solely on a dotted semi-quaver theme made up of triplets and developed throughout the piece. A lyrical English horn sets the scene, and this is later developed further by the oboe

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and flute. The marimba and piano rhythmically sustain the effect of a dance-like theme, whilst the strings melodically intensify the emotional climax of the work. The timpani and percussion strengthen the feeling of liberation and relief which is being extended until the finale chord. This piece is dedicated to my father, who has always loved it.

Narrow Streets was premiered in 2020 with the mezzo soprano Marissia Papalexiou. It makes use of a recurring harmonic progression of four chords throughout the piece. The repetitive pattern acts as a musical analogy to the limited, confined and obscured sense of dead-end, any individual can experience in life. I also introduced a harpsichord into the orchestration to evoke a sense of the Baroque. A sentimental soprano vocal line offers hope, superimposing the gloomy idea of a problem without a solution which is evoked by the orchestration. The improvisatory cadenzas in the beginning and middle part of the composition, were contributed by the Greek harpsichordist *Gerassimos Choidas*.

Rainy Days was originally written for solo piano and featured in a film by the same title, along with Narrow Streets and Means of Escape. My individual encounter with rain has always been one associated with a sense of continuous movement, a lightness of spirit and a nostalgic feeling. The English horn sets the mood here, with other wind instruments participating in the development of its melody, whilst the piano and string sections contribute to the musical tension developed in the introduction. The lively Adagio is followed by a more lyrical and sentimental section, which in turn is followed by a differently orchestrated dance-like melody. A concluding music references the opening melody of the composition. This piece is dedicated to Vasilis Kapralos.

Elena Pavlea's compositional output is influenced by Neo-romantic and Minimalistic musical genres.

Born and raised in Athens, Greece, she discovered classical music at an early age, undertaking her first piano lessons aged seven and composing her first piano pieces aged eight. In her own words, she relates, "I quickly realized that composition was something I felt I needed to pursue. I feel that music can help me to express myself in an honest and sincere way."

Much of Elena's music has been written collaboratively with film directors, video artists, choreographers, sculptors, painters, and poets. In her own words: "Music can be found in words, in gestures, in images and objects and can create a whole world by itself - or enhance an existing visual narrative where it already exists".

Elena began her musical education in Greece. She undertook theory lessons with Alexandros Dionatos at the Max Hallecker Conservatory and completed her piano studies under professor Yannis Hallecker with a Piano Soloist Diploma. She also holds a diploma in Harmony (class of Dimitris Karavelis) from the Eratio Conservatory. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Music from The American College of Greece, with a minor in Philosophy. Elena continued her studies in the UK receiving her Postgraduate Diploma in Piano Performance from City, University of London and Guildhall School of Music and Drama (joint programme) under professor Peter Bithell. Elena is currently pursuing further studies in Fugue and Orchestration under professor Yannis Avgerinos at the Athens Musical Society Conservatory.

Elena has been awarded numerous prizes, including two first prizes in 2015 and one in 2018 at the International Composition Competition "Donne in Musica".

Alongside composition and performance, Elena also studied philosophy and music aesthetics whilst she attended numerous masterclasses in Greece and abroad. She continues to work as a pianist, composer, piano teacher and music educator in conservatories and schools in primary and secondary music education. Eena Pav

BIOGRAPHIES

SIMON CHALK - CONDUCTOR

"Dynamic" ... "passionate" ... "devilish but with a great sense of fun" ... "committed" ... "a musician's conductor"

Simon has conducted orchestras in over 70 countries, across a plethora of musical genres, to tens of thousands of concert goers and has appeared at many of the world's most iconic venues, from the Royal Albert Hall and Sydney Opera House to the O2 in London and Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas.

He is currently the Artistic Director and Conductor of Southern Sinfonia, Principal Guest Conductor of the Slovak Sinfonietta (formerly Chief Conductor) and Guest Conductor of the St Petersburg Symphony Orchestra. He has made numerous recordings including two live DVDs with the international vocal quartet, Il Divo.

www.simonchalk.co.uk



SOUTHERN SINFONIA

Southern Sinfonia's reputation continues to grow as the leading professional Chamber Orchestra in the South of England. With Sir Roger Norrington as its Patron the orchestra, established in 1990, is now developing its exciting new residency at Queen's College in Taunton, Somerset, alongside its other continuing relationships under its new Artistic Director/Conductor, Simon Chalk.

Characterised by the strength and depth of knowledge of its players – from its unique ability to also play Baroque instruments at the correct pitch and with informed playing style to its commitment to contemporary and new music – Southern Sinfonia is in great demand. The orchestra has held residencies at the Corn Exchange, Newbury and the University of Winchester, and has had a long association with Reading University. It performs in venues throughout the UK including London, Wells, Bath, Exeter, Canterbury, Cambridge, Nottingham and Romsey.



Simon Chalk directs Southern Sinfonia during recording at Turner Sims, Southampton, 25th - 26th June 2021

As well as regular orchestral concerts and performances with the South of England's most established chamber choirs and choral societies, the orchestra has made a number of high profile recordings most recently the world premieres of both of the Requiems by Dan Locklair (Convivium) and Carl Rütti (Naxos), and the Bach B Minor Mass and Monteverdi Vespers with Ralph Allwood and the Rodolfus Choir (Signum). www.southernsinfonia.co.uk

LONDON PIANO TRIO

"Simply World Class" is the description made by the German press of the London Piano Trio. For the past 20 years the London Piano Trio have been touring, recording, and teaching across the globe to rave reviews. Upcoming tours include a 10 city tour of China in 2020 and a Far East Tour in 2021. At home they have been described as a "National Treasure".



BIOGRAPHIES

They were artists in residence at the Gibbs Music Festival from 2008 - 2014 and from 2014 - 2016 had a residency at St John's Smith Square in London, featuring a critically acclaimed 2015 Beethoven Cycle and are artists in residence at the Festival Jalesnes, Venantes, France.

Their interest in promoting English music has resulted in them recording the complete trios of Donald Francis

Tovey, Henry Cotter Nixon, and Cecil Armstrong Gibbs, with many premiere performances in places such as Dubai, Singapore, Manila, Naples, and Paris. They have actively commissioned works by composers such as Christopher Gunning, Jed Balsamo, Gavin Bryers, Clement Ishmael, Christopher Weeks and Carson Cooman

www.londonpianotrio.com

THANKS

DEDICATED TO **MY SON AND HUSBAND**

Special thanks to my parents who have supported me and helped enable this recording project to be undertaken.

I wish to personally thank Kostas Karagiannis for his suggestions in orchestration and Mihanis Hanos for his score editing and proofreading.

I also wish to thank Adriana Kandyla and Dimitris Katharopoulos for their help in proofreading and editing the earlier version of my orchestral scores used in the 2020 premiere with the Ert Contemporary Music Orchestra.

I would like to give a special thank you to Natalie Tsaldarakis and Panagiotis Archontides of the Ivory Duo Piano Ensemble for all their friendly support throughout the project.

Also, I would like to thank my professor Yannis Avgerinos for all his support.

MUSICIANS

SOUTHERN SINFONIA

Cellos

Claire Constable Mike Nowland

Dave Ayre Kate Addis

Flute Tim Taylorson

Rachel Broadbent

Oboe2/Cor Simon Dewhurst

Clarinet Peter Gigleris

LONDON PIANO TRIO

1st Violin Robert Atchison

2nd Violin Neil McTaggart*

Leader

Richard Smith

1st Violins

Ivor McGregor

Zhivko Georaiev

Helena Ruinard

Paul Barrett

2nd Violins

Charley Beresford

Caroline Bodimead

Jakob Törmä

Katrina McWilliams

Violas

Morgan Goff

Rachel Calaminus

Stephanie Chambers

Nick Stringfellow

D/Bass

Oboe

Viola Elisa Bergersen*

Cello David Jones (*Guest members)

Bassoon Phil Brooks

> Trumpet Steve Lee

Horn Dave Oxley

Percussion Tim Farmer Tom Peverelle

Piano Helen Reid

Harpsichord Martin Perkins

Soprano April Fredrick

Flute Kia Bennett*

> Piano Tim Carey

Elena Pavlea THE SHAPE OF FREEDOM GREEK ORCHESTRAL & CHAMBER WORKS

SIMON CHALK directs SOUTHERN SINFONIA with LONDON PIANO TRIO

SOLOISTS April Frederick (soprano), Kia Bennett (flute), Robert Atchison (violin), David Jones (cello), Martin Perkins (harpsichord) and Tim Carey (piano).

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EXECUTIVE PRODUCER Adrian Green.

www.elenapavlea.gr www.simonchalk.co.uk www.southernsinfonia.co.uk www.londonpianotrio.com

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