

# YORGOS SICILIANOS

Sonata for Violin and Piano, Op. 45

Violin

## Preface

The Sonata for Violin and Piano, Op. 45 (1981) by Yorgos Sicilianos (1920 - 2005), is the first chamber work in which the composer draws his inspiration from extra-musical sources. Dedicated to the composer's son, Linos Sicilianos, who at that time was a violin student, the Sonata begins with a 57 bar section, titled Chaconne, that is inspired by J. S. Bach's Chaconne, the final movement of Partita No. 2 in D minor (BWV 1004). Apart from the chaconne rhythmic pattern that stresses the second beat of the bar, the composer evokes other sections of the Chaconne with the pedal section in bars 28-39 and the semiquaver triplet episode at bars 40-47, all occurring exactly 200 bars later in Bach's original composition. However, this section of the first movement is not an arrangement of Bach's work, but a fantasia-introduction inspired by it. As the performer will notice, the drastic changes in speed and dynamic, as well as the rubato indication, confer an improvisational character on this movement. The Scherzo is a reworking of an earlier composition by Sicilianos entitled Six Songs, Op. 37 (1975) for single voice and piano, inspired by a poem written of Giannis Ritsos (1909-1990), entitled "At the Edge of the Port" (1961).

Editor's translation of Ritsos' poem from the original Greek:

The deaf-mute was waving his arms - he didn't hide his fear.  
He was pointing to somewhere high in the night sky. No one paid any attention.  
He had heard the wild birds scream, only he,  
over the coal-houses. When they took from the ship  
the five coffins, the mute lowered his arms, he took  
a little piece of string from his pocket and tied the bird's leg.  
In such dark shadows, he says, I yearn to escape the darkness.

The second movement, Pantoum, is inspired by the eponymous poem written by the Nobel Laureate Giorgos Seferis (1900 - 1971). The poem follows the traditional Javanese pantoum technique of poetry that repeats every other line of the poem in such a way that the repeated words gain new meaning each time because of the line of text that precedes and succeeds them. Sicilianos follows this structure and has assigned musical phrases to specific lines in the poem. It is imperative that the performers adhere precisely to the articulation, dynamics and other markings, as any alteration will affect the special concept of repetitions that the composer has transferred from the poetic style of the pantoum. The piano part in this movement emulates the percussive elements of a Gamelan orchestra, which traditionally accompanies recitations of Javanese and Malay poems. Below is the editor's translation of Seferis's poem from the original Greek. Note the introduction of numbers next to the lines of the poem for the easier identification of the repetitions:

1 The stars hold a world of their own  
2 on the ocean ships draw flames  
3 my soul liberate yourself from the bond of darkness  
4 bitter, inflamed with grace.

2 On the ocean ships draw flames  
5 the night shrivels and stands a stranger  
4 bitter, inflamed with grace  
6 my soul knows which law binds it.

5 The night shrivels and stands a stranger  
7 in black silk the lights are extinguished  
6 my soul knows which law binds it  
8 and what will remain and what will leave.

7 In black silk the lights are extinguished  
9 only the sound of time remains  
8 and what will remain and what will leave  
10 if the mute battlement strikes lightning.

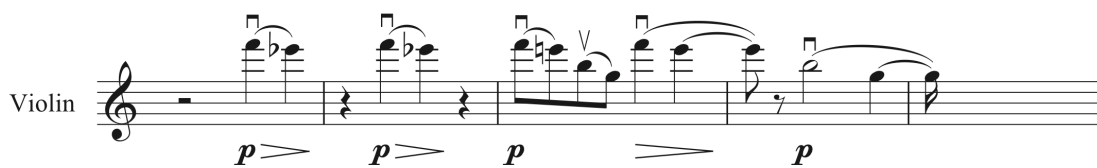
9 Only the sound of time remains  
11 metallic post at the edge of pain  
10 if the mute battlement strikes lightning  
12 not even a dream will you find to shed a tear.

11 Metallic post at the edge of pain  
13 the moment approaches like a hovering blade  
12 not even a dream will you find to shed a tear  
14 in the aerial crowd that constricts you like a snake.

13 The moment approaches like a hovering blade  
15 what are they awaiting for peace to prevail?  
14 in the aerial crowd that constricts you like a snake  
16 not the sky, nor an angel's indulgence.

15 what are they awaiting for peace to prevail?  
17 on people shut in who measure their sorrow  
16 not the sky nor an angel's indulgence  
1 the stars hold a world of their own.



Violin 

4  
4 (Bar 25 - 29)

πικρή, φλογισμένη που δέεσαι με ευλάβεια  
bitter, inflamed with grace

Violin 

6  
6 (Bar 29 - 30)

ψυχή μου γνωρίζεις ποιός νόμος σε δένει.  
my soul knows which law binds it.

Violin 

5  
5 (Bar 31 - 34)

Η νύχτα στενεύει και στέκει σαν ξένη  
The night shrivels and stands a stranger

Violin 

7  
7 (Bar 35 - 36)

στο μαύρο μετάξι τα φώτα έχουν σβήσει  
in the black silk the lights extinguish

Violin 

6  
6 (Bar 37 - 38)

ψυχή μου γνωρίζεις ποιός νόμος σε δένει.  
my soul knows which law binds it

Violin 

8  
8 (Bar 39 - 40)

και τι θα σου μένει και τι θα σ' αφήσει.  
and what will remain and what will leave.

Violin 

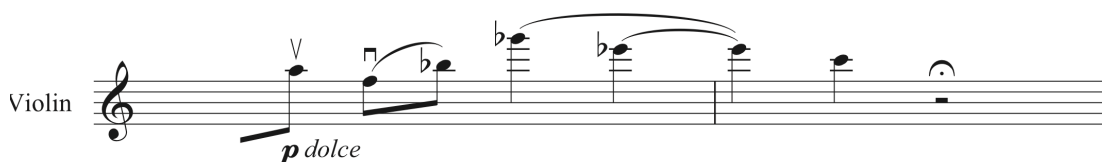
7  
7 (Bar 41 - 42)

Στο μαύρο μετάξι τα φώτα έχουν σβήσει  
In the black silk the lights extinguish

Violin 

9  
9 (Bar 43 - 46)

ακούγονται μόνο του χρόνου τα σείστρα  
only the sound of time remains

Violin 

8  
8 (Bar 46 - 47)

και τι θα σου μείνει και τι θα σ' αφήσει.  
and what will remain and what will leave

Violin 

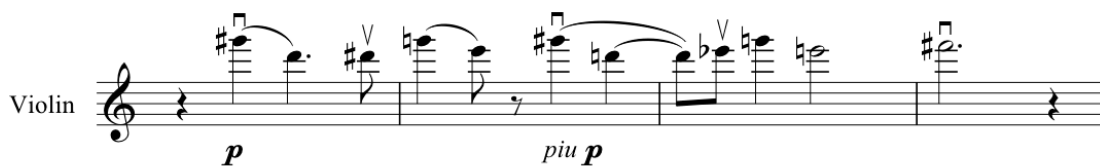
10  
10 (Bar 48 - 50)

αν τύχει κι αστράψει βουβή πολεμιστρά.  
if the mute battlement strikes lightning.

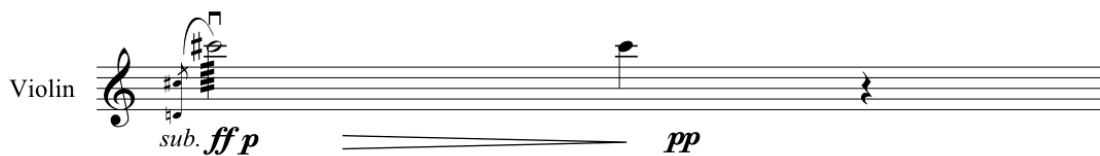
Violin 

9  
9 (Bar 51 - 52)

Ακούγονται μόνο του χρόνου τα σείστρα  
Only the sound of time remains

Violin 

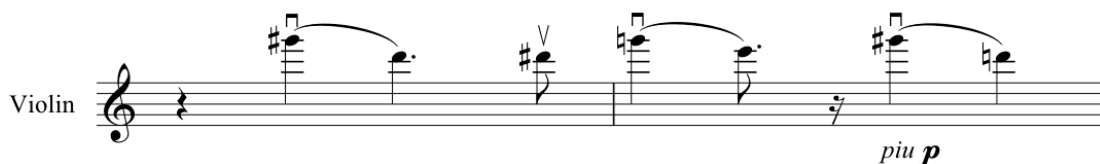
11  
11 (Bar 53 - 56)      μετάλλινη στήλη στου πόνου την άκρη  
metallic post at the edge of pain

Violin 

10  
10 (Bar 57)      αν τύχει κι αστράψει βουβή πολεμίστρα  
if the mute battlement strikes lightning

Violin 

12  
12 (Bar 58 - 59)      ούτε όνειρο θα βρεις να δώσει ένα δάκρυ.  
not even a dream will you find to shed a tear.

Violin 

11  
11 (Bar 60 - 61)      Μετάλλινη στήλη στου πόνου την άκρη  
Metallic post at the edge of pain

Violin 

13  
13 (Bar 62 - 63)      ψηλώνει η στιγμή σα μετέωρο λεπίδι  
the moment approaches like a hovering blade

Violin 

12  
12 (Bar 63 - 65)      ούτε όνειρο θα βρεις να δώσει ένα δάκρυ.  
not even a dream will you find to shed a tear

Violin Musical notation for Violin part 14 (Bar 65-67) in treble clef, showing a melodic line with various intervals and dynamics.

14  
14 (Bar 65 - 67)

στο πλήθος σου το άυλο που σφίγγει σα φίδι.  
in the aerial crowd that constricts you like a snake.

Violin Musical notation for Violin part 13 (Bar 68-69) in treble clef, starting with a rest and then a melodic line. Dynamics include *p* and *(molto dolce)*.

13  
13 (Bar 68 - 69)

Ψηλώνει η στιγμή σα μετέωρο λεπίδι  
The moment approaches like a hovering blade

Violin Musical notation for Violin part 15 (Bar 70-71) in treble clef, featuring a melodic line with rests and dynamics. Dynamics include *p*.

15  
15 (Bar 70 - 71)

σαν τι να προσμένει να πέσει γαλήνη;  
what are they awaiting for peace to prevail?

Violin Musical notation for Violin part 14 (Bar 71-74) in treble clef, showing a melodic line with dynamics. Dynamics include *p*.

14  
14 (Bar 71 - 74)

στο πλήθος σου το άυλο που σφίγγει σα φίδι.  
in the aerial crowd that constricts you like a snake

Violin Musical notation for Violin part 16 (Bar 74-75) in treble clef, showing a melodic line with dynamics.

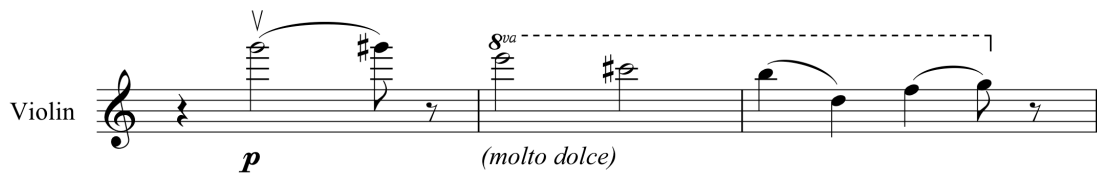
16  
16 (Bar 74 - 75)

δεν είναι ο ουρανός μηδέ αγγέλου ευφροσύνη.  
not the sky, nor an angel's indulgence.

Violin Musical notation for Violin part 15 (Bar 76-77) in treble clef, featuring a melodic line with rests and dynamics. Dynamics include *p*, *mp*, and *mf*.

15  
15 (Bar 76 - 77)

σαν τι να προσμένει να πέσει γαλήνη;  
what are they awaiting for peace to prevail?

Violin 

*p* (molto dolce)

17 Σ' ανθρώπους κλειστούς που μετρούν τον καημό τους  
 17 (Bar 78 - 80) on people shut in who measure their sorrow

Violin 

*p*

16 δεν είναι ο ουρανός μηδέ αγγέλου ευφροσύνη  
 16 (Bar 81 - 82) not the sky nor an angel's indulgence

Violin 

1 τ' αστέρια κρατούν έναν κόσμο δικό τους.  
 1 (Bar 82 - 84) the stars hold a world of their own.

The final movement of the Sonata, Nijinsky, is an example of programmatic music by Sicilianos. This movement like the previous one was inspired by the eponymous short story written by Giorgos Seferis. The story describes an imaginary encounter between an author (assumed to be Seferis) and the dancer Vaslav Nijinsky (1889-1950).

The editor's translation of "Nijinsky" by Giorgos Seferis from the original Greek:

He appeared as I was staring at the lit coals that were burning in my fireplace. He had a large box of red matches in his hands. Like an illusionist pulls an egg from a person's nose he presented it to me.

He took a match and set the box on fire. It vanished in a puff of smoke, and he stood before me. I remember his magenta smile and his glass eyes. A small organ kept playing the same note out in the street. I couldn't tell what he was wearing. Slowly his arms started to delineate a cross as they stretched out from his body. Where did all these birds come from? One could say that he had them hidden beneath his wings.

They flew carelessly; oddly, with great momentum they slammed against the walls of the narrow room, against the glass windows and, injured, they strewed the floor. The soles of my feet felt a warm layer of feathers and pulses swell beneath them.

I gazed at him with fervour that consumed my body. When he finished, he started to raise his hands, and when his palms met each other, he suddenly leapt. It was as if the spring had snapped in the clock opposite me. He hit the ceiling, which resounded like a cymbal ringing. He stretched his right arm and snapped the wire from which the lamp was hanging and moved a little, he then started to draw figures of eight with his body in the dark light.

This spectacle stunned me and I covered my face with my two hands. I clasped the darkness over my eyelids, listening to the small organ that kept playing the same note, which then suddenly ceased. A sudden gust of cool air hit me. I felt my legs freeze. I heard the deep and velvety sound of a flute, and immediately after it a broad, even flapping sound. I opened my eyes. I saw him standing tiptoe, on top of a crystal sphere in the middle of the room. He had in his mouth a strange flute that was commanded by his fingers, as if he had seven thousand of them. The birds came to life and, with ridiculous order. They rose and formed thick flocks that one could embrace as they flew out into the night from the window that had somehow opened.

When not even half a wing was left, though a muggy smell of game remained, I decided to look him in the eye. He had no face, at the top of his purple body. Headless, it seemed, he admired a golden mask, like one of those found at Mycenae. I attempted to stand up. No sooner had I made a move than a thunderous sound, like a stack of hubcaps crashing down at a funeral march, rooted me to the spot.

It was the mask. His face appeared once more in its original form, as I had seen it at first, his eyes, his smile, and something that I was only just starting to notice: the white skin stretched by two pitch black wisps that were embedded in front of the ears. He tried to jump, but he did not possess the same nimbleness as before. In fact, I think he stumbled over a book forgotten on the floor and knelt on one knee. I could now look at him with greater ease. I could see the pores of his skin trickling tiny drops of sweat. I started to gasp. I was trying to understand why his eyes had seemed so strange to me. He shut them. He tried to stand, but it must have been immensely difficult, it seemed that he was trying to muster all his strength, but to no avail. He was down on both knees now.

The white skin seemed horribly pale, almost yellow-ivory, and the black hair seemed dead. Even though, I was witnessing his agony, I felt better as if I had scored a victory. Before I could breathe I saw him completely prostrated sinking into a jade pagoda that was printed on my carpet.

This edition used as its main source the composer's final manuscript, found in Sicilianos's digital archive housed at the Institute for Research on Music and Acoustics (IEMA) in Athens. Sicilianos was meticulous in the creation of "final" scores for his works, thereby safeguarding them from conjectural emendations. The file name for the source used in the creation of this edition is: iem.CMC.gsi.sme.160.1

This preface and score were first published by the Benaki Museum of Athens in the following book: Mavroudis, Anastasios Rupert Arthur. *Sicilianos, The Greek Modernist: Performing Selected Chamber Works and Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 51*. Athens: Benaki Museum, 2020, 93-154, 323-357



Violin

48 *a tempo* *rit.* *a tempo* *accel.* *ritornando*  
*ff* *ff*

54 *p dolce* *p sempre in tempo*

61

70 **Scherzo-Allegretto** (♩ = ♩ = 120) *pizz. sul tasto*  
4 *mp*

81 *p*

88 *arco* *mf* *f* *fp* *pizz.* *arco* *p mp mf*

98 *f* *ff* *gliss.* *ff sempre*

106 *f* *f marc* *f* *mf*

112 *f marc* *f* *mf*

125 *mf* *3*

139 *Alla breve* (♩ = ♩ = 60) *p molto tranquillo*  
2 *p*

146

150 *(senza rit.)* *pizz.* *p*

150 *(senza rit.)* *pizz.* *p*

Violin  
II  
Pantoum

1 **Largo** ♩ = 48

3

*p dolce senza trascinare*

7

*p sempre come prima*

12 *gliss.*

*p*

16

*piu p* *p*

20

*p* *fp* *piu p*

24

*p* *pp* *p* *p* *p*

28

*p* *pp* *p dolce*

32

*p* *p* *piu p*

37

*p* *p* *p* *p*

42

*piu p* *mp* *p*

46

*p dolce* *rit.* *sub. ff p* *pp* *p*

50

*p* *mp*

3

The image shows a page of a violin score for the second movement, 'Pantoum'. The music is in 4/4 time and begins with a tempo marking of 'Largo' and a quarter note equal to 48 beats. The score consists of ten staves of music, with measure numbers 1, 7, 12, 16, 20, 24, 28, 32, 37, 42, 46, and 50 indicated. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score includes various dynamic markings such as piano (p), piano fortissimo (fp), piano molto (pp), mezzo-piano (mp), and piano dolce. It also features performance instructions like 'dolce senza trascinare', 'sempre come prima', 'gliss.', and 'rit.'. The music is characterized by long, flowing lines with many slurs and ties, and includes some triplet markings. The page ends with a final measure containing a fermata and a '3' indicating a triplet.

Violin

53 *p* *piu p*

57 *sub. ff p* *pp* *p*

61 *piu p* *(molto dolce)*

65 *(molto dolce)* *p* *p* *p* *p*

69 *(molto dolce)* *p* *p* *p* *p*

73 *p* *a tempo* *mp*

77 *mf* *p* *(molto dolce)* *p*

82 *2*

Violin  
III  
Nijinski

1 Allegro  $\text{♩} = 76$

8

14 *tr* *sf* *sostenuto* *a tempo* *3* *3* *ff pesante* *sempre f*

21 (au talon) *poco tratt.* *piu f* *sf*

27 *sf*

32 *cresc.*

36 *8<sup>va</sup>* Poco piu mosso ( $\text{♩} = 84$ )

40 *jeté* *fff* *marc.*

42 *jeté* *marc.*

45 *jeté*

48 *jeté*

51 *pizz.* *sff*

Violin

53 **Tempo Primo** (♩=76) *8va* arco *pp* 2

61 *8va* *ff* 11 *sf > p* 7 *p (allontanato)* 7

77 **Piu Lento** (♩=66) *8va* con sord. *pp dolciss.* 3 *pp*

89 *pp sempre dolciss* poco rit. 2

97 *8va* a tempo *pp dolciss.* **Tempo primo** (♩=76) 7 *pizz.* *p*

111 *via sord.* **Largo** (♩=44) *piu p* 5 **Allegro appassionato** (♩=92) senza sord. arco (au talon) *ff*

122 *pizz.* *sff* *sff* arco *sff sempre* *pizz.* *sff* *sff* 3

**Tempo Primo, ma appassionato** (♩=76)

130 arco *ff* 3

136 *sff* *p* 3 6

Violin

143 *p con grazia* *p* *mf*

147 *p* *gliss.*

152 *cresc.* *mf* *cresc.* *f*

157 *gliss.* *< sf* *piu f* *> sf*

161 *cresc.*

165 *gliss.* *ff*

Lentamente (♩=52)

167 *tr<sup>b</sup>* *pp* *pp*

176 *p* *mf* *mp* *f*

Allegro mosso (♩=112)

182 *p* *pp* *f sub.*

188 *stringendo poco a poco*

192

196 *ff* *ff*