THE NATIONAL ELEMENT IN MUSIC

INTERNATIONAL MUSICOLOGICAL CONFERENCE
ATHENS (MEGARON-THE ATHENS CONCERT HALL)
18-20 JANUARY 2013

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

ORGANIZED BY
FACULTY OF MUSIC STUDIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS
MUSIC LIBRARY OF GREECE ‘Lilian Voudouri’
SUPPORTED BY MEGARON-THE ATHENS CONCERT HALL

ATHENS
2014
Nikos Skalkottas' *Thema con Variazioni (thème grec populaire)* from *Suite for Piano no. 3* - An analytical and compositional approach

Costas Tsougras  
School of Music Studies, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki  
[tsougras@mus.auth.gr](mailto:tsougras@mus.auth.gr)

**Abstract.** Nikos Skalkottas, the highly acclaimed pioneer of Greek musical modernism, used folk or folk-like musical elements (melodic and rhythmic material) in a considerable number of tonal or atonal works, while employing a great variety of compositional techniques for the exploitation of the embedded folk elements. The present paper examines a representative of the category of “Theme & Variations” works that, although based on modal Greek folk melodies, are overall atonal. The piece under examination is the *Thema con Variazioni (thème grec populaire)*, second part of his *Suite for Piano No. 3* (1940). The analysis focuses on the harmonization of the original folk melody for the creation of the theme, on its transformation during the variations - while functioning as melodic and structural core -, as well as on the evolution of the musical texture throughout the unfolding of the variation form. The analysis reveals Skalkottas’ outstanding capacity to fuse traditional formal elements with modern harmonic and transformational techniques and connects this category of piano pieces with his other atonal variation-type works (such as the *15 Little Variations* and the *Passacaglia*) not based on Greek folk tunes. Aside from the analytical approach described above, the paper also attempts a compositional one, with the latter based on the compositional and stylistic features disclosed by the former. The output of the compositional procedure is a piano miniature in the style of Nikos Skalkottas, based on a Greek folk tune from Macedonia. The step-by-step explanation of the compositional procedure complements and verifies the results of the performed analysis.

**Introduction**

Nikos Skalkottas (1904-1949) used folk or folk-like musical elements (melodic and rhythmic material) in a considerable number of tonal or atonal works, while employing a great variety of compositional techniques for the exploitation of the embedded folk elements. The present paper examines a member of the category of "Theme & Variations" works that, although based on modal Greek folk melodies, are overall atonal. This category comprises the following works:

1. *Eight variations on a Greek folk theme* (*8 Variationen üeber ein griechisches Volksthema*) for piano trio (A/K 43, 1938),
2. *Short variations on a mountain theme* (*Kurze Variationen auf ein Bergsthema*), no. 3 from the *32 Piano Pieces*, A/K 70, 1940),
3. *Greek Folkdance* (no. 5 from the *32 Piano Pieces*, A/K 70, 1940),
4. *Thema con Variazioni* (no. 2 from *Piano Suite no. 3*, A/K 73, 1940 or 1941),

In the present paper, this category is represented by the *Thema con Variazioni* from the third Suite.

The *Thema con Variazioni (thème grec populaire)* is the second part of the *Suite for Piano no. 3* (the Suite comprises four pieces: Minuetto, Themà con Variazioni, Marcia Funebra, Finale), composed during the autumn of 1940 or the first months of 1941. This was an intense creative period for Skalkottas, who was at the time feverously exploring the composition of music for solo piano (in the second half of 1940 and the first half of 1941 he composed the *32 Piano Piec-\[1\] The titles and dates come from Mantzourani’s chronological worklist: Eva Mantzourani, *The Life and Twelve-Tone Music of Nikos Skalkottas* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 379-387. A/K denotes the catalogue number in the Skalkottas Archive.\[2\] Thornley (John Thornley, "Skalkottas, Nikos", in *Grove Music Online*) writes that the *Suite no. 3* was composed in 1940, while Papaioannou [John Papaioannou, *Nikos Skalkottas* (Athens: Papagrigoriou-Nakas, 1997), vol. 1, 403 and vol. 2, 217] states that it was composed in 1941. Mantzourani, citing various sources, includes both years in her catalogue (*The Life and Twelve-Tone Music of Nikos Skalkottas*, 384).
es, the *Suites for Piano* nos. 2, 3, 4 and the *Four Studies for Piano*, a total of 48 pieces or movements). The autograph of the *Suite for Piano* no. 3 is part of the *Skalkottas Archive* (A/K 73), and the work has been published by Universal Edition and has been recorded for discography by Christodoulos Georgiades and George Hadjimikos. References to this piece and the folk element it incorporates have been found in Papaioannou, Hadjimikos and Demertzis. These sources include references to the chronology and conditions of the piece's composition (Papaioannou, Demertzis - both emphasize the fact that the suite was composed during the outbreak of the war between Greece and Italy) or are brief verbal descriptions of its content (Hadjimikos, Demertzis). Demertzis also refers to the formal design of the piece, i.e. the gradual acceleration and return to slow tempo, and its textural density. However, none of these sources contains a full or selective analysis of the piece.

The identity and title of the folk song functioning as theme for the piece is not fully explicit, although Skalkottas declares this property at the title (in the autograph it appears as "thème grecque [sic] populaire", and in the UE edition as "thème grec populaire"). Both Demertzis and Hadjimikos acknowledge in their writings the melody's folk origin and its dramatic character, but neither provides the title or lyrics of the folk song. Hadjimikos, in an oral communication with the author of the present paper (summer 2012), said that the folk melody possibly originates from Epirus (a northwestern region of Greece) and is a tribute to Antonis Katsantonis (1775?-1808), a renowned Greek hero of the pre-Greek revolution period. The Funeral March that follows in the Suite also refers to the hero's death. The folk melody has a sober and mournful character.

So, the aim of the present paper is to provide a comprehensive study of the harmonization of the original folk melody for the creation of the theme, of the theme's transformation during the variations while functioning as melodic and structural core, as well as of the evolution of the musical texture throughout the unfolding of the variation form. The results of the analysis attempt to shed some light into one of the most interesting aspects of Skalkottas' music: the relation and equilibrium between tradition (classical form, Greek folk music) and innovation (contemporary harmonic, textural and transformational techniques). Also, the stylistic features provided by the analysis will serve as resource for the second aim of the paper, which is the composition of a piano miniature in the style of the category described above. The explanation of the compositional procedure will complement and verify the results of the performed analysis.

---

4 U.E. 13611 LW.
6 The recording was published in a CD bundled with the book: George Hadjimikos, *Nikos Skalkottas: A renewed approach to the musical thought and interpretation* [Νίκος Σκαλκώτας: Μία ανανέωση στην προσέγγιση της μουσικής σκέψης και ερμηνείας] (Athens: Nefeli, 2006) [in Greek].
9 Kostis Demertzis, *Nikos Skalkottas as composer for piano solo* [Ο Νίκος Σκαλκώτας ως συνθέτης μουσικής για πιάνο σόλο], (Chalkis: State Central Library of Chalkis), 150-151 [in Greek].
10 Demertzis, *Nikos Skalkottas as composer for piano solo*, 150.
Analysis of the Thema con Variazioni from the Suite for Piano no. 3

The analysis was performed through the study of both the autograph\textsuperscript{12} and the UE edition, and focuses on:

- The folk melody and its formal, modal and structural characteristics
- The transformations of the melody in the Theme and its Variations
- The harmonization of the melody and its variations
- The layers of the musical texture and their motivic content
- The overall form and its dynamic evolution
- Any other specific or generic features pertaining to the specific piece and possibly to other pieces of the same or similar categories

Aspects of texture and harmony

The score does not feature any time signatures or measure barlines. Instead, the Theme and its Variations are indicated in brackets, after the tempo/character markings at the beginning of each part. According to these indications, the variation form unfolds without pauses between its parts as following:

Lento (Thème grec populaire), Adagio (Var. I), Moderato (Var. II), Allegro (Var. III), Presto (Var. IV), Libro (Coda). The acceleration of the tempo from the Theme (Lento) to the 4th Variation (Presto) is followed by a slow ad libitum Coda, featuring the varied recapitulation of the Theme.

The Theme (Lento) is essentially the harmonization of the folk melody (see fig. 1, upper voice, annotated in red color), and lasts for 15 quarter-note beats, which can be grouped metrically to 4+4+3+4 or 8+7. This metrical structure corresponds to the fifteen-syllable poetic metre, common in many Greek folk songs.

\begin{figure}[h]
  \centering
  \includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure1.png}
  \caption{Figure 1\textsuperscript{13}}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{12} As reproduced in: Papaioannou, Nikos Skalkottas, vol. 2, 327-8.

\textsuperscript{13} Figures 1, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 are annotated excerpts from the UE edition of the piece. The pitches of the folk melody and its transformations are indicated with red circles.
The musical texture consists of three distinct layers (see fig. 2): melodic upper voice, contrapuntal middle-voice and accompanimental lower-voice. These three layers are depicted in figure 2, together with other analytical data. The melodic layer can be divided into four subphrases a, b, c, d, which overlap to produce two phrases: a+b, c+d. Each phrase represents a semi-autonomous segment of the Theme part. The middle layer contains eight-notes, quasi 2nd/4th-species counterpoint to the lower layer, creating sharp dissonances with the melodic layer, except in subphrase b, where parallel 5ths are formed. The accompanimental lower layer is rhythmically simple and consists of quarter-note events, either single bass notes prepared by appoggiaturas or sonorities. The single notes form the Ab major chord, whose parallel (Ab minor chord) relates to the implied tonality of the folk melody. Also, the Ab minor 7th chord is emphasized, while parallel perfect 4ths are used in subphrase c. An interesting feature is the melodic line Gb-F-D-Db-Cb, formed in the lower layer, which imitates the main melody notes Ab-G-Fb-Eb-Db.

![Figure 2](image)

Harmonic elements (see fig. 3): The pitches of the folk melody define an idiomatic 7-note scale, found frequently in Greek folk music: Eb-Fb-G-Ab-Bb-Cb-Db (this intervalic scale structure is commonly described as D chromatic scale and is related to the second plagal Byzantine mode). Its pitch space hierarchy projects Eb (^1) as pitch center, with Ab (^4) functioning as secondary center. The complementary pc set, containing the remaining pitch classes is [F, Gb, A, C, D]. The lower voice projects Ab as pitch center, and the central sonority is Ab-Cb-C-Eb (pc set [0,3,4,7]), while the middle contrapuntal voice stress pitches F-(Ab)-A-C (also pc set [0,3,4,7]) and the chromatic melodic pc cells F-Fb-Eb, C-Cb-Bb, D-Eb-E-F and A-Bb-B-C. The consistent use of descending semitones in the middle voice could be interpreted as a reference to Greek folk moirloi (lamentation). The harmony is freely atonal, with no 12-tone series being identified, and is based on the construction of two full chromatic aggregates, one for each phrase of the Theme: aggregate 1 is formed in phrase a+b and aggregate 2 in phrase c+d. In both cases the pcs of the theme and counterpoint share a chromatic dyad (Eb-E in aggregate 1 and G-Ab in aggregate 2).

---

In Variation I (see fig. 4) the melodic theme (folk melody) appears in the upper voice transformed through retrograde procedures and motivic embellishment (see annotations in fig. 3). Its four initial subphrases appear overlapped in inverse order as d+c+b+a, with free melodic ornamentation and with octave displacement (see fig. 5). The Variation incorporates a climax, created through a crescendo from mf to f and an abrupt melodic climbing of $2^{1/2}$ octaves to high Cb, after which it returns to the initial octave and dynamic level.

Harmonic elements (see fig. 5): There are three layers in the musical texture: upper-melodic, middle-chordal, lower-accompanimental. The middle layer features the alternation of two minor thirds (A-C, F-Ab) that are combined to create the sonority F-Ab-A-C (set $[0,3,4,7]$), also encountered in the Theme. The lower layer contains two types of harmonic events: $[0,1,4]$ triads and their derivatives - $[0,3,4]$, $[0,3,4,5]$, $[0,1]$ - and quartal sonorities, either with perfect fourths - [D-G-C-F], [G-C-F-Bb-Eb-Ab] - or with free fourths - [F-B-Eb-Ab-D]. Both elements relate to the harmonic devices used in the Theme, as the $[0,1,4]$ trichord is part of the $[0,3,4,7]$ set, and the quartal harmony can be considered an evolution of the parallel 5ths and 4ths. Also, two full chromatic aggregates are formed again from the pitches of the phrases d+c and b+a.
In **Variation II** the theme appears in transposition by a tritone (T6) and as part of a polyphonic melody played by the right hand (see annotations in fig. 6). The musical texture has two layers, and the overall character is very sharp and rhythmic, with the energetic rhythm retained despite the gradual diminuendo that takes place in the second half of the Variation.

Harmonic elements (see fig. 7): In this variation three full chromatic aggregates are formed for each of the variation’s three subphrases. The segmentation of the accompaniment to smaller cells is done differently, however some core elements are kept, like the use of parallel motion (this time with 3rds instead of 5ths or 4ths) and quartal sonorities with mixed-type fourth intervals (perfect, diminished, augmented).
Variation III is essentially a retrograde of the previous one (see fig. 8), but not in the same way as Variation I was a retrograde of the Theme. The musical texture is almost exclusively homophonic (one active layer), presenting the sonorities of Variation II in reverse order and vertically, while incorporating the buildup of another climax. The pitches of the melodic theme are woven in the musical fabric in such a way as to render the melody acoustically unperceivable, and the whole Variation tends to be heard as a climaxesing segment with no reference to the initial folk melody.

Harmonic elements (see fig. 9): As already mentioned, the harmony of Variation III is the retrograde of the harmony of Variation II, but with reordering of the pitches of the sonorities and scattering of the initial melody at multiple registers and inner voices. The only element that remains intact is the parallel 3rds sequence in the second subphrase.
In Variation IV the initial melody is transposed once more by a minor third (T9), thus starting with C, and it is placed in the lower voice for the first time (see fig. 10). There are two layers in the musical texture: the lower one (in f dynamic), based on eighth-notes and carrying the transformed folk melody, and the upper one (in p dynamic), based on sixteenth-notes, creating a quasi 2nd species counterpoint and leading to another climax through crescendo and registral broadening. The first subphrase of the melody is repeated and then one of its pitches (G) is substituted by three neighbouring pitches (Bbb-Ab-Gb, green color in fig. 10). This is the only transformation of the pitch structure of the theme that occurs on the piece (unless we consider that G exists in the upper voice at this moment, so that the initial pitch structure is retained).

Harmonic elements (see fig. 11): The formation of three full aggregates is once more the main harmonic procedure, with a different use of the same harmonic cells and sonorities as in the previous Variations, and with an emphasis in minor third relations (notated with vertical brackets in fig. 11). Apart from the last sonority, which is exclusively tertian, there are also instances of parallel minor 3rds in the second phrase and a semi-diatonic part at the beginning of
the upper layer, pertaining to the Eb Dorian mode. Also, due to the transformation of the main melody, there are two pairs of theme/complementary sets in this Variation.

Figure 11

The Coda is a recapitulation of the Theme part and also a return of the initial mood, character, dynamic level and tempo (see fig. 12). The theme returns to its initial transposition, but this time only subphrase a is in the upper voice, and the remaining three are in a very low register. The three layers of the musical texture are essentially the same, but they are freely reversed (as in invertible counterpoint).

Figure 12
Harmonic elements (see fig. 13): The harmony of the Coda is the same as of the Theme, with the difference that, due to the placement of the main melody in the lower layer, the pitch center Ab that was apparent in the Theme, is now absent.

Aspects of form and character

The evolution of the overall form of the piece involves the following aspects:

Transposition and transformation of the theme:
[Theme & Var. I - related through retrograde] (melody based on Eb) - [Var. II & III - related through retrograde] (melody based on A) - [Var. IV] (melody based on C) - [Coda] (melody based on Eb).

According to this aspect, the six parts of the piece (Theme, 4 Variations, Coda) are organized in 4 groups, with the first two groups having 2 members related through retrograde transformation of the theme.

Tempo and character evolution:
Lento → Andante → Moderato → Allegro → Presto → Libro (Lento).

There is a gradual evolution from slow/somber to energetic/climactic tempo/character during the course from the Theme to Variation IV, after which the initial character is re-established. This creates a single expressive formal gesture (gradual buildup of climax - relaxation).

Number of layers and complexity of musical texture:
3 layers → 3 layers → 2 layers → 1 layer → 2 layers → 3 layers

As the tempo increases, the number of layers and the complexity of the musical texture decreases, with the minimum number of layers found in Variation III, which is essentially homophonic. Textural complexity returns at the Coda through Variation IV.
Summary of compositional and stylistic features

The present analysis reveals a balanced combination of traditional (theme & variation form, thematic/motivic transformation, folk melody) and modern (20th-century chromaticism, free atonality, multi-layer musical textures) principles and techniques. The disclosed compositional and stylistic features of the piece can be summarized as following:

- The theme is transformed in various ways, while retaining its intervallic structure and modal characteristics. Essentially, what is always kept is the abstract shape of the melody, while all its surface elements are liquidated. Thus, the theme is in principle a abstract Basic Idea (Grundgestalt) and not a rigid, fixed melody.
- The harmonization is based on the formation of full chromatic aggregates in every phrase of the theme. The aggregates are formed from smaller pc sets or intervallic cells, mostly quartal sonorities and certain pc sets ([0,1,4], [0,3,4,7], [0,1,6], [0,1,3,4]), while specific intervals (mainly minor 3rds and major 7ths) are used more frequently, either vertically or horizontally, as accompaniment. The harmony is free atonal (not serial), but with specific harmonic elements and allusions of pitch centricity.\(^{15}\)
- The evolution of the form is based on the acceleration of the tempo, which is combined with the transition from sober to energetic character together with the decrease in the number of active textural layers, and on the buildup & relaxation of a single climactic/expressive gesture.

The above compositional features connect the Thema con Variazioni with other variational pieces by Nikos Skalkottas that are not based on folk tunes, such as the 15 Little Variations (1927) and the Passacaglia (1940, no. 15 from the 32 Piano Pieces). Moreover, the variational technique in Thema con Variazioni can be considered an evolution of the corresponding technique in Passacaglia, since it incorporates transformation and transposition of the theme, a technique not employed in the Passacaglia, which is based on an untransposed 11-note theme and 6 fixed harmonic fields (see figures 14 and 15).\(^{16}\)

---

\(^{15}\) Mantzourani (The Life and Twelve-Tone Music..., 82) summarizes Skalkottas' harmony as following: "...his harmonic language is inclusive, incorporating tonal, post-tonal and twelve-tone elements ... Overt or disguised tonal harmonic relationships are deliberately used ... to highlight certain structural points, to allude a key and to achieve ... the all-important perceptibility of the thematic and harmonic shifts within a piece". Also, Skalkottas himself had written in a article in Musiki Zoe (1931) that the purpose of serialism is not the continuous circulation of the 12 pitch classes, but the creation of a coherent and restricted new harmony (cited in Mantzourani, 82).

\(^{16}\) These figures are included in the full analysis of the piece: Costas Tsougras, "Nikos Skalkottas' Passacaglia for solo piano: Tradition and innovation in equilibrium" [Η Passacaglia για οόλο πιάνο του Νίκου Σκαλκώτα: Παράδοση και καινοτομία σε ισορροπία], Polyphonia 18 (2011): 7-28 [in Greek].
Stylistic Composition

Subsequently, the present paper pursues a compositional approach, based on the compositional and stylistic features disclosed by the presented analytical approach. The output of the compositional procedure is a piano miniature in the style of Nikos Skalkottas, based on a Greek folk tune from northern Greece.

The variation technique employed for the composition is a hybrid technique extracted from the Passacaglia and the Thema con Variazioni, meaning that the conception of unaltered harmonic segments throughout the theme and all variations (Passacaglia) is combined with the formal design of slow theme-accelerating variations-slow coda (Thema con Variazioni).

The folk melody used as theme is a Greek lullaby, entitled "Ὑπνε, ποιο παίρνεις τα παιδιά" (Oh Sleep, you who takes the children) (see fig. 16). The lullaby possibly originates from Asia Minor and is encountered with variations in many regions of eastern Macedonia (Thassos, Drama, Chalkidiki, etc). This melody was chosen for the stylistic composition because of the affinity of its modal structure with the folk melody of Skalkottas' Thema con Variazioni, since both melodies pertain to the "D chromatic mode" (characterized mainly by the augmented 2nd between scale degrees ^2 and ^3). The lullaby comprises four short phrases ending with fermata at the descending scale pitches G-F#-Eb-D.
Harmonic elements of the Study (Theme and Variations): The pitches of the melodic theme define a five-note scale: D-Eb-F#-G-A (C is not considered equally important compositionally, since it is used only once, as a neighbour tone to D) and they produce the "theme set" (the pentachord [0,1,4,5,7]). The remaining pcs (C#, E, F, G#, Bb, B, C) form the "complementary set" (the septachord [0,1,2,3,6,7,10] in normal order). These pitches can be arranged in such a way as to produce a descending scale similar to the theme's: F-Db-C-Bb-Ab. This sequence is subsequently used as a bass line or as a contrapuntal accompaniment to the main melody.

The Theme of the study is constructed as following (see fig. 17): For each one of the four subphrases, a full chromatic aggregate is formed by inputting all the complementary pcs in the middle staff, between the melodic subphrase (upper staff) and the bass line (lower staff), so that all 12 pitch classes are heard until the end of each subphrase. Then, these pcs are grouped so as to produce pairs with interval class 1 (semitone, major 7th) and 3 (minor 3rd).

The musical surface of the Theme consists of four layers of musical texture (see fig. 18): Layer 1 is the bass line (in green color), layer 2 is the quartal-harmony chordal accompaniment, layer 3 is the folk melody (in red color) and layer 4 is another accompaniment pattern consisting of major 7ths and minor 3rds. The Theme has a very slow tempo (♩=32) and a mournful character.
The National Element in Music

Variation I (see fig. 19) also has four layers, with the theme placed in the lower register (red color) and reduced to its melodic skeleton: D–Eb–G–F#. The tempo has been increased to $\text{♩}=48$ and the character is more rhythmic. The Variation starts the buildup of a climax by progressing from $p$ to $mf$.

In Variation II the theme is transferred to the high register in free melodic transformation (only the pitch content is retained). The tempo increases to $\text{♩}=64$, while the 3/4 meter and rhythmic pattern of the accompaniment denote the "Tsamikos" dance, a rhythmic element frequently encountered in Skalkottas' music.  

---

Figure 20

Variation III (see fig. 21) includes the main climaxing procedure and incorporates two instances of the theme. In the first four bars the tempo is J=96 and the theme is on the higher of the three layers, while in the remaining four bars the tempo accelerates, the theme is placed on the lower layer (the number of layers has also decreased to two). The energetic character is intensified through the continuous flow of sixteenth-notes and the dynamic level gradually increases from mp to ff.

Figure 21

Variation IV (see fig. 22) continues the climaxing procedure and leads to its completion in the forthcoming part. It includes two layers, and the theme is placed (as a retrograde skeleton) in the upper voice of the chordal layer. The initial tempo is J=128, but it drastically decreases to the initial Grave tempo for the full recapitulation of the theme.

Figure 22

The Coda (see fig. 23) features the return of the initial melody and tempo (J=32) and -in contrast with Skalkottas’s Theme con Variazioni, but in parallel with the Passacaglia- is the climax of the piece. It is essentially homophonic (one active layer), with the melody in octaves in the lower register, reinforced by parallel quartal chords (parallel harmony - planing). The piece ends with a full aggregate arpeggiation above the last note of the theme.
An important comment regarding the compositional approach needs to be made at this point: The general structure of the composed piece and the employed transformational processes were inspired from Skalkottas' model pieces (Thema con Variazioni, Passacaglia), but they were not identical to them, so that a fully explicit correspondence between the models and the produced miniature is unfeasible. Having said that, a certain deviation from any model is necessary in a compositional process, if the whole endeavor aspires to be a creative and not an imitative one. Moreover, the present analysis mainly revealed the structural, formal and transformational elements of the style. However, the elements of the musical surface (rhythmic units, motives, accompaniment patterns, placement and content of transitory passages, etc) are equally important for a successful stylistic approach, and they must be invented from the initial material according to the style, and not copied from existing pieces pertaining to the style.

Conclusion

The present analysis discloses Skalkottas' idiomatic compositional technique of fusing traditional formal elements with modern harmonic and transformational techniques. It also reveals the close association between the variation technique used in the "theme & variation" works based on Greek folk melodies with the parallel variation technique employed in his other atonal "theme & variation" works, not based on folk material. Moreover, the analysis shows that Skalkottas actually uses his personal harmonic, rhythmic and formal devices regardless of the initial compositional material, which is the folk element in this category of pieces. Congruently, the folk element does not alter the modernistic outlook and content of the composition, it is neutralized and absorbed by the modern modus operandi, thus producing a new coherent, amalgamated style, not pertaining to the nationalistic music being composed by the majority of Greek composers of the same period. In Skalkottas' style, the folk element is an organic part of a modern, rich and multi-faceted distinctive musical language, an unobtrusive but deep element of identity, character and meaning. So, it seems that at the time of the composition of the 3rd suite for piano, he had achieved the goal expressed earlier in a letter to Manolis Benakis:

---

18 For more about Skalkottas' multi-faceted musical language, see: Yorgos Zervos, "Musical idioms and aesthetic directions in Skalkottas' work", in Nikos Skalkottas, a Greek European, ed. Haris Vrondos (Athens, Benaki Museum, 2008), 50-87. Also, for more about Skalkottas' outlook and influences, see: Katy Romanou, "Nikos Skalkottas", in Serbian & Greek Art Music, ed. Katy Romanou (Bristol: Intellect, 2009), 163-186.
"... to discover the combination that I've been seeking for such a long time, of a strict technique [applied to] our folk songs, but with a new content" (17 December 1931).\(^{19}\)

In regard to the second aim of the paper, namely the compositional approach to Skalkottas' style, the step-by-step explanation of the compositional procedure complements, verifies and exploits the results of the performed analysis, while at the same time it practically corroborates the validity of the extracted stylistic features and the affinity between the variation techniques mentioned above. In addition, the suggested approach may be used as a pedagogical tool for both analysis and composition students.\(^{20}\) Nevertheless, the main incentive to its implementation for the author of this paper has been the exciting and rewarding experience of attempting to creatively comprehend Skalkottas' music.

**Addendum**

In the process of the analytical study, a number of possible mistakes or oversights in the existing available scores of the piece were revealed:

- In the Universal Edition, a natural accidental has to be added at pitch G at the 4th beat of the left hand stave at the Moderato (Var. II). This accidental is present in the autograph.
- In both versions (autograph and published) there is a discrepancy regarding Variations II and III. As the analysis has revealed, the two variations have a strict retrograde relation, so there should be an exact correspondence between their vertical pitch content. However, there are two instances of differentiation: 1) At the 11th quarter-note beat of Var. II (left hand stave), pitch D is natural, while at the corresponding 4th quarter-note beat of Var. III (right hand stave), pitch D is flat. It is suggested that the D of Var. II should become D flat also. 2) At the 1st beat of Var. II (right hand stave), pitch E is natural, while at the corresponding 9th beat of Var. III (left hand stave), pitch E is sharp. It is suggested that the E# of Var. III should became E natural. Both suggestions/corrections have been applied to the analytical diagrams of figures 7 and 9. Of course, since these two discrepancies are also found in the autograph, there is a possibility that they were deliberate deviations from the strict retrograde relation.

---

Costas Tsougras (composer – musicologist) was born in Volos in 1966. He began his musical studies in Volos (piano, accordion and classical harmony) and continued them in Thessaloniki (music theory and composition with Christos Samaras). He studied musicology at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (bachelor and PhD in music analysis with Demetre Yannou) and at the Columbia University of New York (where he worked with Fred Lerdahl on his PhD project involving the use of the Generative Theory of Tonal Music on 20th-century modal music). He is assistant professor of systematic musicology and music analysis at the Music Department of the A.U.Th. and a member of Greek Composers’ Union, ESCOM (European Society for the Cognitive Sciences of Music) and SMT (Society for Music Theory). He is the editor of “Musical Pedagogics”, the GSME’s (Greek Society for Music Education) scientific journal. He has published theoretical and analytical work at international and Greek journals (JIMS, Musicae Scientiae, Polyphonia, et al) or conference proceedings on GTTM, Modal Pitch Space, music cognition models, computational musicology, music by Greek contemporary composers (Xenakis, Kounadis, Skalkottas), etc.

---

\(^{19}\) The reference to this letter comes from Mantzourani, 49.

\(^{20}\) Stylistic composition has been used for the training of composers for centuries. For a representative recent approach, see: Nicholas Cook, *Analysis through Composition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).
Appendix - Scores

Νανούρισμα (σπουδή στον Νίκο Σκαλκώτα)
για σόλο πιάνο
Κώστας Τσούγκρας (2011)