

GROUP 2 – WORK 2



COMPOSER: TASOS STYLIANOU

WORK TITLE: *PROTEST* for orchestra

Composed in 2017

Duration: c. 12'30''

Tasos Stylianou's thoughts on *Protest* are provided below from an unpublished interview and are consistently shown in “ ”. Any additional comments are outside these “ ”.

“*Protest* equals freedom and freedom is what I want to claim.

Protest is underlined by and can be seen in highly dramatic and visual (see for instance the different types of ‘attacks’ in pointilistic manner in the score) dimensions both in literal and symbolic/metaphoric manner. The sense of dramaturgy/drama is prevailing as well as *relativity*.”

In fact, it is worth noting the general guidelines that the composer gives at the beginning of his score which highlight the idea of relativity (see references below to elasticity and improvisation). In ad, for more in-depth examination of the score go to following link at the composer's webpage:

http://stylianoutasos.com/wp-content/uploads/0000.00.00_scores_protest.pdf

General Notes

All players read from the score.

Each player should **mark** his/her part in the score since, many times, traditional orchestration-layout is varied.

All time proportions are elastic, especially those that deal with thick improvised textures.

The conductor should decide on the amount of elasticity used, if any, during rehearsals and performance.

Pitch, for the most part, is secondary in relation to texture. Texture and collective sound balance must be maintained as the primary element throughout the piece.

When repeated events appear the player must try to vary the event as much as possible; do not try to pre-decide on what to play - improvisation must prevail whenever possible.

The composer states that “all collective sound events are not absolute as in the process of the *Protest* a number of events may occur, such as episodes, explosions, tensions etc. This is in turn reflected in the score where musical events are indicated in graphic notation and are thus improvisational, aleatoric. There are specific reasons for what I have just stressed. It is not just to create certain effects in order to satisfy a mere personal ‘ego’, it has to do with a protest that is specified within specific external and internal elements of gravity. The most important external element of gravity which is the source of inspiration for me is the general tangible element of occupation which both in an instinctive and deliberate level has a deep relationship with my country in a functional and dramatic dimension.

There are internal elements of gravity in *Protest* that have to do with the compositional process. For instance, there is a specific pitch, a *c#* played by the flute as soon as the work starts which kind of hangs there being the only specific pitch along with all sound events happening at the same time as seem below in *Example 1*.

Example 1: The opening *c#* at the flute part

The image shows a complex musical score for a piece titled "PROTEST". The score is written for multiple instruments including Flute 1 (FL. 1), Piccolo (Picc.), Saxophone (Sax.), Viola (Vln. 1 & 2), Cello (Cello), and Trombone (Tromb.). It features a mix of traditional musical notation and graphic notation, including vertical lines, horizontal bars, and dynamic markings like "pp" and "ff". The tempo is marked as "J = 60". The score is divided into several sections with time markers (e.g., 14", 13", 9", 8", 4", 8", 5", 2"). The title "PROTEST" is prominently displayed at the top center.

This *c#* is transfigured throughout the protest in various ways and acts as a unifying element in the compositional procedure where events are happening in tandem in various levels. It is first taken by the piccolo and tension is built by giving the *c#* an austere specific rhythmic motif which is in fact the transcription of a Morse code signal; this signal is directly related with the protestors; they communicate through this signal; it is established though several persistent repetitions that occur until the very end. Notice the ‘shadow’ of this *c#* in the violas and cellos in their low register at the same time of the first appearance of the Morse Code Signal in the score.

Example 2: The Morse code signal by the piccolo.

The image shows a musical score for the Piccolo part. It includes instructions such as "extremely precise with more rhythmic separation as tempo gets faster" and "solo". The tempo is marked as "J = 132". The score is divided into two parts: "1st" with a tempo of "J = 60 p" and "2nd" with a tempo of "J = 80 * mf". The score shows a rhythmic motif that is described as a Morse code signal. A box labeled "G" is placed above the second part of the score. The score includes dynamic markings like "ff" and "mp".

The protest proceeds in a multi-level synthesis of sound events characterised by a dry, percussive character -there are no sustained sounds - images of people walking, forming small and larger groups, forming angles. The Morse code signal persists over increasing speed, there is a building of a wall (see *the fast attacks in a pointilistic manner in the strings in Example 3 below*), the occupation and consequently the deprivation of basic human rights become specific as now the *c#* is part of a specific chord barely heard, yet it is always there, the only chord heard in the whole work (at letter *L*), a *symbolic chord*. The chord is the symbol for 1974, the year of the occupation of Cyprus by the Turks. If one takes $c = 0$, $c\# = 1$, etc. then one can conclude from the tones used that the tones of the chord 'spell out' 1 9 7 4. The protest becomes specific, it is specific.

Example 3: The *c#* is transfigured: a symbolic chord - 1974

The image displays a complex musical score for a symphony. At the top center, a box labeled 'L' indicates the 'symbolic chord'. The score is organized into systems for different instrument groups:

- Woodwinds:** Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Obs.), Clarinet 1 (CL.1), Bassoon 1 (Bass.1) and Bassoon 2 (C.Bass.).
- Strings:** Violin 1 (Vln. 1), Violin 2 (Vln. 2), Viola (Vie.), Cello (Cell.), and Double Bass (D.B.).
- Percussion:** Timpani (Timp.), Crotales (Crot.), and Tambourine (Tamb. S.T.).

The score features a variety of musical notations, including dynamic markings (p, cresc., f), articulation (accents), and complex rhythmic patterns. The string parts are particularly dense, showing a 'pointilistic' texture with many short, repeated notes. The woodwinds play sustained notes, often with a 'cresc.' marking. The percussion parts are highly rhythmic and percussive.

What follow are disorder and order (the Morse code) in an improvisatory passage – pay attention to the angular tree-like dry ‘branches’ in the graphic score and more of the persistent Morse code signal (see *Example 4*).

Example 4: Protesting till the end ... tree-like branches

The score for Example 4 is divided into two main sections. The first section, marked 'N' and 'A Tempo' with a tempo of $J = 60''$, is described as 'Very fast almost without space'. It features a graphic score with angular, tree-like branches for various instruments: W/Winds, Brass, Strings, Perc., and Lib. The graphic score includes dynamic markings such as *sub. f*, *sim.*, and *lib.*. The second section, marked 'A', features a Piccolo solo line with a tempo of $J = 132$ and a dynamic marking of *fff*. The score concludes with a 'Tut' (Tutti) section and a vertical graphic score labeled 'All Registers'.

A protest is related with the human right of Freedom and this is what the orchestral players claim loudly at the end of the piece: ‘FREEDOM!’ This vocal manifestation is another dynamic element of internal gravity and acts additionally and cumulatively. In other words, freedom is verbalized, it is raw, it is shouted, not sung, all that has preceded (all sound events, the transfigurations of the introductory *c#* sharp, the Morse code signals and the symbolic chord), as well as the climax and the subsequent die out in the distinctive sound event of pointilistic manner in the score at letter P lead to that intense verbalization (*please see example No. 5 below*): ‘FREEDOM!’

Example 5: Towards verbalizing FREEDOM!

The score for Example 5 is marked 'P' and features a large, dense graphic score with a pointilistic pattern. The graphic score is annotated with various performance instructions, including 'reminiscent of the first part', 'open in any order extremely slowly', 'very expansively with space', 'adjusting dynamics accordingly', 'Mute: open', 'Mute: down', and 'Mute: open'. The score includes parts for Solo C, Solo C, Viola solo, and Tutti (-Temp.) Sing. The vocal line for 'Tutti (-Temp.) Sing' includes the words 'FREE' and 'DOM!'. The score concludes with a vertical graphic score labeled 'All Registers'.

BIOGRAPHY TASOS STYLIANOU (b. 1969)

Tasos Stylianou comes from the town of Morphou, Cyprus. He became a refugee after the brutal Turkish invasion on Cyprus in 1974.

He moved to New York at the age of 19 where he studied music at Mannes College of Music where he received a three-year diploma in general music studies. Later he studied Jazz and Contemporary Music at the New School for Social Research where he received his BFA in jazz guitar performance. After his BFA he studied composition privately with Henry Martin and later at the Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens College where he received his MA in Composition. He continued his composition studies by moving to Salt Lake City in order to study with Morris Rosenzweig. There he attended the University of Utah where he received his Ph.D. in Composition. He has participated in many lectures, seminars/ conferences and private sessions participating with composers such as Mario Davidovsky, Johnathan Harvey, Pierre Boulez, Paul Lanskey, Fred Lerdahl, Steven Mackie, Chen Yi and several others.

T.S. has a strong background in jazz, classical as well as traditional music, however he is mostly involved in the art of sound composition. His compositions derive from various sound experimentations that include mixtures of inventions of original structural functions and improvisational procedures that quite often express an “archaic” and ritualistic sound aesthetic.

For extended biographical and other information visit the composer's webpage

<http://stylianoutasos.com/>

There is an mp3 file with the performance of PROTEST accompanying this doc. file.