

# ABOUT THE RESEARCH GROUP (WHO WE ARE)

- *Orchesis Study Group of the "Dora Stratou" Theater* has been operating for decades in Greece and abroad.
  - [www.grdance.org](http://www.grdance.org), [www.orchesis-portal.org/grdance/](http://www.orchesis-portal.org/grdance/),  
<https://www.facebook.com/AncientOrchesis/>,  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/lazou2011.ancientorchesis/>,  
<https://uoa.academia.edu/ΑνναΛαζου>
- The philosophy research group of the Department of Philosophy of Athens University (UOA – ex Department P.P.P.), composed of PhD holders and post graduate students, examines the different aspects of a modern approach of the relationship between philosophy, dance and language.
- In “Platonic Orchesis I” (under publication), *Orchesis* as a cosmic reflection of the natural movement found in Plato's *Timaeus*, is related to time measurement practices, language and philosophical criticism, while it is placed as much in the field of the history of ideas as in connection with the current examples of philosophical and scientific investigation. As for the use of metaphors and symbolism in references to dance in Platonic dialogues, there are various approaches (etymological, historical – philosophical and semiotic) of the terms denoting movement and dance. Contemporary survivals, mutations or changes in their meaning are examined. Apart from Plato, Democritus, Aristotle and others, the functional use of movement as an insistent reference in the ancient Greek philosophy of nature is also studied. Furthermore, based on Platonic dialogues such as *Cratylus*, *Thaetetus* and others, attempts are made to investigate the relationship between language and movement.





## Platonic Orchesis II: Contemporary Developments in the Philosophy of Language and Dance – Lectures

✓In the lecture (a) section) we discuss issues related to the definition of the concept of platonic Orchesis/dance in a contemporary, epistemological and philosophical, perspective to be defined by the analysis and explanation of the dance phenomenon of our time.

✓On the grounds of a series of classical texts like the platonic *dialogues Timaeus, Cratylus, Filebus*, the *Republic*, the *Laws*, Democritus' fragments and Aristotle's works, where it is stated that dance is a form of rhythmical movement, aiming at the representation of the human character, actions and feelings, etc., we support that dance is a form of body language, a communication code with a lot of denotations, a *palimpsest* including elements of many cultures. Our research proposal is of interdisciplinary character, because we support that dance can be analyzed and explicated by the means of linguistic and philosophical theories as well as other branches.

✓Our lecture draws on the findings of different sciences & disciplines: linguistics, sociology and anthropology, theatre studies & philosophy, philosophy of practice/action, philosophy for children, history of ideas.

# Platonic Orchesis II: Contemporary Developments in the Philosophy of Language and Dance – Lectures

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

✓Based on Plato's dialogue *Timaeus*, and in particular, on the choreutic model of interpreting the movement of celestial bodies through the dance metaphor (gr. Ὀρχησις, the ancient Greek term for dance), the joint study of the group members, inspired by a previous related work and under the direction of Anna Lazou, is structured in two units: Platonic Orchesis I and Platonic Orchesis II. The present paper concerns matters of the second unit only, Platonic Orchesis II, as following:

✓In Platonic Orchesis II, *Orchesis* and the concepts related to it, e.g. circular dance, dance (gr. Χορεία, χορός) will be examined in their anthropological, psychological and social context (e.g. *Republic*, *Laws* and elsewhere). On the basis of the kinetic metaphors about the soul in the platonic dialogues (*Republic*, *Phaedrus*, *Phaedon* and *Menon*) referring mainly to immortality, knowledge, erotic methexis etc., more particularly, the perspective of their dramatic representation by means of the human body and the lived experience and representation is located in current applications of therapeutic and educational practices.

# Platonic Orchesis II: Contemporary Developments in the Philosophy of Language and Dance – Lectures

## ✓The Research objectives:

- We attempt to understand the multiplicity of the meanings of the ancient cultural form of dance that encompassed logos – music – body movement as a moral and aesthetic unity, and to illuminate the assumption that this unity may be revived in our time through ancient drama and teaching drama with educational and therapeutic purposes.
- A further purpose of this theoretical work is the composition and proposal of a new and original educational model – with very ancient ideas – for the teaching of ancient Greek language and literature, based on the lived experience and body activity, which may be potentially applied in all grades and forms of education – formal and non – formal.

**Key Words:** Orchesis, Plato, dance philosophy, revival, theater philosophy, therapy, Choreia, Cosmic Model, Movement, Dance of the Stars, Dance, Metaphor, Language, Drama

# ΟΡΧΗΣΙΣ – ORCHESIS: ETYMOLOGY

- ▶ The combination of poetry, music and movement for the representation of ideas, desires and feelings is called “ὄρχησις”.
- ▶ The noun “ὄρχησις” derives from the ancient Greek verb “ὀρχέομαι” (attic form:ὀρχοῦμαι ).
- ▶ On the etymology of the verb “ὀρχέομαι” Beekes (2010: 1115) points out that “ὀρχέομαι [verb] means: ‘to dance’, ‘act’, ‘to make dance’ < IE.? \*h1ergh – ‘mount’ VAR. Aor. ὀρχήσασθαι (Od.) COMP. Also with prefixes like ὑπ -, κατ -, ἐξ -. According to Bambiniotis (2002: 1280), the verb “ὀρχοῦμαι” is connected with the sanscrit verb **rghāyati** (to tremble, to be furious) and is connected with the IE root \*ergh -.
- ▶ Derivatives are:
  - **1. Action noun** -ὀρχηθμός [m.] ‘dance’ (Hom., h. Ap.), ὀρχησμός [m.] ‘idem’ (A.), ὀρχηστύς [f.] (Hom., E. Cyc. 171), like κιθαριστής; younger ὄρχησις [f.] ‘id’ (post – Hom.), ὄρχημα (ὑπ-), [n.] ‘id’ (Simon., S., Pl.).
  - **2. Agent noun** ὀρχηστήρ (Il.), ὀρχήστής, ὀρχηστάς (Dor.) (Il., Thera, OAtt. ) [m.] ‘dancer’ with fem. -ὀρχηστρίς (com., Pl.), ὀρχήστρια (Moer.).
  - **3. The nomen loci:** ὀρχήστρα [f.], ‘dancing – room, orchestra’ (Pl., Arist.).
  - **4. Adjective:** ὀρχηστικός ‘ptng.to dance(r)s, fit for dancing’ (Pl., Arist.).

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2. Μπαμπινιώτης, Γ. 2002. *Λεξικό της Νέας Ελληνικής Γλώσσας*. Αθήνα: Κέντρο Λεξικολογίας



# Orchesis as a linguistic and cultural element

- ✓ The principles and criteria directing the research of *ὄρχησις* are:
  - i) Investigation of a religious and cult (rituals and myths) background,
  - ii) systematic training in practical skills and dexterities,
  - iii) rules of aesthetic excellence,
  - iv) contemplating on social, educational and therapeutic functionality,
  - v) development of self knowledge
  - and vi), philosophical interpretation of the dancing human activity and its theoretical presuppositions.
- We focus our examination on the poetic and not on the many philosophical texts of antiquity. The working hypothesis that determines the approach of our research stresses the significance of the organic unity of three elements – spoken word (*λόγος*), melody (*μέλος*) and physical movement (*κίνησις*) – that incorporates in rhythmic forms of spoken word the primary identity of these three aspects appearing in the ancient Greek civilization that is expressed both in the forms and the way of life (athletics, education, politics, medicine, everyday life), as well as in specific artistic creations (theatre, sculptures, paintings and poetry).
  - Secondarily, philosophical thought emerges to seal the summit and unprecedented threedimensional identity of ancient Greek art and culture.

# Orchesis as a linguistic and cultural element

- ▶ Orchesis is an element that has polysemy in ancient Greek and expresses philosophical ideas and feelings.
- ▶ *Ὀρχησις* (“*dancing with song*”)

First of all, what is *orchesis* and why is it important for the study of the ancient Greek drama? Human dancing, which, in ancient Greece represented every kind of movement of the feet, hands, head or even the eyes, did not constitute a self-contained art. It was combined with music and the recitation of lyrics, even with an individual or a collective dramatic action. Literature and more specifically, poetry, was tightly linked with music and dance, from the earliest eras of its existence. Greek poetry’s evolution was very much influenced by the appearance of dance – as the use of the word *πούς*, which means foot, indicates, among other elements, for a part or a metrical unit of a verse. Regarding to this, a fragment of Libanius, a Greek teacher of rhetoric of the Sophistic school, is frequently cited: “Dancing is not made complete by songs, rather it is for the sake of dancing that the songs are worked out”.

**Bibliography** Lib. *Or.* 64.88 (transl. by M. E. Molloy, in *Libanius and the Dancers*, Olms-Weidmann, 1996, p. 86–87.  
Cf. Lib. *Or.* 64.4 – 5: Citation by An. – Er. Peponi, “Theorizing the Chorus in Greece” in J. Billings, F. Budelmann, F. Makintos (eds.), *Choruses, Ancient and Modern*, OUP, Oxford, 2013, p. 28, note 58.



# Dance in ancient Greece, in other civilizations...

## In the present day

- In ancient Greece dance was cooperative and strengthened their relationships. As a result, they could face down their enemies. In addition, it contributed to enrich education for the young people.



- In other civilizations we could not claim that it has a pedagogical function, but we could claim that it grinds out the views of its society. Through dance activities society initiates the young people into the understanding of their social rights. This can be traced as a dance function in our civilization too.



# Dance in ancient Greece, in other civilizations...

## In the present day

- ▶ Dance can legitimize the norms of its society, but it can be liberating too.
- ▶ For people with “disability” more particularly dance could be liberating from the norms. In this way, the pedagogical value of dance is boosted.



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# Philosophy & Theatre: Brecht

## Theatre as a product and a representative tool of social reality

1. Art follows life -> *“reality(...) springs from the social superstructure which is in turn determined by the mode of production. In essence, the mode of production creates the conditions of the material life-world. Changes in the mode of production create new material conditions. Art, then, depicts these new conditions and relationships.”* (Brecht, BT, 1992, 29)
2. Theatre -> create representations of life. -> representations should be scientific -> *“theatre cannot work out satisfactory without knowledge of dialectics- and without making dialectics known”* (Brecht, BT, 1992, 279).

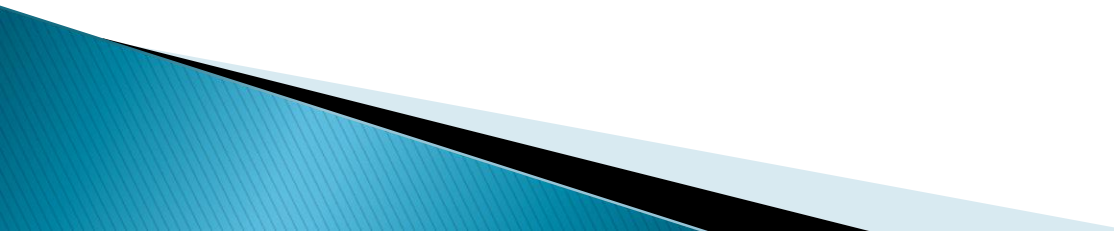


# Theatre as a product and a representative tool of social reality

Brecht presents epic theatre as the logical response to the crisis of modern theatre and proposes key epic concepts– Verfremdung, historization and experiment– to replace empathy. (Silbermann, 2019,p. 126)

*“Empathy is a central pillar of the prevailing aesthetics. In his brilliant Poetics Aristotle describes how catharsis, that is, the spectator’s spiritual cleansing, is brought about by means of mimesis. The actor imitates the hero (Oedipus or Prometheus), and he does this with such suggestion and transformative power that the spectator imitates him and thus takes possession of the hero’s experiences.”*

*“Empathy is the important tool of art in an age in which the human is the variable and the surroundings are a constant. We feel sympathy only with those who bear the stars of fate in their own breasts, unlike us. (...)” (Bertolt Brecht, ‘Über experimentelles Theater’, BFA 22/540–56)*



# Theatre as a product and a representative tool of social reality

Brecht poses the following questions:

- ▶ *Is the enjoyment of art even possible without empathy, or in any event on a basis other than empathy?*
- ▶ *What attitude are the spectators supposed to assume in the new theatres if denied the illusionary, passive, resigned-to-fate attitude?*
- ▶ *What could substitute for fear and pity, the classical binary that produces Aristotelian catharsis?*
- ▶ *If you relinquished hypnosis, what could you count on?*

(Bertolt Brecht, 'Über experimentelles Theater', BFA 22/540–56)

# Philosophy & Theatre: The Platonic Drama, Socrates

- ▶ The central question posed in the *Clouds* is: Does Aristophanes really believe everything he said about Socrates? Or is it a “mind game” between two major personalities of the 5<sup>th</sup> century?

- ▶ STREPSIADES

You're looking down upon the gods up there,  
in that basket? Why not do it from the ground,  
if that's what you're doing?

- ▶ SOCRATES

Impossible!  
I'd never come up with a single thing  
about celestial phenomena,  
if I did not suspend my mind up high,  
to mix my subtle thoughts with what's like them—  
the air. If I turned my mind to lofty things,  
but stayed there on the ground, I'd never make  
the least discovery. For the earth, you see,  
draws moist thoughts down by force into itself—  
the same process takes place with water cress.



(Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 223-235)



# A case of theatrical philosophy from the *Clouds*

## BETTER ARGUMENT

↓

Come on. Show yourself to the people here—  
I guess you're bold enough for that.

↓

You'll wipe me out? Who'd you think you are?

↓

Yes, but second rate.

↓

What clever tricks  
do you intend to use?

## WORSE ARGUMENT

↓

Go where you please.  
The odds are greater I can wipe you out  
with lots of people there to watch us argue.

↓

An argument.

↓

You claim that you're more powerful than me,  
but I'll still conquer you

↓

I'll formulate  
new principles.

(Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 889-902)

- ▶ The power of Socratic wisdom goes beyond challenging any claim that can lead to a fragile certainty. According to him, self-knowledge is a painful and difficult process in which man must dominate over himself and his passions, otherwise he will be led to a wrong arrogance of the truth. The rule of «γνῶθι σαυτόν» has influenced the Platonic dialogues, starting with the *Apology*, then *Theaetetus*, *Phaedrus* and finally, *Protagoras*.
- ▶ Socrates tries to maintain his individuality and philosophy persona while in the meantime his own personal tragedy is about to conclude. The jury of Heliaia contends him to death by poison.



# Platonic Orchesis III: The Danced Logos – Workshop

- In the practical workshop (b) section) we investigate the 3rd stasimon of Sophocles *Antigone* (pp. 782 – 800) "Love unconquered in battle" as a "danced piece of text" of the historical past, through a teamwork workshop coordinated by the Ancient Orchesis Study Group of the Dora Stratou Theater, representing the practical aspect of our research. Participants will read the excerpt from the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC Greek text, attaining to understand by its linguistic structure the concepts that correspond to the words and refer to the elements of a worldview referring to life, love, divinity and other qualities important to the age of Sophocles but also today.
- Through the reading of the extract, it is attempted, according to the text – centered approach (Halliday & Hasan, 1985, Cope & Calantzis, 1993, Gouliama, 2014) and to the linguistic structure, a comprehension of the meanings that correspond to the words that concern the elements of a worldview about life, love, the divine and other qualities important for the era of Sophocles, but also for the man of our days.
- According to the theory of Brandt (2015:234 – 237), we consider dancing as a kind of dialogue, which contains metaphors and meanings, that can be studied with the help of the semantic field theory (Sweetser, 1990).
- The theoretical framework of the dance act consists in the following semantic fields: 1. Natural – Kinetic, 2. Cultural – Social, 3. Mental, 4. Spiritual – Linguistic Act.
- According to the theory of semantic fields, the meanings are classified and thus the concept of communication is formed (communicative competence) (Hymes, 1972). The words correspond to movements, bodily actions, which in the context of a moral unity together with the stage act (dance, speech, song) along with the space and the group dance of the ancient drama (chorea) in its overall context – the city – reveal the stunning relationships of man with nature, the psyche and other human beings, ultimately with the world as a whole and its culture.
- Participants in that level are urged to act, learn movements and gestures (dance actions). As a case study this workshop highlights the practical ways – with the tools of modern dance theater – of an innovative teaching of ancient Greek language demonstrating applications and utilization in school, broader education, lifelong learning and academic environment.
- **Keywords:** Love, Sophocles, Speech, Drama, Concepts, Music, Song, Dance



# Platonic Orchesis III: The Danced Logos – Workshop

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# Platonic Orchesis III: The Danced Logos – Workshop

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Τον ακούμε σε όλο το χορικό:

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786					$B$ Α	$B$ ΓΡΟ	$B$ ΝΟ	$A$ ΜΟΙΣ	$B$ ΑΥ	$C^{\#}$ ΛΑΙΣ.		
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790				$C^{\#}$ ΘΡΩ	$C^{\#}$ ΠΩΝ	$B$ Ο	$B$ ΔΕ	$B$ ΧΩΝ	$E$ ΜΕ	$D$ ΜΗ	$C^{\#}$ ΝΕΝ.	
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795	$B$ ΝΙ	$B$ ΚΑ	$B$ ΔΕΝ	$B$ ΑΡ	$E$ ΓΗΣ	$D$ ΒΛΕ	$C^{\#}$ ΦΑ	$B$ ΡΩΝ	$C^{\#}$	$C^{\#}$		
796				$B$	$E$	$B$ ΜΕ	$A$ ΡΟΙΣ	$B$ ΕΥ	$C^{\#}$ ΛΕΚ	$C^{\#}$ ΤΡΟΥ		
797			$F^{\#}$ ΝΥΜ	$F^{\#}$ ΦΑΣ	$E$ ΤΩΝ	$D$ ΜΕ	$C$ ΓΑ	$B$ ΛΩΝ	$C^{\#}$			
798				$B$ ΠΑ	$B$ ΡΕ	$B$ ΔΡΟΙΣ	$A$ ΕΝ	$B$ ΑΡ	$C^{\#}$ ΧΑΙΣ	$B$		
799				$F^{\#}$ ΘΕ	$F^{\#}$ ΣΜΩΝ	$E$ Α	$D$ ΜΑ	$C^{\#}$ ΧΟΙΣ	$B$ ΓΑΡ	$B$ ΕΜ	$C^{\#}$	
800				$C^{\#}$ ΠΑΙ	$C^{\#}$ ΖΕΙ	$B$ ΘΕ	$B$ ΟΙΣ	$B$ Α	$B$ ΦΡΟ	$E D$ ΔΙ	$C^{\#}$ ΤΑ	

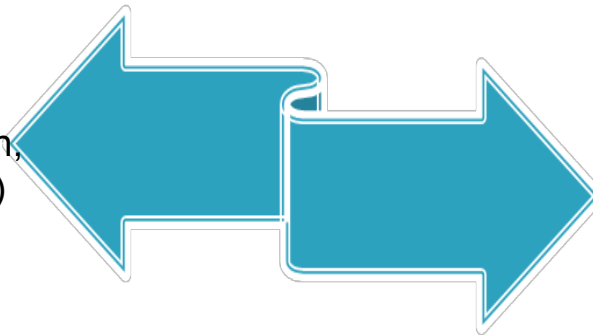


# Πλατωνική Όρχηση III: Λόγος Κεχορευμένος – Εργαστήριο

## Platonic Orchesis III: The Danced Logos - Workshop



Philosophy  
(Search path,  
systematic approach,  
human expression)



Body  
(movement,  
expression)  
Communication code,  
body language.

# Πλατωνική Όρχηση ΙΙΙ: Λόγος Κεχορευμένος – Εργαστήριο

## Platonic Orchesis III: The Danced Logos - Workshop

THE PLATONIC ORCHESIS (speech-melody-movement) transforms the timeless experience. It is cultural heritage -timeless human expression.

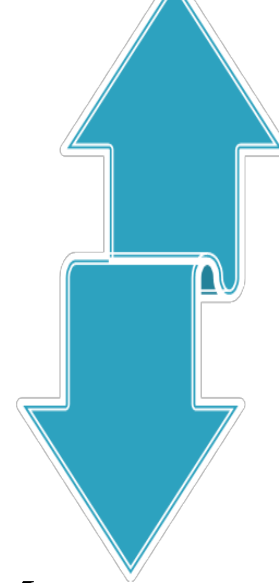
Human-nature relationship.

Intra-individual relationships.

Personality-culture relationship.



*The  
words*



*Movements,  
bodily flows*

# Πλατωνική Όρχηση III: Λόγος Κεχορευμένος – Εργαστήριο

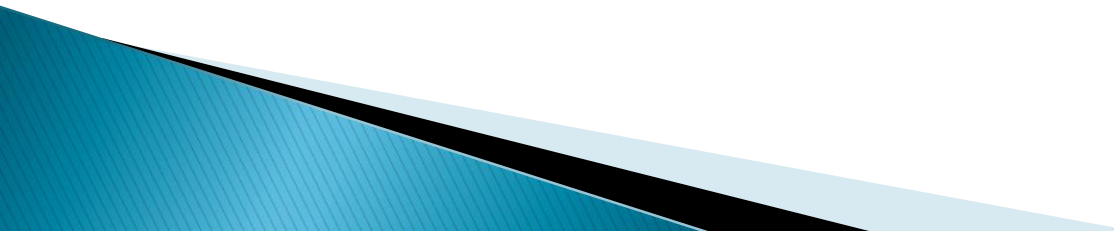
## Platonic Orchesis III: The Danced Logos - Workshop

### First activity

#### SPEECH

- Text comprehension (third verse of Antigone “Eros anikate machan” Eros thou are invincible in battle).
- Understanding and identification of the thematic center of the text.
- Linguistic analysis and categorization -> The omnipotence of Eros and its effects on humans.

#### MOVEMENT

- The embodiment begins...
  - Words evoke emotions and they become a bodily expression in space.
  - Creating kinetic patterns in space (relative and embodied concepts of the text) -> Self-observation-Observing others.
- 

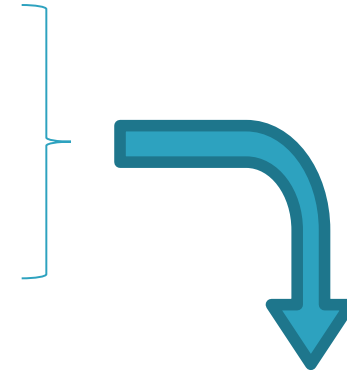
# Πλατωνική Όρχηση III: Λόγος Κεχορευμένος – Εργαστήριο

## Platonic Orchesis III: The Danced Logos - Workshop

### Second activity

#### MELODY

- Listening to musical themes and associative depiction of Eros (color, emotion, etc.).
- Production of movement and speech (Creation of a short story and its dramatized representation).



The musical piece as a starting point acts as a stimulus that conveys synaesthesia (mixes the senses) to the subject in order for it to produce movement and speech.



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## Platonic Orchesis III: The Danced Logos - Workshop

### Suggested musical themes:

- Beethoven – The melody of tears
- Apocalyptica – For whom the bell tolls
- Vivaldi– The Spring
- Dead can dance – Return of the she King
- Σταμάτης Σπανουδάκης – Ξαφνικός Έρωτας
- Lorena McKennitt – The Mystics Dream



- Video: EROS & STUDY GROUP OF ANCIENT ORCHESIS ACTIVITIES (attached)

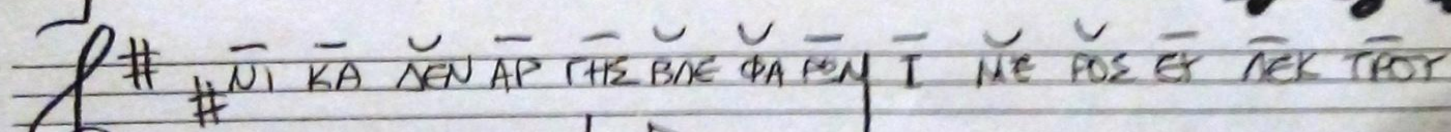
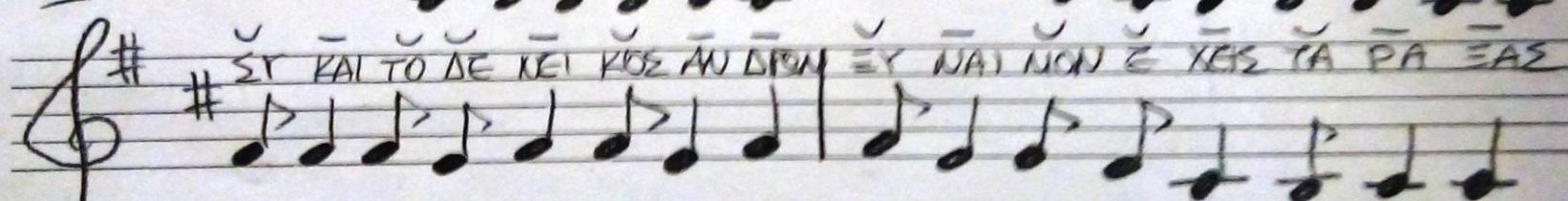
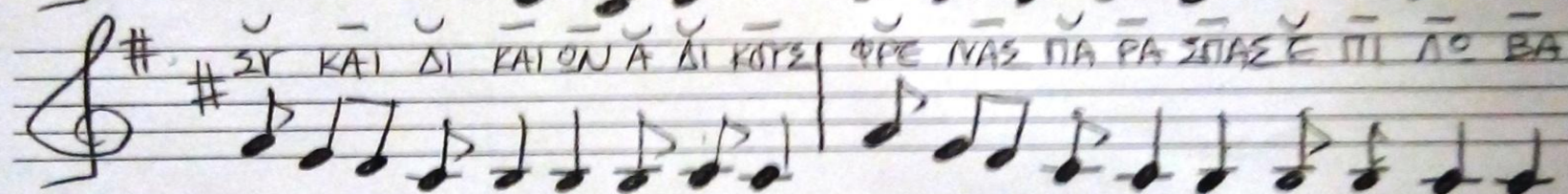
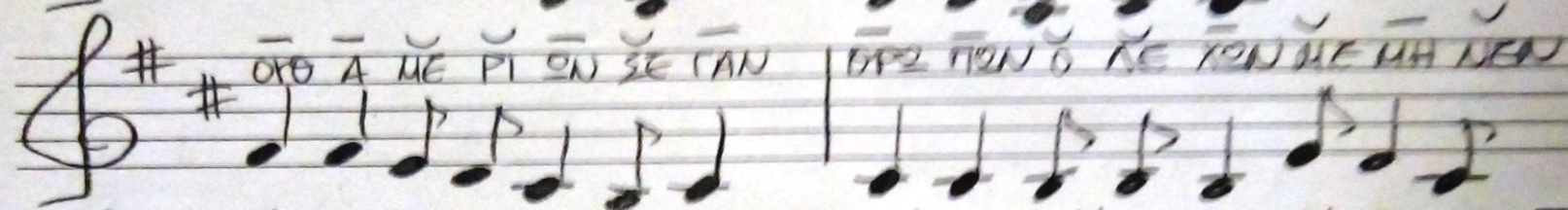
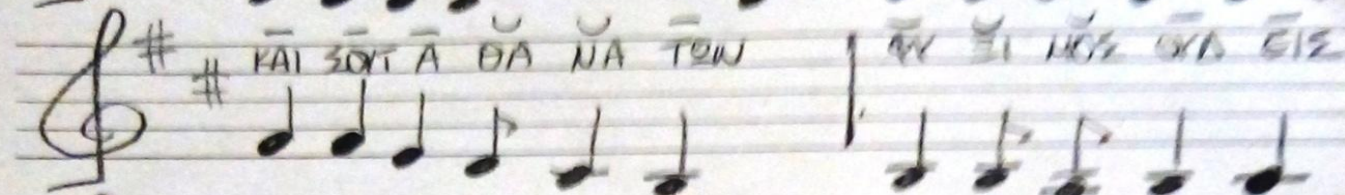
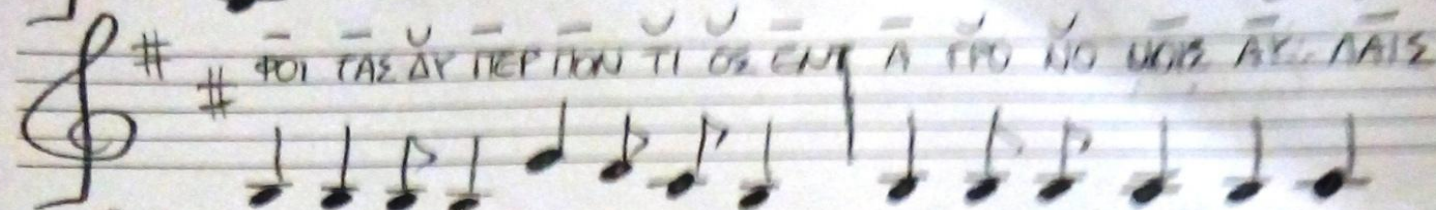
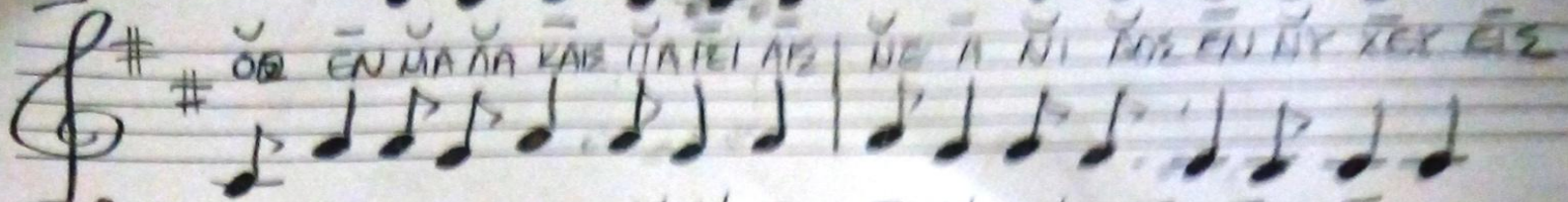
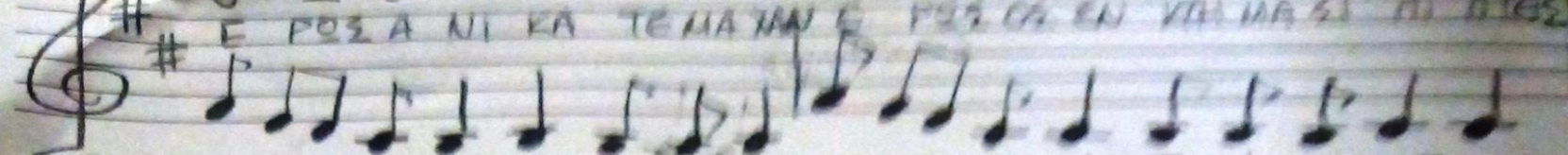


*Socrates on Trial, interaction with the audience*

Γαβριέλης Β. Καραγιάννης

*Socrates on Trial*, interaction with the audience









Sophocles *Antigone* 2018

© Theo Lian Photo



*The Dance of the Planets (Hermes & Apollo)*  
in Athens Cultural Space AITION

in the Demotic Gallery of the Municipality of Piraeus



Theo Lian  
Photo



Dora Stratou 2015 *The Clouds* Aristophanes, Choreography F. Nikolopoulou, dir. A. Lazou





[www.nesisphotography.com](http://www.nesisphotography.com)

















**ΟΜΑΔΑ ΜΕΛΕΤΗΣ ΑΡΧΑΙΑΣ ΟΡΧΗΣΗΣ  
ΤΟΥ ΘΕΑΤΡΟΥ «ΔΟΡΑ ΣΤΡΑΤΟΥ»**

**Τετράδια εργασίας 2013 – 2018**



ΕΚΔΟΣΕΙΣ  
**ΟΨΕΠΟΣ**



Στο πλαίσιο & με τη στήριξη της



**ΕΡΜΗΝΕΥΟΝΤΑΣ ΤΟΝ ΑΡΧΑΙΟ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟ ΧΟΡΟ**

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