

Fraternity

Summary

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for a brotherhood without borders

MASONIC CEREMONIAL MUSIC

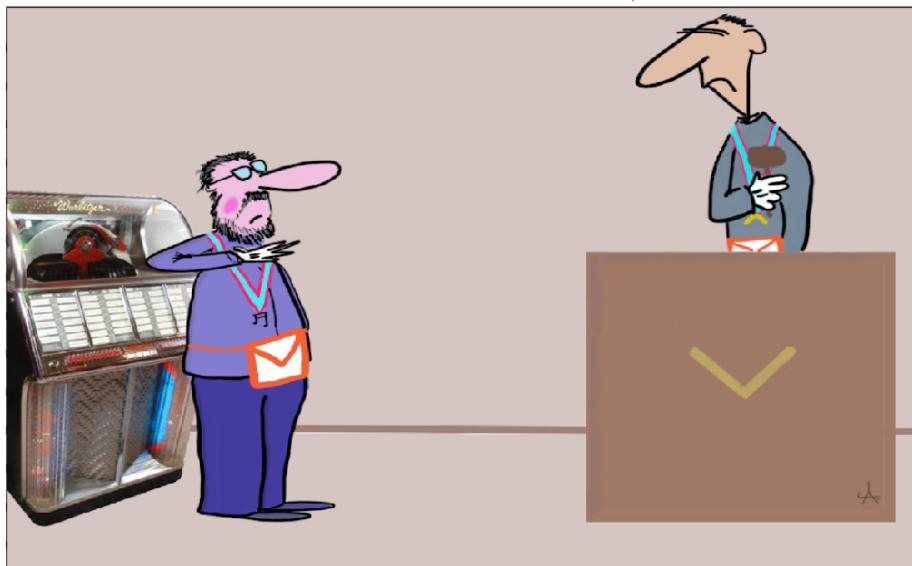
MIMIS PLESSAS:
The Mason with the Rich Musical Heritage

MUSIC: ITS FUNCTION AND ITS LANGUAGE

DANIEL BARENBOIM
Bringing the world together through music



Humor



*My dear sisters, my dear brothers,
since the master of the harmony
column changed the equipment
without warning us.*

*we will begin this meeting
with the solidarity trunk*

*in order to collect
a few coins to put
in the jukebox.*

I said!



“ Politics can be strengthened by music, but music has a potency that defies politics. ”

Nelson Mandela (Long Walk to Freedom)



Music should not

be a field of

political controversy!

Our feature: Music and Brotherhood

Music, a universal language for a brotherhood without borders

by Sylvie Moy

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Music is a universal language that transcends cultures, languages, and borders.

It has the power to bring people together, to create bonds between individuals, to erase the differences that separate us.

In a world where divisions and conflicts seem to prevail, music reminds us that we are all connected.

We share a common humanity. It invites us to come together, to share our emotions and experiences, to celebrate our diversity in a spirit of fraternity.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Louis Armstrong, and Bob Marley have always used their art to promote unity and understanding among peoples.

Their songs have become hymns to fraternity, calls to action and solidarity that continue to inspire us today.

Music is not only a means of artistic expression.

It is also a powerful tool for building peace and social cohesion.

Musical projects, festivals, and benefit concerts are all examples of how music can unite and foster a sense of belonging to a community.

Together, we can create a symphony of fraternity that resonates throughout the world — a music that celebrates our shared humanity and inspires us to work together for a better future.

Long live music, long live fraternity.

Sylvie Moy

Music Teacher

*President of the Clermontoise Association for the
Support of Young Foreigners and Their Families*



MASONIC CEREMONIAL MUSIC

by: Iván HERRERA MICHEL

Masonic ceremonial music has been used in lodges since the 17th century and has roots in an ancient cultural tradition that dates back more than 40,000 years to the Upper Paleolithic period. Anthropologists have discovered that even at that time, flutes were used in rituals. For example, a bear bone flute dating back about 43,000 years has been found in present-day Slovenia, likely used by Neanderthals. Similarly, another mammoth ivory flute dating back around 35,000 years has been found in Germany, attributed to Cro-Magnons.

When Freemasonry emerged in the early 18th century, the oldest printed songs were found in Anderson's Constitutions of 1723. From that date, they can be found everywhere in very varied forms, whether as hymns, songs, instrumental compositions, marches, etc.

From that date, they experienced a notable flourishing. Their main purpose has been to recreate and set the ambiance for the stories, myths, and legends of Freemasonry, as well as to enliven banquets. These musical compositions adapted to the popular styles of the places and times and were mainly intended for the enjoyment and delight of lodge members. Frequently, the songs also celebrated the virtues and skills of their leaders and culminated with an invitation to toast in their honor.

But we also find them intended for specific moments of the ritual, such as the entrance to the Lodge, the recognition of brothers and sisters,



the lighting of the lights, the inquiry about the time to start or conclude the work, the opening of the same, a break, the Widow's Trunk, the Chain of Union, the extinguishing of the lights, the exit from the Lodge, the tests, the purifications, the journeys...

In the 18th century, notable composers of Masonic music included Jean Christophe Naudot, Luis Nicolás Cleramboult, François Girourt, and especially Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, who gave Masonic music a noble status by composing true masterpieces. At the productive extreme is W. A. Mozart with eleven masterful pieces composed especially for the Order.

Now, what characteristics must a composition have to be considered Masonic? The answer is simple: Whether the author is a Mason or not, whether the composition is prepared for exclusive use in lodges or adopted, it should in its composition evoke emotions and, thanks to the lyrics, music, and/or the singer's voice, transcend the different phases of a Masonic ceremony.

Iván HERRERA MICHEL

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Mimis Plessas: The Mason with the Rich Musical Heritage

by Giorgos Bousoulas Thanasoutas

Mimis Plessas (1924–2024) was one of the most defining figures in 20th-century Greek music. Although perhaps not as internationally recognizable as Manos Hadjidakis or Mikis Theodorakis, his influence on Greek society was equally significant, timeless and multi-layered.

His melodies accompanied generations of Greeks, marking moments of joy and sadness, maturity and nostalgia.

Plessas was born in Athens in 1924 and became the first piano soloist at the National Radio Foundation at the age of fifteen. In parallel with his musical career, he studied Chemistry at the University of Athens and postgraduate studies in the USA. The science of Chemistry was his equal love of music. He completed his PhD in Chemistry at Cornell University in the USA and in 2010 was awarded a title of honorary doctorate by the University of Patras. "Chemistry is the ultimate science. Music is a chemistry of notes that convey emotions. I love Chemistry and Music equally," he said in an interview with journalist Yannis Pantazopoulos.

His international career began early. In 1952 he won the first prize in music at the University of Minnesota and in 1953 he was ranked fifth pianist in the US. Since 1956 he has been recognized as a composer and conductor, and subsequently he has repeatedly distinguished himself in international competitions (Barcelona, Warsaw, Belgium, Italy, France, USA, Tokyo) and six times in Greece (1959, 1963, 1964 and 1967). He conducts orchestras all over the world and is active in theater, cinema, radio and television. At the same time, he



participates in artistic associations and evaluation committees, having an active and multidimensional role in Greek cultural life. He is a member, among others, of the Greek Society of Playwrights, the Society of Composers and Lyricists of Greece and the Electronic Music Laboratory.

He collaborated with prominent Greek performers, including the internationally recognized Nana Mouskouri, contributing decisively to the emergence of many new talents. The album *The Road* with lyrics by Lefteris Papadopoulos is one of the highlights of Greek discography. His radio show *In the 30 Seconds* in the 1960s and 1970s is a point of reference for Greek radio.

Our feature: Music and Brotherhood

One of the most characteristic elements of his work is the ease with which he combines different musical genres. His music moves with ease from jazz to large forms, from symphonic techniques to artistic folk, from "light" music to lyrical creation. Plessas did not just write songs. He brought to the Greek public musical idioms that until then were considered "sophisticated" or "exotic", making them familiar and deeply Greek. Two of the many examples that confirm this are listed below.

The first is found in the song *If I Refuse You, My Love*. Using a simple folk framework as a base, he 'dresses' it with harmonic choices that bring elements of jazz and classical music. In this way, he highlights the melancholy and sweetness of love. The result is a song that, although it seems folk, has the complexity and depth of a composition that transcends the boundaries of the genre.

Something similar applies to the second example of the song *Don't Talk to the Child*. In it, a poem is transformed into a song through the use of symphonic and lyrical techniques. He presents such sounds, which were often associated with the "elite" or with more "closed" musical circles, to the general public by combining simplicity with complexity. Thus, his music takes on elements of national music, speaking to the heart of the Greek, without being limited by rules.

Giorgos Bousoulas Thanasoutas

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Music and brotherhood: married at first sight

by Yves KENG



It is often said that music soothes the soul—though perhaps not during a wild mosh pit at a punk concert... Music is also said to be a universal language. And in that case, even at a punk concert, it brings aficionados together in a very fraternal way.

A universal language, really?

Perhaps so, if one makes the effort to truly listen. Yet, there exists a vast diversity of styles, often tied to geographical origins. Claude Lévi-Strauss described music as a "language that combines the contradictory qualities of being both intelligible and untranslatable (...)".

Indeed, each civilization has its own musical codes, but unlike spoken languages, these can often be understood—or at least interpreted—by all. More importantly, unlike spoken language, music carries no inherently discriminatory traits, be they social, ethnic, or educational.



In this sense, it already contains numerous codes and emotions whose resonance transcends genres. Those of us who attend the Queen Elisabeth Competition each year often see Asian performers tackle Mozart, Stravinsky, or Chopin and deliver renditions that are remarkably faithful to the composers' intentions.

Let us also remember that since antiquity, music has been one of the seven liberal arts, along with grammar, dialectic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy. Of this list, it is the only discipline that aligns with what we consider to be "art" today—the others being more akin to sciences. This says a great deal about the enduring importance attributed to music...

Fusions in Abundance

While music cannot replace spoken language in everyday interpersonal communication, it does overcome the so-called "Babel complex"—that is, the communication barrier between peoples caused by linguistic differences. Through its evocative power, music enables a form of collective communication, even though, culturally, it often remains rooted in the civilizations that gave birth to it.

That said, we can point to magnificent fusions between Western and Eastern musical traditions, brilliantly demonstrated by Ravi Shankar and Yehudi Menuhin, for example. Or between American and African music (think Manu Dibango, Ry Cooder and Ali Farka Touré, Neneh Cherry and Youssou N'Dour, Fela Kuti... the sky is the limit).

The Language of the Unspeakable

If we accept the premise that music is a form of language—albeit different from spoken language—then its evolution shows that this language develops in nearly infinite ways, continually revealing new forms of expression, often linked to the evolution of our societies. And unlike language, these forms of expression are not necessarily tied to a social construct dependent

on historical developments. Dodecaphonism, serialism, atonality, jazz, pop music, rock'n'roll, punk—all have broken with earlier models while continuing to express feelings and generate new emotions.

As Kant said,

"Music is the language of the unspeakable."

And this is precisely where its strength lies: in its ability to carry a message beyond words, to transmit emotions that are often shared in similar ways by many listeners. And it does so with far less ambiguity or risk of misunderstanding than words, which are often difficult to wield when it comes to expressing feelings.

And isn't this precisely what humanity should seek to express more, in order to transcend the alienating materialism that defines our society?

Music speaks to our collective unconscious. In doing so, it fosters **fraternity**. Music festivals are often great adelphic gatherings, where the values upheld by the artists flow into the audience, drawing them into a vast fraternal movement.

Yves Kengen



Fraternity

A free digital magazine dedicated to the Fraternity, created by Freemasons but accessible to all.

To subscribe, send us an email at revue.fraternite@gmail.com

Mateo Simoita

Editor-in-chief

Our feature: Music and Brotherhood

MUSIC: ITS FUNCTION AND ITS LANGUAGE

by Joaquim Villalta

The term *Column of Harmony* emerged at the end of the reign of Louis XV to designate the instrumental ensemble that performed during Masonic ceremonies. This group typically consisted of up to seven musicians—usually 2 clarinets, 2 horns, 2 bassoons, and 1 drum.

Later, competition among Lodges to secure the most virtuosic performers led to the admission of musicians into the Lodges. These musicians, exempt from paying dues, provided musical services (although they were not permitted to advance beyond the degree of Master) and composed works for various Masonic ceremonies (banquets, initiations, funerals, etc.).

Thus, the **Masonic Song**, present since the founding of speculative Freemasonry in 1717, was highly fashionable in Lodges from the 18th century to the early 20th century. It gradually fell into disuse as mechanical reproduction technologies—such as the phonograph and the tape recorder—became prevalent. These songs are not particularly demanding in terms of style, form, or interpretation, yet they are imbued with the emotional force of chants that, like those in other companion guilds, strengthened fraternal bonds and conveyed simple but clear messages in their lyrics—aimed at evoking pleasure, joy, reflection, or solemnity.

Subsequently, within the broader body of work produced by many illustrious musician-brethren, numerous compositions that were not explicitly labeled as *Masonic music* nonetheless contain unmistakable **programmatic, symbolic, and conceptual elements**, in which the principles, symbolism, and essence of the Craft are reflected structurally, harmonically, and formally—even if not readily apparent to performers unfamiliar with the vital, interactive characteristics embedded in Freemasonry.

Some performers, myself among them, have ex-



plored this field, and indeed, the discoveries arising from our research open up new dimensions to the very act of musical interpretation—and to the message projected by any musical phenomenon, even when expressed through a procedural language beyond the strictly rational, one that becomes evident through alternative sensory perception.

A careful analysis of certain works by **Liszt**, **Mozart**, or **Sibelius**, to name a few Masonic composers, is enough to open the "chest" and uncover treasures that are nearly unknown and truly astonishing.

It is precisely this new *treatment* of sonic material that we now aim to explore: a vision of **sound**, its construction, interaction, and manifestation, as well as its latent message—a concept also found in other cultures, religions, and philosophical schools.

Authors like **Beresniak**, in the section regarding the *Harmonist*, offer us a vision of **silence and music**:

“Music is absolutely indispensable in ritual, not only during special ceremonies, but also at the opening of works or during entrance into the Lodge. It does not replace silence, since silence does not exist: it covers inaudible noises, the inner tremors generated by experiences outside the Temple. It covers the soul’s unrest and lifts emotions upward.

Emotions will not generate exercises in intelligence; rather, they will comfort the spirit. Music effectively supports the function of the ritual opening of the works—a function which consists of fostering a deconditioning and a reconditioning toward a different way of being. And it is no coincidence that the word ‘opening’ (in French, ouverture), so rich and beautiful, is also a musical term.”

Generally, musical terms such as **composition, performance, concert, melody, harmony, scale, rhythm, key, atonality**, and many others offer us precise references that help illuminate the tools of thought. For this reason, the brother *Harmonist* could, beyond his traditional duties, also take on the mission of informing his Lodge of the many resources music can offer in the serious study of symbolism.

We must, however, make a brief reflective aside regarding **silence** and its use in the Lodge. Here we distinguish between:

- *Physical silence*, which is an attitudinal remnant imported from monastic religious traditions and introduced into Freemasonry via Pythagorean principles,
- and *imposed silence*, considered essential for the learning process.

Both types have their defenders and detractors, and their application often ends up being **ad libitum** within the Lodge. I am of the opinion that silence is necessary at certain moments, but its use should not be prescribed as an obligatory procedure, neither ritually nor attitudinally, for Apprentices. One must learn to still the senses, but one must also seek *reconditioning* (as Be-

resniak says) through processes of stimulation and language **outside the purely rational field**, and for this, the **sensory and auditory** dimensions are essential.

THE MUSICAL PHENOMENON: A MANIFESTATION OF THE "ROYAL ART"

This exposition seeks to briefly organize possible answers to various personal reflections regarding the purpose and origin of the **musical phenomenon**, as well as the **transcendent task** performed by the musician—an endeavor which is, in fact, extrapolable to other **artistic expressions**.

We shall attempt, then, to identify **Masonic characteristics** that, to some extent, parallel other traditions, such as the **Buddhist Dharma** paths known as *Do or Ways*, whose ultimate goal is **illumination** or a state of *Satori*—a process of complete liberation from *profane metals*, thus breaking the “infernal” cycle of **Samsara**, or at least fostering personal growth and spiritual evolution.

Delving deeper into this field of study and meditation would inevitably lead us to introduce the **Hermetic principle of cause and effect**, since by following these “Ways,” we develop aspects that lead individuals toward **positive Karmas**, and hence, positive outcomes.

Joaquim Villalta



[Read more](#)

Our feature: Music and Brotherhood

Daniel Barenboim

Bringing the world together through music
by Sylvie Moy

For Daniel Barenboim, Music Is More Than Art — It's a Universal Language and a Peaceful Weapon

For Daniel Barenboim, one of the greatest musicians of our time, music is not merely an art form — it is a **universal language**, a **peaceful weapon**, a **space where all human beings are equal**. From the very beginning of his career, the pianist and conductor has consistently promoted **dialogue among peoples**, firmly convinced that music can bring individuals closer — even when everything seems to set them apart.



Sources : Le Monde

Music as a Common Language

Born in **1942** in **Argentina**, Daniel Barenboim began studying piano at the age of **5** and gave his first recital at **7**. He moved to **Israel** in **1952**, and very early on embarked on a dazzling international career. From a young age, he developed a **humanist worldview** in which music played a central role.

“Music teaches us to express ourselves with intelligence, passion, and above all, to listen to what the other has to say. It is stronger than any human dialogue.”

For him, **playing together** already means **learning to live together**.

Concerts as Symbolic Acts

Barenboim often points out that **music creates bonds** where politics fails. In **1989**, just three days after the **fall of the Berlin Wall**, he conducted a **historic concert** at the **Berlin Philharmonie**, celebrating the hope of a new era.

In **2001**, he took an even more audacious step: organizing a **concert in the Gaza Strip** with 25 musicians from various European orchestras. One audience member shared this deeply moving reflection:

“We, the inhabitants of Gaza, feel like the world has forgotten us. Those who remember us send food or medicine, which would also suit animals. But you came with music — you made us feel human again.”

The West-Eastern Divan Orchestra: A Utopia Made Reality

Barenboim's most emblematic project remains the **West-Eastern Divan Orchestra**, founded in **1999** with the philosopher **Edward Said**. Each summer, the ensemble brings together young musicians from **Israel, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon**, and other countries from the **Near and Middle East**. Their goal: to **live the orchestra experience together**, to engage in dialogue, to understand one another, and to share the same passion.



Barenboim describes the orchestra as a true:

"Independent and sovereign republic,"

where each participant is invited to overcome the **prejudices inherited from their upbringing.**

He recalls:

"In 1999, Syrian musicians arrived convinced that Israelis were monsters — and Israelis thought the same of them. But when you play seven hours a day side by side, trying to tune to the same A, to bow the same stroke, and then dine together — it's no longer the same 'enemy' as yesterday."

A Messenger of Peace

For his unwavering commitment to **intercultural dialogue**, Daniel Barenboim was named a **United Nations Messenger of Peace** in 2007. In 2016, the **West-Eastern Divan Orchestra** was officially designated a **Global Advocate for Cultural Understanding**.

Barenboim describes himself as a **Spinozist**, deeply influenced by the philosophy of **reason and tolerance**. Like **Spinoza**, he believes that **natural understanding** and **knowledge** can liberate individuals and peoples.

Music as a Horizon

The orchestra has performed **around the world**: in **Jordan (2005)**, in **Ramallah**, and even at the **United Nations headquarters** in

Indira Gandhi Peace Prize 2023

Daniel Barenboim, Ali Abu Awwad awarded Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace



2008, to mark the **60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**.

For Barenboim, the Divan's mission will be fulfilled only when it can perform in **every country of the Middle East**.

Through his concerts, his commitments, and his work with young musicians, Daniel Barenboim reminds us of a simple yet essential truth:

Music does not erase conflicts — but it offers human beings a common ground, a breath, a space where the possibility of another world begins to take shape.

Sylvie Moy
Music Teacher

