

# Modern Greek Program

From the C. P. Cavafy Professor of Modern Greek Studies

## OPENING A WINDOW TO GREEK CULTURE

Where can you read about the on-going restorations on the Acropolis, the mosaics of Hagia Sophia, the Greek diaspora, and Pope Benedict's thoughts on "dehellenization"? Where can you meet Cavafy, Papandreou, Theodorakis, and Angelopoulos? Where can you find analyses of Greek text messaging, soccer, TV, and music, all in one place? Only in a unique section of the Michigan Modern Greek website called "Window to Greek Culture" ([www.lsa.umich.edu/modgreek/window](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/modgreek/window)). It is available to all, and it is free: you don't need a password or pay a fee. And you can access it from anywhere in the world.

We launched this section of our site four years ago with a modest ambition. Initially, we just intended to share some interesting literary translations. Gradually we started soliciting original commentaries, reviews, and essays. We also got visitors to our campus to allow us to post their talks.

The response from around the world has been uniformly positive. We are reaching an even larger audience as newspapers (*National Herald*) and magazines (*NEO, Greece in Print*) are printing pieces from our site. Thus the webpage has turned into

a minor project as we continually try to enrich it with new and interesting pieces.

Nearly everything we post is unpublished and therefore cannot be found anywhere else. Each piece has a thought-provoking, often challenging, perspective to offer. We tend to post position essays that take a stand on an issue more than standard scholarship that can be

published in an academic journal or book. We are especially proud of the work of our students. Undergraduates and graduates who have won awards in various competitions are often featured on our site in recognition of their creativity and excellence.

The section has great chronological range (from Socrates to Tony Blair), geographical span (from Macedonia to Crete and from Australia to the U.S.) and thematic breadth (from the classical tradition to globalization and from happiness to governance). We have featured many distinguished or emerging Greek and Greek American authors in the original and in award-winning translations.

Since Michigan is the home of the C. P. Cavafy Professorship, it is natural that we give special attention to the great author. For example, taking advantage of modern technology, we convened an electronic roundtable where five specialists discussed a position essay by Manuel Savidis, the Curator of the Cavafy Archive. It would have been costly and time consuming to fly him from Athens and five professors from Sydney, Oxford, Boston and New Haven. Through our web forum, we brought them together in a unique exchange of ideas. We hope to facilitate more exchanges like this soon.

As the section "Window to Greek Culture" expands, we realize that

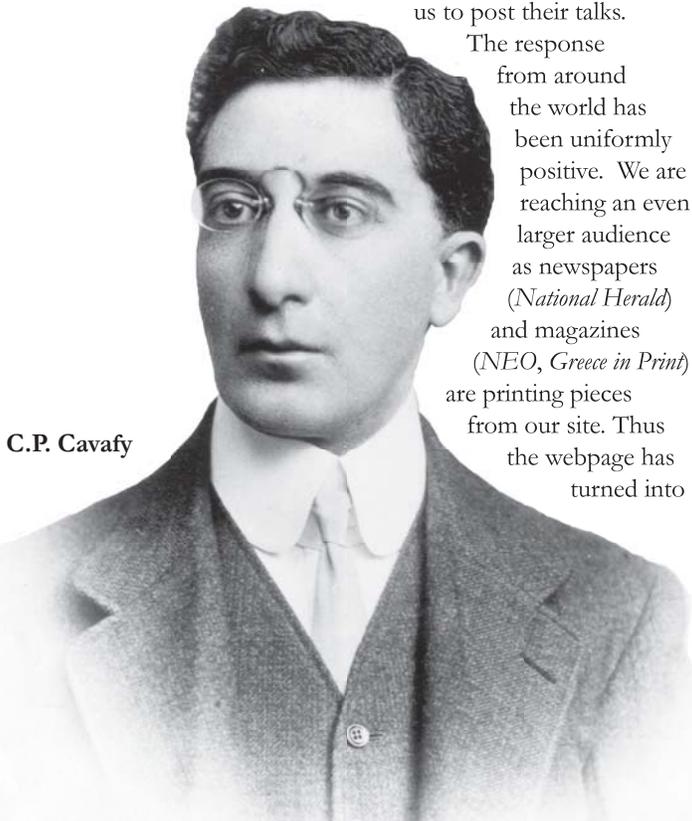
it now needs a structure that will organize posted items in a more meaningful way. This will happen some time next year. Our entire website is up for reconfiguration. The design has been completed, and soon we expect the specialists of the College to begin working on it. With an even better design, our cultural section will do justice to the richness of its contents.

[www.lsa.umich.edu/modgreek/window](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/modgreek/window)

Only a few years ago, we might have been tempted by the thought of publishing a magazine. Now we have been able to introduce something that has a comparable function but can reach a vast audience: an electronic publication that makes the treasures of our campus available to everyone. Thus, if you could not make it to Ann Arbor for a major lecture, you can now read the lecture on our site, where you can also discover new authors, young scholars, neglected issues, and current debates. This way, you too can benefit from Michigan as a global university.

Obviously there is much more that can be done but we need to keep our limitations in mind. We are a school—not a museum, a cultural center, a think tank or a company. Our primary responsibility to serve Michigan's 40,000 students. Our basic tasks are teaching at a major public university and conducting cutting-edge research. Therefore we cannot devote ourselves to the community at large as much as we would like. At the same time, because we believe in public culture and the civic mission of the scholar, we do our best to expand our educational work in order to reach as broad an audience as possible. Our web page, "Window to Greek Culture," will continue to evolve as part of this effort. Make sure to visit it often!

~Vassilios Lambropoulos



C.P. Cavafy



## Κ Π ΚΑΒΑΦΗ PROFESSORSHIP IN MODERN GREEK ENDOWED BY THE FOUNDATION FOR MODERN GREEK STUDIES

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# TOWARD A GREEK NATIONAL MUSIC

## Looking forward to a Lecture by Maestro Constantine Kitsopoulos

by *Artemis Leontis*

What audiences know best of conductors is their well-tailed backs, flying hair, eloquent arms, and the rich, disciplined sounds their orchestras produce. Maestro Constantine Kitsopoulos has shown that side to audiences on many different occasions. As a conductor, he has a reputation for musical breadth. He has led orchestras in the world's great venues, from Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, and Royal Albert Hall, to our own Hill Auditorium. And his musical experiences span opera and symphonic music, musical theater and even Broadway, most famously perhaps as Musical Director and Principal Conductor of Baz Lurhmann's production of Puccini's *La Bohème*, highlights of which he recorded for DreamWorks records in 2002. He currently works as both music director of the Queens Symphony Orchestra and general director of Chatham Opera, which he founded in 2005.

But Mr. Kitsopoulos, a pianist as well as a conductor, has another side. He is as comfortable facing audiences as he is orchestras. In fact, he loves talking to people about the music he knows so well. One subject that really inspires him is Manolis Kalomiris (1883-1962), the Smyrna-born Greek classical composer, who was also author, teacher, founder of the Hellenic conservatory (1919) and National Conservatoire (1926), and director of the National Opera of Greece. Kalomiris wrote over 220 pieces. He collaborated with poet Kostis Palamas and author Nikos Kazantzakis. His best-known operas, *The Masterbuilder* and *Constantine Palaiologos*, are both based on plays by Kazantzakis. In addition to operas, his large output includes symphonies, orchestral pieces, concertos, incidental music, chamber music, songs, and piano pieces.

Kalomiris worked toward establishing a "national school" of music that would join the classical idiom—complex harmonies,

rich orchestrations and counterpoints—with Greek music—the long, sinuous flow of eastern melodies punctuated by odd, percussive rhythms. In a Radio Speech of June 22, 1958, Kalomiris spoke of lifetime inspirations: "My childhood was haunted by our folk songs, by the melodies and rhythms of our people, by our legends and traditions, by Byzantium, its mythical Kings and its haunted monasteries. Along with them, by Greek poetry.... Intellectually I always lived in contemporary Greece. Even when I was away, I was in the land of Venizelos and of Palamas. I felt the pulse of New Greece as it was emerging. I found my inspiration in modern Greece and tried to sing primarily and mainly for the Greeks. I tried to sing our pains and our glories, our few joys and

to mourn the loss of our great dreams."

Kitsopoulos knows Kalomiris's music from the inside out, as a conductor who has studied and performed the musical scores and as a lover of Greek music who appreciates the layers of songs, melodies, rhythms, legends, and traditions that color Kalomiris's art. Music of all kinds has stimulated Kitsopoulos's imagination from his youth. In fact, he comes from a family of distinguished musicians, beginning with his mother, a mezzo contralto who studied in Athens with the

fabled Elvira de Hildago, teacher of Maria Callas, and who used to take her son with her to the Metropolitan Opera, where she sang. Kitsopoulos's training is in piano as well as conducting, which he studied with internationally renowned conductors Vincent La Selva, Gustav Meier, Sergiu Commissiona, and Semyon Bychkov.

On Thursday, February 15 at 7 pm in the Michigan Union Pendleton Room, Kitsopoulos will give the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Dimitri and Irmgard Pallas Lecture in Modern Greek, exploring this question: How was the national tradition of Greek classical music established? His analysis will lead his audience through a marvelous journey phrase by musical phrase. Reaching deep into Greece's musical past, Kitsopoulos



*Maestro Constantine Kitsopoulos*

will show exactly how the works of composer Kalomiris embody the rich and varied musical heritage of Greece: how his operas, in particular, combined melodies from Byzantine times with folk songs and rhythms taken from the rembetika style. In his own way, Kalomiris captured the Greek spirit and created

a unique national music, spanning the soundscape of his Anatolian birthplace, European, especially Viennese, training, and Athenian adopted home.

Maestro Kitsopoulos will illustrate his lecture by performing excerpts on the piano.

5th Annual Pallas Lecture on  
Modern Greek Studies  
“Toward a Greek National Music”  
Lecture by  
Constantine Kitsopoulos  
Thursday, February 15, 2007  
7pm, Michigan Union Pendleton Room

## MY GREECE *by William Reader*

I came to Greece the long way around. My first encounter with Greek was as a sophomore at the University of Michigan enrolled in Classical Greek 101. To a monolingual kid from Detroit this course proved to be a bigger challenge, but also a more enriching experience than I had ever anticipated. The first fruit of this class was that I went on to do an undergraduate minor in ancient Greek. Subsequently I studied theology in St. Louis, where I received



*William Reader on a boat from Piraeus to Aegina in 1983. Photo courtesy of Keith Taylor.*

an assistantship under Frederick Danker who put me to work on the milestone, second edition of his *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. He assigned me the task of reading and summarizing German articles on Hellenistic Greek lexicography. Prompted by that work I ended up going to Germany to pursue graduate studies in the New Testament. There, at the University of Göttingen, I endeavored to improve my Greek skills—but always via book learning as an “outsider,” laboriously working to crack the Hellenic “code” as would a cryptographer.

Then one day in Göttingen—now as a “wissenschaftlicher Assistent”—while preparing to teach a pro-seminar on early Christian letters, I had a transforming “aha experience” which I still vividly remember to this day. I was in my office slogging through a late first century Greek text by Clement of Rome, trying to

get ready for an upcoming lesson. Unexpectedly there was a knock on my door and in came a friend, Nikos Skourtos, a law student from Rhodes. He asked me what I was up to, and I explained that I was struggling with a Hellenistic Greek text in preparation for a class I had to teach, but that I didn’t fully understand the syntax or sense of the text. So he looked at it for a moment—he had never seen the text before in his life—and then did in a couple minutes what I had been unable to do in a whole afternoon of work: as easy as you please he translated it from top to bottom into smooth, lucid German.

That was the moment in my life when I first realized what an enormous advantage a speaker of Modern Greek has when it comes to reading and understanding ancient Greek texts. From that incident I concluded that any serious professional work with Greek would henceforth necessarily require learning to speak the modern language. Thus in the early 1980s—after I had assumed a teaching position at Central Michigan University—I began making an annual summer pilgrimage to Greece to attend intensive Modern Greek language courses for foreigners. This now decades-long project of learning Modern Greek on site has indeed brought me what I had hoped for, namely an easier entrée into the ancient language. But far beyond that, it has in the meanwhile also brought me countless other riches I had never dreamed of.

I’ve gone to summer schools in Athens, Thessaloniki, and the Peloponnesos, and on the islands of Chios, Alonnisos, Sifnos, Evvia, Santorini, Kythera, Crete, Aegina,

Paros, Spetses, Hydra, and Ikaria. Each summer brought a fresh appreciation for the physical beauty and diversity of the country. I got hooked on the seaside tavernas with their kalamaraki and kokoretsi, retsina and ouzo. I fell in love with the music of Vamvakaris and Tsitsanis. And it was hard not to marvel at whole planes of passengers breaking into applause when they crossed into Greek air space. It seemed like every new day in Greece I met yet another *μεραλλής*. Their passion became infectious. My ongoing Greek adventure has pushed me beyond the boundaries of my academic metier of biblical studies. As perhaps the most tangible evidence of how the Greeks have engaged me over the years I would point to the recent publication by Keith Taylor and myself of *Kostas Karyotakis: Battered Guitars, Poems and Prose* (Birmingham: Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman, and Modern Greek Studies, 2006) which is the result of nearly a decade of fascination with Greece and its culture. It is hard for me now to imagine my life without Greece—devoid of this experience my life would seem profoundly impoverished.

*Kostas Karyotakis: Battered Guitars, Poems and Prose* translated with an introduction by William W. Reader and Keith Taylor, is available at the Shaman Book Shop (311 S. State Street, Ann Arbor) or can be ordered from [www.arch-ant.bham.ac.uk/publications](http://www.arch-ant.bham.ac.uk/publications). The publication received assistance from the U-M Modern Greek Program with support from the Foundation for Modern Greek Studies.

*William W. Reader, a native of Detroit, Michigan, attended U-M from '54-'56 and received a Doctorate of Theology from the Georg August Universität in Göttingen, Germany. He currently teaches in the Department of Philosophy and Religion at Central Michigan University. Since the early 1980s he has spent most of his summers in Greece pursuing the study of Modern Greek.*

## A very eventful Fall '06 term...



A full house gathered for Keith Taylor and William Reader's public reading of *Kostas Karyotakis: Battered Guitars, Poems and Prose* on Monday, October 30th at Shaman Drum Book Shop.



Christopher Merrill signing books for students at his public reading, held on October 18th.



Modern Greek Student Reception, held on September 20th.



Left to right: Sam Roumanis (FMGS), Prof. Thomas Maloutas (University of Thessaly), Dr. Dimitri Pallas (FMGS) and Dr. Maria Sereti (Onassis Foundation USA) gathered at Maloutas' lecture, held on November 1st.

### Curriculum News

Modern Greek courses offered in Winter '07

Elementary (MG 102), Intermediate (MG 202), and Advanced (MG 302) Modern Greek Language

Modern Greek Conversation (MG 105, 205, 305)

Greek American Culture (MG 318)

Athens Present and Past (MG 325) and Athens Study Tour (UC 399)

### Student and Alumni News

**Jimmy Roumanis** is a partner of McKinley Commercial Brokerage Services, a full-service real estate firm focused on brokerage and sales of commercial property.

**Anna Moniodis** is currently attending the University of Virginia Medical School.

## Thank you!

We are grateful to **Dr. Denny Stavros** for the Gift Agreement he has made with U-M benefiting the Hatcher Graduate Library's Modern Greek Collection in memory of Gwen McFerran Stavros and in honor of Gwen Margarette Stavros. Dr. Stavros has been an energetic supporter and generous donor for the past decade.

We would like to extend a special thanks to the estate of the late **Theo G. Zacharatos**, CHA. Zacharatos was born in 1937 in the Belgian Congo (Zaire), died in 2003 in Royal Oak, Michigan, was buried in Fribourg, Switzerland, and eulogized in a memorial service in Athens, Greece. He was a consummate diasporan Greek of Cephallonian descent who grew up in Mansoura, Egypt, and spent time in Canada before settling in the U.S., and was an enthusiastic supporter of Modern Greek Studies. His daughter, Anastasia, made sure that his Greek books were deposited in the Library of the University of Michigan.

The Modern Greek Program would also like to thank **Mr. Manolis Foufopoulos** and the **European Capital of Culture - Patras 2006** for contributing scholarly and educational material.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Thursday, 1/11/07**

Lecture by Ioannis Evrigenis,

Dept. of Political Science, Tufts University

"Enlightenment, Emancipation, and National Identity: Korae & the Ancients"

4pm, 1636 International Institute (SSWB)

1080 South University, Ann Arbor

**Thursday, 2/15/07**

5th Annual Pallas Lecture on

Modern Greek Studies

Lecture by Constantine Kitsopoulos

"Toward a Greek National Music"

7pm, Michigan Union Pendleton Room

530 S. State St., Ann Arbor

**Monday, 3/19/07**

Lecture by Nathalie Karagiannis,

University of Sussex

"The stranger and the external world:

the kosmos of synagonism"

3pm, 2175 Angell Hall

435 S. State St., Ann Arbor

All events are **FREE** and open to the public.

For up to date information on all our events, please visit our website at:

[www.lsa.umich.edu/modgreek/events](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/modgreek/events)