

**ONE YEAR WITHOUT ROLAND DYENS...
HOWEVER, HIS MUSIC WILL ALWAYS BE WITH US!**

by Elena PAPANDREOU

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photo: Elena Papandreou and Roland Dyens in Patras, Greece, 23rd April 2016

On the 29th of October 2016, I lost my best friend. His name was Roland Dyens. I am sure that all of you, dear readers of Gendai Guitar, know him and admire him. Some of you have also met him, heard him play in concert, heard him teach, or were friends with him. I think we all will agree that he was one of the most significant music geniuses that ever appeared in the guitar world. And that it is so sad that we already spent one year without his warm presence. All the ones who were close to him, will remember him for the rest of our lives and we will miss him for the rest of our lives... But luckily, he left a gift to the whole guitar world, a treasure that cannot die and will certainly survive for centuries: his music!

For this anniversary, I was asked by Gendai Guitar to talk about his music, since I have played and recorded a lot of it and since I knew Roland so well. We have played together, he dedicated some wonderful pieces to me, I have been present at so many of his concerts and heard him teaching several times. So, I will try to tell you as much as I know, directly from him, about his music and about the way he played it and he wished the other guitarists to play it.

But before I talk to you about his music, let me say a few words about him as a person and about my own personal experience from him. The character and personality of an artist, is bonded to and reflected in his art. I feel so lucky to have been close friends with Roland, for more than 20 years. The first time I got to know of Roland Dyens, was when I heard his famous Tango en Skaï, which immediately captured my attention, as it did to everyone who heard it. I made a private recording of it and sent him a tape, together with a letter of admiration. To be honest I did not expect an answer, but he did answer very warmly and I was so impressed and happy!

Ville d'Avray, le 7^{VI}

Dear Elena

Thank you very much for your letter and for your K7 - Your playing is really tonic and musical - A lot of qualities you have - Congratulations!

My tango is very well played which is a rare thing. You're not afraid by speedness and never make strategic *rallentandi*!

This little piece is a joke and must be played so, like a joke - I composed it in 78, in 5 minutes, playing for people dancing Tango. I was a bit drunk!

About the possibility of composing something for you, I rather prefer to tell you that I never wrote anything for anybody particular because I need to know you, first, and because the need of composing must start one day without special reasons - I'm sure anyway that we'll meet some day and I'm sure

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that you are a perfect interpreter for my music - Here and now I don't have any music of mine. I would send you some of my recent works - But, if you want, you could order some of them by LEJOINE editions, 17 rue PICASSO 75009 PARIS -

I'm sure they could enclose for you some music if you ask for it from my recommendation -

I wish you the best -

You are a very talented person -

Cordially,  - Dyens.

Then, in 1996 we met at a guitar festival in Voronezh, Russia and we immediately became friends. I was so enchanted by his incredible playing, stage presence, contact with the public, I was enchanted by his personality and warmth, I felt so close to his way of playing which had a lot in common with my own taste in music.

Roland loved people, as much as he loved making music. He had hundreds of friends in every place on earth. He understood how people felt and he cared about them. He gave importance and time to everyone. He was generous and encouraging with young people who dreamed to become musicians. He was never jealous of other people's success or happiness.

I rarely met someone so professional as he was. He only did things the best possible way. He played beautifully, he wrote music at the highest level and he made arrangements for guitar that nobody could do better. And he continued this until the last moment of his life, even in the summer of 2016 when he gave his last concerts, already very ill and weak. He never compromised and he never underestimated his public.

I am amazed by the number of works he composed and although I played and know many of them, I keep discovering beautiful pieces that I did not know before. I decided that at least for a while, in my concerts I will only perform his music and arrangements, in my need to stay close to such a great friend and to enjoy more of these masterpieces.

One reason that I am happy to write this article, is because I feel sad when I hear his music badly played. Unfortunately, this is more the rule than the exception. Guitarists often treat our instrument as a pop instrument, with which you can do whatever comes to your mind!

One of the misunderstandings about Dyens's music, probably starts from the fact that Roland loved to improvise and as we know, he always started his concerts with an improvisation. He also made several arrangements to popular music and famous songs from different countries. Part of him was close to a jazz player. This made several guitarists think that his music is 'light' or that it can be... improvised! And that he would not care if they did so! Nothing more far from the truth. Roland had the highest level of classical music education, both in guitar playing (he studied with Alberto Ponce in the renowned *École Normale* in Paris) and in composition (with Désiré Dondeyne). He once told me how important was for his compositions, that he followed all the possible studies in harmony, counterpoint, analysis etc. And when Roland played his music, he did **everything** in the way he wrote in his scores and the same time, he wrote in his scores **exactly** what he played. I can assure you that he meant every little dot printed in his scores. Nothing was put by accident and nothing was insignificant.

Roland Dyens's scores

Dyens's scores are maybe the most detailed and complete I have ever seen. He was writing the maximum possible information in order to help the interpreter play the best possible way. His indications were not just from the point of view of a composer, but also, from the point of view of a performer and of a teacher. With his scores, he teaches a guitarist how to play well in general, not only his own music. And if someone actually follows everything he reads in a Dyens' score, he will become a better guitarist! In one of his latest works, *Les 100 de Roland Dyens*, (the 100 [pieces] by R.D.), he composed an impressive number of beautiful studies. Through some very pleasant music, he teaches young guitarists, how to strive towards a complete and expressive technique, without neglecting any aspect of it. Even these scores, which are addressed to almost beginner guitarists, are full of indications and details, showing that even when someone is at the beginning of his learning, he must be aware of everything that is needed for

best interpretations. In a world of players where quantity often seems more important than quality and when too many players only try to play as fast as possible, Dyens's 100 studies (120 if we also include his *20 Letters* which are also composed for students) came to add to quality and to expressivity. The impressive and very long 'Notation' included in the beginning of his scores, explains in detail the way he wishes the interpreter to execute all of his special signs.

- **Titles**

One of the moments that Roland enjoyed the most, was when he named his pieces. He always did this after he finished them and he found great pleasure in finding the most original or even funny titles. Some included words that he invented, by combining other words: *Rythmaginaires*, *Triaela*, *Concertomaggio*, *staccatOstinato*, *Calypsong* etc. In other titles of his, he changed the original spelling of a word, making word games, which he adored: For example, in his piece *Comme un Rond d'eau* he plays with the word *Rondeau*, (the well-known music form), and changes it to *Rond d'eau* which sounds the same, but means 'circle of water'! Another play on words was the title of the first movement from *Triaela* that he dedicated to me. This movement he called *Light Motif*, playing with the same sound of *Leitmotiv* the well-known characteristic, (often found in Wagner's music), which meant 'leading motif'.

Knowing how much he loved titling his pieces I am happy to say that I was the... 'godmother' of one of them. After a USA trip he had in 2011, he wrote to me how tired he was from 'jet lag' (the fatigue we get because of time zone change) and also that he was writing a new piece. I proposed that the title of the piece could be: '*Jet Lag*'. Sometime later, he sent me the piece and wrote: *And your wish came true (well, almost)*. I saw that the title of the new piece was *The Delights of Jet Lag*! No need to say that I felt very proud!

Tuning

One of the obsessions we shared with Roland, is the need to always be perfectly in tune. On the other hand, he was very fond of 'scordatura' (tuning certain strings, different than the traditional way). It is rare that a piece of his has the common guitar tuning! Therefore, someone who cannot tune well with his own ears (I mean without an electronic tuner) and plays his compositions, might be out of tune most of the time! So, please learn how to tune well and never skip this part every time you start playing!

Right hand technique

Roland used a more recent position of right hand technique, comfortable, with his wrist quite straight and not too far from the guitar top. He had very short and strong nails and he used his right hand in a very flexible way, changing as many colors and dynamics as possible. You can still watch in the so many videos that are fortunately available, that his right hand rarely stayed in only one position, using a monotonous sound. On the contrary, it was constantly changing, in his search for variety, something which is so essential for a beautiful interpretation.

- **Right hand and colors**

Roland's father was a painter, maybe it is one of the reasons why Roland loved musical colors. Not to mention how much he liked colorful clothes! Colors both in the eyes and in the ears! He used all possible ways for plucking a string. He certainly used both *tirando* (free stroke) and *apoyando* (rest stroke). Several guitarists today, unfortunately have abandoned the *apoyando* technique as 'unnecessary'. What a pity... Roland would not

consider anything unnecessary. He would make the maximum effort in order to add one more different sound and make his color 'pallet' richer and his playing more expressive. After all, which is the reason for playing music, if not in order to express emotions? Colors (almost exclusively produced by the right hand) are an important element in our effort to reach the heart of our audience, an aim that both Roland and myself shared.

Roland also used a lot of harmonics, *pizzicato*, tapping on the top or on other parts of the guitar body etc. And he often played with the thumb without nail, with flesh only (*pulpe* or *plp.* in his scores), something that many guitarists (including myself until a few years ago!) do not use. In 2011, for a few months, he was composing every day one short piece (yes, every day one piece!) for his collection of 100. In the piece that he wrote on my birthday that year, the 7th of March (he always remembered sending me birthday wishes!), he used this technique. He dedicated that piece to me (*Saint-Germain en Laye*) as a birthday gift. I understood the 'message' which was that he expected me to start using this technique as well. I did of course, and thanks to him I had one more chance to augment my own color 'pallet'.

- **Arpeggiated chords**

Guitarists often have the habit to arpeggiate almost every chord. Roland was aware of this, so he indicated which chords he wanted arpeggiated and he clearly did not want any other chord to be arpeggiated except the indicated ones.

Left hand technique

Dyens's compositions, as well as his arrangements, explore to the maximum the polyphonic possibilities of the guitar. For this reason, most of his pieces are very demanding for the left hand, with a lot of stretching and tiring positions, with complex chords and often more than two voices. His own left hand was - as his right one - very flexible and able to change numerous shapes. He was also placing his fingers in a very precise way next to the frets, so he could always find the right spots and not miss notes. Often between pressed strings, he included open strings, making more difficult to hear all the notes of a chord, without buzzes or dump notes. As he was saying, he knew very well the 'geography' of the fretboard, so he was limitless in discovering new possibilities.

- **Portamento and glissando**

There is quite a confusion about what is the difference between the very similar terms *glissando* and *portamento* and I do not wish to enter this discussion. I will only tell you what Dyens meant. When he wrote *glissando* (or short: *gliss.*) he meant that our finger must slide on one string from one note to another, without plucking the second note. When he wrote *portamento* (or short: *port.*) he meant that after sliding from one note to another, we should pluck the second note.

- **Left hand and unnecessary noise on bass strings**

Dyens liked a 'clean' playing, as much as I do. Either of a guitarist's hands, may produce ugly noise, that can ruin the magic of a beautiful guitar piece. To avoid this, requires a lot of work and attention. He created a special sign which he placed in spots where the left-hand fingers most likely will make noise by sliding on the bass strings. This sign showed that these fingers must be lifted between the two positions:

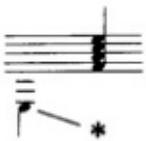


- **vibrato**

Another important technique of the left hand is *vibrato*, also often neglected or used very little by today's guitarists. Dyens used it as much as necessary and knew well that *vibrato* can be used in infinite different ways, in order to stress a color, achieve a longer duration of a note or chord and make a better connection between notes.

Dampening of open strings

One of the issues that several guitarists neglect, is to stop the sound of open strings when their written value is over and especially if such notes clash with the harmony of the following chord. Certainly, if a guitarist gets more trained to good tuning - as I mentioned earlier - he will also become more aware of such dissonances. Dyens, in order to remind this to guitarists who learn his music, invented a symbol which shows the exact spot where an open string has to be stopped. And this has to be done, with any available finger of either the left or the right hand.



Practicing

Roland was often saying that he never practiced! Of course, this sounds incredible and you most likely think that he lied! Having met him so many times and having also hosted him with my husband Oscar Ghiglia in our home, I can confirm that practicing in the way we all imagine, was not in his daily routine. No scales, no other exercises, no warm up, no playing his pieces in order to remember them, no ... metronome! He also had an admirable memory. He often played a piece on stage, while he had not played it even once, for months or even years! His ability to place his hands on the guitar and play almost anything at his maximum level, was unbelievable.

But before you try to ... kill yourself, thinking how many hours of work you (and myself!) need in order to prepare a proper concert, I must tell you certain important details. First of all, when Roland was a child and he discovered how much he loved to play and to compose (I think he wrote his first piece when he was 9!), the guitar was in his hands most of the time. When he was a teenager, he would run away from home, jumping out from the... window, in order to go and improvise for hours, in the cold, inside an old car, together with a childhood friend. When he composed a new piece or arrangement, he would repeat short sections or phrases, infinite number of times, in order to find how did they sound best, which fingering worked best and which other idea might put more... spices to his work. This way, every new piece was somehow attached on his fingers forever. He also worked a lot before a concert. He would go to the hall more than three hours before his concert and he would usually work on his latest piece or arrangement. He started and completed one of his pieces (*Valse des Loges*, or 'Green-room Valse'), only in 'green-rooms' (the backstage rooms where musicians prepare themselves before

they go on stage). On the other hand, all the people that knew him, will confirm that in whichever occasion, during a dinner, in a restaurant, in a bar, in friends' homes, even in the ... street, if you gave him a guitar, he would never refuse to play and he often did this for hours. So, dear readers you can continue living, Roland Dyens **did** practice, not the way most of us do, but he did!

Singing

I do not think I remember Roland singing. Maybe singing a few notes during a master-class, yes and he had a nice voice. On the other hand, he could sing so well with his guitar, that I am sure he was constantly singing inside him, while playing. He was able to hold a melodic line, even with the most complex counterpoint or chords. In some of his arrangements that came from piano (pieces by Fryderyk Chopin for example) or even from orchestra (like Maurice Ravel's *Pavane for a dead Princess*), you could hear well the singing line, although he had written almost every note of the original score, making these scores extremely difficult. To be able to do this, you have to be able to sing, and every moment to be aware of the exact finger that has the main melodic line and never lift it too early.

Rhythm

Dyens used many different rhythms in his pieces, sometimes very complex and he was excellent in solfege. To interpret does not mean to play without counting! There are several guitarists who make rhythm mistakes in Dyens's pieces. So, if you wish to play his music, you have first to be very good in solfege and I would advise you that you do not place your hands on the guitar, before you count the rhythms, reading your score and conducting with your hand.

Guitarists who compose for guitar

Some guitar players might think that just to have a guitar in your hands and improvising, is enough for composing music! But this way it is often your fingers that choose the notes and not your mind. Dyens composed without the guitar, writing with a pencil on music paper. Apart from having a rare talent and imagination, he had followed the best possible studies in harmony, counterpoint, analysis and composition. And he worked non-stop in order to bring each one of his pieces at the highest level of his possibilities. He never lost his inspiration and he never did things half way, until the end. This is hard as we grow older, but he did and he should be an example to anyone who composes music on the guitar.

Sense of Humor!

Roland adored good humor, he preferred his friends who were funny and he avoided people who had no sense of humor. We have laughed so much and so many times. I feel so sorry when I cannot tell him anymore something funny that came to my mind and for the fact that I do not receive anymore his e-mails that were so often full of funny lines! Humor was also used in his music, not only in his titles, but also in the way he wrote certain pieces. For example, his most known piece, *Tango en Skai*, was a joke as he often declared. In the end of the third movement of his *Hamsa* (for guitar quartet or guitar ensemble), he indicates that a... mobile phone of one of the players rings and this creates a terrible fight between the performers! It takes some time for the audience to realise that this was actually written in the score! Roland also wrote funny indications in his pieces, for example 'shed a tear' in his arrangement of *Adios Muchachos*, 'like blinking an eye', 'Tragic', 'Less tragic' in *Tango en Skai*, etc! And he wrote numerous funny descriptions in the 100 pieces for students, which will often make you laugh!

ABOUT THE PIECES THAT I PLAYED OR RECORDED

Roland was happy that I was as a perfectionist as he was and that I was carefully checking his scores, telling him about possible misprints, that are always a nightmare for every composer and every publisher. No matter how many times we check a music score before it gets published, there is always the risk to miss some of the countless details. While writing this article I contacted the main publishers of Dyens's works, in order to inform them about misprints that I found in some scores of pieces that I play. Since they were interested in making corrections of these misprints, we agreed with Gendai Guitar not to include them in this article.

I have played and/or recorded several works and arrangements by Roland Dyens. A number of them were included in an all-Dyens CD with the Swedish BIS (2005). For some of them, I would like to tell you what he said or wrote to me.

Tango en Skaï (Editions Henry Lemoine, 1985)

Dyens's most famous piece. *Skaï* in French, means a very bad quality of cheap fake leather. So, a free translation would be 'cheap tango'. And please do not confuse 'skaï' with 'sky'.

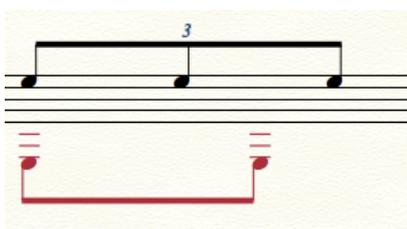
In 1998, I asked Roland to write a few lines about *Tango en Skaï*, on the occasion of my recording for the NAXOS Laureate Series:

R.D.: Composed, or rather improvised, in Paris in 1978 during a fiesta. For years and years, I didn't dare say that I was the composer, even if I used to play it a lot in concert with success. A friend of mine told me that I was crazy not to publish it. And I did, but several years later only (1985). Now it is one of the most played pieces (mostly as an 'encore'), played and recorded all over the world. Tango en Skaï is a joke, has to remain a joke, a sort of caricature of the true Argentinian pure Tango. Skaï, in French, means false leather, maybe worse than bad plastic! So, it is not a Tango en cuir... [i.e. 'Leather Tango']. Has to be played with a lot of humor, a maximum of dynamics and a minimum of rubato... NOT AT ALL CLASSICO-SERIOUSLY!

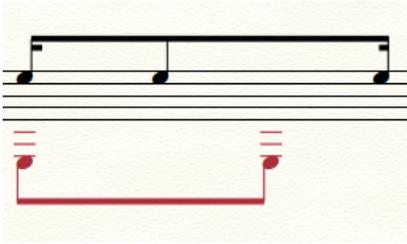
In the first letter Roland ever wrote to me (1995, see above), he said about my recording of *Tango en Skaï* which I sent to him:

My Tango is very well played, which is a rare thing. You are not afraid of speediness and you never make 'strategic rallentandi'!

After having heard this piece too many times (and unfortunately so many times played badly!), I would like to say these: First of all, *Tango en Skaï* is NOT an easy piece! The fact that it is written in just two pages, does not mean that you can play it when you are a beginner! It has several technically very demanding spots, scales, arpeggios, slurs that have to be played **perfectly** rhythmical and not dirty and clumsy! And please make sure that you have learned to count 3 against 2, which is the common mistake that even professional guitarists make. Therefore, it is important to know that this:



is NOT the same as this:



Unfortunately, most guitarists play the second rhythm. I will recommend that you record yourself, listen to the triplet and make sure you hear a triplet!

Libra Sonatine (Editions Henry Lemoine, 1986)

One of the most famous pieces of Roland Dyens, especially the last movement, *Fuoco*. Unfortunately, several guitarists are so much in a hurry to learn the piece, that they neglect many important things. Like in every piece of music, especially the fast ones, you must work on them at half their final speed (or even slower!) and do **everything** that the score says, clearly, well measured and playing good music.

Here are some common mistakes that guitarists make:

1st movement *India*: watch every indication and since several are written in French (in later scores he was including English translations), find someone who can translate well what they mean.

Page 3, staff 1 one of the most difficult sections of the whole piece. You must hold the chords their whole duration, while you can also hear well the bass line. **Both** are important

Page 3, staff 3, bar 2: you must count accurately the triplet, while you also hold the chords. See again the note in *Tango en Skai* about counting 3 against 2. The same with the triplet against 2 eighth notes, in staff 4, bar 2.

Page 3, last staff, bar 1: make sure you know exactly the rhythm **before** you put your hands on the guitar! Several players count this bar wrongly. Additionally, do **not** play too fast. Remember that this same tempo you will keep until the beginning of page 6. Many players cannot keep the tempo, especially in page 5 staff 4, where it gets very difficult. Roland hated what he called '*strategic rallentandi*' which is when players slow down because they are not able to maintain the tempo and not because the music requires it (see his 1995 letter to me about my interpretation of *Tango en Skai*). So, before you decide the speed where you will play the *Swingez* in page 3, you must see which is the speed you can play perfectly **all** this section.

Page 4, last staff, last bar: several guitarists do not count well the 3/8 bar. You must also know that here is **no** fermata in the end of this bar. You must continue exactly in tempo.

Page 5, last staff, last bar: the *dedillo* (very quickly plucking the indicated strings up and down with one finger) you may also try to do it with the index finger. Roland did it with the middle one but he suggested either of the two.

2nd movement *Largo*: Count the first beat exactly as it is written. Remember that there is no improvisation in Dyens's music! When he wanted something to be played free, he wrote *ad lib*.

The basses in the first three staves must be **without** nail and must sound enough (though not too loud), because they are more important. Remember that a common mistake of guitarists is to play louder the voice that has many notes, but this is not always the important voice!

3rd movement *Fuoco*: Since *Fuoco* is a very impressive piece, it is played extremely often, but usually too fast. Roland did not want it to be too fast, this was often what he

would advise students who played it for him. Additionally, like in most of his pieces, several of the indications in the score are often neglected. For example, the accents **have** to be done where they are written and must **not** be done elsewhere.

In page 9, at staff 6, accent **only** the bass F and **not** the top sixteenth notes.

Page 10, staff 3, bar 1, several guitarists play it very unclear. Observe and do well the triplet and the *gliss.* must also be exact in rhythm.

page 12, staves 2-3-4-5, you must do **all** the *glissandi*. Some guitarists do only the last of every bar. But before you start each *gliss.* you must play clearly all the first three strings with your thumb, and **then** do *glissando*. Like with every fast piece, you must start working on this, at half the speed or slower.

Page 12, staves 5-6-7, when you play the *slap* technique, you must hit the 6th string very near the 19th fret. **Not** near the bridge as several guitarists do wrongly.

In the same staves, you must hear clearly the *Bartok Pizzicato* as well as the slurs right after.

Page 12, last staff, bar 1, beat 3: Roland has removed the last sixteenth percussion note that the right-hand thumb nail had to play just before the double percussion with both thumbs (4th beat), in order to make the whole bar easier and clearer.

Page 12, last staff, bar 2: you must pluck the strings over the nut at the head of the guitar with your **left** hand. I have seen players trying to do it with the right (too difficult for no reason!). Additionally, this sound must last **exactly** one beat, since this bar is of 1/4. It is **not** a fermata!

Triaela (dedicated to Elena Papandreou) (Editions Henry Lemoine, 2003)

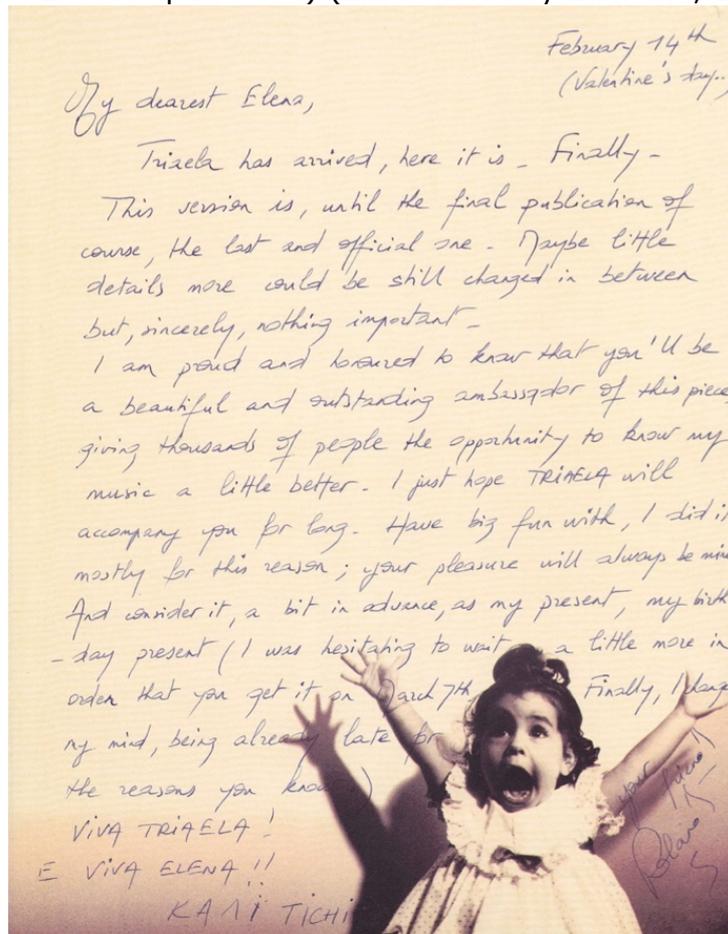


photo: letter of Roland Dyens to Elena Papandreou, accompanying the Triaela manuscript (14 February 2003).



photo: the first page of the manuscript of Triaela

In August 2001, I went together with Oscar Ghiglia to the Guitar Festival of Fermo, Italy, to attend Roland's concert. He had finished a new piece the day before, it still had no title and, brave as he was, he decided to play it the day after in concert! I loved the piece and asked if he would be so kind to give me the music. Here, I must mention that normally it is not polite to ask for music that is not published and I never do that. But Roland was such a close friend and had many times showed me that he would be willing to give me any music I asked for. Roland answered that he intended to dedicate it to me, but wanted first to see if I like it, since he didn't want to load me with a dedication of a piece that I might not like!! In an e-mail of 9th September 2001, he wrote:

R.D.: [...] **TRIAELA**. Yes dear, it's finally the title of this crazy piece dedicated to The Greek, and I now explain why **this** name and the 4 meanings it contains. I do hope you will appreciate. 1st I wanted that it sounds a bit Greek: **Tria** [three in Greek] (3 parts); 2nd It is mostly around the main note **La** (6th string tuned in La, mega ostinato...); 3rd **ela** (I will not teach you that it means **come** in Greek); 4th And finally my beloved daughter's name belongs - at least as a sound (**iael**) [Dyens' older daughter is called **Yael**] - to the word Triaela. That's it. And the subtitle will be: **3 scenarios for La**. Vive Triaela et vive Elena!! I hope (and I feel sincerely) that this new piece is expected to have a long and great life. You'll help me for sure on this very point, isn't it?

Roland wrote in a letter of recommendation for me, on May 9th 2011

R.D.: I first met Elena in 1996 in an International Guitar Festival in Voronezh (Russia). Later on, we developed a solid and great friendship. To celebrate this relationship, I wrote and dedicated Triaela to her, a 12 min-long guitar solo piece. She played Triaela countless times around the world always with huge success. Elena Papandreou is an outstanding performer.

Specifically, for the movements of Triaela he wrote:

R.D.: 1) Light motif (a play on words), light because it is simple, motif = melody. Just to let the listener imagine a combination between Takemitsu's music and a Brazilian modinha (sentimental melody).

2) *Black Horn* is not a play on words but a 'play on senses', I would say, since the designated theme is 'When Spain (a bull's horn, high symbol of this country) meets Jazz' (black Afro-American people).

3) *Clown Down* has to do with the beautiful (and old) recording by Egberto Gismonti 'Circense' (that means 'about circus' or something like that in Portuguese). This record shocked me a lot many years ago. Then I could make a sort of homage to Gismonti through this very idea of circus.

Triaela is one of the most demanding pieces I have played and also among the ones I love the most! It requires precision, speed and very good solfège, especially in the last movement.

Songe Capricorne (Editions Henry Lemoine, 1994)

In an e-mail on March 3rd, 2016, I asked Roland who was the 'Capricorne' and he answered:

R. D.: *On my very first 'LP', I recorded 'Capricornes', a duo piece recorded in re-recording technic with a certain Rodyens Land [Roland loved to invent variations of his name!]. This piece was dedicated to one of my best friends - Jean-Luc Ceddaha (he passed away 2 years ago - a stroke - and was an incredible percussionist. I met him when I was around 12). His Zodiacal sign was Capricorn. Then, as I was writing Songe Capricorne, it reminded me so much of this 'Capricornes' (tempo, key, atmosphere) that I titled it Songe (daydream) Capricorne (Capricorn). Plus, I liked the 'music' generated by the association of these 2 words. Who could guess that story?*

Now you know what 'Songe' means. Several guitarists who do not speak French, confuse it with the word 'song'.

Sols d'Ièze from **Trois (3) pièces polyglottes** (Editions Henry Lemoine, 2000)

R. D.: *This piece (the title is a fanciful way of writing 'G sharp' in French) is the earliest of the '3 Pièces Polyglottes' and I wrote it in 1992 by way of celebrating the fifteenth birthday of the French classical guitar magazine 'Les Cahiers de la Guitare'. Naturally it is dedicated to the founder-editor Danielle Ribouillault. During the interview, which appeared in this anniversary number, she asked me the final question, 'what is your favourite note?' Without thinking, I answered 'G sharp'. I should have known better - Danielle immediately sprang back at me and challenged me to write a piece round this note, its pitch, timbre, implied harmony and the very notion of G-sharpness. Well, I did it, and quickly. But another time, if anyone should ask me the same question, I would be more careful in my reply: A!*

Saudade No 3 (Editions Musicales Hortensia 1980 and Editions Hamelle 2006)

This piece was first published in 1980 and Roland published it again in 2006, having corrected the misprints of the first edition and having written it in a more meticulous way. It is therefore strongly recommended that you get the new revised edition.

For my NAXOS CD that I mentioned above (under *Tango en Skai*), Roland wrote about Saudade No 3:

R.D.: *Written in 1980, some years after my first trip to Brazil (and some days after my second). Kind of homage to Brazilian Nordeste (North-East) and its African culture, still very strong (capoeira, candomblé...). 'Rituel' is a sort of improvisation, a very free opening part using (as for the rest of the piece) the typical scale (mode) of this part of Brazil (BAHIA) which is the same as what is called Bartok mode C-D-E-F#-G-A-Bflat. 'Danse' is built on the typical rhythm called 'baião' (from Bahia). This dance is generally accompanied with percussion (triangle, surdo, berimbau...), guitar and accordion. 'Final'*

may be the composer's vision (me!) of this folk music, for example using once the Debussy scale. 3rd part: sort of 'synthesis'.

EPILOGUE

Writing this article was emotionally difficult. It has been less than a year that my dear friend Roland has left this world for the sky (not Skai!), and going into our letters, notes, e-mails, scores and all those memories, was painful. But I am glad I was able to convey to you, some of what I know about his precious music, so that we can all play it better, appreciate it better and help it live for as long as it deserves.

I will end with a text that Roland wrote for my BIS CD with his music in 2005 and I thank him once again for everything that he offered to me with such generosity! Thank you, dear Roland! And thank you on behalf of all the people that love you and your music!

CD of Elena

It's a great pleasure and such an honour to see his own music partly recorded on a full CD devoted to...your music. On the other hand, it could be a bit scaring too since composers, sometimes, might not be the biggest fans of their own works.

It's my case...

Nevertheless, thanks to Elena Papandreou and her deep artistry I did not only enjoy listening to her special tribute from Alpha to Zeta but also took advantage of the many unexpected aspects of my music that this outstanding artist has been able to bring out all along the CD, through every tiny part of the pieces selected by her. More than a composer's dream, it's a real gift she gave to me actually.

This is indeed what we call talent. And Papandreou is full of it.

*Merci Elena.
Efkaristo poli.*

Roland Dyens

APPENDIX

Apart from the abovementioned pieces, Elena Papandreou has performed in concert and/or recorded the following:

Solos:

- *Saint-Germain en Laye* (dedicated to Elena Papandreou, gift for her birthday on March 7th 2011) (Les 100 de Roland Dyens, Les Productions d'OZ, 2012)
- *Lettre Encore* (dedicated to Elena Papandreou) from the *20 Letters* (Editions Henry Lemoine, 2001)
- *Hommage a Villa Lobos* (Editions Henry Lemoine, 1987)
- *Valse des loges, Flying Wigs* from *Trois (3) pièces polyglottes* (Editions Henry Lemoine, 2000)
- *Halkidiki, The Magic Souvlaki, Chinese Reggae* from *Les 100 de Roland Dyens* (Les Productions d'OZ, 2012)

Concertos:

- Concerto Métis for guitar and string orchestra



photo: Concerto Metis, Greek Premiere, 14 May 2000, Athens Concert Hall, Elena Papandreou guitar, Camerata Orchestra, Miltos Logiadis conductor

- Concertomaggio for two guitars and string orchestra
14 June 2001 Roland Dyens and Elena Papandreou in the Athens Concert Hall with the Orchestra of Colours and Miltos Logiadis conductor.
16 December 2001 Roland Dyens and Elena Papandreou in Patras, Greece with the Patras Orchestra and Miltos Logiadis conductor.

Chamber music:

- Rythmaginaires (guitar octet) 25 June 2014, RNCM Manchester England (with Aquarelle Guitar Quartet, Craig Ogden, and Tom McKinney).
- French Pot-Pourri (for guitar quartet or ensemble) 17 April 2010, Chicago USA with Oscar Ghiglia, Anne Waller and Mark Maxwell.

Arrangements:

- Fryderyk CHOPIN, Valse op. 69 No 2
- Ariel RAMIREZ, Alfonsina y el Mar
- Manos HADJIDAKIS, The Postman, Thalassa Platia (both unpublished)