

**Asphyxia** (2017) for flute, Bb clarinet, percussion, percussion, violin, viola. Duration ca. 10 minutes

*"Everything in the world has its own spirit and  
this spirit becomes audible by setting it into vibration"*  
Oskar Fischinger, 1932

*Asphyxia* is an instrumental sound commissioned by the Onassis Cultural Centre, Athens, for the "Music for the New World" project and was first performed at the Onassis Cultural Centre by the Artefacts Ensemble in May 2017. The title of the piece refers to a condition arising when the body is deprived of oxygen, causing unconsciousness or death. It comes from the Greek *a-* (without) and *sphuxis* (pulse or throb of the heart) that literally translates as stopping of the pulse or breathlessness. The piece is inspired by the mysteries of the unconscious mind, the notions of time and energy, as they are manifested through sound. It is the man panicked, feeling that he might suffocate in the tiny room or a big room with no air; no air to think, to act, to breath.

I was attempting to draw out sounds of from within found objects, strings, pipes, gestures then intensify their sonic potential, and give them pulse, meaning, and memory. This process led me to a *Hyper-idiomatic* writing that goes beyond the classical view of instrumental writing and performance practice yet it remains deeply connected with each instrument's sonic and performance potential. Both the clarinet and the saxophone use an ultra-thin synthetic reed developed by me while the strings play on prepared instruments with unusual tuning.

In *Asphyxia* instrumental writing is blurred with soundscape practices and musique concrète, to create a dramatic narrative. Each sound could be related to other sounds, but it is also an autonomous unit independent from each other. Each sound bears its own meaning, motion, emotion, acoustic attributes, and associations. Sound memory is not experienced as an instance but as sensory packages. The experience is not sequential anymore; it dissolves into a holistic sensation.