

# HELICONIAN MUSES

by

**Anna Stereopoulou**

*Full moon... You're heading to the top of the mountain. A side-way takes you to your destination. You stop.  
You've arrived. The gale gives you their voice. And you're listening to their song...*

After a travel of years in composition, Anna looks back and remembers her first piece. 'The Rain' is born, between platan-trees and running waters in Pelion, the holy mount the 12 Gods used as their resort. In 2005 and after a trip at Helicon, the holy mount of the 9 Muses, Anna looks forward to the horizon and she knows it is the right time to thank the Muses for the inspiration they have been giving her. She sings 'Hesiod' in ancient Greek under the full moon and feels reborn and blessed to continue her work.

**HELICONIAN MUSES** is a music passing from archaism to modernism. It is a meeting with the Muses and Apollo, celebrating art, science and music. Doric melodies blend with minimalism; electronic sounds from the past travel to the 21<sup>st</sup> century to meet the sounds of Apollo's *lyre* and *aulos* in a dance with the Muses at the holy mount Helicon. The concert includes new compositions by Anna for Piano, Flute, Soprano, Baritone and Narrators. The text is based on the first part of Hesiod's 'Theogony' (*creation of the world*) and glorifies the 9 Muses and Music itself.

Other poems included /set into music are 'Cantiga VI', by Martin Codax (Old Occitan-Southern France, 12<sup>th</sup> century B.C) and a 'Homeric Hymn to the Muses and Apollo' [1]. Before the end of the concert, there is a performance of Pindar's First Pythionic Hymn, the most ancient specimen of Greek music that has survived until our time.

*I will begin with the Muses and Apollo and Zeus. For it is through the Muses and Apollo that there are singers upon the earth and players upon the lyre; but kings are from Zeus. Happy is he whom the Muses love, sweet flows speech from his lips.*

Homeric Hymn to the Muses and Apollo, 1

Before poets recited their work, it was customary for them to invoke the inspiration and protection of the Muses. The best maybe example is Hesiod's 'Theogony'. Hesiod is one of the greatest Greek poets and was born and raised in Attica's county, Beotia. It is said that when he won a Poetry Competition in Chalkida, he gifted his award to the Heliconian Muses. He believed it was them, who were granting every inspiration. The Muses were the personification of Memory; the memory of science and fine arts.

*From the Heliconian Muses let us begin to sing, who hold the great and holy mount of Helicon, and dance on soft feet about the deep-blue spring and the altar of the almighty son of Cronos, and, when they have washed their tender bodies in Permessus or in the Horse's Spring or Olmeius, make their fair, lovely dances upon highest Helicon and move with vigorous feet.*

Hesiod, 'Theogony' 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C [Translation]

Mnemosene – or Memory – is the remembrance of Zeus' victory upon the Titans. Zeus also created the Muses in order to sing and transfer all the previous knowledge and achievements from the past to the present; from the old world, to the new one. Before writing was discovered, Memory was considered a science and a gift from the Muses.

As we know, the Greeks considered Music an 'International Language'. They also believed that our soul is influenced from it and is led in actions of virtue. According to Pythagoras, 'Music is the science of order'. Music consists of Order, Rhythm and Rules. Rules, which we must follow, according to the Muses' indications, in order to achieve every Science and Art.

**HELICONIAN MUSES** was first performed at the HELLENIC CENTRE [16.09.2005, London] and later on at the INSPIRATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL [30.04.2006, 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY THEATRE, London] and the AMAROUSSION SUMMER FESTIVAL 2006, [04.07.2006, ANAVRYTA THEATRE, Athens].

Hesiod, 'Theogony' 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C [Original Text]

*Μουσάων Ἑλικωνιάδων ἀρχώμεθ' αἰεΐειν,  
αἴ θ' Ἑλικῶνος ἔχουσιν ὄρος μέγα τε ζάθεόν τε  
καί τε περὶ κρήνην ἰοειδέα πόσσ' ἀπαλοῖσιν  
ὄρχεῦνται καὶ βωμὸν ἐρισθενέος Κρονίωνος·*

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