This album is the culmination of an exciting collaboration between myself and Lutherios Ancient & Modern Music Instruments for their inspirational "Lyre 2.0 Project" - dedicated to reintroducing the beautiful lyre of antiquity back into our much aesthetically poorer, bland modern world.

Their vision is one I share and which continues to inspire me - maybe, someday soon, the beautiful lyre of antiquity will once again resonate the 21st century and beyond, with its haunting, ancient beauty.

"Lutherios" is comprised of members of the Koumartzis family of specialist musical instrument makers, who are based in Thessaloniki, Greece:
Their “Lyre 2.0 Project” recently featured in an article in *Lifo Magazine* - one of the most widely read cultural magazines in Greece.

The lyre featured in this album is their handcrafted “Lyre of Apollo III" model, a *chelys* form of lyre:
The literal translation of the ancient Greek word "chelys" means "tortoise shell lyre"; the lyre made with a resonator fashioned from a tortoise shell carapace over which a soundboard of taut leather was stretched.

However, as well as an actual tortoise shell carapace, the term 'chelys' could also refer to a lyre with a resonator made of wood, but carved into the general form of a tortoise. Indeed, the latter would have produced a much richer, resonant tone, as wood is a far lighter and resonant material to construct a musical instrument from, than a much denser tortoise shell carapace, in addition to its irregular thickness. The 'Lyre of Apollo III' was therefore constructed in accordance with the latter form of chelys.

The definitive proof that the resonator of the ancient Greek chelys was also sometimes made out of wood carved in the form of the tortoise shell can be found in this fascinating original ancient text by Philostratus the Elder, in his writings, "Imagines":

![Illustration of a lyre player](image)
"All the wood required for the lyre is of boxwood, firm and free from knots – there is no ivory anywhere about the lyre, for men did not yet know whether the elephant or the use they were to make of its tusks. The tortoise-shell is black, but its portrayal is accurate and true to nature in that the surface is covered with irregular circles which touch each other and have yellow eyes..."

The word 'chelys' was said to have been invented by Hermes. Hermes, the messenger of the Olympian gods, is the son of Zeus and the nymph Maia, daughter of Atlas and one of the Pleiades. According to the Homeric Hymn to Hermes (475) he was attracted by sounds of music while walking on the banks of the Nile, and found they emanated from the shell of a tortoise across which were stretched tendons which the wind had set in vibration. The story is recounted here, in a passage from 'Encyclopedia Mythica', which goes on to describe how the chelys became forever associated with Apollo, the ancient Greek god of music:

"According to legend, Hermes was born in a cave on Mount Cyllene in Arcadia. Zeus had impregnated Maia at the dead of night while all other gods slept. When dawn broke amazingly he was born. Maia wrapped him in swaddling bands, then resting herself, fell fast asleep. Hermes, however, squirmed free and ran off to Thessaly. This is where Apollo, his brother, grazed his cattle. Hermes stole a number of the herd and drove them back to Greece. He hid them in a small grotto near to the city of Pylos and covered their tracks. Before returning to the cave he caught a tortoise, killed it and removed its entrails. Using the intestines from a cow stolen from Apollo and the hollow tortoise shell, he made the first lyre. When he reached the cave he wrapped himself back into the swaddling bands. When Apollo realized he had been robbed he protested to Maia that it had been Hermes who had taken his cattle. Maia looked to Hermes and said it could not be, as he is still wrapped in swaddling bands. Zeus the all powerful intervened saying he had been watching and Hermes should return the cattle to Apollo. As the argument went on, Hermes began to play his lyre. The sweet music enchanted Apollo, and he offered Hermes to keep the cattle in exchange for the lyre. Apollo later became the grand master of the instrument, and it also became one of his symbols"
MY EXPERIENCE OF PLAYING "THE LYRE OF APOLLO"

Inspirationally authentic - this was my first observation! In particular, the unique, exotic timbre of this lyre is mainly thanks to the much more authentically 'bench-shaped' bridge - much wider at the top and flatter than the standard guitar-style 'A-shaped' bridges which feature on my other lyres.

The shape of the lyre bridge is really significant in the creation of the unique tone of the lyre, for whereas the modern guitar-style 'A-shaped' bridge is designed to be buzz-free, creating a pure, harp-like tone almost all detailed illustrations of ancient lyres seem to show the flatter, bench-shaped bridge, which creates a completely different tone!

The wider top of these 'bench-shaped' bridges creates a subtle but very pleasant 'buzz' to the overall timbre - rather like that of a sitar, or a much more subtle version of the begena, a lyre still played today in Ethiopia, where the inherent buzz of the archaic flatter lyre bridge has become the primary feature of the particular tone of this bass register 10-string lyre.

Every detail of this beautiful lyre has been designed with authenticity in mind, even down to the incredibly useful and aesthetically pleasing braided 'telamon' - the strap traditionally used to play the lyre with two hands simultaneously, which contrary to the prevailing prejudice for a belief in the 'urban myth' of the monotony of monophony in the ancient world, this is exactly how these beautiful instruments were indeed designed to be played in antiquity, as illustrated in countless actual ancient depictions of lyre players. All of these beautiful lyres, lovingly hand-crafted by Luthieros are indeed, divine artefacts, reintroduced into the modern world.

THE TRACKS

The tracks in this album feature a new composition for the first track, two examples of the actual surviving music of ancient Greece and adapted arrangements for “The Lyre of Apollo III” of eight of my existing compositions featured in some of my other albums for solo lyre – here,
transformed by the exotic, ancient timbre of my beautiful chelys form lyre.

Throughout all of these tracks, the unique character of the original ancient Greek musical modes can be heard, further enhanced by the use of the wonderfully pure just intonation of antiquity:

1) The Golden Lyre of Erato – a new composition commissioned for this album, in the intense ancient Greek Hypodorian mode.

2) The Dark Lyre of Orpheus – adapted from my single “Orpheus’s Lyre: Lament For Solo Lyre in the Just Intonation of Antiquity”, this original composition is in the poignant sounding ancient Greek Phrygian mode, and attempts to evoke the tragic legend of how Orpheus, son of Apollo, lost his lover, Eurydice twice, first due to her tragic death by a the bite of a serpent, then again in his quest to rescue her from the Underworld, when just before they had ascended, he looked behind, only to have Eurydice snatched back to the dark realms of Hades forever...

3) Skolion of Seikilos – the famous first century ancient Greek drinking song in the warming ancient Greek Hypophrygian mode, preserved in its complete form for 2000 years on an ancient Greek burial stele. This piece features in different arrangements on several of my other albums, including “The Ancient Greek Lyre” & “A Well Tuned Lyre – The Just Intonation of Antiquity”.

4) Ancient Greek Music Fragment (Bellerman Fragment) – a magical ancient Greek music fragment in the dreamy sounding ancient Greek Hypolydian mode, this piece also features in my albums “The Ancient Greek Lyre” & “A Well Tuned Lyre – The Just Intonation of Antiquity”.

5) Apollo's Lyre – this original composition in the warm ancient Greek Hypophrygian mode, first featured as the opening track to my album, “Apollo’s Lyre”. In this album, and my similar albums “The Ancient Greek Lyre” and “The Ancient Greek Modes”, I attempted to recreate the sound of the ancient Greek kithara – the larger wooden lyre favoured by the professional musicians of ancient Greece.
6) **Ode to Ancient Athens** – this original composition in the poignant ancient Greek Phrygian mode originally was entitled “Ode to Ancient Rome” which featured as track 1 on my album “Ode to Ancient Rome”.

7) **Acheron (River of Sorrow)** – this original composition in the mournful and intense ancient Greek Hypodorian mode, first featured in my album “The Ancient Roman Lyre” under its original Roman-themed Latin title of “Tristitia (Sorrow)”.

8) **Hymn To Zeus** – this original composition in the mighty and intense ancient Greek Dorian mode, first featured in my album “Apollo’s Lyre”.

9) **Ode to Aphrodite** – this original composition, in the intense ancient Greek Hypodorian mode, first featured in my album “The Ancient Greek Lyre”.

10) **Contemplation of the Philosopher** – this original composition, in the intense and introspective ancient Greek Dorian mode, first featured in my album “The Ancient Roman Lyre”, under the Roman-themed Latin name of “Contemplationis (Contemplation)”.

11) **The Sanctuary of Apollo** – this original composition, in the warm-sounding ancient Greek Hypophrygian mode, first featured in my album “The Ancient Greek Modes”.

12) **Ancient Visions** – this original composition, in the poignant ancient Greek Phrygian mode, first featured in my album “Ancient Visions – New Compositions for an Ancient Lyre”.