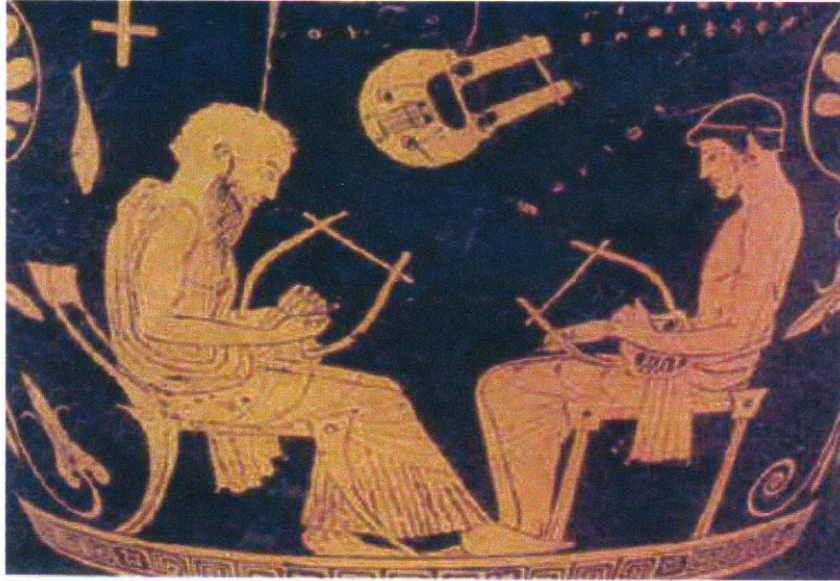


THE ANCIENT GREEK MODES

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MICHAEL LEVY



The concept of this album, is to recreate the both the sounds of the musical modes once used in Ancient Greece (as described in the writings of Plato & Aristotle) & to restore the lost sounds of the ancient Greek [Kithara](#) - the large wooden lyre once favoured by the professional musicians of Ancient Greece...

THE ANCIENT GREEK MUSICAL MODES

The names of musical modes in use today, (e.g. Dorian, Mixolydian etc) although having the same names as the original Greek musical modes, were actually misnamed during the Middle Ages! Apparently, the Greeks counted intervals from top to bottom. When medieval ecclesiastical scholars tried to interpret the ancient texts, they counted from bottom to top, jumbling the information. The misnamed medieval modes are only distinguished by the ancient Greek modes of the same name, by being labelled "Church Modes". It was due to a misinterpretation of the Latin texts of Boethius, that medieval modes were given the wrong Greek names!

According to an article on Greece in the New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, the original ancient Greek names for species of the octave included the following (on white keys):

B-B: Mixolydian

E-E: Dorian

A-A: Hypodorian

D-D: Phrygian

G-G: Hypophrygian

C-C: Lydian

F-F: Hypolydian

For what Plato & Aristotle had this to say about these ancient musical modes, please see this fascinating link:

<http://www.pathguy.com/modes.htm>

More details on the original Ancient Greek Modes can also be found here:

<http://www.midicode.com/tunings/greek.shtml>

THE REPERTOIRE

The seven original compositions arranged for replica lyre which form the repertoire of this album, are each written in one of the seven [Ancient Greek Modes](#).

The lyre-playing techniques heard in this album, are authentically based on lyre-playing styles which have remarkably survived from Antiquity & which still can be heard today in the amazing lyres still played throughout the continent of Africa, where unlike the rest of the Western world, a precious remnant of the cross-cultural influences from the around ancient world have miraculously survived.

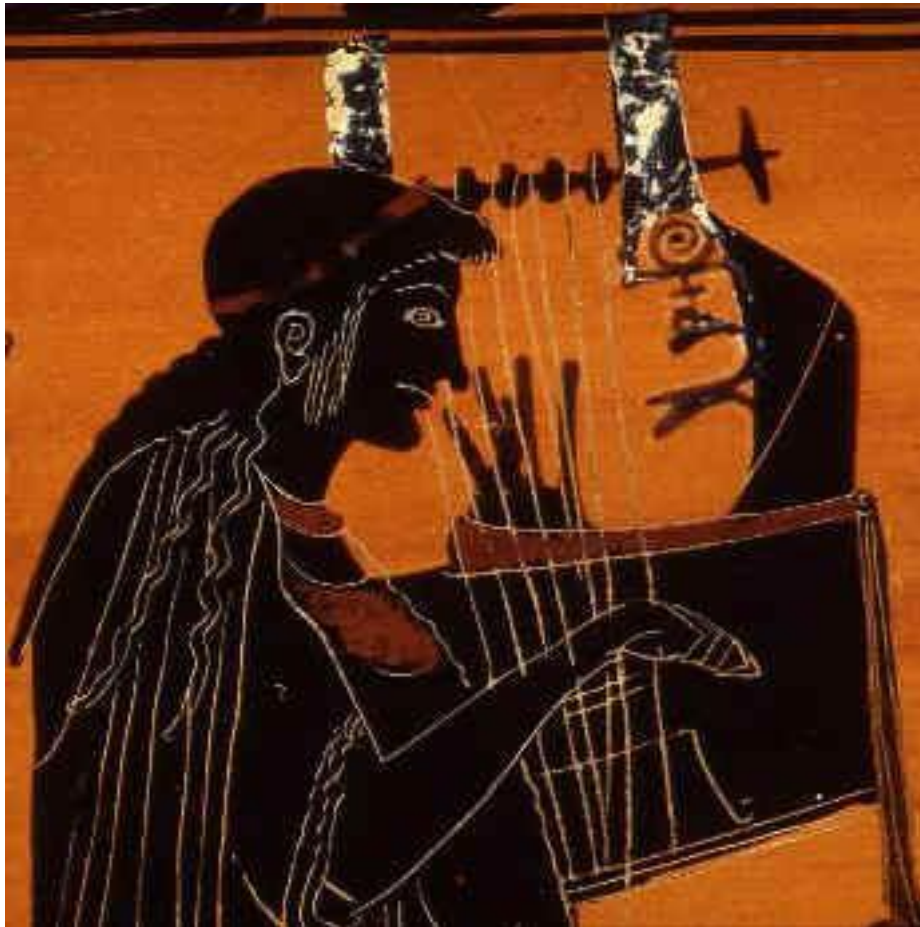
THE LYRE PLAYING TECHNIQUES USED IN THIS ALBUM

Some of these lyre-playing techniques include the “block & strum” method, still practiced today by the [Krar](#) Lyre players of Eritrea in East Africa – this technique allows the player to strum rhythm & basic chords on the lyre, similar to an acoustic guitar:



This technique entails blocking strings with the left hand which are not required and leaving open only the strings which form the required intervals, which then can be strummed with a plectrum in the left hand.

Ancient illustrations of Kithara players seem to infer that this technique was also prominent in Ancient Greece – many illustrations clearly depict the left of the lyre player blocking/dampening the strings with the left hand whilst strumming the open strings with a plectrum in their right hand:



I also demonstrate all the possible styles available on the Kithara. These include the use of tremolo (based on the style of Egyptian [Simsimiyya](#) Lyre Players still heard today), alternating between harp-like finger plucked tones played with the left hand, and guitar-like plectrum-plucked tones with the right hand, using basic finger-plucked intervals/chords with the left hand to form a basic harmonic background for the melodic line being played with the plectrum in the right hand (the surviving fragments of Ancient Greek music clearly imply a basic harmonic tonality to these ancient melodies (as opposed to simple folk melodies which can simply be accompanied by a drone).

To hear my arrangements for solo lyre, of some of these actual surviving melodies from Ancient Greece, please listen to my other albums, "[An Ancient Lyre](#)" & "[The Ancient Greek Lyre](#)"

THE 7 TRACKS

1) "Spirit of the Kithara" (Composition for Lyre in the Ancient Greek Dorian Mode)

2) "Dancers of Dionysus" (Composition for Lyre in the Ancient Greek Hypolydian Mode)

3) "Hymn To Poseidon" (Composition for Lyre in the Ancient Greek Hypodorian Mode)

4) "Procession of the Olympians" (Composition for Lyre in the Ancient Greek Lydian Mode)

5) "The Sanctuary of Apollo" (Composition for Lyre in the Ancient Greek Hypophrygian Mode)

6) "The Oracles of Delphi" (Composition for Lyre in the Ancient Greek Mixolydian Mode)

7) "Glory of the Parthenon" (Composition for Lyre in the Ancient Greek Phrygian Mode)