



## HELIKON – Musical landscapes of passion and melancholy

With her new album, HELIKON, the German-Greek pianist Danae Dörken returns to her Greek roots once again. To mark Mikis Theodorakis' 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2025, Dörken dedicates a multifaceted and deeply personal album to the important Greek composer. Theodorakis' compositions cover a broad range of musical genres, combining classical and modern music with elements of Greek folk music. Danae Dörken recorded his piano concerto "Helikon," a highly exciting early work that remained unfinished, combining it with Suite No. 1—a "hymn to the divinity of dance"—alongside a selection of songs that exude a very special magic. Danae Dörken performed the songs in an arrangement for solo piano by Tatiana Papageorgiou.



### MIKIS THEODORAKIS (1925 – 2021)

For Piano and orchestra  
Crete and Paris, 1949–55

- [1] 1. Movement – 2:36
- [2] 2. Movement – 4:09
- [3] 3. Movement – 3:20
- [4] 4. Movement – 9:34
- [5] 5. Movement – 3:18

*Helikon* – For piano and orchestra  
Athens, 1952

- [6] 1. Movement – 13:18
- [7] 2. Movement – 9:19

[8] *Itan 18 Noemvri* – 0:54  
*On the eighteenth day of November*

[9] *To gelasto paidi* – 1:29  
*The laughing boy*

[10] Margarita Magiopoulos – 2:07  
*Margarita daughter of May*

[11] *Ena to Helidoni* – 1:36  
*This one swallow*

[12] Asma Asmaton – 5:02  
*Song of songs*

[13] *Tis Dikeosinis Ilie* – 2:24  
*Sun of justice*

[14] *Strose to Stroma sou* – 3:21  
*Make your bed*

Danae Dörken *piano* | Staatskapelle Weimar | Kornilios Michailidis  
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Whether live in concert or on her highly acclaimed CD recordings, Danae Dörken captivates listeners with her incomparable musical charisma, her sensitive yet spirited interpretations, her astonishing technique, which she always applies perfectly to the music, and her extraordinary and imaginative programming, which also characterizes her latest album, HELIKON. It will be released on 23 May 2025 with Berlin Classics / EDEL.

On this album, Danae Dörken is accompanied by the **Staatskapelle Weimar** under the direction of the young Greek conductor **Kornilios Michailidis**.

*"I've known Kornilios since I was a young girl," says Danae Dörken. "We started discussing music at a very early age and practically grew up together, so it was a great pleasure for me to work with him. I absolutely wanted to make this album with a conductor of Greek heritage, because I think it's important to understand what defines Theodorakis' music, what it wants to say, and what permeates it on a very deep level. We went through the scores together and also had some of Theodorakis' manuscripts at our disposal – to see what was meant and how, and which accent meant what in his music. Having the Staatskapelle Weimar as a partner, who explored these works with great joy and enthusiasm, was a tremendous delight."*

**Mikis Theodorakis** was one of the most important Greek composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was politically active throughout his life. During World War II, he joined the resistance against Nazism and fought on the side of the left in the subsequent Greek Civil War. He experienced internment and severe torture; his music was censored, and he was forced into exile. Later, Mikis Theodorakis was elected to the Greek Parliament and campaigned for reconciliation between Greeks and Turks.

*"Mikis Theodorakis is an incredible man who led a lifelong struggle in Greece for music, and at the same time for the freedom that evidently has to accompany this music. I doubt if there has been another life that shows so strongly the connections between revolutionary art and political freedom,"* wrote the American writer Arthur Miller.

The **piano concerto "Helikon"** was written in 1952 and conveys the composer's optimistic attitude after the suffering and deprivation of the 1940s. Theodorakis himself described how the title "Helikon" for his piano concerto came about: "I gave it the title 'Helikon' because Dionysus spent time with the nymphs in the Helikon Mountains. So it was a Dionysian work." *"What fascinates me about "Helikon" is the sheer range of emotions it conveys—from passionate turmoil to melancholic contemplation,"* says Danae Dörken.

Mikis Theodorakis's **First Suite for Piano and Orchestra** was composed in Paris in 1954/55. "The First Suite was intended to be a musical monument of rhythm and colour to my homeland, Crete. With the First Suite, I had become a composer," wrote Mikis Theodorakis. For Danae Dörken, *"the Suite for Piano and Orchestra is a masterful work that, with its powerful fusion of Greek folk music, classical structures, and passionate rhythms, unfolds a distinctive emotional intensity and impressively reveals the composer's versatility."*

Mikis Theodorakis said of his **songs**: "The most important thing about my attempt at songwriting was the search for an original melodic world. To create this melodic world, two things were needed: simplicity and authenticity." *"What impresses me most is Theodorakis' ability to use simple yet powerful melodies to create complex and profound emotional musical landscapes that express both Greek culture and universal themes such as freedom, love, and resistance,"* says Danae Dörken.

**Danae Dörken** is one of the most sought-after artists of the new generation. She studied with the renowned piano teacher Karl-Heinz Kämmerling and the great pianist Lars Vogt. She is internationally acclaimed as a piano soloist and works with eminent orchestras such as the Munich Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Northern Sinfonia, the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra, the Norrlandsoperan Symphony Orchestra, and the Düsseldorf Symphony Orchestra. She has performed at venues including London's Wigmore Hall, the Vienna Konzerthaus, the Mozarteum Salzburg, the Tonhalle Zurich, the Cologne Philharmonic, the Gasteig in Munich, the Konzerthaus Berlin, the Laeiszhalle Hamburg, and the Alte Oper Frankfurt.

Danae Dörken has a special love for chamber music. In 2015, she and her sister Kiveli Dörken founded the **Molyvos International Music Festival (MIMF)** on the island of Lesbos. This picturesque Mediterranean island in the North Aegean Sea offers an incomparable setting for the chamber music festival – yet it remains at the center of the refugee crisis to this day. Danae and Kiveli Dörken are committed both to refugees and to the musical connection between Greece and Germany. This year's festival takes place from August 12<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> under the motto "CHAOS" and features celebrated artists such as Antje Weithaas, Tanja Tetzlaff, Florian Donderer, and others. For the first time, musicians who landed on Lesbos as refugees and have since become part of the local community will also be performing a concert as part of the festival.



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