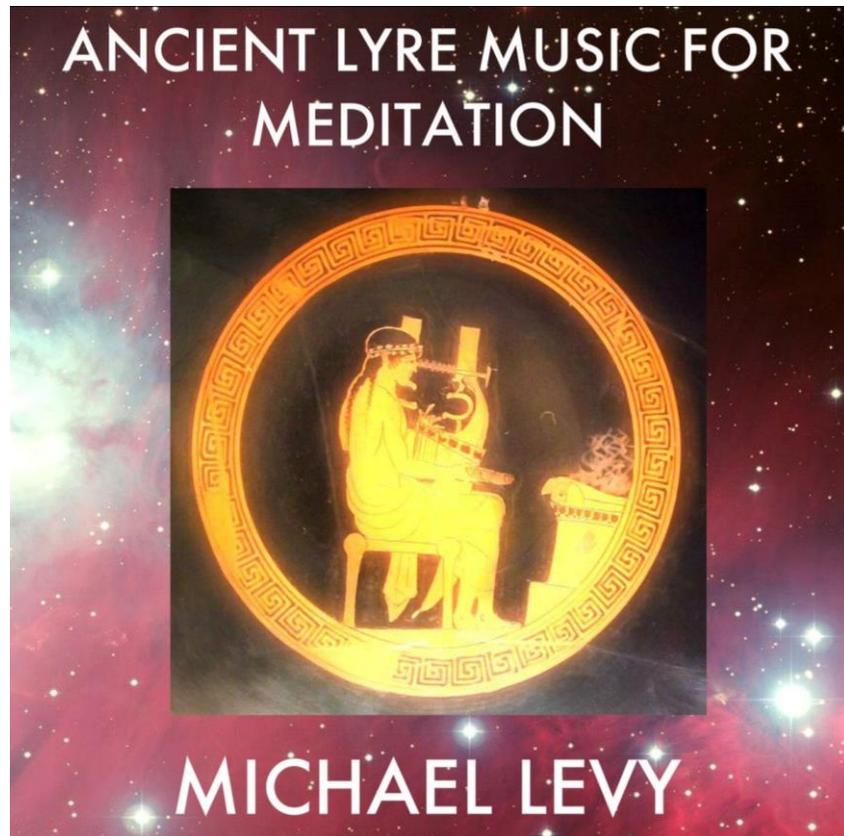


ANCIENT LYRE MUSIC FOR MEDITATION



This compilation album features a selection of some of my most meditative compositions for archaic replica lyres featured in my previous ancient-themed albums, in some of the most hypnotic, mesmerizing ancient Greek intonations and musical modes I have so far experimented with. The tracks all feature the use of geometrically pure musical intervals in just intonation, many of which feature the subtly more calming effect of using a reference tuning pitch of A at 432 Hertz. These enigmatic melodies are perfect soundtracks for relaxation, meditation or prayer; for yoga, reiki, aromatherapy or massage; the perfect musical antidote to living in our stressful, spiritually deprived, aesthetically deprived contemporary world...

We live in a bland and relentlessly manufactured 'musical' world. To me, it feels soulless. It's as if the stonking beat of rock' n roll was replaced by a drum machine and suddenly a thrumming heartbeat was silenced in the world.

Somehow this replacement pacemaker doesn't quite measure up! So, I have a musical mission. An obsession, some might say to open a portal to a time that has been all but forgotten - *I dream to rekindle the very spirit of our ancient ancestors. To capture, for just a few moments, a time when people imagined the fabric of the universe was woven from harmonies and notes. To luxuriate in a gentler time when the fragility of life was truly appreciated and its every action was performed in the almighty sense of awe felt for the ancient gods.*

With its capacity to transport our thoughts and imaginations, truly there must only be one true magic left in this realm. *Music*, I say! For, in nothing more than an instant the notes from an ancient melody can carry us right back into the heart of ancient society. *Hark...can you hear the lyres and lutes strumming victories and love songs of ordinary people living under these same skies, so many thousands of years before?* Listen here to experience life, at a different rhythm. Close your eyes and through the strange and enigmatic notes, plucked on strings lost through time, let the ancestors sing you their songs...

THE TRACKS

1. In an Ancient Roman Garden

An evocation of the lost serenity of Classical antiquity, [this piece was originally released as single in 2016](#).

The piece, in [the geometric purity of just intonation](#), features a completely spontaneous improvisations for chelys (tortoise shell form) lyre, recorded, live in my own garden at the height of summer, with nothing but the soothing, timeless background sounds of flowing water and birdsong...

The lyre featured in this piece the Luthieros ["Lyre of Apollo III"](#) - a very large tortoise shell form lyre, with the resonator fashioned in wood instead of an

actual tortoise shell, for a wonderfully rich and resonant sound. As described in ancient texts, it was also sometimes the lyre construction practice of portraying the tortoise shell in wood, for a much richer timbre than an actual tortoise shell can provide:

" 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 wither 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"

(Philostratus the Elder, ["Imagines"](#))

Unlike ancient Greece, from which we are lucky enough to have at least 60 fragments of actual written music (notated in the unambiguous alphabetical system of ancient Greek musical notation, whereby specific alphabetical symbols represented specific pitches), there is strangely not a shred of written music to have survived from ancient Rome.

However, as the Romans so obviously borrowed so much from the artistic culture of ancient Greece, particularly in art and architecture, it goes without saying that when it came to music, it is therefore incredibly likely that they also borrowed many musical ideas from ancient Greece as well. This is evident by the similarity between depictions of the ancient Roman kithara and tortoise shell lyres (for example, in the fresco's found preserved in Pompeii and Herculaneum) to their ancient Greek counterparts.

Therefore, in putting together this single, I used an ancient Greek mode; the distinctively warm and contented-sounding ancient Greek Hypophrygian Mode - this mode was the equivalent intervals as G-G on the white notes of the piano, (misnamed the 'Mixolydian' mode in the Middle Ages). I also tuned my lyre in the ancient, authentically pure tuning system of just intonation.

The main challenge of recording this piece, live in my own garden, was avoiding also recording the almost omnipresent, 'tinnitus-like' 21st century background noise - to those with more sensitive ears, a few tiny snippets of '21st century auditory blemishes' may have very slightly stained the image of the purity of Classical serenity I was trying to portray, but in general, I think I

accomplished the monumental task to the best of my ability! Enjoy a taste of my evocation of the lost tranquillity of the Classical world...

2. Contemplationis (Contemplation)

This piece originally featured as track 4, in my 2013 album, [“The Ancient Roman Lyre”](#).

This piece, also in the geometric purity of just intonation, is in the intensely introspective ancient Greek Dorian Mode – the equivalent intervals as E-E on the white notes of the piano (misnamed the “Phrygian” mode in the early Middle Ages) and features [the delicate harp-like tone of a modern evocation of an ancient 10-string lyre, hand-made in the USA by Marini Made Harps.](#)

3. The Wisdom of Minerva

This piece originally featured in my 2012 release, [“Ode to Ancient Rome”](#). Also featuring the 10-string lyre by Marini Made Harps, the piece is in the mysterious sounding ancient Greek Chromatic Phrygian Mode, (equivalent intervals as: EF#FGA#BC#DE) in just intonation, [featuring a percussive style of lyre playing](#), whereby the lyre strings are hit with a small wooden baton, rather like a hammered dulcimer.

Minerva "was the ancient Roman goddess of wisdom, medicine, commerce, handicrafts, poetry, the arts in general, and later, war. In many ways similar to the Greek goddess Athena, she had important temples in Rome and was patron of the Quinquatras festival." (The Ancient History Encyclopedia)

4. Amatores (Lovers)

This track originally featured on my 2013 release, [“The Ancient Roman Lyre”](#).

Featuring my Marini-Made 10-string lyre tuned in just intonation, this piece is in the dreamy, sensual and evocation sounding ancient Greek Hypodorian Mode – the equivalent intervals as F-F on the white notes of the piano (and

misnamed the “*Lydian*” mode in the early Middle Ages).

5. The Golden Age of Pericles

First featured in my 2015 album, [*"The Ancient Greek Tortoise Shell Lyre"*](#), this piece, in just intonation, is a dreamy, spontaneous improvisation in the ancient Greek Phrygian Mode (the equivalent intervals as D-D on the white notes of the piano and misnamed the ‘*Dorian*’ mode in the Middle Ages). The distinctively poignant, yearning characteristics of this mode are perfect for expressing an evocation of the lost world of the “*Golden Age*” of Athenian culture, which flourished under the leadership of Pericles (495-429 B.C.), a brilliant general, orator, patron of the arts and politician—“the first citizen” of democratic Athens, according to the historian Thucydides.

The *Age of Pericles* (461-429 BCE) denotes the period of history in which enabled the necessary conditions for Athens to rise as an academic and artistic superstructure which gave birth to Western Philosophy, in turn acting as the foundations of all we claim to know within our postmodern society and all its previous developments. Some have come to know this era as “*The Golden Age*” because in such a short period of time, advancements in all fields of practice flourished by merely by questioning the foundations in which knowledge was built from and if error was identified, correcting it by re-establishing the foundations in which its conception originated.

This piece features the incredibly authentic Luthieros [*"Kylix Lyre of Pan"*](#) – hand-made in modern Greece, with an actual tortoise shell (a locally sourced, naturally discarded shell, readily found in the forests near Europos). This particular lyre also has arms of actual goat horns, a carved bone plectrum and the authentic timbre of gut strings.

6. Odysseus and the Sirens

This piece originally featured as track 1 from my 2016 release, [*"The Ancient Greek Kithara of Classical Antiquity"*](#), featuring the wonderfully reconstructed Luthieros [*Kithara of the Golden Age of Classical Greece*](#).

Regarding the story of Odysseus and the Sirens in Homer's "Odyssey", quoting from Wikipedia:

"In Greek mythology, the Sirens (Greek singular: Σειρήν Seirēn; Greek plural: Σειρῆνες Seirēnes) were dangerous yet beautiful creatures, who lured nearby sailors with their enchanting music and voices to shipwreck on the rocky coast of their island...Odysseus was curious as to what the Sirens sang to him, and so, on the advice of Circe, he had all of his sailors plug their ears with beeswax and tie him to the mast. He ordered his men to leave him tied tightly to the mast, no matter how much he would beg. When he heard their beautiful song, he ordered the sailors to untie him but they bound him tighter. When they had passed out of earshot, Odysseus demonstrated with his frowns to be released"

This piece is an evocation of the sort of melody which may once have accompanied a recitation of this tale. In just intonation, I use the distinctively poignant and luring ancient Greek Phrygian mode (misnamed the 'Dorian' mode in the Middle Ages), featuring an atmospheric background of ocean sounds, with the sound of the kithara enhanced by a subtle reverb, sampled from Belgian monasteries.

7. Meditations of Polyhymnia

This track originally featured as track 1 in my 2016 album, ["Kithara of the Golden Age"](#) - featuring again, the wonderfully reconstructed Luthieros Kithara of the Golden Age of Classical Greece tuned in authentic just intonation.

Polyhymnia (Πολυύμνια; *"the one of many hymns"*), was in Greek mythology the Muse of sacred poetry, sacred hymn, dance, and eloquence as well as agriculture and pantomime. Her name comes from the Greek words "poly" meaning "many" and "hymnos", which means "praise".

She is depicted as very serious, pensive and meditative, and often holding a finger to her mouth, dressed in a long cloak and veil and resting her elbow on a pillar. Polyhymnia is also sometimes credited as being the Muse of geometry and meditation.

This piece, therefore is fittingly composed in the intensively introspective ancient Greek Dorian Mode (the equivalent intervals as E-E on the white notes of the piano and misnamed the 'Phrygian' mode in the Middle Ages). This uniquely introspective characteristic of the ancient Greek Dorian Mode is further enhanced by the use the pure, focussed musical intervals tuned in authentic just intonation...

8. Asteriai (Nymphs of the Stars)

First featured in my 2015 release, ["The Lyre of Hermes"](#), this track is a spontaneous improvisation for solo chelys (tortoise shell form) replica ancient Greek lyre, in the profound and timeless ancient Greek Phrygian mode, (equivalent intervals as D-D on the white notes of the piano and misnamed the 'Dorian' Mode in the Middle Ages) in the just intonation of antiquity.

The lyre featured in this piece once again, the Luthieros ["The Lyre of Apollo III"](#) - a very large tortoise shell form lyre, with the resonator fashioned in wood for a wonderfully rich and resonant sound. The flatter 'table' of the bridge of this lyre also sometimes creates a wonderful sitar-like buzzing timbre.

9. Hymn to the Stars

This piece originally featured as track 3 on my 2016 release, ["The Ancient Greek Kithara of Classical Antiquity"](#). This track, in just intonation, is an evocation of the lost melody which may have once accompanied a recitation of the 6th Orphic Hymn, ["To the Stars \(Astron\)"](#):

"With holy voice I call the stars [Astron] on high, pure sacred lights and genii of the sky.

Celestial stars, the progeny of Night [Nyx], in whirling circles beaming far your light,

Refulgent rays around the heav'ns ye throw, eternal fires, the source of all below.

With flames significant of Fate ye shine, and aptly rule for men a path divine.

*In seven bright zones ye run with wand'ring flames, and heaven and earth
compose your lucid frames:*

*With course unwearied, pure and fiery bright forever shining thro' the veil of
Night.*

*Hail twinkling, joyful, ever wakeful fires! Propitious shine on all my just desires;
These sacred rites regard with conscious rays, and end our works devoted to
your praise."*

This piece is in the distinctively poignant ancient Greek Phrygian mode, which also can invoke a unique sense of timelessness and mystery, perfect for a song of praise to the immortal stars of the celestial spheres...

10. Ancient Visions

Originally featuring on my 2010 release, ["Ancient Visions: New Compositions for an Ancient Lyre"](#), this new arrangement of this piece is for the more delicate, harp-like tone of my Marini Made 10-string lyre, whose purer timbre is further enhanced by the use of just intonation.

11. Sacred Reverie

This piece is a spontaneous improvisation performed on my 10-string Marini Made 10-string lyre. The piece is accompanied by the subtle sound of naturally flowing water, with geometrically pure musical intervals tuned in just intonation.

Another highly experimental version of piece, transformed by contemporary studio effects, [is entitled "Methane Lakes of Titan"; featured as track 4 of my 2017 release, "Ascension of the Lyre"](#)

12. Etude in the Archytas Enharmonic Genus

This piece, originally released as an extended length single in 2016, features a completely spontaneous improvisation for solo replica ancient Greek chelys

tortoise shell form lyre ([the Luthieros "Lyre of Apollo III"](#)), based on a hauntingly evocative documented microtonal scale from ancient Greece, known as the ["Archytas Enharmonic Genus"](#).

The use of quarter tones in this ancient Greek scale adds an intensity to the resulting music improvised in it in an entirely different dimension to the artificial constraints of our monotonously standardized 12-note chromatic system. The feeling of intensity in this microtonal scale is further enhanced by the authentic use of the clearly focused intervals, tuned here in just intonation.

In this improvisation, I also demonstrate the rhythmic potential of the reconstructed tortoise shell form lyre by using the greater mass of my replica ancient Greek carved bone plectrum to also occasionally beat rhythm on the skin soundboard; in much the same manner that acoustic guitarists today can beat rhythm on the soundboard of their guitars whilst they play - I sincerely hope that Apollo would approve of my effects to bring both his lyre and his long-forgotten ancient Greek musical scales new life!

13. Etude in the Olympos Pentatonic Scale

An improvisation in just intonation for replica ancient Greek tortoise shell lyre, [in a minor pentatonic scale, said to have been introduced to Greece sometime in the 7th century BC by the aulos player, Olympos:](#)

"Olympus (or Olympos, Greek: Ὀλυμπος) is the name of two ancient Greek musicians, one mythical who lived before the Trojan war, and one apparently real, who lived in the 7th century BC. Both musicians were connected with the auletic music, which had its origin in Phrygia. It is possible that the elder and mythical Olympus was invented through some mistake respecting the younger and historical Olympos. Instrumental music was apparently introduced into Greece by Olympos" (Wikipedia).

This track actually started life as a practical 'musicological experiment' in lyre tuning which to my surprise, revealed that if one tunes a 9-string lyre to the ancient Greek Archytas Enharmonic Genus, the Olympos Pentatonic scale also

naturally occurs within exactly the same tuning - the resulting improvisation demonstrates the seamless relationship these two haunting ancient Greek scales seem to have and presumably, how an ancient Greek lyre player must have been able to seamlessly modulate between them?

The lyre I am playing, is the ["Golden Lyre of Erato"](#) – hand-made in modern Greece by Luthieros. This custom made version of this Luthieros lyre model uses an actual perfectly preserved Greek land tortoise shell, locally sourced from the remains of land tortoises found in the forests near Europos – about the nearest one can come, to taking [the 2400 year old reconstructed Elgin Lyre](#) out of its display cabinet at the British Museum *and actually playing it!*

14. Ascension of the Lyre

This piece (originally forming track 12 of my 2017 album, ["Ascension of the Lyre"](#)), is an extended length spontaneous improvisation in the intensely introspective ancient Greek Dorian Mode (equivalent intervals as E-E on the white notes of the piano and misnamed the *"Phrygian"* mode in the early Middle Ages), for harp & lyre, featuring the talented Harpist, [Rebecca Penkett](#).

This track is mastered with the subtle use of ambient, contemporary studio effects, in my attempt to enhance the 'other-worldly' meditative feeling of the piece.
