



ANCIENT THEATRE OF EPIDAUROS

Starting time for all performances: 21:00

Greek and English surtitles in all performances

WORLD PREMIERE

INTERNATIONAL CO-PRODUCTION

1 & 2 July

Schauspielhaus Bochum – Johan Simons

Alkestis

by Euripides

A weird play: the story of a woman who sacrifices her life to save that of her dying husband. Mourning; negotiations; arguments; who is not afraid of dying; who has more of a right to live. Finally, Heracles descends to the Underworld to bring Alkestis back: by now, though, she is a stranger to her family.

Previously featured in the Festival, initially in 2002 with Euripides' *Bacchae* and subsequently in 2009 with Horváth's *Kasimir and Karoline*, co-produced with his collaborator Paul Koek, Dutch director Johan Simons, founder of the famous Theater Holandia (1985) and one of the pioneers of European avant-garde theatre, returns to Epidaurus for a world-class event. Simons is noted for his musical approach on texts and his impressively minimalist aesthetics. In this new work, Simons attempts a contemporary take on Euripides' *Alkestis*, drawing on the music of Gluck's eponymous opera and placing four singers and an organ in lieu of the Chorus.

Directed by **Johan Simons** • Set design **Johannes Schütz** • Costume design **Greta Goiris** • Dramaturgy **Susanne Winnacker** • Cast **Anne Rietmeijer, Steven Scharf, Elsie de Brauw, Pierre Bokma, Stefan Hunstein, Victor IJdens** • Co-production **Athens Epidaurus Festival, Schauspielhaus Bochum**

Co-production **Schauspielhaus Bochum – Athens Epidaurus Festival**

PREMIERE**8 & 9 July****National Theatre of Greece – Yannis Kalavrianos*****Medea* by Bost**

The National Theatre of Greece presents a landmark piece of modern Greek drama for the very first time at the Ancient Theatre of Epidauros, through the unique directorial perspective of Yannis Kalavrianos. Written in 1993 in political (Decapentasyllabic) verse, *Medea* by Bost, or Mentis Bostantzoglou, bearing the masterfully wry, signature style of its author, is a scathing parody on contemporary reality in Greece. The tragic heroine does not kill her children out of amorous jealousy but out of her disappointment for their poor school performance and sinful lifestyles. The prolific playwright employs ancient drama in a playful and comical manner to “criticize critics, puzzle judges, and liberate audiences”.

Directed by **Yannis Kalavrianos** • Set design **Eva Manidaki** • Costume design **Vana Giannoula** • Music **Thodoris Economou** • Choreographer **Marianna Kavallieratos** • Lighting design **Nikos Vlasopoulos** • Assistant to the director **Kelly Papadopoulou** • Dramaturg **Eva Saraga** • Assistant to the set designer **Katerina Vlachmpei** • Assistant to the costume designer **Alexandros Garnavos** • Cast **Thanassis Dimou, Yorgos Glastras, Galini Hatzipaschali, Stelios Iakovidis, Syrmo Keke, Maria Koskina, Stavros Svigos, Andri Theodotou** • Chorus **Niovi Charalampous, Maria Konstanta, Irini Makri, Lygeri Mitropoulou, Elpida Nikolaou, Katerina Patsiani, Matina Pergiodaki, Mariam Rukhadze, Theodosia Savvaki**

*

PREMIERE**15 & 16 July Epidauros // 30-31 July Eleusis****Dimitris Karantzas*****The Persians* by Aeschylus**

The Persians as a tragedy of humanity, a micro-system reflecting on issues of existence and co-existence which have remained unresolved over the centuries. Boasting a stellar cast, Dimitris Karantzas’ production raises crucial questions: What constitutes “society”? And what about the equal inclusion of all citizens? What is signified by a persistent attachment to power or by the need of believing to a guide, human or divine, amid a ravaged world?

Different sections of the ancient theatre, the *coilon* and the *orchestra*, come together to “participate” in a public debate about the difficulty involved in conceding defeat and the awkwardness of moving on. Volunteers will gradually enter the theatre, seeking to pick up the thread of their existence in the wake of the catastrophe, mirroring present historical circumstances.

Translated by **Panagiotis Moullas** • Directed by **Dimitris Karantzas** • Dramaturgy collaborator **Geli Kalampaka** • Set design **Cleo Boboti** • Costume design **Ioanna Tsami** • Movement **Tasos Karachalios** • Music **George Poullos** • Vocal coaching **Henri Kergomard** • Lighting design **Lefteris Pavlopoulos** • Assistant to the director **Marissa Farmaki** • Cast **Reni Pittaki, Christos Loulis, Giorgos Gallos, Michalis Ikonomou, Yannis Klinis, Alexia Kaltsiki, Theodora Tzimou, Aeneas Tsamatis, Ilias Moulas, Manos Petrakis, Tasos Karachalios, Vasilis Panagiotopoulos et al**

Co-production Athens Epidauros Festival – “To Theatre” Company – 2023 ELEUSIS EUROPEAN CULTURAL CAPITAL

INTERNATIONAL CO-PRODUCTION

WORLD PREMIERE

22 & 23 July

Residenztheater – Ulrich Rasche

***Agamemnon* by Aeschylus**

In the first chapter of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* trilogy, Agamemnon's homecoming signals a new, bloody chapter of violence when he is murdered by his wife, Clytemnestra. Ulrich Rasche, one of the most exciting new German directors, is famous for his unusual and impressive scenic language. His actors are often driven towards a deeply existential and "manic" style of performance, combining text, movement, and rhythm. Audiences will be captivated by a breathtaking production, a well-orchestrated choreography performed on mechanical revolving stages to the sounds of live contemporary music.

Directing – Set design **Ulrich Rasche** • Composition – Musical direction **Nico van Wersch** • Costume design **Romy Springsguth** • Choral direction **Jürgen Lehmann** • Lighting design **Gerrit Jurda** • Dramaturgy **Michael Billenkamp** • In collaboration with **Goethe-Institut Athens**

Co-production **Residenztheater – Athens Epidauros Festival**

*

PREMIERE

29 & 30 July

National Theatre of Greece – Argyris Xafis

***Ajax* by Sophocles**

Ajax, central among Sophocles' surviving tragedies, was written in peaceful times. However, the stage for the Peloponnesian War was already being set. Once an admired warrior on a par with Achilles, Ajax ends up becoming a deadly enemy of the army leaders and a pawn in the hands of gods, unable to grasp the spirit of a newly emerging era. This ancient tragedy does not recount the fall of a hero but his unique, posthumous redemption and glorification. *Ajax* marks Argyris Xafis' directorial debut at the Ancient Theatre of Epidauros.

Translated by **Nikos Panagiotopoulos** • Directed by **Argyris Xafis** • Set design **Maria Panourgia** • Costume design **Ioanna Tsami** • Music **Kornilios Selamsis** • Choreographer **Chara Kotsali** • Lighting design **Alekos Anastasiou** • Assistant to the director **Ioulia Stamouli** • Dramaturg **Aspasia-Maria Alexiou** • Second assistant to the director **Maya Kyriazi** • Assistant to the set designer **Sofia Theodoraki** • Cast **Yannis Dalianis, Nikos Hatzopoulos, Dimitris Imellos, Despina Kourti, Evi Saoulidou, Stathis Stamoulakatos, Christos Stylianou** • Chorus (alphabetically) **Asimina Anastasopoulou, Irene Boudali, Dimitris Georgiadis, Afroditi Katsarou, Erato Karathanasi, Lambros Konstanteas, Fanis Kosmas, Efstathia Lagiokapa, Alkiviadis Maggonas, Fotis Stratigos**

ANTIGONISMS Antigone Cycle

PREMIERE

5 & 6 August

Cezaris Graužinis

Antigone by Sophocles

In the aftermath of the Civil War in Thebes, the city's champions celebrate their victory, trying to erase the days of insecurity and misery from memory. The new king, Creon, takes part in the festivities in an attempt to consolidate his power, intimidating and threatening his fellow citizens. Young Antigone also "celebrates": a celebration of disobedience, energized by an enthusiastic resistance against the political pragmatism of tyranny. Established Lithuanian director Cezaris Graužinis returns to the Athens Epidaurus Festival with a strikingly contemporary, timely adaptation of Sophocles' tragedy. The cast includes some of the most lauded actors of the new generation, with Elli Tringou portraying Antigone and Vasilis Bisbikis in the role of Creon.

Translated by **Yorgos Blanas** • Directed by **Cezaris Graužinis** • Set and costume design **Kenny McLellan** • Musical composition **Dimitris Theocharis** • Choreography **Edgen Lane** • Lighting design **Alekos Yiannaros** • Cast **Elli Tringou** (Antigone), **Vasilis Bisbikis** (Creon), **Ieroklis Michailidis** (Coryphaeus), **Giorgos Papageorgiou** (Messenger), **Danae Michalaki** (Ismene), **Christos Sapountzis** (Tiresias), **Kostas Koronaos** (Sentry), **Stratis Hatzistamatiou** (Aemon), **Marina Argyridou** (Eurydice) • Chorus **Tassos Sotirakis, Ioannis Mastrogiannis, Periklis Sioundas** • Production **Lykofos**

*

12 & 13 August

National Theatre of Northern Greece – Vassilis Papavassiliou

Helen by Euripides

Written in the aftermath of the Athenians' crushing defeat at the Sicilian Expedition, Euripides' *Helen* is notable both for its anti-war qualities and its focus on virtues such as the power of oath and intelligence, both personified in the titular heroine. Drawing on the version of the myth created by lyrical poet Stesichorus instead of Homer's best-known version, Euripides portrays the Trojan War as a massacre committed for a phantom rather than a real woman. One of the lesser-known works of Euripides, classified as a "tragedy" almost as a technicality, but also famous for its humorous aspects, *Helen*, a National Theatre of Northern Greece production directed by Vassilis Papavassiliou that was set to premiere last year but was ultimately postponed due to the wildfires, will now be staged at the Ancient Theatre of Epidaurus.

Translated by **Pantelis Boukalas** • Directed by **Vassilis Papavassiliou** • Dramaturgy - Collaborating director **Nikoleta Filosoglou** • Set and costume design **Angelos Mentis** • Musical composition **Angelos Triantafyllou** • Choreography **Dimitris Sotiriou** • Lighting design **Lefteris Pavlopoulos** • Orchestration - Musical coaching **Yorgos Dousos** • Musical coaching **Chrysa Toumanidou** • Assistant to the director **Anna-Maria Iakovou** • Assistant to the set and costume designer **Elli Nalmpanti** • Assistant to the choreographer **Sofia Papanikandrou** • Production manager **Athanasia Androni** • Stage guides **Giannis Palamiotis, Marina Chatzioannou** • Cast **Emily Koliandri** (Helen), **Themis Panou** (Menelaus), **Agoritsa Oikonomou** (Theonoe), **Giorgos Kafkas** (Theoclymenus), **Efi Stamouli** (Old Woman), **Dimitris Kolovos** (First Messenger), **Angelos Bouras** (Second Messenger), **Dimitris Morfakidis** (Teucer), **Panagiotis Papaioannou**, (Attendant), **Nikolas Maragopoulos**, **Orestis Paliadelis** (Dioscuri) • Chorus **Nefeli Anthopoulou, Stavroula Arampatzoglou, Natassa Daliaka, Eleni Giannousi, Electra Goniadou, Sofia Kalemkeridou, Egli Katsiki, Anna Kyriakidou, Marianna Pourega, Katerina Plexida, Fotini Timotheou, Chrysa Toumanidou, Loukia Vassiliou, Momo Vlachou, Chrysa Zafeiriadou** • Musicians on stage **Yorgos Dousos** *flute, clarinet, saxophone, kaval*, **Danis Koumartzis** *double bass*, **Thomas Kostoulas** *percussion*, **Pavlos Metsios** *trumpet electric guitar*, **Haris Papathanasiou** *violin*, **Manolis Stamatiadis** *piano, accordion*

PREMIERE**19 & 20 August****Themis Moumoulidis*****Iphigenia in Aulis*** by Euripides

In the tragedy *Iphigenia in Aulis*, the main heroine dies for the sake of a futile, destructive imperialist war. A decadent society sacrifices Iphigenia, the incarnation of an entire generation of young people. In the wake of 20 years of Peloponnesian War, Euripides seemingly wonders: is a paradigm shift feasible? 2,500 years later, as we begin to perceive the first signs of a dystopian future, we also keep wondering: can things ever change? Themis Moumoulidis presents a performance reflecting on the past, present, and future, drawing on Panagiota Pantazi's new, Modern Greek translation of the play. The production is pervaded by a complete musical work by composer Stavros Gasparatos, who is inspired by the form of Iphigenia, creating a parallel narrative in dialogue with the direction.

Translated by **Panagiota Pantazi** • Directed by **Themis Moumoulidis** • Set design **Giorgos Gavalas** • Costume design **Niki Psychogiou** • Music – Musical coaching **Stavros Gasparatos** • Movement design **Cecil Mikroutsikou** • Lighting design **Nikos Sotiropoulos** • Dramaturgy advisor **Kaiti Diamantakou** • Research associate **Katerina Diakoumopoulou** • Photos **Elina Giounanli** • Artwork **Ifigenia Vasiliou** • Production manager **Stamatis Moumoulidis** • Cast **Christina Cheila Fameli, Ioanna Pappa, Giorgos Chrysostomou, Lazaros Georgakopoulos, Pantelis Dentakis et al** • Chorus **Lena Bozaki, Ioulia Georgiou, Alkistis Giraud, Sandy Hatzioannou, Sofia Koulera, Ioanna Lekka, Angelica Noea, Danae Politi** • Production **5th Epochi Technis, Ars Aeterna Theatre Company, Municipal and Regional Theatre of Agrinion, Ancient Iliada Festival**

*

1 July – 20 August**Children's creative workshop in Epidaurus**

After a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic, the successful theatre education programme will resume this year, familiarizing children with the wonderful, mysterious universe of ancient myths. Concurrently with grown-ups fully immersed in watching performances at the Ancient Theatre of Epidaurus, children are engaged in creative activities, tackling the content of those plays. The programme is coordinated by theatre researcher Elli Gavriil, in cooperation with a group of experienced teachers of theatre, music, movement, and arts education (Angeliki Tsakona, Elpida Komianou, Alkisti Vasilakou, Vasilis Kalagias, Anastasia Kordari, Mara Kalantzi).

Every Friday and Saturday
during the performances held at the Ancient Theatre of Epidaurus
For children aged 5-12

Held in collaboration with the International Network of Ancient Drama