



PM Tsipras visits USA

PM Tsipras at White House - Greece has turned page
Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras was on an official five-day visit to the US, which included meetings with US President Donald Trump, Vice President Mike Pence and International Monetary Fund managing director Christine Lagarde.

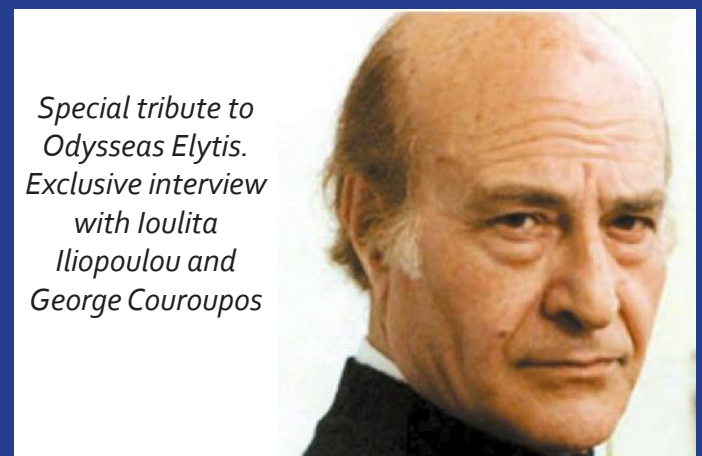
Tsipras met with members of Congress, state and local government officials, members of organisations and the Greek community and business people. He delivered addresses at Brookings Institution and the Chicago Council on Global Affairs.

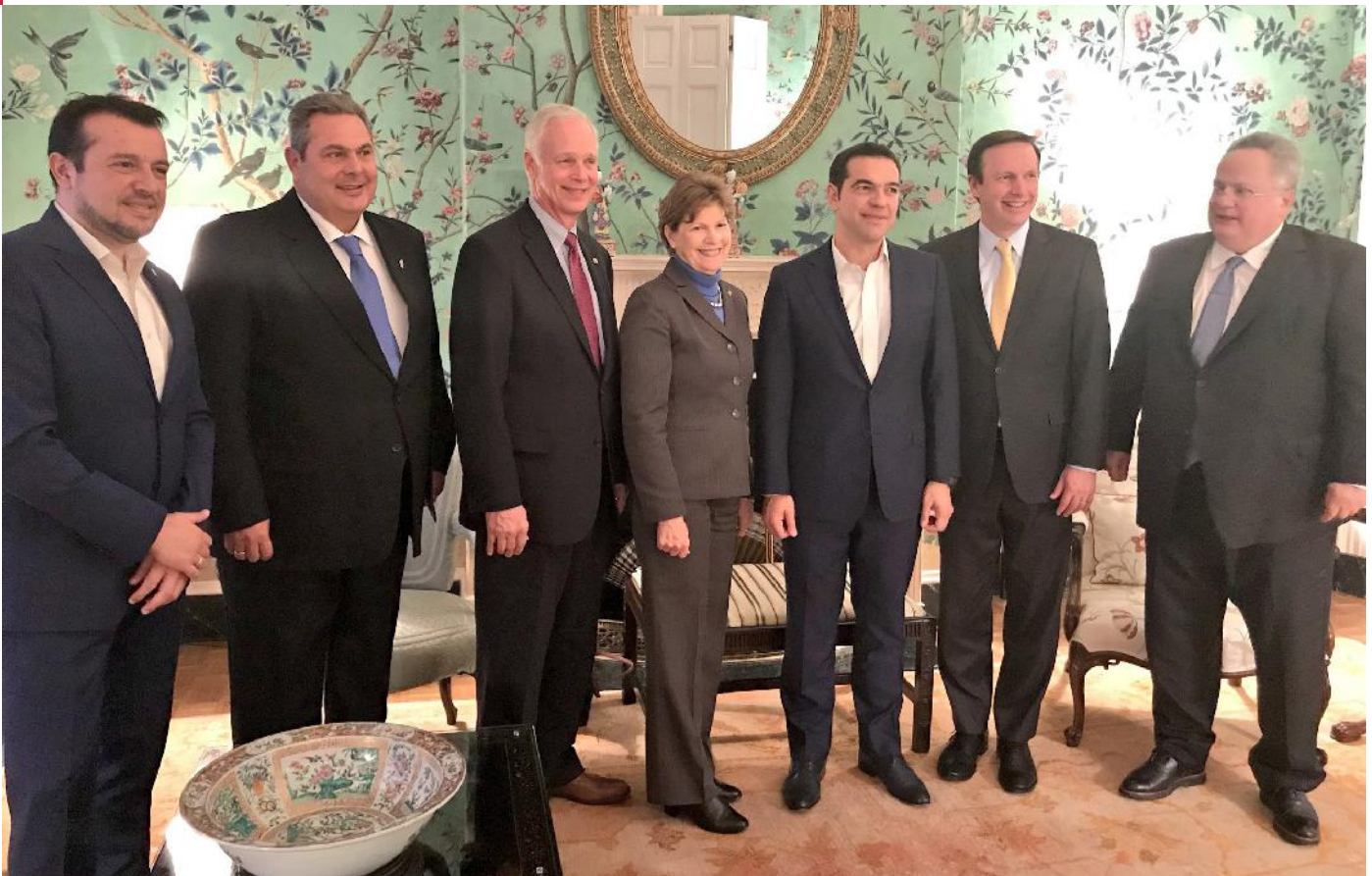
According to sources, a crucial point of his visit was the significant upgrading of Athens' relations with the Greek community in the US that supports the country's recovery effort and plays an important role for attracting investors.

The visit also emphasised the fact that Greece has turned a page and its economy - with steady steps and at the same time with an emphasis on social care - is emerging from ordeal of the memoranda. At the same time, it plays a central role as a pole of stability in the wider region, with a strong say in regional and global geopolitical developments.

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The President and the PM

During the meeting with American President, Mr. Trump stated many times that Greece ‘has done a terrific job of coming back’ from the crisis. We’re working with them on many different things. We’re doing trade with Greece and we’re going to have some meetings right after this”, he said. “We’ll be talking about additional ways where Greece will help us and we will help Greece, we’ve had a long-term relationship with Greece, they’ve been loyal friends and allies and we look forward to our discussion today”. The President made it clear that his country supports “responsible debt relief” for Greece to assist in its economic recovery because a strong and flourishing Greece provides immense opportunity for American trade, investment and job creation.”

PM Tsipras stated that “Greece is a very strategic partner in a very sensitive region and a reliable partner of the United States. We look forward to a close cooperation”. He also revealed that the United States will be the honoured country at next year’s [Thessaloniki] International Fair in Greece. This historic business and trade exhibition will showcase American technology, enterprise and innovation on the world stage”.

Tsipras at Brookings Institute

In a keynote address at Brookings institute, PM Tsipras said that the government is not only fighting corruption in the country but also all the reasons that led to the crisis, noting it is the time to support its efforts to exit the crisis and the adjustment programs. “Now is the time to Trust Greece. This is the message I tried to convey [...] and the one I think President Trump tried to convey,” In the Q&A session that followed, Tsipras was asked whether he preferred the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in or out of the Greek program”. He said that ‘The best for Greece is to successfully complete the program with the IMF participation if this means better results on debt relief,” but added that if the dilemma is to have again an “endless discussion and negotiation” on its demands from Greece or a quick conclusion of the review without the Fund, then he’d choose the second.

The aftermath of the trip

‘The trip went extremely well, the main goals were achieved,” Tsipras said in a statement to Greek journalists at Blair House. He explained that the main targets were achieved, both in terms of institutional contacts, namely with US President Trump and Vice President Pence, as well as in his



contacts with entrepreneurs, investors, and Greeks living abroad. As he said, everyone acknowledged that "Greece is making a comeback." Greece is at a turning point and this is not only reflected in the performance of the economy but also in the investment climate. He also noted that he was impressed by the fact that his contacts with entrepreneurs did not focus on the prior actions and when Greece would implement them, as was the case in the past, but on the chronic problems that had plagued the Greek economy even before the memoranda, such as dealing with bureaucracy, accelerating judicial decisions and a better functioning of state mechanisms. This fact, he pointed out, shows that "it is now assumed that reforms have been implemented to a large extent and the country is coming out of the support programmes."

photos: amna.gr



Maria Yannakaki “Transgender Rights are Human Rights”

Greece has passed legislation enabling citizens to determine their gender identity. The parliament endorsed policies that would permit people to legally change their gender on all official documents without undergoing sterilisation. The passing of the new law was hailed by [Amnesty International](#) as an historical step forward for transgender people in Greece. The Council of Europe’s Commissioner for Human Rights Nils Muižnieks also welcomed the new law, describing it as “an important first step”, adding that “more is needed, to achieve self-determination for transgender persons.” Maria Yannakaki, Secretary General for Human Rights spoke to [Greek News Agenda](#)* about the new law.

Interview to Ioulia Livaditi

* *Greek News Agenda is an online English language platform launched by the Secretariat General for Media & Communication, Hellenic Republic. The platform offers news, analysis and interviews that showcase political, economic, business, social and cultural developments in Greece.*

The legal recognition of gender identity has been a long standing claim of the LGBTQI+ community. Can you tell us why this is a human rights issue?

Social justice only stands when all citizens are treated equally and are protected as citizens; even though they may belong to groups with characteristics that differentiate them from the social majority. Such a group is our LGBTQI+ fellow citizens. There were numerous occasions where these citizens were a target of racist behaviour - be that verbal, psychological or physical abuse. Additionally, and deeper into societal justice issue: Due to the social stigma they faced if they came out, these people often suppressed their own true selves and tried to live under an identity that wasn't

their own, in order to achieve what all other citizens are entitled to, such as get a home to live in, get a job, get equal treatment in any public aspect of their lives. The core purpose of the gender recognition as law is exactly that: to abolish the administrative reasons underlying the unfair treatment of these citizens and to allow them to live their life as the person they feel they are. Respect towards human values, without any exceptions and exclusions, is the foundation of our democratic culture and it does not come a la carte, but as a duty of our State. Not a moral one, but a constitutional one. And the constitutional confirmation and protection of Human Rights is at the core of our political identity as a government.



What does the bill include? Which are the most important changes it introduces?

The most important change this bill introduces is the fact that a person who would like to legally proceed to a gender transition is no longer obliged to go through a surgical operation or get medical approval to do so. The way the person experiences their gender identity, the person's own free will, is the only factor taken into account to legally proceed with gender transition and the procedure is the same one that applies to any other case in which a citizen of this country wants to change a part of identity information, such as their name. This bill, in a few words, gives the chance to anyone who wishes to correct their "official" gender information without them having to go through an undesired sterilization or surgical process. Furthermore, the bill also includes the right of persons between the age of 15 to 17 to proceed with the correction, provided they have their parents' or legal guardians' consent and the approval of a medical board.

The LGBTQI+ community has expressed concerns about certain elements of the bill, such as the maintenance of the judicial procedure -rather than a simpler administrative act- and the exclusion of married people from the process. How do you comment?

The judicial procedure is necessary to keep the same procedure for all citizens who want to proceed with any kind of legal change in their identity information. It is the same procedure someone follows, for example, to change their name, even for a trivial mistake, such as a typo by a police officer taking down a name during an ID card issue procedure. Keeping this procedure for gender correction is the meaning exactly of equal treatment of citizens. Anything else would raise reasonable arguments about a la carte handling of citizen issues by the State.

Is Greek society conservative? What do you think of the level of public debate and the reactions of opposition parties and church to the bill?

I will be absolutely honest in answering this: Greek society is quite conservative, in its majority and one can easily realise that, we all live in the same country and know what we are talking about here. Our society, behind the façade of traditionalism -which helps to uphold family values and this is



undoubtedly important- has also kept social groups in the dark, in closets, or simply in roles that were constraining for the persons themselves. Take for example the difficulties faced by women, in the job market, in high ranking positions etc. Greek society is not only conservative towards the LGBTQI+ people, it remains conservative in other aspects as well, despite the progress we have made along decades, after difficult battles fought by activists. And there have been tough clashes for stuff we now take for granted. Such is the case of LGBTQI+ rights as human rights.

Public debate always serves a purpose, it is very important in itself, regardless of the outcome. In our case, it was mainly characterized by loud voices raising moral issues, on the grounds of ethnic traditionalism rather than constitutional equality. But the debate itself shows how far we have come, although there remains double and triple the distance to cover. Issues that were taboo in Greek households, have now reached the parliament and are discussed in the streets. This is the biggest essential victory, because every time such a so called moral issue becomes part of the public debate, the next time it is going to be discussed, the starting discussion point will always be more progressive, people will be used to the idea of discussing such things.

As for the opposition parties in the parliamentary discussion of the bill: All I have to say is that the moment of truth is when it comes down to a vote and hands will be raised or will stay down. When a political party claims to be pro-European, progressive, an ardent defender of human rights and this is claimed to be a core of its political identity, there is no room for cheap oppositional tactics. Human rights are protected globally and universally and cannot be measured in terms of political games. As for the church, I personally had no illusions or

great expectations for it to remain silent or even moderate, although I acknowledge the fact that not all clergy is the same. But I certainly do not see any reason why the church would be an official stakeholder in this. Faith and its practice is a personal issue, it is not to be brought up every time we try to settle civic issues. But this leads us again to what I said earlier about traditionalism and its interference in social justice issues.

What are the most important problems trans people face in Greek society? What are the most common misconceptions about gender identity?

It is truly horrifying for someone to realise the everyday issues trans people have to deal with, things that every other citizen takes for granted, things that are otherwise so trivial and simple technicalities, that most of us don't even bother to think about. Transgender people face problems with simple procedures such as getting a driver's license issued, obtaining their travel documents etc. I cannot even begin to imagine how stressful my life and everyone else's would be if we had to face such issues every day. We are talking about people, citizens, who want to live their day to day routine like the rest of us, in the same terms the majority does. We were not letting them do even that without having to put their personal dignity aside and pretend to be someone they are not, forcing them to even dress and look like someone they are not, in order to be able to proceed with trivial issues of everyday life. Never mind the racist behaviour they occasionally faced, precisely because not even the State itself recognized till now their right to live with dignity.

As for society, unfortunately there is a very large part of it that still has not grasped the fact that gender identity and sexual orientation are two different things. The most common misconception is definitely this. There just isn't enough information available to the people, so that they get to learn these differences, and I understand that this is partially our fault, as a State, but also a result of what I was saying before about taboo discussion issues in Greek society.

A large section of society is not deeply negative and "morally" opposed to the gender recognition law. If someone provides them with detailed information on what this bill includes and how these are civic matters, they will understand that this is about equality. Hypocrisy and fear of those different from us, the ones outside society norms will always be

there. Unfortunately, there are still too many people who just don't have the appropriate education and information about these things and we are on that, trying to make these issues visible and provide the right information to those who want to listen. I believe that a whole new starting point was set after the extension of civil partnership to same sex couples in 2015. Since then, the public debate has moved forward, even though some voices, or rather shouts, still remain the same.

How do you evaluate the government's work in the field of human rights? What challenges lie ahead?

This government is very proud to have taken legislative steps in the last 2,5 years in the field of human rights, that -otherwise unfortunately- had not been taken earlier for decades. More specifically, we expanded the application of civil partnership to same sex couples as well, enforced antiracist legislation and legislation against any form of discrimination, and formed a National Council against Racism and Intolerance to compile a national strategy for tackling and preventing these issues, in cooperation with civil society and state authorities.

Also, with Law 4443/2016 for equal treatment, we brought important changes to legislation, as the law applied to a broader frame of cases, the Ombudsman's responsibilities increased and private sector cases could now be examined by it. We proceeded to the designation of Special Prosecutors responsible for cases of racial violence, in the cities of Athens, Piraeus, Thessaloniki, Patras and Irakleion, and to the abolishment of article 347 of the Penal Code. We took measures to make the life of prisoners better, respecting their rights as humans as well.

Last but not least, the Legal Gender Recognition bill is a Greek State law as of last Tuesday. The fight for human rights is a constant one. I'd like to say, that, as long as there is humanity, this will be a never ending fight. Are the aforementioned taken steps enough for the protection and promotion human rights? The answer is definitely "no". But we are making progress; we are taking measures in the right direction that should have been taken a long, long time ago. When only 3 years ago Greece was the black sheep in these issues, the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe Muiznieks remarked last summer that Greece is the friendliest country regarding human rights. We intend to remain that kind of country.

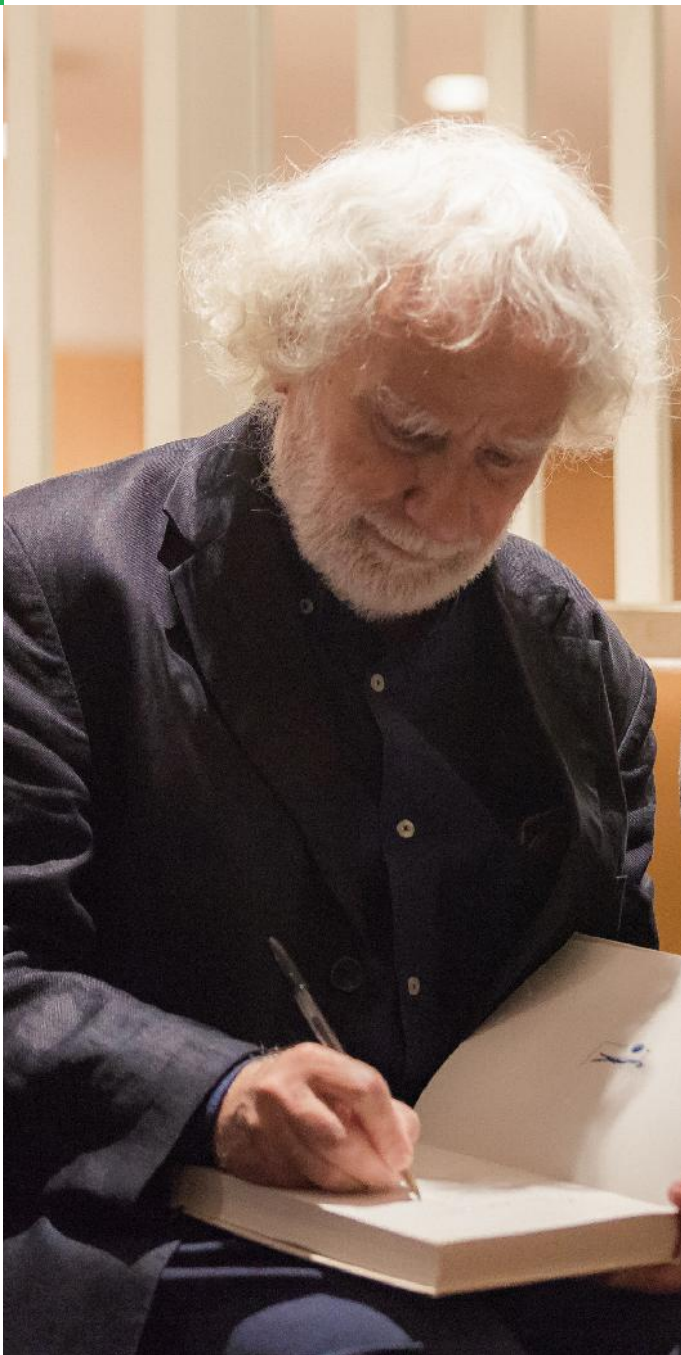


Special Tribute to Odysseus Elytis at the British Library

On Sunday Oct. 15th a special tribute event celebrating the Greek poet, Odysseus Elytis (Nobel Prize 1979) took place at the British Library. It was a concert based on Odysseus Elytis' poetry and on George Couroupos' music, one of the most outstanding living Greek composers having set to music many poems of Odysseus Elytis and composed symphonic works on his poetry too. The concert was held under the Auspices of H.E. the President of the Hellenic Republic Mr. Prokopios Pavlopoulos and took place on the occasion of a new multilingual edition of Elytis' poetry, an anthology in five languages: "The Small world, the Great!" of Odysseus Elytis with music by George Couroupos (Ikaros, 2016).

The event features a selection of Elytis' poetry and prose presented in Greek and English, accompanied by Couroupos' music composed specifically for the edition (songs, melodies and sounds) and video projections with a great number of the poet's art work. The event was held with the cooperation of the Embassy of Greece and the support of John S. Latsis Public Benefit Foundation and Links of London and was organised by [Ark4Art](#).

[@GreeceInUK](#) spoke to the composer George Couroupos, as well as to the poet, Ioulita Iliopoulou about the event.



George Couroupos - The man behind the Music

How did you respond to the idea of creating music for Elytis poetry?

This was not the first time. The first time was 20 years ago. There was an even older work of musical composition in Symphonic Form, but the actual cooperation in this type of a small band, only with a piano and voices, hadn't started since 1996. In 2011, on the occasion of the 100 years from Elytis' birth, we thought that we could use some songs from the old material reorchestrated in the new scheme and at the same time embellish it with much more, so that we could produce a complete tribute to Elytis, that would feature the various phases of

*"The music is,
perhaps,
the vehicle
to poetry"*

his life and the different approaches to the poetic work that he adopted. We wanted the audience to leave with a powerful impression, of his thought and his way of living. This was the reason why we used footage as well as paintings he painted himself, so that this combination of music, poetry and documentary could give the feeling that one has really experienced Elytis with all the senses. My music aspired to be at the same high level, to a point, as the whole project. Now, this is admittedly a high flying ambition, only History can judge if it is and to what extent. But I think that we have succeeded in this. The reaction of the audience, the fact that they receive this performance with such concentration, and they stay and talk with us about Elytis afterwards, I absolutely love it! We felt that our project was vindicated, when we saw the audience reacting this way. It is not at all conventional, It is a heartfelt reaction!

How did you manage to make your music reflect the emotional impact of Elytis' poetry?

Well, this goes back to the outset of this work, in 1990, and even earlier, I tried to understand what the keys and the basic elements of Elytis poetry are, so that I could figure out how I would go about composing music for these poems. I am not fully aware what was of instrumental help here. The more extensive I read, the more I could understand that an important trait of his poetry was always telling the truth, never trying to copy or imitate anything. Another trait is that he plays with different idioms and styles, that go back to an older period. He uses different dialects, a different language, in the sense that the Greek language is evolving. He's been actually influenced by all modern poetry. Therefore, I had to find myself in a streaming of thoughts that would go this way, his own way. For instance, I shouldn't hold back from experimenting with different musical styles and find a good match for each one of his poems and lyrics. For example, in a poem titled "The Symphony of Hyacinths", I used a pattern used by Mozart and this helped me view this poem in a way I imagined Elytis could have seen it and heard it. It was those ingredients of his poetry that helped me find this musical analogy. Analogy is the right word, I think it works

perfectly suggesting a transition, a counterpoint to a different form of art. You have poetry and all of a sudden, this poetry finds, I believe, an analogy.

How did you feel about the audience response in London?

I was moved by the number of people coming over to talk to me afterwards. From the start of the performance, you could feel the audience reaction. A safe indication is whether they pay any attention or not. As I sat in the middle of the room, I could see that the audience reacted in a reverence. Not a single whisper, everybody riveted to their seats. The second safe test we all know is how many people remain in the house after the break. Not a single person moved away. This was awesome, not a single person got bored. This made a strong impression on me. It is perhaps the first time in my whole life that I have seen this. And then, I saw the last reception. The audience applauded before the break and at the end. The emotions ran high in the house, it was obvious. There were people saying "I don't like poetry, but the way you presented it, I felt something really special exists here". Therefore, music can be a vehicle for poetry to find its way to people's hearts!"



Ioulita Iliopoulou - The voice of the Poetry

"Elytis poetry is...

*a different way of approaching the world,
a different perspective,
a different hierarchy of values,
a different goal"*

How did the idea for this event occur to you?

2011 marked the 100th anniversary of the birth of Elytis and we thought that it was a great chance to hold an event at Athens music hall in order to pay tribute to a man who was one of the greatest poets of his generation. After that idea, I asked George Couroupos to compose music for some poems and together we created a portrait of the poet in a different style: literary texts and poems as well as new songs and with a visual part. That's how this program shaped up. Working together was a necessity in order to achieve our goal. We then split our work, I chose the texts and he composed the music for the poems. His aim was to create a musical environment for recitation of poems. The programme holds a lot of surprises, not only poems made into songs but also combinations of music and speech.

The visual imagery was another instrumental component of the performance. I chose the visual parts and worked closely with an atelier. I searched for films unknown so far, some of them owned by Andreas Empeirikos, a poet and friend of Elytis, who was the first to record at those times with super8. The first part of footage you saw in the performance was from Empeirikos collection .

That's how this idea was born in 2011 and last year we recorded again all this material for the publication. To this new series of publication 4 more languages were added, so that it could address a public beyond the Greek speaking people. In this new publication we have a Greek, English, French, Italia and Spanish version. In the book there are about 60 translators The first translations from 1940 were French and then we added new translations which were created especially for this edition. We have overall more than 60 translators. For each one of all four languages there was a chief

translator who chose the rest of the translators in his own language. David Connolly, Professor of Translation who has delved into Elytis poetry was in charge of the English language, Paola Maria Minucci, professor of Modern Greek studies at the University of Rome was in charge of the Italian part and Beatrice of the French part. Nina Aggelidi was in charge of the Spanish section.

Why did you choose London to start off?

When we were considering where we should do our first performance, London came across my mind immediately. It had been ages since the last Elytis event in England and I was eager to organize an event to launch the new edition and draw attention to some new translations. There have been many English translations, actually his total work has been translated into American English (by the American translator Jeffrey Carson) and it was in America that the Collective Poems were first published, the Greek edition came out afterwards. So here in England, while there are so many reeditions, there wasn't anything published by an English Publishing Company. So it was interesting to see events addressing the general public as well as the professionals and publishers, so that someone can think of their next proposals and steps.

What is your feeling about the reception you were given at the British Library?

Exceptionally good! Not only was the turnout impressive, but the way they approached the performance as well. When I was on stage I felt a sort of religious atmosphere and a secret, deep contact with the audience. I could feel this energy coming from the audience. It was something like action and re-action between the audience and the stage. Moreover, after the performance, their response, their enthusiasm and their questions suggested that something special had happened. Mutual joy!

With just a few words, what does Elytis poetry mean to you?

Elytis poetry is a different way of approaching the world, a different perspective, a different hierarchy of values, a different goal.



photos: Panayis Chrisovergis

Celebrating the 77th Anniversary of Ohi Day - 28 October 1940 at the Orthodox Cathedral of Aghia Sofia, London

On Sunday 29 October the 77th Anniversary of the OHI Day – 28 October 1940 was celebrated at the London Orthodox Cathedral of Aghia Sofia. The official ceremony started after the end of the Sunday service with a doxology headed by His Eminence the Archbishop Gregorios of Thyateira and Great Britain. The ceremony was attended by a great part of the Greek community in Great Britain as well as the representatives of Greek diplomatic and military authorities appointed to the country. Pupils of the Greek schools in London holding Greek flags along with their teachers framed the celebration.

At the commemorating speech of His Eminence the Archbishop of Thyateira and Great Britain it was pointed that "Greece's victory against Fascist Italy 'disenchanted' the Europeans from the allure of the Fascist Paradigm and a modernity stressing the power of social Darwinism. It effectively removed the Italian Fascist exceptionalism, shredding Mussolini's international charm to pieces, even within the walls of the Italian Fascist Regime. By wreathing the weapons of ideas and not just those of war, the Greek victory swept away the myth of the invincible, hierarchically-organized societies and the illusions of totalitarianism professing a New World Order, a superior civilization that was the expression of the powerful, of supremacy in battle, of racial purity and of adopting war as the major moving force in History".

His Excellency the Ambassador of Greece Mr. Dimitris Caramitsos-Tziras addressing the congregation, underlined the heroic resistance of small Greece against the Axis forces, despite its limited human and military sources. The gigantic efforts of the Greek army prevented the Italian fascism from expanding, while the Greek resistance contributed substantially to the utter defeat of the Axis Forces.

His Excellency compared the 1940 struggle of the Greek people with the struggle of the country to overcome economic and social crisis, for the last seven years. He expressed his optimism that the efforts made by Greek governments and the Greek people have created better prospects for the economy and the society, and a clear development tendency. Moreover the Greek Ambassador stressed the geopolitical role of Greece as a pole of stability and democracy at the south east Mediterranean guaranteeing its importance at the periphery of Europe which is enhanced by its alliance with Cyprus.

The celebration of the Ohi Day ended with the chanting of the National Anthem by all attendants.



**2017: The Celebration of 28 October 1940
Archbishop's Encyclical on the
Anniversary of OXI of 28 October 1940**

*Adremo nell' Egeo
Prendereno pure il Pireo
E-se tutto va bene
Prendereno orche Atene!*

*We'll get to the Aegean
And take Piraeus
And if everything goes well
We'll take Athens, too!*

(Popular song of the Italian Army)



Greece entered the Second World War in October 1940 when the Italian Army invaded its territory through the Albanian Hinterland. The symbolic choice of the date of the Italian invasion underscored Benito Mussolini's and his Fascist Party 18th anniversary from his rise in power in Italy. At the same time, the real motives behind the Italian onslaught revealed the strategic, political and ideological targets of the neighbouring country. Control of Greece was critical to Mussolini's strategy in establishing an Italian hegemony in the Mediterranean and the rebirth of a Fascist-type Roman Empire. Furthermore, through his expected military defeat and submission of the Greeks, the Italian dictator was aiming to flaunt the superiority of Italian fascism and the ethnic supremacy of the Italian people to the world. Masterminded to achieve the total domination and submission of Greece within three weeks, the invasion was successfully intercepted by the Greek Army, causing displeasure and striking fear to the Italian dictator and great surprise to the whole world. The battle at Kalpaki marked the first victorious battle of the Allies in WWII against the Axis Forces, while the epic and victorious for the Greek Guns Battle of Pindos, paved the way for the Greek Counterattack of 14th November across the entire frontline, and was marked by the taking of Korytsa, the largest Albanian city, on November 21st. Korytsa was the first city occupied by the Axis Powers to be

liberated by the Allied Forces, during WWII. From Korytsa and pulling upwards, the Greek Army scythed through, pushing back the Italian Forces on Albanian ground, all the way to the 'Spring Offensive' mounted by the Italian Army on the symbolic date of 25th March 1941. Benito Mussolini, who was on Albanian ground, personally taking command of the 'Spring Offensive', returned to Italy, symbolically humiliated and substantively defeated. The Greek victory against Italy was of great significance for the fortunes of WWII, which - unfortunately - has not been projected as much it should have been. The insistence on the argument on the part of the Greeks that the Struggle of the Greeks against the Axis Powers delayed Nazi Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union for six weeks, while speaking the truth, deemphasizes the substantive and strategically stupendous effect the victory of the Greeks has had on the whole war effort. This is because reducing the Greco-Italian War to smaller-scale local war episode of WWII 'plays into the hands' of the narratives of the two central European adversaries in WWII: Great Britain and Germany. The British narrative underestimates the significance of the Greek victory, in its effort to take almost total credit for the Glory of its own resistance. The German narrative, on the other hand, adopted by many German generals, seeks to find decent excuses to justify the defeat of the Wehrmacht by the Red Army.

We believe it is worth stating our own, much more realistic narrative of the victory of 1940-41, to demonstrate thus, out of both pride and duty but also serving the science of History ethically and consistently, the true value the cost of the sacrifice of those fallen and those who returned 'humiliated victors' and 'unsung heroes' has had. Our own therefore, true narrative, stresses the strategic and ideological consequences of the Greek Victory in the Mediterranean War Theatre. The Greek Victory in Albania averted Italian control of the Mediterranean and the potential defeat of the British in Egypt. Control of the Suez Canal by the Axis Powers would have offered them complete supremacy over the Mediterranean, since the Fascist regime of Generalissimo Franco in Spain, abandoning any neutrality, would side with the Axis Powers. The fortunes of the war would be completely different, since Gibraltar would come under Spanish control.

But even more significant are the ideological consequences of the Victory to a world who, having had their liberal modernity and its associated value system shattered because of their failure, was still desperately clinging on to it. Greece's victory against Fascist Italy 'disenchanted' the Europeans from the allure of the Fascist Paradigm and a modernity stressing the power of social Darwinism. It effectively removed the Italian Fascist exceptionalism, shredding Mussolini's international charm to pieces, even within the walls of the Italian Fascist Regime. By wreathing the weapons of ideas and not just those of war, the Greek victory swept away the myth of the invincible, hierarchically-organized societies and the illusions of totalitarianism professing a New World Order, a superior civilization that was the expression of the powerful, of supremacy in battle, of racial purity and of adopting war as the major moving force in History. To those therefore fallen on the mountains of Epirus and Albania, to those who returned as 'humiliated' victors, the unsung heroes who have been now been lost to the oblivion of life, we bestow honour today, so that we remind ourselves why they have fought and ask ourselves whether their struggle has been duly vindicated and honoured to this day. In that way, we can honour them and bring them back to life, not just as heroes but as active subjects of History and the Motherland.

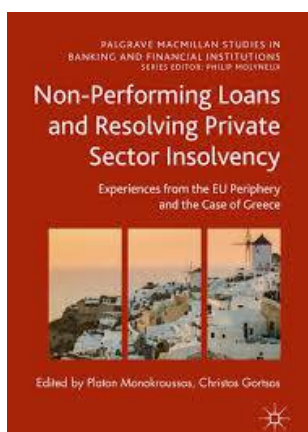
Under those thoughts, we are called again in yet another celebration of this historic anniversary and to yet another remembrance of all those things handed down to us from those who lived through those events and actually partook in them, as

well as all that History teaches us about the great OXI of 1940-41 and its epic. Let us all celebrate in Schools and Churches, in spiritual Organizations and Associations, extending our Thanksgiving to the eponymous and anonymous heroes who fell fighting for the honour and freedom of their country. In the Greek-Orthodox Diaspora in the United Kingdom and Ireland, the Victory of 1940 will be celebrated with special ceremonies and ecclesiastical thanksgiving. In London, the historic anniversary will be officially celebrated on Sunday, 29 October 2017 in the Cathedral of the Divine Wisdom with the usual Doxology headed by His Eminence Archbishop Gregorios of Thyateira and Great Britain and the official speech of His Excellency the Ambassador of Greece in London, Mr Demetrios Karamitsos-Tzirias. Wishing you all health and the blessing of Almighty God on your pursuits, I remain with warm wishes and blessings in the Lord and honour.

London, 28 October 2017 Archbishop Gregorios of Thyateira and Great Britain



Optimism about the prospects of the Greek banking system



The problem of private sector over-indebtedness following the recent financial crisis in the case of Greece and other EU countries is the subject of the book "Non performing Loans and Resolving Private Sector Insolvency: Experiences from the EU Periphery and the Case of Greece", which was presented on Monday

16 October at the London School of Economics. The book was edited by Platon Monokroussos and Christos Gortsos and published by the Hellenic Bank Association.

Speaking at the event, the chairman of the Hellenic Bank Association and of Eurobank, Nikolaos Karamouzis, noted that after a major unprecedented crisis in the Greek economy and after three recapitalizations the conditions for Greek banks are improving. Banks have returned to organic profitability, the capital ratios are improving and the non performing exposures (NPEs) stock is declining. Greek banks maintain a capital buffer above the minimum required – among the highest in the eurozone. Despite the capital controls and the slow return of deposits Greek banks managed to significantly lower their ELA dependency.

Greek banks have a plan to reduce non performing loans (NPLs) in the next three years, Mr. Karamouzis said, expecting that the targets for 2017 will be achieved. He stressed that for the first time a proper legal framework for managing NPLs and NPEs is in place, as are regulations regarding the possibility of selling loans in the secondary market, electronic auctions, the out-of-court debt settlement mechanism, the bankruptcy code and the licensing of NPL management companies. He added that "we must trust the European Central Bank's supervisory mechanism, the SSM" and he expressed his optimism for the upcoming stress tests in spring 2018.

Mr Karamouzis said that at the moment the Greek economy is improving, with unemployment going down. He admitted that "NPL's and NPE's cannot be resolved overnight", but NPL management will improve if the economy grows, and urged the continuation of reforms.

Athens - A City to Share Your Ideas



Under the motto "Athens – a city to share your ideas" a special event took place on Wednesday 25 October at the Hilton Hotel, Park Lane. The Athens Convention and Visitors Bureau (ACVB) which belongs to the Athens Development and Management Agency of the Municipality of Athens, organised a roadshow aimed at introducing Athens as a four-season business and convention destination. The roadshow was attended by many Greek and British congress associations representatives as well as British and Greek journalists.

His Excellency the Ambassador of Greece in UK Mr. Dimitris Caramitsos-Tziras made an introductory greeting stressing that the combination of business, tourism and pleasure is a challenging target. Athens can meet this challenge. Thanks to the Olympics 2004 it possesses excellent infrastructures and, as he said, after the financial crisis there seem to be a keen interest in investing in Greece, marking a clear development tendency. The introductory greeting of the Ambassador followed a video-recorded greeting by the Mayor of Athens Mr. George Kaminis.

Officials from the most important industry stakeholders involved in the organisation of a successful official business meeting made presentations about the advantages of Athens as a host city. Representatives of the Aegean airlines, the Athens Megaron (convention venue), the Metropolitan Expo centre (convention and exhibitions centre), the Hellenic Association of Professional Congress Organisers (HAPCO) and the Hellenic Hotel Federation focussed on the benefits, privileges and conveniences of a meeting hosted in Athens.

The comparative assets of the city have to do with the land (natural environment and surroundings), the infrastructures (transport, technology, networks), people (Mediterranean spirit, hospitality), but also with the professionalism and commitment of the Greek congress agencies who can cope excellently with small or huge scale events. The rich cultural life (which has to do with the past but also with the present), the weather, the food the urban renovations and the affordable life are to be counted among the positive aspects. The numerous different venues options (hotels, cultural venues, historic sites, indoor or outdoor spaces) may satisfy the most demanding event.

Moreover the location of Athens at a distance of maximum 3,5 hours from almost every European country, Africa and Middle East makes it an easily accessible business destination. Aegeanair which connects 40 countries and 100 destinations through 2000 flights per week makes Athens a convenient world-class meeting point.

The most important is that the experience, credibility and professionalism of the Greek congress organising companies can separately meet the needs of each participant in a big or small event guaranteeing "money-for-value" of the organisation.

All presentations at the roadshow were supported by vibrant, interactive, lively video projections, showcasing the multisided advantages of the city of Athens, that make it the ideal city for staging any kind of business meeting.

Moreover, the Food company Yoleni's prepared on the spot a delicious dessert with Greek yoghurt, honey and pistachios that was served to all



roadshow participants. A prize draw at the end of the roadshow will give the opportunity to the lucky participants to travel to Greece for free and enjoy free accommodation at Greek hotels.



All photos courtesy of ACVB/ADDMA

Margarita Mavromichalis *Pictures of the World*

"I love walking the streets of cities and villages and capture moments in life that usually go unnoticed by most"

Margarita Mavromichalis' photos were exhibited at the Brick Lane Gallery from 4-9 October along with new works by eight female artists based in London under the general title "An'Other World". In her work Margarita focuses on street photography capturing images of everyday life in various countries in a powerful emotional way.

@GreeceInUK spoke with Margarita Mavromichalis about her work and her sources of inspiration.

Your photos focus on people in different environments, urban and rural, representing different cultures and lifestyles. How do you choose your subjects?

Street photography is one of the most challenging genres of photography as there is not much that the photographer can control. I love walking the streets of cities and villages and capture moments in life that usually go unnoticed by most. I will look for interesting juxtapositions, interactions between people and often will not resist humor whenever it can be captured. My contact with fellow human beings is what I cherish most and by walking the streets I will attempt to communicate with as many people as I possibly can. Coming close to locals is important to get a better understanding of the country and the culture of its people. I am always humbled at how welcoming most people are even when I walk uninvited into their homes. I don't have any particular criteria in choosing my subjects; I would say that they choose me rather than me choosing them!

You have lived in different countries and you are still travelling around the world taking photos. How has this experiencing of "other worlds" affected your perspective and point of view?





I have spent my life traveling, earlier on as a diplomat's child and spouse later. Traveling under the diplomatic status is a very privileged way to see the world, which of course has its fair share of advantages. But I felt that I discovered the real world when I first started my photographic journey less than ten years ago. Besides being creative, I find that photography has educated me in ways that nothing else has until now, I return home after every single trip feeling very fortunate, grateful for what I have and feeling more grounded than ever. Photography forces me to slow down, observe and get close.

Several times you have chosen to depict disaster—as in the case of the Hurricane Sandy in New York or more recently in the case of the refugees on Lesbos. How have these tragic events affected you and your work?

My belief is that if each one of us did a very small part to make a difference in this turbulent world that we live in, we would live in a much better and more humane world. I happened to live in NY when hurricane Sandy hit in 2012 and we had just moved back to Greece in 2014 when the refugee crisis reached its peak. The only means I had to make a difference was to pick up my camera and use my work to raise awareness and equally importantly to

raise some money that would go towards the relief efforts. In New York, I managed through a one man show to raise a substantial amount of money that I donated to the relief fund of City of New York, and respectively in Greece I was able to raise a decent amount of money to support our coast guards on the island of Lesbos.

Both, Hurricane Sandy and the refugees on Lesbos were very painful projects but worth every minute of my time. Lesbos was even a life lesson for me in many ways, one that I will never forget. I will always be drawn to any matter that needs attention and if I can use my work to make a difference, I will then consider myself to be very lucky.

In your self-portraits you often present yourself as an ephemeral figure. How difficult is it for an artist to expose his/her feelings and look at oneself through the lens of the camera?

Turning the camera towards oneself is very therapeutic, revealing and certainly very difficult. In my photography classes or talks I always urge photographers to put themselves in front of the camera to truly understand themselves but also to comprehend what it is that we expect of our subjects. Through this series of self portraits, I have attempted to explore the feeling of loneliness and sadness that comes with constantly uprooting oneself, the sense

of not belonging or wanting to belong to a world that is not yours and more importantly to illustrate the importance of relationships that are often the pillar in our life. As human beings, we have emotions. We need to understand them and often use them, thus hopefully creating meaningful work.

Like a modern Odysseus, you keep returning to Greece - with photos of modern Athens, of the traditional lifestyle in the countryside, of Greek nature. What does being Greek mean to you? How do you feel when you present photos of Greece to the rest of the world?

I always saw myself as a Greek and a citizen of the world, having lived much more abroad than in Greece. During the financial crisis I realized how anything Greek touched me even more profoundly and often experienced difficulty photographing certain scenes there. I went from feeling anger, frustration for what should have been and pain seeing our fellow citizens struggle in a way no one in our modern age should, to feeling pride and more Greek than ever as resilience prevailed. As a photographer I try to remain unbiased, which was proven difficult when working at home.

photos: Margarita Mavromichalis





Thodoris Atheridis talking about theatre, success and inspiration!

Thodoris Atheridis, Smaragda Karidi, Myrtyw Alikaki & Konstantinos Kappas offered two shows full of laughter in the packed Shaw Theatre in London on Oct 7th!. Organised by [Prosopa Events](#) and Athinaika Theatra

What was the feeling you had from the London audience?

The Greek audience in London – consisting mainly of Greeks – was filled with expectations, warmth and lots of love. The reception was great. We gave two wonderful, full-house performances and we would love to come. The financial incentives to do so are limited at best. There are transfers to consider and investors to persuade to take the risk, but it was such an exciting venture and evening. It is indeed very difficult due to financial reasons, because even if we had a full-house, the profit made by those who bring you here is insignificant compared to the risk undertaken.

How did it feel to perform in London?

It was the first time in my life that I performed in London. The only experience overseas I had so far was in Frankfurt, with another production, the tragedy *Electra* by Sophocles. I have also performed in Taiwan. London is the theatre metropolis of Europe,

as well as Berlin, so it is always a dream for an actor to perform here. So, this dream came true combined with a recent trip to New York, so since the beginning of September it was a month of magic for me. I went to New York as a stage director as well as an actor of a movie we did last year, same in for a play we did here in Greece. Therefore, you can realize what a pleasure it was to me, an unprecedented experience.

Has Greece taken steps towards establishing meritocracy in the field of performing arts and the Art in general?

The notion of meritocracy is sort of complicated in the field of Art. There are no measurable criteria to base an objective assessment of someone's merit. A combination of artistic and business success is usually a safe criterion to determine whether someone has done a good job. However, even if the two components are taken separately, which means that if someone succeeds artistically, you can certainly say they do a good job. On the other hand, being able to fill the seats in the theatre without necessarily hitting

the highest standards of artistic expression but with commercial success is also an indicator of merit.

Do you want to feel fulfilled with what you do or fill the house?

As a rule, I always prioritise artistic outcome, but as we play in a stadium with other high-ranking performers, it is a kind of championship, to be in the City league of Athens, in a theatre downtown Athens, you have to recognize the need to cover the high flying costs of such a venue. The annual rent for such a theatre amounts to 150.000 a year, excluding the functional costs as well as the staff costs etc. If you reach the end of the season having earned less than 250.000 euros a year, you are considered incapable of maintenance for the place. So, we need to take both these factors into account, a high quality performance and the appeal to the spectators as well as their needs and the problems they have to cope with. The same applies to my playwriting or scriptwriting. I certainly feel free to express what I really want to say, since I don't consider myself different from the average people, so what I am concerned about, is equally a cause of concern for the majority of people anyway. So, when it comes to writing, I don't compromise, by dealing with issues beyond my personal preferences just because they attract the public's interest. Therefore, I think that over the last years, I have managed to follow both the artistic and the box-office success.

Do you prefer working with the same people that are a guaranteed success or do you give opportunities to young actors too?

I am not pursuing guaranteed success, what I am setting as a goal is a good match with the best possible artistic outcome. On the other hand, this is not possible to happen for a long time, because when you stick to a specific team, you risk audience fatigue and saturation. The audience needs change, you have to alternate actors to keep their interest. I am proud to say that I was one of the few that resisted this trend of easy changes and I transitioned smoothly and gradually from one to the next one.

What do you get inspiration from?

There is no such thing as "inspiration". I think inspiration happens to an artist as rarely as it happens to a human who doesn't deal with art. A man or a woman of any professional background, at some point they get inspired and set out to write something.

So, what really triggers inspiration is the need to write something. Therefore, if you decide to sit in front of your laptop and start working with plots, stories, subjects, then there's a succession of things and in the end, you will produce something either inspirational or not. But, inspiration doesn't exist in the sense we have been taught since we were kids, that is to say, you are struck by inspiration at unguarded moments.

Can a Greek actor today dream of an international career?

Very difficult, it's mainly a matter of language, not of talent and skills. Unless a Greek actor is bilingual, with an American or British mother, so that he or she can master the language, they can't have high aspirations for a career. Even if they succeed, they will unavoidably play the foreigners' parts. This is an assumption. I have seen it happen repetitively. It is clear though, that these markets are open to the rest of the issues. If you create something important in your country, it will be recognized. Kakoyannis or Kusturica constitute two good examples. They both created something that went well beyond the borders and their appeal reached so far that even the Americans wanted them! If for instance, you have a film of global scope, dealing with a subject of global interest, and not just local, they will definitely reach you. You needn't go on a hunt for them yourself!

Can a new and talented writer find support in Athens?

We live in dark times but historically speaking, this succession of eras and shift in mood is taken for granted, there are times of severe deprivation and times of affluence and abundance. Artists are supposed to have an acute sense of what's going on or what's coming, so they grasp what we call "timing" with their antennas. Talent could be defined also as the ability to understand the times you live in and express them through your art. Being able to promote your work and reach as many people as possible is also a talent. An example here is Dimitris Papaioannou. As far as I have heard, Papaioannou put forward a proposal for the Inaugural Ceremony, after Greece undertook the Olympic Games. If it hadn't been for his proposal, we wouldn't have had this Ceremony. Nobody approached him to get a proposal. He thought it was something that interested him. That's how he got this job. Your obligation to pursue your dream is also an integral part of talent!

photo: Panayis Chrisovergis



Anastasia Revi is one of the most talented Greek theatre directors of our time. (Not one of the most talented Greek female directors, but Greek directors overall). She has won many awards in Greece and internationally and she has received many 5 star reviews for the plays she has directed around the world. She was nominated for the Woman of the Year Award 2017 in Greece at the Director's Category. She recently won the 2016 Theatre Award of Best Director of the Year for the production "Macbeth" by William Shakespeare at the National Theatre of Northern Greece and the 2016 Exaliptron Theatre Award for Greek Women with International Career. She was nominated for Emerging Director Award of Greece in 2009 and for the Total Theatre Awards at Edinburgh Festival in 2007. In 2007 she was voted as the director of Best Show by the Prague Press of Theatre Festival of Prague. She had also won the Hellenic Foundation Theatre Award in London in 1997.

She has been living in London for the past 22 years and she is currently the Artistic Director of Theatre Lab Company www.theatrelab.co.uk She is also mentoring and directing 'Praxis', the official theatre group of the University of Oxford Greek Society." She is currently nominated for the Greek International Women Awards in London.

Anastasia Revi "The soul of the actor is beyond countries"

You have been working in London for years mainly as a stage director, and as an actor too. Is it different to work with British actors compared to their Greek colleagues? Would it be kind of an overstatement to talk about a mentality gap or a culture divide here?

Yes, I have been working in London a long time now but mostly as a director. I worked as an actor only for a short period of time compared to my directing experience, therefore I speak from the director's point of view. I usually work with actors from all over the world most of the time and with British of course, as Theatre Lab Company www.theatrelab.co.uk is an international theatre company in London. Obviously I have worked with a great number of British actors all those years, and I would say that even though they are very different from the Greeks at the same time they are not. The reason I'm saying this is the fact that even though British actors are more disciplined in work, more polite and a bit more advanced in their training and different techniques they can be equally emotional with their Greek colleagues, equally fragile, equally strong, equally mean and equally generous. The soul of the actor is beyond countries. The soul of the actor will always be the most complicated

and exciting landscape to explore therefore I don't see many differences in between the British and the Greeks regarding the nature of acting. I see differences in the way they approach theatre and this yes, reflects the mentality gap you mentioned.

You have delved into the Ancient Greek Drama. You have actually worked for several consecutive years to bring Ancient Greek tragedy home to the British public. How would you describe the reception you were given? Is Ancient Drama appealing to the contemporary British audience?

I have spent five years on researching Greek classics, 2009-2014, and I have directed four productions at RIVERSIDE STUDIOS funded by the Arts Council of England: "Antigone" by Sophocles, the trilogy "Oresteia" by Aeschylus, "Medea" by Euripides and "Lysistrata" by Aristophanes, all in English by a full English and international cast. Ancient Drama or Greek classics as they are called, do appeal to the contemporary British audience but they see them as a very different type of theatre. It is a lie to think that the whole world knows our theatre inheritance, they don't. The big number of London audience have no



idea of Sophocles or Euripides. Only the Academics, the Classicists, the very highly educated and the A-level students come in theatre with an idea. The rest come to see something that don't know at all. We always have to promote the productions with the relevant information because quite early I realized that what is for granted for me as a Greek, is not the case for the rest of the world. Also the stories and the characters of Ancient Greek theatre are too heavy and too complicated for the British audience as they are philosophical archetypes therefore I have been extremely careful every time I was working on each one of the above productions. Those five years I spent on directing the Classics in London was a huge experience in my career.

You have also produced performances of Contemporary Greek Plays. Do you think there exists contemporary Greek playwrighting that can speak to a universal public dealing with themes and issues of interest to all humans regardless of cultural differences?

Yes, Contemporary Greek writing can be universal and can apply to multicultural audiences. I have done it, I have seen it and it works. Of course every play is different and every style of writing has a different approach but if someone chooses carefully what they produce depending on the story, the writer, the cast, the venue, the level of the English translation, the quality of the production and the reputation they have, then Contemporary Greek Theatre can definitely stand amongst the plays of London stage. I have directed so many contemporary Greek plays through the years, always translated and performed in English with different English and European actors, including play readings and full productions that I can proudly say yes it works. We have also published the books "Greek Contemporary Theatre Vol1 and Vol 2" back in 1999, so there is a long history of promoting and communicating Contemporary Greek Theatre in Theatre Lab Company. Recently I started

working with the Oxford University Greek students and their theatre group PRAXIS that since 2013 they/ we also present Contemporary Greek theatre in the multicultural Oxford stage, with great success.

Meritocracy. The perennial debate in the Greek society and the political scene in Greece. Everybody talks about meritocracy. Do you think that over the years Greece has taken bold steps to battle cronyism and favoritism, especially in your own field of interest?

It is really difficult to say. Living abroad all these years I see things from a distance even though I have worked in theatre in Greece having directed some great productions there, and I always like to go back when the working conditions are good. Well, I think that network is very strong at Greece and I think that no matter how bold are the steps to battle cronyism and favoritism, connections are more important than meritocracy. I think that not being in the system gives you the freedom to observe and choose even though the "not belonging" makes you an outsider, something that I personally find liberating!

I remember, a few decades back, an important figure of Classical Ballet speaking to his students in a Drama School class and – in a contemptuous manner admittedly - saying how different it is for an artist, for their inspiration, to live in Paris and be able to walk along the riverside of Seine rather than live in Athens and wander in the neighborhoods surrounding Acharnon street. How inspiring can be contemporary Greek reality for an actor living in Greece?

I get inspired constantly regardless of the landscape around me. Inspiration comes from within and from my merciless imagination, therefore River Thames or Acharnon Street is only a stimulation for me, it is not the main source. Even though I do not live in Greece a long time now, I know the Greek reality, I carry it in my genes and I find it inspiring yes. That's why I think there is this explosion of theatre shows in Athens and that's why there is quality in most of them. Because Greek artists get inspired in Athens! It is a dynamic city that constantly changes, it has its own vibes and secret codes.

Back in the Spring of 2016, the appointment of Belgian director Jan Fabre as the new artistic director of the Athens & Epidaurus International Festival created a furor and sparked a heated debate in Greek society with tensions running high especially

in Greek theatrical circles, leading to his resignation. How would you account for this reaction? What is your take on this?

When I first saw that Jan Fabre would be the new Artistic Director of Athens & Epidaurus Festival I thought that it was a very good choice as he is a different artist obviously provocative and internationally known, that would bring a different air even though George Loukos, the previous Artistic Director had done a great job. When I read about Fabre's concept of teaching Greeks the Belgian culture and inheritance and what he had in mind, I thought that something wouldn't work there and of course that's what happened. I think that if there were a few meetings amongst Fabre and the Greek theatre people and if they could start a dialogue on the idea of the Festival as such, maybe the situation would have been different. I don't know. I cannot say that Fabre's plan was exceptional, it seemed quite rigid and obviously Greeks reacted to that. I don't think that they skillfully handled the situation, both sides. What happened after Jan Fabre though, is the worst in my opinion. The after Fabre Artistic Director, or the after Fabre story, could be a nice title I would say, as the kingdom of the Athens Festival is rotten like the kingdom of Denmark in Hamlet... it reflects the mechanism of a whole country!

Given the language barrier, how challenging is for a Greek actor to pursue an international career in theatre?

I always believed in great achievements and I think that yes it is possible but it needs hard work. If Greek actors want to pursue an international career yes they can do it but they need to speak high level English, they need to speak clearly and they need to be flexible. A possible accent might be an advantage if they play smart.

Theatre Lab Company is an established group in the industry today. In retrospect, how challenging was this course over the years? Was it daunting, at the outset, to perform in London, a city with a long and rich theatrical tradition and before a demanding audience setting high standards of aesthetics?

It was incredibly challenging. We established Theatre Lab Company by putting on the play "The Parade" by Loula Anagnostaki back in 1997. A group of three crazy Greek young artists who decided to put on a Greek play, translated and performed in English,

for the London audience in Chelsea theatre. This mad idea became a reality without money, just with whatever we had at the time. It was also the era of no Greek community in London, because back then, London was nothing like what it is now. I mean that back then, London stage was very British, only British I would say and the number of Greeks who were living here was so much smaller than what it is now. The production was groundbreaking, very successful, we got great reviews, we also got the Hellenic Foundation Award and we felt that something had happened. But after the buzz and the happiness of achieving the impossible the other two left, they went back to Greece and I stayed alone with the new born Theatre Lab. I decided that I would go on and I would find new artists to collaborate and different ways to make it here, and probably that was the case. It was not an easy ride, on the contrary it was an incredibly difficult one but I wouldn't change anything. When I look back and I see the huge journey from Chelsea theatre to the established stages of RIVERSIDE Studios, Sadler's Wells and Hoxton Hall in London, to the amazing experiences of International Theatre Festivals like Avignon, Dublin, Prague, Edinburgh, Belgrade, Cyprus and New York, when I see the amazing artists from all over the world who have worked for Theatre Lab Company I feel proud and content. Theatre Lab Company has a reputation in London of an international company of top quality with high standards and aesthetics.

Would you like to talk about your new project that is to premiere on November 8th at Tabard Theatre?

Oh well, the new production is the novel JAMAICA INN by Daphne Du Maurier written in 1936. It is a story of corruption, feminism and love in the dark Cornwall of 1820. The book has been a favorite of the reading audiences of English Literature, inspiration for Alfred Hitchcock who made it a film amongst two other Du Maurier famous scripts, Rebecca and The Birds, and it has also been a BBC series.

A lonely and dark inn on the bleak Cornish moors. A place full of secrets, violence and rum that fuels nightmares of ghosts that howl with the wind. Young Mary comes to stay but becomes entangled to its mysteries... The production faithful to the Theatre Lab aesthetics consists of 8 great actors, all British this time, original compositions for the production and striking visuals that are the trademark of TLC. It opens on the 8th of November at Tabard Theatre in West London, in the heart of Chiswick.

photos: Christos Chatzioannou & Stefanos Kastrinakis

Austerity Measures - Greek Poetry Flourishes in Times of Crisis



Can the financial situation of a country influence inspiration? Does the economic crisis put a stop in creativity or can it be used as a starting point? How do the personal and the political intertwine in poetry? These are some of the questions that were discussed on Friday 27 October at a well-attended poetry evening, hosted by the Hellenic Centre in London, on the occasion of the presentation of *Austerity Measures*- an anthology of Greek poetry written during the financial crisis.

*"To fight your elements with poetry
-that's what devastation means!-"*

Yannis Stiggas

Austerity Measures brings together 50 young Greek poets from different regions and backgrounds, writing in different styles and influenced by various traditions in an attempt to map the contemporary Greek poetry and its original response to the crisis.



Greek poetry has always been connected to crisis, noted Roderick Beaton, Professor of Modern Greek at King's College, while referring to Greece's rich poetic tradition, spanning from Dionysios Solomos to Kostis Palamas and Giorgos Seferis. Presenting the book at the event, Karen van Dyck, Professor of Modern Greek Literature and editor of *Austerity Measures*, spoke of a renaissance of Greek poetry and art in the last decade and explained that the title of the anthology had a double meaning: on the one hand the word austerity is connected with the reduction and loss – loss of means but also loss of identity- and on the other hand the word measure indicates not only an official regulation but also the meter of possible.

*"those who forget to think
dance better
a sketch
under the laughter
of bitter desolation"*

Anna Griva

Karen Van Dyck, along with the poets Yiannis Efthymiades and Elena Penga, read out some poems from the anthology, while journalist and translator Maria Margaronis moderated the discussion that followed. The financial crisis renewed the international interest in Greece, led to more attention and that worked as motivation for artists, said Elena Penga. Influenced by Samuel Beckett and the Theatre of the Absurd, Elena Penga combines plays and prose, using humour as a form of resistance.

*"If you were to spread the skin of a human
body horizontally
It would cover a double bed.
Ever seen it?
Where?
In the tabloids.
In the tabloids?
Everything's in the tabloids."*

Elena Penga

Speaking about his personal experience as a poet in times of crisis, Yiannis Efthymiades noted that poetry gives one an opportunity to live more lives, by writing about other people, about his fellow citizens. "We Greeks lost what we knew as homeland and we are seeking a new country inside and outside us", he said. When trying to find a new way to live, life finds a little hope in poetry, he concluded.

*"What heated heaven turned her back on us?
What thieving heartless time rubbed salt in
our deepest
wounds?
And meanwhile we spawn senses and
sensations, drown
in delusions"*

Yiannis Efthymiades



November events

Melisses live at Mimi's

When : Friday, 3 & Saturday, 4 November 2017;
10:30pm

Where : Mimis bar London (19 Newman Street,
W1T 1PF)

The Greek Side of the Ottoman Music

When: Monday 6 November, 7:15pm

Where: The Hellenic Centre (16-18 Paddington
Street London)

Suite Home Escape' – book presentation

When : Tuesday, 7 November 2017; 7:00pm

Where : private club The Century

Vasilis Karras with Christos Menidiatis Live

When: Saturday 11 November, 10:00pm

Where: Hilton Park Lane Hotel

Cloudy Sunday / Ouzeri Tsitsanis

When : Sunday 19 November screenings at
2:00pm & 7:00pm

Where : The Hellenic Centre (16-18 Paddington
Street London)

The Geography of Cyprus in the Middle of the 19th Century' a lecture in Greek by professor Christos Chalkias

When: Monday 20 November , 7:15 pm

Where: The Hellenic Centre (16-18 Paddington
Street London)

The metamorphosis of the Muses in recent Greek poetry: Classical reception in the era of postmodernism

When: Monday 20 November, 5:30-7:00pm

Where: Small Committee Room, King's College
London Strand, London WC2R 2LS

Iro, 'The Artista' in London

When : Thursday, 26 November 2017; 6:00-
9:00pm

Where :Mimis bar London (19 Newman Street,
W1T 1PF)

Round-Table Discussion: Post-crisis Greek Foreign Policy: Challenges and Prospects

When:Monday 27 November 2017, 19.00

Where: The Hellenic Centre (16-18 Paddington
Street London)

@GreeceInUK is a newsletter with a monthly roundup of news related to Greece, Greek Politics, Economy, Culture, Civil Society, the Arts as well as Greece's distinctive vibrant presence in the UK. Our ambition is to offer an accurate and rich source of information to those interested in Greece and her people.

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