

GREEK NATIONAL OPERA PROGRAM OF EVENTS FOR MARCH TO JULY 2017

> OLYMPIA THEATER

> GREEK NATIONAL OPERA MAIN STAGE – ‘STAVROS NIARCHOS’ HALL – STAVROS NIARCHOS FOUNDATION CULTURAL CENTER

> ODEON OF HERODES ATTICUS THEATER

The GNO kicks off the second half of the 2016-2017 Artistic Period with opera and ballet performances to be held during the introductory period at the Main Stage - ‘Stavros Niarchos’ Hall of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center, and will end in July with Giuseppe Verdi’s *Il Trovatore* being presented at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus Theater.

> For the GNO’s introductory period at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center, its first production will be the GNO Ballet’s work *Landscapes [Topia]*, choreographed by **Benjamin Millepied, Antonis Foniadakis and Douglas Lee**. Performances will take place on March 31, April 1, 2, 4 and 5 as well as May 5, 6 and 10, 2017 at the GNO Main Stage – ‘Stavros Niarchos’ Hall.

> The GNO’s first opera in the introductory period at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center is Giuseppe Verdi’s *Macbeth*, conducted by **Lukas Karytinis - Elias Voudouris**, and directed by **Lorenzo Mariani**. It will be presented on **April 23, 25, 27 and 29 & May 3, 2017 at the GNO Main Stage – ‘Stavros Niarchos’ Hall**. **Tassis Christoyannis** and **Dimitra Theodosiou** perform in the starring roles.

> On **May 19, 2017** the GNO bids farewell to the **Olympia Theater** by presenting the first work it ever staged at this historic venue in Academias Street back in 1944. It is **Spyridon-Filiskos Samaras’** opera *Rhea*, to be presented in semi-staged format, conducted by **Byron Fidetzis** and directed by **Nikos Diamantis**.

> The first major production of the summer as part of the Athens Festival is Giacomo Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*, conducted by **Lukas Karytinis** and directed by **Hugo de Ana**. Five performances will be staged at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus Theater on **May 31 & June 2, 3, 4 and 7, 2017**. **Cellia Costea, Stefano Secco, Dimitris Paksoglou** and **Dionyssis Sourbis** star in the main roles.

> The GNO’s second major production of the summer as part of the Athens Festival is **Giuseppe Verdi’s *Il Trovatore***, conducted by **Miltos Logiadis** and directed by **Stefano Poda**. The opera will be staged at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus Theater on **July 21, 23, 25 and 27, 2017**. **Piero Pretti, Cellia Costea, Yelena Manistina, Dimitri Platanias** and **Dimitris Tiliakos** perform in the key roles.

The detailed program of events is as follows:

Dance

Landscapes (Topia)

Greek National Opera Main Stage - The 'Stavros Niarchos' Hall - Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center

March 31, 2017

April 1, 2, 4, 5, 2017

May 5, 6, 10, 2017

Starts at: **20.00**

Choreography: **Benjamin Millepied / Douglas Lee / Antonis Foniadakis**

Music: **Johann Sebastian Bach / Ezio Bosso / John Adams**

Costumes: **Tassos Sofroniou / Paul Cox / Douglas Lee**

Lighting: **Sakis Birbilis**

For the GNO's introductory period at the Main Stage (the 'Stavros Niarchos' Hall) of the SNFCC, its first production will be the triple bill *Landscapes*, which aims to forge a new path in the GNO Ballet's artistic identity, by bringing into creative dialog different styles of neoclassical ballet.

Benjamin Millepied, until recently director of the Paris Opera Ballet, and an internationally acclaimed principal dancer and choreographer himself, is presenting one of his pieces entitled *Sarabande* for the first time in Greece, performed by the Greek National Opera's Corps de Ballet. **Acclaimed British choreographer, Douglas Lee**, presents his new creation *Fortress*, while **Antonis Foniadakis** will present his choreography *The Shaker Loops*.

- *Sarabande*

Choreography: **Benjamin Millepied** / Music: **Johann Sebastian Bach**

Millepied, former director of the Paris Opera Ballet, was principal at the New York Ballet. There in the 1990s he performed the work *A Suite of Dances* choreographed by Jerome Robbins. In memory of that amazing solo performed to the music of Bach's *Cello Suites*, in 2009 he devised the piece entitled *Sarabande*, a choreography based on Bach's *Sonatas and Partitas for solo violin* and *Partita for solo flute*. He may well share with his American inspirer a musicality free of any kinesiological surplus, but he has managed to instill his own choreographical language into the work; a language fluid and full of flexibility. The work commences with a variation on solos, followed by successions of duets, trios or quartets, in a light-footed choreography, which appears to be devising itself as it goes along. Precisely paced and in time with the music but without any sense of heaviness.

- *The Shaker Loops*

Choreography: **Antonis Foniadakis** / Music: **John Adams**

First presented at the Ballet de Lorraine in 2014

This is Foniadakis' first work with the Ballet de Lorraine, for which the choreographer chose one of the most famous pieces by John Adams, *Shaker Loops*, written in 1978 for a septet of strings, which is now recognized as one of the most emblematic minimalist pieces. The choreography follows the frantic paradoxicality of the music which is primarily based on the sense of endless circles and waves. The vibration of

the music prompted Foniadakis to devise a sensitive choreography to match Adams' work. The choreography exposes many aspects of the music which “fully suits the turmoil of our times” as the choreographer points out.

- Fortress

Choreography: **Douglas Lee** / Music: **Ezio Bosso**, *The 12th room in G minor*

The internationally acclaimed choreographer Douglas Lee, who is behind many major works for the Stuttgart Ballet, Zurich Ballet and Netherlands Dance Theater, presents his new creation for the GNO Ballet, based on a piece for solo piano by Ezio Bosso. The choreographer was guided by the emotional world of the music and completed his creation based on the personality of the dancers he worked with. Utilizing a small team of dancers, his desire is to showcase the quality of individuals, through the real sense of familiarity that the music engenders.

With the **GNO Principal dancers, Soloists, Demi-Soloists and Corps de Ballet.**

Pilot season ticket prices: €20, €25, €30, €40, €45, €50

Students, reduced: €15

Limited visibility seats: €10

> Members of the public who have purchased tickets to watch Landscapes at the Olympia Theater will be notified by the GNO Box Office about how they can swap their tickets for the GNO Main Stage at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center. Should they wish, they can hand the tickets back and receive a full refund.

Opera

Macbeth

Giuseppe Verdi

Greek National Opera Main Stage - The 'Stavros Niarchos' Hall - Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center

April 23, 25, 27, 29 & May 3, 2017

Starts at: **20.00**

Conductors: **Lukas Karytinis - Elias Voudouris**

Director: **Lorenzo Mariani**

Revival director: **Ion Kesoulis**

Sets: **Maurizio Balo**

Costumes: **Silvia Aymonino**

Lighting: **Linus Fellbom**

Projection designs: **Lucy Mackinnon**

Chorus master: **Agathangelos Georgakatos**

Macbeth: **Tassis Christoyannis**

Lady Macbeth: **Dimitra Theodosiou**

Banco: **Petros Magoulas**

Macduff: **Dimitris Paksoglou**

Giuseppe Verdi's compelling opera will be presented during the GNO's introductory period at the SNFCC, at the Main Stage - The 'Stavros Niarchos' Hall.

Based on William Shakespeare's play of the same name, it is considered to be one of the most important operas of Verdi's youth. Through its highly dramatic music, the opera portrays with utmost depth general Macbeth and his wife, two unscrupulous characters who use every means in order to rise to Scotland's throne.

In *Macbeth*, Verdi transcends the conventions of his time and has composed a work of great theatrical force, featuring characters of hitherto unknown psychological depth and intensity, while his skilled orchestration helps set the dramatic tone for the violence, conspiracy and death which unfold in the work.

The acclaimed Italian opera director and theoretician, Lorenzo Mariani's stage directions focus on the internal workings of the minds of the two heroes, painting a clear picture of how they react to fear. The sets depict a no man's land; a reflection of the darker parts of their minds.

An impressive production, with spectacular sets, with a cast of distinguished leading Greek singers. Tassis Christoyannis stars in the role of Macbeth, while Dimitra Theodosiou performs the role of Lady Macbeth.

With the **GNO Orchestra, Chorus and Soloists.**

Ticket prices €15, €25, €35, €50, €55, €60

Students, reduced: €12

Limited visibility seats: €10

Opera in semi-staged format

Rhea

Spyridon-Filiskos Samaras

Olympia Theater

May 19, 2017

Starts at: **20.00**

Conductor: **Byron Fidetzis**

Semi-staged production director: **Nikos Diamantis**

Costumes: **Giorgos Patsas**

Chorus master: **Agathangelos Georgakatos**

Rhea: **Julia Souglakou**

Daphne: **Maria Mitsopoulou**

Lysias: **Yannis Christopoulos**

Guarca, Venetian Commander: **Kyros Patsalidis**

The Greek National Opera's 73-year history at the Olympia Theater comes to an end with the first ever work it performed. In a highly symbolic gesture, the GNO is honoring its past by presenting Spyridon-Filiskos Samaras' important opera, *Rhea*, which was the inaugural work performed in April 1st, 1944, conducted by Antiochos Evangelatos.

The opera premiered in 1908 in Florence and tells the story of the illicit love affair between Rhea, wife of the Genoese governor Spinola, and the Greek athlete Lysias on the island of Chios in 1400.

No reviews survive; nevertheless Puccini's and Mascagni's congratulatory telegrams to the composer indicate that the opera was a major success.

With the **GNO Orchestra, Chorus and Soloists.**

Ticket prices: €15, €25, €30, €35

Students, reduced: €10

Limited visibility seats: €7, €10, €12

Opera

Madama Butterfly

Giacomo Puccini

Within the framework of Athens Festival

Odeon of Herodes Atticus Theater

May 31 & June 2, 3, 4, 7, 2017

Starts at: 21.00

Conductor: **Lukas Karytinis**

Director-sets-costumes: **Hugo de Ana**

Revival director: **Katerina Petsatodi**

Lighting: **Vinicio Cheli**

Projection designs: **Sergio Metalli - Ideogamma**

Movement: **Leda Lojodice**

Chorus master: **Agathangelos Georgakatos**

Cio-Cio-San: **Cellia Costea**

Suzuki: **Elena Kassian**

Pinkerton: **Stefano Secco - Dimitris Paksoglou**

Sharpless: **Dionyssis Sourbis**

Famous for its wonderful arias, its highly melodic music and dramatic story, *Madama Butterfly* remains one of the most touching operatic stories and one of Puccini's masterpieces.

The impressive production, directed by Hugo de Ana, will be staged for just five performances at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus Theater, conducted by Lukas Karytinis.

The opera tells the tale of the fatal love of a 15-year old geisha Cio-Cio-San for Benjamin Franklin Pinkerton, a lieutenant in the US Navy. After an absence of 3 years, the officer returns to Japan with his American wife, and learns that he has acquired a son with Butterfly. She agrees to hand the child over to Pinkerton, but then commits suicide.

Puccini's "Japanese tragedy", with its excellent depiction of Cio-Cio-San's character, sheds musical light on the stark differences between the two cultures of Japan and the West-America.

In the five performances of the highly popular *Madama Butterfly*, the audience will have the chance to relish leading soloists such as Cellia Costea, Stefano Secco, Dimitris Paksoglou, Dionyssis Sourbis, and others.

With the **GNO Orchestra, Chorus and Soloists.**

Ticket prices: €25, €45, €55, €60, €85, €100

Students, reduced: €15

In Italian, with Greek and English surtitles

Opera

Il Trovatore (*The Troubadour*)

Giuseppe Verdi

Within the framework of Athens Festival

Odeon of Herodes Atticus Theater

July 21, 23, 25, 27, 2017

Starts at: **21.00**

Conductor: **Miltos Logiadis**

Director-sets-costumes-lighting: **Stefano Poda**

Chorus master: **Agathangelos Georgakatos**

Manrico: **Pierro Pretti**

Leonora: **Cellia Costea**

Azucena: **Yelena Manistina**

Count di Luna: **Dimitri Platanius - Dimitris Tiliakos**

Ferrando: **Tasos Apostolou**

The Greek National Opera's second major summer production at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus Theater, which brings the 2016-2017 artistic period to a close, is the popular *Il trovatore*, one of Verdi's most important operas.

An archetypal Romantic melodrama, with its distinctive melodic and intense music, full of passionate arias and duets, as well as some of the most famous opera choruses in history.

In *Il Trovatore* everything plays out between fire and moonlight; between the flames of passion burning in the hearts of the four main characters, and the cold light of the moon which illuminates the harsh situations they find themselves in.

The libretto and music could be said to contain all the stereotypes of the genre. The story, full of unexpected twists, is about two brothers, unaware of their relation to each other, who fall for the same woman. The key figure is a gypsy girl, who cast a child into the flames to take revenge on the wrongful death of her own mother; quite by mistake though it happened to be her own child which she tossed into the flames. The stunning production which sees Stefano Poda responsible for direction, sets, costumes and lighting, was first staged at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus Theater in 2012, and was a roaring success.

Il Trovatore is a "singer's opera" par excellence, requiring world class performers for the key roles. And the GNO's production certainly does feature some of the world's best performers such as Piero Pretti, Cellia Costea, Yelena Manistina, Dimitrios Platanius and Dimitris Tiliakos. Conducted by Miltos Logiadis, Artistic Director of the Athens Concert Hall and accomplished conductor.

With the **GNO Orchestra, Chorus and Soloists.**

Ticket prices: €25, €45, €55, €60, €85, €100

Students, reduced: €15

In Italian, with Greek and English surtitles

GNO Dance School

**Presentation of the Professional Dance School of the Greek National Opera
Greek National Opera Main Stage - The 'Stavros Niarchos' Hall - Stavros Niarchos
Foundation Cultural Center**

July 1, 2017

Starts at: **20.00**

An annual event that allows students from the Professional Dance School of the GNO to present their own choreographies as well as pieces of the classical and contemporary repertoire taught at the School under its director, Yannis Donsakis. The audience will have the opportunity to get to know tomorrow's dancers and come into direct contact with the younger generation's creative side.

Admission is free. Entry vouchers available on a first come first served basis