

Εθνική
Λυρική
Σκηνή

Greek
National
Opera

2017
/ 18



STAVROS
NIARCHOS
FOUNDATION
CULTURAL
CENTER

ΚΕΝΤΡΟ
ΠΟΛΙΤΙΣΜΟΥ
ΙΔΡΥΜΑ
ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ
ΝΙΑΡΧΟΣ

Greek National Opera Artistic Programme 2017/2018

The programme for the Greek National Opera's first artistic period consists of 7 cycles each with its own theme, as well as one tribute. Each of the cycles will run throughout the 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 periods and will come to an end in the 2019/2020 period when the 3-year plan prepared by the Greek National Opera's new Artistic Director, Giorgos Koumendakis, comes to its conclusion.

Behind all these cycles and tributes lies a fine connecting line: all Greek National Opera productions take an **incisive look** at and explore **modern concerns**.

Since its emergence, lyric theatre has expressed the concerns of the age to contemporary audiences. It was not merely a musical form, but an entire cosmos which recorded the concerns composers had about the age they lived in, about the society they were a part of, and about the political situation. **Opera, as an art form, has never been decorative; on the contrary it has always been engaged in dialogue with society.**

Opera's leading composers have always directly or indirectly addressed political and social issues in their works. In the Greek National Opera's new programme, those concerns are transported to the present day by commissioning cutting-edge artists who interpret the meaning, subject matter, hues and shades of the works, creating performances that respect the original but at the same time can also get the modern-day spectator thinking.

With that in mind and as our guiding principle, the Greek National Opera's desire for its first season at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center is to re-position opera in its true role. The objective is to get back to the very core of opera as an art form; to redefine it as an active, vibrant work of art for our times. A work of art which addresses the issues faced by modern man, and not an art form one would find in a museum display case or which starts and ends in the stalls. At its heart, opera is a pointed, interactive, contemporary yet timeless art form which raises questions and opens up debates, which provokes disagreements yet also brings people together.

The cycles comprising the programme are as follows:

The Atreus Cycle

2017/18

Elektra

Iphigenia's sacrifice, Agamemnon's murder and Orestes' revenge are some of the most popular themes in operatic works. Whenever a culture or an age sought out the values of the classical period, the Atreus cycle has provided an abundant source of inspiration. From the emergence of opera to the present day, including the Romantic movement, composers have been enchanted by the Mycenae myths.

The Greek National Opera raises its opening curtain with Richard Strauss' one-act opera *Elektra*. He is a composer interested par excellence in ancient Greek culture and from which he drew much creative inspiration. Over the years to come, other aspects of the Atreus myth will be presented from the viewpoint of other works by equally important composers.

20th Century Cycle

2017/18

Elektra, The Makropulos Affair

Although a large segment of the audience has come to equate the lyric art with Italian 19th century opera, the genre began quite a few centuries before that and continues to bear important fruits even today.

The 20th century saw important works added to the repertoire, expanding the subject matter and musical language, as the lyric art developed to reflect the concerns of each country. The former Soviet Union, the countries of Eastern Europe, the UK and the USA are just some of the regions where opera went down its own path, contributing to a dialogue which is now global.

From the time it originally opened, the Greek National Opera has been closely monitoring developments in the world of opera and in past decades has presented operas by Shostakovich, Britten, Prokofiev and many other leading names.

Over the next 3 years, works from the 20th century will again form part of the Greek National Opera's repertoire, starting with Strauss' *Elektra* and Janáček's *The Makropulos Affair* in the 2017/2018 season. However, the Greek National Opera will not limit itself to 20th century masterpieces which are now considered to be classics, like the works named. Having staged operas by Poulenc, Ligetti and Adams in the past, over the next 3 years it will continue to present works from the second half of the 20th century which also include milestones in Greek post-war creative output.

Italian Opera Cycle

2017/18

Rigoletto, La Bohème, Tosca, Lucia di Lammermoor, Nabucco

Italian 19th century works continue to form the core of the Greek National Opera's repertoire. As particularly melodic works, they remain firm favourites with both traditional audiences and younger fans of the genre who are getting to know opera. The Greek National Opera revisits these works, using the stage directions to drive home the political and social aspects of each of them. All operas in the cycle are staged from a modern perspective, allowing modern-day spectators to more directly appreciate the issues the composer was attempting to showcase. In the case of Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, which is back at the Greek National Opera after a 37-year absence, the famous British director Katie Mitchell allows the audience insight into two viewpoints at the same time, adding even greater depth to the show.

French Opera Cycle
2017/18
Romeo and Juliet, Carmen

Over the next 3 years, the Greek National Opera will place French works once again at the dynamic core of its repertoire. It begins with Charles Gounod's *Romeo and Juliet*; although extremely popular with audiences around the world, it has never been staged by the Greek National Opera before. Lukas Karytinis conducts this particularly melodic work, and the central role of the fragile, yet decisive Juliet is performed by Myrtò Papatnasiu. The first season will end with the highly popular *Carmen*, in Stephen Langridge's successful version. Over the years to come the Greek National Opera will promote the French repertoire, presenting masterpieces which have been absent from its programme for decades.

Janáček Cycle
2017/18
The Makropulos Affair

The Czech Leoš Janáček is one of the 20th century's most important composers. He was deeply interested in the traditional music of his homeland and made great use of it in the context of European music. The way in which he respected the rhythm, sounds and special intonation of the Czech language in his works is exemplary. His unique style profoundly influenced composers such as the Russian Modest Mussorgsky or the Hungarian Béla Bartók, who examined Janáček's accomplishments and utilised them in the context of their own musical language. Composers of post-war Avant Garde music such as Ligetti also made careful study of his very personal musical language.

The acclaimed intellectual Milan Kundera, wrote this about Janáček: "Thanks to the aesthetics of his works, Janáček is part of a most of major (unique) anti-Romantics from Central Europe. Although he dedicated his whole life to opera, he maintained a critical stance towards its traditions, conventions and code of gestures".

His operas are concerned with realism, and address day-to-day topics even when the storyline appears fantastic. All his operas from his mature period, such as *Jenůfa* (1904), *Katya Kabanova* (1921), *The Cunning Little Vixen* (1926) and *From the House of the Dead* (1920) are considered to be 20th century masterpieces and are regularly staged by the world's leading opera houses. During the 2017/2018 season the Greek National Opera will stage Janáček's acclaimed opera, *The Makropulos Affair*, directed by Giannis Houvardas.

Operetta Restart Cycle
2017/18
Medea

Modern audiences view operetta as a retro, nostalgic, almost museum-like version of lyric theatre. The truth is that unlike opera, the composition of operettas has almost died out in the second half of the 20th century. As part of the *Operetta Restart Cycle*, the Greek National Opera is attempting to give this once exceptionally popular genre a creative boost. Starting from the 2017/2018 season, for the next 3 years the Greek National Opera's Artistic Director has commissioned acclaimed and younger Greek composers to write new operetta works based on unexpected, humorous, contemporary libretti which are suited to the 'light-hearted' yet 'subversive' and much-loved world of operetta. The objective is to restore operetta to its role as a commentator on daily life and the vital topics of the age. The venture kicks off with Nikos Kypourgou's new operetta, *Medea*, based on the work by Bost, directed by Nikos Karathanos.

Manos Hadjidakis Cycle

2017/18

Concerts at the Stavros Niarchos Hall and the Greek National Opera Alternative Stage

"I was deeply influenced by *Erotokritos*, General Makrygiannis, the Fix Factory, Haralambos the *Byzantine*, Thessaloniki's damp climate and the unknown people I met by chance and who remained unknown throughout all the years thereafter. During the Occupation I realised how pointless music lessons were since in some underhand manner they took me away from my original objectives, which were to communicate, to give part of myself, to disappear; that's why I stopped them immediately after the Occupation. I wrote poems and loads of songs and I practised a lot getting my views across using democratic processes, which was something that benefited me massively when I became an employee in recent years".

Unconventional and innovative, opposed to seriousness and long-established ways of seeing, a fan of 'youth' and a constant doubter of things, armed with his Greek and ecumenical education, Manos Hadjidakis connected works with folk music, creative a 'new' sounds, a 'new' form of song whose roots lie in both the East and the West in equal measure.

The Greek National Opera Presents a unique tribute to the 'magnus eroticus' of Greek composition, the incomparable Manos Hadjidakis. In partnership with his son, Giorgos Hadjidakis, over the next 2 years leading up to 2020, the Greek National Opera will present the works we have forgotten as well as other we've never had the chance to know.

In parallel with some of Hadjidakis' important works being revisited and presented on the Greek National Opera's two stages at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center, some of his hitherto unpublished works will also be presented.

Song cycles, works for piano, suites, ballet and operatic works, and transcriptions will be performed by the Greek National Opera's ensembles (Orchestra, Chorus, Children's Chorus) and by acclaimed and young talents.

The Greek National Opera's desire is not simply to honour the composer and intellectual Manos Hadjidakis, but to transport his work to a modern age, to make it part of everyday life, to introduce younger generations to it, to re-record his works and reposition them, to adapt them and ensure he enjoys a new spell of popularity, and enduring acclaim.

In the first artistic period at its new venue (2017/2018) as part of the tribute the Greek National Opera will present the *Age of Melissanthi* (Stavros Niarchos Hall) and the major piano works *For a little white seashell*, *The accursed snake*, *Ionian Suite*, *Erimia*, *Rhythmology*, *Six Folk Paintings*, and an unpublished piano work, performed by leading pianists of our age (Alternative Stage).

Music and visual performance cycle

Starting in the 2018/2019 artistic period

In the 2018/2019 artistic period the Greek National Opera will launch a new cycle to create art installations accompanied by live symphonic music. The cycle intends to overturn the idea we have about lyric theatre and become a platform for seeking out new forms and new genres. Leading Greek and foreign artists, performers and directors will present live events at the Stavros Niarchos Hall and elsewhere and create a vibrant interaction with both the orchestra and audience. Every aspect of these events (duration, use of stage and audience areas, etc.) will be a far cry from the classic way in which performances are watched and will exhort spectators to play an active, thinking role in the dramaturgical process.

This cycle will also feature collaboration with the acclaimed Greek choreographer and dancer Dimitris Papaioannou. A key partner in this cycle is NEON Culture & Development.

Tribute to Stefanos Lazaridis

***La Bohème, Tosca* & an exhibition dedicated to Stefanos Lazaridis**

During the 2017/2018 artistic period the Greek National Opera will host a tribute to the unforgettable director, set designer and former artistic director, Stefanos Lazaridis, staging productions of *La Bohème* and *Tosca*, as well as a major exhibition dedicated to his work in Greece and abroad, in partnership with the Educational Institute of the National Bank of Greece.

Stefanos Lazaridis, a key figure in European opera, is considered internationally to be one of the most iconic and influential visionaries of the genre. A 'romantic cynic' as he liked to call himself, Lazaridis always started from a single idea which formed the basis for his entire on-stage world. His philosophy can be summarised in the phrase he used to describe his approach to opera: 'distorted traditionalism', meaning a creative redefinition of tradition. During the 30 years he worked at the English National Opera in London, he presented to the British and global audience, productions which are now viewed as milestones. His close collaboration with the acclaimed David Pountney not only resulted in productions in London but also 3 iconic performances at the Bregenz Festival. He was not a fan of large theatres (like Covent Garden, Vienna, etc.) because he viewed them as factories of a sort, and took on the Greek National Opera because it was small and he would work on every single detail of productions there. That's what he did: He paid attention to the finest of details.

In an exceptionally short period of time of just one artistic season, he laid the foundations of the Greek National Opera's transformation from a peripheral theatre to an organisation which engaged in dialogue on equal terms with the world's most important lyric theatres. Viewing opera above all as a spectacle, he attached great importance to the direction of works and sought to avoid mere musical reproductions and always opted for a language that was accessible to modern-day audiences. He believed in presenting productions that would stand the test of time which is why from the very outset he opted to commission new stage directions for key works in the repertoire such as *Tosca*, *La Bohème*, *Carmen* and the opera *Orpheus and Eurydice*. Another objective of his was to present the Athenian audience with famous productions, such as the opera *Nixon in China* by John Adams directed by Peter Sellers.

The musical side of things was equally as important for Lazaridis. That was why he expanded the orchestra pit at the Olympia theatre so that operas with added orchestral requirements could be played in the appropriate manner.

Richard Strauss

Elektra

Atreus Cycle
20th Century Cycle
Opera

Greek National Opera Stavros Niarchos Hall
Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center

First time presented by the Greek National Opera

Official opening, October 15, 2017

October 15, 18, 22, 26, 31, 2017

At 20:00

Conductor **Vassilis Christopoulos**

Stage-set design **Yannis Kokkos**

Artistic associate-dramaturgy **Anne Blanchard**

Costumes **Lily Kentaka**

Lighting **Vinicio Cheli**

Acclaimed Greek contralto **Agnes Baltsa** stars in the role of Klytemnestra in her first collaboration with the Greek National Opera. *Elektra* will be performed by **Irène Theorin** and Orestis by **Dimitris Tiliakos**.

With the **Greek National Opera Orchestra, Chorus and Soloists**

Sponsor: **Mytilineos Group**

Greek National Opera inaugurates the new chapter in its history at its new facilities at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center with an ambitious venture, having chosen an insuperable operatic masterpiece with a Greek storyline as its first work; none other than Richard Strauss' *Elektra* based on the tragedy of that name by Sophocles.

Elektra has been dubbed one of the most important, yet also most demanding, 20th century operas. Staging the work is a major challenge for the Greek National Opera and its musical ensembles because the particularly complex score, in which Strauss pushes expressionistic delivery to the limits, almost touching upon tonality, requires around 110 musical instruments.

Strauss' *Elektra* has never before been performed by the Greek National Opera. The symbolism operates on many levels, since a work with a Greek theme has been chosen, inspired by the myth of the house of Atreus, which will play a major role in the Greek National Opera's overall program for the next 3 years, but is also a 20th century work since one of the Greek National Opera's intentions is to demonstrate that opera, the lyric art, and musical theater did not come to an end in the 19th century.

The production also marks the first collaboration between the Greek National Opera and world class Greek contralto Agnes Baltsa, who will star as Klytemnestra in all performances, which will be directed by the international Greek director and set designer Yannis Kokkos, and conducted by the internationally acclaimed conductor Vassilis Christopoulos. The acclaimed Wagnerian soprano Irène Theorin stars in the title role. Theorin has performed the role in Saltsburg, Paris, Munich, and, after Athens, will be performing in Stockholm. Renowned Greek baritone Dimitris Tiliakos will be debuting in the role of Orestis.

Ticket prices: €15, 30, 40, 60, 65, 100 / Students, reduced: €15 / Limited visibility seats: €10

Giuseppe Verdi
Rigoletto

Italian Opera Cycle – Opera

Greek National Opera Stavros Niarchos Hall
Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center

October 25, 27, 29, 2017

November 1, 2017

At 20:00

Conductor **Elias Voudouris**

Stage directions-sets-costumes **Nikos Petropoulos**

Greek stars **Dimitri Platanias, Christina Poulitsi** and **Yannis Christopoulos** perform in the key roles

With the **Greek National Opera Orchestra, Chorus** and **Soloists**

Sponsor: **EUROBANK**

Perhaps the darkest of all Giuseppe Verdi's masterpieces, *Rigoletto* brings the acclaimed Greek baritone Dimitri Platanias to the Stavros Niarchos Hall in a role he has performed masterfully in London, Berlin, Munich, Amsterdam, Brussels and Venice. Alongside him, the renowned Greek coloratura soprano Christina Poulitsi, in the particularly demanding role of Gilda, as well as the tenor Yannis Christopoulos.

In Nikos Petropoulos' black and white, almost *film noire* version of the work, *Rigoletto* has been relocated from 16th century Mantua to Mussolini's Italy, shortly before the outbreak of World War II, in a bleak climate where conspiracy and arrogance abound. In *Rigoletto*, Giuseppe Verdi turned a new leaf in his career as a composer, experimenting broadly and creating an intensely dramatic score which matches the contradictory, dark personality of the hero of his work.

The story narrates Gilda's love for the rakish Duke of Mantua, who presents himself to her as a poor student. She is the daughter of the hunchbacked court jester Rigoletto. To take revenge on his daughter's lost honor, Rigoletto formulates a plan to murder the Duke. When Gilda discovers her father's plans, she decides to rescue her beloved and to sacrifice herself by taking his place.

Ticket prices: €15, 20, 30, 40, 45, 60 / Students, reduced: €12 / Limited visibility seats: €10

Manos Hadjidakis
The era of Melissanthi

Manos Hadjidakis Cycle – Concert

Greek National Opera Stavros Niarchos Hall
Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center

November 4 & 5, 2017

At 20:00

Conductor

Lukas Karytinis

In partnership with the composer's son, Giorgos Hadjidakis and the Manos Hadjidakis Archive, the Greek National Opera has devised a 3-year cycle of performances during which it will present well-known and hitherto unpublished works of the iconic Greek composer, whose work and attitude to life left a deep imprint on modern Greek culture.

The Hadjidakis Cycle, which is the first comprehensive tribute to the great composer's works, will run in the 2017/18, 2018/19, 2019/20 artistic periods at Greek National Opera venues and elsewhere. The Greek National Opera will attempt to piece together forgotten works, and to present for the very first time works which were never published.

The *Era of Melissanthi* is a musical autobiography based on the composer's poems which Hadjidakis dedicated to his mother's memory. It is a cantata for a mature female voice, two young male voices, a mixed and children's chorus, chamber orchestra and military band, where the bouzouki stars as the primary instrument.

Ticket prices: €15, 20, 25, 35, 40, 55 / Students, reduced: €10 / Limited visibility seats: €8

Piano Festival
Piandaemonium

Greek National Opera Stavros Niarchos Hall
Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center

November 11, 12, 2017

At 20:00

A special concert by the *Piandaemonium* ensemble featuring 6 pianos and 12 pianists on November 11 and 12, 2017, at the Stavros Niarchos Hall, as part of a Piano Festival which will take place in November and December 2017 at both Greek National Opera stages at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center.

In effect it will be an orchestra of pianos, which will feature works by Aniseggos, Anadolis, Koumendakis, Papageorgiou, Gershwin, Bizet/Wilberg, Wagner/Rock and others, in an endeavor to redefine the traditional sound of a piano.

Piandaemonium, an unparalleled Greek piano ensemble, which is one of the few such ensembles worldwide, was founded in 1998 by the well-known pianist Domna Evnouchidou. During *Piandaemonium's* almost 20 year history, it has presented the world premieres of works by Greek composers written specifically for the ensemble, adaptations of important symphonic works and authentic pieces for various combinations of piano.

Piandaemonium has also endeavored to get close to those less aware of European music. The impressive layout of 6 pianos in a row, the sheer magnitude of the sound produced, the diversity of musical styles (from pure classic to completely modern) presented by *Piandaemonium* mean every concert is a truly unique event.

Piandaemonium made a comeback 4 years ago at the behest of pianist Haralambos Angelopoulos and this year's line-up includes internationally acclaimed pianists such as Haralambos Angelopoulos, Eftychia Veniota, Evi Giamopoulou, Domna Evnouchidou, Nikos Zafranias, Stefanos Thomopoulos, Christos Lenoutsos, Irini Mavrou, Maria Mylaraki, Stefanos Nasos, Christos Noulis, Antonis Selemidis, Thodoris Tzovanakis, and Kostas Hardas.

Ticket prices: €10, 15, 20, 25, 35 / Students, reduced: €8 / Limited visibility seats: €8

Pontus Lidberg / Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Sleeping Beauty

Ballet

Greek National Opera Stavros Niarchos Hall
Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center

November 22, 24, 25, 26, 2017

December 3, 15, 16, 22, 23, 29, 31, 2017

At 20:00

(and at 19:00 on 31 December)

Conductor **Andreas Tselikas – Elias Voudouris**

Choreography **Pontus Lidberg**

Set design-costumes **Patrick Kinmonth**

With the **Orchestra, Principal Dancers, Soloists** and **Principals** and the **Corps de Ballet** of the **Greek National Opera**

Sponsor: **ALPHA BANK**

The dance version of Charles Perrault's famous tale set to music by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky was first staged in 1890 and since then has remained exceptionally popular worldwide.

The Greek National Opera, which has previously presented classic choreographies of the work, now presents an impressive new version from two acclaimed artists for its first artistic period at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center: the well-known Swedish choreographer, film maker and dancer Pontus Lidberg who has worked with the New York City Ballet, the Monte Carlo Ballet and the Dresden Opera as well as other major organizations, and the acclaimed British set and costume designer, Patrick Kinmonth, recognized as a multi-faceted persona in the world of the visual arts, opera, fashion, photography, with an extensive range of artistic accomplishments to his name, from British *Vogue's* creative director to set and stage designs for operas and ballets for some of the world's leading opera houses.

Lidberg/Kinmonth's version of *Sleeping Beauty* follows the tale as we move through the four seasons of the year, symbolizing birth, love, life, and death. This particularly impressive production with its brightly-colored sets, which dance in tandem with the dancers from the Greek National Opera's Corps de Ballet, takes an utterly modern approach to choreography while engaging in dialogue with the style of classical ballet.

Ticket prices: €15, 20, 30, 40, 45, 60 / Students, reduced: €12 / Limited visibility seats: €10

Giacomo Puccini

La Bohème

Tribute to Stefanos Lazaridis – Opera

Greek National Opera Stavros Niarchos Hall
Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center

December 7, 8, 13, 17, 20, 24, 27, 30, 2017

January 3, 5, 2018

At 20:00

Conductor **Elias Voudouris – Vladimiros Symeonidis**

Director **Graham Vick**

Set design-costumes **Richard Hudson**

Lighting **Giuseppe di Iorio**

Myrtò Papatnasiu, Yannis Christopoulos, Dionyssis Sourbis star in the leading roles

With the **Orchestra, Chorus** and **Soloists** of the **Greek National Opera**

Accepting the invitation from the Greek National Opera's then artistic Director, Stefanos Lazaridis, back in 2007 the famed British director Graham Vick devised a version of *La Bohème* set in modern-day Athens, transporting Puccini's beloved opera from 19th century Paris to 21st century Exarchia. The faces of the four ambitious young artists and their camaraderie are known to all. Their problems, concerns, jokes were run of the mill back then; they remain so even today. Rodolfo's ill-fated love for Mimi assumes an unexpected tragic dimension given that their tale could be played out in the apartment right next door; right among us.

Vick's version of *La Bohème* returns to Athens as part of a tribute to the great Greek director and set designer, Stefanos Lazaridis, whose term as the Greek National Opera's artistic director was critical in improving the quality of the organization's operatic offerings.

The leading British director, Graham Vick, will be in Athens to work on the revival of the work, seeking out the bohemian friends in the current age, and in effect creating a new version of the production 10 years after its original presentation at Olympia Theatre. Internationally renowned Greek soprano Myrtò Papatnasiu makes her debut in the title role.

Ticket prices: €15, 20, 30, 40, 45, 60 / Students, reduced: €12 / Limited visibility seats: €10

Renato Zanella / Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

The Nutcracker

Children's Ballet

Greek National Opera Stavros Niarchos Hall
Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center

January 13, 14, 16, 21, 25, 27, 2018

February 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 2018

Week days at 11.00

Saturdays at 18:30

Sundays at 12:00

Choreography **Renato Zanella**

Set design-costumes **Christof Cremer**

Saturday and Sunday performances feature the **GNO Orchestra**, conducted by **Giorgos Ziavras** and the **GNO Children's Chorus** conducted by **Mata Katsouli**

With the **Principal Dancers, Soloists** and **Principals** and the **Corps de Ballet** of the **Greek National Opera**

One of the GNO Corps de Ballet's most successful productions, *The Nutcracker*, returns in a new children's version. Aided by fairytale-like sets and costumes designed by Christof Cremer from the Vienna State Opera, and Renato Zanella's light-hearted, dreamlike choreography, Tchaikovsky's ballet will be staged in morning and evening shows for schools and families.

In its initial two act form, with choreography by Lev Ivanov and a libretto by Marius Petipa for which Tchaikovsky composed the music, *The Nutcracker* was first staged at the Mariinsky Imperial Theatre in St. Petersburg on December 18, 1892. The original idea derived from the tale "The Nutcracker and the mouse king" by E. T. A. Hoffmann. Numerous other choreographies followed including those of George Balanchine (1954), Yuri Grigorovich (1966), John Cranko in the same year, Rudolf Nureyev (1967) and John Neumeier (1971).

This is one of the most popular ballets of all time, with hundreds of productions worldwide.

Weekend performances feature the GNO Orchestra, conducted by the up-and-coming conductor Giorgos Ziavras and the GNO Children's Chorus conducted by Mata Katsouli.

Ticket prices on weekdays (for schools): €10, general entrance

Weekend ticket prices: €10, 12, 15, 20, 30 / Students, reduced: €10 / Limited visibility seats: €5

Giacomo Puccini
Tosca

Tribute to Stefanos Lazaridis – Opera

Greek National Opera Stavros Niarchos Hall
Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center

January 26, 28, 31, 2018

February 4, 7, 9, 2018

At 20:00

Conductor **Lukas Karytinis**

Stage directions-sets-costumes **Nikos Petropoulos**

Cellia Costea and **Dimitris Tiliakos** star in the leading roles

With the **Orchestra, Chorus** and **Soloists** of the **Greek National Opera**

The production directed by Nikos Petropoulos in 2007 following an invitation from the GNO's then artistic director, Stefanos Lazaridis, is back.

Set in World War II Rome, the performance emphasizes violence and sadism, allowing the work's extremes of emotion to be expressed with even greater intensity. In Act II, the blackmailing of Tosca by the lustful officer Scarpa and the scene in which she murders him are almost thriller-like.

The production's black and white styling, and the impressive lighting give the show the feel of a feature film, and make particular reference to Italian neorealist works.

Commenting on the production, Stefanos Lazaridis said, *"the shift in the historical context doesn't affect the opera's main theme, which remains the emotions and desires of the three main characters. However, it does seek to bring to mind images very familiar to us all, from conditions which the older among us have experienced firsthand and the younger among us have read about from tales or seen in documentaries and films. Conditions right on the edge ... which form the basis for the conflicts that Puccini's opera addresses"*.

Nikos Petropoulos' version of *Tosca* returns to Athens as part of a tribute to the great Greek director and set designer, Stefanos Lazaridis, whose term as the Greek National Opera's artistic director was a turning point in improving the quality of the organization's operatic offerings.

Dimitris Tiliakos debuts in the role of Scarpia, while the title role will be performed by Cellia Costea.

Ticket prices: €15, 20, 30, 40, 45, 60 / Students, reduced: €12 / Limited visibility seats: €10

Charles Gounod
Romeo and Juliet

French Opera Cycle – Opera

Greek National Opera Stavros Niarchos Hall
Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center

February 25, 28, 2018

March 2, 4, 7, 11, 2018

At 19:30

(and at 18:30 on Sundays)

Conductor **Lukas Karytinis**

Director **Nikos Mastorakis**

Sets-costumes **Johannes Schütz**

Myrtò Papatnasiu stars in the leading role

With the **Orchestra, Chorus, Corps de Ballet** and **Soloists** of the **Greek National Opera**

Charles Gounod's 5 act opera *Romeo and Juliet* is being staged for the very first time in the GNO's history and is the first of a series of works from the French repertoire which will be presented by the GNO over the next 3 years.

Thanks to the work's amazing melodic wealth it was a hit from its first performance in Paris in 1867 and to this day remains by far the most popular version of the Shakespearean drama set to music.

Four long duets for the lovers from Verona and their famous arias garner the most interest but also help push the story forward from the innocent first meeting between these two young people right to their tragic end; from Juliet's light-hearted *waltz* to her "Poison Aria", from Romeo's ecstatic song to his inconsolable monologue dedicated to the memory of Juliet.

Although it focuses on the main pair, the opera's crowd scenes with their impressive choral pieces, and the dance scenes too, bring a certain radiance and flare to the work, adding a phantasmagorical aspect to it which has contributed to its popularity.

The GNO's new production is directed by the leading theatrical director Nikos Mastorakis, who is presenting his work for lyrical theatre for the first time.

The sets and costumes for the production are by the acclaimed German designer Johannes Schütz, whose name has been associated with top performances by some of Europe's leading theatres (London, Berlin, and Paris, to name a few) and some of Europe's largest operas (Berlin, Frankfurt, Lyon, Salzburg, London, and Amsterdam, to name a few). His work was previously seen in Greece in the 2010 production of *Orestes* by Giannis Houvardas for the National Theatre.

Ticket prices: €15, 20, 35, 50, 55, 80 / Students, reduced: €12 / Limited visibility seats: €10

Gaetano Donizetti
Lucia di Lammermoor

Italian Opera Cycle – Opera

Greek National Opera Stavros Niarchos Hall
Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center

A co-production with the London Royal Opera House

March 14, 16, 17, 18, 21, 23, 24, 28, 2018
At 20:00

Conductor **Giorgos Petrou – Zoi Tsokanou**
Director **Katie Mitchell**
Set design-costumes **Vicky Mortimer**
Lighting **John Clark**
Movement-choreography **Signe Fabricius**
With **Christina Poulitsi, Vasiliki Karagianni, Tassis Christoyannis, Yannis Christopoulos, Tasos Apostolou**

With the **Orchestra, Chorus** and **Soloists** of the **Greek National Opera**

Exclusive donation by the **Stavros Niarchos Foundation**

One of the masterpieces of the romantic Bel Canto period, Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* returns to the GNO after an absence of 37 years, in a co-production with the London Royal Opera House from Covent Garden.

The famous British director Katie Mitchell endeavors to penetrate the world of 19th century women and view the plot from the perspective of the main heroine. As a counterpoint to the dark male-dominated world of the north imagined by Sir Walter Scott, Mitchell brings the female viewpoint to the fore and places the work in the overall context of literature from that time, in the style of works such as those by the Brontë Sisters. The theatre stage is divided in two allowing the spectator to view the plot and the proposed reading of it in parallel.

As one of the most genuine and interesting voices in European theatre at present, Mitchell has been guest director for the Royal Shakespeare Company and Royal Court in London, and since 2000 has been directing operas at some of the world's leading opera houses such as the London Royal Opera, the Dutch Opera, the Paris Comic Opera, the Berlin State Opera, Brussels' La Monnaie Theatre, to name a few, as well as at the Aix-en-Provence and Munich Festivals.

Katie Mitchell received popular acclaim from the Greek audience for her direction in Strindberg's masterpiece *Miss Julie* by the Berlin Schaubühne company staged at the 2012 Athens Festival.

The lead role, which is particularly demanding in vocal and stage terms, will be performed by the acclaimed Greek sopranos Christina Poulitsi (first cast) and Vasiliki Karagianni (second cast).

The production will be conducted by the Kamerata Orchestra's artistic director, conductor Giorgos Petrou and the Thessaloniki State Symphony Orchestra's new artistic director Zoi Tsokanou.

Ticket prices: €15, 20, 35, 50, 55, 80 / Students, reduced: €12 / Limited visibility seats: €10

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

The Magic Flute

Opera

Greek National Opera Stavros Niarchos Hall
Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center

March 31, 2018

April 1, 11, 13, 14, 15, 18, 20, 22, 25, 27, 29, 2018

At 20:00

A Komische Oper Berlin production

Conductor **Zoi Tsokanou – Giorgos Balatsinos**

Director **Suzanne Andrade – Barrie Kosky**

Animation **Paul Barritt**

Concept **“1927” (Suzanne Andrade, Paul Barritt) – Barrie Kosky**

Set design-costumes **Esther Bialas**

With the **Orchestra, Chorus and Soloists** of the **Greek National Opera**

Sponsor **Porsche**

Mozart's much loved opera returns to the GNO in an impressive, innovative production which launched in Berlin and has already become famous worldwide. Wherever *The Magic Flute* directed by Barrie Kosky, the Australian artistic director of the Komische Oper Berlin has been staged, crowds have been awed by the production's sheer imagination and by the precision with which the artists perform the 'dance-like' directions, which merge animation with 'live' spectacle and a sense of cabaret, music hall and Weimar Republic era shows as well as dabs of British humor and opera.

Working with the British “1927” theatre company, Kosky employed animation to create an unexpected fairytale packed with color, joy and inventive turns, and “*this production points the way toward a freer, more experimental style of producing opera*” to quote the *New York Times* review. *The Magic Flute's* creative universe contains distinctive references ranging from Buster Keaton and *Nosferatu* to Louise Brooks and Terry Gilliam.

Since it was first staged in Berlin in 2012, the “*amazing irrational mix of silent cinema and animation*” (*Berliner Morgenpost*) to the present day *The Magic Flute* has travelled from Los Angeles to China, and from the Edinburgh Festival to Spain and Switzerland, and shortly before the GNO performances will also be presented at the Bolshoi in Moscow and at the Paris Comic Opera.

Christina Poulitsi, a Greek soprano who has made a career for herself internationally in the role, will play the Queen of the Night, a role that is one of the most demanding in the soprano repertoire. She has starred in tens of performances of this production worldwide, and is now a close associate of Barrie Kosky and the Komische Oper Berlin.

Ticket prices: €15, 20, 35, 50, 55, 80 / Students, reduced: €12 / Limited visibility seats: €10

Foniadakis / Ekman
Dés/équilibre/s / Cacti
Ballet

Greek National Opera Stavros Niarchos Hall
Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center

May 3, 4, 5, 6, 2018

At 20:00

With the **Principal Dancers, Soloists and Principals** and the **Corps de Ballet** of the **Greek National Opera**

Dés/équilibre/s

Choreography **Andonis Foniadakis**

Music **Philip Glass – Julien Tarride**

Andonis Foniadakis first presented the performance *Dés/équilibre/s* at the Summer Nostos Festival held at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation in June 2017.

A choreography piece exploring the resolute discipline and steely will of classical dancers, the strictures of its form and its hermetic hierarchy; elements which make direct reference to classical dance's courtly origins. Aided by the evocative, nostalgic, cathartic, almost prayer-like sounds of Philip Glass from his iconic work *Koyaanisqatsi*, Andonis Foniadakis invites the public on a journey into the unexplored heart of dance.

Cacti

Choreography **Alexander Ekman**

Set design **Alexander Ekman – Tom Visser**

Costumes **Alexander Ekman**

Lighting **Tom Visser**

Text **Spenser Theberge**

Music **Joseph Haydn, Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz Schubert**

Outstanding Swedish choreographer Alexander Ekman, known for his rapid pace, witty humor and clever transformations, is collaborating with the GNO's Corps De Ballet for the first time with his popular piece *Cacti*. "*The whip-smart timing of this piece as it juggles these incongruous elements is pure pleasure*" says the *Guardian* in its review, while the *Telegraph* praised Ekman's ability to "*create strong images, make big ensembles and convincingly give absurd flashes of wit a place*".

In *Cacti*, Alexander Ekman turns his gaze on the scene that birthed him: modern dance itself. The performance endeavors to take a critical stance to and hilariously deconstruct the great excesses of the art of dance.

Sixteen dancers stand trapped in oversized Scrabble tiles. As the string quartet plays and texts are read out, the dancers run, fall, writhe and try to escape their invisible prisons. *Cacti* has been staged already in Holland, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, the USA, Brazil, Canada, etc.

It is no exaggeration to say that Ekman has collaborated with some of the most important dance troupes around the world, such as the Vienna Ballet, the Netherlands Dance Theatre, the Swedish Royal Ballet, the Ballets de Monte Carlo, the Sydney Dance Group, Dresden Ballet and Boston Ballet, and this December will present his latest work at the Paris Opera's Palais Garnier.

Ticket prices: €15, 20, 25, 35, 40, 55 / Students, reduced: €10 / Limited visibility seats: €8

Leoš Janáček
The Makropulos Affair

20th Century Cycle
Janáček Cycle – Opera

Greek National Opera Stavros Niarchos Hall
Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center

May 20, 23, 25, 2018
At 20:00

Conductor **TBA**
Director **Giannis Houvardas**
Set design **Eva Manidaki**
Costumes **Ioanna Tsami**

Acclaimed GNO soprano **Elena Kelesidi** in the role of Emilia Marty

With the **Orchestra, Chorus** and **Soloists** of the **Greek National Opera**

One of the 20th century's operatic masterpieces, Leoš Janáček's opera combines existentialist drama with elements of fantasy. Emilia Marty, a famous singer, is in fact a 300 year old woman. The secret of her eternal youth is an elixir made in the 16th century by the Cretan alchemist, Hieronymus Makropulos, who was then in the service of Emperor Rudolf II, which he tested for the first time on his daughter Elina Makropulos. Elina survived the centuries as Eugenia Montez, Elsa Müller, Ekaterina Myshkin, and Ellian McGregor, only ever keeping the first letters of her original name. Now as Emilia Marty she comes to realize the cynicism and indifference that her eternal youth has created and grasps how many things, like the sense of a life's purpose, are determined by the fact that one knows one's life has a clear end. And so she decides to let death take her.

Leoš Janáček's masterful opera is being staged for the first time ever by the GNO and launches a cycle of works by the Czech composer which will be staged by the organization over the next 3 years. Janáček –one of the 20th century's leading European opera composers– was deeply interested in folklore and was inspired by the traditional music of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and by Slavic music in general. He developed his one distinctive musical language which blends contrasting themes, and reflects the entire gamut of human emotions.

The outstanding theatre and opera director, and former artistic director of the National Theatre of Greece, Giannis Houvardas, will direct *The Makropulos Affair* in a production which will balance between thriller and science fiction.

Ticket prices: €15, 20, 35, 50, 55, 80 / Students, reduced: €12 / Limited visibility seats: €10

Giuseppe Verdi

Nabucco

Italian Opera Cycle – Opera

Odeon of Herodes Atticus Theater
Within the framework of the Athens Festival

June 1, 3, 6, 8, 10, 2018

At 21:00

Conductor **Philippe Auguin**

Director **Leo Muscato**

Set design **Tiziano Santi**

Costumes **Silvia Aymonino**

Lighting **Alessandro Verazzi**

Internationally acclaimed GNO baritone **Dimitri Platanias** stars in the title role

With the **Orchestra, Chorus** and **Soloists** of the **Greek National Opera**

The GNO brings *Nabucco*, one of Verdi's most popular operas, back to the Odeon of Herodes Atticus Theater. It is the work which showcased Verdi's talents, ending a series of failures and a period of great sadness in the composer's personal life.

The opera is best known for the famous "Chorus of the Jewish Slaves", which serves as a sort of national anthem for the Italians, since it expresses the collective feeling of opposition to the Austrian conquerors.

In addition to the well-known chorus, the opera includes roles for baritones, sopranos and basses which are demanding both musically and in terms of stage presence.

In this new GNO production, the lead role is played by famous Greek baritone Dimitri Platanias, who has garnered praise for his performances as Nabucco at important theatres around the globe such as the London Royal Opera (Covent Garden), the Bavaria State Opera, the Florence Opera, Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia (Valencia) and the Stuttgart Opera to name a few.

Leo Muscato directs the work in his first collaboration with the GNO. Muscato is a rising Italian opera director with a penchant for the works of Verdi and Puccini, who has achieved great box office successes at Italy's top opera houses (Rome, Venice, Florence, Turin, and others).

Ticket prices: €25, 45, 55, 60, 85, 100 / Students, reduced: €15

Nikos Kypourgos

Medea

Based on Bost's *Medea*

Operetta Restart Cycle – Operetta

Greek National Opera Stavros Niarchos Hall
Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center

July 7, 8, 11, 12, 2018

At 20:00

Conductor **Elias Voudouris – Giorgos Balatsinos**

Director **Nikos Karathanos**

Sets-lighting **Elli Papageorgakopoulou**

With the **Orchestra, Chorus** and **Soloists** of the **Greek National Opera**

The operetta is the flagship of light musical theatre and developed in parallel with its grander, more serious cousin, opera. Operettas were immensely popular in Greece especially between the wars, when hundreds of new works were written by some of the country's leading composers.

For the next 3 years, the GNO will present 3 new operetta works, commissioned from 3 acclaimed Greek composers, to creatively restart the art form.

The initiative launches in the 2017/18 artistic period with Bost's satirical version of *Medea*, which has been set to music as an operetta by Nikos Kypourgos following a commission from the GNO and will be directed by Nikos Karathanos.

It was a quite deliberate choice to launch the Operetta restart cycle with Bost's *Medea*, since it is in effect a radical work which will take on a new aspect after it is set to music and staged as an operetta.

Besides, it is no coincidence that Bost managed to create a completely individual, recognizable satirical style as a cartoonist, copywriter, dramatist, and painter. His unorthodox use of language and deliberately misspelled texts were intended to deconstruct purist Greek and firmly establish use of the demotic version of the language. Bost's satire was aimed at the petit bourgeois Greeks of the post-war decades, at conventionality, ignoramuses, the nouveau riche, the mania with all things foreign, as well as the intense class conflicts in post-war Greece and Greek political life.

The decapentasyllabic text of *Medea* takes Euripides' famous tragedy as its starting point but in typical Bost style talks about a woman who wants to kill her children because they will not take to learning and they don't want to work; not to mention that her husband is cheating on her and wants to marry Corinth's princess.

Nikos Kypourgos, one of Greece's most important living composers, was a close associate of Manos Hadjidakis. His career began with the famed *Lilipoupoli* radio series and since then he has composed tens of works for theatre and cinema, pieces of voice and orchestra, chamber music, music for dance, songs, and musicals.

Nikos Karathanos, an accomplished theatrical director, has in recent years developed a recognizable theatrical idiom all of his own, managing to create a new world in each and every performance he works on. Karathanos is collaborating with the GNO for the first time in what will be one of the most demanding artistic ventures of the 2017/18 artistic period.

Ticket prices: €15, 20, 30, 40, 45, 60 / Students, reduced: €12 / Limited visibility seats: €10

Georges Bizet
Carmen

French Opera Cycle – Opera

Odeon of Herodes Atticus Theater
Within the framework of the Athens Festival

July 26, 28, 29, 31, 2018

At 21:00

Conductor **Lukas Karytinis**
Director **Steven Langridge**
Set design-costumes **Giorgos Souglidis**
Video **Silbersalz Film GmbH – Thomas Bergman**
Lighting **Giuseppe di Iorio**

With the **Orchestra, Chorus, Children’s Chorus** and **Soloists** of the **Greek National Opera**

Symbolizing love and liberty, the most popular opera in the French repertoire is being brought back to the Odeon of Herodes Atticus Theater by the GNO, directed by the famous British director, Steven Langridge, currently Artistic Director of the Gothenburg Opera.

Langridge’s *Carmen* was first staged at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus Theater in 2016 and is a contemporary, pointed, timely version set in a Europe of closed borders and poverty. Working with Giorgos Souglidis who designed the impressive sets and costumes, Giuseppe di Iorio who created the otherworldly lighting and Thomas Bergman who devised the ethereal video projections, Langridge has created a modern but also timeless setting for *Carmen’s* tale; “a tale about borders and poverty, freedom and slavery. A tale about today,” as the director himself put it.

One of the most iconic operas around, *Carmen* continues to provoke even today, just like when it first saw the light of day 142 years ago. An unconventional storyline, expressed through the then equally unconventional, but now extremely popular, music of Georges Bizet. The heroine of the piece defends her freedom and right to choose her lovers, not for them to choose her. She is a threat to male-dominated, patriarchal societies. Her choices threaten their very foundations. The only solution: get rid of her. The love-struck, ‘betrayed’ Don José takes on the task.

Ticket prices: €25, 45, 55, 60, 85, 100 / Students, reduced: €15