**Athens Epidaurus Festival 2021 – THEATRE**

**WORLD PREMIERE**

**INTERNATIONAL CO-PRODUCTION**

**SCHAUBÜHNE**

**THOMAS OSTERMEIER**

**ödipus**

**by Maja Zade**

Ancient Theatre of Epidaurus
3, 4, 5 September / 21:00

Ancient Drama has been on the mind of Thomas Ostermeier, acclaimed theatre director and Artistic Director of Schaubϋhne Berlin, for years. It seems that the time is ripe this summer on the occasion of a new production specially commissioned by the Athens Epidaurus Festival and Artistic Director Katerina Evangelatos.

For three unique evenings (3-5/9), the groundbreaking artist, a longtime favourite of Greek audiences, will present a new version of *Oedipus* at the Ancient Theatre of Epidaurus: a world premiere of the play *ödipus*, an Athens Epidaurus Festival and Schaubühne Berlin co-production.

Driven by Sophocles’ play, Ostermeier turned to German dramatist Maja Zade – one of his and Schaubϋhne’s longstanding collaborators – and asked her to write an original text that brings Oedipus’ myth to the present.

“*I was commissioned to create a performance for the Ancient Theatre of Epidaurus. Let’s stage Oedipus, but in the present day, with a German family that is on holidays in Greece*.” These were the directors first words to Maja Zade. As she notes: “*Thomas made it clear that what interested him was less how the gods govern the life and fate of man, and more how the idea of a man’s life and his assumptions are suddenly called into question, realising that nothing is as it had seemed, having the rug pulled out from underneath his feet*.”

As part of the creative process and in view of the performance at the Ancient Theatre of Epidaurus a new work was born featuring four characters: **Christina**, inspired by Jocasta, **Michael**, based on Oedipus, **Robert**, based on Creon, and **Theresa,** a made-up friend of Jocasta who combines elements of Tiresias and the slaves, but is an overall original character.

These four characters are not, in fact, part of a royal family; they belong to a family of industrialists with a long and dark history behind them, given that their business is based on exploitation and concealment of crimes. “*I hope that the Ancient Theatre of Epidaurus will frame and bring out the new story, just as it has done with the myth of Oedipus, which was a source of inspiration and guidance to me as I was writing*”, notes Maja Zade in the introduction of the play that is published as part of the Festival’s newly launched theatre book series in collaboration with Nefeli Publishing.

The Festival’s Epidaurus programme comes to a close with this extraordinary cultural event, which showcases the Festival’s international character and the central position it claims on the global cultural stage.

*The play is published as part of the Festival's newly launched theatre book series, translated by Giannis Kalifatidis.*

*With Greek and English surtitles.*

**Schaubühne Berlin**

The Schaubühne Berlin was founded in 1962. Since 1999 it has been led by Artistic Director Thomas Ostermeier. The repertoire encompasses the great dramatic works of world literature alongside contemporary plays from internationally renowned writers, with over 100 world and German premieres over the past 20 years.

A radical, political, and critical approach of theatrical forms and repertoire, both classical and contemporary, is a key component of the theatre’s artistic programme. Alongside directors such as Herbert Fritsch, Milo Rau and Marius von Mayenburg, the theatre frequently offers a platform in Berlin to notable directors from abroad. Currently, productions by Katie Mitchell, Simon Stone, Simon McBurney, and Anne-Cécile Vandalem are being presented at the theatre.

At the same time, the Schaubühne showcases its productions abroad in numerous performances every year, whether at big international festivals like the Festival d’Avignon, the Salzburg Festival, the Athens Epidaurus Festival, the Festival Internacional de Buenos Aires (FIBA) and the Territorija Festival in Moscow, or as guest performances at theatres around the world including in New York, Paris, Amsterdam, Rome, Quebec, São Paulo, London, Oslo, Ramallah, Melbourne, Ottawa, Taipei, Tel Aviv, Seoul, Rennes, Barcelona, Adelaide, Tokyo, Prague, Sydney, Montreal or Beijing.

**Thomas Ostermeier**

One of the most celebrated *auteurs* of the contemporary European theatre scene, Thomas Ostermeier took over as Artistic Director of the historic Schaubϋhne in 1999, at the age of 31. He studied directing at the Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Arts in Berlin (Hochschule für Schauspielkunst »Ernst Busch« Berlin) from 1992 to 1996. Subsequently, he served as assistant director at the Berliner Ensemble, where he began presenting his works, taking the first step towards international recognition and acclaim.

Having caused a sensation with his early, groundbreaking work on plays such as Nicky Silver’s *Fat Men in Skirts* (1996), Bertolt Brecht’s *Man Equals Man* (1997), and Mark Ravenhill’s *Shopping and Fucking* (1998), Ostermeier turned to contemporary texts, while at the same time remaining fascinated by classical texts, through which he consistently seeks analogies with our own era.

His most recent productions at the Schaubühne include *History of Violence* by Édouard Louis (2018) – a performance scheduled to be presented at Peiraios 260 this October –, *Italian Night* by Ödön von Horváth (2018), *abgrund* by Maja Zade (2019), *Twelfth Night or What You Will* by William Shakespeare (2019), *Youth without God* by Ödön von Horváth (2019), and *Vernon Subutex 1* by Virginie Despentes (2021).

Ostermeier has received numerous international accolades for his work.

For his contributions to the Arts and Theatre, he has been the recipient of several distinctions. He was awarded the Golden Lion at the 2011 Venice Biennale as a lifetime achievement award. In 2015, he was named Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters (Commandeur de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres) by the French Government. In 2018, he was awarded the Order of Merit by the Federal Republic of Germany and was also awarded the title of Honorary Professor at the University of Gothenburg.

A member of the German Academy of Performing Arts (Deutsche Akademie der Darstellenden Künste) and Berlin’s Academy of Arts (Akademie der Künste), Ostermeier is widely beloved by Greek theatregoers. Several of his works have been presented at the Athens Epidaurus Festival, including Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (2006), Ibsen’s *Nora* (2006), Shakespeare’s *Othello* (2010), and Lillian Hellman’s *The Little Foxes* (2015).

**SCHAUBÜHNE - THOMAS OSTERMEIER**

***ödipus***

**by Maja Zade**

**A Schaubϋhne Berlin – Athens Epidaurus Festival co-production**

Ancient Theatre of Epidaurus

3, 4, 5 September, 21:00

**Directed by**: Thomas Ostermeier

**Set design:** Jan Pappelbaum

**Costume design:** Angelika Götz

**Video:** Matthias Schellenberg - Thilo Schmidt

**Music:** Sylvain Jacques

**Dramaturgy:** Maja Zade

**Lighting design:** Erich Schneider

**Cast**

**Caroline Peters** (Christina)

**Christian Tschirner** (Robert)

**Renato Schuch** (Michael)

**Isabelle Redfern** (Theresa)

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**Tickets:** VIP 75€ • ZONE Α 55€ | ZONE B 30€ • UPPER TIER 20/15/10/8€ • STUDENTS / 65+ / ARTIST UNIONS 12€ • PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES / UNEMPLOYMENT CONCESSIONS / ART SCHOOL STUDENTS 5€

**Tickets can be purchased at** aefestival.gr | tickets.aefestival.gr | www.ticketservices.gr

At +30 210 7234 567, at the Main Box Office (Panepistimiou 39) and the Public stores.

Audience buses to and from the Ancient Theatre of Epidaurus are also available.

