



# **Presentation of the Artistic Programme**

## **Odeon Of Herodes Atticus 2026**

**FAREWELL CELEBRATIONS**

When Hadrian became emperor in 117 AD, a young rhetoric student with a stutter arrived at his military camp near the Danube to greet him. This seventeen-year-old boy was about to become not only one of the greatest orators and the richest men of his era, but also a generous sponsor of big artistic events and public works.

His first precious gift to the city of Athens was the reconstruction of the Panathenaic Stadium, completed in 143 AD. Afterwards, in addition to many works in different Greek cities, in 161 AD, he offers Athens a theatre with a roof, an Odeon, with a seating capacity of 5000 people, built on the south side of the Acropolis Hill.

This boy was Herodes Atticus.

It is said that the theatre's roof was made of cedar wood.

Herodion — the Roman Odeon — is today considered one of the most emblematic odeons in the world.

In June 2026 — a month with a special symbolism — thanks to a smart gesture which transforms temporary stillness into creative opportunity, the Odeon of Herodus Atticus, before it is sealed and retreats into silence for a few years (so that, through an inspired and necessary work of restoration, renovation, and exposure, it passes into the next century of symbolism and importance in the cultural life) opens, for only one month — this special June — its gates. An opportunity, therefore, arises for a series of Art events to unfold, within the context of *Farewell Celebrations*. Someone could say that each event set to be presented this year on the stage of the Herodion — every single night, every kind of 'Tribute' — is a special Farewell celebration of the Odeon.

Until we meet again,  
MM.

## OPENING CEREMONY

### CLASSICAL MUSIC

#### –GREEK DEBUT–

3 June

#### **Víkingur Ólafsson**

*Works by Bach, Beethoven, Schubert*

The Icelandic pianist Víkingur Ólafsson is an undisputed phenomenon of rare stature. Now in his early forties, his interpretations have lost none of their youthful ardour, trailblazing spirit, or profound spirituality – qualities that have defined him since he burst onto the international music stage some fifteen to twenty years ago. Among the most celebrated artists of his generation – and long an exclusive recording artist with Deutsche Grammophon – Ólafsson remains, above all, an uncompromising visionary. His artistic choices are marked by originality and by a subversive, luminous gaze that reimagines even the most familiar cornerstones of the piano repertoire.

His recordings have achieved worldwide resonance, amassing over a billion streams and earning numerous distinctions, including the recent GRAMMY Award for Best Classical Instrumental Solo (for Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, 2025), the BBC Music Magazine's Recording of the Year Award, and – twice – the Opus Klassik Award for Solo Recording of the Year.

In his eagerly awaited Greek debut, Ólafsson presents a programme of works by Bach, Beethoven, and Schubert, conceived under the title *Opus 109*, mirroring his latest recording released in November 2025. The title, of course, alludes to Beethoven's *Piano Sonata No. 30 in E major*, which the artist places alongside – and perhaps even in dialogue with – other works by Beethoven and Schubert, while never neglecting his beloved Bach. As the pianist himself suggests, these two grand nineteenth-century composers confront the eighteenth-century giant “as every composer ought to do.” The unifying thread of the programme is the tonality of E, both minor and major. Within this

tonal landscape, Ólafsson harnesses the condition of synaesthesia as a generative force, evoking a vast array of green's rich and vivid shades.

Above all, it is a programme that reveals the essence of Ólafsson's artistic thinking. One need only turn to the past, he argues, to recognise what is often missing from today's concert formats, which can leave the listener with the sensation of "leafing through a library catalogue." Nineteenth-century recital programmes, by contrast, offer a sense of genuine liberation, as they are arresting, brimming with improvisatory vigour, and full of the unexpected. It is precisely this modern outlook on historical touchstones that establishes Víkingur Ólafsson as one of the defining artists of the twenty-first century.

Concert sponsor **Piraeus Bank**

**Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)**

*Prelude in E Major, BWV 854*

**Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)**

*Piano Sonata No. 27 in E minor, Op. 90*

**Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)**

*Partita No. 6 in E minor, BWV 830*

**Franz Schubert (1797-1828)**

*Piano Sonata in E minor, D 566*

**Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)**

*Piano Sonata No. 27 in E minor, Op. 109*

**MUSIC  
SCREENING**

4 June

**The Avex Ensemble**

*Blade Runner*

Live

*I've seen things you people wouldn't believe  
All those moments will be lost in time, like tears in rain*

When two people meet for the first time and begin to exchange references, testing the ground for common territory, the mere mention of *Blade Runner* can dissolve all distance, becoming a tender code of recognition. Nearly half a century after its release, this futuristic noir – steeped in darkness, rain, neon light, and shadows slipping at the edge of vision– retains a place of honour in the history of cinema and, above all, in the hearts of the most fervent devotees of the future everywhere. It is the film that restored science fiction to its rightful stature, establishing it as a genre worthy of serious artistic regard and bringing it back from the (self-imposed) exile in which it had lingered as the domain of the “chosen few”. It is also the soundtrack that ushered electronic music into every home: Vangelis’s moving cathedrals of synthesisers have forever haunted the cinematic imagination and the emergent language of electronica, setting the standard against which every original score would henceforth be measured.

Legend has it that there was never a definitive version of the film, but rather seven distinct incarnations. Like an ironic echo of the film’s central meditation on replication, Vangelis’s score remains singular and indivisible – a film within the film. It is not a mere accompaniment, but a living pulse alongside and within the image, a vital dramaturgical compass guiding every emotion articulated within Ridley Scott’s dystopian vision of the future. The music of Vangelis bears a singular compositional intelligence. In the forever-iconic “Love Theme” and “Runner’s Blues,” melody surfaces like an inner monologue, casting its hues upon the most fragile facets of a world suspended between the human and the mechanical. On June 4, beneath the rock of the Acropolis, the Final Cut of this

landmark film will be screened on a monumental HD screen, while its future-proof soundtrack is performed live by the eleven-member The Avex Ensemble, in perfect synchrony with the image. This will surely be a rite of initiation: a fragment of the future brought to life within the shell of an ancient theatre, on the eve of its closure for restoration works.

For decades, the film foretold a world in which technology and human existence would become so deeply intertwined as to be indistinguishable. Today, it no longer feels prophetic – it feels realised: the replicants of our time demand autonomy and recognition; humanity finds itself questioning its own nature and limits, as well as the future of consciousness in a world of machines that have gained intelligence. On June 4, a gateway to a new unknown will open upon the stage of the Odeon of Herodes Atticus. Will we be brave enough to cross it?

Original music composition **Vangelis**

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## MUSIC

5 & 6 June

**Stavros Xarchakos**

*Here and now*

*At eighty-seven, I realise more than ever that life exists only in the present, as the song says. And what is the present in music? It is the music that does not bend to time; the music born before our very eyes; the music that passes like a torch from one generation to the next. I must also confess that, for the first time, I have – unintentionally – failed to keep my word to you. Last September, at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus, I told you we would meet again in three years. The Athens Epidaurus Festival and its director, Michail Marmarinos, have ‘proved me wrong’ – and I thank them for it.”*

Stavros Xarchakos

From *Our Grand Circus* to *Rembetiko*, from his studies in Paris with Nadia Boulanger to Juilliard in New York – encouraged by Leonard Bernstein – Stavros Xarchakos' path has been unwavering and monumental, but, above all, highly attuned to the grand adventure of modern Greek song, of which he remains one of the most authentic craftsmen. And yet, this legacy does not seem to weigh upon his shoulders. His activity in recent years reveals an artist wholly surrendered to the pulse of the present and to its vital unrest. For the present is the true dwelling of the creator: a living moment, ever expanding, capacious enough to hold all others within it.

We might conceive of this evening with Stavros Xarchakos at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus as a present unfolding in three acts. Part one: the creators meet in the present. The composer and lyricist Lina Nikolakopoulou come together in conversation and in song, accompanied by a piano and a string quartet. Xarchakos conducts, reflects, remembers. Part two: the recent present. Iro Saia takes the stage, performing new songs written for her by the composer. Part three: the enduring present. Dimitris Basis joins them on stage, and together they perform songs that have taken root in our hearts and become part of our shared tradition. Alongside them, the children of the folk orchestra "En Chordais kai Organois" ("With Strings and Instruments") School of Syros – many of whom will be remembered from that spontaneous musical moment in June 2022, when the composer conducted them in a tavern on the island and the video recording of that evening travelled far and wide. Today, those children have grown; some are already university students. For Xarchakos, their presence is more than symbolic: it embodies a presence that nourishes a future within it.

Thus, on the stage of the ancient theatre, generations converge, and the title of the concert gains its sharpest meaning and resonance: the present of the music is where memory, experience, and new creation become one.

Because whatever endures through time  
Goes on...

Music Direction **Stavros Xarchakos** • Performed by **Dimitris Basis, Iro Saia** • Featuring a **10-member orchestra** and **children from the "En Chordais kai Organois" School of Syros**

**"HOMMAGE"**

## MUSIC

9 June

**Epilekto Epirus Ensemble – Vasilis Kostas**

*Epirus*

Featuring **Kostas Tzimas, Antonis Kyritsis, Petros Chalkias**

*[...] they kneel and plead with the clarinet to play into their ears.  
A sweet sorrow. The soul is nourished by sound.  
Their steps are long-drawn, slow, and heavy with grief.  
There, dance has no figures, only footfalls upon the earth [...]*

*Music from Epirus, Hellenic Parliament Foundation*

The tribute “Epirus” unfolds as a musical encounter of memory and continuity, dedicated to the deep-rooted tradition of Epirote music and its unbroken passage through time. At the heart of the performance lies the glorious legacy of the late Petroloukas Chalkias, a towering presence for the way in which the music of Epirus is transmitted, transformed, and renewed across generations.

Under the artistic direction of the laouto player, lecturer at Hellenic College Holy Cross in the United States, and Grammy-nominated musician Vasilis Kostas – whose decade-long apprenticeship and close collaboration with Petroloukas Chalkias shaped a rare and invaluable core of knowledge and aesthetic insight – this material gains new life today through the Epilekto Epirus Ensemble, the principal orchestra of the production. Based in Ioannina, this twenty-member collective of young musicians from across Greece brings to the stage a vivid dialogue between the authentic performance of traditional melodies and novel approaches to orchestration. In doing so, it preserves the distinct idiom of Epirote music while offering a contemporary artistic perspective on the region’s perennial musical heritage.

Joining the performance as guests are Kostas Tzimas (vocals), Antonis Kyritsis (vocals), and Petros Chalkias (clarinet) – figures firmly rooted in the grand Epirote tradition, who

appear in selected pieces, thereby reinforcing through their presence the intergenerational character of the tribute.

The coexistence of musicians from different generations initiates a space where memory is experienced as something immediate and lived, rather than as mere representation. The concert, then, approaches Epirote music as a breathing, malleable artistic language – one that still pushes through the deep foliage of time, evolving through collective exercise and personal expression.

The Epilekto Epirus Ensemble operates under the auspices and with the support of the Holy Metropolis of Ioannina and the charitable organization “Apostoli” of the Holy Archdiocese of Athens.

Concert & Epilekto Epirus Ensemble Artistic Direction **Vasilis Kostas** • Epilekto Epirus Ensemble **Aimilia Chalkia** *vocals*, **Konstantina Karampa** *vocals*, **Dimitris Lalezas** *vocals*, **Konstantinos Sakaridis** *clarinet*, **Anna Maria Sinopidou** *kaval*, **Melina Bitzidou** *santouri*, **Giorgos Venetis** *santouri*, **Eleni Efthymiou** *santouri*, **Myrofora Theodoridou** *santouri*, **Giorgos Theodoridis** *laouto*, **Apostolos Poupalos** *laouto*, **Stefanos Paterakis** *laouto*, **Christos Danas** *violin*, **Christos Poullos** *violin*, **Giannis Deligiannis** *violin*, **Akis Papaemmanouil** *violin*, **Constantinos Brachopoulos** *violin*, **Evangelia Moukanou** *accordion*, **Thodoris Efaplomatas** *percussion* • Guest musicians **Kostas Tzimas** *vocals*, **Antonis Kyritsis** *vocals*, **Petros Chalkias** *clarinet* • Featuring **Panagiotis Aivazidis** *qanun* • Sound design **George Kariotis**, **Vangelis Iakovidis** • Lighting design **Giorgos Charalambous** • Executive producer **Solar Productions Athens**

## “HOMMAGE”

### MUSIC

#### –YEAR OF MANOS HADJIDAKIS–

10 June

#### **Athens State Orchestra – Lukas Karytinis**

*America by Manos X – Part I*

The 1960s find the world in constant flux: legions of young people passionately seeking new visions and meanings in life and in art – culminating in the upheaval of May 1968 – while Greece, in particular, grapples with its own native political and social turbulence, leading to the coup d'état in 1967. Manos Hadjidakis stands at a moment of maturity and recognition. He had already been awarded the Academy Award (1961) for *Never on Sunday* and, more importantly, has succeeded in speaking directly to the soul of Greek – and not only Greek– audiences, weaving together art music and folk legacy in a manner at once natural, profound, and deeply candid.

At this crossroads, he spreads his wings towards the United States, where he resides for several years, consciously retreating from a dire Greek reality, yet also distancing himself from his very own roots, that is, his leanings towards certain sounds, imagery, and the intimacy of his closest circle.

In America, “dancing with his own shadow,” he experiences the universality of Greek music anew, while uncovering unexpected dimensions of his deeply seated sensibility. It is there that he composes the thrilling *Gioconda's Smile* (1965), a work that would come to define the artistic quests of its time and stand as a touchstone of modern Greek music. Three years later, in 1968, he composes the score for the western film *Blue* by the Canadian director Silvio Narizzano. Despite the film's failure, Hadjidakis's music emerges as a singular accomplishment, and by virtue of its intrinsic value has endured independently as one of the finest instances in his orchestral oeuvre. This summer, the Athens State Orchestra, under the direction of its artistic director Loukas Karytinis,

revisits these two major works by Hadjidakis, marking the centenary of his birth with a tribute worthy of his enduring legacy.

Conductor **Loukas Karytinis** • **George Tossikian** *guitar*

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**MUSIC**  
**THEATRE**

12 & 13 June

**Stamatis Kraounakis**

*Lysistrata*

A hilarious opera

Can anything new still be said about *Lysistrata* after all these years? Why does it return with such persistence to the stages of the world? What resources of meaning remain inexhaustible within the heroine's audacious grace?

When Aristophanes wrote the play in 411 BC, he was not simply offering an oblique commentary on the state to which Athens had been reduced amid the Peloponnesian War. In truth, he was acutely attuned to the political tremors within the city walls, where the Assembly of the People had weakened and oligarchic forces were re-emerging. With the covert weapons of art – devices that do not name, yet reveal without accusation – he addressed the root of all calamity: the frenzy for power and domination, a hollow imperative that belonged to men and dragged society as a whole towards ruin. And what was the antidote? A resounding slap across the face of this laughable masculinity. When Aristophanes moved the woman from the sphere of the “oikos” into that of the “polis,” he did not merely perform a theatrical trick, but enacted a political shift of seismic proportions. The heroine did not simply call upon the women of Athens – and even of rival cities – to embark upon a ‘strike of love’; rather, she unleashed a torrent of femininity that swept away the certainties of the world, proposing an alternative that others hastened to dismiss

as utopian and, therefore, impracticable. Any resemblance to the present day is, of course, purely coincidental.

It is therefore a particularly felicitous moment for this adaptation by Stamatis Kraounakis, which leaves us wondering what might emerge from the encounter between the sparkling wit of Aristophanes and the composer's unbridled musical imagination. Kraounakis forges a polyphonic operetta in which music and speech coexist in equal measure, all tuned to the key of the poet's merciless satire. By turns lyrical, folk, and sharply cabaret-like, the music becomes the driving force of the action, while the sung theatrical speech completes this Aristophanic rite, casting glances to the present and amplifying the work's exuberant theatricality. At the same time, the internationally acclaimed scenographer Takis envelops the production in a strikingly contemporary aesthetic that resonates with the work's historical framework, culminating in an irresistible visual spectacle. On stage, thirty distinguished performers and musicians come together, with the singular presence of Dimitra Galani in the role of the goddess Athena.

In the play, the women seize the Acropolis – where the public treasury is kept – to freeze the war machine helmed by men. For two nights, their marvellous theatrical spectres will hover just above us, allowing this ecstatic stream to flow once more under the baton of Stamatis Kraounakis, surging through the tiers of the theatre, sweeping towards the stage, and once again overturning the certainties of the world.

Music – Text – Direction **Stamatis Kraounakis** • Libretto contributors **Lina Nikolakopoulou, Giorgos Chatzidakis, Lakis Lazopoulos** • Assistant to the director **Marilena Moschou** • Set & costume design **Takis** • Choreography **Thodoris Panas** • Lighting design **Stella Kaltsou** • Dramaturgical consultant **Evanthia Stivanaki** • Performance visual branding/logo **Kostas Spanakis** • Photography **Spiros Poros** • Communications **Despina Kraounakis** • Cast (in order of appearance) **Lena Ouzounidou** *Lysistrata*, **Kostas Bougiotis** *Apollo compère*, **Sophia Kounia** *Kleoniki*, **Elena Kafourou** *Indian Woman*, **Penny Xenaki** *Babushka / Chorus Leader*, **Georgia Amorgianoti** *Minoan Woman*, **Argyro Kaparou** *Lampito*, **Venetia Manaveli** *A Girl*, **Giorgos Stivanakis** *Theban Woman / A Disabled Soldier*, **Konstantinos Tsonopoulos** *Theban Woman / Vangelas*, **Stella Krouska** *Myrrhine*, **Christophoros Stampoglis**

*Proboulos, Christos Gerontidis Kinesias, Kostas Venetsanos A True Athenian, Sakis Karathanasis Folk Singer, Theologos Papanikolaou Cantor, Spyros Pinkeridis Herald, Dimitra Galani Goddess Athena, Marilena Moschou Athens Hotty, Maria Papadopoulou Athens Hotty* • On-stage musicians **Dimitrios Andreadis** piano, music direction, orchestration, **Dimitris Kiklis** keyboards, **Giorgos Tamiolakis** cello, euphonium, **Lambros Papanikolaou** double bass, **Theologos Papanikolaou** violin, **Kosmas Kokolis** guitar, bouzouki, **Nikos Katsikis** soloist (mandolin, Spanish lute, bouzouki) • **Production GR Entertainment – Athens Epidaurus Festival**

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**“HOMMAGE”**

**MUSIC**

15 June

**Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir – Tallinn Chamber Orchestra – Tõnu Kaljuste**

*Works by Arvo Pärt*

Arvo Pärt is everywhere. In the first quarter of the twenty-first century, his works have been performed more widely than those of almost any other composer. The sonic cosmos he conceived – a crystalline, near-monastic music that bears the touch of snow and comes closer than any other to silence – has long since transcended the private realm of the composer’s imagination. It is now recognised as one of the most riveting musical corpora of the past hundred years, cherished alike by devoted adherents of classical music and by audiences shaped by contemporary culture.

It is impossible to speak of Pärt without returning to his moment of transformation – a paradigm of artistic rebirth, inner quest, and musical reinvention. In the mid-twentieth century, feeling confined within the dominant yet rigid currents of the avant-garde – serialism, aleatory music, collage, and neoclassicism – Pärt withdrew from composition

completely and embraced silence. In that stillness, he sought a new musical language, one of ascetic essence and translucent truth. He invested himself in an intensive study of Gregorian chant, Orthodox liturgical music, and the early polyphony of the Renaissance. In 1972, he was received into the Russian Orthodox Church; from that moment onward, his faith became the lodestar of his artistic mission: to bring forth a spiritual beauty seeking expression through sound.

The compositional system he developed, known as *tintinnabuli*, enabled him to approach this sparse music of the higher spheres through a lucid and disciplined technique – one that elevates the impact of the minimal musical trace, the unadorned resonance of a single note, to its fullest expressive potential.

In a celebration of the life and work of the Estonian master, this evening at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus brings together emblematic works from his vocal oeuvre, both solo and choral. The demanding task of interpretation is entrusted to the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir and the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra under the direction of Tõnu Kaljuste – Pärt's long-standing collaborators for decades, who have played a critical role in shaping and disseminating the understanding of his musical language. Their presence on the stage of the ancient theatre promises an evening of profound musical devotion: a true vesper of sound, marked by unalloyed emotion and offered as a gesture of gratitude to a great hierophant, who once distilled the power of music into these few words: "If one can kill with a sound, then one can also heal with a sound."

Conductor **Tõnu Kaljuste** • Soloist **Maria Listra**

Concert sponsor **Piraeus Bank**

**Arvo Pärt (b. 1935)**

*Für Lennart in memoriam* (2006)

*L'abbé Agathon* (2004, arr. 2008)

Soprano **Maria Listra**

*Stabat Mater* (1985, arr. 2008)

Soprano **Maria Listra**  
Countertenor **Danila Frantou**  
Tenor **Toomas Toher**

*Magnificat* (1989)

Soprano **TBA**

*Te Deum* (1985, rev. 2007)

Soprano **TBA**

Tenor **TBA**

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**“HOMMAGE”**

**MUSIC**

**–YEAR OF MANOS HADJIDAKIS–**

17 June

**George-Emmanuel Lazaridis – Raining Pleasure**

*America by Manos X – Part II*

If you look closely at the cover of *Reflections* by Manos Hadjidakis and the New York Rock & Roll Ensemble, you might notice another band shimmering faintly in the water before the original quintet: Raining Pleasure. Thirty-four years after the album’s release, they became, in a sense, its reflection: a group that unexpectedly entered Hadjidakis’s orbit, offering their own reading of the music of *Reflections*, and with it, yet another glimmer of the composer’s enduring genius.

Hadjidakis’s tenure in New York (1966–1972) has since taken on an almost mythic quality, leaving behind a trail of vivid anecdotes: encounters with defining figures of the era – among them Grace Slick of Jefferson Airplane – a personal immersion into the

psychedelic mythology of the era, and a deep engagement with the unprecedented music being forged by a generation that seemed to hold the blueprint of another world in its hands. Who, after all, can forget his striking remark, when he once described Lena Platonos as “a female Syd Barrett?”

And yet, Hadjidakis could never absorb these influences unfiltered, however much he may have been captivated by the “exquisite noise” of bands like the Rolling Stones. At the centre of his musical world remained the Greek Song, tempered by the refinement of the classical tradition. Still, beneath the surface, there lingered a desire to engage with this extraordinary musical awakening on his own terms. He found his ideal counterparts in the New York Rock & Roll Ensemble. At their core were three Juilliard-trained musicians, armed with formidable classical discipline and virtuosity across multiple instruments – among them the late Michael Kamen, who would later collaborate with David Bowie, Pink Floyd, Metallica, and many others. The convergence of their charged electric energy with Hadjidakis’s early baroque leanings – already evident in the seminal *Gioconda’s Smile* – gave birth to one of the most distinctive albums of its time: a work that fused progressive rock with the deep folk sensibility of the composer’s musical language. With its finely judged orchestration and performance, the album achieved a rare balance, sounding at once unmistakably Greek and strikingly universal.

A leap forward in time: in a studio just outside Cologne in 2004, Raining Pleasure complete their recording of *Reflections*, joined by saxophonist David Lynch and Elli Paspala on the closing track, “Noble Dame”. A band of innate melodic sensitivity and distinctly European orientation, they recognised their kinship with the key traits of *Reflections* – its English lyrics, its rock-infused pulse – and delivered a reinterpretation of remarkable finesse and emotional depth. The album became a crowning moment in their discography, while also opening new paths of international recognition through its live presentations across various stages.

This rare alignment of musical forces returns to life this summer. And if we look closely at the stage of the ancient theatre, as Raining Pleasure unfold the gossamer world of *Reflections*, we may glimpse a reflection forming, before the orchestra or suspended in the night sky: an electric ensemble under the baton of a composer-magician – the New York Rock & Roll Ensemble and the eternal Manos Hadjidakis.

The evening will open with another work from Hadjidakis's American years. Conceived in London in the summer of 1969 and recorded in New York in December 1971, *Rhythmology* brings together six pairs of pieces for solo piano, revealing a needle-fine and highly personal engagement with the archetype of the rembetiko song. While earlier works of the composer included direct arrangements, *Rhythmology* evokes the essence of rembetiko through an entirely original compositional lens. As Hadjidakis writes in the album liner notes: "From the outset, I wanted to play seriously, with simple rhythms and with 'hasapika' interwoven among them, governed by constellations. Above all, I wanted to recall very old ways – the orthodox ones – of the bouzouki and rembetiko songs. I believe I had reached a point where I could listen to them without emotional excess, from a distance, more technically, and with all their deep erotic and sacred content intact." Dedicated to George Seferis – "a living Seferis who continues to walk among us" – this utterly idiosyncratic work from Hadjidakis's discography will be performed live by the pianist George-Emmanuel Lazaridis. With thirty-five years of ceaseless presence on the international music scene as a soloist, composer, and educator, George-Emmanuel Lazaridis has devoted a body of work of rare value to the interpretation and processing of the Hadjidakian idiom – an artistic contribution that stands worthily alongside his broader international career and his recognition as one of the most formidable pianists of our time. His appearance on the evening of 17 June is expected to consolidate that his performances stand "beyond comparison" (*BBC Music Magazine*, Adrian Jack), and are "so distinctive that they retain their singularity even when measured against great interpretations by Argerich, Horowitz, Brendel, and Zimerman" (*Gramophone Music Magazine*).

18 June

## **Einstürzende Neubauten**

*Ode to Avant Garde*

Those who will climb the stairs to the ancient theatre on this June night will find themselves confronted with a historical paradox: a demolition crew of musical conventions, disguised as a band, will have seized the stage of the Odeon of Herodes Atticus, transforming it into an exquisite industrial playground.

We are speaking, of course, of Einstürzende Neubauten (“Collapsing New Buildings”). Amongst the most vital biological processes that sustain a species, ensuring both its renewal and survival, is the capacity to absorb foreign DNA – even when it may prove hostile. With a wisdom that mirrors this principle, the German ensemble has traversed half a century of musical history, continuing to sound unmistakably like themselves because they sound like nothing else. While they may cast a fleeting glance toward passing sonic avant-gardes, their listening remains steadfastly attuned to a sound that emanates from within.

And what is this sound? Its birth act belongs to a West Berlin that no longer exists, however diligently we might search for it. A city defined by imagery such as this: urban reconstruction, factory units, squats, abandoned buildings, metal, concrete, the pervasive Wall. Within this feral landscape, a burning youth sought answers in the scripture of ruins and the hieroglyphs of sound: how to make art from the very materiality of one’s city. From the ashes of these visions emerged a form of musical guerrilla warfare: Einstürzende Neubauten.

Experimental yet rigorously disciplined, they stubbornly refused to adhere to inherited modes of composition and performance, returning instead to a kind of sacred zero. They already knew, too well, that to attain pure music, one must recalibrate one’s entire mental toolkit. In their case, the term “sonic arsenal” is no journalistic exaggeration: custom-built instruments, air compressors, plastic and metal tubes, canisters, sheets of steel, objets trouvés – even a jet turbine – form part of their musical equipment. With these weapons,

they forge restless industrial chants that range from hypnotic nocturnal sonatas to rhapsodies of noise and symphonies of steel.

The days when concert promoters hesitated to invite them – fearful of the damage they might inflict on the buildings in their wake – are long gone. Their presence at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus carries equal portions of poetry and irony: seasoned in bidding farewell to emblematic buildings (one recalls their saga before the demolition of the former East German Parliament), the “Collapsing New Buildings” will stand within the skeleton of this Attic monument and lull it with their metallic timbres, accompanying it into a temporary slumber ahead of its restoration.

A black box recording the history of Europe; a mural from a future not yet deciphered; a living organism that breaches consciousness and plants the seed of unease. On June 18 – now that their musical language has crystallised so gracefully with *Rampen* (2024) – we are invited to witness, body and soul, an ensemble that anyone who calls themselves a lover of art owes it to themselves to encounter at least once in a lifetime. The consequences may be transformative, reopening us to the awe of sound. After all, where else will you hear a jet turbine sing?

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## MUSIC

19 June

**Lena Platonos – Maria Farantouri**

*Fortunes*

Nature and its humble creatures; the bond between women; love and war; death and life; the fragile equilibrium between the sexes. The little-known world of the poetesses of antiquity comes into view in a performance drawn from Thanos Tsaknakis’s book *Fragments of the Silent Ones* (“Ton Siopilon Sparagmata”), set to music by Lena Platonos and brought to life by Maria Farantouri. Sappho – the presiding figure and “mother” of

them all – alongside Corinna, Telesilla, Anyte, Praxilla, Moero, Nossis, Diophile, Erinna, the evil eye healers, and other women poets of the ancient Greek world – the Silent ones, whose names alone have survived – emerge through the lyrical and tender fragments of this performance like a song both of now and of forever, as they rightly deserve.

Conceived especially for this year's Athens Epidaurus Festival and for a select series of performances at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus, this work sees Lena Platonos and Thanos Tsaknakis pull from oblivion the Platonic idea of the soul's immortality, reimagining it through the *Fortunes*, the composer's new work, presented here for the first time and performed by the internationally acclaimed flute soloist Stathis Karapanos. The texts are narrated by Maria Farantouri.

Lena Platonos – uniquely and by nature attuned to these ancient figures– becomes, through her music, the medium that channels the poetesses into the present, securing for them a life in the future, where they will stand as sung heroines. With her electronic palette, she imbues their words with contemporary textures, while at the same time drawing on the legacy of the ancient Greek modal system and weaving in elements of traditional songcraft. No interpreter could be more fitting for this material than the timeless – and therefore ever-relevant – voice of Maria Farantouri.

The performance reaches its apex with a return to Platonos's seminal work *Sabotage* (1981), a cornerstone album that helped shape the vocabulary of electronic music in Greece. Three striking pieces from the album ("One Thousand and One Nights", "Sabotage," and "In the Constellation of the Penguin") are presented here in new arrangements for flute, performed by Stathis Karapanos.

Composition – Narration (*Fragments of the Silent Ones*) – Keyboards (in the works *Moires* and *Sabotage*) **Lena Platonos** • Performance (*Fragments of the Silent Ones*) – Narration (*Moires*) **Maria Farantouri** • Orchestration **Lena Platonos, Stergios T. (Stergios Tsirliagkos)** • Flute soloist (in the works *Moires* and *Sabotage*) **Stathis Karapanos** • Musicians **Stergios T. keyboards, programming, electronic percussion** (*Moires*), **Michalis Porfyris cello**, **Giorgos Kontogiannis lyra**, **Vahan Galstian wind instruments** • Music direction (*Fragments of the Silent Ones*) – Keyboards **Michalis Papapetrou** • Co-production **Athens Epidaurus Festival, Technotropon – Artway Cultural Productions**

## CLASSICAL MUSIC

21 June

**ERT National Symphony Orchestra**

**World Music Day**

Every year, on June 21, we celebrate World Music Day with the annual concert of the ERT National Symphony Orchestra.

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## MUSIC

22 June

**Lykke Li**

Lykke Li does not write songs; she writes moments. Moments that meet you when you least expect them, overturning the course of your day and transforming your night. The irreducible voice behind “I Follow Rivers” and tracks such as “No Rest for the Wicked” and “I Never Learn,” comes to Greece for the very first time, meeting her devoted fanbase at last and fulfilling a long-standing concert wish.

With a career spanning over fifteen years, the multi-award-winning Swedish singer, songwriter, model, and actress has crafted a world in which pop sheds the polished sheen of contemporary studio production and is laid bare, reaching towards a raw and unvarnished form of expression. Time and again, she has chosen the flawed over the perfect, allowing tension, breaths, imperfection, and spontaneity to enter the frame and

inhabit her recordings – those very elements that render emotion dangerously vivid and disarmingly real.

Balancing, with irresistible ease, between an icy Scandinavian cool and an intimate, almost diaristic lyricism, her music unfolds as a fluid moodboard of emotion, drawing on indie pop, alternative sensibilities, and an elusive songwriting that feels cinematic. From the emotional gravity of “I Never Learn” to the dark, sensual charge of “so sad so sexy” and the fragile introspection of “Eyeeye,” each of Lykke Li’s songs does not seek to impress, but to slip quietly into the listener’s mind and inner world, forging a bond that is at once subtle and deeply binding.

On 22 June, the Odeon of Herodes Atticus becomes the ideal setting for this long-awaited convergence – a concert that will traverse the entire gamut between the fragile and the explosive. With new material on the horizon and a forthcoming album expected in 2026, Lykke Li continues to redefine the contours of contemporary pop with impeccable style, wise instinct, and an unerring command of atmosphere.

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**THEATRE**

**–100 YEARS OF THE ACADEMY OF ATHENS–**

25 & 26 June

**Stathis Livathinos**

Euripides

*Hecuba*

In the shade of Plato’s *Republic*

Euripides’ *Hecuba*, written in the early years of the Peloponnesian War, does more than recount the fall of mythical Troy; it also portrays the twilight of the Athenian polis as a coherent political and civic structure. Throughout the play, the invocation of law and justice

recurs insistently – an indication of a period in which neither can truly function. By contrast, Plato's *Republic*, composed during a period of cultural upswing, articulates a utopian vision of reconstruction, binding knowledge to the very fabric of political order. Though separated by genre and time, the two works align over a shared axis of inquiry: What are justice, truth, and education?

Where do the limits of human morality lie?

At the heart of the staging stands Hecuba – once powerful and benevolent – now an emblematic figure of moral and political collapse. Shattered by loss and exposed to the violence of history, she confronts the disintegration of every stable point of reference in her world. Queen, mother, captive – she bears upon her body the marks of war and human brutality. As every sense of justice dissolves, she is gradually driven toward an extreme threshold where ache, vengeance, morality, and justice become indistinguishable.

Set against her devastation, the Platonic fragments introduce a different field of reference. Justice – as an applied idea aimed at the harmonic coexistence of the whole – and the pursuit of truth beyond appearances and the narrow perspective of the individual, form a conceptual framework within which Hecuba is re-inscribed. They trace the contours of a mental horizon from which Euripides' characters have long since drifted. In this way, the excerpts from the *Republic* expand the field of the tragic in *Hecuba*, where – aside from the dead, who are always the young and the innocent – no one emerges morally unscathed.

The backbone of the staging is the "Allegory of the Cave," Plato's emblematic parable on illusion, knowledge, and the possibility of awakening. The image of prisoners mistaking shadows for reality establishes here a powerful theatrical condition. Within it, Hecuba rises as a catalytic presence, while the incisive directorial gaze of Stathis Livathinos transforms the union of tragedy and philosophy into a locus of reflection and trial – one where the limits of awareness, human measure, and responsibility are relentlessly tested.

<p>The production is presented as part of the centenary celebrations of the Academy of Athens (1926–2026).</p>
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Translation **Elsa Andrianou** • Text composition **Elsa Andrianou, Stathis Livathinos** • Direction – Dramaturgical adaptation **Stathis Livathinos** • Set & costume design **Eleni Manolopoulou** • Original music composition **Thodoris Abazis** • Lighting design **Alekos Anastasiou** • Assistant to the director **Ilektra Maggina** • Cast (in alphabetical order) **Giorgos Dambasis, Antonis Giannakos, Nikos Kardonis, Nestor Kopsidas, Anna Magou, Lilly Meleme, Polyxeni Papakonstantinou, Erato Pissi, Theodosia Savvaki, Maria Savvidou, Virginia Tamparopoulou, Aris Troupakis** • Musicians on stage **Iakovos Pavlopoulos** *percussion*, **Angelos Pappas** *electric guitar* • Executive producer **Polyplanity Productions** • Production management **Yolanda Markopoulou, Vicky Strataki** • Co-production **Athens Epidaurus Festival – Lykofos Cultural Organisation/ George Lykiardopoulos**

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## CLASSICAL MUSIC

29 June

**Athens State Orchestra – Michał Nesterowicz**

*Symphony No. 8*

By Gustav Mahler

Even within the monumental symphonic output of Gustav Mahler, *Symphony No. 8* occupies a singular place. It signals an extreme –indeed, a culmination – not only in the Mahlerian oeuvre, but in the Romantic symphonic lineage in its entirety. The epithet “Symphony of a Thousand” was not the composer’s own, but was coined by the impresario Emil Gutmann as a publicity device ahead of the premiere. It may sound like an exaggeration today, yet it is estimated that no fewer than 858 singers and 171 musicians participated in the performance. And yet, the essence of the work lies neither in its duration (*Symphony No. 3* is longer) nor in the sheer scale of its performing forces (*Symphony No. 2* demands similarly vast resources). The undisputed grandeur of the “Eighth” resides in its purely affirmative spirit: it is the only one of Mahler’s symphonies

entirely devoid of irony, doubt, or inner conflict. Instead, it unfolds with a masterful, unyielding rhetorical force, conveying messages of profound spirituality with unflappable inner conviction and musical certainty. Its premiere on 12 September 1910 in Munich, conducted by the composer himself, was the greatest triumph of Mahler's lifetime, just seven months before his death. Mahler himself regarded the Eighth as his supreme compositional achievement, while the great German writer Thomas Mann encapsulated the essence of this colossal work when he wrote that it "expresses the art of our time in its profoundest and most sacred form."

Surely, practical considerations alone render performances of the Eighth a rare artistic event – and therefore one of exceptional significance. On this occasion, the internationally acclaimed Polish conductor Michał Nesterowicz leads the Athens State Orchestra, joined by an outstanding roster of vocal soloists and extensive choral forces, offering the Festival audience one of those rare opportunities to experience this epic masterwork live.

### **Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)**

*Symphony No. 8 in E-flat major* ("Symphony of a Thousand")

Part I

*Hymnus: Veni, Creator Spiritus*

Part II

*Schlusszene aus Goethes Faust*

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30 June

***Further details to be announced soon.***

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