

Athens, September 12, 2023

PRESS RELEASE

Visual Arts programme

THE ARTIST ON THE COMPOSER

A Greek National Opera + NEON co-production

Ioanna Pantazopoulou | *A Summer Evening*

22, 23, 24 September 2023

Greek National Opera, Stavros Niarchos Hall – SNFCC

The Artist on the Composer – a pioneering programme run by the Greek National Opera in collaboration with NEON – connects contemporary artists with classical music and opera since 2019.

For its third iteration, the programme – curated by GNO's Artistic Director Giorgos Koumendakis and NEON's Director Elina Kountouri – commissions the artist Ioanna Pantazopoulou to create an immersive installation in which visual arts and music invite audiences to discover a magical, fairy tale world.

A Summer Evening is a suspended installation consisting of 135 sculptures that disappear and reappear in a meticulously choreographed sequence, accompanied by the thirty-six-minute music score *Music for a Summer Evening (Makrokosmos III)* by contemporary American composer George Crumb performed live by Nikos Kyrioglou and Stefanos Thomopoulos (amplified piano) as well as Kazuyo Tsunehiro, Kostas Argyropoulos (percussion).

The work is choreographed progressively, inextricably linked to the music, and reveals a playful yet dystopian environment. A tropical island drawn from Pantazopoulou's childhood memories of her visits to her father in the Seychelles, where he was Consul General of Greece. A natural landscape resembling to a childhood dream, between the world we know and a blur, uncertain threat. A place threatened by overexploitation yet protected by rituals, myths and the imagination.

Ioanna Pantazopoulou lives and works in New York. She creates sculptural monuments and immersive installations that seek to disrupt and challenge the conventional approach of spaces and objects. Her works overturn the notion of experience and participation and attempt – through unexpected collisions – to create new connections between the past and the present, to what has been lost and recovered. Her works appear in several permanent collections: Solomon R. Guggenheim and MCA Chicago, Fidelity Investments Corporate Art Collection.

George Crumb (1929–2022) is one of the most important avant-garde contemporary music composers of the 20th century. Crumb established a unique musical language while his work has received, among other prizes, a Pulitzer Prize for music (1968) and a Grammy Award (2001). His work is included in the repertoire of preeminent musical ensembles and organizations around the world.

Makrokosmos is a series of four volumes of pieces for piano. The name alludes to *Mikrokosmos*, a set of piano pieces by Béla Bartók. The third volume, entitled *Music for a Summer Evening* is scored for two amplified pianos as well as percussion.

Participation in the co-production of Greek National Opera is made possible by a Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF) [www.SNF.org] grant for enhancing the GNO's artistic outreach.

NEON is solely funded by its founder Dimitris Daskalopoulos.

The Artist on the Composer programme – run by the Greek National Opera and NEON – connects pioneering contemporary artists, filmmakers and producers with live performances of orchestral music. For each new commission, the artist communicates and initiates a dialogue with scores by classical composers. Freed from typical musical conventions and storylines, the intention is to reach audiences who potentially was not interested in opera.

The first commission of the programme was to Nikos Navridis in 2019; an installation that extended in all Stavros Niarchos Hall, GNO areas, with live performance of works by Gustav Mahler and György Kurtág.

The second commission of the programme in 2022 was to the award-winning Greek filmmaker Yorgos Lanthimos who created *Bleat*, a short film presented with live performance of works by J. S. Bach / Knut Nystedt and Toshio Hosokawa.

VISUAL ARTS PROGRAMME

Music and Visual Arts Cycle, a Greek National Opera + NEON co-production

The Artist on the Composer

Curator: Giorgos Koumendakis (GNO Artistic Director) – Elina Kountouri (NEON Director)

Third commission: **Ioanna Pantazopoulou | A Summer Evening**

22, 23, 24 September 2023 | Starts at: 22/9 at 19.30 & 21.00, 23-24/9 at 19.30

Stavros Niarchos Hall of the Greek National Opera – SNFCC

Music: George Crumb *Music for a Summer Evening (Makrokosmos III)*

Piano: Nikos Kyriosoglou, Stefanos Thomopoulos

Percussion: Kazuyo Tsunehiro, Kostas Argyropoulos

Light Design: Eleni Choumou

Architectural design: Fanis Kafantaris, Nikolas Arnis

Tickets: 10 euros (*ticket price supports the projects of the Greek National Opera*)

Presale: ticketservices.gr, GNO Box Office (+302130885700, daily 09.00-21.00)

nationalopera.gr

neon.org.gr

NOTES TO EDITORS

The **Greek National Opera** (GNO) was founded in 1939 and is Greece's one and only opera house. In 2017, the house moved into new facilities at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center (SNFCC) and expanded its arts programming across two stages: the Stavros Niarchos Hall, which hosts large-scale opera and ballet productions, and the Alternative Stage, where smaller-scale productions of music theatre and contemporary opera are presented alongside concerts, festivals, and more.

With the composer Giorgos Koumendakis at the helm, serving as Artistic Director since 2017, the GNO has forged itself a new creative identity founded on the core pillars of artistic outreach, international partnerships, the commissioning of new works, connecting with a variety of other art forms, working with major artists, and broadening audiences. Beyond its two stages at the SNFCC, the GNO also presents performances at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus and other open-air venues, not to mention additional arts events and activities across Athens and Greece. As part of its commitment to education, the GNO has developed a broad range of social outreach and learning programmes.

The GNO is funded by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture. Its Lead Donor is the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF).

NEON is a non-profit organisation that works to bring contemporary culture closer to everyone. It is committed to broadening the appreciation, understanding, and creation of contemporary art in Greece, and to the firm belief that this is a key tool for growth and development.

NEON, founded in 2013 by collector and entrepreneur Dimitris Daskalopoulos, breaks with the convention that limits the contemporary art foundation of a collector to a single place. NEON's space is the city. It acts on a multitude of initiatives, spaces, and civic and social contexts seeking to expose the ability of contemporary art to stimulate, inspire and affect the individual and society at large. NEON constructively collaborates with cultural institutions and supports the programmes of public and private institutions to enhance increased access and inventive interaction with contemporary art.

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ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ ΝΙΑΡΧΟΣ
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