

# TERZOPOULOS TRIBUTE DELPHI



**Theodoros Terzopoulos**, born in Makrygialos in Northern Greece in 1945, studied acting in Athens. Between 1972 and 1976 he was a master student and assistant at the Berliner Ensemble. Returning to Greece, he worked as director of the drama school in Thessaloniki. In 1985 he founded the theatre group Attis, which he has led since then. From 1985 to 1988 he was also Artistic Director of the International Meeting of Ancient Greek Drama in Delphi, which included participation from Heiner Müller, Marianne McDonald, Tadashi Suzuki, Robert Wilson, Andrei Serban, Wole Soyinka, Min Tanaka, Yuri Lyubimov and Anatoly Vasiliev. He was a co-founder of the International Institute of Mediterranean Theatre and has been Chairman of its Greek Committee since 1991 and of the International Committee of Theater Olympics since 1993, for which he has conceived events in Delphi (1995), Shizuoka (1999), Moscow (2001), Istanbul (2006), Seoul (2010) and Beijing (2014), Wrocław (2016), in 22 cities across India (2018), Toga, Japan, and St. Petersburg (2019). Since the late 1970s, he has continuously developed an individual, heavily codified, intercultural theatrical language. Guest performances of Attis Theater and workshops on Terzopoulos' working methods take place throughout the world. As a guest director, he has directed ancient tragedies by Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, as well as operas and works by important contemporary European writers, in theatres in Russia, the USA, China, Italy, Taiwan, Germany and elsewhere.



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TRIBUTE  
DELPHI**



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ΥΠΟΥΡΓΕΙΟ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΣΜΟΥ  
ΚΑΙ ΑΘΛΗΤΙΣΜΟΥ  
**ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΣΤΙΚΟ  
ΚΕΝΤΡΟ ΔΕΛΦΩΝ**  
HELLENIC MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND SPORTS  
EUROPEAN CULTURAL CENTRE OF DELPHI

## **HÉLÈNE AHRWEILER**

*President of the Administration Council  
European Cultural Centre of Delphi*

An inner and long-lasting relationship links the European Cultural Centre of Delphi with the work of Theodoros Terzopoulos. For a long time, the questions and concerns of this great director and outstanding man of the theatre were also the concern and anxieties of the Centre.

Delphi has always been a perfect setting for the presentation of all the remarkable performances of Theodoros Terzopoulos either as research experiments or as proposed solutions. Their acceptance by the audience, as well as by experts and critics, has always been encouraging and often very enthusiastic.

I would also like to note that Theodoros Terzopoulos was, for many years, the artistic director of the emblematic meetings of Ancient Drama organised by the European Cultural Centre of Delphi.

This year's tribute is organised as a small token of this longstanding friendship between Theodoros Terzopoulos and the Centre of Delphi. "The Return of Dionysos" is the main event of the Centre's artistic programme for this year. Participants are distinguished foreign and Greek academics, researchers and artists whom I wish to warmly thank for their contribution.

The tribute includes an international symposium, a demonstration of the method of Theodoros Terzopoulos, a photographic and a sound installation. The crowning event is the performance *The Trojan Women* by Euripides, directed by Terzopoulos, at the Ancient Theatre of Delphi.

The “Return of Dionysos” is made possible thanks to the Onassis Foundation’s generous contribution. The cooperation of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Phokis has been invaluable. Let me also remind you that 2018 has been declared “Year of the European Cultural Heritage” and Delphi shares these celebrations.

The tribute to Theodoros Terzopoulos is organised, despite the very limited financial resources of the Centre of Delphi, thanks to the dedication and the high professional quality of the few associates of the Centre. I wish to thank and congratulate them as President of the European Cultural Centre of Delphi.

powered by

**ONASSIS CULTURE**

## **AFRODITI PANAGIOTAKOU**

*Director of Culture, Onassis Foundation, GREECE*

The body is a very dangerous thing. Myths are, too. And Theodoros Terzopoulos' theatre is a theatre wrought from myths and bodies; a theatre beautiful for reasons that transcend aesthetic categories. "Beauty lies in change. That's the intoxication of things. I always seek a clash, a rupture. I'm not interested in things resting peacefully in their beauty", he says.

At the Onassis Foundation, we often say we have no interest in beauty per se. Meaning that showing beautiful things to the world just isn't enough. Because we are not striving simply to produce culture; we want to change culture. Change means conflict. Pressing on ahead without a safety net is liberating; it can also be self-destructive – unless the freedom comes with knowledge, specifically well-founded knowledge.

A forward-thinking man, never afraid of conflict, Theodoros Terzopoulos is more than the internationally celebrated director with 2,100 performances to his credit. He laid the foundations of an actor training method that places its trust in the body, in myth and ritual, in Dionysos. For the god of theatre, of life and death, eternal transformation and conflict, always returns to the Attis theatre.

Given his oeuvre and his career, you could almost say that the Onassis Foundation's entire cultural mission over the last four decades is encapsulated in Theodoros Terzopoulos: presenting Greece at its best, here and everywhere, with humankind and society at its core and art as an engine of change. That's what Theodoros Terzopoulos does. His work comprises a theatre education in its own right; his method is an act of liberation; his axis, around which the works revolve, is people – always people.

And we are at his side. As a gesture, our support for this Tribute to Theodoros Terzopoulos at Delphi is especially symbolic. The first step in a long-term relationship. Because we too have learned a great deal from Theodoros Terzopoulos. Have learned too from what he is doing here: connecting people with one another, connecting generations, making clear to us all that the very future's future is in fact the present moment. Our job then is just to talk with one other, to follow his guidelines, all of which are rooted in learning how to listen, how to give our full attention. I consider myself lucky because I have already seen Terzopoulos' future, my children have seen Terzopoulos' performances, and that means something for the generations to come. And some of us may sometime meet again and say: "We first met at Delphi, oh yes, with Terzopoulos, oh yes..."

**PROF. ERIKA FISCHER-LICHTE**

*Professor of Theatre Studies at Freie Universitat, Berlin, GERMANY*

*Director of the International Research Centre for Advanced Studies on 'Interweaving Performance Cultures', GERMANY*

Dear Theo,

I am so deeply sorry that I cannot participate in this wonderful event, held in your honor. As you know quite well, I owe some of my deepest and most important experiences in theatre to your productions. The first was the *Bacchae* and the last, as we both remember, *Prometheus* in Wroclaw.

The title of this conference is *The Return of Dionysos* and this is not by chance. As we both know, as a child, Dionysos was dismembered by the Titans and then Zeus put together the fragments of the dismembered body. This is so meaningful for your theatre. In its center is the human body. Since Helmuth Plessner, we are all very much aware of the fact that we are a body, that we are body subjects. On the other hand, we have a body, a body that we can instrumentalize and put to very different kinds of use. The body-subject and the body-object are very closely related to each other. Everyone grows up in a particular culture and gains quite a number of different body techniques. Body techniques that are linked to this very particular culture and determined by it. For the actors, moreover, techniques are shaped by the special kind of training. So, what you want the actors to do is to unlearn the specific body techniques they have acquired so far. We can say that you ask them to dismember their body and then to put together the fragments piece by piece in a new way, creating a completely new body-object. But since the body is nothing without the body-subject and because they influence and are related to each other, this way also, another body-subject comes into being. This is in fact, the journey which Dionysos made in a certain respect.

This is not only a method that shapes a new body, body-subject and body-object, but is also one which forms the basis for the co-operation of actors hailing from very different cultures. Because all of them have to do the same. But what comes out of that, the result, is by no means a homogeneous body. They do not do the same, although they have undone the formal body-object in a very similar way and acquired

a new one, as well as a new body-subject. This is one of the great aspects of your work with actors: that actors hailing from such different cultures and performance cultures are able to collaborate with each other in such a fruitful and promising way.

This is also the basis for another thing, which is particularly important to me. That this is a new approach to Greek tragedy. As we all know, since the late nineteenth century, people in Greece, in Germany and in Europe in general, were more or less convinced that Greek tragedy is “universal” and therefore transmits universal meanings and values. This is, of course, of great doubt to us. What happens now is that your method, when you apply it to Greek tragedy, “universalizes” Greek tragedy in a way that is completely new. Because it is based in the human body and springs from the human body. The link between the body and the word, the *logos*, is a completely new one. The *logos* is not something inscribed into the body, but which comes out of the body, grows from the body, emerges from it and then through the breath, which is also a part of the body, is conveyed to the world and onto the spectators. One might call this a universal proceeding, but it has nothing to do with the universalism, cherished so much since the eighteenth century.

Theo, I want to thank you very much for the experience you allowed for with your productions, for the new insights you enabled me to make into theatre as well as into Greek tragedy. I hope very much that you will continue to create new works in this way, but of course in very different manners, as you used to do and that I shall also have the opportunity in the future to witness them. So, once more, congratulations on this great event, which you more than deserve and best wishes for your future projects.

**ETEL ADNAN**

*Writer, Painter, LEBANON*

I'm deeply sorry that I cannot attend the tribute to Theodoros; a tribute he mostly deserves. I love his job because he looks to the East. It is authentic and, while it is modern, it is deeply rooted in the tradition. It unites the old with the new, creating an authentic form. When you listen to Theodoros singing oriental melodies, you realize his relationship with the tradition. You feel that in his work nothing ends, it goes on forever, because his work focuses on the nucleus of the body.

I do not visit Greece often, but Theodoros is always in my mind, I love him very much, because he is authentic and his work is collective and profound. I love him, as if we have known each other for a long time. When we meet, I speak Greek better. His voice reminds me of my father's voice and I am moved.

## THEODOROS TERZOPOULOS' POEM

You now arrive,  
and I am eager  
to participate  
in your beautiful celebration.

You now arrive  
to remind me  
that the Word is the Earth  
and that Knowledge is Conscience  
that Passion is its Removal  
and Harmony is its Contradiction.

You now arrive at the homeland  
and I linger around you  
eager to participate in your beautiful celebration.

Crash the Mirror, you say,  
And the fragments will  
give birth to a new image.

Looking in your eyes  
hallucinations possess me  
the journey of Transgression begins.

You arrive now when I am ready  
To offer my Body  
to the sanctum of the Uncanny!

An evening in Delphi  
When the mountains are bleeding.



Photo page 19

*Theodoros Terzopoulos, Erdogan Kavaz at the Ancient Theatre of Delphi,  
The Trojan Women rehearsal (photo Johanna Weber)*

**MASTERS  
DIRECTORS  
ACTORS  
ARTISTS**



# The Return

ANATOLY VASILIEV

*Director, RUSSIA*

I will speak about Terzopoulos and my generation – since we are almost the same age. I first came to Delphi in 1995, invited by him. Our acquaintance and relationship have been decisive for my relation with Greece. For twenty-three years now – from 1995 until now – I have been feeling connected with Greece.

I saw his performances in Delphi in 1995 and it was a formidable experience. The most striking memory I have was walking through the night, climbing a mountain and then suddenly beholding the amazing view of the ancient theatre of Delphi and seeing the performance. It was a remarkable performance, with a new, utterly different expressive language. I had never seen such a performance. For the first time I felt that I had been transferred to an ancient world and that experience was stunning. I was thinking that if this world always existed, if our European civilization maintained fragments of this ancient civilization, then we would be able to talk about a great culture. Instead, now we only have the European culture and I, as a Russian, am a part of that culture. We have not maintained the tradition of the ancient Greek theatre, unlike the Japanese or the Chinese who have preserved theirs despite the revolutions. And then, along with my enthusiasm, I felt sad because I realized that it required a human feat, the feat of a director and a small troupe of actors, to represent it and say: “This exists. Embrace it. Embrace us.” And the most important: “Preserve it.”

Then, I visited Delphi many times and there it was decided that Moscow would host the 3<sup>rd</sup> Theatre Olympics. Once again, I owe this to Theodoros. To be precise, I owe a lot to Theodoros. On the occasion of the Theatre Olympics, we had proposed an adventurous idea to the Moscow government: to build a new theatre building, based on my theatre concept and the designs of a fellow architect, scenographer and artist, who also knew Delphi very well. But to make this happen we needed money and the support of the Moscow government; and we only had two years until the Theatre Olympics. So we needed an eminent and prestigious person to support this endeavor and this person was Theodoros. We all sat around a big conference