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HELLENIC REPUBLIC  
Ministry of Culture



# SECOND INTER-BALKAN CONFERENCE ON THE PERFORMING ARTS

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NATIONAL THEATRE  
OF NORTHERN GREECE

HELLENIC  
OPEN  
UNIVERSITY

PROGRAMME OF  
POSTGRADUATE STUDIES  
IN PERFORMING ARTS

## MYTHS AND LEGENDS OF THE PERFORMING ARTS IN THE BALKAN REGION

### 8-9 | 3 | 2026

VENUE:  
FOYER OF THE SOCIETY FOR MACEDONIAN STUDIES,  
NATIONAL THEATRE OF NORTHERN GREECE, THESSALONIKI

CO-ORGANISERS



national university of  
theatre and film  
„I. L. Caragiale”



UNDER THE AUSPICES OF

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# **SECOND INTER-BALKAN CONFERENCE ON THE PERFORMING ARTS “MYTHS AND LEGENDS OF THE PERFORMING ARTS IN THE BALKAN REGION”**

**8-9 MARCH 2026**

**FOYER OF THE SOCIETY FOR  
MACEDONIAN STUDIES  
THESSALONIKI**

Host Institutions:

National Theatre of Northern Greece (NTNG)

Hellenic Open University, MA Programme in Performing Arts (PAT)

Co-organisers:

- Inter-Balkan Network of Culture, Art, and Education

- National University of Theatre and Film “I.L. Caragiale”, Bucharest (UNATC)

- Centre for Ancient Rhetoric and Drama (CARD), Department of Philology, University of the Peloponnese

- Association of “The Friends of the European Cultural Centre of Delphi”

# Conference Programme

Sunday, 8 March 2026

9:45-10:10 Registrations

9:00-9:15 Registration

9:15 Opening

9:15-10:00

Welcome Addresses:

**Yianna Karibali - Tsiptsiou**, Emeritus Professor of Law (AUTH), President of the Administrative Board of the National Theatre of Northern Greece

**Andreas Markantonatos**, Vice-President and Founding Member of the Inter-Balkan Network of Culture, Art, and Education; Director of the MA Programme in Performing Arts, Hellenic Open University; Professor, Department of Philology, University of the Peloponnese, Greece

**Asterios Peltekis**, Artistic Director of the National Theatre of Northern Greece; Leader-Instructor in the MA Programme in Performing Arts, Hellenic Open University

**Nikos Koukis**, Historian, President of the Association of "The Friends of the European Cultural Centre of Delphi", Former President of the Hellenic Foundation for Culture; President of the Advisory Board of the MA Programme in Performing Arts, Hellenic Open University

Greetings:

**Konstantinos P. Gioulekas**, Deputy Minister of the Interior, Sector of Macedonia and Thrace

**Jason Fotilas**, Deputy Minister of Culture, responsible for Contemporary Culture

**Nikolaos G. Papaioannou**, Deputy Minister for Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs, and Sports

**Vasileios Gakis**, Deputy Mayor of Culture, Tourism Development & Intermunicipal Co-operation of the Municipality of Thessaloniki

**Christos Galilaias**, Artistic Director of Thessaloniki Concert Hall

Keynote Speeches:

10:00-10:20 **Andreas Markantonatos**: *The Myth of Ajax in Greek Tragedy: Memory, Honour, and the Politics of Heroism*

10:20-10:40 **Asterios Peltekis**: *The Myth as a Trans-Balkan and International Language: From National Narrative to Stage Coexistence*

Round Table

10:50-11:50 *The Resilience of Myth on Contemporary Stage*

Moderator: **Savas Patsalidis**

**Asterios Peltekis**, **Constantin Chiriac**, **Mihaela Bețiu**, **Savvas Stroumpos**, **Liviu Lucaci**, **Michael Marmarinos**, **Giannis Rigas**, **Marianna Calbari**

Track 1: *The Social Dynamics of Myths & Legends*

Moderator: **Andreas Markantonatos**

11:55–12:10

**Aurelian Bălăiță**, *Shadows and Myths: Perspectives on Theatrical Aesthetics*

12:10–12:25

**Ivan Dodovski**, *Unravelling the Balkan Dionysus: Western Arrogance and Eastern Irrationality in Goran Stefanovski's Play "Bachanalìa"*

12:25–12:40

**Nikolay Iordanov**, *Myths and Legends as a Basis of the Bulgarian Dramaturgical Canon*

12:40–12:55

**Barbara Georgopoulou**, *The Festival of Agios Giannis: Folk Legends and Social Demands*

12:55–13:10

**Janko Ljumović**, *From Incident to Mainstream: Repertoire Strategies and the Reconfiguration of Myth and Legend in Contemporary Montenegrin Theatre*

13:10–13:25

**Despina Kosmopoulou**, *Issues of Power and Identity in Sophocles' "Oedipus Tyrannus" and Robert Icke's "Oedipus"*

13:25–13:40 Discussion

13:45–14:05 *Presentation of the Proceedings Volume of the 1st Inter-Balkan Conference on Performing Arts*

**Andreas Markantonatos, Despina Kosmopoulou, Mihaela Bețiu, Asterios Peltekis, Barbara Georgopoulou**

14.10

**"Mama Loba, Nights with Myths"**

A theatrical action–performance exploring myths and legends from ancient Greek, Balkan, and Celtic mythology, centred on female archetypes.

A theatrical rendering and animation based on the anthropological research of Polyxeni Spyropoulou, entitled "Archetypes and Stereotypes of Femininities in Myth".

Performers: Polyxeni Spyropoulou, Giorgos Kolovos

# Monday, 9 March 2026

9:00–9:15 Registration

Track 2: *Ancient Myths and Classical Heritage on the Balkan Stage*

Moderator: **Asterios Peltekis**

9:15–9:45

**Spyros Syropoulos & Andreas Lagos**, *Resurrection of the Dead in Ancient Greek Drama and Folk Tradition: Symbolism, Principles and Cultural Representations*

9:45–10:00

**Ana Stojanoska**, *From Ritual to Dramaturgy: Folklore and Ethno-Theatre as the Foundation of National Ethno-Drama*

10:00–10:15

**Kamelia Nikolova**, *Ancient Myths on the Contemporary Bulgarian Stage*

10:15–10:30

**Ion M. Tomus**, *Modern and Contemporary Reworkings of Balkan Myth: Embodied Practice in Experimental Performance*

10:30–10:45

**Javor Gardev**, *The Revenge of the Estranged*

10:45–11:00 Discussion

Track 3: *The Intimacy of Ancient Myths & Legends*

Moderator: **Barbara Georgopoulou**

11:05–11:20

**Argyro Loukaki**, *Cinematic Antigone: Mise en Scène and Visual Arts in the Film by Giorgos Tzavellas (1961)*

11:20–11:35

**Pinelopi Fragkaki**, *Myth and History as Interrelated Narratives in Dramatic Texts, Historiography, and Theatrical Performance*

11:35–11:50

**Sofia Siamanidou**, *War and Propaganda: The Case of Iphigenia in Georgian Theatre*

11:50–12:05

**Călin Cibotari**, *The Manole Effect, or How 'At Home' We Still Feel in Our Founding Myths*

12:05–12:20

**Oana Cristea Grigorescu**, *Navigating Upstream on the River of History: Performative Intercultural Interferences*

12:20–12:35

**Oana Bors**, *War and Its Mythical Sources in the Drama of Matei Vișniec*

12:35–12:50 Discussion

Track 4: *Young Researchers Panel – Contemporary Readings of Myths & Legends*

Moderator: **Mihaela Bețiu**

12:55–13:05

**Octavian Szalad**, *Myths of Birth and Rebirth in Romanian Puppetry*

13:05–13:15

**Elpida-Angeliki Komianou**, *Reactivating Myth through Performance-Based Pedagogy – Guns and Roses: ‘Little Trackers’ and the Learning of Violence, Anger, and Conflict*

13:15–13:25

**Silvia-Alexandra Bem**, *The Meșterul Manole Myth as a Paradigm for Transformational Leadership*

13:25–13:35

**Anna Chronopoulou**, *The Sound of the Myth, the Myth of the Sound: The Music in the Performances of “Ornithes,” “Acharnians,” and “Eirene,”* Directed by Karolos Koun

13:35–13:45

**Stella Kollia**, *Black Was the Cart: Women as Spoils – From the Mythical Andromache and Cassandra to the ‘Lenaki’ of the Mourning Ritual of Alistrati, Serres*

13:45–13:55

**Paul-Eugen Pristavu**, *The Alchemy of the Hero: Co-Active Therapeutic Theatre and the Triumph over Addiction through Balkan Fairy Tale*

13:55–14:05

**Maria Georgiadou**, *The Ballad of the Dead Brother: From Archaic Myth to Maro Vamvounaki’s Dramatic Work “If You Are the Wind, Go”*

14:05–14:15

**Teona-Irina Giugariu**, *Myth and Reality in Ovidiu Georgescu’s Film “The Last Incubus”*

14.15- 14.25

**Bogdan Contea**, *Returning to Myth: Tragedy and Performative Revitalization in Romanian Theatre*

14:30–15:30 Break (light lunch)

Track 5: *Balkan Myths & Legends from Multiple Perspectives*

Moderator: **Despina Kosmopoulou**

15:30–15:45

**Enud Kuka**, *Myth as Spatial Experience: Scenic Space and Performative Memory in Balkan Theatre*

15:45–16:00

**Elpida Zampetaki**, *Ancient Greek Tragedy as a Mirror of Post-1990 Social and Political Realities in the Balkans*

16:00–16:15

**Iskra Shukarova / Esther Baker**, *Willow Tree*

16:15–16:30

**Maria Papadopoulou**, *The Myth of Spider and the Hidden Secrets*

16:30–16:45

**Lamprinos Platypodis**, *Euripides's Medea: Myth and Reality in Performance*

16:45–17:00 Discussion

# Performances

17:00–17:20 Mariupol Theatre of Ukraine in Exile

Evangelos Kosmidis

Myth in Real Time: Mariupol, Testimony, and the Performative Rewriting of War

Madzia Modrzynska

Anna Pracheva

Vladyslav Piatin-Ponomarenko

Diana Klymenko

Mehman Gamidov

17:25–17:45 National Theatre of Northern Greece – Drama School

“BACCHAE MATERIAL”

A performance excerpt based on Euripides' Bacchae, presented by the second-year students of the Drama School of the National Theatre of Northern Greece (NTNG) under the direction of Polyxeni Spyropoulou.

The Bacchae constitutes both a field of construction and deconstruction of theatrical function. The work with the second-year students of the NTNG Drama School is grounded in codes of contemporary acting and the embodiment of mythical motifs, so as to activate both the ensemble and each individual performer on stage as a daemonic/rebellious body. Improvisations, the conditions of devised theatre, and the verses of the Bacchae alike call for the return of Dionysus, who symbolises art itself.

Rendition: **Giorgos Cheimonas**

Teaching/Directing: **Polyxeni Spyropoulou**

Second-Year Students: **Sophia Antoniadou, Athina Zevgariou, Martha Markada, Charalampos Maroufides, Maria Bovali, Dimitris Moysidis, Myrto Pneumatikaki, Stavros Rondiris, Athina Triantafyllou, Nikos Chapsalis**

17:50–18:10 UNATC (National University of Theatre and Film “I.L. Caragiale”, Bucharest)

Performance: “Iona”

Synopsis

What if you woke up one morning and discovered that you were living your life inside the belly of a giant fish? Iona searches for a way out—toward the light, but also toward the truth of his own identity. The interior of the fish becomes a territory of memory and present time, a chamber of the mind where thoughts roll, collide, wound one another... and even destroy each other. Iona carries the fragility, humor, and rebellion of this journey, sketching new destinies on the map of an inner escape. Perhaps Iona is about all of us—caught between screens and dreams, between fear and the longing for freedom. It is a reminder that no matter how many bellies we tear open, we remain in search of a wider horizon—and that the exit, more often than not, begins with an act of courage. “Iona, we shall break through to the light!”—perhaps this is how we find ourselves again, even in the heart of the unknown.

Author: **Marin Sorescu** (Romania)

Director: **Florin Liță**

Actor: **Ștefan Vătășoiu**

Video Projection: **Paul Pristavu**

English Surtitles: **Silvia Bem**

Set Design: **Maria Alexandra Ivan**

Sound Design: **Adrian Picioarea**

Lighting Design: **Ruxandra**

18:15–18:40 Closing Remarks

End of Conference

## List of Speakers

1. Esther Baker, Adjunct Faculty, Temple University; Interdisciplinary Choreographer
2. Aurelian Bălăiță, Rector, George Enescu National University of Arts Iași; Actor and Director
3. Silvia-Alexandra Bem, PhD Candidate, I.L. Caragiale National University of Theatre and Film (UNATC), Bucharest, Romania
4. Mihaela Bețiu, Associate Professor PhD, I.L. Caragiale National University of Theatre and Film (UNATC); Treasurer and Founding Member of the Inter-Balkan Network of Culture, Art, and Education; Editor-in-Chief, CONCEPT Academic Journal; Bucharest, Romania
5. Oana Bors, Assistant Professor, I.L. Caragiale National University of Theatre and Film (UNATC), Bucharest; Artistic Director, FEST-FDR Timișoara / European Festival of Performing Arts in Timișoara
6. Marianna Calbari, Artistic Director, Art Theatre; Stage Director
7. Constantin Chiriac, President of the Sibiu International Theatre Festival (FITS)
8. Anna Chronopoulou, PhD Candidate, Department of Theatre Studies, University of the Peloponnese; Musician, Actor
9. Călin Cibotari, Professor PhD, Faculty of Theatre, George Enescu National University of Arts Iași; Theatre Critic
10. Bogdan Contea, PhD candidate in the Department of Drama and Theatre Studies at the Faculty of Letters and Arts, Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu
10. Ivan Dodovski, Professor, American College Skopje; President of Eurodram – The European Network for Drama in Translation; Playwright; Member of the Inter-Balkan Network of Culture, Art, and Education
11. Jason Fotilas, Deputy Minister of Culture, responsible for Contemporary Culture
12. Pinelopi Fragkaki, PhD; Independent Scholar
13. Javor Gardev, Associate Professor, National Academy for Theatre and Film Arts, Sofia; Stage Director, Ivan Vazov National Theatre of Bulgaria, Sofia
14. Maria Georgiadou, Student, MA Programme in Performing Arts, Hellenic Open University
15. Barbara Georgopoulou, Professor Emerita of Theatre Studies, University of the Peloponnese; Founding Member of the Inter-Balkan Network of Culture, Art, and Education
16. Konstantinos Gioulekas, Deputy Minister of the Interior (Sector of Macedonia and Thrace), Hellenic Republic
17. Teona-Irina Giugariu, PhD Candidate, I.L. Caragiale National University of Theatre and Film (UNATC), Bucharest, Romania
18. Oana Cristea Grigorescu, President, Romanian AICT.RO; Chair of Conference, AICT-IATC Executive Committee; Theatre Critic
19. Nikolay Iordanov, Professor, Institute of Art Studies, Sofia; Director of the International Theatre Festival “Varna Summer”; Member of the Inter-Balkan Network of Culture, Art, and Education
20. Yianna Karibali - Tsiptsiou, Emeritus Professor of Law (AUTH), President of the Administrative Board of the National Theatre of Northern Greece
21. Stella Kollia, Student, MA Programme in Performing Arts, Hellenic Open University
22. Elpida-Angeliki Komianou, Student, M.A. Programme in Performing Arts, Hellenic Open University
23. Evangelos Kosmidis, Theatre Director, Writer, and Actor; Artistic Director of the Mariupol Theatre of Ukraine in Exile
24. Despina Kosmopoulou, Secretary and Founding Member of the Inter-Balkan Network of Culture, Art, and Education; Leader-Instructor and Public Relations Officer, MA Programme in Performing Arts, Hellenic Open University; Scientific Associate, Department of Theatre Studies, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
25. Nikos Koukis, Historian; President, Association of “The Friends of the European Cultural Centre of Delphi”; President of the Advisory Board of the MA Programme in Performing Arts, Hellenic Open University; Former President, Hellenic Foundation for Culture
26. Enud Kuka, Lecturer and Scenic Designer; PhD Candidate in Scenography and Theatre Studies, University of Arts, Tirana
27. Andreas Lagos, PhD Candidate, Department of Mediterranean Studies, University of the Aegean; Theatrolgist
28. Janko Ljumović, Full Professor, Faculty of Dramatic Arts, University of Montenegro; Theatre Producer
29. Argyro Loukaki, Professor Emerita, Hellenic Open University; Leader-Instructor, MA Programme in Performing Arts, Hellenic Open University
30. Liviu Lucaci, Rector of the I.L. Caragiale National University of Theatre and Film; Vice-President and Founding Member of the Inter-Balkan Network of Culture, Art, and Education; Bucharest, Romania
31. Andreas Markantonatos, Vice-President and Founding Member of the Inter-Balkan Network of Culture, Art, and Education; Director of the MA Programme in Performing Arts, Hellenic Open University; Professor, Department of Philology, University of the Peloponnese, Greece
32. Michael Marmarinos, Stage Director and Actor; Artistic Director, Athens and Epidaurus Festival
33. Kamelia Nikolova, Professor, DSc; Institute of Art Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
34. Diana Păcurar, Lecturer, Ph.D.; Vice-Rector of International Affairs and Public Relations, I.L. Caragiale National University of Theatre and Film, Bucharest, Romania; Treasurer and Founding Member of the Inter-Balkan Network of Culture, Art, and Education
35. Maria Papadopoulou, Dance Teacher and Choreographer
36. Nikos Papaioannou, Deputy Minister for Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs, and Sports, Hellenic Republic; Former Rector, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
37. Savas Patsalidis, Emeritus Professor, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki; Founding Member of the Inter-Balkan Network of Culture, Art, and Education
38. Asterios Peltekis, President and Founding Member of the Inter-Balkan Network of Culture, Art, and Education; Artistic Director, National Theatre of Northern Greece; Leader-Instructor, MA Programme in Performing Arts, Hellenic Open University
39. Lamprinos Platypodis, PhD; Faculty Member, Department of Pastoral Studies, Supreme Ecclesiastical Academy of Athens; Leader-Instructor, MA Programme in Performing Arts, Hellenic Open University
40. Paul-Eugen Pristavu, PhD Candidate, I.L. Caragiale National University of Theatre and Film (UNATC), Bucharest, Romania
41. Giannis Rigas, Director of the Drama School of the National Theatre of Northern Greece
42. Iskra Shukarova, PhD, Professor, Faculty of Music, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje; Department of Dance Pedagogy
43. Sofia Siamanidou, Professor, Tbilisi State University; Dean, Department of Modern Greek Philology; Deputy Head, Institute of Classical Philology, Byzantine, and Modern Greek Studies
44. Ana Stojanoska, Professor, University of Skopje
45. Savvas Stroumpos, Stage Director and Actor
46. Spyros Syropoulos, Professor of Ancient Greek Literature, Department of Mediterranean Studies, University of the Aegean; Director of the MA Programme in Ancient Greek Theatre, University of the Aegean; Leader-Instructor, MA Programme in Performing Arts, Hellenic Open University
47. Octavian Szalad, PhD Candidate, I.L. Caragiale National University of Theatre and Film (UNATC), Bucharest, Romania
48. Ion M. Tomus, Professor, “Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu
49. Elpida Zampetaki, Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Crete, Research Laboratory of Theater, Film, and Music Studies

Honorary Committee

1. Yianna Karibali - Tsiptsiou, 2. Nikos Koukis

Scientific Committee

1. Liviu Lucaci, 2. Savas Patsalidis, 3. Barbara Georgopoulou, 4. Andreas Markantonatos, 5. Asterios Peltekis, 6. Michael Marmarinos, 7. Mihaela Bețiu, 8. Giannis Rigas, 9. Despina Kosmopoulou

Organizing Committee

1. Asterios Peltekis, 2. Andreas Markantonatos, 3. Despina Kosmopoulou, 4. Savas Patsalidis, 5. Giannis Rigas, 6. Michael Marmarinos, 7. Barbara Georgopoulou, 8. Liviu Lucaci, 9. Mihaela Bețiu, 10. Diana Păcurar

The conference is held under the auspices of the Municipality of Thessaloniki, the Ministry of the Interior – Sector of Macedonia and Thrace; the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs, and Sports; the Ministry of Tourism; and the Hellenic Open University. With the support of the Municipality of Thermi.

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