



**Elliniko Theatro** promotes Greek culture worldwide by expanding the temporal, spatial and social boundaries of Hellenic Theatre. Elliniko Theatro embraces the *Greek Theatre of New York*, based in the United States, and *Greek Theatre International*, based in Greece.

The *Greek Theatre of New York (GTNY)* was founded by actor, writer, producer Yannis Simonides and his colleagues in 1979, and ever since it has served Greek and English speaking audiences with acclaimed productions in the USA and internationally. The company has sought to approach the classical, medieval and contemporary Hellenic repertory with discipline, delight and occasional irreverence.

*GTNY* has collaborated with distinguished artists, such as Olympia Dukakis, Nicholas Kepros, Yannis Houvardas, Loukas Skipitaris, Theoni Vachliotis Aldredge, Alexander Mylonas, Dionysis Fotopoulos, Mikis Theodorakis, Robert U. Taylor, Anna Makraki, Dionyssi Fotopoulos, George Tsontakis, Kostas Mourselas, Iakovos Kambanellis, Manolis Korres, Yannis Glezos, Caryn Heilman, Dan Georgakas, Vangelis Fampas and others, and has always been mindful of nurturing young talent in all fields of the performing arts. Over the years it has become known for its festivals of new plays, its solo and ensemble performances, its children theatre tours and its imaginative staging of Greek oratorios.

Productions over the years have included Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, Sophocles' *Electra*, Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris*, Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, *Thesmophoriazousai* and *The Birds*, Kazantzakis' *Greek Passion*, Theodorakis' *Song of the Dead Brother*, Kambanellis' *Nameless Fairytale*, Kornaros' *Erotokritos*, Gregorios' *Christos Paschon*, Simonides' *Epitheorisi*, *Alexandriad*, *Cavafy* and *Smyrne*, Korres' *Happy Sunset*, Skourtis' *The Nannies* and *Karaghiozis in America*, Makriyannis' *Memoirs*, and Plato's *Apology of Socrates*.

Ellen Stewart of La MaMa ETC praised *GTNY* as one of her "brightest children", and Melina Mercouri championed it as "the longest living and most accomplished theatre of the Greek Diaspora".

*Greek Theatre International (GTI)* was founded in 2010 by Yannis Simonides and his young colleagues in Athens, Greece, as a sister organization to the *Greek Theatre of New York*. Serving the continuity of *GTNY's* tradition, *GTI* aims to bring performing artists and works of Greek Drama and Literature beyond national boundaries and traditional theatre spaces, into schools, universities, festivals, companies, communities and public spaces around the world. Minimal sets and casts, bi-lingual productions—often enhanced with inventive projections of surtitles in several languages—and post-performance discussion seminars with audiences make our work globally accessible and attractive to a wide range of hosts and sponsors.

At the heart of GTI's work is a profound belief in the diachronic and universal value of select Greek texts and plays, as well as a strong commitment to Cultural Diplomacy. Alongside these notions lies the conviction that theatre is a unique means of human expression, communication and learning, as well as an invaluable instrument for creative initiatives that aim to enhance social cohesion and economic development. Through our educational and participatory projects and the use of digital media, we intend to provide access to artistic enjoyment and experimentation, especially to the younger generations and disadvantaged social groups.

Greek Theatre International is currently building upon major projects produced by the Greek Theatre of New York, promoting them at an international level. In the immediate future and the longer term, it aims to develop new projects in collaboration with Greek, European and international partners, who are interested in using the Classical and Modern Greek heritage as a departure point for exciting cultural journeys.

### ***Yannis Simonides – Artistic Director***



Born in Istanbul and raised in Athens, Yannis Simonides is a Yale Drama School trained actor/writer and Emmy-winning documentary producer. He has served as professor and chair of the NYU Tisch Drama Department, as executive producer of Greek Orthodox Telecommunications (GOTelecom) and as the executive director of Hellenic Public Radio – COSMOS FM in New York. He is the founder and artistic director of Elliniko Theatro, which in 2014 becomes 35 years old.

His performance work includes plays by Euripides, Sophocles, Aristophanes, Shakespeare, Brecht, Korres, Kambanellis and others, along with solo and ensemble pieces culled from the writings of Constantine Cavafy, General Makriyannis, Nikolai Gogol and others. He has received the support of the National Endowment for the Arts, The Greek Ministries of Culture and Foreign Affairs, The A. S. Onassis, I. Kostopoulos, S. Niarchos, M. Tsakos and A. Leventis Foundations, the Pia Zombanakis Fund, Time Warner, IBM and the Mobil Foundation. He co-produced Mikis Theodorakis' 75th Birthday Celebration at Lincoln Center with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra. He has narrated the PBS television specials *Visions of Greece* and *Return to the Homeland*, and received an Emmy award for his documentary *A Light Still Bright* on the Greek community of Istanbul. He recently constructed and directed *Smyrne*, a docudrama on the post World War I Asia Minor upheavals, which toured the USA through to 2013.

He has performed the *Apology of Socrates*, in Greek, English, Spanish, French, Bulgarian, Russian and Turkish, at theatres, festivals, schools and universities in the USA, England, Greece, Cyprus, France, Turkey, Canada, Luxembourg, the Ukraine, Bulgaria, Mexico, Belgium, the United Emirates, Egypt and Uruguay. In 2014-15 he will be touring it under the title 'Socrates Now', combined with an interactive post-performance discussion, in Greece, the USA, Australia

and New Zealand, Europe and the Middle East. As a founding member of the international literary organization The Readers of Homer, he has helped stage marathon audience-participation Readings-Celebrations of the Iliad and Odyssey on the islands of Chios and Kos in Greece, at the Library of Alexandria, the Dahesh Museum and the 92nd Street Y in New York, in Troy, Delos, Pylos, Malta, Sicily and Ithaca, at the Getty Villa in Malibu, at the Halles de Schaerbeek in Brussels and at the Hellenic Centre in London, in the context of the Olympic Games.

In 2009 Yannis Simonides was honored by the city of Athens as Ambassador of Hellenism for his lifelong service to Greek arts and letters worldwide. In 2010, along with a team of young visionaries, he founded EllinikoTheatro's second base in Athens, with the express mission not only to help expand the boundaries of Hellenic theatre, but to help contribute decisively in Greece's upcoming renaissance, serving Cultural Diplomacy in practice.