



ΣΗΜΕΙΟ
ΜΗΔΕΝ

ZERO POINT THEATER

AESCHYLUS

"THE PERSIANS"

Direction: Savvas Stroumpos

Presentation



After the highly successful three-year long (2019-2022) presentation of Sophocles' *Antigone*, Zero Point Theater continues its research on ancient Greek tragedy with the tragedy "The Persians" by Aeschylus.

The play

" The Persians" by Aeschylus (472 BC)

It is the first tragedy that derives its theme from historical events (and in fact only seven years before its presentation to the public) as it deals with the suffering of the Persians when they are informed of their overwhelming defeat in the battle of Salamis in which the author himself participated. Often referred to as "anti-war", Aeschylus' tragedy "The Persians" stands critically against any kind of arrogance and expansionism, respecting the lamentation of the defeated and condemning the arrogance of the victors.



Director's note

From the end of History to the landscape of Nemesis

The "Persians" are set in the landscape of Nemesis (a moment of divine wrath and revenge). The earlier stages of the ancient Greek tragedy terrible triptych Hybris (violent and arrogant attitude) and Ate (blurring, blindness of mind) have already been preceded, since we are, in essence, at the beginning of the painful end of the Persian Empire. At the beginning of the play, we are in the landscape of Nemesis. Tisis (punishment and crushing) is coming. Agony and fear. No news from anywhere, yet everyone senses the destruction that has

taken place at the battlefield, more specifically in the marine man-cave of the naval battle of Salamis, without anyone daring to admit it. The Persians stubbornly refuse to draw conclusions from the deadly battles of the previous period.

Aeschylus doesn't ridicule the enemies of Athens but at the same time, his criticism is absolutely relentless, especially regarding their desire for power and wealth, their imperialistic arrogance. He mines the tragic material from the Persian dead end in the landscape of Nemesis. As long as they refuse to function reflectively and self-critically, to radically question their anthropophagic stance and see how to deal with the upcoming disaster, the only way left for them is fierce, unconditional and limitless lamentation. The mournful atrocity of the Persians is linked to the poet's critical stance towards their attitude. The connection between these two dimensions illuminates the tragic scale of the Persians' tragedy.

Aeschylus being sarcastic or ridiculing to the Persians, would be nothing more than a poetic and political petty on his part. The Athenian tragedian could not have walked such paths. Through the attitude of the Persians - an attitude of profound conscious and political blindness - with its tragic results, he showcases the evolving imperialist arrogance of Athenians themselves, who, under the guise of their democratic principles, are engaged in the same voracious politics as their worst enemies. In fact, he becomes so harsh to his countrymen that he critically compares them to the Persians, just eight years after the naval battle of Salamis (the tragedy is written and performed in 472 BC, the naval battle of Salamis dates back to 480 BC). Through the Persians, Aeschylus points finger to the Athenians, thus creating a poetic filter of critical stance to express his political, social and existential anguish regarding democracy itself.

Let us act accordingly. The Persians reflect every arrogant, bloodthirsty and expansionist authority. How close we are to the blinding narrative about "end of history". How much arrogance of the supposed victors, how much expansionist fury, how much empty savagery. The time of now finds us in a similar Nemesis landscape. But how much longer will the tragedy of a taming humanity continue?

The performance presented by Zero Point Theater is a result of a multi-month workshop on ancient Greek tragedy, based on the *Method of Theodoros*

Terzopoulos. Six actors participate in the performance. They all form the chorus, through which the characters of the play emerge.

Savvas Stroumpos



Credits

Translation: Giorgos Blanas

Direction: Savvas Stroumpos

Stage installation, costumes: Katerina Papageorgiou

Light design: Kostas Bethanis

Sound landscape: Zesses Seglias

Dramaturgy: Maria Sikitano

Costumes making: Eleni Hasioti

Makigiaz: Virginia Tsihlaki

Director's assistant: Spiros Betsis

Photographs: Giannis Hatziantoniou

Communication: Marianna Papaki, Nondas Douzinas

Performers (in order of appearance)

Leader of the chorus: Rosy Monaki

Atossa: Evelyn Assouad

Messenger: Babis Alefantis, Anna Marka – Bonisell

Darios: Ellie Iggliz

Xerxes: Dinos Papageorgiou

Chorus: The group



Director's Bio

Savvas Stroumpos was born in 1979 in Athens. He graduated from the drama school of the National Theatre of Greece (2002). He has an MA with Merit from the department of Theatre Practice, University of Exeter, UK, where he studied with **Phillip Zarrilli** (2003).

As an assistant director, he collaborated with **Theodoros Terzopoulos** in the following performances: Aeschylus **Persians**, Meyerhold Center, Moscow (2003), Sophocles **Oedipus Rex**, Alexandrinsky Theatre, St. Petersburg (2006), Aeschylus **Prometheus Bound**, State Academy of Dramatic Art, Beijing, China (2008), Sophocles **Antigone**, State Academy of Dramatic Art, Beijing, China (2011), Samuel Beckett **Endgame**, Alexandrinsky Theatre, St. Petersburg (2014), Euripides **The Bacchae**, Electro Theater, Stanislavski (2015), Sophocles **Antigone**, Wilma Theatre, Philadelphia, USA (2015), Euripides **The Bacchae**, National Theatre of Taiwan (2016), Federico Garcia Lorca **Yerma** National Theatre and Concert Hall - Taipei, Taiwan (2018), Heiner Muller **Mauzer**, Alexandrinsky Theatre, St. Petersburg (2020), Euripides **The Bacchae**, National Theatre of Hungary (2022), etc.

As an actor of **Attis Theatre**, he participated in the following performances: Boris Pasternak **Hamlet a lesson** (2003), Aeschylus **Prometheus Bound** (2003), Aeschylus *Epigone* – fragments from lost tragedies of Aeschylus (2004), Samuel Beckett **Ohio Impromptu** (2004), **Ajax – the madness** – adaptation of Sophocles' Ajax (2004), Costas Logaras **The Last Mask** (2006), Aeschylus **The Persians** (2006), Marios Pontikas **Cassandra** (2007), **Ajax – the madness**, 2nd

version (2008), Aeschylus **Prometheus Bound** (2010), Euripides **The Trojan Women**, Cultural City of Pafos, Cyprus (2017).

With **Zero Point Theatre Company** he has directed: Franz Kafka **In the Penal Colony** (2009), William Shakespeare **As You like It** (2010), Albert Camus **The Justs** (2011), Franz Kafka **Metamorphosis** (2012), Georg Buchner **Woyzeck** (2013), Franz Kafka **In the Penal Colony** (2014 – 2nd version for the Athens Festival), Yevgeny Zamiatin **We** (2015), Heiner Muller **The Mission: A memory of a revolution** (2016), Dimitris Dimitriadis **Troas** (2017), Gyorgy Kurtag **Kafka Fragments** (2018), Samuel Beckett **Waiting for Godot** (2018), Sophocles **Antigone** (2019), Samuel Beckett **Happy Days** (2020), Franz Kafka **A Report to an Academy** (2021), Aeschylus **Persians** (2022).

He has translated: In the Penal Colony (Franz Kafka), William Shakespeare As You like It (William Shakespeare), The Justs (Albert Camus)

More info on Zero Point Theatre Company, interviews and photo gallery can be found in our website <http://simeiomiden.gr/point-zero-2020/>

Facebook: Zero Point Theatre Company (@omadasimeiomiden)

Instagram: Zero Point Theatre Company (@zeropointtheater)

The performance is supported by the Ministry of Culture of Greece



Contact:

Savvas Stroumpos – Zero Point Theatre Company

stroumpos@gmail.com | simeiomiden@gmail.com

+30 694 2841714 & +30 210 3225207