

The UCLA Stavros Niarchos Foundation Center
for the Study of Hellenic Culture presents



POLYMNIA

a new chamber opera
by Theodosia Roussos



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A Chamber Opera in One Act by Theodosia Roussos

Michiel Delanghe, conductor
Diana Wyenn, director

world premiere
January 21- 22, 2023

UCLA Little Theater
Los Angeles

POLYMNIA

A Chamber Opera in One Act with texts by Theodosia Roussos, Polymnia Athanasiadis Pappas, Sophie Vasilas, letters between Athena Violet and Polymnia, oral history, text of Byzantine hymns by Kassiani

CREATIVE TEAM

Theodosia Roussos, composer/librettist

Michiel Delanghe, conductor

Diana Wyenn, director

Tanya Orellana, scenic designer

Pablo Santiago, lighting designer

Yee Eun Nam, video designer

Wendell C. Carmichael, costume designer

Brittany White, props designer

Peter Kazaras and Diana Wyenn, dramaturgy

Jenny Park, production stage manager

CAST

Theodosia Roussos, Polymnia/Theodosia

Natalie Buickians, Paula

Michele Patzakakis, Maria/Church Lady

Anthony Moreno, Nikolaos/Priest

Joanna Lynn-Jacobs, Anthie

Jon Lee Keenan, Costa/Tax Collector/Turkish Soldier

ORCHESTRA

Movses Pogossian, Violin I (Saturday)

Xenia Deviatkina-Loh, Violin I (Sunday)

Rhea Fowler, Violin II

Ben Bartelt, Viola

Spencer Artwick, Guitar

Hillary Smith, Cello

Kathryn Schulmeister, Bass

Mathias Coppens, Piano

Theodosia Roussos, Oboe

Polymnia is produced by Plain Wood Productions.

ADDITIONAL PRODUCTION CREDITS

Dr. Ella Haselswerdt, Sappho translations

Theodosios Roussos, Polymnia translations

Joey Guthman, associate lighting designer

Lewis Pesacov, quadraphonic sound mixer

Rachel Flesher, violence director

Michele Patzakis, dialect coach

Brandon Zhou, titles operator

Christina Cordano, production assistant

“Oboe Cluster Piece” is recorded and mixed at Knobworld and Ahata Sound by Lewis Pesacov, music produced by Christopher Rountree and Lewis Pesacov, Oboe/English horn and Composition by Theodosia Roussos

“Pappas Singers Interlude” features a sample of The Pappas Singers’ recording of “Anthismeni Amigdalia,” and original music by Theodosia Roussos, mixed by Lewis Pesacov

“Liminal Oboes” features the 2022 Oberlin Oboe Studio: Jonathan Kronheimer, Caroline Becker, Meera Bhatia, Chiara Rackerby, Isa Difiore, Mackenzie Kim, Gwen Goble, Victor Romulo Garcia, Addie Carter, Adrienne Burg; Sopranos: Melody Prater, Theodosia Roussos; Rachel Yee, recording engineer

TIME AND PLACE

1913-1925

Troulia, the region of Anatolia Roumelia, near the Black Sea, close to Istanbul

Ellis Island and Astoria, Queens, New York

85 minutes; No intermission.

SYNOPSIS

Polymnia, described by Opera News as “haunting and beautiful,” is a debut experimental chamber opera that tells the story of a woman who responds with resilience to war and trauma, and relates how her experience echoes across generations and communities. Drawing from fragments of Sappho’s poetry, Kassiane’s hymns, as well as four generations of private family writings and oral history, composer and performer Theodosia Roussos shares the story of her great-grandmother Polymnia Athanasiadis Pappas, a young woman whose family was expelled from its village by the Ottoman Turks during the Asia Minor Catastrophe. Roussos draws influence from her Greek Cypriot American background and weaves elements of Byzantine and Greek folk music into the score.

Presented in both Greek and English, Polymnia reveals the very personal and also political experience of diaspora—what is lost, what is retained, and what cannot be forgotten.

NOTE FROM THE COMPOSER

Polymnia is inspired by the true story of my great grandmother Polymnia Athanasiadis Pappas and our family. I would like to dedicate this work to my mother, Paula Roussos, whose unconditional love inspired me to write this piece. I am eternally grateful for all of the generosity of our supporters and the artists who have helped bring this project to life.

ARTIST BIOS



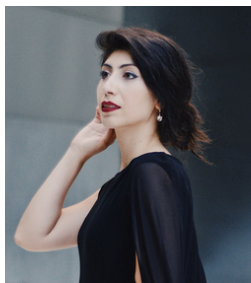
Theodosia Roussos (Composer, Librettist, Oboist, Theodosia, and Polymnia) is a Greek Cypriot American composer, soprano, oboe/English horn player, and Improviser. Theodosia's passion for contemporary music has led to collaborations with Beth Morrison Projects, The Industry, WildUp, Jacaranda, Synchrony, and Bang on a Can. She has performed with orchestras including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Boston Philharmonic, Phoenix Symphony, and many studio orchestras. Her film scoring work can be heard on Netflix's Naomi Osaka and soon-to-be-released films Being Mary Tyler Moore, and Fresh Kills. thetheodosia.com



Michiel Delanghe (Conductor) (1987) got his masters degree at the Royal Conservatory of Antwerp (Belgium), where he studied orchestral conducting with Ivo Venkov and Koen Kessels. In December 2013 he won third prize and Special Award in the 11th Cadaques Orchestra International Conducting Competition. It was the first time a special award was given in the history of the competition. As a result of this event, Michiel made his professional debut with the Orquesta Sinfónica de Castilla y León in a program of Mozart and Beethoven, the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra, the Youth Orchestra of Girona and the Orchestre National de Lille. During his studies he conducted several concerts with the symphony orchestra from the Royal Conservatory of Antwerp and with the Ensemble XXI. Also, he served as an assistant-conductor in the Flemish Opera where he assisted conductors such as Patrick Fournillier (Turandot), Yannis Pouspourikas (Candide) and Jef Smits (Aladino e la lampada Magica). He actively participated in masterclasses with Robin Engelen and “het collectief”, with Ivo Venkov and the “Philharmonic Orchestra of Russe-Bulgaria”, with Mark Heron and the Manchester Camerata and with Peter Eötvös and the “Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France”. michiieldelanghe.com



Diana Wyenn (Director and Dramaturg, she/her) Los Angeles born and based artist **Diana Wyenn** creates theater, opera, and film that advocate for equity and environmental and disability justice and rigorously explore trauma and healing. Wyenn has directed and choreographed projects for the LA Phil, Center Theatre Group, National Sawdust, Beth Morrison Projects, Roundabout Theatre Company, The Walt Disney Company, Skirball Cultural Center, SummerStage, Grand Performances, Pomona College, Occidental College, and many more. Her work has been presented at performing arts centers and universities across the United States and is supported by the NEA, National Arts and Disability Center, Center for Cultural Innovation, and California Arts Council. She earned a BFA in Drama from New York University, is an associate member of SDC and the co-founder of Plain Wood Productions. dianawyenn.com



Natalie Buickians (Paula) With a “timbre of melodious, bell-like clarity,” soprano **Natalie Buickians** is a recent winner of the Metropolitan National Council Competition, Los Angeles District as well as regional finalist, 2020. She was a participant in SongStudio 2020 at Carnegie Hall under the direction of soprano Renée Fleming. She competed in the Aram Khachaturian International Competition where she took top jury prizes, 2nd in the Friends of Eastman Opera Aria Competition, and 3rd in the Jesse Kneisel Lieder Competition. nataliebuickians.com



Michele Patzakis (Maria / Church Lady), voice faculty at Azusa Pacific University, received critical acclaim for performances across Europe and North America. She earned a DMA from the USC Thornton School of Music where she conducted research in Vocal Arts Medicine and, as an LA Opera Connects Teaching Artist, leads a Covid-19 “long-haulers” rehabilitation course in collaboration with UCLA Health. She is the Director of the San Francisco District of the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition and on the Boards of the Loren L Zachary Society, NATS-LA, the SoCal Voice and UCLA SNF Center for the Study of Hellenic Culture. michelepatzakis.com



Anthony Moreno (Nikolaos / Priest), DMA, has performed with LA Opera, LA Master Chorale, and New Opera West and is currently a member of Tonicity, an award-winning choir whose mission is to incite dialogue, understanding, and positive change. He began studying music at El Camino College, went on to obtain his BM Degree at CSU, Long Beach and his MM and DMA Degrees at USC. Dr. Moreno now proudly teaches at El Camino College and Fullerton College.



Joanna Lynn-Jacobs (Anthie, she/they), is a classically trained vocalist and performer specializing in contemporary and mixed-genre opera and music theater. They recently toured the US and Europe with Meredith Monk's Cellular Songs, and the US premiere tour of (... Iphigenia) by Wayne Shorter and Esperanza Spaulding. Joanna has performed with numerous companies including the Industry, Four Larks, and the LA Philharmonic, and looks forward to working on various other opera and theater projects confirmed for this year.
joannalynnjacobs.com



Jon Lee Keenan (Tax Collector / Turkish Soldier / Costa) Versatile tenor **Jon Lee Keenan** is a native of Las Vegas, Nevada. Influenced by his father, a classically trained jazz saxophonist, Jon cultivated an interest in performing a variety of musical styles at an early age. After studying classical voice and jazz studies at UNLV, Jon relocated to Southern California to pursue a career in classical singing. In 2007, Jon was asked to join the LA Master Chorale and has been featured as a soloist at Walt Disney Concert Hall in numerous performances of note since. Recent highlights with LAMC include the role of "Evangelist" in Bach's St. Matthew Passion, and tenor soloist in Handel's Messiah and Bach's Magnificat. As an in-demand performer of new music, Jon has helped create many new exciting characters through collaborations with experimental oper producers at The Industry LA, including "Clyde Barrow" in Bonnie and Clyde (Andrew McIntosh), "Gunner" in War of the Worlds (Anne Gosfeld) and the "Captain" in Sweet Land among many others. jonleekeen.com



Tanya Orellana (Scenic Designer, she/her), designs performance spaces for theatre and opera. Collaborations include *The Odyssey* directed by Jenny Koons at The Getty Villa, *Fefu and her Friends* directed by Pam MacKinnon at ACT's Strand Theatre, *Eugene Onegin* directed by Peter Kazaras at Music Academy of the West, *The Industry's Sweet Land* directed by Yuval Sharon and *Cannupa Hanska Luger*, *Voices from a Killing Jar* by Kate Soper at Long Beach Opera and *We the Peoples Before* at The Kennedy Center.

tanyaorellana.com



Pablo Santiago (Lighting Designer, he/him) is a Mexican American lighting designer. Born in Chiapas, Mexico, Pablo moved to the United States as a teenager and studied filmmaking at University of California, San Diego. After spending fifteen years working on major motion pictures, Pablo returned to school to earn his M.F.A. in Theatrical Lighting Design from UCLA. He is the winner of the Richard E. Sherwood Award and Stage Raw Award. His most recent work was seen at LA Opera on the West Coast premiere of *Omar*. Pablo is proud to have long standing collaborations with many great artists including James Darrah (*Breaking the Waves*), Ellen Reid (Pulitzer Prize winner *p r i s m*), José Luis Valenzuela (*Destiny of Desire* and *Macbeth*), Missy Mazzoli (*Proving Up*), Bill Rauch (*Mother Road*), Patricia McGregor (*Skeleton Crew*, *Place*, and *Good Grief*), Ted Hearne (*Place*), Adam Rigg (*The Lord of Cries*), and Yuval Sharon (*War of the Worlds* and *Die Walküre*). Pablo has designed for companies such as Santa Fe Opera, Geffen Playhouse, and Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Some of the amazing venues he has worked at include Theatro Municipal São Paulo, Kennedy Center, BAM Harvey Theater, Goodman Theatre, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, and Arena Stage in DC.



Yee Eun Nam (Video Designer) is a visual artist and a media designer for live performances. Recent collaboration for Opera/Music projects include Detroit Opera, Opera Omaha, LA Opera, Opera Saint Louis, Boston Lyric Opera, REDCAT, San Francisco Symphony. Theatre projects include Audible Theatre, Ma-Yi Theater Company, Center Theatre Group, South Coast Rep, Pasadena Playhouse, Geffen Playhouse, Latino Theater Company and many more. She is a member of United Scenic Artists, Local 829. MFA in Theater Design at UCLA.
yeeunnam.com



Wendell C. Carmichael (Costume Designer) - Theatre credits: Phantom of the Opera, Head Over Heels, Spelling Bee, Lavender Men, Uncle Vanya, Both And ~ Laughing While Black, Blues for An Alabama Sky, Three Sisters, Yellowman, Spring Awakening, Miss Julie Freedom Summer, Paradise Blue, Cyrano De Bergerac, McBeth, A Winters Tale, Sweeney Todd, Waiting for Godot, Salvage, Ragtime, Scraps, The Mountaintop, Our Town, The Wizard of Oz, WINK, Fool for Love, In the Heights, Happy Ending, American Saga: Gunshot Medley, Jews, Christians and Screwing Stalin, Vol. 1: A Post Racial America, Violet, Her Portmeanu, Native Son, A Walk in the Woods, Cabaret, West Side Story, Romeo and Juliet, Othello, Desdemona: A Play about a Handkerchief, The Crucible, An Octoroon, Br'er Cotton, Waiting for the Parade, The Good War Greenwood 1964. 2018 Stage Raw winner – Costume Design, three-time L.A. Ovation Award nominee 2017 Orange County's Best Costume Designs 2015 NAACP Theatre Award winner. Member of Local 768, the Theatrical Wardrobe Union/ LA Opera.



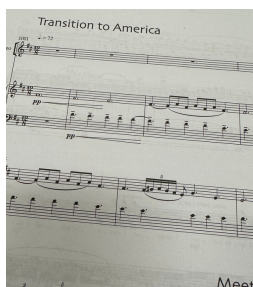
Brittany White (Props Designer) stays behind the scenes. Technical theater background, mainly as a Prop Artisan but will cover most roles. Member of SF based theater group, Campo Santo. Happy to be alive and doing theater nationally and internationally for 10+ years. Yee!



Joey Guthman (Associate Lighting Designer) is a lighting designer for theatre, opera, dance, and music whose work has been seen in Los Angeles and around the world. Previously with Diana Wyenn: *Blood/Sugar* (Bootleg Theatre, Highways); *Macbeth* (Pomona College); *Golden* (USC); *Match* (Inkwell Theatre); *Becoming Human* (McCadden Place); *Tell Me I'm Pretty* (Bootleg Theatre, REDCAT, Greenway Court) and many more. Opera: *Elixir of Love*, *The Bartered Bride* (Assoc. LD, Music Academy of the West); *Cunning Little Vixen* (Assoc. LD, Opera Santa Barbara). Inter/National Tours with LA Dance Project, Collage Dance Collective, Kronos Quartet, Kristina Wong. BFA: Emerson College. JGuthmanDesign.com



Peter Kazaras (Dramaturg), stage director and teacher, is the Director of Opera UCLA and Distinguished Professor of Music. As an operatic tenor, he has performed worldwide at The Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin, Vienna State Opera, L'Opéra National de Paris. Directing assignments have taken him to Washington National Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Glimmerglass Festival, Dallas Opera, Merola Program at San Francisco Opera, The Juilliard School and Seattle Opera. In 2022, he returns to Seattle Opera for *Le nozze di Figaro* and in 2023 he returns to Washington National Opera for a revival of his production of *La bohème*. As part of his mission at UCLA, he has produced two world premieres of works by female composer/librettist teams, with another on the way by UCLA Composition faculty composer Kay Rhie. Other plans include a new opera by Richard Danielpour, also a member of the UCLA Composition faculty. He has been a libretto consultant for numerous world-premiere operas.



Jenny Park (Stage Manager) is a Korean American Stage Manager based in Los Angeles. Select stage management credits include *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, *The Tempest*, *Twelfth Night*, *Measure for Measure*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with the Independent Shakespeare Company's Griffith Park Free Shakespeare Festival, *Letters from Home*, *Happy Days*, *Revenge Porn* or *The Story of a Body*, *King Lear*, *Gunshot Medley*, Part 1 and *The Giant Void in My Soul*.

ABOUT THE UCLA STAVROS NIARCHOS FOUNDATION CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF HELLENIC CULTURE

The UCLA Stavros Niarchos Foundation Center for the Study of Hellenic Culture was established in 2017 by a lead gift from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF) and matching funds provided by generous members of the Hellenic and Philhellenic community of Southern California. Featuring two named professorships and a lectureship in Hellenic Studies, graduate student funding, and support for the arts, the Center builds on UCLA's strengths across many academic fields, placing Hellenic culture within a broad historical and contemporary context. Located at one of the most prestigious public universities in the United States, the Center supports a comprehensive set of academic and public initiatives, both locally and through partnerships in Greece and Cyprus with universities and cultural institutions.

ABOUT PLAIN WOOD PRODUCTIONS

Plain Wood Productions, founded in 2017 by wife and husband team, Diana Wyenn and Laban Pheidias, specializes in directing and producing music videos, short films, and live performances. Clients and collaborators include music legends, award-winning playwrights, celebrated arts nonprofits, professional skateboarders, and more. Projects marry the strengths of its founder's unique backgrounds and artistic practices to create live and media experiences that challenge and inspire audiences to see beyond the usual. Whether it's a unique documentary, contemporary opera, or funny short film, Plain Wood Productions gets it done with enthusiasm, creativity and a keen sense of detail.

plainwoodproductions.com

WE THANK THE FOLLOWING FOR THEIR SUPPORT:

Julie Bersani, Beth Morrison Projects, Mathias Coppens, Vicky Hioureas, Peter Kazaras, Violetta Kontodaimon, Eleni Lambros, Helen Lambros †, Hana Kim, Maria-Elena Kolovos and Brett Winton, National Sawdust, Jeannie Ranglas, Pappas Pappas & Cavis PC, Ramon and Constance Parsons, Laban Pheidias, Christopher Rountree and Wild Up, Theodosios Roussos, St. Sophia Cathedral, Temple Israel of Hollywood, the staff of UCLA's School of Theater, Film & Television, and the staff of the UCLA Stavros Niarchos Foundation Center for the Study of Hellenic Culture.

Cover Image: (left) Polymnia Athanasiadis Pappas, photographer unknown; (right) Her great-granddaughter Theodosia Roussos, photo by Jeremy Jackson.

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is presented by the



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HELLENIC REPUBLIC
CONSULATE GENERAL OF GREECE
IN LOS ANGELES



ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ ΝΙΑΡΧΟΣ
STAVROS NIARCHOS FOUNDATION

