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PRESENTS

Classical Greek Dinner Theater in English

OEDIPUS REX / ΟΙΔΙΠΟΥΣ ΤΥΡΑΝΝΟΣ

By **Sophocles**, 260 to 370 AFO [After First Olympics]

Ελισσαίος Paul Taiganides, Producer; Editor and Publisher, www.GreekEthos.org, eptai@aol.com

Oedipus the Rex by Sophocles is the epitome of dramas. It is a fantastic depiction of a tragic life of *pathos* but also of *ethos*. Philosophy great **Aristotle** considered it an example of a perfect tragedy. Its relevance and appeal is ecumenical, catholic, ageless. Like **Antigone [Αντιγόνη]**, which we produced in 2008, Oedipus the Rex, too, is part of the principal outbursts of unparalleled intellectual and artistic *anthropocentric* exuberances achieved during the **Golden Age of Greece**. It was during Pericles [foto in mural] era of democracy when **theater** emerged as a compelling *entertaining, didactic* communications medium. Theater was propelled to its apogee by the greatest of all ages playwrights [portraits in the mural]: Aeschylus [Αισχύλος], Sophocles [Σοφοκλής], Euripides [Ευριπίδης], and Aristophanes [Αριστοφάνης]. Over 140 *ancient amphitheatres* have been located throughout Greece. The most prominent amphitheater Epidaurus was built next to the ancient *health spa* of the sage doctor **Asclepius** who discovered the *therapeutic* value of theater.



Noble Oedipus, crown prince of **Corinth**, visits Delphi. He is told by the Delphic oracle that he shall **kill his father** and **marry his mother**. To avoid the dreadful divination, he does **not return** South to Corinth but heads East towards **Thebes**. At a crossroad, he meets up with 5 people headed toward Delphi; when the man inside the carriage horsewhips him for not standing aside, Oedipus kills him and 3 others. One escapes and tells queen **Jocasta** [Ιοκάστα] that **a band of vagabonds** killed her husband King **Laius** [Λαίος].

On the road Oedipus encounters the nemesis of Thebes, the **Sphinx** [Σφίγγα] who is torturing the city by devouring every passerby who cannot answer her enigma: “*what is the thing that walks on 4 when young, on 2 when an adult, on 3 when old?*” Oedipus answers **MAN** [Ανθρώπος] and the Sphinx throws herself over the cliff and dies.

Heralded as savior, Oedipus is elected King. He marries the widowed queen **Jocasta** with whom he lives happily procreating 2 boys **Polyneikes & Eteocles** and 2 girls **Antigone &**

Ismene.

The drama begins 15 years later when a plague is devastating **Thebes**. Folks led by the local priest gather outside the palace pleading for the king’s intervention. Oedipus informs the congregation that he had sent his brother-in-law **Creon** [Κρέων] to Delphi and invited the town sage, the **blind prophet Tiresias** [Τειρεσίας] to help interpret the Pythic prophesy, assuring them he would do everything that those 2 would recommend. Creon returns to report that the plague would be lifted if the murderer of King Laius is banished from Thebes.

Tiresias arrives reluctantly and pleads with the King not to force him to reveal the dreadful secret of the prophesy. Oedipus does not want any “cover-up” and threatens Tiresias with punitive actions if he continues to refuse to tell the whole truth. Tiresias tells him that he is the murderer of Laius, father and brother of his children, husband and son of his wife. Puzzled Oedipus accuses blind Tiresias of a satanic conspiracy with Creon to dethrone him screaming the famous euphonic verse:

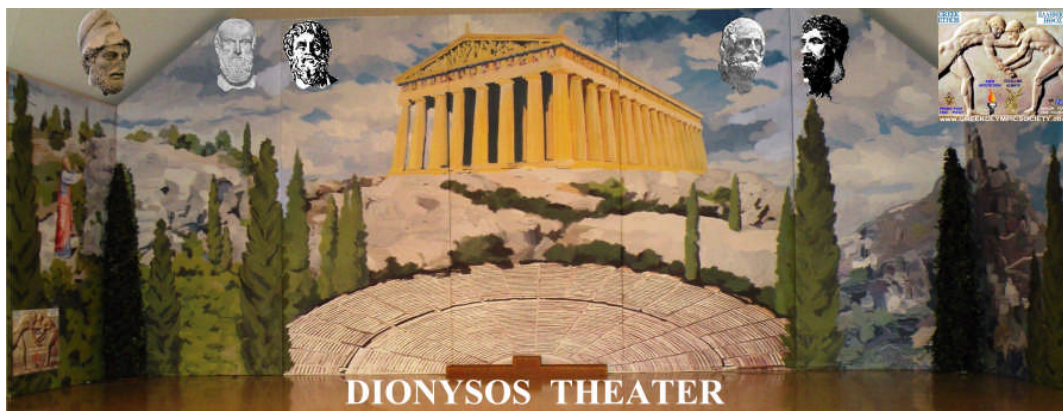
Τυφλός τά τ’ότα τόν τέ νούν τά τ’όμματόι ει / tiflos ta t’ota ton te noun ta t’omati i
blind in the ears, in the brain, in the eyes you are.

Tiresias retorts “you **mock me** for being blind; you have eyes, yet you cannot see that you are destined to endure a life **no mortal** in the world will ever suffer! I am not afraid of you, because I am protected by the **power of the truth**”.

His wife Jocasta comes out to calm Oedipus pleading with him not to accuse her brother Creon of treason, because she was sure the Tiresias interpretation of the prophesy was flawed. She tells him that she had a trusted shepherd slave take the **only child she ever bore** to the mountains and **hang him to die** to avoid a paradoxical prognosis. She had sent for that shepherd [who, by the way, was the same one who had escaped the Laius murder] to come to reassure Oedipus that he indeed had her only infant child killed.

In the meantime, a shepherd arrives from Corinth to announce that king **Polybus** [Πόλυβος] died and the people of **Corinth** elected Oedipus tyrant [Τύραννος]. He reassures Oedipus not to worry about the fateful prophesy. “You are not the son of Polybus. You are the baby I found **hanging** on a tree from a pin riveted through your foot [hence the name Oedipus = **swollen foot**]. I gifted you to Polybus and Queen **Merope** [Μερόπη] for they had **no children of their own**”. The other shepherd is **coerced by Oedipus** to reveal the truth that he had hanged the toddler on a tree, thus the tragic fate of Oedipus is sealed. He admits his folly [αμαρτία]; withdraws the conspiracy charge against Creon and Tiresias.

Queen Jocasta is overwhelmed by the revelations; she dashes into the palace and hangs herself. Oedipus rushes after her. Upon seeing her **hanging** from the ceiling as she had him **hanging** from a tree, Oedipus blinds himself by piercing his eyes out. Banished from Thebes and deprived of normal



eudemonia, Oedipus' atonement, his *sophrontisterion* becomes life in exile as a **blind** beggar, despite his **phronesis, arête, eunoia**, his unflinching pursuit of the **truth**, his noble **ETHOS!**

Oedipus is to be performed **Sunday 18 October 2009** at the Dionysos Theater stage [foto] [Θέατρο Διονυσίου] in the Parthenon hall of the Columbus Greek Cathedral. The Greek Olympic Society commissioned the mural of **Dionysos Theater** located on the side of the famous Acropolis rock adorned by that architectural marvel, the **Parthenon**, all of which were built in the 90-years lifetime of Sophocles, 496 to 406 BC.

Date: Sunday 18 October 2009;

Place: **The Parthenon Room, Greek Cathedral**, 555 N High Street, tel: 1-614-224 9020

Time: 6:30 PM **Social Hour** with free drinks; Denny Mardas, President dsmardas@yahoo.com

7:00 Gourmet Greek mezedes; George Tornnik & family George.Tornnik@hilton.com

8:00 PM Oedipus the Rex by Sophocles [To maximize the nuances of the drama and its poetic prowess, the actors will read the drama, with minimal acting]

Director: Ms **Eleni Papaleonardos**, Denison University tel: 1-740-321 1457 Email: elenipapaleonardos@hotmail.com or papaleonardo@denison.edu

Producer: Dr. E Paul Taiganides, Editor & Publisher of www.GreekEthos.org periodical, eptai@aol.com 1-614 451 4112 **Video** by Yorgos Papalios, papalios.1@osu.edu, tel: 1-614 260 3448 for distribution to Greek schools and other Greek communities in America.

6 to 8 PM and after the performance viewing of the **art exhibits** by local Greek American artist plus **silent auction** for some of the exhibited articles and for other offerings from local merchants. **Artist:** Evangelia Philippidis, organizer of the **art exhibit and auction**, evangeliaphilippidis@hotmail.com, tel: 1-614-354 6557 Physical Arrangements for the play and the art **Exhibit:** George Papalios, papalios.1@osu.edu tel: 1-614 260 3448 **Auction Merchandise:** George Sourvanos, gasproperties@aol.com tel: 1-614-263 2665 **Public Relations:** **Lee Adamantidis**, tel: 1-614 291 2002 LDA@pellaco.com **Accounts:** **Chris Bouzounis**, 1-614-635 8865 Chris@Artina.com

RESERVATIONS: Reservations with payment are required by **Thursday 15 October**

Please contact Scott Bowman, Secretary GOS 1-614-255 6109 sbowman@plymale.com ;

or **George Limbert**, Asst Secretary, 1-614-221 2121 georgelimberty@isaacbrant.com

DONATION: \$25 per person. Send check to Greek Olympic Society, 555 N High St, Columbus, OH 43215

PROCEEDS to be used to fund the **Reverend Anthony & Marie Sarris** memorial philanthropic programs for the **needy and the ailing** carried out by the Greek Olympic Society; for information **Nick Geldis** 1-614- 579 2513

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