



Nicosia, 2013



Catania, 2010



Barcelona, 2015



St. Petersburg, 2014



THEATRICAL WORKSHOP
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CYPRUS

The *Ballad* of the *Bridge*



Monday 28 May 2018 | 20:30



XXVIII CESE Conference
Identities and Education

May 28 - June 1, 2018
University of Cyprus, Nicosia



Adaptation, stage direction: **Michalis Pieris**

Music: **Evagoras Karageorgis**

Set and props: **Christos Lyssiotis**

Lighting, technical support: **Kyriakos Kakoullis**

Production manager, assistant director: **Stamatia Laoumtzi**

CAST

Narrator:	Myria Hadjimatheou
Singer:	Gregoris Papagregoriou
Master Builder A´:	Stavros Aroditis
Master Builder B´ (Konstantas):	Dimitris Pitsillis
Master Builder C´:	Vasilis Karaolis
Rodafnou:	Angela Savvidou
Lygeri:	Stella Vlastaki
Marouthkia:	Maria Christodoulou
Mother:	Myria Hadjimatheou
Voice (ghost):	Christodoulos Santziakki
Voice–singing (bird):	Maria Christodoulou
Voice (bird):	Eftyhia Georgiou
Messengers/apprentices:	Athinos Konstantinidis Gregoris Papagregoriou
Dafnoula:	Georgia Hadjinikolaou
Mother (of the built-in women):	Myria Hadjimatheou

Chorus:

Prodromos Alambritis, Ioanna Georgiou, Ioanna Ioannou, Konstantina Konstantinou, Georgia Liassi, Nikoleta Sianou, Michalis Philippakis, Andri Hadjigeorgiou, Christoforos Hadjichristoforou, Maria Theophanous, Michalis Yiangou, Solomon Kountouris, Theophanis Panagi and the rest of the company.

MUSICIANS

Evagoras Karagiorgis: lute
Giorgos Hoplaros: violin
Christiana Antonoudiou: clarinet
Christodoulos Santziakki: drum

The performance begins with the recorded voice of Cypriot folk poet Andreas Mapouras singing the “Song of Maroullou”, the Cypriot version of the “Bridge of Arta”. The natural sound of the loom of Fotini Andreou, which is heard during the performance, was recorded by Christos Lyssiotis in 2003, in Neo Chorio, Paphos.

The play is a stage adaptation of some of the most expressive versions of the famous Greek folk ballad “The Bridge at Arta” as preserved in Cyprus, Pontus, Crete, and Epirotic Greece. More than just an enjoyable theatrical event, the performance constitutes a truly productive educational experience, since it gives students and educators the opportunity to come across some essential issues in the research of verbal folklore, such as the different approaches to and interpretations of a given theme, as well as the historical and ideological perspectives that open up as a result of the creative approach to demotic songs. At the same time, the performance offers an innovative stage interpretation of traditional folklore that takes into consideration the context, pursuits and collective dilemmas of modern times.

THEPAK’s performance “The Ballad of the Bridge” – in which the rhythmic sound of the loom sets the pace of the play as the heartbeat measures the stride of a human being – is woven in unembellished modesty and elegiac tone, in vivid imagery reminiscent of a living picture, in that lovable group spirit that brings us to the truth and the purity of the original vision of the world and its intuitive perception and interpretation into art. [...] As the twenty boys and girls from the University of Cyprus performed with Dionysian passion clad in words, before the eyes of the viewers paraded, clean and unadulterated, the crucified world of Cyprus, ‘the world of Homer’, as the poet put it.

Zenon Zannetos, *Cretan Review*,
Rethymno, 28 August 2004

Events and time in the performance do not evolve in a straight line, but like in the ancient perception of a myth, the plot opens up as a heavenly vault on which episodes rather than following one after the other, coexist like constellations. The second element of the prologue – the sound of the loom – introduces the symbol of weaving, which has been associated with the notion of destiny from time immemorial, while serving also as a tool with which the director sets the pace and rhythm of the performance. The persistent sound of the loom combined with a slow choreography that, at times, verges on stillness, functions as a depressurisation chamber in which the audience is emancipated from the shallow hypermobility of contemporary thinking in order to plunge more easily into the deep and dark waters of the text. [...] The ancient hoard of verbal folklore enables folk ballads to act as channels of communication with the depths of collective subconsciousness where the subterranean streams of different national cultures merge into an ocean of universal prototypes. Phobos resides there (remember the wife of the Head Builder who kept seeing the hand or the jaws of the Dragon in the arch of the bridge), but also the notion of the eternal debt, which mankind owes to the primal darkness it came from, a debt that is being repaid with human sacrifice. THEPAK’s production brought us in touch with matters of value.

Nona Moleski, *Phileleftheros Daily*,
Nicosia, 21 July 2003