

Sokratis Malamas Performs for the First Time in the United States

TNH Staff

NEW YORK – An enthusiastic Greek-American audience at Manhattan's Symphony Space welcomed popular singer/songwriter Sokratis Malamas and young performer Lamprini Karakostas for a concert in honor of the Greek Cultural Center's 42nd anniversary.

Malamas grew up in Thessaloniki and recorded his first album, *Aspromavres Istories*, in 1989. Since then, he has recorded many songs and albums and has performed with famous musicians and composers. Each of his performances is a unique musical experience. Malamas has a reputation for the intensity of his performances and did not disappoint the audience at the concert on May 5.

The musical journey featured various musical genres ranging from Rembetiko (Greek Blues), and Rock, to Alternative and Greek Folk music. The lyrics to the music that Malamas performs are embedded in Greek culture, and focus on themes such as immigration, love, hardship, and everyday Greek life. About 1000 Greeks defied



Lamprini Karakostas and Sokratis Malamas perform at Symphony Space in New York City, marking the US debut for the popular Greek singer/songwriter.

the inclement weather to attend Malamas' first-ever concert in the United States. The concert transported many to Greece with Malamas' performance of his hit song *Pringpessa*, and

many other favorites that had the audience singing along and dancing in the aisles.

In addition to Lamprini Karakostas, Malamas was accompanied by Gianni Papatri-

antafillou (bass), Nikos Magiannis (drum), Fotis Siotas (violin and viola) and Kyriakos Tapanis. Titas Kargiotakis was involved in the production and Demetris Katevas was the stage

manager. The musical group Nisafis opened the concert with well-known pieces from their repertoire and also received enthusiastic applause from the audience.

FIRST TIME IN AMERICA
Despite his songs on immigration, especially to the United States, Malamas never appeared HERE until the concert in New York. President of the GCC, Iraklis Kremmidas told The National Herald that he insisted on persuade Malamas to cross the Atlantic.

He said "for Malamas, it was once considered impossible to come to America. I replied 'Malamas will come and sing a song.' Eventually, he came and sang many songs today."

Kremmidas continued, "It is a great honor for us to have Malamas in the heart of New York, to sing and to dedicate the song entitled 'Greece has taken Greece' America like a weed!"

"It is important for the youth that today, unfortunately, is leaving Greece again," said Kremmidas, who also warmly thanked The National Herald for its contribution and support for the organization of the concert.

Malamas, who accompanied her husband here."
Malamas was also quite communicative throughout the concert. Indeed, he did not fail to comment on the hectic pace of New York, as well as the stringent anti-smoking measures which made him feel uncomfortable.

"When I smoked, they looked at me in a style that made me believe that I was the biggest problem in the city," he said.

Shortly afterwards, he thanked Iraklis Kremmidas and reporter Dina Giannoutsou, who constantly encouraged him to make the transatlantic journey. "The trip to New York is not like going for a cigarette, or for a cup of coffee. But in time, we will come back again," he promised the audience.

"I will say unambiguously. We at the GCC are singing with our soul. What is important is that a complete band came from Greece along with Malamas, something that was not easy to accomplish, but it came true," said Kremmidas, who also warmly thanked The National Herald for its contribution and support for the organization of the concert.

Roza of Smyrna U.S. Premiere at SEE Film Festival

By Vasilis Papoutsis

LOS ANGELES, CA – Director George Kordellas' emotional drama *Roza of Smyrna* had its U.S. premiere at the 12th Annual South East European (SEE) Film Festival in Los Angeles.

For the first time there were 5 entries of Greek films, with the Greek film *Limbo* winning the award for Best Short. A dark and artistic film with interesting visuals directed by Konstantina Kotzamani.

Roza of Smyrna brought an emotional ending to the festival's closing night. The Greek movie was directed skillfully by director George Kordellas in his first feature film debut. The film is based on the Gianni Giannellis-Theodosiadis' novel *Ismael and Roza* and it was filmed in Athens, Mytilene, Constantinople, and Smyrna. A story of a forbidden love between Roza and her Turkish lover Ismael that took a tragic turn, was set in the time of the Asia Minor Disaster.

The story is reincarnated when Dimitris, an art collector in search of the origins of his new exhibition, discovers in an antique shop Roza's bloody wedding dress and a hidden letter. Tasos Nousias inhabits the role of Dimitri, who patiently peels off the many intricate layers of the story as well as Roza's resistance to revisit her painful past.

Roza's granddaughter Marianna, played charmingly by Evgenia Dimitroglou, came to the art collector's aid and along the way find themselves irresistibly attractive to each other. Roza, played by Lida Protopsalti, eventually agrees to take the difficult path or reliving



ing her past and that leads her to an unexpected reunion.

The movie stirs powerful emotions that deal with love, war and reconciliation. Associate Producer Ioanna Bolomyti when asked how did the movie come together she explained that "The producer of the film Panos Papahadziis was the one who presented me with the idea that he wanted to produce the film based on the novel. I was

intrigued and excited with the strong narrative, the dress and the hidden letter," she told TNH.

Another strong offering was the film *My Aunt in Sarajevo*, which is the story of Bosnian refugee Zlatan, who works in Sweden as a construction worker and one day is forced to return home after his Swedish born daughter Anja, portrayed by Julia Ragnarsson, purchased two tickets to Bosnia in search

of her family roots. Actor Milan Dragasic who played the role of Zlatan in the Q&A following the screening said that the emotionally charged scenes while confronting his past life in Sarajevo "drained him physically and emotionally to the point that he needed a few days to recover after filming was done." The picture earned director Goran Kapetanovic, the Swedish equivalent of the Academy's Best Director Oscar, the Guldbagge Award for Best Actor and actress Sazida Setic won the Guldbagge Award for Best Actress in a Supporting role. The screening of the film was preceded by the short film *Refugee 532* and it is the director's real life account of survival as a 12 year old refugee in Sweden.

The SEE's Audience Award went to *That Trip We Took With Dad*. Anca Miruna Lazarescu's family account of yet another return to the homeland with the backdrop of the "Prague Spring" asks a simple question "How truly free are we when we chose freedom?" As this was the director's first feature film, winning four awards at the SEE Fest in Los Angeles "made me proud and grateful for the recognition and it gives me the trust to continue my work," director Lazarescu told TNH.

The SEE Fest was founded by Vera Mijoljic to promote issue driven films that originate from the South East region of Europe that also transcend cultures and borders. Now in its 12th year, the festival has grown tremendously. When the festival was incorporated in 2006 it presented 12 films, and this year there were 56 film screenings.



The cast of S' Agapaw Alla... (I Love You, But...).

S'Agapaw Alla... (I Love You, But...)

TNH Staff

ASTORIA – Can two blonde hairs lead a couple to divorce? Can a simple real estate deal break up the relationship between the best man/maid of honor in a couple's relationship? Is there love after marriage? Can relationships survive these times of economic crisis? Or can love conquer all? These are the questions asked and answered by *S' Agapaw, Alla... (I Love You, But...)*. The hit play by George Valaris and Stelios Papadopoulos.

S' Agapaw, Alla... ran for six full seasons starring popular actors Alexander Stavrou, Marianna Toumassatou, Alexandra Palaioiologou, Iosif Marinakis, Dimitra Matsouka, and Maria and Tony Dimitriou. Audiences and critics alike loved the play in Athens, Thessaloniki, Canada, Australia, Africa, and Cyprus.

Now, the play is poised to conquer America and spread joy to the Greek American community for a limited run at the Stathakion Center in Astoria with the popular star Stratos Tzortzoglou, and talented actresses Flavia Sgoifo, Nadine Xintara, and Basilica Bliachas.

S' Agapaw, Alla... is a funny, timely, interactive "couples-comedy" featuring the themes of marriage, divorce, and the relationships of couples dictated by today's neo Greek reality, with the emphasis on human emotion and interaction, plus all the twists and turns.

Fotis (played by Tzortzoglou) is a policeman chasing cyber-crime. A popular kid, he is married to Kiki. They both grew up in the same neighborhood. He married Kiki when



he was promoted through "connections" in other words a true Greek.

Kiki (played by Flavia Sgoifo/Nadine Xintara), is a sales lady at Hondos Center, married very young to Fotis, who is considerably older than her. They have been trying to have a child for many years, but have been unsuccessful. She is pathologically jealous and makes his life miserable.

Nina (played by Bliachas), is Fotis and Kiki's koumbara, she grew up in the same neighborhood in adjoining houses in Menidi, after she came from the United States (Astoria) along with her family. After she finished her studies she took a job at the American Embassy and married Mano and together they enjoy the high society life.

Manos (played by Rafitis) is Fotis and Kiki's koumbaros and childhood friend. Since Manos became a lawyer and married Nina, he considers everybody inferior, but he can always use the favors of a policeman, who takes care of all his vehicle violations.

The play opens May 7 at the Stathakion Center in Astoria.

Sofia Papazoglou Wraps up Northeast US Tour

TNH Staff

ASTORIA – Singer Sofia Papazoglou gave a wonderful concert at the Chiotiko Spiti in Astoria on May 5 and touched the souls of the Greeks in attendance. Together with Paris Gyparakis, accompanied by Manolis Pappos on bouzouki, Dasha Kuri on accordion, Vasilis Kentenzoglou on guitar, and Nikos Gyras on stand-up bass, Papazoglou performed favorites including classic laika and rebetika. The enthusiastic audience enjoyed the music and dancing as well as food and drink in the convivial atmosphere of the Chiotiko Spiti.

The concert was organized by The Kohas Agency and was part of Papazoglou's tour of the northeastern United States. Her tour started on April 30, with the Sofia Papazoglou Sings the Greek Blues concert in Norwalk, CT, which helped raise funds for the AHEPA Scholarship Fund and ended with a Celebration



Sofia Papazoglou performs at the Chiotiko Spiti in Astoria.

with Sofia Papazoglou, which was organized in the community hall of Saint Nektarios in Rosendale, Massachusetts on May 6.

Papazoglou is among the many Greek singers touring in

the United States recently to appreciate the audiences of expatriates across the country.



The 66th Annual National Day of Prayer Commemoration

His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios was among those invited by President Trump to attend the annual event at the White House where the president signed the Executive Order Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty.