

10/06/2023

Yannis Markopoulos the composer of our hearts sadly passed away

Yannis Markopoulos a dear friend of the EPLO and the composer of the EPLO hymn, sadly passed away of cancer on 10 June 2023, at the age of 84.

Yannis Markopoulos was one of the most important Greek composers. His musical work ranges from art song to compositions for symphonic orchestras and from film and theater music to opera and oratorios. With his musical proposal, which he called "Return to the roots", he **created his own school of Greek song**, while his symphonic works - where traditional Greek instruments, such as the lyre and the santouri meet with those of the symphonic orchestra - were a new proposal to the world music scene.

He was born in 1939 in Heraklion, Crete into one of the old families of the island — his father was an attorney and later a Prefect.

With the imposition of the dictatorship in Greece, Yannis Markopoulos moved to London, where he enriched his musical knowledge near the English composer Elizabeth Latiennes.

In 1969 Markopoulos returned to Athens with a musical vision that would not only change the course of music in Greece but would also lend immediate moral support to the general demand for restoration of democracy, the struggle being led primarily by university students and intellectuals. He founded a new and highly distinctive musical ensemble which included Greek local instruments. Thus, the piano was combined with the lyre for the first time, while he also added instruments of his own invention, particularly among the percussion, with the intention of enriching the variety of sounds. He then selected young musicians, singers and actors, from both the city and the provinces, and collaborating with painters and poets he presented a series of performances with his musical works *Ilios o Protos* (Sun the First), *Chroniko* (Chronicle), *Ithagenia* (Native land), *Thitia* (Lifetime), *Stratis Thalassinou Among the Agapanthi* (poetry by Giorgos Seferis, Nobel Prize 1963), *Oropedio* (Mountain Plain) at the **Lydra** venue which he named music-studio.

In 1976 he composed the popular liturgy *The Free Besieged*, based on the poem by Greece's national poet Dionysios Solomos, that he conducted in the crowded Panathenean Stadium, and which was presented in London in 1979. In 1977 he composed the music for the BBC television series *Who Pays the Ferryman?*

In 1980 Markopoulos married the singer [Vassiliki Lavina](#), with whom he had his daughter Lenga.

In his own words the composer mentioned three significant words on which his work is focused "Reason, Work, Meaning, three words particularly relevant in the wider political system today", as he said.