

A painting of a hand holding a string of beads over a pomegranate. The hand is positioned at the top, with fingers slightly curled, holding a thin, dark string. The string has several small, dark, teardrop-shaped beads. Below the hand, a large, ripe pomegranate sits on a light-colored, rectangular surface. The background is a textured, mottled mix of brown, blue, and green tones. The overall style is painterly and somewhat somber.

Persephone

A secret Rite

A dialogue with Cello
and Poetry

Project Plan

Persephone, a Secret Rite

A dialogue between Cello and Poetry

Idea and the Project:

Imagine yourself walking down from The Parthenon of Ancient Athens, strolling around the ancient Agora and following the Sacred Way(Iera Odos) together with the rest of the crowd all the way to the Temple of Demeter in the Coastal town of Eleusis where the famous Eleusinian mysteries took place every year to commemorate the abduction of the Daughter of Demeter, Persephone from the God of the underworld Hades. In the festivities you will enter the temple and after you drink the Kykeon you will experience the truth of reality, life, death and rebirth.

Unfortunately was strictly forbidden to share the knowledge and what was happening in the Eleusinian Mysteries. A mystery that still gives headaches to the Historians and archeologists but fortunately fills the minds of artists, musicians and poets with wonder and inspiration.

For Centuries the mysteries and the Myth of Persephone inspired artists from all over the world and in exchange they granted us with masterpieces that we still admire today in museums, art galleries, books and concert halls.

As a Greek Artist of the 21th century I grew up with these stories and I always let them inspire me both artistically and philosophically .

With the Project Persephone, A secret rite: A dialogue between Cello and Poetry i want to offer a journey through time with the use of Classical music from different artistic periods and Poetry.

My goal is to present the universality of these mysteries with the use of the Ecumenism of Music and Poetry and give a new perspective of how classical and Cello Music can be used in different contexts no matter the

Century or the Era. The message is universal and I want to transmit this message to my audience with the use of Cellos, Piano, Poetry recitation and Narration and together to bring it back to the 21st Century.

Description of the Project:

Embark on a mystical journey with Persephone: A Secret Rite, a captivating fusion of music and poetry that transcends the ordinary and delves into the realm of the Mystic.

At the heart of Project Persephone lies a narrative inspired by the ancient Greek myth of Persephone, the goddess of the underworld and the daughter of the Goddess Demeter.

The project seeks to explore the cyclical themes of life, death, and rebirth through a contemporary lens, blending classical music with evocative and sensitive poetry in order to create a tapestry of emotions and imagery for both the artists and the audience. By presenting this project in Museums and Archeological sites (Eleusis, Athens) I hope for an enchanting experience for both my colleagues and audience while we are surrounded by Art and History.

The artistic team consists of 4 cellists and a pianist. The Narrator of the themes and the Poetry will be myself (Apostolos Pagonis).

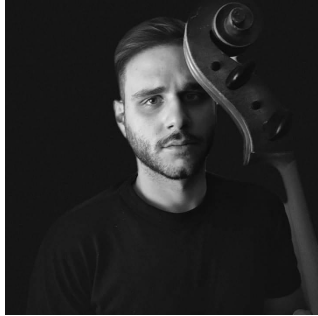
Before the performance a small speech will be held in order to explain to the audience the purpose of the performances and meaning behind this Secret Rite.

The Performance will be held in 2 parts. The first part will be light and joyful, symbolizing life and the youth of the young daughter.

Things will turn around in the second part of the performance, when Hades suddenly abducts Persephone and the themes start to be darker and earth sinks into winter and death. But in the end life and death is a circle. With the interchange of the opposites, earth, nature and humanity comes to a new era, renewed and closer to the truth.

Meet the Artists:

Apostolos Pagonis ***Cellist & Project Manager***



Apostolos Pagonis was born in Athens, Greece in 1992. In June of 2013 he received the Diploma in Cello from Philippos Nakas Conservatory in Athens. In September of 2015 he started his Bachelor studies in the Conservatorium of Utrecht HKU , in the Netherlands with the specialization of Classical Cello (Prof. Ran Varon) where he graduated Cum Laude in August of 2019.

In the course of his studies he followed multiple Masterclasses on Cello performance, chamber music and orchestra (Michel Strauss, Gary Hoffman, Marcio Carneiro, Jeroen Den Herder).

He has performed Solo, with Chamber music groups and orchestras in venues in Greece, The Netherlands, Turkey, Belgium, Germany and France.

He has participated in festivals like the Sound of Music Festival, Aurora Festival, Valder aa festival, Emmy Verhey Festival (The Netherlands) and Delphoi festival (Greece)

Currently he is in the course of obtaining his Master of Music Degree with the specialization of Cello performance from Hanze, Prins Claus Conservatoire, Groningen (Prof. Jan Ype-Nota)

Mare Nostrum Cello Ensemble



Mare Nostrum is a cello ensemble founded in 2022 that performs a wide stylistic repertoire, from Renaissance and Baroque music to Romanticism and contemporary music.

Up to now, it has performed in various formations, from quartet to solo cello music. The musicians in the ensemble come from Spain, Greece and Italy and are currently within the higher education curriculum of the Prince Claus Conservatorium. Each of them completed their first musical studies in their home country, performing in professional and high-level contexts. Since 2022, Mare Nostrum has been performing its repertoire within the province of Groningen, favoring settings such as churches and cathedrals, places that amplify the communicative power of the repertoire.

Ensemble Members: Elena Rota (IT), Emma Zarzuela Castro(ES), Vittorio Zelocchi (IT) , Apostolos Pagonis (GR)

Diana Milena Acosta Cruz

Pianist



Diana M. Acosta studied her Professional Music Studies with Jordi López at Conservatori Professional de Música de Vila-seca until 2015, when she finished with the Prize of Honor in Chamber Music with the Argyre Piano Duo. Afterwards, she obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Music from the Centre Superior de Música Liceu in Barcelona with Tensy Kristmant as the piano teacher. Diana finished in 2023 her Master in Music with Paul Komen at Prince Claus Conservatoire of Groningen. Moreover, she has actively attended masterclasses of Edith Fisher, Ralph van Raat, Patrick Zygmansky, Luiz de Moura, Cecilio Tiele, Elza Kolodin, Enrique Bagaría and Alba Ventura. Her broad education includes from Chamber Music lessons with Daniel Ligorio, Alan Branch and Heidrun Bergander to Musical Analysis with Benet Casablanca, Ramon Humet and Benjamin Davies. Diana is the pianist, the writer, the manager and the producer of the project The Wonders of the Forest. In this project, she wants to use uniqueness and emotional connection as a tool to approach the audience to the exciting coexistence of great classical music from the past centuries with the refined and cutting-edge music from our century.

The Programm:

Part I: Persephone in the world of the living

J.S Bach- Suite Nr.1 , Prélude, Allemande, Sarabande (10 min) ,

Performer: Apostolos Pagonis

Homer- Ode to Demeter (Recitation)

Beethoven Sonata for Piano and Cello Nr.4 (15 min)

Performer: Apostolos Pagonis& Diana Milena Acosta Cruz

Malarme- The Flowers (Recitation)

Luigi Forino- Preghiere, Saint Francis speaks to the birds (7 min)

Performer: Mare Nostrum Cello Ensemble

Small Break (10 min)

Part II: Persephone abducted from Hades to the world of the Dead

P. Tchaikovsky- October, from the Seasons (5 Min)

Performer: Diana Milena Acosta Cruz

G.F Handel - Sarabande (4 min)

Performer : Mare Nostrum Cello Ensemble

Cavafy- Finalities (Recitation)

P. Hindemith- Cello sonata Op.25 . Nr.3 (10 min)

Performer: Apostolos Pagonis

Baudelaire - Song of Autumn (Recitation)

Arvo Part- Fratres (10 min)

Performer: Mare Nostrum Cello ensemble

Shakespeare- The bridal song (Recitation)

Free Improvisation (5 min)

Performers: Apostolos Pagonis, Mare Nostrum Cello ensemble, Diana Milena Acosta Cruz

Marketing and Publicity:

This artistic and cultural event is a public concert, available for people of all ages.

The main audience target are the visitors of both museums that feel eager to discover more about the ancient Greek Rites and enjoy a musical performance while they are surrounded by Art and History itself. The goal is to amplify the mystical experience of this performance with the surrounding artifacts and art while the artists guide the listener as a mystic to the wonders of the Ancient Greek Mysteries of Passage.

A main method of advertising and making the event public will be through all social media platforms(Official fan page,share the event in multiple artistic, University and historical pages), the Websites of the Museums and Posters strategically placed in relevant areas and stores. One of the main goals is also to create an article explaining my goal and reason for the project in order to be released in the local and municipal press.

The promotion will take place approximately 1.5 months before the dates of the concerts in order to keep the interest going and fresh.

The Locations:

- *Groningen Museum, Groningen (The Netherlands)*
- *Archaeological Museum of Eleusis, Athens (Greece)*

Relevance of the Project in the modern artistic world and funding:

The aim of this project, besides offering a high quality performance and experience, is to transfer the listener to a mental state that time isn't relevant anymore and provoke the audience to meditate in the circle of life and death as presented in Nature and the arts.

Over the course of the years Museums, artistic institutions and Musicians have lost a lot of new audiences. In the era of fast and smart technology, de-symbolization of everyday life and the rise of loneliness amongst younger generations, people feel disconnected from the great art and music of the past and today. People for millennia and cross-culturally always connected with each other through Rites and music is an essential part of this.

What I want to offer is a way to reconnect with that.

Therefore in order to create this project and give it the gravity it deserves it is important to request for funds (From organizations and Municipality). All the funds and all endowments will be used in order to cover the expenses of the production, travel costs and a fair compensation for my colleagues and me.

I had the opportunity in November of 2022 to realize and execute this project for the first time. The first performance of the production happened in a wonderful artistic venue (Atelier Touchstone

<https://www.touchstoneatelier.com/>

, Utrecht) in the Canals of the Old city of Utrecht.

The audience of the first performance was really enthusiastic and excited and gave me valuable feedback. From this experience I gained important insights on how to scale-up my production and prepare it for bigger audiences and venues.

I am really excited to continue this production and create an annual event that will happen in Museums and Archeological sites all around the world.

Budget Plan:

For reasons of organization and clarity the analytical budget plan will be presented in a separated Excel Sheet.

Expected Results:

As i mentioned before, the main goal of this production is to help our audience to Reconnect with the circle of life as presented in Nature and her seasons and initiate a small rite with the use of music and poetry as we get Inspiration that arise from the Myth of Persephone and her Abduction from Hades as was happening thousands of years ago in the high of Greek and Roman civilization in the Eleusis Mysteries.

I really hope the audience and the museum visitors will embrace this performance and allow us to offer them a unique experience.

A criteria of success for me would be besides the quality of performance and the attendance of the audience, to gain strong professional relationships with these organizations in order to continue the project the next few years and allow us to expand and create new projects and productions over the years, independently or with their support.

Contact:

For more info, concerts and ticket sales please, feel free to contact us

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Mare Nostrum Cello ensemble website:
<https://www.cellogoplay.com/projects/mare-nostrum-cello-ensemble>

Reach us on Social Media:
Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/apostolospagonis/>