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EFFECTIVE NOTES IN THE AEGEAN WINDS

Syros

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The **Festival of the Aegean** in Syros unfolds in an aura full of opera, lyric voices and emotion, which attests to the bygone bourgeois past of the island. The interpretation of the internationally acclaimed soprano, Jennifer Larmore at the performance of Pietro Mascagni's *Zanetto* under the direction of **Peter Tiboris**, two days ago, "reached" the boxes of the beautiful Apollo musical theatre full of charm, generating aspirations for a serious music festival capable of having an impact both within and beyond borders.

The Festival of the Aegean is the result of the ambition of its Artistic Director, the Greek origin conductor Peter Tiboris, which has been carried out with the contribution of the local cultural institutions, as it is evident that Syros has all the prerequisites for such type of organizations. From the opening symphonic concert with a Verdi and Beethoven program to the first fully staged presentation of Mascagni's opera, from the opera galas to the recital for voice and piano, the Festival's program turns out filling. But, most importantly, as Mr. Tiboris explains, it conveys the significance of an effort which began seven years ago, progresses with deliberate but firm steps and is consolidated in the consciousness of the local people but also of the visitors of the island.

Both the Viennese operetta program (on Saturday) and the presentation of the opera *Zanetto* (on Sunday) attracted the audience, which filled the theatre and demonstrated sufficient musical culture, appreciating and applauding the mezzo soprano **Melody Kielisch** and the tenor **Giorgio Aristo Mikroutsilkos** in arias from works of Strauss, Lehar, Stolz, Kalman (under the direction of

Austrian maestro **Gerhard Track**), but also the **Bohuslav Martinuu Philharmonic Orchestra** that performed the one act piece of Mascagni (written six years after the famous *Cavaleria Rousticana*) with soloists **Jennifer Larmore** and **Eilana Lappalainen**, staged by **Carol Castel**.

Plans for next year include an even further enrichment of the program aiming at the broadening of its artistic horizons and also at a distinct educational dimension. This year, much of the focus is on theatre (with *Romeo and Juliet* by **Aquila Theater Company of New York**), jazz (with concerts of **Human Touch** and the **Stratos Vougas Jazz Quartet**) and Greek music (with rebetika from **Taximi** band). Nevertheless, the ambition of Peter Tiboris goes beyond that to productions of symphonic orchestras taking place at the grand, central square of Hermoupolis, so that the potential of the Festival can "radiate" beyond the beautiful, but small Apollo. Furthermore, he anticipates that the series of workshops, master classes and the fora of high quality (programmed for the coming years) will bring substantial outcomes.

It seems, though, that these ambitious efforts win the bet. Based on the professional experience and high profile of **MidAmerica Productions**, which produces concerts in the US and Europe and encouraged by the impressive response of music-lovers (tickets sold out every night), the Festival of the Aegean serves the philosophy of a real cultural policy, apt to draw artists and groups from the most important centers of production and circulation of contemporary classic (serious) music, opera and lyric singing. Additionally, Syros wins its place in the map of

music festivals so that, metaphorically, the aegean wind which blows soothingly in the face and also the wide open look on the neoclassic décor of the city find an ideal ally in some “most effective music notes,” as Emmanouil Roidis would say.

More information on the festival’s program (July 11-22) can be found at the website www.festivaloftheaegean.com

THE “APOLLO” THEATRE: A REAL JEWEL

A mezzo soprano with international career and rich curriculum vitae which includes innumerable concerts and recordings, as well as collaborations with major

conductors and orchestras, the American born Jennifer Larmore came to Syros, at “the Apollo, this diminutive bijou theatre.” “I wanted from my part to contribute to the consolidation of the Festival; I believe it is very important that such an artistic event takes place each year in the island.” Jennifer Larmore is enthusiastic about her collaboration with Peter Tiboris and about the prospects created for the Festival of the Aegean. “It is not easy for a lyric artist to travel continuously throughout the world. It always depends on the demands of the other partners, on the particular atmosphere created. This time, though, I felt I could relax participating also with some of my own selections in the program. The calmness which Syros breathes is already a benefit for me...”