

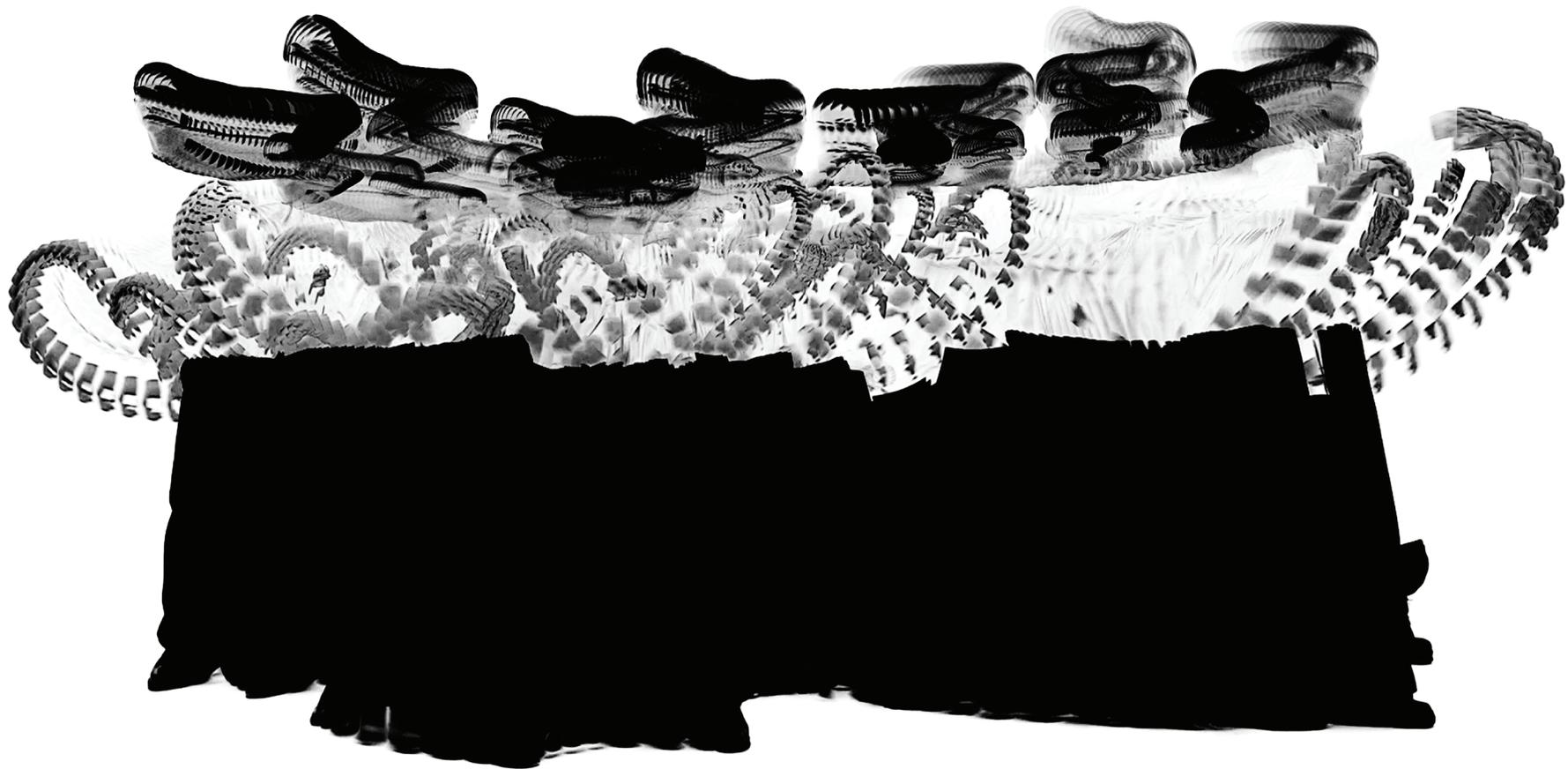
# Ion

Concept & Choreography: Christos Papadopoulos

Premiere, Creation: 1-4 February 2018

Main Stage

Onassis Cultural Centre - Athens



## Cast & Credits

### **CONCEPT & CHOREOGRAPHY**

Christos Papadopoulos

### **DRAMATURGY**

Tassos Koukoutas

### **MUSIC**

Coti K

### **LIGHTING**

Tasos Palaioroutas

### **COSTUMES**

Angelos Mentis

### **SET DESIGN**

Evangelia Therianou

### **1ST ASSISTANT CHOREOGRAPHER**

Katerina Spyropoulou

### **2ND ASSISTANT CHOREOGRAPHER**

Ioanna Antonarou

### **PRODUCTION ORGANIZATION**

Theodora Kapralou

### **DANCERS**

Maria Bregianni, Nontas Damopoulos,  
Nanti Gogoulou, Amalia Kosma,  
Hara Kotsali, Giorgos Kotsifakis,  
Dimitra Mertzani, Efthymis Moschopoulos,  
Ioanna Paraskevopoulou, Alexis Tsiamoglou

### **PRODUCED BY**

Onassis Cultural Centre–Athens

### **WITH THE SUPPORT OF**

The Fondation d'entreprise Hermès within  
the framework of the New Settings programme

### **CO-PRODUCTION**

Théâtre de la Ville–Paris,  
Le Lieu Unique–Scène nationale de Nantes

### **PARTNERSHIP**

Dublin Dance Festival

---

## Links

### **47” trailer**

<https://youtu.be/191GEFXZc9w>

### **4’35” promo trailer**

<https://youtu.be/T58gLE9Na68>

## Dramaturge's note

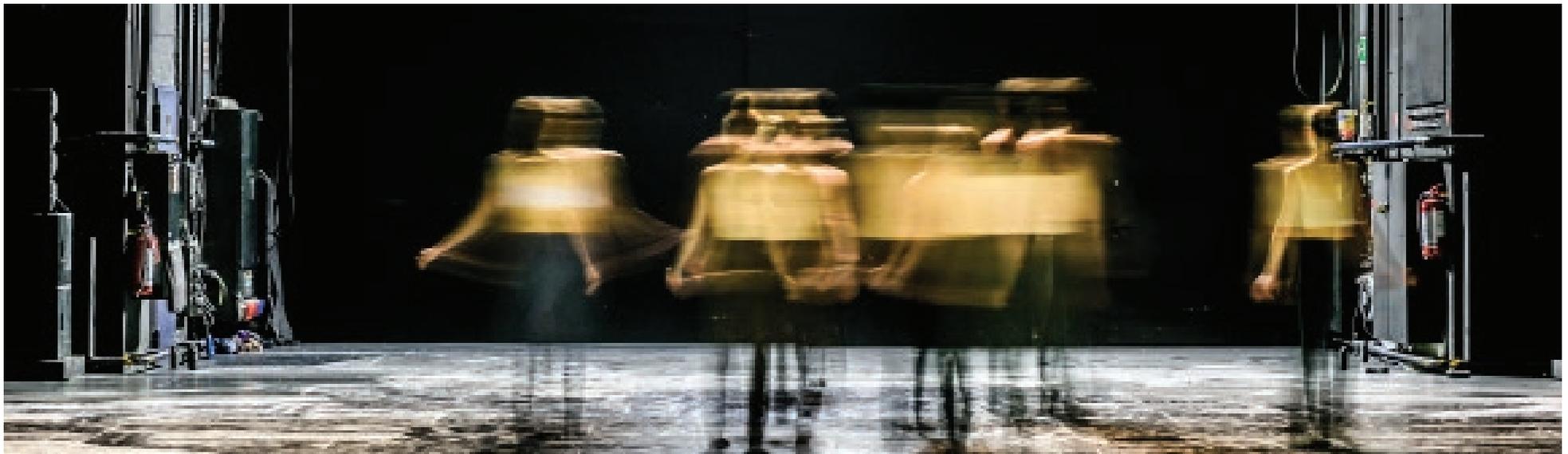
**The flight of birds, the coordination of fireflies, a series of microphenomena that comprise the world of nature become a starting point for the kinetic research of Christos Papadopoulos.**

Two basic components are clearly discernible in Christos Papadopoulos' choreographic research. The first pertains to the spatiality of the body – the way the body becomes a carrier of the perception of the space it inhabits, positioning us actively and consciously in the world. The second deals with the insistence on a kinetic pattern, so that the course of time can acquire a different duration – to move from the juxtaposition of moments to a unified, integrated temporal

cosmos. Still, despite the focus of performing on the here and now, which expands through the function of repetition, the choreographer's wish is to free our eye from the compulsion of sensationalism. One might say that his quest is for a sort of minimal discipline, the infinitude that realises itself in the human being and the aggregate that surrounds him. This intensity in observing the things that surround us, as when we find ourselves in nature and are bewitched by the phenomena that make up its cosmos, cannot be quantified. The act of seeing carries no weight unless it is linked to the emergence of a specific inner landscape, with the personal appropriation of space. So too, in this specific choreography, the body renders the diversity of a world visible through

the imperceptible gradation of movement, to ultimately free us from the finiteness of the stage. What is more, the stage is not merely the surface on which movement takes place; for the choreographer, it is a spatial condition of introspection, a malleable material that seeks to emulate the enchantment exerted upon us by the immensity of the celestial sphere. Similarly, the approach of the other implies a rapport that is not exhausted in proximity but diffused in the incalculable, fundamental difference of the other, transforming space to a locus of coexistence.

Tassos Koukoutas



## Curriculum Vitae Christos Papadopoulos

*“...in the core of my work  
I always look for the human dimension.”*

**Christos Papadopoulos** studied dance and choreography in SNDO (School for New Dance Development) in Amsterdam (2003), theatre in the National Theatre of Greece Drama School (GNT Drama School) (1999) and Political Sciences in Panteion University (2000).

His works, *OPUS* and *ELVEDON*, met with great acclaim when presented in Porta Theatre in Greece, and in a number of festivals abroad. *ELVEDON* was the first choice of the Pan-European network Aerowaves 16 Dance Across Europe and was later presented with equal success in Paris (Théâtre de la Ville and La Briqueterie), in Amsterdam and other Eu-



photo @Elina Giouanli

ropean stages. *OPUS* – another work of distinction – was chosen by Aerowaves 17, while March 2018 marks the beginning of its international tour. We got to know Christos Papadopoulos – some may also remember him as Centaur in the 2004 Summer Olympics Opening Ceremony in Athens – in the works of Dimitris Papaioannou (*2*, *NOWHERE*, *INSIDE*), Fotis Nicolaou, Mariela Nestora, Alexandra Waierstall, etc. He was part of the 2004 Athens Olympics Opening and Closing Ceremonies team and the Baku 2015 European Games. He has choreographed the performances of numerous directors (Dimitris Karantzas, Michail Marmarinos, Thomas Moschopoulos, Yannis Kakleas, Vasilis Niko-

laidis, Vasilis Mavrogeorgiou, Kostas Gakis). He has been with the Drama School of the Athens Conservatoire since 2003, teaching movement and improvisation. He is also a founding member of the dance group *The Lion and the Wolf* (2015).

Christos Papadopoulos introduces us to his new work in the OCC. *Ion* has attracted the attention of international co-producers and is scheduled to travel to other European stages after its premiere in Greece.

## Context

*Ion*, like life.

A living system of ten dancers, pulsating and coordinating, attracting and repulsing, tracing orbits that follow the mechanisms of nature.

Because we are all ions out there, electrically charged.

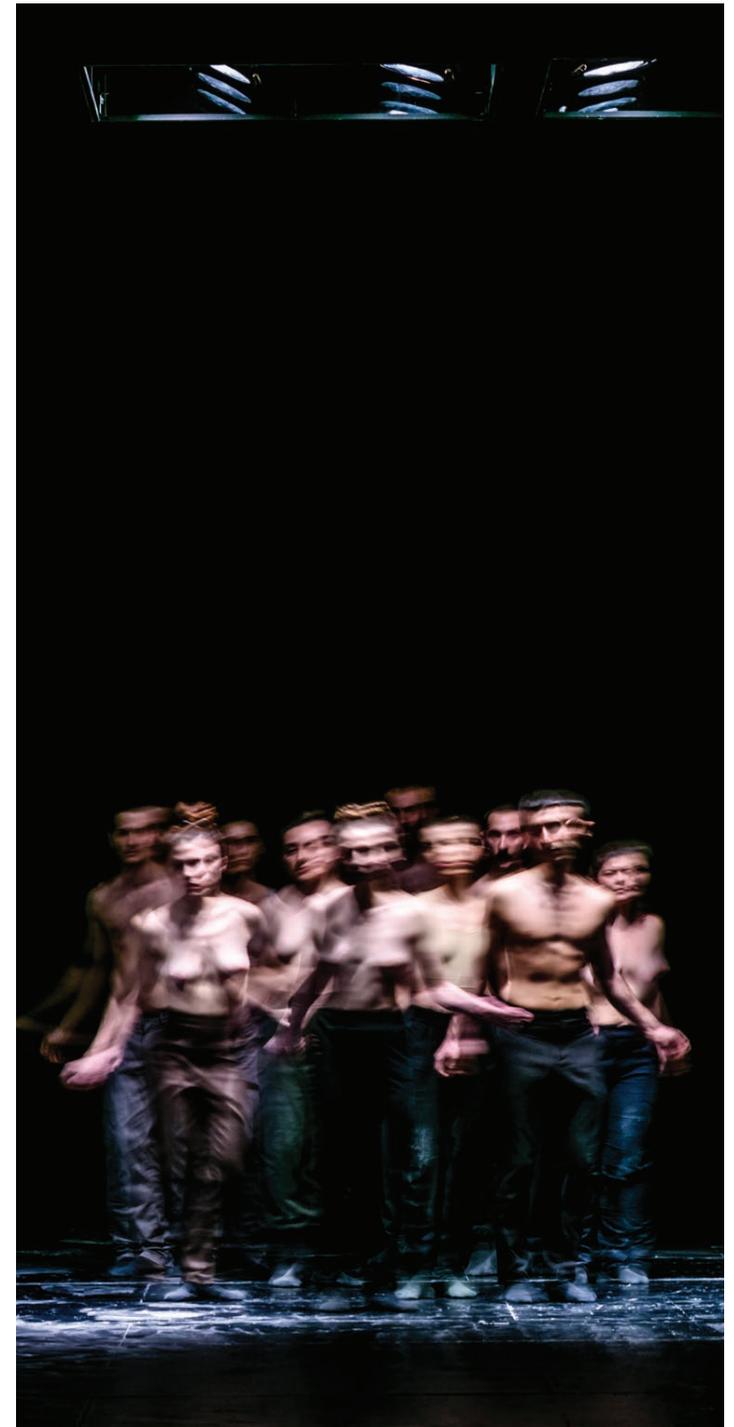
Christos Papadopoulos' minimalist, poetic, artistic universe is a place you may inhabit. *Ion* is a performance that focuses on the microphysics of motion, the volume of detail that can derive from a kinetic pattern allowing the eye to wander, to travel through the boundless field of human relations.

The flight of birds, the coordination of fireflies, a series of microphenomena that comprise the world of nature become a starting point for the kinetic research of Christos Papadopoulos. Still, the choreographer does not merely represent the aforementioned enchanting coincidences; he moves on with a reductionist approach to kinetic patterns encountered all around us. In a minimalist language, which is a feature of his work up to now, he looks for the mechanisms or

the algorithm that lies behind the function of coordination. A living system of 10 dancers tests our powers of observation with imperceptible changes and noiseless transitions, in order to reveal the fragility of human relations that validate the pace of life, the natural order of things.

So, while the title refers us directly to the phenomenon of ionization, we could say that the performance tends to work by association, highlighting elements that transcend form, the mechanism of choreography, the rigor of a system. Besides, what fascinates the choreographer is not the Empire of Signs, but how they connect, creating a unique cosmos. The appeal of coordination lies in the brevity of the phenomenon, its transience, the impression of randomness and the expectation of recurrence.

With his new work, *Ion*, Christos Papadopoulos submits a multisensory experiment, which does not exhaust itself in easy attention-seeking mechanics. The choreography aims to foreground the minimal, the ecstatic serenity, like





that crack through which light enters before the splendour of the skies is revealed to us. Christos Papadopoulos focuses on the repetitiveness of kinetic motifs, on stage space clarity defined by lighting and action. The choreographer relies on the primal elements that constitute his work: rhythm, movement, place and time. Still, the way he weaves the acts allows us to gradually discover the interaction of the movement with the other elements, light showcasing the movement of the bodies and the effect of music on the sound environment, which does not merely guide but also converses with the choreography.

Moving bodies as lively compositions, constantly changing our perception of space, shifting our experiences through different sensory registers. Ion is aimed at experimenting with the microphysics of dance, involving all kinds of specific affinities between bodies, repulsions, transitioning and synchronisation.

Within the realm of disparate movement phenomena the most impressive variations are attributed to co-ordination; a behavioural pattern, which allows maximum utilization of the available energy produced or distributed among the members of a group. Think of, for example, bird flocking.

Applied to dance phenomena, the above example could give us a better understanding of how a body of entities on stage is engaged in the variations of continuity in movement. Exceeding the mere suggestion of a choreographic exercise, this experiment aims at exploring the group dynamics, the sharing of a common rhythm, the belonging in an ever-expanding space, the transitory phase from unit to community.

Yet, the question prevails: “what makes co-ordination so alluring to the eye?”

Our experiment of course, doesn’t suggest a “magic moment” of co-ordination that could never be repeated or rephrased. We want to try out a pattern in which co-ordination is not aiming at itself but rather allow us to search into the algorithm that makes it possible; by unifying a vast field of divergent elements, going beyond a self-sufficient “form” in order to create a pattern, both harmonious and utterly efficient in its execution.

The weaving of the elements into groupings, regroupings; the losing and finding of themes, subthemes and counter-themes, seemingly disparate yet always dominated by the relentless inevitability that they resolve at the end, could offer, perhaps, a reflection on some deeper, more fundamental laws of which we are not yet aware of.

# Interview

## SHOWstudio Art Director Younji Ku asks choreographer Christos Papadopoulos about the visual nuances in his work

**Younji Ku:** When a movement repeats in the choreography, it creates or forces a meaning – people read different things into this, but did you intend to create a meaning?

**Christos Papadopoulos:** ‘Forces a meaning’ is too strong a phrase to use. I am more attracted to the idea that movement within repetition is revealing a way to inhabit the space, to gradually build a way through the piece, which is contemplative, suggesting more than a singular meaning. It is singular only through the prism of the individual who performs it, but it doesn’t contain singularity in its meaning; rather, I would say it is open to multiple meanings.

**YK:** Do you have an intention in mind when you begin the process of choreographing?

**CP:** I try to respect the process so that intention reveals itself. I have references of course, but I am also open to ways of interpreting, of inviting other people in the process. Intention is processual; it doesn’t imply a mere orientation to an end, but embraces all steps to a sharing, a community of ideas. That’s why I am creating while being in a team of collaborators.

**YK:** What were your references and inspirations?

**CP:** One major reference is what I would call ‘creativity’ in nature. But of course nature has no intention to impress by the occurrence of its phenomena. Another, is the rhythmic cycle of the repetitive structures in nature; things synchronising not just because they operate within a system but because their synchronisation allows a system to exist beyond operation. Otherwise birds will just fly straight, fish will swim

straight; why follow patterns which are far more complex? But if everything is going ‘straight’ how do we look for communities and singularities?

**YK:** How long did it take you to conceptualise and complete Ion?

**CP:** There’s the practical side of things – the rehearsal period and preparation of the show– and then a psychological aspect, which is really hard to put in numbers. I mean when does an idea come into one’s mind? For how long is it there, nurturing and growing before it hits the surface?

**YK:** Why do you choose to be so minimal in a profession which normally capitalises on the extremities of a dancer’s body and the physical form?

**CP:** It depends on what you see in minimal; minimal can be exhausting in terms of physicality. Minimal is not minimum energy, neither less dexterity. If we talk about form, minimal is about reinventing yourself within a form that maybe defies exuberance, resists the ‘hunger’ of the eye to be constantly pleased and satisfied. It is, to a certain level, a sort of nakedness in terms of performing.

**YK:** How much does the physical appearance of your dancers matter to you?

**CP:** My work requires certain physical skills, but appearance is not a prerequisite.

**YK:** To what extent does your choreography represent human behaviours?

**CP:** Do you mean if my movement vocabulary has a realistic approach? Because otherwise it would be like answering what qualifies as ‘representative of human’ within the artistic practice.

**YK:** Do you envision the motion before you hear the music or does the music influence the movements you want to create?

**CP:** Movement research comes before music, or sometimes with music.

**YK:** How do you maintain total conviction in your work? What drives you to ensure your ideas are put into action?

**CP:** By creating a community that supports the initial idea and guarantees its effective execution but also its expansion towards directions which I might not have imagined.

**YK:** How do you expect your work to evolve?

**CP:** I don’t plan to stick to a certain label that characterises my work. I don’t want to be constrained by kinetic styles and practices; in the core of my work I always look for the human dimension. My priority –though it may not be apparent at first glance– is focusing on the individual, the way he/she is in a community of bodies, or exposed by himself–herself. I want my work to reverberate the inner human condition, whether it is demonstrated by abstract movement or a simple gesture. A movement from and towards the human.

## Reviews

Christos Papadopoulos' choreography raises a variety of issues, such as the way a living system works as observed from outside, its apparent uniformity (or mass), which is nonetheless made up of various individualities, the way the minimum unit is separated from or integrated into the whole, thereby influencing its image, and most of all, how the otherness of even a single entity enriches and adds variety to an ostensibly homogeneous and indivisible whole.

**Review by Dimitris Tsatsoulis**  
**Professor at the Department of Theatre Studies - Patras University**  
**16-02-2018, imerodromos.gr/**

Christos Papadopoulos, a long time performer but quite new to choreography, pleasantly surprises us in this, his third work. Even though his stimuli and experiences were more relevant to the body narrator or the body impressive, he held on to his own branch of the inviolate, by promoting a different approach to the body.

What body, then? Because there are many: the dissector's, the scientist's, the erotic body, the suffering body, the ordinary body etc. Fascinated by the unmediated language of the body, he instinctively opts for a simple mode and an admirable economy of means, without the verbosity and trimmings that seems to rule the local scene. This insistence on his idiosyncratic need, along with the urge to focus on a game of coordination or consonance of discrete bodies is what makes all the difference.

**Review by K. Vounelaki**  
**dance critic, bookpress.gr/politismos/**

A perfectly coordinated world in motion in which repetition breeds magic. In *Ion*, Christos Papadopoulos achieved his own personal transcendence and created a stunning rhythmic and perfectly coordinated moving world, based on the perpetual repetition of the kinetic motifs – and believe me, here repetitiveness does not fire, but it releases all the charm it may contain – the purity of a stage that is moulded and transformed by the use of lighting and the impact of a sound environment – the music was composed by Coti K – that does not merely guide but converses with the choreography...

**Review by Georgia Oikonomou,**  
**06-02-2018**  
**tospirto.net/dance/**

An energy purger containing the bare essentials.  
Nothing is more charged with meaning, nothing is simpler than human existence itself.

**Review by Panos Michael**  
**02-02-2018**  
**lifo.gr/guide/culturenews/**

# Contact

For tour inquiries please write to

Christina Liata

Head of Tours and Co-productions

Onassis Cultural Centre - Athens

[c.liata@sgt.gr](mailto:c.liata@sgt.gr)

Office +30 213 017 8116

Mobile +30 6946 871 899



ONASSIS  
CULTURAL  
CENTRE  
ATHENS