

Zoi Tsokanou: Biography

Making a name for herself across multiple engagements in Opera and Concert, showing a vivid temperament and a true love of making music on stage, Zoi Tsokanou is the first woman in history to lead a major Greek Orchestra.

From 2017 to 2023, she served as Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Thessaloniki State Symphony Orchestra, leading 120 musicians in a new area of repertoire, international profile, accessibility, and educational and community engagement.

Highlights of the concert season 2024/2025 include her Return to the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, her Debut with the Hessisches Staatsorchester Wiesbaden, the Tyrolean Symphony Orchestra, the Brandenburgische Staatsphilharmonie, Concerts with Athens State Symphony Orchestra, The Lausanne Sinfonietta, the Orquesta Sinfonica da Xalapa in Mexico and a series of appearances and recordings with the Cyprus Symphony Orchestra.

In the past seasons, she made her Debut at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden in London Gorecki's Symphony nr. 3 choreographed by Crystal Pite, at the Norwegian National Opera, at Grande Theatre de Geneve, as well as with the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande OSR, the Polish Radio National Symphony Orchestra NOSPR, the Niederrheinische Sinfonikern a.o. Her new album with the TSSO "Topos" has been recently released by Naxos receiving critical acclaim.

She works with distinguished artists like Gil Shaham, Thomas Hampson, Cyprien Katsaris, Juliana Avdeeva, Anastasia Kobekina, Simon Trpceski, Daniel Lozakovich, Alena Baeva, Daniel Müller Schott, Anneleen Lenaerts, Valeriy Sokolov, Lucienne Renaudin Vary, Roman Simovic, Maximilian Hornung, Ramon Vargas, a.o.

Other recent engagements include concerts with the Karajan Academy of the Berliner Philharmoniker and Artist in Residence Marlis Petersen, Barcelona Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre Nationale de Lille, Düsseldorfer Symphonikern, Sofia Philharmonic, Norddeutsche Philharmonie Rostock, Bergische Symphonikern, Szczecin Philharmonic, the Radio and Television Orchestra Madrid RTVE, Collegium Novum Zürich, Ensemble Contrechamps Geneve, the Georgisches Kammerorchester Ingolstadt, as all major Greek orchestras and the Greek National Opera where she appears regularly. She participated in famous festivals such as Lucerne Festival, Holland Festival, Athens Festival, Schumann Festival Düsseldorf, Domstufen Festival, Klangspuren Festival, Festival Amplitudes.

From 2014-2017, she served as a permanent conductor at the Theater Erfurt conducting a vast Opera and Concert Repertoire. For two years she held the position of Associate Conductor at the oldest Czech Orchestra, the Westbohemian Symphony, and from 2011-2014 she was the Music Director of Arosa Music Theater at the Arosa Festival, Switzerland.

In 2024 she conducted the new Carmen production of the Schauspielhaus Zürich in Zurich and Amsterdam winning critical acclaim. In the Spring of 2018, she conducted Spontini's rarely performed Opera Agnes von Hohenstaufen at Theater Erfurt creating an international sensation. At the Greek National Opera, she led renowned Opera productions such as Barrie Kosky's Magic Flute, Katie Mitchell's Lucia die Lammermoor and Elijah Moshinsky's Simon Boccanegra.

Her Opera Repertoire includes among others, Rigoletto, Il Trovatore, Macbeth, Otello, Tosca, Cavalleria Rusticana, Glucks Orfeo ed Euridice, Die Verkaufte Braut, Gounods Faust, Zandonai's Giulietta e Romeo, Il Barbiere di Siviglia, die Lustige Witwe, Die Fledermaus, West Side Story, working together with Opera Theaters in Erfurt, Bremen, Regensburg, Osnabrück, Hagen, Athens, Thessaloniki.

One of her remarkable moments is her assistantship with Bernard Haitink, her important mentor, together with Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich. She was invited several times by Lucerne Festival to participate in the conducting Master Class with Bernard Haitink as well as from Tonhalle Orchestra and David Zinman. She won several prizes in International Conducting Competitions.

Zoi Tsokanou was born in Thessaloniki. She held from her hometown a piano and musicology degree and studied in Zurich piano with Konstantin Scherbakov and Conducting by Johannes Schlaefli. She lives with her family in Zurich.