

Hellenic-American Cultural Foundation

The Hellenic-American Cultural Foundation, a not-for-profit organization, was established to organize and promote high quality and relevant educational and cultural programs, concerts, lectures, exhibits, and similar events for all persons interested in the history, culture and affairs of Greece and its people and the people of Greek ancestry outside of Greece.

Current Events

Greece, Byzantium and Post-Byzantium at The Met

May 31, 2017, at the offices of Debevoise & Plimpton

Dr. Helen C. Evans, the Mary and Michael Jaharis Curator for Byzantine Art at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, discussed how the Byzantine and post-Byzantine centuries maintained many aspects of classical Greek culture and traditions, even as Christianity replaced the gods of Greek antiquity and ultimately the Ottoman Empire. Dr. Evans oversees the Byzantine, Early Christian and Early Jewish collections at The Met.

The Mary and Michael Jaharis Galleries highlight the importance of the Byzantine Empire, ruled from Constantinople as a major world power for centuries, and of the role that Greece played in developing many images used by Christians around the globe. Four exceptional Cretan icons, acquired by The Met through the generosity of the Jaharis family in 2013, were the primary focus of Dr. Evans's talk.

This was the third spring event with curators from The Met addressing Greek heritage. A reception with Dr. Evans followed the program.

Jews of Greece: 25 Centuries of Continuous Presence

April 19, 2017, at the offices of Norton Rose Fulbright

The Hellenic-American Cultural Foundation presented, along with The Hellenic-American Chamber of Commerce and American Friends of the Jewish Museum of Greece, a lecture on the historical presence of Jews in Greece.

Dr. Mimis Cohen, MD, FACS, FAAP, is a founding member of the American Friends of the Jewish Museum of Greece and a professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He gave a presentation on the early interaction of the Greek and "Romaniote" Jewish communities around the Eastern Mediterranean, including the cross-fertilization of ideas which has had a significant and long-lasting impact on Western civilization and became the basis of Judeo-Christian culture. The history of Romaniote communities and their traditions and customs was discussed as well as the influence from their non-Jewish neighbors in the development of a unique culture. Tragically 86% of the pre-war Jewish population of Greece perished during the Holocaust, including the Jews from the Romaniote communities.

Dr. Cohen was born and raised in Athens after the Second World War. His parents survived the Holocaust in Athens thanks to the courage of Greek Orthodox friends. A reception with Dr. Cohen followed the program.

2016

Olympic Games 1896: The Photographic Album of Albert Meyer

December 7, 2016, at The Consulate General of Greece

The Benaki Museum of Greece made available to the members of the Hellenic-American Cultural Foundation a preview of its exhibition “Olympic Games 1896”. Albert Meyer, one of the best-known German art photographers, accompanied his country’s delegation to Athens to photograph the first modern Olympic Games. His purpose was to document the event and put together a commemorative album intended for the German Royal Court and the International Olympic Committee.

The photographic archive was destroyed in 1945 when bombardments flattened Dresden, turning the original photographs into rare and priceless artifacts. Marinos Yeroulanos, president of the Board of Trustees of the Benaki Museum for many years and grandson of George Streit, a member of the 1896 International Olympic Committee, donated the album to the Historical Archives of the Museum. Since then, this unique Album is safeguarded with care as imposed by rarity, being a unique token to both history and art.

Screening of “Techniques of the Body”

November 3, 2016, at the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs

The Hellenic-American Cultural Foundation co-sponsored with the Carnegie Council “Techniques of the Body” – a film made from the stories of historian Mark Mazower (Professor of History at Columbia University) and from the artistic perspective of filmmaker Constantine Giannaris. The film explored the memory of war, exile, and massive population movements and asked how we might respond to their impact in the present. Both Mr. Mazower, a member of HACF’s Advisory Council, and Mr. Giannaris commented on aspects of the film.

Tenth Annual New York City Greek Film Festival

September 29 - October 19, 2016, at various locations

For more information please go to nycgreekfilmfestival.com.

Jerusalem 1000-1400: Every People Under Heaven

March 2, 2016, at Debevoise & Plimpton LLP

Barbara Drake Boehm and Melanie Holcomb previewed *Jerusalem 1000-1400: Every People Under Heaven*, an international exhibition opening at The Metropolitan Museum of Art this fall, for which they are co-curators.

In words and images, they brought the city of Jerusalem to life – giving voice to the accounts of medieval visitors and introduced some of the great works of art that will travel to New York from more than 60 institutions worldwide for the exhibition. Special focus was given to works of art testifying to the role of the

Greek Orthodox Patriarchate as protector of Christian holy sites in Jerusalem. A reception followed the presentation.

2015

The Olympus Piano Trio

November 5, 2015, at Merkin Concert Hall at the Kaufman Music Center

The Hellenic-American Cultural Foundation presented in concert The Olympus Piano Trio – Pianist Konstantine Valianatos, Violinist Regi Papa, and Cellist Benjamin Capps. The program featured music from four different countries – an international sampling of works for piano trio: Russian, French, Greek and German. In addition to pieces by Mendelssohn, Rachmaninoff and Ravel, the program included the New York premier of Christos Hatzis' *Odd World*, a contemporary work with traditional Greek dance rhythms. A reception followed the performance.

Ninth Annual New York City Greek Film Festival

October 2-25, 2015, at various locations

For more information please go to nycgreekmfestival.com.

Joan R. Mertens on the Art of Interpreting Greek Vase

June 10, 2015, at Debevoise & Plimpton LLP

The Hellenic-American Cultural Foundation presented Dr. Joan R. Mertens of the Greek and Roman Department of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, who discussed the extraordinary interrelation of subject matter, shape, and execution that distinguishes Greek vases as works of art. Dr. Mertens has been a member of the Met's curatorial staff since 1972, becoming curator in 1981 and is the author or co-author of over 60 publications, including her book, "How to Read Greek Vases" (2011). A reception with Dr. Mertens followed the discussion.

George Tenet on Life in Public Service: The Peter T. Kourides Lecture Series

April 29, 2015, at The University Club

The Hellenic-American Cultural Foundation presented George Tenet who delivered the third lecture in the Peter T. Kourides Lecture Series on public service. Mr. Tenet served as the 18th Director of Central Intelligence from 1997 to 2004. In this position, he led the U.S. Intelligence Community and presided over the daily activities of the Central Intelligence Agency. In December of 2004, President George W. Bush awarded Mr. Tenet the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the U.S.'s highest civilian honor. The lecture was held in the format of a "fireside chat", led by Mike Emanuel, Chief Congressional Correspondent and Senior Political Correspondent for FOX News Channel. A reception with George Tenet followed the discussion.

Margalit Fox on The Riddle of the Labyrinth

February 12, 2015, at the Rubin Museum

The Hellenic-American Cultural Foundation hosted a discussion on *The Riddle of the Labyrinth* by Margalit Fox, a journalist at *The New York Times*. Ms. Fox is the author of the acclaimed book *The Riddle of the Labyrinth*, which recounts the history and individuals behind the deciphering of Linear B script, the earliest known form of writing of the Greek language, dating from as early as 1400 BC. A reception with Ms. Fox followed the discussion.

Yannis Palaiologos on the Implications of the Rise of the Extreme Right in Greece

January 15, 2015, at the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs

The Hellenic-American Cultural Foundation, in conjunction with the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs, hosted a talk at the Council's lecture theatre on the cultural implications of the rise of the extreme right in Greece. The speaker was Yannis Palaiologos, a leading Greek journalist, commentator and author who writes for Kathimerini newspaper. A reception with Mr. Palaiologos followed the talk.

2014

Pianist Maria Asteriadou and Violinist Kurt Nikkanen: In Concert

November 6, 2014, at Merkin Concert Hall at the Kaufman Music Center

The Hellenic-American Cultural Foundation hosted an enchanting concert by Pianist Maria Asteriadou and Violinist Kurt Nikkanen. Heralded as “an artist with intense personality, virtuosic flair, unusual poise and intimate contact with style,” Greek pianist Maria Asteriadou is an acclaimed soloist and chamber musician. Ms. Asteriadou’s love for her native Greece and her enthusiasm for contemporary music have led to prestigious premieres by many of Greece’s most prominent composers. American violinist Kurt Nikkanen is an international soloist of the highest order. After making his Carnegie Hall debut at the age of twelve, he has performed to great acclaim at many international venues and worked with many of the world’s most renowned conductors. An enthusiastic advocate of contemporary music, he has performed premieres and recorded many significant composers. A reception with the artists followed the performance.

The event was co-sponsored with The Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation (USA).

Eighth Annual New York City Greek Film Festival

October 18-30, 2014, at various locations

For more information please go to nycgreekfilmfestival.com.

Professor Ioli Kalavrezou:

The Motherhood of the Virgin Mary: Its Iconography and Development

May 8, 2014, at Debevoise & Plimpton LLP

Professor Ioli Kalavrezou of Harvard University presented her analysis on the place and role of the Virgin Mary in the Orthodox Church. Based on surviving visual and textual evidence, she discussed the changes that can be observed in the cult of the Virgin Mary through the centuries beginning with some of the earliest depictions and the development of her images as late as the 15th and 16th century. Professor Kalavrezou's lecture especially focused on the centuries when the Virgin Mary officially became the Mother of God, as she is known today. A reception with Professor Kalavrezou followed the program.

The Parthenon Enigma: A Lecture and Conversation with Joan Breton Connelly

April 7, 2014, at the Rubin Museum of Art

The Parthenon is revered as the symbol of Western culture, the pinnacle of excellence in art and architecture, and an icon of democracy itself. But how much do we know about what it meant to those who built it? A fascinating presentation and discussion with archaeologist Joan Breton Connelly revealed a deeper, more profound meaning for the temple than ever realized before. Ms. Connelly recently published a book on this subject. A reception with Professor Connelly followed the program.

**A Life in Dance: A Conversation with H el ene Alexopoulos,
Former Principal Dancer with the New York City Ballet, and Celia Ipiotis**

March 4, 2014, at the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Cathedral Center

A fascinating program of film clips and conversation on the life of a ballet dancer, Celia Ipiotis, the creator of the nationally acclaimed cultural television series "Eye on Dance," had a conversation with H el ene Alexopoulos, former Principal Dancer with the New York City Ballet. A reception with Ms. Alexopoulos and Ms. Ipiotis followed the program.

2013

Looking Through The Prism: Greek Culture in a Time of Austerity and Innovation

November 5, 2013, at Debevoise & Plimpton LLP

The Hellenic-American Cultural Foundation hosted a fascinating multimedia presentation and discussion about Greek identity, introducing a new generation's innovative perspective on what it means to be Greek in a time of austerity and crisis. Three short films from the critically acclaimed cross-platform documentary by filmmakers Nikos Katsaounis and Nina Paschalidou, "The Prism," framed this unique conversation. Ambassador Loucas Tsilas, presently Executive Director of The Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation (USA), Yannis Palaiologos, a renowned journalist, and Nikos Katsaounis, a groundbreaking documentary filmmaker tackled the burning questions raised in the headlines of international media over the past three years. Ioannis Vrailas, the Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the

United Nations, served as the panel moderator. All audience members were invited to a reception with the panelists and panel moderator following the presentation.

New York City Greek Film Festival

October 3-16, 2013, at various locations

The Hellenic-American Chamber of Commerce, the Onassis Foundation (USA), the Agnes Varis Charitable Trust and the HACF presented the *Seventh Annual New York City Greek Film Festival*. The following films were screened: *A.C.A.B. All Cats Are Brilliant (Synharitiria Stous Aisiodoxous)*, *Black Box*, *Boy Eating The Bird's Food (To Agori Troei To Fagito Toy Pouliou)*, *Greek American Radicals: The Untold Story (Taxisyneidisia)*, *Hello Anatolia*, *Joy (Hara)*, *Kisses To The Children (Filia Eis Ta Paidia)*, *Magic Hour*, *Marjoram (Matzourana)*, *Naked Hands (Gymna Heria)*, *One Step Ahead (Ena Vima Brosta)*, *Papadopoulos & Sons*, *The Tree And The Swing (To Dentro Kai I Kounia)*, *What If (An)*, *A Bright Shining Sun and Archive*. For further information go to New York City Greek Film Festival.

Pianist George-Emmanuel Lazaridis: In Concert

October 1, 2013, at Merkin Concert Hall at the Kaufman Music Center

The Hellenic-American Cultural Foundation and The Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation (USA) presented in concert pianist George-Emmanuel Lazaridis. Mr. Lazaridis' performances have been characterized as "special enough to be beyond comparison" (BBC Music Magazine, Adrian Jack). The program consisted of Schubert's Wanderer Fantasy in C Major, D760, Op. 15 and Liszt's Sonata in B minor, S. 178, along with excerpts from Mr. Lazaridis' own composition "The Trojan Cycle", including "Achilles Mourning", "Andromache" and "The Battlefield Toccata". All audience members were invited to a reception with Mr. Lazaridis following the performance.

Ambassador John NegroponTE: The Peter T. Kourides Lecture Series

June 18, 2013, at The University Club

Ambassador John NegroponTE delivered a lecture on life in public service, which was the second annual lecture in the Peter T. Kourides Series. Ambassador NegroponTE has been the quintessential public servant for over four decades, serving at eight different Foreign Service posts, and as an ambassador to five countries. Ambassador NegroponTE has also held important positions at the U.S. Department of State and the White House. Reflections on the evening can be read in The National Herald.

Mr. Peter T. Kourides was a dedicated and long-time supporter of educational, professional and cultural excellence in the Greek American community. A reception followed the lecture.

Nicholas Gage: A Writer's Odyssey

March 21, 2013, at the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Cathedral Center

Mr. Gage discussed how his experiences in two worlds, Greece and the United States, moved him to pursue a career as an award winning investigative reporter and foreign correspondent for The New York Times and to become the author of seven acclaimed books including *Eleni, A Place for Us and Greek Fire*.

Pontian Odyssey: The Endurance and Renewal of an Ancient Culture

February 19, 2013, at the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Cathedral Center

An evening of presentations on a fascinating and enduring culture from Thomas de Waal, Senior Associate of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, D.C., Nikos Michailidis, Ph.D. candidate, Department of Anthropology, Princeton University, and Eleftherios (Ted) Kostans, award winning photographer and co-founder of Cosmos-Philly.

2012

Panel Discussion: Greek-American Artist William Baziotes

December 11, 2012, at the National Academy Museum

The great Greek American painter's centennial was honored at a panel on December 11th at the National Academy Museum. Eminent contemporary art historians Dr. Mona Hadler and Dr. Karen Wilkin and director of the Baziotes catalogue raisonne Mr. Michael Preble discussed Baziotes's work in the context of his generation and its relevance today. The discussion included a rich survey of images and was followed by a reception in the Academy's Stone Room.

Greek Connection: Pianist John Kamfonas In Concert

November 13, 2012, at Merkin Concert Hall

Greek-American pianist John Kamfonas performed an electrifying evening of solo and small ensemble works. Described as "mesmerizing... inspirational... and eccentric" (Deccan Herald, Bangalore), Mr. Kamfonas opened the program with solo piano pieces by Manos Hadjidakis and Samuel Barber, both inspired by dance music, as well as works by Franz Liszt. The second half featured solo music by Busoni and ensemble works by Victor Kioulaphides, both his dynamic and highly virtuosic Rhapsody for mandolin and piano and the world premiere of his Piano Trio. For these works, Mr. Kamfonas was joined by cellist Caleb van der Swaagh, violinist Sharon Park, and mandolinist Sebastiaan de Grebber.

All audience members were invited to a reception with the performers following the concert. For further information go to Kaufman Center.

New York City Greek Film Festival

October 6-17, 2012, at various locations

The Hellenic-American Cultural Foundation in conjunction with The Hellenic-American Chamber of Commerce and with support from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, organized and helped sponsor the 2012 Greek Film Festival.

The following films were screened: *Alps*, *Burning Heads (To Gala)*, *Christmas Tango (To Tango Ton Christougennon)*, *City of Children (I Poli Ton Paidion)*, *The Fiend of Athens (O Drakos)*, *Fred Won't Move Out*, *God Loves Caviar (O Theos Agapai To Haviari)*, *Magic Hour*, *Smyrna: The Destruction of a Cosmopolitan City, 1900–1922*, *Two Men and a Baby (Mia For A Kai Ena Moro)*, *Unfair World (Adikos Kosmos)*, *Wasted Youth*, *100*. In addition, there was a Manhattan Gala event Wednesday, October 10th, Screening of *Smyrna: The Destruction of a Cosmopolitan City, 1900–1922* followed by a reception. For further information go to New York City Greek Film Festival.

Senator Paul S. Sarbanes Lecture: The Peter T. Kourides Lecture Series

May 3, 2012, at The University Club

On May 3, 2012, the Foundation in cooperation with The Hellenic-American Chamber of Commerce organized an inaugural lecture at The University Club in Manhattan, established in memory of the late Peter Kourides by members of his family. Senator Paul Sarbanes of Maryland gave the inaugural lecture reflecting on his childhood and youth in a Greek American family and on significant events of his illustrious career in Congress. A reception followed the lecture.

Mr. Peter T. Kourides was a dedicated and long-time supporter of educational, professional and cultural excellence in the Greek American community.