

## Greek Embassy Celebrates 'Oxi Day' with Prestigious Music Performance

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On the occasion of "OXI Day", the Greek Embassy in Cairo celebrated the historic event with a distinguished **Mysteria Graecorum** musical performance. Renowned Greek flute soloist and Professor at the Athens Conservatoire Natalia Gerakis, together with Dr. Doaa Saber from Cairo Conservatoire, performed in the concert.

The two musicians presented a selection of historical compositions collectively known as Mysteria Graecorum, which include some of the oldest surviving religious and spiritual pieces in the musical history of Greece. The repertoire featured works such as Invocation to the Muse by Mesomedes, Epitaph of Seikilos, and Hymn to the Sun by Mesomedes.

On the occasion, the Ambassador of Greece to Cairo, Nikolaos Papageorgiou, said: "It's a great pleasure to have you all today, one more time at the Greek resident, on this very special day, because the 28th of the Second World War, when the Greeks said no to the Italians' demand by Mussolini to surrender. We said no, and that's why it is usually mentioned as the "Oxi day," the No Day."



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Afterwards, he discussed the cultural significance of the performance, noting how it underscored the spirit of cooperation, harmony, and the enduring cultural and historical ties between Egypt and Greece. The performance witnessed huge interaction from the audience, who praised the beauty of the performed pieces and the skill of the flautists.

Gerakis shared insights into the historical and cultural significance of the *Mysteria Graecorum* program. She explained that the concert was carefully curated to be both “meaningful and not tiring for the public,” combining musical performance with brief explanatory texts to help audiences understand the context and emotional depth of each piece.

In her interview with SEE News, Gerakis emphasized the profound historical connections between ancient Greece and Egypt, particularly in the realms of art and music. “Historians know that Greece was strongly influenced by Egypt — in its symbols, artistic expressions, and even musical traditions,” she said. While much of the music from antiquity has been lost, the fragments performed in *Mysteria Graecorum*—including hymns to the gods and philosophical poems—are among the oldest surviving compositions in human history.



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Gerakis’ research also delves deeply into Hellenistic Alexandria, a city she describes – among others – as a cosmopolitan center of artistic innovation. Her studies uncovered references to prominent flutists of that era who played the traverse flute, the ancestor of the instrument she plays today.

“I found names of flutists such as Mnisida and Potheini,” she noted, “who were celebrated artists of their time. That means Alexandrian society valued musicians not merely as performers, but as creative figures, much like painters or sculptors during the Renaissance.” Reflecting on the experience, Gerakis said she felt deeply moved to perform in the same city where her ancient predecessors once played. “It was truly touching to be in Alexandria, where this musical heritage began. The city remains a symbol of harmony between civilizations — a bridge between the Greek and Egyptian worlds that continues to inspire us today.”

“Gerakis also referred to her long-standing artistic connection with Dr. Doaa Saber, noting that they have performed together in the Mediterranean Youth Orchestra.”

In turn, Dr. Saber invited Gerakis to meet and interact with students at Egypt’s Conservatoire, emphasizing the importance of cultural and academic exchange between both institutions. Saber highlighted that she and Gerakis share a rich professional history, having performed together on numerous occasions during their time with the Mediterranean Youth Orchestra. She added that, since the Greek artist was performing in Alexandria, she took the opportunity to invite her to conduct a masterclass at Egypt’s Conservatoire.