Municipality of Petroupolis
Department of Culture

Καλώς ήρθατε!
Welcome!

A quarry becomes a theatre

- **Petras Theatre**, an open theatre in the west side of our city, up on Zacharitsa Hill, used to be a **quarry** for many years.
- In 1983 it was used as an open theatre for the first time.

The inspiring director who proposed the innovation

- It was the idea of a great Greek Director, Minos Volanakis, who proposed the reforming of the Athenian quarries into open theatres.
- The idea was proposed by the Mayor, Nikos Paximadas, who was already fighting against the transformation of the quarry into a **dump,** a political decision by the government at the time, and was supported by the Minister of Culture, the famous actress Melina Merkouri.

Minos Volanakis

Nikos Paximadas

Minos Volanakis with the white shirt, along with the actor Dimitris Papamichail, and the actress and Minister of Culture Melina Merkouri

A Festival on the Rocks, 1983

- The Theatre opened its gates for the first time in the context of a Festival, called “A Festival on the Rocks”.
- It included new open theatres around Athens, just like Petras Theatre. The collaboration included Municipalities of Petroupolis, Peristeri, Ilion, Ag. Anargyroi, Kamatero.
- That year the festival presented performances from the famous Technis Theatre of Karolos Koun, concerts of Sotiria Bellou and Yannis Markopoulos.
- The Artistic Director was Minos Volanakis.

The landscape

The first form of the Stage

- The stage was set in the natural curve of the rocks.
- Chairs were used to host the audience. No building was constructed.
- The stage nowadays has another construction.

Athens, Cultural Capital City of Europe, 1985

- The celebration of “Athens, Cultural Capital City of Europe” in 1985, was a great occasion for the establishment of the **Petras Festival**. It was then that a second stage was constructed to host Peter Brook’s *Mahabarata* and a third stage for Peter Stein’s Aeschylus *Oresteia*.
- Ever since, there are two stages in Petras Theatre; the main stage “Minos Volanakis” with a capacity of 3.500 viewers and the “Brook Stage” with a capacity of 1.000 viewers.

Peter Brook's *Mahabarata*, 1985

Schaubühne - Peter Stein's *Oresteia, 1985*

Peter Stein's Stage

- Peter Stein's stage for *Oresteia* did not remain in Petras Theatre. In 1986 it was moved to another open theatre, in Vironas, Athens.
- For a documentary including rehearsals of the performance, see here: https://archive.ert.gr/100423/

Peter Stein

Acclaimed visitors

- Famous artists and groups, such as the Bolshoi Ballets, the Opera of Sofia, the Philarmonic Orchestra of Bonn, have presented their performances here. The Festival was visited by Indian Prime Minister Indira Ghandi, the Swedish Prime Minister Ulaf Palme, the Canadian Prime Minister Pier Eliot Tridot and many other famous personalities from all over the world.

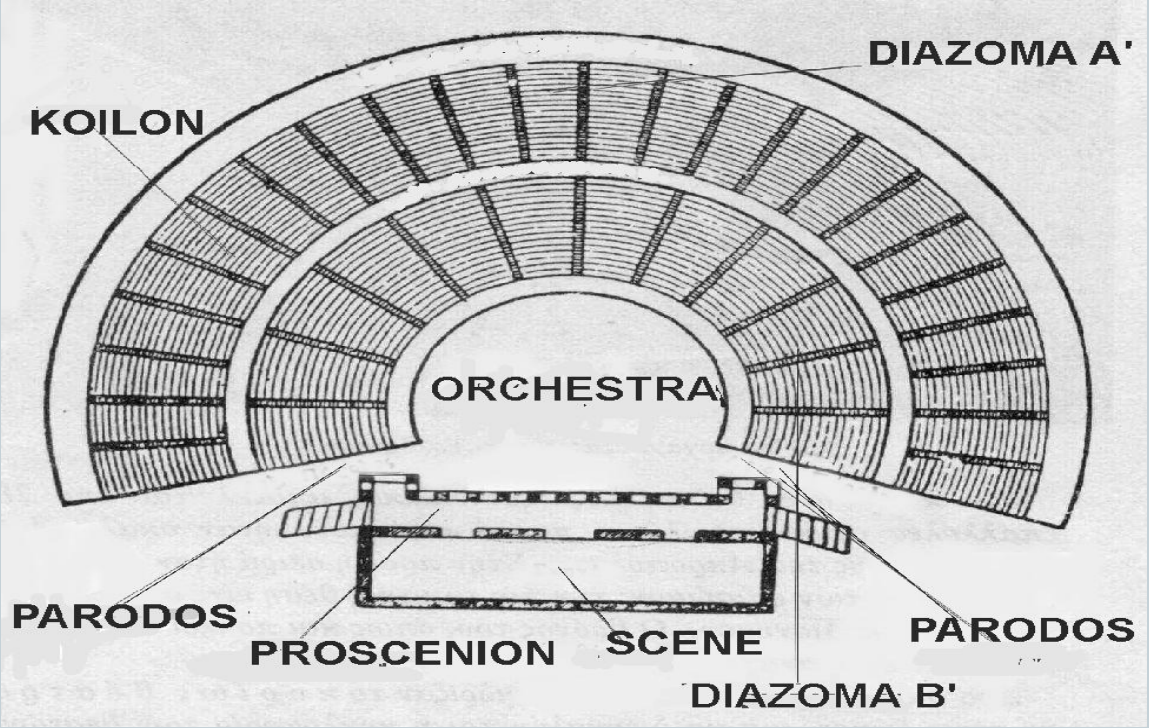
The new, current construction of the main stage "Minos Volanakis"

- In 1995, the Mayor Yiorgos Yiogos decided to reform this stage, in order to have the shape we see now. The theatre was built from the beginning. It has a capacity of 3.500 viewers and was given the name **Minos Volanakis** to honor the director. The architecture embraces the idea of the rocky surrounding, and also the shape of amphi-theatre, the ancient Greek shape of open theatres.

Yiorgos Yiogos

The form of ancient Greek amphitheatre

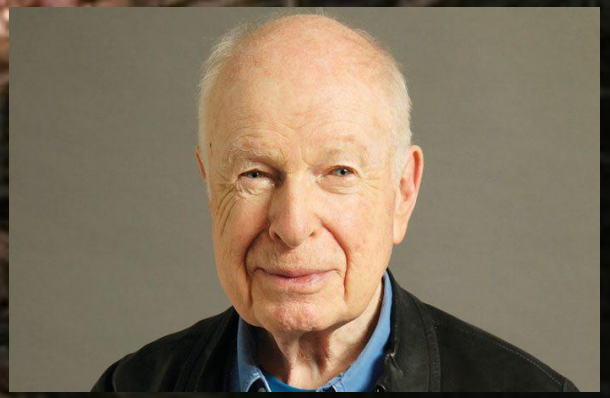
- Let's take a look at a sketch of an ancient Greek theatre, called amphi-theatro, to understand its form.



Petras Theatre, “Minos Volanakis” Stage

Peter Brook Stage

- The second, iron and wooden stage, called “Brook Stage” in honor of the British director who “opened” it, has a capacity of 1.000 viewers.



Peter Brook

53 years Petras Festival

- For the past 52 years the Festival has hosted a number of exceptional artists.
- Every summer the Festival welcomes 80.000 viewers.
- This is the 53rd year for Petras Festival, it opens June 3rd 2026

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- **Apart from the professional productions, our Festival hosts the amateur performances of the municipalities' groups of dance, theatre and music.**
- **Petras Theatre is a cultural meeting point for the citizens of Petroupolis and an acclaimed Greek landmark for culture.**

Thank you!

- Ευχαριστούμε!
- Thank you!

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