

**Iphigenia in the Buffer Zone: A Site-Specific Performance of Euripides'
Iphigenia in Aulis in Nicosia, Cyprus**

© Magdalena Zira, theatre director

ABSTRACT

This is an account of a production of Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis* in July 2017 by Cyprus-based theatre company Fantastico Theatro in a new prose translation and a contemporary re-topicalization, which challenged aspects of the play's reception in that country, especially since the location created a decisive meta-narrative for the audience. The text was adapted, with additions from classical and modern texts, as a way to engage with the issue of the original's corruption. The aesthetics and dramaturgy attempted to challenge the taboo status of the classics in Greece and Cyprus, especially the issues of authenticity, ownership and national identity that often surface in discussions of contemporary revivals. Gender conflict was the other axis of the production, since the dramaturgy emphasized the story of women in a militarized world. Several articles written about the performance by politics columnists (e.g. 'The Cyprus problem in Aulis', Kathimerini Newspaper, 'Iphigenia in Nicosia', Politis Newspaper), reveal that it was seen as part of the debate on Cyprus' political problem and a challenge to orthodoxies, both political and cultural. One journalist wrote that the performance revealed the location to be "a line of separation not only between opposing armies but between myths and versions of history". Perhaps the production's greatest success was that a piece of theatre was seen as relevant to current politics and as potentially influential. On September 29 2017 a one-off free-entrance performance was given with an audience of 500 and an additional chorus of citizens, following a workshop focusing on the idea of creating a community through the chorus, and on drawing parallels between the original cultural context and current sociopolitical issues.