

## The Antipodes Writers Festival celebrates Constantine Cavafy, one of the finest and most enigmatic poets of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**5 June, 2013** - The Antipodes Writers Festival (AWF) is this year being dedicated to the work of CP Cavafy. Born within the once thriving Greek community in Alexandria of Egypt, Cavafy (April 29, 1863 – April 29, 1933) is regarded as one of the foremost modern Greek poets and one of the finest poets of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was instrumental in establishing modern Greek poetry on the international scene, where he is still being studied and translated into many languages well into the 21st century. 2013 marks the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the renowned poet's birth.

Cavafy gained the critical attention he deserved after his death in 1933. "His life was an enigma, but his poems about ancient Alexandria and his longings for a 'Hellenic kind of pleasure' offer insights into a passionate", commented Duncan Spratt in his article 'The naked civil servant' for *The Guardian*.

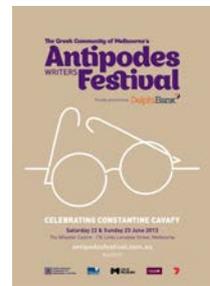
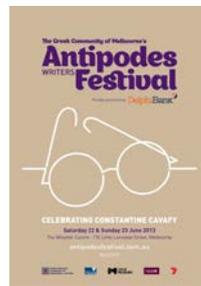
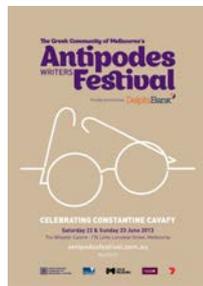
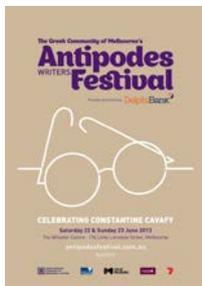
He goes on to write "(When I was 18) I didn't know the name of Cavafy, but he sounded exotic, intriguing. He had a passion for the Greek and Roman past. He also had a passion for young men. He wasn't afraid to write about sex; his poems oozingly erotic. I rushed out and bought the Complete Poems and read all night."

The AWF weekend at The Wheeler Centre will see five international academics unravel some the multiple layers of his work. Speakers include **George Syrimis** (Yale University), **Gregory Jusdanis** (Ohio State University), **Maria Boletsi** (Leiden University), **Karen Emmerich** (University of Oregon) and **Dimitris Papanikolaou** (University of Oxford). Vrasidas Karalis from the University of Sydney will also take part in a session on Sunday 23 June, discussing the topic of 'C.P. Cavafy as a moral thinker'.

On Sunday afternoon at 3pm, the wider community is invited to share a **Date with Cavafy**, when lovers of Cavafy's work can come along and read their favourite piece. People can register their interest by emailing [info@antipodesfestival.com.au](mailto:info@antipodesfestival.com.au). A number of guest speakers will also be part of this session including, author and ABC Radio presenter Phil Kafcaloudes, writer Hariklia Heristanidis and local actor and director Tony Nikolakopoulos.

A special addition to the weekend program will be a screening of ***The Barbarians***, an immersive opera by Constantine Koukias inspired by the iconic poet and commissioned by the Museum of Old and New Art. Otherness is a central theme of Constantine Cavafy's poem 'Waiting for the Barbarians'; written in 1904, it is one of Cavafy's most important works. The poem echoes the dramatic traditions of Ancient Greek Theatre and resonates with today's eco-political environment.

The Antipodes Festival is the cultural arm of the Greek Community of Melbourne.



## Saturday 22 & Sunday 23 June - FREE EVENT

The Wheeler Centre

176 Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne

For the full weekend schedule visit [antipodesfestival.com.au](http://antipodesfestival.com.au).

### For further information contact:

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### International Speakers - Biographies

**George Syrimis** is Associate Chair and Lecturer in Comparative Literature at Yale University, where he received his MA and PhD. His dissertation was on the poetics of C.P. Cavafy's love poems. He has taught at Yale since 2001, and has been associate Program Chair of the Hellenic Studies since 2004. Aside from Cavafy, Dr Syrimis has also published articles on the oral tradition, Georgios Vizyenos, Cavafy, Mikis Theodorakis, and Nikos Kazantzakis. He has a new volume forthcoming on "Julian the Apostate in the work of Constantine Cavafy and Nikos Kazantzakis".

**Gregory Jusdanis** is Humanities Distinguished Professor and Director of Modern Greek Studies at Ohio State University. He is a leading figure in Modern Greek Studies in North America, as well as written numerous books and articles on various topics in cultural studies. His books include: *The Poetics of Cavafy: Textuality, Eroticism, History*, Princeton University Press, 1987; *Belated Modernity and Aesthetic Culture: Inventing National Literature*, University of Minnesota Press, 1991; *The Necessary Nation*, Princeton University Press, 2001; *Fiction Agonistes: In Defense of Literature*, Stanford University Press, 2010.

**Maria Boletsi** is Assistant Professor at the Film and Literary Studies Department of Leiden University, where she also received her Ph.D. She has published articles on postcolonial literature, Greek poetry, literary speech acts, barbarism, migratory aesthetics and cultural identity. She is particularly interested in the concept of barbarism, which includes her new book *Barbarism and Its Discontents*, Stanford University Press in January 2013.

**Karen Emmerich** is Associate Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Oregon. She studied at Princeton, Columbia University and the University of Thessaloniki. She is interested in translation and textual scholarship, and in many aspects of modern Greek literature. She has also published on Cavafy, including "The Afterlives of C. P. Cavafy's Unfinished Poems." *Translation Studies* 4.2, 2011, 197-212 and the entry for "Constantine Cavafy" in the *The Literary Encyclopedia*.

**Dimitris Papanikolaou** is University Lecturer in Modern Greek Studies, Fellow of St Cross College, University of Oxford. His interests are strongly focused on literary and cultural theory, and the new perspectives that they offer for the study of Greek literature. He is currently working on cultural responses to the current Greek socio-economic crisis, on national identity, homosociality and homosexuality in Greek culture; and a detailed study of the writings of C.P. Cavafy.

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