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The Greek-American conductor, the soul of the Festival of the Aegean, spoke to us about Syros, the festival, the difficulties and plans for the future. Sophia Stylianou reports:

When the Greek-American conductor, Panagiotis Tiboris, the soul of the Festival of the Aegean, was touring all over Greece, conducting international orchestras, he was looking for a place where he could stay more than one day. Once, while on Satorini, he was suggested to visit the theatre of Syros.

“Ela tora” was his answer. Indeed, he had reserved tickets five or six times to Syros which were cancelled since he could not believe what he was told. Finally, he visited Syros and saw the theatre which was the centre of the “Greek Renaissance” of opera and melodrama of the 19th century, namely the theatre “Apollo”, constructed in 1864, modeled after La Scala of Milano.

“Since then, I have never left” says Peter Tiboris, as he is internationally known as a conductor and producer of MidAmerica Productions. Yet, this year he decided to keep his Greek name: Panagiotis Tiboris.

What makes him return every year to Greece, even if he lives permanently in New York? “I love Greece, the language, the people... I have many friends here and I could not possibly imagine a better place to spend the summer”. Recently, he has also bought a home in Syros.

While other decentralized festivals are faced with serious financial restraints, the Festival of the Aegean seems to be

developing every year. “This was our best year” says Tiboris, and we cannot disagree with that statement. Last Saturday, *Cavalleria rusticana* had 100 persons on stage, the performance was sold out and “dramatic tension” was at its peak—something which was felt both by Tiboris, who was conducting the Manhattan Philharmonia, and all the participants who felt their “personal” drama unfolding in front of their eyes, listening to the slightest note.

The inexhaustible inspiration of the Greek-American conductor, who always finds a way to make this inspiration a reality, brings innovations to the Festival of the Aegean, with long term planning for the next 10 years. “We signed a contract with the Municipality for the next 10 years” says Tiboris. “Moreover, next year I want to make music accessible to the wider public” Therefore, he is planning a bold staging of Puccini’s *Tosca* at the square of Syros, while at the same time he is discussing with an Italian choreographer from Vienna, Renato Zanela, to stage a week dedicated to dance at the theatre of Apollo, with music not only by Ravel and Mozart, but also by Hatzidakis and Theodorakis.

To the question “are there any difficulties which trouble you,” his only answer is: “ I just wish that more and more people attend and enjoy the performances.”