

# Grand Prix Lady

## Katina Paxinou



**Katina Paxinou** was born on December 17, 1900 in Piraeus, Athens. Her birth name was Ekaterini Konstantopoulou. She was the daughter of the prosperous flour mill owner Vassilis Konstantopoulos and Eleni Malandrinou. She studied music and song at the Geneva Conservatory, and also at schools in Berlin and Vienna. She married the industrialist Giannis Paxinos, with whom she had two daughters.

Her first professional appearance was in the Municipal Theatre of Piraeus, in the opera '*Sister Beatrice*' by the prominent composer Dimitris Mitropoulos (1920). Four years later she made her debut in a dramatic role in '*La Femme nue*'.

In the early 1930's she was one of the founding members of the National Theatre of Greece.



She performed several major roles ("Electra" by Sophocles, Henrik Ibsen's "Ghosts" etc.), often co-starring with her second husband, Alexis Minotis. Tours of the USA, Germany, and England followed, culminating in her acclaimed London debut in the title role of Sophocles' *Electra* (1939)

The outbreak of the Second World War found her in UK; she later managed to arrive at the US, where she appeared on Broadway, starring in productions of Ibsen's *'Edda Gabbler'* and *'Sophie'* by R. Feld and G. Ross.

At the age of 42, she was offered her first film role in the film *'For Whom the Bell Tolls'* (1943), a Paramount Pictures production, based on Ernest Hemingway's novel.

She played the role of the Spanish guerrilla Pilar, along with famous actors like Gary Cooper and Ingrid Bergman.



For her performance as Pilar she won the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress at the 1944 Oscar Awards. For that same role, she also received the Award for *Best Supporting Actress* at the first ever Golden Globes, and a *Best Actress Award* by the National Board of Review (1943).



She appeared in a few more Hollywood films, like *Confidential Agent* (1945), *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1947), *Rocco and his Brothers* by Luchino Visconti (1960).



In 1950, Katina Paxinou returned to Greece and resumed her theatre career by reviving the classical Greek tragedies. She also made tours in the USA and Europe, performing in plays like Lorca's *The House of Bernarda Alba* and Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*. She also appeared in British and American television plays.





In 1968, after the establishment of the Military Junta in Greece, Paxinou and Minotis formed their own theatre group which performed in Thessaloniki and Athens. They were generally considered the great couple of Greek theatre. Paxinou's last great success was Bertold Brecht's *Mother Courage and Her Children* (1971 – 1972).



## Distinctions

In her lifetime, Katina Paxinou was awarded the 'Grand Commander of the Royal Order of George I', and several other honors and prizes. She is also the only non-Diaspora Greek actor to have been honored with her own star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame (1960).

She passed away on 22 February 1973 in Athens, at the age of 72.





The **Paxinou-Minotis Museum** is an Athens museum featuring memorabilia of the life of Paxinou, including furniture, paintings and sketches, photographs, books and personal effects donated by her husband, Alexis Minotis, and include his personal library and theatrical archive.





*'Mourning Becomes Electra'*, Rosalind Russell & Katina Paxinou (1947):

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZdDp7Is4fo&ab\\_channel=jaydeenyc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZdDp7Is4fo&ab_channel=jaydeenyc)

*'Mr Arkadin'* (1955):

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OSD\\_WixWJzc&ab\\_channel=OscarHookers](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OSD_WixWJzc&ab_channel=OscarHookers)

“In theatre there's a continuous fight with the audience” (1964):

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYM8jCot-yA&ab\\_channel=istories4050](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYM8jCot-yA&ab_channel=istories4050)

<https://youtu.be/GHrOnx3vU5k>

Katina Paxinou was very talented and had skill in her facial expressions, which enabled her to appear in various roles. Her studies in music also helped her control the tone of her voice, so as to enhance the melody of poetic speech.

She was a Greek actress who remains one among the top actresses around the world. With her endless talent she managed to excel worldwide. The first non - American actress to receive an Oscar, she still makes all Greeks very proud.





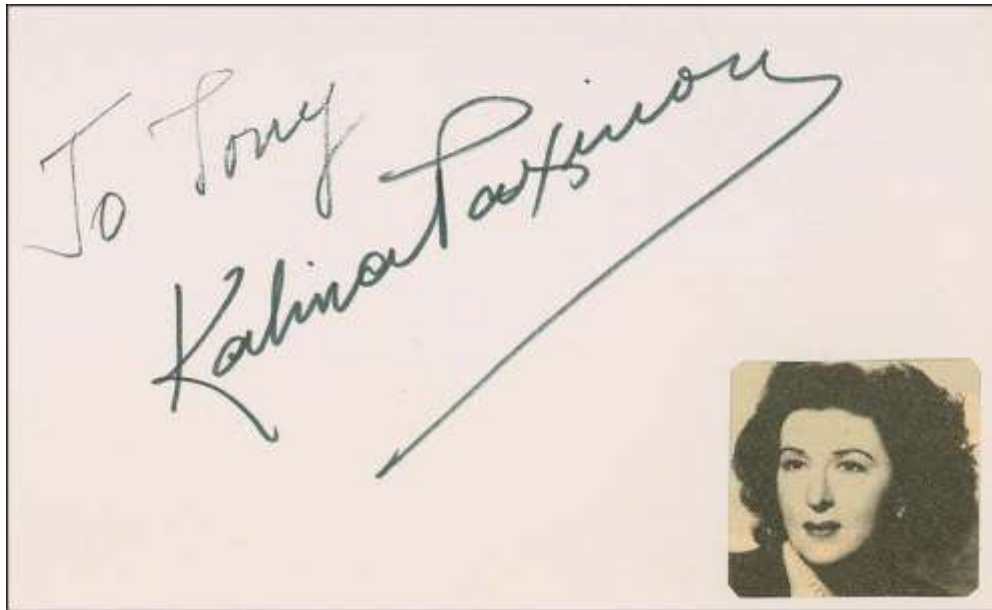


## ***Famous quotes***

- \* “We have to fill our soul with the sun, and give this sun to other people as well”
- \* Explaining to Paramount executives why she should be cast in *'For Whom the Bell Tolls'*: “I come from generations of guerrillas. My grandmother learned her ABCs from a guerrilla chieftain in a cave. I know that Pillar. I know her well”



# Thank you !!!



## Sources

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