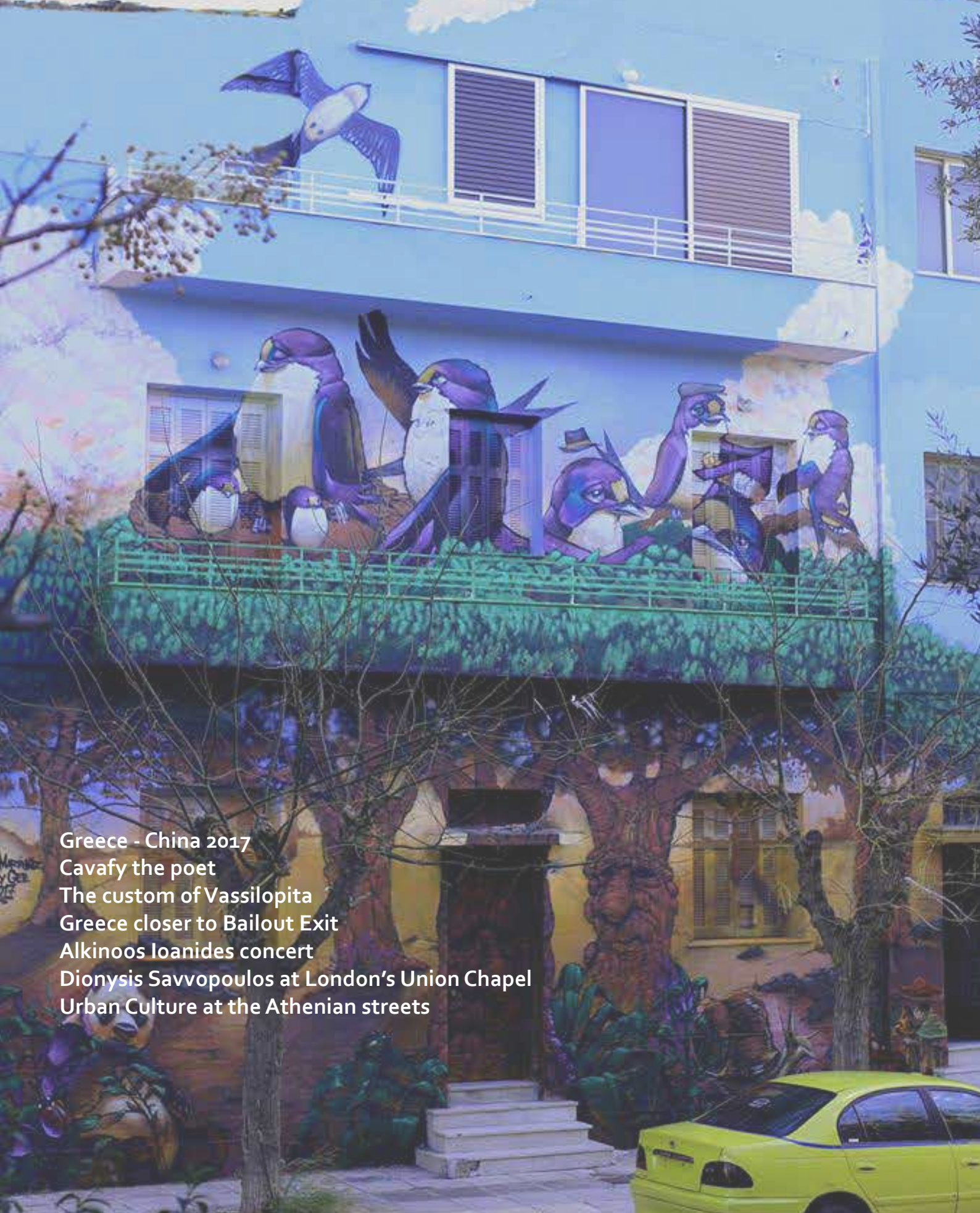


# @GreeceInUK

January 2018

*Cherish the Past, Embrace the Future*



Greece - China 2017

Cavafy the poet

The custom of Vassilopita

Greece closer to Bailout Exit

Alkinoos Ioanides concert

Dionysis Savvopoulos at London's Union Chapel

Urban Culture at the Athenian streets

## Greece - China 2017 Year of Cultural Exchanges and Cooperation of Creative Industries

*On the occasion of the 2017 Greece-China Year, the Secretariat General for Media and Communication created the web site <http://greece-china2017.gr/> in order to promote the cultural exchanges and cooperation between the two countries.*



2017 was a momentous year for the development of greater political, economic, and cultural exchanges between Greece and China. So much so, in fact, that when the Chinese Vice Premier Ma Kai visited Athens on the 7th December 2017 for further discussions with his counterpart, Deputy Prime Minister Yiannis Dragasakis, he called upon the need for further consolidation and the deepening of cooperation across all fields, highlighting the win-win nature of such joint projects.

The “Belt and Road” initiative has been a major part of the increase in Greece-China relations over the course of 2017. Indeed, for Greece, China represents a growing market in which exports increased by 70% for the first 7 months of 2017. For China meanwhile, Greece also serves as a maritime gateway to Europe and the trans-Europe transport network. As Makis Balaouras, Syriza MP for Iliia and chairman of Hellenic Parliament Standing Committee on Economic Affairs highlighted: “The Chinese transport 80% of their exports to Europe by sea because this is more advantageous to them. For this reason, they are interested in ports. The location of the port of Piraeus at the southeastern edge of

Europe has made it an ideal gateway to importing Chinese products into Eastern and Central Europe”. One of the centrepieces of this investment drive – estimated to represent \$10 trillion over the course of the next 10 years – is COSCO Shipping's Piraeus Port project. Beginning the year as a relatively unknown port, it is now recognised a commercial centrepiece for European shipping becoming Europe’s eight-largest container port and giving substance to the idea that Greece truly is the “gateway” to Europe.

2017 was also a political highlight for Greece-China relations as it marked the 45th anniversary of cordial diplomatic relations. The Greek Ambassador to China, Mr Leonidas Rokanas, said in an interview on the occasion that cultural and historical relations with China were the basis of trust and friendship that supports the bilateral relations between the two countries. As well as the rise in tourism – direct Air China Beijing to Athens flights also began operating in 2017 – the year saw a noted rise in a number of cultural exchanges between the countries. In November, Greek writer Dimitris Stefanakis visited Beijing, participating in a series of debates on issues related to literary creation, the importance of



diversity in literature, and the social and political role of literature. Referring to the challenges associated with literary translation, he pointed out that the translation process served as a form of peaceful process between the two ancient languages.

In other cultural developments, the long-awaited arrival of Chinese artists from the historical Hangzhou Opera and Dance Theatre performed their most recent masterpiece in the Foundation of the Hellenic World in Athens. Using a unique visual and dance vocabulary, this dance-drama performance recounts the two-thousand-year history of China's Grand Canal that connects the country's Northern and Southern provinces and provides an excellent opportunity for the Greek people to learn about the outstanding characteristics of contemporary Chinese dance art.

In addition to cultural exchange science and technology cooperation was also top of the agenda throughout 2017. In November, the First International Symposium on the Development of Natural Science Museums under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRISMIS) was held in Beijing, represented by Mr Pavlos Fyros and Mr Athanasios Kontonikolaou, Director of NOESIS - Thessaloniki Science Center and Technology Museum. Mr Kontonikolaou signed a Memorandum of Cooperation, under the auspices of the Chinese Association of Natural Science Museums, aiming to present an exhibition of ancient Chinese science and technology at the NOESIS Center during 2018. On the 3rd November, Mr Fyros, founder of the Herakleidon Museum, also opened his new exhibition "EUREKA – Science, art and technology of the Ancient Greeks" in Beijing. The exhibition provides an exciting opportunity for Beijingers to witness the coming together of two proud historical nations through shared ventures in museums, the preservation of antiquities, literary

translation, as well as in dance, theatre, and cinema. The China Science and Technology Museum Director, Mr Yin Hao, thanked the Herakleidon Museum for its endeavour to establish the exhibition in China and stressed that exchanges between museums are an important element of China's Belt and Road initiative, as well as a good starting point for the Chinese museum's communication and cooperation with Greek museums.

Overall, the deepening partnership between Greece and China is paving a way forward for both countries to pursue their own developmental goals. For Greece, fresh investments bring welcome rejuvenation to old projects whilst kick-starting new innovation in the country, stimulating jobs as well as the wider economy. For China, meanwhile, its own national development has been spurred on by a resurgent presence on the international stage. The revitalisation of the Silk Road harks back to an era in which China's prestige was unmatched. Thus, reigniting old trading partners and routes along the silk road not only serves to bolster an already rapidly growing economy but also appeal to a cultural narrative of rejuvenation and prowess which had been perhaps once lost.

Both Greece and China are well underway in the processes towards economic reform and development, proving that both sides hold a mutual interest in fostering positive linkages and cooperation as a key part of their national development. Let's celebrate a positive year of two civilisations, deeply rooted in their soil, that are looking towards the world with the desire to share the best of their contemporary artistic creation. Finally, we welcome 2018, the lucky Chinese Year of the Dog, as being the harbinger of greater developments and exchanges yet to come.

## C.P. Cavafy: The Poetics of History and the Music of Poetry

A two-day tribute to Constantinos Cavafy, one of the most renowned Greek poets in the world, organised under the auspices of H.E The President of the Hellenic Republic, Mr. Prokopios Pavlopoulos.

Taking place on the 11th and 12th of January 2018, the event 'C.P. Cavafy: The Poetics of History and the Music of Poetry' was the result of the successful collaboration between the Hellenic Centre, King's College London (Centre for Hellenic Studies and Department of Classics), and the Athens Conservatoire.

During the event, a series of presentations were given by acclaimed academics held at both the Hellenic Centre and King's College. Highlights included the great British actor Jeremy Irons, who provided a recital of many Cavafy classics, and a musical version of Cavafy's poems by the famous composer and conductor Dimitrios Mitropoulos, further delighted audiences. An exhibition centred on Cavafy's poems (translated into English by Evangelos Sachperoglou) and an exhibition of ancient Greek coins depicting figures from Cavafy's poetry also succeeded in conveying Cavafy's raw personality and poetic elegance, allowing participants to further delve into his "hidden" history.

On the first day, Ms. Agatha Kalispera welcomed participants before Ms. Bettany Hughes, historian, author, and broadcaster opened the event, explaining that whilst she herself was not an expert on the topic, she was indeed an amateur passionate devotee to both Cavafy and his poetry. Stressing Cavafy's love and close connection to history, Hughes admitted that she often turns to his poems whenever she looks for sources, ideas, and inspiration concerning history when it comes to her own writing. Ms. Hughes also pointed to the fact that memory and harmony – important factors in human historical evolution - are interwoven throughout Cavafy's

poetic work whilst friendship towards strangers, the unknown who bring new ideas and influences, and the notion of Xenia are also deeply incarnated in Cavafy's poetry. Hughes closed by addressing how the historical, cosmopolitan city of Constantinople had itself also played a significant role in influencing Cavafy's creative genius and open-mindedness, evident throughout his poetic canon.

-Mr. Nikos Tsouchlos, Director of the Athens Conservatoire, focussed on the concept of time present in Cavafy's poetry. Tsouchlos presented the poem 'The Melancholy of Iason Kleandros, Poet in Kommagini' to highlight his point, explaining that the quick passage of youth serves as a trauma to the poet, who witnesses the consequences of passing time on his body. The subject, Kleandros, serves thus to echo Cavafy's own melancholy. In this regard, time occupies two dimensions within Cavafy's poetry: It is perceived as the ageing of the body and the loss of physical beauty but also as a dimension of the historical past. Cavafy's poem establishes a historical distance between the fictional past and actual present in order to illustrate the ever present melancholy born by the elusiveness of time. Mr Tsouchlos pointed out that poetry is for Cavafy a refuge to console the melancholic drama of his ageing body and parallels the Arabic philosopher, Al Farabi, who comments on time read: 'Exhaustion is caused by the sense of time but music makes us lose that sense of time'.

Concerning the musical version of a selection of Cavafy poems by the great composer and conductor Dimitrios Mitropoulos, Mr. Tsouchlos drew attention to the linguistic particularities of the poems which seem to entertain their own musicality. As Mr Tsouchlos noted, Mitropoulos himself describes, the songs of Cavafy's poetry as 'artistic mathematical calculations with sounds and words'.

-Prof. Anastasios-Ioannis Metaxas examined Cavafy's poetry with regards to its historical context, namely the late 19th and early 20th centuries, elaborating on the spatiotemporal exoticism of Cavafy's work. Prof. Metaxas noted that this period was encapsulated and typified by the intense aesthetic pursuit of genuine freedom and a less hypocritical way of life,





not only in the poetic domain but also throughout the Arts as a whole. Poets and artists pursue this in other times and places invented and imaginative. Prof. Metaxas stressed that Cavafy himself often sought to rescue his thought and life in shelters of his own and pointed that Cavafy sought other refuges (hiding-places sometimes) as a stranger, in his own time and place in order 'to be preserved'. Metaxas also underlined the musicality of Cavafy's verses, his colour-tones and the crafty rhythm. Central to the principles of Cavafy's work are the personal and social responsibility of the individuals within them but also the contempt for any absolute value nor faith which seeks to restrain the free and unalloyed expression of our authenticity. Prof. Metaxas recited abstracts from the poems 'Walls', 'Waiting for the Barbarians', 'In a Large Greek Colony, 200B.C', 'An Old Man', and 'The Windows' analysing the most important verses of these poems.

-Prof. Peter Mackridge spoke about Evangelos Sachperoglou's English translation of Cavafy's poems, published in a renowned 2007 literature series by the Oxford University Press. Mr Mackridge, who wrote the introduction to the collection, stressed the difficulties of translating Cavafy's language, since his poems often included expressions originating in antiquity yet mixed with various spoken language idioms. Despite the fact that translation is usually made into the translator's mother tongue, Evangelos Sachperoglou was able to successfully preserve the unique tones and flowing musicality of Cavafy's original poems when translating into English.

-Prof. Stefanos Geroulanos, gave a presentation of the book 'C.P. Cavafy: Historia Arcana-A Hidden History'. By arranging Cavafy's poems in a chronological order, Geroulanos sought to shed light on Cavafy's secret, yet unfinished, artistic plan. Studying the book's table of contents, one can discern the division of the poems in three broad

categories – the Historical, Didactic, and the Erotic. There is also a historical classification of the poems: The Ancient Greek, Hellenistic, Greco-Roman, and Byzantine as well as possible groups of seven poems for each period, from mythological times to the Fall of Constantinople. In addition, 139 of approximately 150 historical figures mentioned in Cavafy's poems are depicted on coins. In the book, next to each poem one can find coins with figures mentioned in the poem. One has the feeling that Cavafy has given these historical personalities a voice. Prof. Geroulanos pointed that Cavafy's History is an Anti-history – a history of antiheroes, whose voices resound through the centuries.

The second part of the first day's event was dedicated to 'Music of Poetry'.

Ms. Angelica Cathariou, professor of music and mezzo soprano, made an introduction to the work of the composer and conductor Dimitrios Mitropoulos, mentioning that the first musical version of Cavafy's poems was performed in 1927. Ms. Cathariou performed the composer's musical settings of poems by C.P. Cavafy, while Mr. Thodoris Tzovanakis accompanied her at the piano. The participants in the event had the opportunity to hear in Greek the music version of the poems 'Far away', 'Has come to rest', 'That they come', 'The next table', 'Days of 1903', 'Grey', 'In the street', 'The afternoon sun', 'So long I gazed', 'I went'.

The second day of the event held at King's College London brought together scholars and academics who explored the relationships between Cavafy, Music, Poetics and Art. The event climaxed with poems by Cavafy recited in the original Greek by Greek poet and Director of the National Bank of Greece Cultural Foundation, Dionysis Kapsalis, and in English translation by distinguished British actor Jeremy Irons.



## Anastasios - Ioannis Metaxas talks on Cavafy - "Cavafy belongs to the few"

Anastasios-Ioannis Metaxas is Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the University of Athens.. He has been awarded the Gold Medal of the Academy of Provence and the Award of the School of Legal, Economic and Political Sciences of the University of Aix-en-Provence for his paper on system analysis. He is also an ordinary member of the Académie Européenne Interdisciplinaire des Sciences. We asked him to talk to @GreeceInUK on Cavafy, poetry, Art and Power.

1. *In the paper you presented at the Hellenic Centre, you argued that Cavafy belongs to the "few" who challenge established trends, social norms, and conformities. To play the devil's advocate, however, one could argue that major changes in history were the outcome of the actions of the "many". What is your take on this?*

Whilst the "many" do indeed embody their own role [in changing history], it is out of respect for the concerns of these many that some pre-established conceptions should be sidelined and, when this cannot be achieved, the only way forward is to thus orientate ourselves towards the society of the future. This is exactly what Cavafy does in his work which, of course, does not negate our responsibility for today.

2. *You used the term "exoticism" to describe Cavafy's poetry. Could you please elaborate on this?*

This term serves as a metaphor meaning that when it comes to the pursuit of society's happiness, and without ignoring the here and now, we are obliged to go to a different space and time – this is 'exoticism'.

3. *Was Cavafy a stranger in his own time and place, and if so, does this mean that his poetry would appear more to the outcasts in contemporary societies?*

The phrase 'stranger in his own time' is clarified in the previous answer however it demonstrates, in any case, a heartfelt appeal for a better world. Andreas Laskaratos did the same fifty years ago in a poem of equal philosophical enquiry.

4. *What are the aims of the Cavafy Archive? What actions or initiatives does the Archive undertake in order to disseminate his poetry?*

Questions on the aims of the Cavafy Archive are best addressed to those who are responsible for its operation and promotion but the obligations of the archive are ensured by the direction laid out by the president of the Onassis Foundation, Mr AP, whose is responsible for cultivating the institute's learning progression and direction.

**"When it comes to the pursuit of society's happiness, and without ignoring the here and now, we are obliged to go to a different space and time – this is 'exoticism'"**

5. *Drawing on your vast experience as an academic as well as your participation in various national and international cultural, political, and human rights organisations, how would you assess the current state of human rights in Greece and Europe?*

Human rights, no matter how much they are protected, are also constantly challenged. The responsibility for their protection entails social, political, and administrative dimensions. Society, for one, has to be constantly vigilant with each one of us on constant guard whilst the state, secondly, has to observe the principles of the rule of law. Finally, the administrative apparatus should treat each citizen with decency. Currently, in some European Union countries, human rights are suffering to greater and lesser extents. Indeed, in some EU states, the respect of human rights may only be considered as adequate. You will not of course find a perfect country anywhere but the tradition of European values and the rule of law necessitate a continual pursuit of an improvement in the status quo.

6. *You are a member of the European Interdisciplinary Academy of Sciences. How is Greek science and research received on the international stage?*

Greek sciences have earned international recognition both within their own sectors and across a broad range of interdisciplinary fields. In this respect, the society at large benefits since science means knowledge and knowledge also entails [social] responsibility. Indeed, science is not an autonomous activity and should therefore be evaluated in relation

**“Human rights, no matter how much they are protected, are also constantly challenged. The responsibility for their protection entails social, political, and administrative dimensions.”**

to the goals for which it serves. Let us hope that those aims are good!

*7. You have dedicated a large part of your work to the relationship between Art and Power. In a nutshell, do you think that Art is by definition an opposing force to political power and that the mission of the artist is therefore to constantly challenge those in power?*

At times, art can both denounce and serve power. But for the artist to be able to express themselves, they should be free to become a challenger to this power. So, if you therefore accept the fact that those in power, even those which are perhaps democratic, should be continually challenged, then whichever art best challenges it, be it through painting, sculpture, literature, or other, allows the citizen to stand in opposition to the given power. They therefore are not only empowered to choose who will govern him/her but also by smiling, for instance at a work of art. Their smile represents the criticism, at times direct and at times indirect or even imperceptible, to those who occupy power.

**“Science is not an autonomous activity and should therefore be evaluated in relation to the goals for which it serves. Let us hope that those aims are good!”**

## Alexandros Charkiolakis on Music and Poetry

Alexandros Charkiolakis studied piano and music theory at the Hellenic Conservatory and musicology and orchestral conducting at the University of Sheffield. Between 2005 to 2013 he worked as a coordinator for educational projects at the Music Library “Lilian Voudouri”. In 2013, he moved to Istanbul to work as Head of the “Erol Ucer” Music Library and Adjunct Lecturer at MIAM - ITU. Since May 2017, he has been the Director of The Friends of Music Society, at the Athens Concert Hall.

*1. You participated in the Cavafy event at King’s College London with a presentation describing some of the musical settings of his poetry. What makes musicians want to set music to poetry and, in particular, Cavafy’s poetry?*

This is probably something you need to ask composers, I am only a musicologist! Seriously though, I think that the depth of meaning that one finds in poetry, and in Cavafy in particular, is a strong motivation for someone to try and mix this up with music, in order to produce a song. After discussing in length with composer friends, I have come to the conclusion that it is extremely difficult for them to find proper verse to set to music. I believe that Cavafy’s poetry in particular encapsulates a spontaneous musicality, something that makes composer’s lives easier.

*2. In contrast to the popular awareness of the musical settings of Ritsos’ and Elytis’, none of the musical settings within Cavafy’s work are widely known. Why is this case?*

Probably because it was mostly art music composers who wrote music on Cavafy’s poetry. It seems that his poetry, as complex as it is, doesn’t attract those composers who offered an alternative, musical, life to poets. Maybe it seems too sophisticated to them or maybe there is a difficulty with Cavafy’s bourgeois language idiom.

*3. How does setting music to poetry fundamentally alter its character?*

A song or another type of composition that involves poetic verse brings out other, not easily traceable, qualities that are in a “hypnotic” state but very much alive within a poetic text. A new art form springs out, a form that is delivered through the amalgamation of verse and music. Here is also the responsibility of the composer; one needs to treat the poem in such a way that will not harm it but will use it in a harmonic joint with one’s music, in order to produce something new and fresh.

*4. Having studied and worked in various cultural environments (such as the UK, Istanbul, Athens), what kind of differences and similarities have you experienced?*

I had the privilege to receive a large part of my music education in Britain (University of Sheffield) and this was a blessing. I also had the chance to live and work abroad -Istanbul this is at the Istanbul Technical University music department- but also at home, at the

Friends of Music Society. Managing and working closely with people seems to be a demanding task and many say that you need to have a close relation with the cultural differences that apply at each occasion. I mostly agree on this but as a general condition I have to say that you need to approach colleagues and anyone who is working with you, from student volunteers to high profile professors, with the same amount of respect if you want to lead a place such as a busy library or an important organisation such as The Friends of Music Society.

Of course, there is always another factor that one needs to take into account. What is most similar to all of the above is the universal language of music. In Istanbul, I was heading a music library and teaching as an adjunct professor at the musicology sector of our department. Students were eager to learn -as it happens or should be happening worldwide-, to gain experience and find solutions to their questions. What I have gained from all these environments is my close acquaintance to many different cultures, all those different musics. For instance, I would have never known the music of Arnold Bax or Granville Bantock if I didn't study in Britain, I would have never known the music of Cemal Resit Rey and the Turkish Five if I didn't work in Istanbul.

*5. What projects are underway at the Friends of Music Society and what is its future direction?*

The Friends of Music Society is a vibrant and very much active organisation in the cultural sector. We have several projects underway. For instance, on the 13th of February we are staging a performance of two long-lost works by Nikos Skalkottas at the Athens Concert Hall with the collaboration of Athens Philharmonia Orchestra, Giorgos Demertzis (violin), Vassilis Varvaresos (piano) with Byron Fidetzis conducting. Also, we will soon start cooperating with Koc University in Istanbul in order to build together a database for Byzantine musical instruments, a topic which is very promising to emerge as a key issue in the next few years. Moreover, we will be collaborating with the Ministry of Culture in order to celebrate European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 by organizing a big conference towards the end of the year. But we don't stop there, we just received funding from the General Secretariat of Research and Technology in order to work together with stakeholders to build a new educational and experience platform. Also, our Society's ensembles, Camerata Junior Youth Orchestra and Musica Choir, continue to thrive. These are just a few of our future and upcoming projects.

I see a bright future for the Friends of Music Society. Our common and steady goal since the establishment of the Society back in 1953, was to build and work together with people and the society. We managed to fulfil a big dream, to initiate the building of the Athens Concert Hall but also to establish and maintain one of the best music libraries in South East Europe region. As you can understand, our aim is to continue influence people's lives in the most positive way and we are working hard in order to do so.

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**Roderick Beaton is Koraes Professor of Modern Greek and Byzantine History, Language and Literature, Department of Classics, and Director of the Centre for Hellenic Studies, King's College London. Professor Beaton spoke to @GreeceInUK.**

*1. How Greek is Cavafy's poetry?*

Cavafy wrote all of his mature poetry in Greek. He was a unique stylist in the modern Greek language and he clearly had a passion for the history and culture of the Hellenic world. You can't get much more 'Greek' than that! At the same time, Cavafy had spent most of his school-years in London and Liverpool. He was equally fluent in English, and very widely read in English literature and in history books written in English. He even wrote some of his earliest poems in that language. So, like many Greeks then and now, he had access to international, cosmopolitan ideas and controversies. Through translation of his poems into other languages, he contributed to those in turn, though not until long after his death. You could call Cavafy a 'cosmopolitan' Greek. But he had a very particular attachment too: to the history and culture of his native city, Alexandria, which had been founded by Alexander the Great in the 4th century BCE.

*2. In your presentation you characterised Cavafy's historical construction of a "greater Greece" as a "daring alternative to the master-narratives of Greek history". Could you please expand a little on this?*

Most histories of Greece and Greeks and in modern times are histories of the Greek state. Cavafy kept his distance from the Greek state, both literally (he visited it only a few times in his life) and imaginatively. For him, the high-point of Greek culture had been its expansion throughout the Levant after the conquests of Alexander. He was fascinated by the interaction between Greeks and other peoples, and the impact that Greek culture had on peoples far from its origin. The Hellenism whose history can be traced through Cavafy's 'historical' poems is a displaced Hellenism, always in dialogue, often under threat, but founded on this vast expansion during the period that we call 'Hellenistic', and its consequences right through the centuries of the Roman empire and the Byzantine that came after it. Throughout the eastern Mediterranean and the lands of the Levant (or Middle East), for more than a thousand years after the death of Alexander, the language of learning and culture was Greek – and this continued throughout the Byzantine empire, as it expanded and contracted, down its final demise in 1453.

*3. Given the rich historical charge of Cavafy's poetry, how accessible do you think it is for a contemporary British audience?*

In one way it's very accessible: unlike so many other poets of the 20th century, Cavafy is never difficult. His language is straightforward. What you might call the 'surface meaning' of his words is never in doubt – though closer reading often reveals that more than one meaning can be found beneath the surface. Reading Cavafy is less hard work than reading, say, Seferis or Elytis. That said, what Cavafy is talking about can be pretty obscure. This probably applies to Greek readers today, almost as much as to English or international ones. He delights in exploring forgotten byways of history. He was also, writing at the time he was, able to take for granted that educated readers would recognise many (though by no means all) of the historical events and situations his poems alluded to. To appreciate these references, readers today need brief notes, which most translations, and indeed the standard Greek edition by G.P. Savvides, provide. But often, you don't need to recognise the specific reference, or be familiar with the historical record, to 'get' at least some of the point of the poem. Cavafy writes about people, their follies and their illusions, especially when they delude themselves. You don't need a lot of footnotes to be able to appreciate that!

*"Like many Greeks then and now, he had access to international, cosmopolitan ideas and controversies[...]But he had a very particular attachment too: to the history and culture of his native city, Alexandria, which had been founded by Alexander the Great in the 4th century BCE"*

***"Unlike so many other poets of the 20th century, Cavafy is never difficult.***

***His language is straightforward"***

4. *In your capacity as professor of Modern Greek and Byzantine Studies, what is your assessment of the evolution of Modern Greek Studies in the UK?*

Very different from what it was when I began teaching modern Greek language and literature 40 years ago! Today's students have less appetite for learning languages at all, still less difficult ones like Greek. And there has been a move away from the specialist degrees of the sort that we used to teach at my university, including a very rigorous BA and MA in Modern Greek Studies. The trend now is towards large 'umbrella' subjects, like History, English, Comparative Literature. We have a new and much sought-after BA in Liberal Arts, which allows students to range more widely still. The result has been that, with imaginative course design and a willingness on the part of academics to engage with the horizons and interests of 21st-century students in the UK, we have been able to offer 'modules', or courses', that attract a large following. Students at King's can take modules in Byzantine history and culture, in modern Greek and comparative literature, in ancient myth and modern interpretations – and these modules attract far more students than we were ever able to reach when we recruited for dedicated degree programmes in Modern Greek or Byzantine studies. So there is a future for modern Greek studies in the UK – it just isn't going to look very like the past that some of us grew up with.

***"People might not remember the name 'Cavafy', but 'the meaning of an Ithaca', 'those people were some kind of a solution' – these have become cultural references in English, not just in Greek"***

5. *If you wanted to inspire someone to read Cavafy, which poem would you choose and why?*

Oddly enough, Cavafy is one of rather few poets that most people can probably remember something about, when prompted: 'Ithaca', say, or 'Waiting for the Barbarians'. These poems have been quoted so many times in so many different contexts. People might not remember the name 'Cavafy', but 'the meaning of an Ithaca', 'those people were some kind of a solution' – these have become cultural references in English, not just in Greek. To encourage someone to look further, to begin to discover Cavafy's unique personality, voice, and sideways perspective on the world, it would be tempting, but a bit obvious, to start with those two poems. In a way, it wouldn't matter where you did start. Any of Cavafy's 154 poems that make up the 'canon' of his work is an entry-point into that Cavafian world. A personal favourite is 'Caesarion', because it seems to give a glimpse into the way the poet works with the dry facts of history: turning an idle search to check out a historical fact into an erotic fantasy that in only a few lines expands into a whole human tragedy.



6. Are events such as this a good forum for disseminating cultural work in a large audience or are they simply an inward discussion among experts?

What was unusual about this particular event is that it set out to do both. The musical performance of settings of Cavafy's poems by Dimitri Mitropoulos, the exhibition of coins and drawings curated by Stefanos Geroulanos, and the unique experience of hearing Cavafy's poems in English translation read by one of the most famous British actors, Jeremy Irons – all these were directed at a large audience of people with very broadly based interests. And to judge from the attendance on both evenings, this worked very well. In between, we had a series of presentations by experts, with questions from the floor and discussion. These were more in the style of an academic conference – though once again the speakers had been asked to address their presentations to issues of wider interest, beyond the academic study of Cavafy. These were of a very high standard, and were particularly important because they brought together experts from very different academic backgrounds and with different specialisms, all focusing on this one multifaceted poet, and exploring links with music (our title was Sounds of the Hellenic World), the historical record and in particular cultural artefacts such as coins. So I would like to think that this was a unique event that offered much both to academic discussion among specialists and to the wider promotion of understanding of Cavafy and his work for audiences in the UK.

*Roderick Beaton*

photo credits: Katerina Kalogeraki



*"This was a unique event that offered much both to academic discussion among specialists and to the wider promotion of understanding of Cavafy and his work for audiences in the UK"*



Vasilopita is a traditional Greek cake or bread served at midnight on New Year's Eve to celebrate the life of Saint Basil. Before baking the Vasilopita cake, a coin is inserted through the base and, when cut, the person who finds the coin is said to be granted luck for the rest of the year. Vasilopita is made of a variety of doughs, depending on the region and almost every family has its own recipe!



On the 12th of January, the Hellenic Centre hosted the community Lykion ton Hellinidon London and celebrated the pita cutting. The Archbishop, the Ambassador with his wife and other officials of the Greek embassy as well as the President of the Lykion ton Hellinidon were only a few among those that attended the venue. The Archbishop blessed and cut the pita. Then, the nursery and primary school caroled that followed by a dance performance from the members.



On Sunday 21 January the Peloponnesian Association of Great Britain celebrated the New Year with the cutting of the traditional Vasilopita, at the Crypt of Aghia Sofia, Bayswater. The ceremony was attended by many Greeks living in UK but also by a few foreigners who wished to participate in this traditional festivity marking the hopeful expectations for the New Year.

Father Dionysios blessed the Vasilopita praying for a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

All participants shared the delicious cake while enjoying the company of their compatriots/ fellow nationals.



### Vassilopita at St Sophia's School

On Saturday 13 January teachers, students and parents attended the cutting of the "vassilopita" at St Sophia's Saturday School. The children sang Greek carols and the school's head teacher Dr Olga Fakatseli wished everyone a happy, prosperous new year.

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# 2018

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## Greece Closer to Bailout Exit

### Eurogroup welcomes the completion of most prior actions, approves loan tranche

Greece has moved closer to the end of its bailout regime, as eurozone finance ministers approved the completion of the third bailout review and agreed to disburse the next tranche of bailout funds over the coming weeks.

At a Eurogroup meeting on 22 February 2018, Greece was warmly endorsed for its financial progress: "The Greek authorities have over-achieved the fiscal targets set over the last three years," the Eurogroup said in a statement, adding that "authorities have also continued to strengthen tax collection." In addition, the ministers said that Athens had "enhanced the fairness and effectiveness of the social welfare system. The business environment has been improved by further actions" aimed at opening up regulated professions and the energy markets, improving the investment licensing system and lifting regulations that unnecessarily restrict competition.

The next slice of bailout cash worth €6.7bn will be disbursed in early February and April, after Athens settles some final issues, such as completing ministerial decrees.

### FinMin Tsakalotos: "This was a very good Eurogroup for Greece"

"This was a very good Eurogroup for Greece. The agreement on the third review is complete. There are a few prior actions that have to be finished before the disbursement. Even more significant for the Greek case is that people are now convinced things have turned round and people are beginning to talk about the future and Greece's exit from the programme."

Tsakalotos also said that overall the Greek government was "looking to the future with a greater degree of confidence that this third review is over," and he specified that "the fourth review will not have that many prior actions, because, as you know, it was a very front-loaded programme."

### Eurogroup chief Centeno: "Excellent cooperation between the Greek authorities and the institutions"

The Eurogroup came to a "political agreement" on Greece's third program review during its meeting, the group's new chief, Mario Centeno, said after the meeting. According to Centeno, this decision "reflects the enormous efforts and excellent cooperation between the Greek authorities and the institutions". Centeno noted that the next bailout tranche for Greece will be used to repay Greece's debt and state arrears and create the liquidity cushion which will be needed to regain full access to the markets.

### EU Commissioner Moscovici: "2018 will be a decisive year for Greece"

European Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Pierre Moscovici, said the important efforts of the Greek authorities were recognized by everyone, "even those who were skeptical in the past" and noted the "change of climate" concerning Greece.

Moscovici added that 2018 will be a decisive year for Greece as it will exit from a long period of economic assistance which included very tough measures and unprecedented reforms that will make the economy more resilient.



### Eurozone starts talks on debt relief

EU creditors will also begin a series of technical talks on how to structure debt relief for Athens after the rescue programme is due to expire in August. A working group convened by the European Commission and eurozone governments will explore ways to link any future debt relief to Greece's economic performance.

### Greece's economy is recovering – IMF supports Greece's program

As Bloomberg recently noted, Greece is "no longer flirting with exiting (or being ejected from) the euro. Economists have upgraded their growth forecasts for this year to 2.2 percent, equal to what they anticipate for the euro zone as a whole. And the rate of unemployment is predicted to drop below 20 percent."

At a meeting with the Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras at the World Economic Forum in Davos, the IMF's Christine Lagarde congratulated Tsipras "on the progress Greece has achieved, a sentiment that was also reflected in the recent Eurogroup statement", and assured him of the Fund's continued support for Greece's adjustment program.

(Sources: ANA-MPA, AP, Reuters, WSJ, Bloomberg)



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## Magical Evenings with Alkinoos Loannides at London's Union Chapel

The talented composer, lyricist and singer, Alkinoos Loannides, offered us two evenings of beautifully tender and sumptuously crafted music at London's Union Chapel on the 25 and 26 January 2018.

Accompanied by a band of compelling string musicians, Alkinoos performed popular songs from his past albums as well as from his latest album, "Mikri Valitsa" (Small Suitcase), a record written from a uniquely Greek perspective as a country on the frontline of unprecedented immigration into Europe. It asks the question: "What would you take when you had moments to leave your house, your life, everything you know and flee. To begin a journey uncertain of where it will end and what it will take to get there."



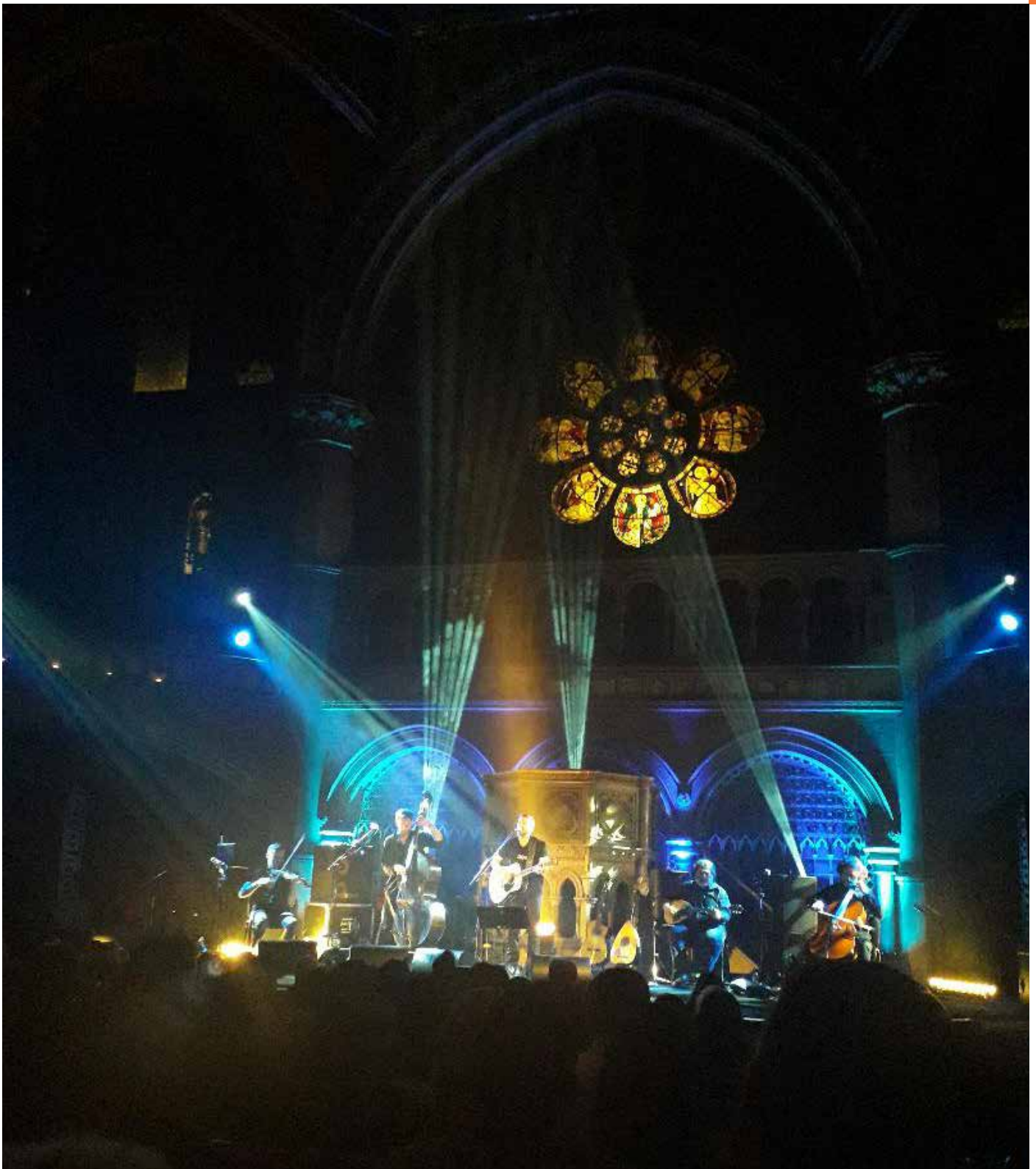
Small suitcase and heavy,  
full of stone and sun,  
onwards it's sunless  
backwards it's hard  
and where can I leave you.

Small suitcase and empty  
Even if it cut my hands,  
I find no place to stand,  
I dare not leave you,  
I bend to keep you.

Where to go and where to come  
and where to return,  
foreign lands are far away  
and my land is foreign  
where can I return.







With influences ranging from traditional Cypriot music, Greek composers of the last decades, Byzantine, Classical and Rock, his performance combine electric music with choirs, improvisation, classical elements, live looping, progressive rock, jazz, Greek and Middle Eastern influences. He managed to captivate the audience with his voice and lyrics, which feel truthful and heartfelt, full of meaning, sometimes political, and other times more personal. In memory of Pavlos Fyssas, the Greek anti-fascist rapper who was murdered by a supporter of the Greek far-right party Golden Dawn in 2013, Alkinoos performed his song "Panta tha ksimeronei" (It will always dawn again). He also paid tribute to the musician and comedian Jimmys Panousis, who recently passed away, by performing his well-known satirical song "Neoellines" (Modern Greeks).

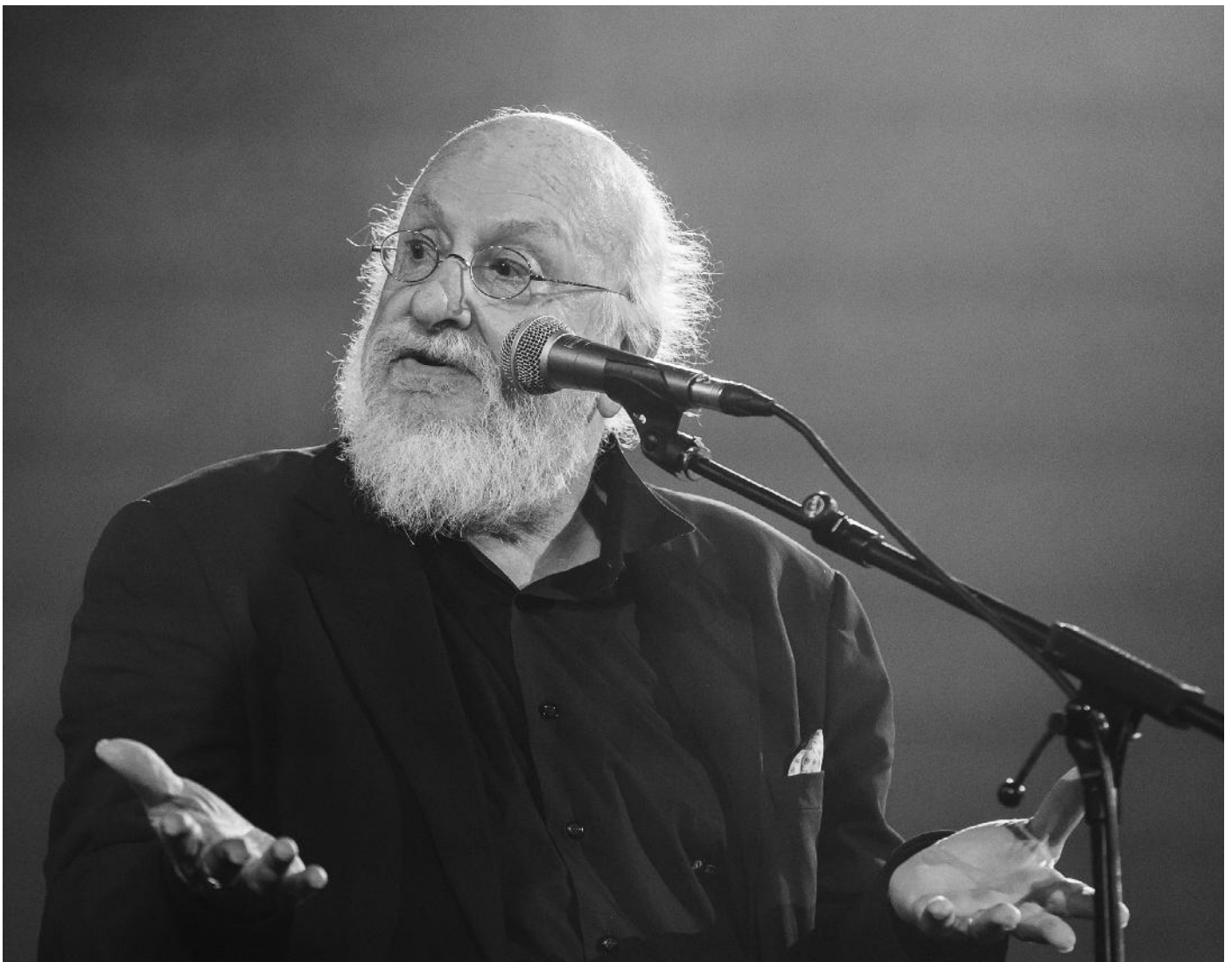
## Dionysis Savvopoulos THE CONCERT

A huge crowd of people singing with a single voice, clapping hands, moving heads rhythmically: An unforgettable concert by Dionysis Savvopoulos that took place on January 30, at the iconic Union Chapel, London, organized by Ark4Art.

Dionysis Savvopoulos came to London for a performance beyond borders with songs selected from his entire musical career, presented in his own unique style and accompanied by outstanding Greek musicians. Even today, Savvopoulos' songs are loved and performed by many Greek singers, taught throughout schools in Greece and the subject of many studies. Simply said, he is a musical legend in Greece. Journalists and the public alike even call him the "Greek Dylan" though he prefers to characterize himself as the "Greek Savvopoulos".

For his performance in London, Dionysis Savvopoulos has once again chosen an amazing location, the Union Chapel. Beside him, the distinguished new songwriter and composer, Katerina Polemi, who has already started her own exciting musical journey. Polemi became famous after she was awarded the prize for composing the music of the film "Little England", directed by Pantelis Voulgaris. She performed in both Greece and Brazil, singing in Greek, English and Portuguese.

@GreeceinUK interviewed Dionysis Savvopoulos before the show. We asked him to talk about his songs as well as his thoughts on Greece and the Greeks.





*1. Your concerts are always met with great success. Which elements of your music or lyrics make your songs both timeless and popular with all ages?*

I don't know the answer. I can tell you, however, why we like Chazidaki's, Tsitsani's or Attik's songs or songs by other songwriters from 80 or 90 years ago: They continue to appeal to us because they respond to our deepest needs for love, justice, beauty, joy, unity.... you can complete the list yourself.

*2. You have composed many widely known romantic songs but your political songs have also echoed with Greek masses. Would you classify yourself as a political or romantic singer-songwriter?*

Song creators are not content with being categorised nor stereotyped. Like all my fellow artists, I sing about my feelings and thoughts; in life I have never lacked an interest in politics, in love, in friendship, in all social issues. I would be happy if my songs appealed to everyone but if they don't, then so what? Sometimes I have had to pay a high cost, mainly for my political songs.

*3. If you were to compose new songs today, would they be romantic, satirical, or political and what new themes do you have to sing about?*

I really don't know. Time will tell.

*4. During your career, have you ever been tempted to become more systematically involved in politics, making that transition from observer to actor?*

I have been offered high positions in Ministries, even in the Ministry of State, by almost all political parties – and there are no complaints about that – but I am not the right person for such duties and so I have politely declined all of these job offers. An artist has the comfort of a 20-year projection in his thinking, while a politician has to take decisions in the short run. I cannot pretend to be able to do this.

*5. You are going to have a concert in London, where many Greek people have emigrated due to financial reasons. Would you say that today the lyrics 'Whether through antiquity or through orthodoxy, the communities of Greeks create new galaxies' still apply, or do you think that the Greek communities living abroad today perhaps struggle to survive, being separate from one another?*

The old communities have resolved the survival issue long ago, their children and their grandchildren became scientists, got active in politics, in the sciences and arts etc. But the new waves of emigrants are qualified, are degree holders, and if today they may live separately, in the future, they will not. They will be able to help themselves as well as the country.

6. *In one of your interviews you once said: 'I believe that we are not just a nameless peoples but we are Greeks'. (Αχελώος tv, 21.8.2013) To your mind what constitutes this idea of 'Greekness'? What do you admire most in Greeks and, likewise, what disappoints you most?*

The fact that Greeks often cannot effectively communicate disappoints me. Particularly when they adopt the "Do-you-know-who-I-am?" egoistic attitude. In Greece there are 10 millions damaged egos, 10 millions vindication seekers. I sometimes get angry with Greeks, I call them 'ass-Greeks' ('koloellines') On the other hand, we are open-hearted, extraordinary motivated, and sharp in seizing new opportunities. We are agile and competent and, provided the conditions permit it, we can become the 'number one'. We love variety and changes – which are also features of the Greek landscape – and we are simply charming/lovable.

7. *Concerning current social and economic circumstances, do you feel more optimistic or pessimistic?*

I feel both. It depends on us how things will turn out in the end.

8. *You seem to expect much from the youth, as you sing in one song: 'In any case they know everything'. Have young people disappointed you in anyway today?*

This verse refers to small children. But young people have not disappointed me at all. They succeed in being creative under very harsh conditions. Happily I have seen that they can overcome their inadequate education; but they certainly suffer a lot.

9. *You were young in the sixties. Do you feel nostalgic of this era as representing a more authentic, sincere, and innocent time or do you view contemporary times as more anthropocentric, creative, networked, collaborative, solidary and sensitive?*

Sixties were, in my opinion, the last creative decade to date. Our contemporary times have had to face great impasse, resulting from the elites' failure all over the world. We will certainly face great difficulties but afterwards something new and promising will arise. Do not doubt that.

10. *How do you judge the contemporary music industry in Greece and do you think it is stagnant?*

In Greece, things are stagnant in general. Ideas can only develop and be implemented within a particular context, which is missing at present. However, I am pleasantly surprised when I meet a young, daring entrepreneur or a young fellow artist. They are but a few, however they do exist.

11. *What advice would you give to up and coming musicians who would like to build a career in Greece?*

To follow the way of their hearts.

12. *How would you describe yourself today, as an 'Old man with braces and glasses who is continuously afraid of tomorrow' or an eternally youthful character, still able to uplift audiences of all ages?*

I am all of these at the same time. I am no longer afraid of any aspect of myself and I try to keep them all in balance.

photo credits: Panayis Chrysovergis



## Urban Culture: Meet the artists reclaiming Athenian streets

*Through murals and skateboarding, young artists are reclaiming the Greek streets and intervening in the urban space in a creative, interactive way. The Athenian street culture is flourishing, so to find out more about its dynamics we reached out to some of its street artists and skaters, who gladly introduced us to their world.*

### The first steps:

For most of the artists interviewed, the first encounter with street art and skate took place during their early childhood. Being initially exposed to street culture through peers or magazines and movies, they regarded it as nothing more than an amusing way to socialize and spend their free time. It was only after several years that they perceived it as an integral part of their identity, a necessity and an outlet to effectively express themselves.

'Through the movement, the trick selection and countless other characteristics, [skateboarding] is the way to declare who I really am in the world.'  
Thanos Panou

demetriosvasileiou



'My inspiration mainly draws on love and urban life; late night strolls, musical influences but also accidental encounters with other artists who share a similar approach to things. I started just because I enjoyed it and afterwards realized that I was in need of it.' Fro Visual Touch

'We happened to pass by the bridges of Nea Ionia (Athens). There was a group of people painting on the bridges and for some reason this scene just lured me. All this colour on a dull day ignited in me the desire to be with these guys and doodle. So, I would say that I started it as a childhood desire.' Zamie

Lune82 reminds us of the inclusion of graffiti as one of the four core elements said to compose the hip-hop culture, along with B-boying, MCing and DJing: 'It was a challenge for us then as well

as a new, interesting means of expression. In the beginning, it was interwoven with hip-hop, which was concurrently upcoming in Greece. As one of the four elements of hip-hop, graffiti followed the same trajectory and served as a communication code among graffiti writers and those initiated in the culture of the four elements. What mostly attracted me, though, was that through graffiti I could express thoughts and feelings of personal or sociopolitical content in both a codified and a simplified, 'raw' way. Graffiti has the power to express the visible and underlying needs of each society.'

'It was just another thing we did as kids with our peers. Life is indeed a crazy journey, from the smallest things you daily see and hear to the most important events.' Alex Martinez

'It began as an extracurricular activity, alongside basketball and other sports. I found skateboarding unique in the sense that it is an expansion of your bodily movement and also entails an aesthetic value. It

billygee



was significant for me that I didn't need a coach or a team to practise. It offered me a sense of autonomy, since it relied solely on my self-discipline. From the very beginning I realised that I would fail; that for a long time I would just try and fail, and stand up and try again.' Demetrios Vasileiou

### The meaning of their work:

There is no homogeneity in the messages communicated through street art and skate, for they range from deeply personal symbolism to political or activist commentary. They can be read as comical, sarcastic and aesthetically beautiful, or even aggressive, edgy and disturbing. Nonetheless, what makes them distinct is their openness to public interpretation, which is also the primary source of gratification for their creators. Since street culture is publicly accessible, it sparks a democratic and direct dialogue among the city's residents without limits in terms of language or socioeconomic background.

'I want my paintings to create colourful situations, in which eyes get lost. To make everyone standing in front of my wall seem as if they enter a colourful dimension regardless of what the painting depicts.' Fro Visual Touch

'Each individual discerns their own messages when coming across a piece of street art. This is the most interesting part of outdoors painting; hearing other

fellows articulating how your work speaks to their soul.' Billy Gee

'Watching people smile when they see a mural of mine cheers me up. Whatever the case, everyone will eventually see what they want to see and they will interpret it as they see fit.' Zamie

Artists don't fall into the comparison trap to differentiate among their works. As Billy Gee told us 'Each new piece of work erases the previous one' or as Fro further expands 'Comparisons are the death of happiness'.

Possibly, what separates artists from the crowd is their ability to draw inspiration from details. Billy Gee acknowledges that life in Athens brings him in touch with marvelous routes and scenery, whereas Lune82 is influenced by his living conditions, his preferred art genres (kinetic, optical art, lettering - typography, abstract graffiti), music, graffiti scenes in other countries and even space.

The creative process for street artists and skaters alike is more the result of deliberation and less a matter of random inspiration.

'Skateboarding to a person who is not really involved in it, might seem plain and with limited possibilities. In reality, it is an activity with inexhaustible ways to approach and infinite maneuvers. The point of view



Greece, strangling her kids, zamie

I like to tend into, is "ruthless skate spot carnage", by that I mean going out in the street with my board and whatever I find interesting on my path, basically skate it in the best possible way. How a skate spot could be interesting, depends on variable reasons such as kind (stairs, handrails, curbs, etc), my personal skills (difficulty of it), appealing on the camera (if we are filming it) or if it is a totally new challenge for me.' Thanos Panou

'Usually my materials are acrylic paint and spray. I try to find locations that have something intriguing, such as greenery or abandoned factories.' Pupet

'For my painting, I usually pick bustling streets, because I am interested in reaching out to more people. I try not to paint on other artists' works and, if possible, to make the wall more beautiful than it was before. I find vandalism and chasing exhaustive, maybe I'm too old for that.' Cacao Rocks

'I use any material that can be applied to a wall; From spray, acrylic markers and pigments to chalk. The initial idea emerges in my mind and is subsequently edited on paper. After that, I figure out the desired dimensions of the mural and choose one of the places where I like to paint, I select a color palette and then the appropriate tools to create the mural.' Lune82

### The case for Athens:

The mild weather is usually taken for granted in Greece but for such activities, as Manos Kiriakousis marks, is a decisive factor: 'As a skater in Athens I benefit from the good weather; without much rainfall or cold, sunshine throughout the year! The

Greek sun on its own is enough to fill you with the zest and optimism needed to achieve more in a day!'

Cacao Rocks asserts that 'The perks for an artist living and working in Athens is that rents are still low compared to other European capitals, and the same applies for art materials such as paints and brushes.' Concerning the effects of the economic crisis to artists, their capacity to gain subsistence through art is noticeably hindered, but this situation has equally kindled their creativity. For instance, the, otherwise unfortunate, rise in stores shutting down due to financial reasons has offered a fresh canvas for street artists, who use the forgotten facades for visual storytelling.

Despite the lack of relevant infrastructure and the financial hardships (personal and national), skaters and street artists find that the city offers an unlimited variety of hidden gems to practise and create. Panos Thanou affirms that 'Athens comes second after Barcelona in spots, throughout all Europe.'

Regarding their favourite ones, Billy Gee is hopeful for the creation of a new skate park in Elaionas; Manos Kiriakousis finds the city centre and specifically the Syntagma Square very convenient in terms of moving from one spot to others nearby; Ioanna Katsanou picks out the skate parks at OAKA and Ilioupoli, and Demetrios Vasileiou describes a new skate park at Alsos Veikou assembled entirely by skaters themselves. Fro notices how street art has been a catalyst for both the blooming of previously downgraded areas, such as Metaxourgeio, and their gentrification. Far from the city centre, Zamie resorts to Parnitha and Penteli to find peace, gain



perspective and let the distant buzz of Athens carry him away, whilst the old disks factory of Columbia in Perissos hosts most of Pupet's outdoors creations.

'It is a great asset that Athens has so many places where you can do graffiti without being considered a criminal or a disruptor of society's public image, as was the case before. Additionally, there is a plethora of locations, prominently abandoned buildings, where you can draw graffiti undisturbed. Our economic crisis coincided with a wave of graffiti and street art expansion, at a period when many European and other cities have encompassed and, in a way, institutionalized graffiti as a commercial form of art. Since Athens is steadily following this wave from abroad, graffiti became accepted by a considerable part of the society.' Lune82

This favourable attitude towards street art might account for the fact that internationally acclaimed artists find their creative home in Athens. The US-born artist, Alex Martinez, famous inter alia for his paintings at London's Portobello Road, says 'What fascinates me but at the same time annoys me in Greece is its relaxed attitude. It grants me the freedom to paint at the streets, which is a gift for me, so I try to give it my best. Currently, the Athens scene includes any kind of street artists/graffiti writers, not to mention lots of graffiti tourists, many of which are big-names.'

The increased acceptance on behalf of the Greek society and the possible use of street art as a touristic incentive do not mean, however, that the public opinion is no longer divided. Thanos Panou clarifies that 'There is an astonishing amount of incidents happening, both in an entertaining and sometimes in a rather petrifying way, due to the fact that this activity takes place in the raw streets, anything goes!' and all interviewees mention stereotypical reactions (e.g. seniors throwing them buckets of water from their balconies, quarrels with passersby who see them as thugs), funny incidents (e.g. a drunk person mistakenly trying to open a painted door depicted on a mural), compassionate gestures (e.g. precautionary advice from the police in dangerous areas, neighbours bringing them food or tools) and sometimes dangerous ones (e.g. hit by cars, threatened with violence, detained by the police). These tragicomic incidents are inextricably linked with life in the streets, so it came as no surprise that Cacao Rocks has written and aims to publish a whole book dedicated to them.

#### The ecosystem:

Skating and graffiti painting do not need to be solitary activities. In Athens, there is a far-reaching street culture ecosystem based on collaboration and solidarity.



'Athens skateboarding scene is crew-organised so far, which creates some kind of friendly competition and that really pushes the activity a few steps further. Lately though, some of us are trying to put skateboarding into a more official organization and that is by creating the Hellenic Skateboarding Association.' says Thanos Panou, while Manos Kiriakousis and Demetrios Vasileiou inform us about events organised by skate shops and skate firms, such as Go Skateboarding Day and Vans Shop Riot.

Ioanna Katsanou spoke with us about Girls on Skateboards Grece: 'It started as a way for female skateboarders to communicate and schedule practicing together. The absence of women in the field along with society's stereotypes discourage girls and women who are interested in skateboarding from making their first steps. We didn't want Greece to be left behind, given that in other countries women's skateboarding is on the rise and has been approved as an official sport for the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo. We try to reach more girls and women through our website and social media, while we had

around Athens; giving young men and women a space to play and socialise. Through skateboarding, they aim at encouraging female participation, social integration and physical/mental health.

According to their team: 'Athens has a thriving, close-knit, DIY-oriented skateboarding scene. The people are kind, welcoming and open to helping the refugee population at every turn. Its location has meant the refugee population has shot up immensely in recent years, and we aim to harness the inclusive subculture of skateboarding to channel these new residents into positive social platforms.'

### Greek street culture over time:

Art and culture are constantly interacting with their surrounding society and, when it comes to Greece, reality keeps providing fertile ground for creative thought and art making.

For Fro, 'The street culture in Greece is skyrocketing. Athens has been called the new Berlin and a stroll in the city centre will definitely convince you.'



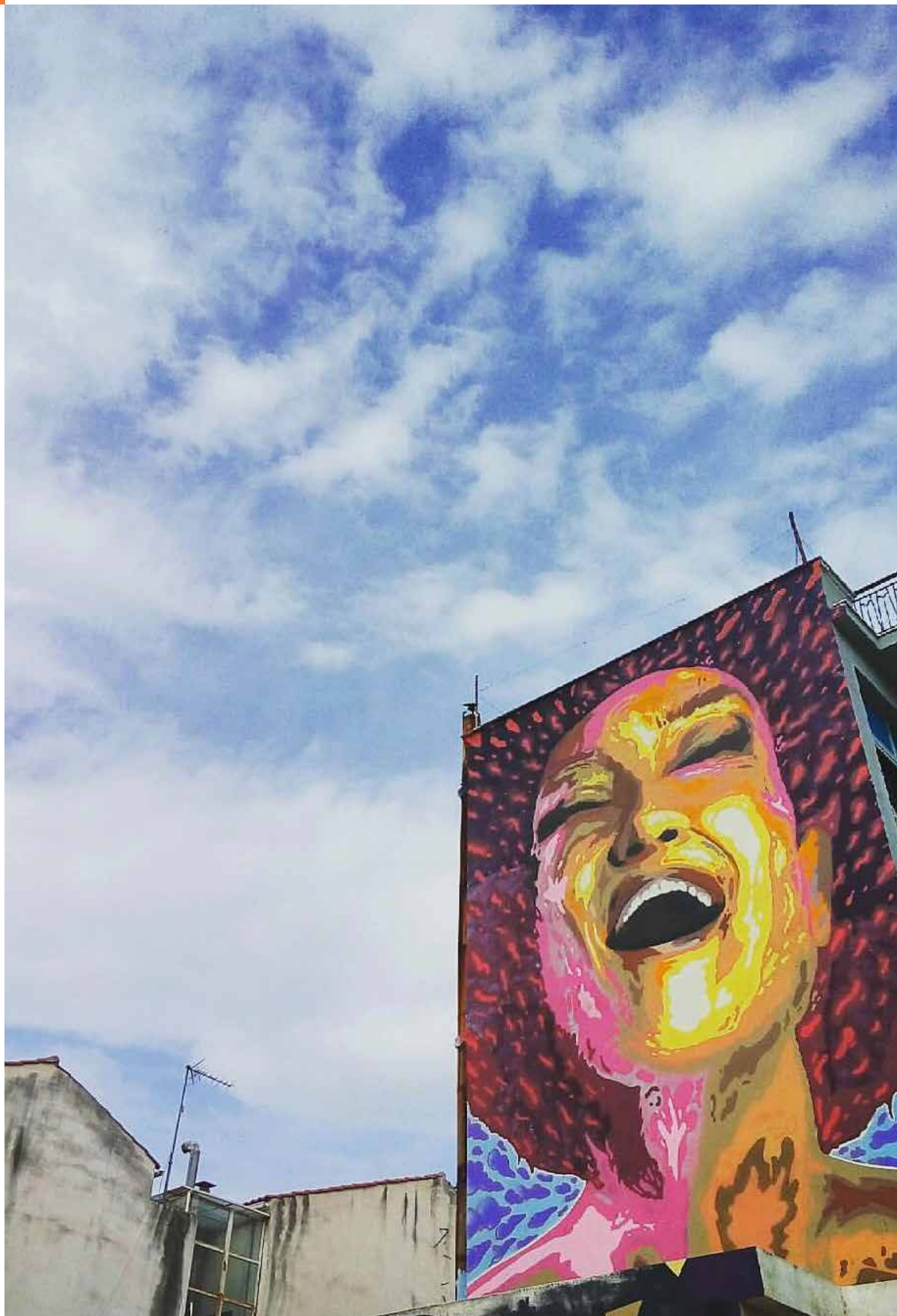
pupet

also launched a video competition for women, so that more of them realise that not only can they get into skateboarding but there is already a community for them in Greece. In Athens, girls who skate have the benefit of selecting among a wide range of possible spots depending on their level and the tricks preferred. Moreover, the skate community is always eager to help and support beginners.'

Free movement skateboarding is an Athens-based, UK-born nonprofit organization that brings the world of skateboarding to the young Greek and refugee population. Working with young people from Syria, Afghanistan, Greece and many other countries, they have designed a skate park which is transported between community centres and refugee camps

On a similar note Cacao Rocks thinks that 'If street art was an Olympic sport, we would definitely claim a medallion, but there is no place for competition in art.'

The Greek street art explosion is part of something bigger, according to Thanos Panou: 'I am glad to realize how the street culture as a whole, has been that much of a break out in the last years. My suggestion would be that young people are behind the continuous stream of information via internet, internet is everywhere, therefore our culture is getting spread out fast. And so Greece is no exception to this unstoppable wave of fresh ideas and unconventional ways of individuality expression.'



Fro\_Visual\_Touch



Street seems to be the new cool and more people wish to be associated with its culture. As Ioanna Katsanou states: 'On the one hand, the growing interest of all these folks is encouraging so that more events take place in the streets, which automatically helps our country's culture. On the other hand, the real concept of being 'street' is fading. Because above all, street means being authentic, having lived experiences that made you love the streets and not proclaim yourself as such just so you feel in fashion.' Whether the mainstreaming of street culture will prove more detrimental than constructive remains unclear but hopefully, for Lune82, this blurred situation will be settled, as sooner or later the finest artists will stand out.

As Fro said 'Comparisons are the death of happiness', so I will refrain from characterizing Athens as the new Berlin. Nevertheless, everyone feels that there is a cultural revival going on in the heart of the country's capital. Despite the multifaceted literature about Greece and its hardships, there is an alternative discourse taking place in its streets, and it is definitely a visionary one.

*Many thanks to the artists interviewed:*

*Pupet: [www.pupet.eu](http://www.pupet.eu)*

*Alex Martinez: [www.murallist.wordpress.com](http://www.murallist.wordpress.com)*

*Manos Kiriakousis: [www.facebook.com/SoS.skateboards](http://www.facebook.com/SoS.skateboards)*

*Thanos Panou*

*Lune82: [www.instagram.com/lune82er](http://www.instagram.com/lune82er)*

*Billy Gee: [billygee.gr](http://billygee.gr)*

*Zamie: <http://www.zamie.org>*

*Fro Visual Touch: [www.facebook.com/frovisualtouch](http://www.facebook.com/frovisualtouch)*

*Demetrios Vasileiou*

*Cacao Rocks: [cacaorocks.blogspot.co.uk](http://cacaorocks.blogspot.co.uk)*

*Ioanna Katsanou: [girlsonskateboards.gr](http://girlsonskateboards.gr)*

*Free Movement Skateboarding: [freemovementskateboarding.com](http://freemovementskateboarding.com)*

## February events

### The Effects of Economic Crisis on Greek Entrepreneurship - Research Seminar

**When:** Tuesday, 6 February 2018, 6-7:30pm  
**Where:** LSE (Cañada Blanch Room, Cowdray House)

### Tsiknopemti Celebration

**When:** Thursday, 8 February 2018, 7pm  
**Where:** The Hellenic Centre (16-18 Paddington St, Marylebone, London W1U 5AS)

### Greek Drama Day 2018

**When:** Thursday, 8 February 2018, 10:30am-3:45pm  
**Where:** King's College London (Great Hall, Strand Campus, London WC2R 2LS)

### Kathara Deftera Celebration

**When:** Monday, 18 February 2018  
**Where:** The Hellenic Centre (16-18 Paddington St, Marylebone, London W1U 5AS)

### Amerika Square

**When:** Sunday, 25 February 2018, 3:30pm, 7pm  
**Where:** The Hellenic Centre (16-18 Paddington St, Marylebone, London W1U 5AS)

### Basilelicious live & hilarious!

**When:** Sunday, 25 February 2018  
**Where:** Millfield Theatre (Silver Street, Edmonton, London N18 1PJ)

### Niki Marangou: Cyprus, female voice and memory

**When:** Monday, 26 February 2018, 5:30-7pm  
**Where:** King's College London (Council Room, Strand Campus, London WC2R 2LS)

### Mistero Buffo with Panos Vlahos

**When:** Wednesday, 28 February - Saturday, 3 March 2018, 8pm  
**Where:** The Cockpit (Gateforth Street, London NW8 8EH)

## DO NOT MISS

### Fake News, Propaganda and Media in Greece

**When:** Tuesday, 27 February 2018, 6:30-8pm  
**Where:** LSE (Hong Kong Theatre, Clement House)

### The Byzantine World of Ilias Kontozamanis

**When:** Friday, 2 - Tuesday, 27 February 2018  
**Where:** The Hellenic Centre (16-18 Paddington St, Marylebone, London W1U 5AS)

### Stegosaurus at Vault Festival

**When:** Wednesday, 28 February - Sunday, 4 March 2018, 7:45-8:45pm  
**Where:** Network Theatre (246A Lower Road)

@GreeceInUK is a newsletter with a monthly roundup of news related to Greece, Greek Politics, Economy, Culture, Civil Society, the Arts as well as Greece's distinctive vibrant presence in the UK. Our ambition is to offer an accurate and rich source of information to those interested in Greece and her people.

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