

# Moonlighting Nocturnal celebrations at ancient sites on August 16

Numerous temples, castles and museums around the country preparing to open up to the public and host events to mark the full moon

Marking the celebration of the harvest in ancient times and the waning days of the summer holidays in more recent years, the August full moon and its accompanying festivities make for a great evening out.

In honor of the visibly biggest and brightest moon of the year, on August 16, the Ministry of Culture will open up archaeological and historical sites, as well as museums, all around the country to lunar revelers.

Admission to all events, which range from classical recitals to Greek ballads and from theater to performance art, is free of charge.

Anyone left in the capital will most likely converge on the "holy rock," the **Acropolis**. Tourists, grandmothers holding tots, stargazing couples and innumerable long-haired boys and girls with guitars will be chilling, singing and rambling amid the ruins all night long. If you are feeling particularly Dionysian, stay until moonset and witness a stunning sunrise over the city.

A five-minute stroll from the Acropolis metro station, the imposing **Temple of Olympian Zeus** is a site Athenians see every day, yet rarely manage to visit. On August 16, it will be opening its gates to promising young jazz musicians Yiannis Kassetas and the Funk Wizards, who will perform pieces from their intriguingly titled album "The Truth About the Alien Invasion in Egypt."

## All-night revelry

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## Classical & contemporary

With an album out this last February, titled "Works of Greek Composers I," the Hellenic Trio's concert at the **National Archaeological Museum** in central Athens will make for a night of unusual classical and contemporary musical combinations.

Founded 19 years ago, the trio offers the unusual instrumental combination of flute, viola and guitar. In terms of influences, the Hellenic Trio is worth seeing because of the arresting way the ensemble layers classical music and jazz along with the more local musical history of Greece.

At the **Numismatic Museum**, Iraklis Paschalidis's compositions for piano will be presented in a concert titled "A Piano on the Moon." Active in theater, Paschalidis has written the music for a large number of productions and has worked with the Greek National Theater and the National Theater of Northern Greece, among others. Although he has been writing music for the theater for more than 20 years, he released his first album just last year. Greece's party-loving second-largest

city, Thessaloniki, will greet the full moon accompanied by the sounds of local jazz funk. Getting down and dirty, NASA Funk, a dynamic band reminiscent of the Red Hot Chili Peppers, will rock the icons in the atrium of **Thessaloniki's Museum of Byzantine Culture** (2 Stratou Avenue). The band formed in 1999, and has developed a fanatical following; they are now a permanent fixture at Thessaloniki's Mylos Club.

The gentle, laid-back musical theater of No Knock Entry, delivered with wit and humor, could scarcely find a better setting for their mix of music and theater than under the full moon in **Thessaloniki's Ancient Agora**.

The Thessaloniki group describes itself as a marriage of humor, music and spectacle, with the ensemble composed of musicians and singers Dimitris Dalezis, Themis Veleni and Nikos Kasapis, bassist Akis Efthymiou, drummer Nasos Tomaras, actors and

singers Lena Petropoulou and Antonia Paraschakou, actor Sophia Voulgari, dancer Katerina Liana and light and set-man Vangelis Xonoglou.

This year the group is presenting its 90-minute "Parivan," a play that is said to portray the meeting point where "yesterday and today flirt with what's to come," recounting the countless stories of "travelers, migrants, kings, drunkards and waiters."

Few towns are as picturesque as Nafplion, in the Argolid, and few castles towering over them as imposing as the **Palamidi Fortress**.

Climbing the 999 steps of the wonderfully preserved Venetian citadel, you will be rewarded by one of the most interesting Greek bands around, the Hainides, renowned for their wild, uplifting shows. Using only traditional instruments, such as the out and Cretan lyre, their original songs are influenced by Cretan folk tunes; their in-



Last year's August full moon rising over the Temple of Poseidon at Sounion. (AP)



Costas Makedonas will perform electro tunes at Kamiri in Rhodes.

novative variations on simple melodies, coupled with a shining full moon will make for a magical night.

## Old and new works

Well-known for his theater and film music, award-winning composer Notis Mavroudis will perform at the **Temple of Hera on Samos**, along with musician Panayiotis Margaritis and vocalist Anastasia Moutsatsou.

The trio, which recently released an album titled "Mia nyxtha stous aionas" (A Night through the Ages), is set to play a selection of Mavroudis's most memorable hits from his long career, as well as songs that Moutsatsou has turned into favorites.

Greek traditional songs in modern orchestrations, songs by other Greek composers but also parts of Mavroudis's popular "Café de l'art" album will also be part of the program.

In the prefecture of Corinthia, the



The theater of the archaeological site of Dodoni in Ioannina will host a concert by Savina Yannatou and her band Primavera en Salonico.

night of August 16 will be all about classical music, with three different ensembles playing at three different sites. The young Trio Tritonous is set to appear at the **Temple of Octavia**. Founded in 2005, the Austria-based group consists of violinist Kathrin Lenzenweger, cellist Philipp Compol and pianist Maria Mylaraki, who will perform compositions by Haydn, Beethoven and Mendelssohn.

Another Austrian ensemble, the **Acies Quartett**, will present melodies by Haydn, Schubert and Debussy at the archaeological site of **Nemea**. Founded in 2000 by music students, the ensemble was named Artist of the Year 2007 by Austrian radio station O1 and won the Musica Juventus competition in Vienna in January 2008. The ensemble, which has toured Austria and has performed in other countries as well, comprises violinists Benjamin Ziervogel and Raphael Kaspran, viola player Manfred Flessl and cellist Thomas Wiesflecker.

At **Ancient Skyon**, west of Corinth, the Art of Brass ensemble, known for its repertoire that combines classical with jazz, will present a mixed program. The first part of the concert will feature works by Monteverdi, Anthony Holborne, Handel and Bach, while the second part is dedicated to contemporary music, with compositions by tango master Astor Piazzolla, jazzman Miles Davis and others. Founded in 1981, the ensemble has performed extensively in Austria and has also toured the USA, Europe, Japan and Brazil.

## Renaissance to baroque

Old music from the 16th to the 18th century (from late Renaissance to Baroque) is on the cards at the **Byzantine Museum of Ypati** in Fthiotida, with Kelsos. Founded in 1989, the ensemble uses traditional musical instruments like the theorbe and the viola da gamba. Its name is derived from Kelsos Street, where the group first started rehearsing.

At the **Aptera archaeological site** near Hania, in Crete, seasoned singer/songwriter Nena Venetsanou will provide her own touch. This high-caliber artist



The site of Ancient Olympia will be serenaded with Greek ballads. (AP)

## Music revival

Founded in 1989, Kelsos uses traditional instruments like the theorbe and the viola da gamba

has proven that quality is ever-present in Greek song and has stayed away from cheap, folkloric productions. The award-winning musician has successfully represented Greece at various festivals abroad. Her career includes collaborations with prominent figures on the Greek music scene, especially Manos Hadjidakis, Mikis Theodorakis and Nikos Mamanakakis.

## New talent

A relatively new talent on the live music circuit in Greece, folk and techno singer Melina Aslanidou will perform at the stadium of the archaeological site of **Nikopolis in Preveza**, along with Rallia Christidou. Aslanidou released her first album in 2003 and has since worked with Lavrentis Maberitsas, George Dalaras and Dimitra Galani, among other notable performers.

Little is left to see of the 4th-century BC **Temple of Asclepius** near Skopelos Town. The ancient ruin will come alive on the night of the full moon, where local musicians will sing traditional rebetika songs among the ruins scattered on the beach. Skopelos, a small island in the Sporades, has a traditional love of this type of music, so bring a bottle of local wine and local "skopelitiki" cheese pie, lie back in the sand and groove to the underground melodies of early-20th-century Asia Minor.

Blues Wire has been around for over 20 years and was the first group of Greek origin to try and recreate the sounds of bluesmen Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf and T-Bone Walker. They have performed extensively over the years, and, listening to them, one would never imagine that they were not from some town in Appalachia. They will howl at the moon on August 16, from the highest point in **Arta**, playing live at the medieval castle.

## ELSEWHERE

Other sites that will be open to the public and holding events include:

- The Sanctuary of the Great Gods in Samothrace, with a music and guitar recital.
- The Temple of Apollo in Karditsa, with a tribute to Maria Callas performed by a quartet.
- The Temple of Poseidon in Sounion, with a concert by the Music Ensemble band.
- The Acropolis of Proerna in Fthiotida, with a production of "Prometheus Bound" by the Regional Municipal Theater of Roumeli.
- The Nafpaktos Fortress, with rock ballads by Michalis Anthis.
- The Archaeological Museum of Eneia, with Greek and foreign ballads.
- The Archaeological Museum of Karystos, with a concert by the Akroama saxophone quartet.
- The Sanctuary of Artemis Orthia in Laconia, with a concert of Greek music by Christos Tsiamoulis.
- The Archaeological Museum of

Symi, with a concert titled "Journey Around Greece."

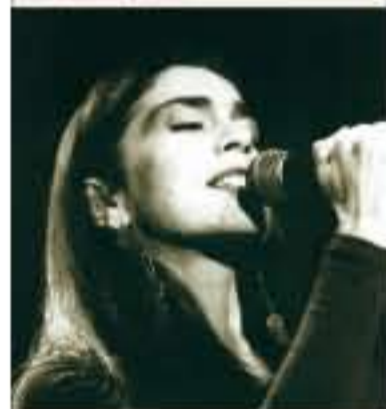
- The Archaeological Site of Dion, with a concert by the orchestra and choir of the Municipality of Dion.

To see if there's an event being held somewhere near you, ask at the local cultural center or town hall.



## NATURAL CHOICE

The sublime sound of vocal artist Savina Yannatou and her gifted all-acoustic backing band Primavera en Salonico is a natural choice for these annual full-moon music events being staged by the Culture Ministry. Yannatou and Primavera en Salonico, currently performing shows around Europe, will be returning to Greece for a full night's performance at the archaeological site in Dodoni, northwestern Greece. Yannatou and her band have been making waves on the world music circuit for over a decade now on the strength of a heavenly style, at once sensitive and adventurous. The act's totally acoustic sound, which suggests a bare musical purity, adds to the appropriateness for these nights of music under a full moon. Interestingly, however, the act, which has released several albums since emerging in the mid-90s, has nurtured a heightened sense of adventure over the years.



Though the bulk of the material released and performed by Yannatou and her musicians has been based on traditional songs from the Mediterranean basin, this musical unit has not hesitated to tamper with tradition.

Yannatou and her associates have displayed an increasing willingness to stretch their working material into the open through heavy use of improvisation.

When the free-spirited playing takes over, the songs, beautifully melodic when kept within their conventional grounds, are struck by a form of mayhem and tend to acquire a stronger sense of mysticism, as if affected by these oft-contemplated effects of the moon, a religion for some.

Yet, whether the full-moon performances at archaeological sites push Yannatou and her musicians deeper into their musical quest remains to be seen.

However, judging by their repeated appearances over the years, they obviously don't mind the conditions.