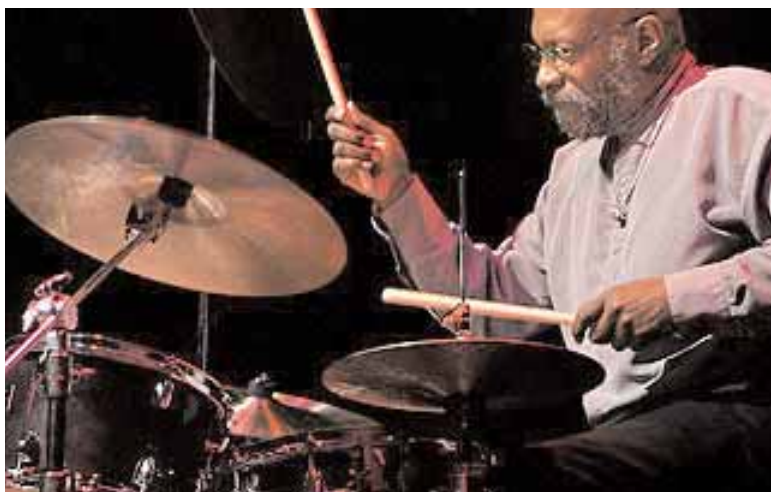


Brad Mehldau, Ellis Marsalis and McCoy Tyner at the Greek Theatre

But it may have been less the fear of a chilly November night than a sky full of smoke and a weekend of tragedy that kept more music fans from showing up Sunday for the outdoor amphitheater's final night of performances with Brad Mehldau, Ellis Marsalis and McCoy Tyner.



Drummer Eric Kamau Gravatt, right, and bassist Gerald Cannon, left, perform with The McCoy Tyner Trio at the Greek Theatre in Los Angeles on Sunday, November 16, 2008.

Whatever the reason for the modest turnout, the dedicated, surprisingly multi-generational crowd that did show up was treated to an evening of seriously dynamic piano jazz, each artist taking a different path to a similar destination.

The 69-year-old Tyner, whose latest album, "Guitars,"

is dotted with collaborators such as Derek Trucks and Bill Frisell, added six-string gadfly Marc Ribot to his touring lineup for this performance.

While Ribot often flexes an aggressively atonal side on albums such as his recent "Party

Intellectuals," here he blended with Tyner's trio beautifully, adding a touch of Eastern raga to Tyner's "Ballad for Aisha," while elsewhere his biting guitar bore a Latin shade that offered an engaging counterpoint to Tyner's rich tone.

It was only when Ribot hung back in the mix that the set's energy occasionally flagged, as in a lovely if somewhat staid reading of Duke Ellington's "In a Mellow Tone." But celebrated former Coltrane sideman Tyner snapped the crowd back to life with his turbulent solo at the song's end.

The evening's other elder statesman, Marsalis also benefited from a strong backing band, buoyed by offspring Delfeayo and youngest son Jason, who offered such hyperkinetic yet nimble work on his drum kit that he slowly drove his riser across the stage with every blow to his kick drum.

Trombonist Delfeayo, resplendent in a slick gray suit, added a rollicking New Orleans flair to the quintet's lively take on Thelonious Monk's "Teo." When he got his own

time in the spotlight at the evening's close, however, the Marsalis clan's elegant patriarch left no doubt where his sons learned their smooth, lyrical approach.

Opener Mehldau set the evening's tone with a delicately filigreed solo set that at times drew from a more classical-oriented approach. His playing is still equal parts challenging and bewitching, and his haunting, occasionally dissonant cover of Nick Drake's "River Man" was one of the evening's standouts.

As his spotlighted piano rang across the amphitheater, it was impossible not to notice the reverent hush that had fallen over the Greek, and for a moment the weekend's smoke-choked sky finally seemed to clear as a few stars shined through for one last post-summer night.

Greece braces for shipping storm

PIRAEUS, Greece - Heir to one of Greece's oldest shipowning families, Leonidas Polemis overlooks the heart of the Greek shipping industry from his plush office in the port of Piraeus and sees a severe economic storm coming.

Global shipping is facing its worst crisis in decades. In just a few months, dry cargo rates have fallen by more than 90 percent as a five-year boom has turned to bust. For Greece, which owns a fifth of the world's fleet, that spells trouble.

"Panic is one word to describe what is going on," said Polemis, sat beneath an oil painting of one of his family's first vessels, bought some 200 years ago. "People are selling some ships in a panic mode ... Some companies will go bust."

Greece has a lot to lose. At 170 million tonnes, its merchant fleet is the largest in the world, ahead of Japan. It is the second biggest contributor to Greece's 240 billion euro economy after tourism, accounting for 7 percent of output. Its tendrils stretch into many sectors, with shipping magnates investing in everything from banks to building and tourism. The slick cars and quayside restaurants of Piraeus testify to fortunes earned in the boom, but executives say they face a perfect storm of plunging demand and oversupply of ships.

"This is the worst it has ever been," said George Xiradakis, head of shipping consultants XRTC in Piraeus. "Everybody will be affected. This is a globalized market, probably the first globalized market in the world."

The global economic crash has slashed demand for transport of commodities to fast-growing nations like China and India. On top of that, the credit crunch has made banks reluctant to lend money to shipowners and to provide financial guarantees to allow their ships to sail, leaving some stuck in harbor. Dry cargo vessels that commanded \$150,000 a day in May are now earning \$7,000 or less. The tanker market, where Polemis' Remi Maritime Corp. owns 22 vessels, has been less badly hit but is still sharply down.

Prices could fall further next year, when a record number of ships are set to flood the market: more than 10,000 new ships are currently on order, according to the UN.

PAINFUL MEMORIES

Greeks have been seafarers for thousands of years. Shipowners made fortunes running the British naval blockade in the Napoleonic wars and in the 20th century the riches and rivalry of Aristotle Onassis and Stavros Niarchos was legendary.

For many in Greece, the latest crisis has revived painful memories of the collapse of the early 1980s, when hundreds of huge cargo vessels floated chained together in the Saronic Gulf off Athens, unable to find charterers as the market dried up.

Brokers say some vessels are already being ordered to slow to half speed on the high seas because there are no cargoes when they arrive. The number of ships asking to idle off Piraeus has risen and officials say traffic at the port is down sharply.

"We estimate (the fall) at around 25 percent for the time being but we think

in the near future ... we face a bigger reduction," said Nikos Arvanitis, head of the International Maritime Union at Piraeus. "If this situation will continue ... working positions will be affected. We have to reduce costs."

While shipping accounts for just over 1 percent of Greece's 4.5 million workforce, its economic influence is far higher. Foreign earnings from shipping were 17 billion euros last year, according to the central bank. "We estimate the slowdown in shipping will take around 0.5 percent off GDP," said Nicholas Magginas of National Bank. "There is a significant risk that there will be some problems with the bank debt ... a need for some restructuring."

"SHIPPING IN THE BLOOD"

For the first time, Greece faces a shipping crisis in which some of its biggest shipowners on the stock market rather than private businesses.

Since billionaire George Economou floated his firm DryShips (DRYS.O: Quote, Profile, Research, Stock Buzz) on the Nadsdaq in 2005, 12 other mostly Greek dry-bulk shipping firms have listed in New York, raising some \$4 billion. But public listings mean public scrutiny. DryShips said in an exchange filing it might not be able to meet its covenants to banks if things worsened. Economou, who defaulted on bonds in the 1990s, said it has no trouble paying its debts.

Hilton Cozies Up With Ex Niarchos



The socialite was spotted getting friendly with her Greek shipping heir ex, who she dated for more than a year before they split in 2006. But the star seemed to be good terms with her former lover as they partied together in Miami hotspot Mokai nightclub this weekend. In the pictures, Niarchos can be seen stroking the blond beauty's hair as he intimately whispers into her ear. A gleeful Hilton looks happy to be in his company, despite being in a serious relationship with Good Charlotte star Madden for over eight months.

A source tells Britain's The Sun newspaper, "Stavros looked thrilled to see Paris again and was spotted stroking her hair. They then looked deep in conversation."

Paris Hilton may be in hot water with her rocker boyfriend Benji Madden, after snaps were published of her and former beau Stavros Niarchos flirting in a club.