

Greek festival awards Iranian actress



A scene from Javad Ardakani's 'Handlebar Moustache'

The Iranian actress, Fatemeh Shakeri has been awarded at the 2008 Olympia International Film Festival for Children and Young Adults. Shakeri received the best actress award of the event for her performance in Javad Ardakani's Handlebar Moustache.

The 90-minute film recounts the story of a little girl who wants to buy a bicycle for her mentally challenged uncle.

Handlebar Moustache has participated in Germany's Schlinge and the Netherlands's Cinekid film festivals.

The 11th edition of the Olympia International Film Festival for Children and Young Adults was held from Nov. 29 to Dec. 9, 2008 in Greece.

AUSTRALIAN RELIEF SUPPLIES FOR PNG FLOODS

Australia will provide up to \$1 million to assist Papua New Guineans adversely affected by severe sea swells this week.

Minister Stephen Smith advised Papua New Guinea Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Sam Abal, of this funding in Fiji last night. This support will include the provision of relief supplies and funding for NGOs already responding to this disaster.

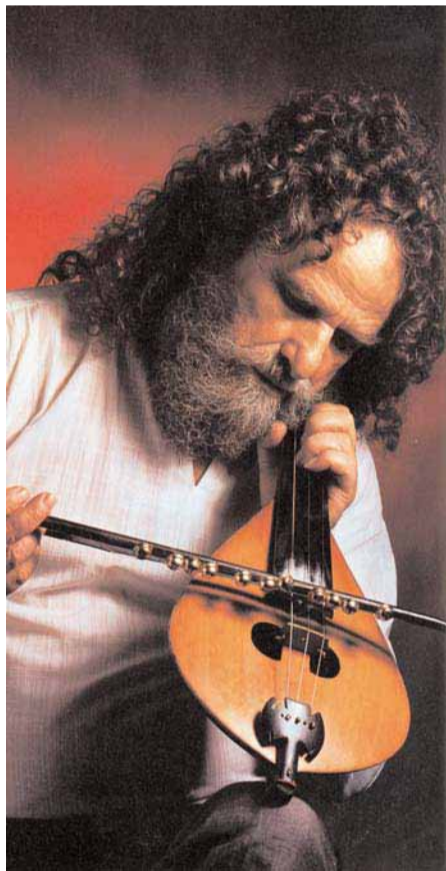
An Australian Defence Force C-130 will leave this weekend carrying water containers, tarpaulins and water purification tablets which will be distributed in the worst hit areas. The plane will fly to Kavieng (New Ireland province) and Lorengau (Manus province) where the supplies will be passed on to PNG officials and Non-Government Organisations for distribution to those in greatest need.

AusAID staff in Papua New Guinea (PNG) will work closely with the PNG National Disaster Committee to coordinate Australia's contribution with PNG's emergency response. Liaison officers will also be deployed to New Ireland and Manus provinces to ensure all possible assistance is provided. Reports suggest 50,000 people have been affected by this disaster and several hundred houses have been washed away when severe sea swells saw water levels rise alarmingly in several PNG provinces.

At this stage there have been no deaths confirmed. The Australian Government will await further assessment of needs to determine whether any additional assistance may be required.

*in Sydney for the very first time....
Cretan masters of lyra and lute*

Psarandonis with Giorgos Xylouris Friday 16 January, 8pm



The Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre is honoured to host what promises to be one of the premier concerts of the year when Cretan traditional music superstar Psarandonis, (in his first ever Sydney concert) takes to the stage of the Joan on Friday 16 January at 8pm.

Psarandonis comes from a rich musical background in a land where myth and history are one. He is one of Crete's leading lyra players and is by far the most experimental. A master of dynamics and variation, his repertoire draws on a large body of traditional music as well as his own songs. He is one of the world's leading exponents of rembetika music, a Greek style that emerged in the middle of the last century as an underground, subver-

sive musical form more akin to the blues, than rock & roll.

A senior member of the formidable Xylouris family, renowned musicians from the Cretan mountain village of Anogeia, Psarandonis is the younger brother of the late Nikos Xylouris an inspiring figure in the Greek resistance to fascism. The village of Anogeia has bred many musicians and has created and maintained for centuries an exciting tradition of dance, music and song.

Psarandonis is regarded as a master of the lyra, a traditional Cretan folk instrument that he has played since the age of 13 (he is now 65). Psarandonis (born Antonis Xylouris) is also noted for the unique timbre of his singing voice. Psarandonis interprets traditional pieces expressively and continually changes them, so that each interpretation is unique to his style. He is a master of simplicity and deconstruction. His sound is timeless, drawing as it does on the past and reaching into the future.

Also appearing is the Xylouris family's master of the lute (and Psarandonis' son) Giorgos Xylouris - a renowned instrumentalist and singer in his own right, who provides the rhythms we associate immediately with Greek dancing and virtuoso melodies. An unmissable event for all world music lovers! Psarandonis with Giorgos Xylouris - Friday 16 January 2009, 8pm - Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre, 579 High St, Penrith. Tickets \$50. Bookings: Phone Box office on: 4723-7600 or go to: www.jspac.com.au

During this, his first visit to Sydney Psarandonis will also be performing at the All Tomorrow's Parties music festival event (Sydney on 17 & 18 Jan) which has been curated by Australian music legends Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds. See www.atpfestival.com for further details.

Australia helps address violence against women in Indonesia

"Australia will provide a \$1 million grant to the Indonesian National Commission on Violence Against Women as part of our commitment to addressing violence against women in the region," Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance Bob McMullan announced.

The funding will assist the Commission to promote human rights and particularly the rights of women in Indonesia.

Mr McMullan announced the grant on the sidelines of the Bali Democracy Forum.

"Australia is committed to ensuring men and women benefit equally from development and this grant highlights our ongoing work in partnership with Indonesia to promote gender equality," Mr McMullan said.

The assistance will strengthen the Commission's ability to promote women's issues amongst a wide range of people including Indonesian judges, police and women leaders.

It will also support the Commission's contribution to policy debates on women's rights and an annual national conference on violence against women. The two-year grant is being funded through the Australia Indonesia Partnership which aims to assist Indonesia to meet Millennium Development Goals, including gender equality.

The announcement comes as the world finishes marking the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN's 16 Days of Action Against Gender Violence.