

# Genes woven with melodies

*Nick Xylouris comes from a long line of Greek musicians and, like the best of them, he prefers to let his music do the talking. The 18 year-old son of Cretan superstar George Xylouris, and grandson of Antonis, received first prize in the Costas Tsiacaderis Foundation awards last night.*

“When you apply for something and audition, you’re always glad when you get it,” Xylouris says, his voice laced with the unmistakable hesitation of someone who doesn’t really like talking about themselves.

We’re talking at the end of a day of auditions for Xylouris, as he applies for university music courses, having finished year 12 this year.

“I’m proud of myself, I suppose, and I’m glad that I won it,” he adds reluctantly. He explains that his greatest musical influences lie within his own genetic structure.

“My grandpa and my uncle and my dad,” the young man says, matter-of-factly.

He tells Neos Kosmos he grew up listening to recordings of his grandfather, Antonis Xylouris, whom he calls by his nick-name, ‘Psarantonis’.

“He’s creative, he experiments with the tradition and with the instruments and he has his own way of singing. He’s

very very entertaining when he’s on stage.”

“I’ve got a whole lot of recordings of him, and I love them - he’s got his unique style,” he says.

So how does an 18 year-old musician from one of Crete’s most loved musical families make his own style? How does he differ from his grandfather, apart from not (yet) having his own Wikipedia entry?

“Just age,” he shrugs.

The young Xylouris started playing music when his father gave him his first instrument.

“He got me a really small kind of lyra when I was about ten, and I started on that,” he says.

“It was the right size for me then.”

Unlike musical virtuosos from other cultures, he wasn’t forced to endure years of formal training.

“Well, I taught myself really, just with a bit of help here and there from my dad and my grandpa,” he says.

Now, Nick Xylouris plays the Cretan lyra, the lute and the mandolin at Greek weddings, baptisms and in restaurants around Melbourne.

He says his favourite gigs have included playing the Thornbury Theatre with the Xylouris Ensemble, a group of fluctuating size made up of members of the extended Xylouris clan.

“The crowd is just great, the audience,” he says.

“They go along with the music, they get up and they clap,



Nick Xylouris with his father George

it’s just amazing and that’s what we need. We like the audience to be involved as well.”

Other highlights from a fledgling musical career have included playing Cretan weddings with his father, with whom he’s been performing for the past five years or so.

“If it’s a wedding we’ll be playing all night, from ten to around, if it’s early, 4 am, and that’s ear-

ly for a wedding,” he says.

“Other times, we go to around 8, get home at 9 in the morning, so they go for a while.”

That’s a long shift to be working alongside your father. But, while many 18 year-olds find their families stifling, and are ready to move out of home at the earliest possible convenience, Xylouris says playing music with his family doesn’t cause

him any stress.

“Nah, nah, we get along well,” he laughs. “Nah nah nah we have fun, we enjoy it.”

Like Xylouris, the Costas Tsiacaderis Foundation’s award is steeped in history.

Jessica Tsiacaderis is Costas’s eldest daughter, and a board member of the Costas Tsiacaderis Foundation.

*Article from Neos Kosmos*

By Joanna Papadimitropoulou

## A year to remember

After the extension of the bailout-loan payment period to 2024 (instead of 2018 that the Memorandum stipulated), which gave us the opportunity to catch our collective breath, Greece is entering the most difficult year in its contemporary history.

The extra time that we were given can help the country get to the markets sooner, as it makes the public debt more

manageable. This explains the optimism among government officials.

Despite this, the financial situation proves to be a whole lot more complex than that and an end to the crisis seems all the more difficult, as shown by the EU predictions about Greece’s major economic indicators for the 2010-2012 period.

While the budget deficit will be down to 7.4 percent in 2011, it will rise back up to 7.6 percent in 2012, while unemployment is expected to reach 15 percent! All the above show that Greece will be the country with the worst recession in 2011 and that there will be no “light at the end of the tunnel” until mid-2013.

Essentially, the most difficult time

for the Greek economy has just begun and its restructuring will be a matter of years, not months. And, as always, the danger of complacency remains imminent.

This is something that the government should keep in mind, as it has to be strictly true to its commitments, curing the costly mistakes that threaten to nullify the sacrifices of the Greek people.

We have to take advantage of the time extension by working hard and starting every developmental engine available, aiming to raise the absorbance rate of EU funds.

The government has already initiated a political effort to have the fourth tranche of the bailout loan approved by the troika. Next month, the cabinet will have to approve not one but 13 bills pushing crucial reforms in the labour market.

This will inevitably result in the opening of several new social and political fronts. There is a lot at stake and everything depends on whether the government will handle this stand-off in a determined and fair way.

*Article from Athens News*

## Teriade Museum on Lesbos to be renovated

The historic museum in the north of the island was the brainchild of publisher Stratis Eleftheriadis - also known as Teriade - and contains his collection of ‘Great Books’ or ‘Grands Livres’ amassed with the assistance of some of the leading artists of his day.

These contain original designs by the likes of Matisse, Chagall, LeCorbusier, Picasso and many of the other great painters of the 20th century, while each book is in itself a work of art supervised by the artists involved.

The publication of the ‘Grands Livres’ continued until 1975

while the museum also contains works of art collected by Teriade in his lifetime and parts of his personal archives. So far, the collection has not been fully inventoried, something that is among the culture ministry’s plans. Apart from the parts of the collection on display in the 18 small rooms of the museum, the remainder is currently stored in the basement of the museum.

Among the major problems faced by the historic and rare collection is that of preservation, since the building is not adequately equipped to deal with high temperatures in summer and the destructive effect of solar radiation that causes irreparable damage to exhibits.

*Article from Athens News*

