

## Chamber music as a beacon of light on the island of Lesbos

### The 2019 Molyvos International Music Festival



This year marks the fifth birthday of one of the world's most exceptional chamber-music festivals, the Molyvos International Music Festival, which has established itself within the cradle of European culture on the island of Lesbos. From August 16 to 19, stars of the instrumental scene will appear there in a wide range of combinations to perform amid a breathtaking historical open-air setting as part of a “DIA-LOGOS” of many voices. For this anniversary year, the festival's artistic directors and founders, Danae and Kiveli Dörken, have once more slotted in a “pre-festival” (August 8-12) ahead of the event proper. This entices music fans to come to different venues on Lesbos and, for the first time, to the

neighbouring island of Chios, for four additional concerts. On August 13, there will be a concert linking last year's motto, “Genesis”, with that of this year. From this day onwards, the organisers also promise special “Musical Moments” – performances once or twice daily at surprise venues that are announced only on the day itself.

One of the most brilliant jewels in the European festival landscape, the Molyvos International Music Festival (MIMF), is already going into its fifth year of existence in 2019. This refreshingly unconventional event, which aims to open people's minds, ears and hearts to the borderless and international language of music amid the lingering refugee crisis on the **Greek island of Lesbos**, will take place in mid-August under the eloquent motto “DIA-LOGOS”. Ahead of the event, from August 8 onwards, the organisers are putting on four “pre-festival activities” with appealing chamber-music programmes to encourage people to explore other (musical) sites on the island or pay a short visit to the neighbouring island of Chios. The six main concerts will then take place in Molyvos itself, a heritage-protected town in the north of the island that takes visitors away into a unique world with its characteristic stone cottages, medieval steps, tiny lanes, Turkish fountains and Byzantine walls, as well as its Byzantine castle, the venue for five programmes, which towers over the whole.

History is in the air everywhere here, and the festival's motto and programme also make an almost inevitable reference to Greek history and its tradition of philosophy: the word “dialogos” was spread through the famous dialogue method of Socrates, which this ancient thinker saw as a tool “to encourage self-reliant, independent thought by individuals in small and very small groups.” This is also an ideal precept for making and listening to music together, especially in the case of unknown or new repertoire such as the pieces composed by David Orlowsky of Germany (who is also among the festival's interpreters as a clarinettist), hearing-impaired Scottish percussionist Evelyn Glennie and Nickos Harizanos of Greece (a **world première**) that will be played in 2019.

But the Molyvos Festival takes it even further: on its four main days, it runs through the **dialectic triad of thesis, antithesis, synthesis** in the individual programmes, interrupted by phases of musical “Reconciliation” and dialogue. This programme structure, conceived down to the finest detail, reflects the high degree of commitment on the part of the performers at this year's festival and of its **artistic directors, Danae and Kiveli Dörken**. This commitment is also made apparent in the appealing new idea of putting on a concert before the festival entitled “From Genesis to Dia-logos” on August 13 in the Holy Monastery of Leimonas, in which the Norwegian percussionist and cimbalom player Hans-Kristian Kjos Sørensen will create a connection to last year's motto.

In the first two of the four “**pre-festival concerts**”, the programme will feature string repertoire ranging from solo to trio works, performed by Elene Meipariani (vn.), Johanna Ruppert (va.) and Friedrich Thiele (vc.). At the first concert, in the **Citrus Estate on Chios (August 8)**, they will play trios by Ernst von Dohnányi and Gideon Klein as well as duets by Maurice Ravel and Georg Friedrich Fuchs. Two days later, in the early Christian

basilica in **Eresos on Lesbos (August 10)**, they will play works by Beethoven, Schubert and Reger as well as solo compositions by Alfred Schnittke (Fugue for Violin Solo) and Krzysztof Penderecki ("Violoncello totale"). The two other "pre-festival" programmes will feature the piano duo Xin Wang and Florian Koltun with Mozart, Brahms and Rossini in **Mytilene (August 11)** and Debussy and Schubert in **Kalloni (August 12)**.

The **festival proper**, whose concerts will be broadcast live from the courtyard of **Molyvos Castle** by Greek national radio, begins with the "Thesis", with the subtitle "**Chaos & Order**" (**August 16**) – again, a reference to last year's theme, "Genesis". Here, the audience can get a good look at most of the virtuoso musical performers who will appear in the following days as they present the "chaos" put into music by the Baroque composer Jean-Féry Rebel (from "Les Éléments"). The rest of the opening concert also features more outstanding musicians and unusual pieces: Kirill Troussov and Danae Dörken with a Chaconne by Tomaso Antonio Vitali, Christian and Tanja Tetzlaff with Artur Pizzarro and Volker Jacobsen in Dvořák's Piano Quartet in E-flat major, op. 87, Hans-Kristian Kjos Sørensen with "Psappha" by Iannis Xenakis and a top-notch quintet ensemble with Karl Jenkins' "Palladio".

The second day of the MIMF bears the title "Antithesis". In the midday hours, it is devoted to the theme of "**War & Peace**" (**August 17**) in the Mithymna Conference Centre - with string quartet movements by Dvořák ("Cypresses") and the String Quintet KV 516 by Mozart, as well as Evelyn Glennie's "A Little Prayer" for violin and marimba. In the evening – back in the historical castle – there will follow the **dialogue "Apollo & Dionyos"**, with the Sextet, op. 100, by Francis Poulenc, the Piano Quintet, op. 8, by Josef Suk, Benjamin Britten's "Young Apollo", op. 16, for piano and string orchestra, and the **world première of "Faces of the archaic dipolum"** by the Athens-born Nickos Harizanos.

The next day has the theme of "Reconciliation" and fluctuates between "**Hope & Despair**" (**August 18**). The evening gets underway somewhat earlier with a "Young People's Concert" – the younger generation has been a central focus of the MIMF from the outset, with (school) projects and workshops taking place throughout the entire year on Lesbos. In the following concert by the professionals, the listeners can look forward to exciting new musical discoveries: alongside well-known pieces such as Mozart's "Kegelstatt" Trio for clarinet, viola and piano, KV 498, Fauré's "Sicilienne" (from "Pelléas et Mélisande") and Dvořák's Terzetto, op. 74, the programme also features Xenakis' "Rebonds B" and entertaining compositions by David Orlowsky and Osvaldo Golizov.

The festival concludes with the "**Synthesis**" (**August 19**), which again features larger chamber-music ensembles, this time playing Johann Michael Haydn's Divertimento in C major P98, the Octet in A-flat major, op. 128, by Ferdinand Ries and Brahms' String Sextet No. 2 in G major, op. 36.

The MIMF is rewriting the history of the festival in many ways and making chamber-music concerts fit for the future with its own special flair. This is partly because it is directly confronting political and social reality, and because the artists are not looking away from the still unresolved tragedy that is the refugee crisis, but are putting across their (musical) message at its very focus. That is what Simon Rattle already expressed in his welcome message for the 2016 festival: "Greetings from the UK in the strangest time in our recent history! In the middle of this idiocy, what you are doing in the Molyvos festival is even more inspiring. The idea that music and culture bring people together and are a vital part of a greater healing is a concept deep in my heart. You are a beacon of light in dark times."

**For any press enquiries, please contact:**

Schimmer PR // Bettina Schimmer  
Auf Rheinberg 2, 50676 Köln, Germany  
fon +49-(0)221-16879623 // mob +49-(0)172-2148185  
[bettina.schimmer@schimmer-pr.de](mailto:bettina.schimmer@schimmer-pr.de)  
[www.schimmer-pr.de](http://www.schimmer-pr.de)

08-19 AUGUST



5th Molyvos International Music Festival  
DIA-LOGOS

Under the auspices of



HELLENIC REPUBLIC  
Ministry of Culture and Sports

Supported by



Embassy  
of the Federal Republic of Germany  
Athens



REPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE  
AMBASSADE DE FRANCE  
EN GRECE

INSTITUT  
FRANÇAIS  
GRÈCE



UNIVERSITY OF AGDER



In cooperation with

Municipality of Lesbos  
Municipal Brands  
of Mithymna



MOLYVOS TOURISM  
ASSOCIATION