

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

MELITZAZZ 2025



TZOUMPELOU

JULY 3-6 LEONIDIO



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MELITZAZZ 2025 "Tzoumpelou"

A kaleidoscope of generations and colors of Tsakonia, with the essence of woman!

July 3-6, Leonidio, Arcadia

Tzoumpelou, the woman of Tsakonia with her pride and her traditional costume, the "tzoumpe", leads us this year in exploring the tradition of the Tsakonian people and inspires Melitzazz 2025, Leonidio's beloved festival that returns dynamically for its 13th year, from July 3 to 6, 2025. Honoring the female figure in Tsakonian tradition, we trace her presence through time and highlight her contribution to cultural transmission and the preservation of Tsakonian identity. Tzoumpelou, with her red woolen jacket, bequeaths tradition from generation to generation, keeping it alive, even inspiring innovative ways of showcasing and honoring cultural heritage.

The festival becomes a living dialogue between yesterday and today. The narrow streets and squares of Leonidio, the 200-year-old mansions and tower houses, even the 'Cemetery of the Standing Maiden' with works by Yannoulis Chalepas, are transformed into stages that bring to life performances, narratives and installations of art, music, imagery and taste, while the contemporary Tzoumpelou takes us by the hand in a Tsakonian dance and welcomes us into the MaB UNESCO!

New collaborations begin this year: The Melitzazz Festival welcomes to Leonidio the **Ethnographic Film Festival Ethnofest** with a series of thematic film screenings (*Zagros, Ama San, First Milk, The Last Nomad*, etc.), **Open farm** with children's activities "*Healthy habits*", as well as the very nearby **Folklore Museum of Pera Melana**, worth visiting for its rich and valuable collection from the Tsakonian tradition.

Melitzazz 2025 includes 7 concerts, 2 art exhibitions, 3 workshops, 4 permanent exhibitions, ethnographic film screenings, 2 literary and cultural dialogue events, culinary experiences, guided tours and more.

We're thrilled to welcome an extraordinary lineup of talented female performers showcasing music from around the world: **Angeliki Toumpanaki** and her quintet in "*For women*", the captivating Cypriot-Ukrainian **Nama Dama** in her concert-performance "*Pagan soul*", **Fenia Papadodima** and her quintet with "*Women's prayers*", **Katerina Polemi** joining **Stathis Anninos'** quartet for "*Sounds of the world*", authentic Italian artists from **La notte della Taranta** and Martano bringing traditional Southern Italian "*Tarantella*", **Blend Mishkin** presenting **Roots Evolution in dub** with high-energy *reggae/dub/rhythm 'n' blues/soul*, plus the **Choir of North Kynouria** with "*Serenades from the Ionian Islands to Athens*".

Visitors can explore Michail Pappas's photography exhibition "**Portraits of Tsakonia**" documenting all the region's villages, participate in the "**Photographing tradition**" workshop, view Popi Tsoukatou's art exhibition "**The Amulet**" and the "**Tzoumpelou – Threads of memory**" installation, join Dimitris Pardakis's "**Tsakonian Connections**" workshop, attend the "**From tradition to contemporary creation**" dialogue, witness designer Melitta's "**Tsachima**" fashion show featuring traditional Tsakonian patterns, celebrate the **Parnon-Malea Biosphere Reserve's** MaB-UNESCO inclusion, enjoy the Strigles Group's "*Cinderella*" children's performance, visit **permanent exhibitions** across historic locations—Tsikalioti Tower, Culture Factory, Tsouchlou Mansion, and the former schools of Vaskina and Leonidio, try the climbing wall, browse the Tsakonian crafts market, and much more, all creating four unforgettable days of exploration, enjoyment and celebration!

Information and detailed program at www.melitzazz.gr

Let's meet again in Leonidio for another magical year!



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- **Melitzazz:** The festival name, which refers to the famous local tsakoniki melitzana (eggplant) and the "jazz attitude" of the festival, which explores local culture and tradition from a modern perspective.
- **Tsakonia:** A unique cultural and linguistic region in the eastern Peloponnese. It's a mountainous area, historically isolated, and encompasses several villages and towns, with a lot of special characteristics, such as the Tsakonian language, the local architecture with mansions and towers, the traditional weaving, the agricultural production, the natural environment, the Tsakonian dance many of them assets of the Greek Intangible Cultural Heritage.
- **Tzoumpelou:** A woman from Tsakonia wearing the traditional tsakonian folk costume with the tzoumpe, the women's jacket.
- **Tsachima:** A traditional Tsakonian term meaning "walking".

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

Thursday, July 3

"The amulet" 19:00 @ Old Gymnasium of Leonidio	Opening of visual arts exhibition by Popi Tsoukatou , featuring AI-generated artworks on Tsakonian jewelry.
"Portraits of Tsakonia" 20:00 @ Tsikaliotis tower	Opening of photography exhibition by award-winning photographer Michael Pappas , with location-specific portraits of people of Tsakonia in traditional costumes.
"Healthy habits" [1] 20:00 @ Parnonas Flora Center	Children's workshop on nutrition, agricultural products and responsibility.
Choir of South Kynouria 21:00 @ Mitropoli sq.	Choir concert – choral performance "Serenades from the Ionian Islands to Athens".
Cine-Melitzazz "Zagros" 21:45 @ Tsouchlou mansion In collaboration with Ethnofest.	Documentary screening. "Zagros" by Ariane Lorrain, Shahab Mihandoust (2018, 58'). Dyeing natural threads and weaving carpets, a disappearing practice still alive in the mountains of Western Iran by the Bakhtiari people. Rich visual poetry, as vivid and mystical as the stunning colors emerging from the dyed vats, ultimately bringing the carpets to life as works of art.
Nama Dama "Pagan soul" 22:30 @ Tsikaliotis tower	Concert "Pagan soul" by Cypriot-Ukrainian performer Nama Dama. Using live looping as her compass, she transforms her solo performance into a unique, colorful ritual, that incorporates percussion, synthesizers, flute and vocals.

Friday, July 4

"Photographing the tradition" 19:00 @ Tsouchlou mansion	Workshop on photography and photographic composition, with photographer Michael Pappas .
Parnonas-Maleas Biosphere Reserve 20:00 @ Old Gymnasium of Leonidio	Event for the announcement of the positive evaluation for the inclusion of Parnonas–Maleas Biosphere Reserve in UNESCO's international Man & Biosphere catalogue.
"Healthy habits" [2] 20:00 @ Parnonas Flora Center	Children's workshop on nutrition, agricultural products and responsibility.

Cine-Melitzazz “First milk” and “The last nomad” 21:00 @ Tsouchlou mansion In collaboration with Ethnofest.	Presentation of the collaboration with Ethnofest Ethnographic Film Festival of Athens. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “First milk” by Panagiotis Papafrangos (2023, 45’). Focusing on the raising of newborn lambs at the foot of Mount Pateras, First Milk weaves a sensory narrative about the human-animal connection, exploring the concepts of motherhood, breastfeeding and orphanhood. • “The last nomad” by Phil. Ferentinos (2024, 24’). Members of the Sarakatsani community, a group of former nomadic herders of Greece, narrate their personal experiences and discuss the concept of identity and collective memory today.
Stathis Anninos 4tet ft Katerina Polemi “Sounds of the world” 21:30 @ Ourani sq.	Concert “ <i>Sounds of the world</i> ”, a captivating musical journey that crosses borders and musical styles, from Greece to Brazil, among the sounds of the world, where music from different places and temperaments are combined in a personal way.
Angeliki Toumpanaki 5tet “For women” 22:30 @ Heroes sq.	Concert “ <i>For women</i> ”, a tribute to the Woman of all places and times, to the stories of special women, with timeless vocal compositions and traditional songs from the Mediterranean, the Balkans, Latin America and various regions of Greece.
Saturday, July 5	
“In the field!” 08:00-10:00 @ Leonidio plains	Children's workshop on nutrition, agricultural products and responsibility, at the plains of Leonidio.
Tsakonian Connections (Part A) 10:00@ Old Gymnasium of Leonidio	Visual arts workshop by Dimitris Pardakis (part one). Duration: 3 hours.
Stringles “Cinderella” 20:00 @ Old Gymnasium of Leonidio	Children's performance by Stringles group, based on a folk tale from the Peloponnese.
“From tradition to contemporary creation”	Double event highlighting the living relationship between cultural heritage and contemporary creation.
“Tzoumpelou” [A] 19:45 @ Fabbrica of Culture	The historical and social journey of the “Tzoumpelou” : The evolution from a manorial garment to the local symbol of Tsakonian culture. By Maria Paraskeva and Tsakonian Archives.
“Tsachima” 20:45 @ Tsouchlou mansion	Fashion show - performative presentation of contemporary dresses by designer Melitta , based on Tsakonian motifs.
Cardia Grica “Aderfia” 21:30 @ March 25th sq.	Concert “ <i>Aderfia</i> ” (Brothers) and tarantella dance from the tradition of Martano and Southern Italy. With the support of the Dance Group of Leonidio .
Blend Mishkin presents Roots Evolution in dub 22:30 @ Riverside road	Concert – explosive live performance with reggae/ dub/ soul/ rhythm n' blues/ world music, along with love for the Jamaican sound. The band presents a set where improvisational energy meets authentic sound system culture, a live experience full of rhythm, basslines and a lot of soul.
DJ Blend Mishkin 24:00 @ Central road of Leonidio	DJ set by Blend Mishkin , an internationally recognized producer, composer, DJ and bandleader, who mixes and moves in reggae, dub, soul, funk and world music.

Sunday, July 6

Tsakonian Connections (Part B)

10:00 @ Old Gymnasium of Leonidio

Visual arts workshop by Dimitris Pardakis (part two).

Duration: 3 hours.

Cine-Melitzazz | "Ama San"

21:15 @ Tsouchlou mansion

In collaboration with Ethnofest.

Documentary screening. "Ama san" by Cláudia Varejão (2016, 112') travels in Wagu, a fishing village on Japan's Ise Peninsula, where – for more than 2.000 years - women dive for sea snails, shells and pearls for sale and survival, but also as a symbol of strength, beauty, spirituality. Without oxygen tanks or equipment, their delicate bodies transform into hunters' bodies.

Fenia Papadodima 5tet "Women's prayers"

22:00 @ Merikakis sq.

Concert "Women's prayers", amplifying women's voices from around the globe. Songs that have gone down in history because they have shaken multitudes of people over the decades, changed the place of women in the world, spoke about their hidden pains, and gave them the opportunity to think, to exist, to have a strong voice. Songs-prayers that struck racism and gave a horizon of freedom and liberation.

Prayers of WOMEN all over the world.

PARALLEL EVENTS

Every day, Thursday to Sunday

"Portraits of Tsakonia"

@ Tsikaliotis tower

Opening hours: 19:30 – 22:30

Photography exhibition by **Michail Pappas**, featuring location-specific portraits of people of Tsakonia, after special photo-shooting throughout the villages of Tsakonia.

Documentaries screening

@ Old Gymnasium of Leonidio

Screening hours: 19:30 – 22:30

Screenings of ethnographic short documentaries by **Ethnofest**, in continuous loop, totaling 70'. Films:

- **"Love in the years of my grandmother"** by Zoe Stavridi (2024, 32'). Stories of women who grew up in Greece in the last century (our grandmothers) and talk about the loves - their romantic and physical dimension - that they (did not) experience, their relationships, desires and passions.
- **"My mother"**, by Katerina Zaga (2021, 11'). Maria travels to her childhood, recalling moments from her past, and shares her experiences in her own, special way.
- **"Roots"** by Aigli Drakou & Eliza Soroga (2018, 27'). The everyday life of elderly women who live alone in isolated villages of Epirus. Having a peculiar relationship with time, they narrate "inner dialogues" and stories from the past, heartfelt poems and songs they loved.

"The amulet"

@ Old Gymnasium of Leonidio

Opening hours: 19:30 – 22:30

Contemporary - visual arts exhibition by **Popi Tsoukatou**.

Focuses on jewelry of the Tsakonian costume and familiar landscapes of Leonidio, creating with the use of A.I. programs a series of new photographic works and videos, which reconstruct memory within a technologically shaped and sensory-charged present.

"Tzoumpelou – Threads of memory" @ Old Gymnasium of Leonidio Opening hours: 19:30 – 22:30	Installation – exhibition. A special tribute to Tzoumpelou, the traditional Tsakonian costumes, objects and habits. In collaboration with the Folklore Museum of Pera Melana.
Folklore of Tsakonia @ Folklore Museum of Pera Melana Opening hours: 10:00 – 13:00 Location: Pera Melana	Guided tours and visits at the permanent exhibition of the Folklore Museum of Pera Melana and its large collection of Tsakonia traditions. The village of Pera Melana is 13 km far from Leonidio.
Tsakonian weaving @ Tsouchlou mansion Opening hours: 19:30 – 22:30	Exhibition of Tsakonian weaving rugs. Rug-making workshop by local weavers. Guided tours: Thursday and Sunday, 19:30 – 21:30
History and tradition of Tsakonia @ Fabbrica of Culture Opening hours: 19:30 – 22:30	Guided tours of <i>Fabbrica of Culture</i> permanent exhibition on Tsakonian history and tradition.
Architecture of Tsakonia @ Tsikaliotis tower Opening hours: 19:30 – 22:30	Permanent exhibition about the architecture of Tsakonia. Guided tours.
Mt. Parnonas Flora @ Parnonas Flora Center Opening hours: 19:30 – 22:30	Guided tours at the "Information center for Mt. Parnon flora", former Elementary School of Vaskina.
Tsakonian products corner @ Pavilion area Opening hours: 19:30 – 22:30	Exhibition and pavilions with tastes and treats of various traditional products from Tsakonia, and also books, jewelry, handicrafts, etc.
Climbing wall @ Piazza Martano (Fabbrica of Culture) Opening hours: 19:30 – 22:30	Climbing wall for our young friends, with the red cliff and Leonidio climbing park as backdrop. With the support of the Climbers Association of Kynouria.
Sea kayak @ Piazza Martano (Fabbrica of Culture) Opening hours: 19:30 – 22:30	Introduction to sea kayaking , to explore the countless beauties of the Kynouria coastline. Theory, demonstration, equipment and instructions, with the support of Hellenic Outdoor Wellness.
"Body parts" @ Panjika climbing shop Opening hours: 19:30 – 22:30	Painting exhibition by German artist Lake , presenting contemporary paintings at the Panjika shop. Exhibition curator: Lake

#Melitzazz #Melitzazz2025 #Tzoumpelou #Leonidio #Tsakonia #SummerFestival #CulturalHeritage

