

# Grec festival kicks off with music, dance and theatre

*A total of 40 shows taking place in Teatre Grec and other concert spaces*

## MICHAEL BUNN

If you are a newcomer to Barcelona, you might not be aware that the Grec festival is actually not an event that has sprung up this year as an offshoot of Forum 2004 - the Grec is an annual festival of theatre, music and dance which has taken place for many years. There is no better way of winding down towards your summer holidays than enjoying the nightly outdoor Grec events featuring some of the biggest international names in the performing arts. The festival is comprised of a total of 40 different shows chosen by the Grec director, Borja Sitjà, in an attempt to showcase the best of the old and the new on the contemporary arts scene. The festival takes place in a number of different venues, the main one being the Teatre Grec, a leafy amphitheatre on the side of Monjuïc.

This year features another excellent mix of shows, beginning tonight with Daniela Mercury, the Brazilian pop music diva, who will be playing at the Teatre Grec. Mercury's rich voice is a chameleon-like instrument that adapts freely to reggae, samba, African music or funk. Other musical events include Juliette Greco, the queen of French chanson whose ageless voice evokes the bohemian Paris of Sartre and Camus. Meanwhile, on Monday 5 July (this time at the Palau Sant Jordi) there will be a special concert CALLED *Neruda in our hearts* featuring, among others, flamenco guitarist Vicente Amigó. Jazz fans



Flamenco guitarist Vicente Amigó will be performing at Palau Sant Jordi along with a dozen others, including Joan Manuel Serrat, in *Neruda in our hearts* / ARCHIVE

are particularly in luck this year, as the Grec festival is featuring a couple of bands who have come to remind us what jazz really is (as opposed to the decaffeinated "Jazz lite" which has been infecting our radios for the last few years). On Monday 12 July

the classic jazz-fusion group Shakti (featuring original members John McLaughlin and Zakir Hussain) will be appearing at the Teatre Grec. Not to be missed. The other highly-promising jazz concert is also on at the Teatre Grec, and features a quar-

ter of living legends, including Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock and Dave Holland. As for theatre, Peter Brook is has arrived in town again, all ready take us on a trip into the heart of Africa with Tierno Bokar. Meanwhile, the Grec festival

will also feature the premiere of a musical version of the film *Baghdad cafe*. And last but not least, the renowned choreographer Pina Bausch will be offering us her latest show. The festival lasts until the beginning of August.



Juliette Greco rose to fame as the face of France's New Bohemianism with her *chanson* / ARCHIVE



Wayne Shorter's jazz borrows from Rock and Classical / ARCHIVE