

Finding the right backbeat on a musical tour of Turkey

KRISTEN STEVENS
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Whether they come from near or far to immerse in Turkey's musical landscape, people who join the Tangents Turkey tour – with its 10 concerts in 16 nights – are captivated by this multicultural land and its myriad sounds. Some can't stay away and have returned to live. This year's tour is October 11-27.

Professionals in the music and travel industries call the tour a one-of-a-kind gem. Tom Brosnahan, writer of bestselling Lonely Planet Turkey guides, said the tour was unforgettable. "Dore opens doors that music-lovers who travel on their own don't even know are there," he said of the tour's organizer Dore Stein.

Dore Stein fell in love with Turkish music when he came to Istanbul in 2004 despite a cancelled music conference. While driving in Cappadocia, new acquaintance Mehmet Dasdeler, now a close friend and associate for the tour, popped a cassette in the player. Spellbound by the voice wafting from the speakers, he said, "It is a special, indeed magical, moment when a sound instantly carves a place in one's heart." Such was the voice of Sabahat Akkiraz for Stein.

Soon he found his way to her record label, Akkiraz records, in an Istanbul complex that is the epicenter of Turkey's music industry. Feted with CDs from the label and Akkiraz's entire CD catalogue, he went home devouring loads of CDs from other labels as well. "That was how I got launched into Turkish music." He came back a year later with the first Tangents Turkey tour.

Pulling from a rich musical amalgam including Roma (Gypsy), Anatolian folk, Kurdish, Ottoman classical, Sufi, Turkish jazz, Middle Eastern styled Turkish and creative Turkish fusions, past performers include Taksim Trio, Trakya All-Stars, oudist Necati Çelik, Smadj, Buzuki Orhan Osman, percussionist Yınon Mualllem and Macedonian Roma band Kocani Orkestar, and of course Sabahat, among others.

Sumru Ayrıyüyen, whose vocals Stein calls "sublime", will perform for this year's Tangents tour. She also runs what Stein refers to as one of Istanbul's best kept secrets: Gitar Cafe in Kadıköy (www.gitarcafe.com). "It is an intimate space similar to having a band perform in one's living room."

This October the Tangents group can also expect to see Turkey's finest kanunist Göksel Bağtacı, and perhaps all-star clarinetist Selim Sesler and a lively percussion performance/workshop with legendary Okay Temiz.

Exploring musical bridges

Considered one of the most creative and versatile programmers in radio, Stein is an advocate for cross-pollinating music. As producer and host, he brought Tangents to KALW (SF, 91.7fm, kalw.org) in 1995 and later to Paris based Mondomix.com.

He says anyone with an open-eared love of music will have the time of their lives on the Turkey tour. Tangents participants have been known to light up the Bosphorus with impromptu dance parties aboard a cruise of the famed strait. Other activities include visits to musical instrument shops and the museum-like home of Turkey's foremost instrument maker.

The group also visits the surreal moonscapes of Cappadocia where they hike along the gentle river of the Ihlara Valley before attending a

San Francisco-based radio host and concert producer Dore Stein puts on his fifth musical tour in Turkey this October. An aficionado of world music, his romance with the music here shines as the centerpiece of this intimate voyage of cultural immersion. 'I know of no other tour for Westerners that organizes concerts with artists in Turkey,' he says

candlelight cave concert. Next they head to Rumi's Tomb in Konya, the calcium travertine wonders in Pamukkale, the ruins of Ephesus and on to the Aegean.

At Istanbul's Roma street party, the Hidrellez Spring Festival, Nancy Wakeman of San Francisco remembers nearly leaving the ground amid the pressure of bodies. "Everyone was joyful, enjoying the music," she said. "Some people even got up on stage with the different musical groups and danced." She also recalls eating plum soup, hearing the voice of Sabahat Akkiraz and attending the Istanbul International Poetry festival.

As a result of the tour, Manhattan native and musician Alexandra Ivanoff, made so many friends and professional connections in Turkey that she decided to move here. "And my original plan was to live in Paris," said Ivanoff, now a designer of contemporary Ottoman couture living in Istanbul. "That's how good it was."

The cost of the October 11-27 tour is \$4285, \$600 less with a friend/partner. Local participants would subtract hotel stays from the cost. The group is limited to 16 travelers and past tours have sold out. Email Dore Stein at tangentsurkey-tour@gmail.com or visit www.tangents.com +1 415 584-4367

Photo, Steve BASILE



STREET BEAT: The best way to learn about other cultures is through travel, Stein said, especially in a climate of ignorance and misperceptions about Islamic culture.

'TAKSİM TRIO IS SO GOOD, THEY ARE 'BEYOND CATEGORY''

Dore Stein is not without favorites and tells of his encounters with Roma-jazz band Laço Tafta, which has morphed their sound into something he says is so great that he calls it "beyond category". "Imagine if Weather Report had been Roma," says Stein, who has been playing their albums on Tangents radio since seeing them in Istanbul in 2004. "In 2007 the Tangents group saw one of the first public concerts by the new group now called Taksim Trio. "We were transfixed," he says. Hüsnü Senlendirici (clarinet), İsmail Tuncbilek (bağlama) and Aytaç Doğan (kanun)

are friends from childhood and it shows in their musical chemistry, Stein explains. "The sound is not jazz or classical. It doesn't matter; it's magical." Although Senlendirici has become a star, especially noteworthy for Stein is Doğan on kanun. "His creativity is boundless as his emotive style and unorthodox technique produce sounds that are unique."

TOUR: Flowing from Istanbul's groove, the tour also finds quieter villages and a cave concert.



Photo: Dore STEIN

International local living

→ FOR THE LOVE OF BOOKS

Join readers of all kinds at Java Studio this Sunday, July 19 from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. for a swap. Come to trade in your lightly used books and magazines and stay for conversation and coffee. Cankurtaran Mahallesi, Dalbastı Sokak, No: 13A Sultanahmet [0212] 517 23 78 www.javastudioistanbul.com/

→ MASTERS AND APPRENTICES

Students and faculty of Istanbul Işık University's fine art department are exhibiting their first in a series of artwork at Galeri Işık Teşvikiye. The work of Naci İslimyeli, Halil Akdeniz, Meriç Hızal, Mahir Güven and Memet Güreli and their students is on display through August 22. Teşvikiye Caddesi No: 152 – Nisantasi [0212] 233 12 03 www.galeriisik.com

→ TRAINING BEGINS

Lace up now for the 31st Intercontinental Eurasia Marathon that takes place Sunday, October 18. Early registration has begun for the 42 kilometer, 15 kilometer and fun run. www.istanbul-marathon.org/en/

→ TOGETHER AGAIN

Turkish pop music lovers are invited to celebrate the musical reunion and 30th anniversary of Yeni Türkü at Istanbul's Cemil Topuzlu Open-Air Theater on Sunday July 19 at 9 p.m. Accompanied by a symphony orchestra and starlight. Price: 45 to 110 Turkish Liras. www.biletix.com

→ LATE-NIGHT WORLD ENSEMBLE

Hotel İshak Paşa is hosting an international music camp from July 19 to 25, from 8 p.m. to 12 a.m. From violin to cello, music lovers are bound to find something to their taste. İshak Paşa Cad. No: 15 Sultanahmet www.hotelishakpasa.com

→ LATIN LOUNGE LEGEND

Julio Iglesias has embarked upon an emotionally packed world-tour of song, making his way to the Turkcell Kurucusme Arena on Wednesday, July 22 at 9 p.m. From Istanbul he will head to Bodrum, Cesme and Antalya. Muallim Naci Caddesi, 60. Kurucusme. Price: 112 to 520 liras. www.biletix.com

→ ROCKER LINE UP

Summer would be incomplete without listening to the deafening music of Nine Inch Nails and Linkin Park at Rock 'n Coke. NIN takes to the stage Saturday, July 18, at 10:35 p.m. and Linkin Park follows on Sunday at 10:35 p.m. Price: 30 to 130 liras. Istanbul Park, Tuzla. www.biletix.com

İZMİR

→ SEASIDE FESTIVITIES

Bergama's harbor town Dikili is hosting the Çandarlı Art and Culture Festival from July 19 to 20. Frequented by cruise liners bringing visitors to Pergamon, the Genoese fortress in Dikili is one of the best-preserved forts in Turkey. <http://izmir.com/festivals.html>

BODRUM

→ PAINT BY CANDLE

NT Gallery is hosting a painting exhibition by Orhan Taylan called "Night Show" through August 1. Kıbrıs Şehitleri Caddesi, Ataman İş Merkezi, 3 blok Yukusbaşı [252] 316 33 31 <http://lebriz.com/pages/events.aspx?lang=ENG>

→ SILVER AND GOLD

Music lovers will enjoy a summer evening at the 6th International Gümüşlük Classical Music Festival while listening to the piano recital of Aleksander Madzar at the 400-year old Gümüşlük Eklisiia Church on Monday, July 20, at 9:30 p.m. Festival runs through August 29. Free admission. www.bodrum.worldguides.com/bodrum_events.html

→ MELODY UNDER THE STARS

The fifth annual D-Marin Turgutreis International Classical Music Festival is being held from July 22 to 25 in the evenings at the Turgut Reis Marina. Tickets are 20 to 70 liras. [0252] 382 92 00 www.dmarinfestival.com/eng.html

→ KIDS WAREHOUSE SALE

Treehouse children's store is holding a giant warehouse sale. This final week greets customers with 50 percent off four seasons of clothing, featuring imported designers. At former I-baby / Valikona?i Cad. Pamuk Apt. N:133, D:7 / Ni?anta?i.

CONSULTANT'S CORNER

The manner in which companies grow is not always simply by generating more profits, reinvesting those profits in their core operations, and expanding. Often the most efficient ways is by acquiring their competitors or counterparts in other markets, or by combining with other companies that offer economies of scale, vertical integration of activities, or an established presence in other desirable markets. The process of growing a company by merger is not unlike a civilian marriage. There are laws as well as local customs that play critical roles in the process. There are even a few regulatory agencies that play the role of the concerned parents; the Competition Authority (to ensure that no unfair trade restrictions or monopolies will be created) and the Capital Markets Board (to protect the shareholders of the companies involved and maintain transparency in the transaction).

A merger occurs when one company "dis-

Mergers & acquisitions: A corporate dating

appears" into another. This is like when you make a Mimosa cocktail. You start with orange juice into which you pour the champagne. It still looks like OJ, but now carries the fiz and flavor of the champagne. In such a case, the orange juice is referred to as the survivor and the champagne is called the decedent. Both ingredients are actually still there, they have just combined into a new concoction that has greater capabilities.

The role of survivor

An acquisition on the other hand, occurs when the stock or assets of one company come to be owned by another company. (The actual transaction can take the form of either a purchase of all the company's stock or an asset

purchase.) The term acquisition is a rather generic categorization for the transfer of ownership of a company. The term merger is a specific, technical term for the entire legal procedure used to dissolve one company into another. A merger does not necessarily have to occur after a corporate acquisition. The acquired company may continue to be run as an independent subsidiary of the company that bought it. In the instance of a merger, it is not always the larger company that enjoys the role of survivor. Sometimes, due to tax, financial, staffing, cost-cutting measures, and the composition of boards of directors and shareholders, the smaller company will emerge as the corporate survivor.

A leveraged buyout (often referred to as a

LBO) is a transaction in which a company's capital stock or assets are purchased with borrowed money. This causes the company's capital structure to primarily be debt oriented. An acquisition of all the selling company's stock, usually by a corporation created by the buyer for that sole purpose, will immediately be followed by a merger of the buyer's new company with the acquired company, so that the assets of the acquired company can be used to secure the loan. There are three general types of LBO's. A Management Buyout, or MBO, occurs when the motivation is to bring in the existing management team as shareholders. Employee Buyouts, or EBO, are used when employees want to purchase the company they work for, in which case, can often use their company re-

irement accounts for this purpose. Restructurings are when much of the assets acquired are sold off to generate funds to pay off the debt used for the acquisition. This is also used as a strategy when investors decide that "the sum of the parts is greater than the whole". In other words, the assets of the acquired company have more individual market value than the company intact. The employees of the acquired company suffer the consequences. That is not unlike a poor person who marries a wealthy individual for his or her money, avoids signing a pre-nuptial agreement then gets a divorce, coming out far richer than ever before. Sound familiar? © 2009 Gary S. Lachman

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