

**SoSe 2016 (March-July)**

**Department of popular and traditional music, TEI Epirus (Arta, Epirus, Greece)**

I would above all define my experience in Arta as AMAZING. Our department has outstanding teachers and a great musical atmosphere. Both teachers and students welcomed me very warmly. My Greek was sufficient when I got here, and that made all my stay much easier: everyone in our department was capable of speaking English, but academic life (and generally speaking, the life in Arta) runs mainly in Greek. It took me one month (more or less) to get the basic musical vocabulary, and very quickly I got integrated. The courses were both theoretical and practical, which I missed during my studies in Germany, so this was a very pleasant change. Besides, all my classmates (and most of the teachers) were musicians (as well as musicologists). I liked the curriculum and the model of school that they have built.

Concerning the content of the courses, I made my first contact with Eastern musics (Turkish and Persian non-tempered traditions, Greek music from Minor Asia...) which opened my knowledge in a way I would never had imagined (only in one semester!). This was only possible thanks to the teachers, which helped me and provided me with extra materials and tutorials, and thanks to the musical life (over 15 different kinds of instruments and a great repertoire that I heard weekly, played by friends!) that was completing my experience.

My Erasmus life was not the "typical", since Arta is quite a small town, with only 4 departments and the campus out of the town, but it had many advantages: everything was reachable and familiar. Moreover, the accommodation and the canteen were free for us (Erasmus students), and there were special prices for students for transport and other services. I couldn't ask for more!

Referring to the pre- and post- Erasmus arrangements: the organisation could have been better, but I am still thankful for all the help provided by my coordinators. After some problems with my former departmental coordinator in Göttingen, I didn't get my Erasmus grant, and I was left as a zero-grant student. However, I managed to work part time all autumn in my hometown (in the Basque Country), so finally I gathered the money to spend 6 months decently. My second coordinator in Göttingen was perfectly helpful, polite and efficient. In contrast, my coordinator in Arta went to Israel on the second week of the semester, and her substitute was not easy to reach, since she was going through a difficult phase with familiar problems... All these matters were somehow stressful, but in the end with the help of the Secretary of our department in Arta and the Erasmus office there, we managed to go through the bureaucracy (although I am still waiting for my Transcript of Records).

In short: I have lived an experience worth living, and I am surely coming back to Greece in the future!