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New York is getting ready for MayFest, Once Again!

Moon and Stars Project proudly presents MayFest 2005, the annual arts and culture festival aimed at building cultural bridges between the United States and Turkey. The festival is scheduled for April 1 – May 31.

New York-based Turkish nonprofit organization **Moon and Stars Project** will hold its seventh annual arts and culture festival from April 1 to May 31, 2005. As in earlier years, various artists from Turkey and the United States will perform this year. The festival will feature renowned artists such as Genco Erkal, Sunay Akın, and Elif Shafak as well as local and emerging talents. Boasting a wide scope of disciplines from theater and dance to photography and literature, MayFest 2005 will welcome nine events.

The festival will open on **April 1st** with Behiç Ak's ***Fay Hattı*** (***The Fault Line***) directed by and featuring **Genco Erkal**. A satirical comedy that depicts the post-1999 earthquake frenzy in Turkey, *The Fault Line* is produced by Dostlar Theater and is expected to attract a large audience in New York as it has in Turkey. The play will be performed by Genco Erkal, Erdem Akakçe, and Istanbul State Theater award-holder Sumru Yavrucuk at Florence Gould Hall of the French Institute.

A prominent writer of the 21st century fiction, **Elif Shafak** will gather with literature enthusiasts on **April 15th** at New York University for a reading of her latest novel ***The Saint of Incipient Insanities***. Shafak's novel is distinguished as the first novel written in English by a Turkish author and has appealed to a wide American audience as well as gaining recognition in Turkey. The reading will be followed by a discussion, book signing, and reception.

The festival will host Boston-based **Collage Dance Ensemble** on **April 24th** at the Fashion Institute of Technology. The artistic director **Ahmet Lüleci** brings together more than twenty dancers, presenting folkloric choreographies with a modern twist that stay loyal to the true spirit of the traditional folk dance. Among choreographies showcased will be the award winning *easternTIDES, balkanBLUES, Passing, Coast to Coast,* and *Anatolian Mosaic* accompanied by music from notable musicians such as Emre Aracı, Fahir Atakoğlu, Mercan Dede, and Cihat Aşkın.

On **April 29th** and **30th** the Moon and Stars Project will co-present with Öykülü Geceler (Story Nights) a theatrical reading of Nazım Hikmet's poem ***Benerci Kendini Niçin Öldürdü?*** (***Why did Benerji Kill Himself?***), which narrates an Indian freedom-fighter's struggle against British imperialism while taking a universal look at the effects of social warfare on humanity. Co-directed by **Cem Baza** and **Elif Özmenek** and performed by Cem Baza, the reading will take place at the Kraine Theater as a part of the Moon and Stars Project's Grants Program, which awards grants to projects of high standards in order to encourage local artistic efforts and initiatives in the Turkish-American community.

On **May 1st**, **Turquartet** and the **Özer Percussion Duo** will perform at Merkin Concert Hall. Under the theme of Anatolian rhythms and folk music, Aslı Özsoy Korner (violin), Emel Akçay Özer (violin), Ercan Gören (viola), Demet Kıyıcı (cello) of Turquartet and Soner Özer (percussion) and Dinçer Özer (percussion) of the Özer Percussion Duo will unite to present arrangements from a wide spectrum of Turkish folk songs. The ensemble's popular interpretation of celebrated

Turkish composer Ulvi Cemal Erkin's *Köçekçe*, arranged by Soner Özer, will also be featured in their performance.

40 Stations / New York: A Photography Exhibition by Muammer Yanmaz will be on view at The Gallery of The Marmara-Manhattan starting **May 5th**. Photographer **Muammer Yanmaz** and coordinator **Selen Akçalı's** project is a joint effort of the Moon and Stars Project's Visual Arts and Grants Departments, the Marmara-Manhattan, Mavi Jeans, and the Turkish Culture and Tourism Office of New York. The exhibition consists of the photographs of forty distinguished Turkish-Americans taken at a New York City subway station of their choice. Deemed as a sociological documentation of the city and the people photographed, the exhibition will be open through **May 31st**.

On **May 6th**, renowned Turkish poet **Sunay Akın** will perform a stand up show that combines slide-viewing with *meddahlık* and *orta oyunu*, techniques of Turkish story telling through narration of folk tales, epics, and legends without using stage elements such as set design, costume, or sound effects. Scheduled to take place at Fashion Institute of Technology's Katie Murphy Amphitheater, the performance will sway the audience to a vivacious ride from past to the present.

On **May 12th** New York's famous jazz trio **Free Key Trio** will be on stage at Zebulon, Williamsburg. Consisting of Ali Perret (piano), Ira Coleman (bass), and Thurman Barker (percussion), the trio treats the stage as an egalitarian platform on which all musicians participate spontaneously instead of taking turns in the traditional soloist rhythm approach.

Last but not the least; **Yeni Rakı** will perform at Satalla on **May 25th** as a part of the Moon and Stars Project's Grants Program. Playing a diverse musical selection from Turkish, Greek, Armenian, Kurdish, and Arabic cultures, Yeni Rakı is Zühre Aksoy (guitar), Zeynep Çatay (vocals), Koray Çalışkan (G clarinet, bamboo flute), Emrah Göker (percussion), Deniz Gündüz (flute, shepherd's pipe, darbuka), Barış Günal (keyboard), Umut Türem (lute, vocals), Murat Yüksel (long-necked lute, percussion), and Gabrielle Clark (violin).

Through MayFest, Moon and Stars Project endeavors to highlight the changing face of Turkish arts within the vibrant multicultural mosaic of America. Seeking to bring the American and Turkish communities together through entertaining and original events, the Moon and Stars Project is pleased to present MayFest 2005.

For more information about MayFest 2005, please visit www.moonandstarsproject.org.
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For visuals: http://www.moonandstarsproject.org/pressimages