

NIGHTLIFE & THE ARTS

top picks

- New Morning (p309)
- Salle Pleyel (p308)
- Au Limonaire (p311)
- Folie's Pigalle (p304)
- Palais Garnier (p315)
- L'Attirail (p310)
- La Pagode (p314)
- Comédie Française (p315)
- Le Batofar (p305)
- MK2 Bibliothèque (p314)

NIGHTLIFE & THE ARTS

A night out in Paris can mean anything from swilling champagne on the Champs-Élysées to opening unmarked doorways in search of a new club in the *banlieues* (suburbs) or dancing on tables till dawn in a mad-loud DJ bar (see p284). From jazz cellar to comic theatre, garage beat to go-go dancer, world-class art gallery to avant-garde artist squat, this is *the* capital of savoir-vivre, with spectacular entertainment to suit every budget, every taste.

The French capital holds a firm place on the touring circuit of the world's finest artists and boasts dozens of historic and/or legendary concert venues: seeing a performance here is a treat. French and international opera, ballet and theatre companies (not to mention cabaret's incorrigible cancan dancers) take to the stage in a clutch of venues of mythical proportion – the Palais Garnier, Comédie Française and the Moulin Rouge included. Away from the bright lights and media glare, a flurry of young, passionate, highly creative musicians, theatre aficionados and artists make the city's fascinating fringe art scene what it is.

The film-lover's ultimate city, Paris provides the best seat in the house to catch new flicks, avant-garde cinema and priceless classics. Its inhabitants are film fetishists *par excellence*, with wonderful movie theatres – 1930s Chinese pagoda to Seine-side cutting-edge shoebox – to prove it.

So go out. Delve into the Seine night.

Information & Listings

'Theatre', 'Kids', 'Outings & Leisure', 'Cinema', 'Restaurants', 'Festivals', 'Music', 'The Arts' and 'Paris by Nights' are the key headings in the index of *Pariscope* (€0.40), the capital's primary weekly listings guide published every Wednesday. Its 230-odd pages – B&W with the odd splash of colour – are almost too packed with information, but everything you need to know about what's on and happening is there. Many find Paris' other weekly listings bible, *L'Officiel des Spectacles* (€0.35), also out on Wednesday, easier to handle. Buy both (in French only) at any newsstand.

Rock, jazz, world and *chanson* (song) are among the many genres covered by *Les Inrockuptibles* (www.lesinrocks.com, in French; €3), a national music mag with a strong Paris focus and great soiree and concert listings.

Of the surfeit of various French-language freebies, easy to pick up on the street and great for a gander between metro stops, *A nous Paris* (www.anous.fr/paris, in French) is among the most informed and posts its contents online; click 'Lieux Branchés' (Trendsetters) to find in-vogue bars, clubs and restaurants of the moment. Pocket-sized

booklet *LYLO* (short for *Les Yeux, Les Oreilles*, meaning 'eyes and ears'), freely available at bars and cafés, is a fortnightly lowdown on the live music, concert and clubbing scene and runs an **information line** (☎ 0 892 68 59 56; www.lylo.fr, in French). Flyers, schedules and programmes for cultural events float around the ticket office areas in Fnac (*below*).

Electronic links finely tuned to the music, clubbing, theatre scene etc right now are listed in the respective sections of this chapter.

Tickets & Reservations

Buy tickets for concerts, theatre performances and other cultural events at *billeteries* (ticket offices) in Fnac (rhymes with 'snack') and Virgin Megastore. Both accept reservations by phone and the internet, and most credit cards. Tickets can't usually be returned or exchanged unless a performance is cancelled.

Some **Fnac** (☎ 0 892 68 36 22; www.fnacspectacles.com, in French) outlets:

Bastille (Map pp94–5; ☎ 01 43 42 04 04; 4 place de la Bastille, 12e; ☎ 10am–8pm Mon–Sat; 🚶 Bastille)

Champs-Élysées (Map pp140–1; ☎ 01 53 53 64 64; 74 av des Champs-Élysées, 8e; ☎ 10am–midnight Mon–Sat, noon–midnight Sun; 🚶 Franklin D Roosevelt)

Étoile (Map pp144–5; ☎ 01 44 09 18 00; 26–30 av des Ternes, 17e; ☎ 10am–7.30pm Mon–Sat; 🚶 Ternes)

Forum des Halles (Map p86; ☎ 01 40 41 40 00; Forum des Halles shopping centre, level 3, 1–7 rue Pierre Lescot, 1er; ☎ 10am–7pm Mon–Sat; 🚶 Châtelet Les Halles)

Montparnasse (Map pp116–17; ☎ 01 49 54 30 00; 136 rue de Rennes, 6e; ☎ 10am–7pm Mon–Sat; 🚶 St-Placide)

St-Lazare (Map pp144–5; ☎ 01 55 31 20 00; 109 rue St-Lazare, 9e; ☎ 10am–7.30pm Mon–Wed & Sat, to 8.30pm Thu & Fri; 🚶 St-Lazare)

Virgin Megastore (☎ 08 25 12 91 39; www.virginmega.fr, in French) branches:

Barbès (Map p169; ☎ 01 56 55 53 70; 15 blvd Barbès, 18e; ☎ 10am–9pm Mon–Sat; 🚶 Barbès Rochechouart)

Champs-Élysées (Map pp140–1; ☎ 01 49 53 50 00; 52–60 av des Champs-Élysées, 8e; ☎ 10am–midnight Mon–Sat, noon–midnight Sun; 🚶 Franklin D Roosevelt)

Galerie du Carrousel du Louvre (Map p86; ☎ 01 44 50 03 10; 99 rue de Rivoli, 1er; ☎ 10am–8pm Mon & Tue, to 9pm Wed–Sun; 🚶 Palais Royal Musée du Louvre)

Gare Montparnasse (Map pp124–5; place Raoul Dautry, 14e; ☎ 7am–8.30pm Mon–Thu, to 9pm Fri, 8am–8pm Sat; 🚶 Montparnasse Bienvenue)

Other ticketing box offices:

Agence Marivaux (Map pp82–3; ☎ 01 42 97 46 70; 7 rue de Marivaux, 2e; ☎ 11.30am–7.30pm Mon–Fri, noon–4pm Sat; 🚶 Richelieu Drouot) Paris' oldest ticket agency, just opposite the Opéra Comique.

Agence Perrossier & SOS Théâtres (Map pp140–1; ☎ 01 42 60 58 31, 01 44 77 88 55; www.agencedetheatres-deparis.fr; 6 place de la Madeleine, 8e; ☎ 10am–7pm Mon–Sat; 🚶 Madeleine)

Discount Tickets

Come the day of a performance, snag a half-price ticket for the ballet, theatre, opera etc at discount-ticket outlet **Kiosque Théâtre Madeleine** (Map pp140–1; opp 15 place de la Madeleine, 8e; ☎ 12.30–8pm Tue–Sat, to 4pm Sun; 🚶 Madeleine) or **Kiosque Théâtre Montparnasse** (Map pp124–5; Parvis Montparnasse, 15e; ☎ 12.30–8pm Tue–Sat, to 4pm Sun; 🚶 Montparnasse Bienvenue).

CABARET

Parisians don't tend to watch the city's risqué cabaret revues – tourists do. Times and prices for the dazzling, pseudo-bohemian productions starring women in two beads and a feather (or was that two feathers and a bead?) vary: shows often begin at 7pm or 7.30pm, 8.30pm or 9pm, or 11pm, and some venues have matinées and additional evening shows at the weekend. Tickets cost anything from €65 to €120 per person (€140 to €400 with swish dinner and champagne). All venues sell tickets online.

top picks

FREE SHOWS

Paris' eclectic gaggle of clowns, acrobats, rollerbladers, buskers and other street entertainers can be highly entertaining and costs substantially less than a theatre ticket (€1 in the hat is a sweet gesture). Our favourite spots for a good show:

- **Place Georges Pompidou, 4e** (Map p86) The huge square in front of the Centre Pompidou.
- **Place Jean du Bellay, 1er** (Map p86) Musicians and fire-eaters near the Fontaine des Innocents.
- **Pont St-Louis, 4e** (Map p105) The bridge linking Paris' two islands.
- **Pont au Double, 4e** (Map p105) The pedestrian bridge linking Notre Dame with the Left Bank.
- **Palais de Tokyo** (p135) & **Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 16e** (p135) Venue of choice for the city's most acrobatic inline skaters.
- **Parc de la Villette, 19e** (p172) African drummers at the weekend.
- **Metro** (Map p2) Any time on any line – even when you're not in the mood.

CRAZY HORSE Map pp140–1

☎ 01 47 23 32 32; www.lecrazyhorseparis.com; 12 av George V, 8e; 🚶 Alma Marceau

This popular cabaret, whose dressing (or, rather, undressing) rooms were featured in Woody Allen's film *What's New Pussycat?* (1965), now promotes fine art – abstract 1960s patterns as they appear superimposed on the female nude form.

LE LIDO DE PARIS Map pp140–1

☎ 01 40 76 56 10; www.lido.fr; 116bis av des Champs-Élysées, 8e; 🚶 George V

Founded at the close of WWII, this gets top marks for its sets and the lavish costumes of its 70 artistes, including the famed Bluebell Girls and now the Lido Boy Dancers.

MOULIN ROUGE Map p169

☎ 01 53 09 82 82; www.moulinrouge.fr; 82 blvd de Clichy, 18e; 🚶 Blanche

Ooh la la... What is probably Paris' most celebrated cabaret was founded in 1889 and its dancers appeared in the celebrated posters by Toulouse-Lautrec. It sits under its trademark red windmill (actually a 1925 replica of the 19th-century original) and attracts viewers and voyeurs by the busload.

DIGITAL DISCOUNT TICKETING

- www.billetreduc.com
- www.ticketac.com
- www.webguichet.com

CLUBBING

Paris is *not* London, Berlin or New York when it comes to clubbing, and hardcore clubbers from other European capitals might be surprised by the pick of Paris clubs. Lacking a mainstream scene, clubbing here tends to be underground and extremely mobile, making blogs, forums and websites (see boxed text, below) the savviest means of keeping apace with what's happening (loads of clubs/events are on MySpace). The best DJs and their followings have short stints in a certain venue before moving on, and the scene's hippest *soirées clubbing* (clubbing events) float between a clutch of venues – including the city's many dance-driven bars (see p284).

But the beat is strong. Electronic music is of particularly high quality in Paris' clubs, with some excellent local house and techno. Funk and groove have given the whimsical predominance of dark minimal sounds a good pounding, and the Latin scene is huge; salsa dancing and Latino music nights pack out plenty of clubs. R 'n' B and hip-hop pickings are decent, if less represented than in, say, London.

Club admission costs anything from €5 to €20 and often includes a drink; admission is usually cheaper before 1am and men can't always get in unaccompanied by a woman. Drink prices start at around €6 for a beer and €8 for a mixed drink or cocktail, but often cost more.

CITHÉA NOVA Map p155

☎ 01 40 21 70 95; www.citheanova.com, in French; 112 rue Oberkampf, 11e; admission free; ☎ 9am-5am Sun-Thu, 10pm-6am Fri & Sat; 📍 Parmentier or Ménilmontant
Beefing up the kitchen (it does all meals and brunch at the weekend from 11am

DIGITAL CLUBBING

Track tomorrow's hot 'n' happening *soirée* with these finger-on-the-pulse Parisian nightlife links (in French).

- www.gogoparis.com (in English)
- www.lemonsound.com
- www.novaplanet.com
- www.parisbouge.com
- www.parissi.com
- www.radiofg.com
- www.tribudenuit.com

to 4pm) and sticking 'new' at the end of your name doesn't always work when times are hard. But these guys have done it and what was a pub-meets-concert-hall with quality bands is now a stylish resto-bar with same. Concerts usually run from 10.30pm, with DJs from 1am on Wednesday to Saturday.

FOLIE'S PIGALLE Map p169

☎ 01 48 78 55 25; www.folies-pigalle.com; 11 place Pigalle, 9e; admission €7-20; ☎ midnight-dawn Mon-Thu, to noon Fri & Sat, 6pm-dawn; 📍 Pigalle

Folie's Pigalle is a heaving place with a mixed gay and straight crowd that is great for cruising from the balcony above the dance floor. There are theme nights and concerts (usually at 2am) throughout the week. Sunday evening is the 'Original Gay Tea Party', followed by the after 'La Grande Soirée Trans', Paris' only transsexual theme night, with R 'n' B, dance, techno and house. It's Latino night on Monday.

LA DAME DE CANTON Map pp162-3

☎ 01 53 61 08 49, 06 10 41 02 29; www.damecanton.com, in French; opp 11 quai François Mauriac, 13e; admission incl 1 drink €10; ☎ 7pm-2am Tue-Thu, to dawn Fri & Sat; 📍 Quai de la Gare or Bibliothèque

This floating *boîte* (club) aboard a three-masted Chinese junk with a couple of world voyages under its belt is moored opposite the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Called *Cabaret Pirate* and *Guinguette Pirate* in previous lives, it re-adopted its maiden name – 'The Lady from Canton' – in 2008 to mark its 30th birthday. Concerts (8.30pm) range from pop and indie to electro, hip-hop, reggae and rock; afterwards, DJs keep the young crowd moving.

LA FAVELA CHIC Map pp94-5

☎ 01 40 21 38 14; www.favelachic.com, in French; 18 rue du Faubourg du Temple, 10e; admission free-€10; ☎ 8pm-2am Tue-Thu, to 4am Fri & Sat; 📍 République

It starts as a chic, convivial restaurant (open for lunch and dinner to 11pm) and gives way to *caipirinha*- and *mojito*-fuelled bumping, grinding, flirting and dancing – mostly on the long tables. The music is traditionally bossa nova, samba, *baile* (dance) funk and Brazilian pop, and it can get very crowded and hot.

CLUBBING IN PARIS: BEFORE, AFTER & D'AFTER

Seasoned Parisian clubbers, who tend to have a finely tuned sense of the absurd, split their night into three parts. *First, la before* – drinks in a bar that has a DJ playing (loads listed in the Drinking chapter, p284). Second, they head to a club for *la soirée*, which rarely kicks off before 1am or 2am. When the party continues (or begins) at around 5am and goes until midday, it's the third in the trio – *l'after*. Invariably, though, given the lack of any clear-cut distinction between Parisian bars and clubs, the before and after can easily blend into one without any real 'during'. *After d'after's*, meanwhile, kicks off in bars and clubs on Sunday afternoons and evenings, with a mix of strung-out hardcore clubbers pressing on amid less-mad socialites out for a party that doesn't take place in the middle of the night.

LE BALAJO Map pp94-5

☎ 01 47 00 07 87; www.balajo.fr, in French; 9 rue de Lappe, 11e; admission €12-18; ☎ 10pm-2am Tue & Thu, 9pm-2am Wed, 11pm-5am Fri & Sat, 3-7.30pm Sun; 📍 Bastille

A mainstay of Parisian nightlife since 1936, this ancient ballroom is devoted to salsa classes and Latino music during the week. Weekends see DJs spinning a very mixed bag of rock, disco, funk, R 'n' B and house. While a bit lower-shelf these days, it scores a mention for its historical value and its old-fashioned *musette* (accordion music) gigs on Sundays: waltz, tango and cha-cha for aficionados of retro tea-dancing.

LE BATOFAR Map pp162-3

☎ 01 53 16 70 30; www.batofar.org, in French; opp 11 quai François Mauriac, 13e; admission free-€15; ☎ 9pm-midnight Mon & Tue, to 4am or later Wed-Sun; 📍 Quai de la Gare or Bibliothèque

This incongruous, much-loved, red-metal tugboat has a rooftop bar that's great in summer, while the club underneath provides memorable underwater acoustics between its metal walls and portholes. Le Batofar is known for its edgy, experimental music policy and live performances, mostly electro-oriented but also incorporating hip-hop, new wave, rock, punk or jazz. Sometimes it doesn't open till 10pm.

LE DIVAN DU MONDE Map p169

☎ 01 42 52 02 46; www.divandumonde.com; 75 rue des Martyrs, 18e; admission free-€12; ☎ 7pm-3am Tue-Thu, to 6am Fri & Sat; 📍 Pigalle

Take some cinematographic events, Gypsy gatherings, *nouvelles chansons françaises* (new French songs). Add in soul/funk fiestas, air-guitar face-offs and rock parties of the Arctic Monkeys/Killers/Libertines persuasion and stir with an Amy Winehouse swizzle stick. You may now be getting some idea of the inventive, open-minded approach at this excellent cross-cultural venue in Pigalle.

LE DJOON Map pp162-3

☎ 01 45 70 83 49; www.djoon.fr, in French; 22-24 Blvd Vincent Auriol, 13e; admission €5-20; ☎ 7pm-midnight Thu, 11.30pm-5am or 6am Fri & Sat, 6pm-midnight Sun; 📍 Quai de la Gare

Something of a new kid on the block in an area becoming increasingly known for its cutting-edge venues, this urbanite, New York-inspired loft club and restaurant is rapidly carving out a name for itself as a super-stylish weekend venue for soul, funk, deep house, garage and disco, courtesy of different visiting DJs. Thursday and Sunday evenings are tamer but still 100% DJ-fed dance. Look for the striking glass-and-steel façade.

LE NOUVEAU CASINO Map p155

☎ 01 43 57 57 40; www.nouveaucasino.net, in French; 109 rue Oberkampf, 11e; club admission €5-10, concerts €15-22; ☎ 7.30pm or midnight to 2am or 5am Tue-Sun; 📍 Parmentier
This club/concert annex of the *Café Charbon* (p296) has made a name for itself amid the bars of Oberkampf with its live music concerts (Tuesday to Thursday and Sunday) and top club nights such as Jockey Club at the weekend. Electro, pop, deep House, rock – the programme is eclectic, underground and always up to the minute.

LE REDLIGHT Map pp124-5

☎ 01 42 79 94 53; www.enfer.fr, in French; 34 rue du Départ, 14e; admission €12-20; ☎ 11pm or midnight to 5am or 6am Sat & Sun; 📍 Montparnasse Bienvenue

It seems that this underground (literally) venue beneath Tour Montparnasse, fittingly called *l'enfer* (hell) in a previous life, will never perish. Up there among Paris' busiest house, techno and electro clubs, its podiums get packed out with a young, dance-mad crowd well past dawn. French Kiss 'after' parties often kick off at 6am. Huge and laser-lit, its hours vary depending on

top picks

CLUBS

- Point Éphémère (right)
- Le Rex Club (below)
- Social Club (opposite)
- Les Bains Douches (right)
- Le Batofar (p305)
- Le Slow Club (below)

the *soirée* – see its website for flyers – and admission is often half-price before 1am.

LE REX CLUB Map pp82–3

☎ 01 42 36 10 96; www.rexclub.com, in French; 5 blvd Poissonnière, 2e; admission free-€15; ☎ 11.30pm-6am Wed-Sat; 📺 Bonne Nouvelle
The Rex reigns majestic in the house and techno scene, always has and probably always will. The new(ish) sound system is impeccable but getting in is more a question of lining up than looking right. Friday nights are a techno institution in Paris; after all, this is the old stomping ground of pioneer Laurent Garnier.

LE SLOW CLUB Map p86

☎ 01 42 33 84 30; 130 rue de Rivoli, 1er; admission €9-13; ☎ 10pm-3am Tue & Thu, to 4am Fri-Sun; 📺 Châtelet
Unpretentious dance and jazz club (concerts from 10pm at the weekend) housed in a deep cellar once used to ripen bananas imported from the Caribbean. It attracts a very mixed-age crowd and is as much an institution as a club. The music varies from night to night but includes jazz, boogie, bebop, swing and reggae.

LE WAGG Map pp116–17

☎ 01 55 42 22 00; www.wagg.fr, in French; 62 rue Mazarine, 6e; admission incl 1 drink Fri & Sat €12, Sun €12, before/after midnight Thu free/€10; ☎ 11pm-6am Thu-Sat, 3pm-midnight Sun; 📺 Odéon
The Wagg is a UK-style Conran club (associated with the popular Fabric in London), beautifully dressed in slick fixtures and contemporary design, but with a somewhat stifled vibe. Last time we looked it had been taken over by the salsa craze – indeed, it opens early on Sunday to host a two-hour salsa class followed by *une soirée*

100% cubaine. Find event flyers posted on the blog (www.blogalcazar.fr) of the neighbouring Conran restaurant.

LES BAINS DOUCHES Map pp82–3

☎ 01 48 87 01 80; www.lesbainsdouches.net, in French; 7 rue du Bourg l'Abbé, 3e; admission €20; ☎ 11pm-5am Wed-Sun; 📺 Étienne Marcel
Housed in a refitted old Turkish *hammam*, this darling of the 1990s has returned with a vengeance and is as elegant a place as you're going to find in the Marais. Once famous for its glamorous clientele and impassable door complete with blocking limo, it has sought to shake off its inaccessible image with a new mix of theme nights, Sunday morning 'afters' and gay soirees.

PENICHE EL ALAMEIN Map pp162–3

☎ 01 45 86 41 60; <http://elalamein.free.fr>, in French; opp 11 quai François Mauriac, 13e; admission €8; ☎ 7pm-2am Sep-Jun; 📺 Quai de la Gare or Bibliothèque
The third in the trendy trio afloat opposite the library, this deep-purple boat is strung with terracotta pots of flowers from head to toe, making it a lovely spot on the Seine to sip away summer evenings. Sit amid flowering tulips and enjoy live bands from 9pm; flyers are stuck on the lamppost in front. Its sound – less hectic than its next-door neighbours, hence the older crowd – embraces jazz, world and Piaf-style *chansons françaises* (French songs) of 1930s Paris.

POINT ÉPHEMÈRE Map pp152–3

☎ 01 40 34 02 48; www.pointephemere.org; 200 quai de Valmy, 10e; admission free-€14; ☎ 10am-2pm; 📺 Louis Blanc
A relatively new arrival by the Canal St-Martin, with some of the best electronic music nights in town. Once this self-proclaimed 'centre for dynamic artists' gets in gear, 'on y danse, on danse' (you'll dance your arse off). Just try to get there before everyone pours out of the surrounding canal-side bars and café-bars at 2am.

QUEEN Map pp140–1

☎ 01 53 89 08 90; www.queen.fr; 102 av des Champs-Élysées, 8e; admission €15-20; ☎ 11pm-Sun-Thu, midnight-8am Fri & Sat; 📺 George V
Once the king (as it were) of gay discos in Paris, Le Queen now reigns supreme with a very mixed crowd, though it still has a mostly gay Disco Queen on Monday. While

right on the Champs-Élysées, it's not as difficult to get into as it used to be – and not nearly as inaccessible as most of the nearby clubs. There's a festive atmosphere and mix of music with lots of house and electro.

SOCIAL CLUB Map pp82–3

☎ 01 40 28 05 55; www.myspace.com/parissocialclub; 142 rue Montmartre, 2e; admission free-€20; ☎ 11pm-3am Wed & Sun, to 6am Thu-Sat; 📺 Grands Boulevards
Known as the Triptyque till the end of 2007, this vast and very popular club is set up in three stonewalled underground rooms and fills somewhat of a gap in inner-city clubbing. Musically it's on to it, with a serious sound system offering electro, hip-hop and funk, as well as jazz and live acts.

COMEDY

Surprising to some perhaps, Parisians do like to laugh, and the capital is not short of comedy clubs, where comedians such as Bourvil, Férnandel, Bernard Blier, Louis de Funès, Francis Blanche, Jean Poiret, Michel Serrault, Smaïn and the duo Elie Kakou and Guy Bedos have enjoyed enormous popularity over the years. The 'one-man show' (say it with a French accent) is increasingly popular, while English-language comedy is a growing scene.

An outfit called *Laughing & Music Matters* (☎ 01 53 19 98 88; www.anythingmatters.com; adult/student €20/15), with no fixed address, presents some of the best English-language laugh-fests in town, with both local and imported talent (last seen: Jools Holland from the UK). It usually puts on shows at *La Java* (p310) but also at *Espace Jemmapes* (Map pp152–3; ☎ 01 48 03 33 22; www.jemmapes.com, in French; 116 quai de Jemmapes, 10e; 📺 République). See the website for details.

POINT VIRGULE Map pp98–9

☎ 01 42 78 67 03; www.lepointvirgule.com, in French; 7 rue Ste-Croix de la Bretonnerie, 4e; 1/2/3 shows adult €17/29/36, per show student except Sat €13; 📺 Hôtel de Ville
This tiny and convivial comedy spot in the Marais has been going strong for well over five decades. It offers café-theatre at its best – stand-up comics, performance artists, musical acts. The quality is variable, but it's great fun and the place has a reputation for discovering new talent. There are three or four shows daily, usually at 7pm, 8pm, 9.15pm and 10.15pm.

MUSIC

Music thrives in cosmopolitan Paris, a first-class stage for classical music and big-name rock, pop and independent acts, not to mention world-renowned jazz. A musical culture deeply influenced by rich immigration, vibrant subcultures and an open-minded public make it a fervent breeding ground for experimental music: Paris-bred world music, especially from Africa and South America, is renowned. As with the hybrid drinking-clubbing scene, bars (p284) are as much a space to revel in these sounds as specific music venues.

Festivals for just about every music genre going ensure that everyone gets to listen in; to check what's on, see p302 and p12. Street music is a constant in this busker-merry city (p303), summer adding a soul-stirring string of open-air concerts along the Seine and in city parks to the year-round hum of accordion players on the metro and amateur opera singers around the Centre Pompidou.

And should classical music be your love, don't forget Paris' beautiful churches – wonderful places to listen to organ music – in addition to the theatres and concert halls listed in this chapter: the magnificent Sunday-afternoon concerts in the Église St-Sulpice (p115) are nothing short of earth-shattering.

ROCK, POP & INDIE

With several venues in and around the city regularly hosting international performers, it can be easier to see big-name Anglophone acts in Paris than in their home countries. *Palais Omnisports de Paris-Bercy* (Map pp158–9; ☎ 08 92 39 01 00, 01 40 02 60 60; www.bercy.fr, in French; 8 blvd de Bercy, 12e; 📺 Bercy); *Stade de France* (Map p182; ☎ 08 92 70 09 00; www.stadefrance.com, in French; rue Francis de Pressensé, ZAC du Cornillon Nord, St-Denis La Plaine; 📺 St-Denis-Porte de Paris); and *Le Zénith* (Map pp174–5; ☎ 08 90 71 02 07, 01 55 80 09 38; www.le-zenith.com, in French; 211 av Jean Jaurès, 19e; 📺 Porte de Pantin) in Parc de la Villette are the largest (and most impersonal) venues. But it's the smaller concert halls with real history and charm that most fans favour.

LA CIGALE Map p169

☎ 01 49 25 89 99; www.lacigale.fr; 120 blvd de Rochechouart, 18e; admission €25-60; 📺 Anvers or Pigalle
Now classed as a historical monument, this music hall dates from 1887 but was rededicated 100 years later by Philippe Starck.

Having welcomed artists from Jean Cocteau to Sheryl Crow, today it prides itself on its avant-garde programme, with rock and jazz concerts by French and international acts.

LA FLÈCHE D'OR *Map pp94–5*

☎ 01 44 64 01 02; www.flechedor.fr, in French; 102bis rue de Bagnolet, 20e; admission free; ☎ 8pm–2am Mon–Thu, to 6am Fri & Sat, noon–2am Sun; (M) Alexandre Dumas or Gambetta

Just over 1km northeast of place de la Nation, this music bar has a striking setup in a former railway station on the outer edge of central Paris. It attracts a young, arty and alternative crowd; this could very well be Berlin and it's best known for its DJ nights and concerts. Reggae, house/electro and rock feature; 'The Golden Arrow' has a solid reputation for promoting young talent.

LE BATACLAN *Map pp94–5*

☎ 01 43 14 00 30; www.bataclan.fr, in French; 50 bdvd Voltaire, 11e; admission €20–45; (M) Oberkampf or St-Ambroise

Built in 1864 and Maurice Chevalier's debut venue in 1910, this excellent little concert hall draws French (eg Les Têtes Raides) and international rock and pop legends. Recently renovated and now a symphony of lively reds, yellows and green, the Bataclan also masquerades as a theatre and dance hall.

L'ÉLYSÉE-MONTMARTRE *Map p169*

☎ 01 44 92 45 47; www.elyseemontmartre.com; 72 bdvd de Rochechouart, 18e; admission €15–45; (M) Anvers

A huge old music hall with a great sound system, L'Élysée-Montmartre is one of the better venues in Paris for one-off rock and indie concerts (Hush Puppies, Morgan Heritage, Sabotage, Skatallites). It opens for concerts at 6.30pm and hosts club events and big-name DJs at 11.30pm on Fridays and Saturdays.

L'OLYMPIA *Map pp148–9*

☎ 08 92 68 33 68; www.olympiahall.com; 28 bdvd des Capucines, 9e; admission €35–110; (M) Opéra The Olympia was opened by the founder of the Moulin Rouge in 1888 and is said to be the oldest concert hall in Paris. It's an atmospheric venue of manageable size, with a sloping floor. It has hosted all the big names over the years, from Johnny Halliday to Jimi Hendrix. This is the hallowed venue of one of Édith Piaf's last performances, and what

Jeff Buckley considered his best ever concert, the seminal *Live at l'Olympia* in 1995.

CLASSICAL

The city hosts dozens of orchestral, organ and chamber-music concerts each week. In addition to the theatres and concert halls listed here, Paris' beautiful churches have much-celebrated organs and can be wonderful places to hear music. Many concerts don't keep to any fixed schedule, but are simply advertised on posters around town. Admission fees vary, but usually cost from €20 for adults and half that for students.

CONSERVATOIRE NATIONAL SUPÉRIEUR DE MUSIQUE ET DE DANSE *Map pp174–5*

☎ 01 40 40 46 47; www.cnsmdp.fr; 209 av Jean Jaurès, 19e; ☎ box office noon–6pm Tue–Sat, 10am–6pm Sun, to 8pm on day of performance; (M) Porte de Pantin

Students at France's National Higher Conservatory of Music and Dance put on free orchestra concerts and recitals several times a week, in the afternoon or evening; check its website for the monthly schedule.

SALLE PLEYEL *Map pp140–1*

☎ 01 42 56 13 13; www.sallepleyel.fr; 252 rue du Faubourg St-Honoré, 8e; tickets €10–85; ☎ box office noon–7pm Mon–Sat, to 8pm on day of performance; (M) Ternes

This highly regarded hall dating from the 1920s hosts many of Paris' finest classical music recitals and concerts, including those by the celebrated *Orchestre de Paris* (www.orchestreparis.com, in French). It has recently emerged from a protracted renovation and now looks (and sounds) even more *magnifique*.

THÉÂTRE DU CHÂTELET *Map p86*

☎ 01 40 28 28 40; www.chatelet-theatre.com, in French; 1 place du Châtelet, 1er; concert tickets €10–60, opera €10–90, ballet €10–55; ☎ box office 11am–7pm, no performances Jul & Aug; (M) Châtelet This central venue hosts concerts as well as operas, ballets, theatre, and musical performances. Tickets go on sale at the box office 14 days before the performance date. Subject to availability, anyone under 26 or over 65 can get reduced-price tickets from 15 minutes before curtain time. The Sunday concerts at 11am (adult/under 26yr €23/12) are a popular fixture.

DIGITAL MUSIC

Tune into the latest sounds and the concerts they spawn with these useful sites (in French). Most listed on p304 also cover the music scene.

- www.france-techno.fr
- www.paris.fr (click 'Culture')
- www.figaroscope.fr (click 'Musiques')

JAZZ & BLUES

Paris became Europe's most important jazz centre after WWII and, niche as the style has since become, the city's best clubs and cellars still lure international stars – as does the wonderful *Paris Jazz Festival* (www.parcfloraldeparis.com or www.paris.fr) that sets the Parc Floral buzzing each year in June and July. Big-name talent is likewise on the billing at *Banlieues Bleues* (Suburban Blues; www.banlieuesbleues.org), a jazz festival held in March and early April in St-Denis and other Parisian suburbs.

Download podcasts, tunes, concert information and all that jazz to listen to on your iPod from Paris' soothing jazz radio station, *TFS* (89.9 MHz FM; www.tsfjazz.com).

CAFÉ UNIVERSEL *Map pp110–11*

☎ 01 43 25 74 20; www.cafe-universel.com; 267 rue St-Jacques, 5e; admission free; ☎ 9.30pm–2am Mon–Sat; (M) Port Royal

Café Universel hosts a brilliant array of live concerts with everything from bebop and Latin sounds to vocal jazz sessions. Plenty of freedom is given to young producers and artists, and its convivial relaxed atmosphere attracts a mix of students and jazz lovers.

CAVEAU DE LA HUCHETTE *Map pp110–11*

☎ 01 43 26 65 05; www.caveaudelahuchette.fr; 5 rue de la Huchette, 5e; admission Sun–Thu €11, Fri & Sat €13; ☎ 9.30pm–2.30am Sun–Wed, to 4am Thu–Sat; (M) St-Michel

Housed in a medieval *caveau* (cellar) used as a courtroom and torture chamber during the Revolution, this club is where virtually all the jazz greats have played since the end of WWII. It's touristy, but the atmosphere can be more electric than at the more serious jazz clubs. Sessions start at 10pm.

HABANA JAZZ *Map p155*

☎ 01 43 38 14 92; www.habanajazzparis.com, in French; 9 rue Moret, 11e; ☎ 8pm–1am Wed–Sun; (M) St-Maur

New jazz supper club on the Ménilmontant/Bastille border that evokes the music and atmosphere of postwar Cuba, with emphasis on viola jazz. Tapas are €5.50, Cuban dishes, €12 to €17 and there are a couple of *menus* (fixed-price meal with two or three courses) at €30 and €35.

LE BAISER SALÉ *Map p86*

☎ 01 42 33 37 71; www.lebaisersale.com, in French; 58 rue des Lombards, 1er; admission free–€20; ☎ 5pm–6am; (M) Châtelet

One of several jazz clubs located on this street, the *salle de jazz* (jazz room) on its 1st floor has concerts of jazz, Afro and Latin jazz and jazz fusion. Combining big names and unknown artists, it is known for its relaxed vibe and has a gift for discovering new talents. Music starts at 7pm and again at 10pm.

LE PETIT JOURNAL ST-MICHEL

Map pp110–11

☎ 01 43 26 28 59; www.petitjournalst-michel.com, in French; 71 bdvd St-Michel, 5e; admission incl 1 drink adult €17–20, admission incl 1 drink student €11–15; ☎ 6pm–2am Mon–Sat; (M) Luxembourg Classic jazz concerts kick off at 9.15pm in the atmospheric downstairs cellar – think St-Germain des Prés in the 1950s – of this sophisticated jazz venue opposite the Jardin du Luxembourg. Everything from Dixieland and vocals to big band and swing sets toes tapping, and Monday-night jam sessions are free. Dinner (*menus* €48 and €53) is served at 8pm, should you wish to make a meal of it.

Concerts at St-Michel's sister club near Gare de Montparnasse, *Le Petit Journal Montparnasse* (*Map pp124–5*; ☎ 01 43 21 56 70; www.petitjournal-montparnasse.com; 13 rue Commandant Mouchotte, 14e; admission adult/student €25/15; ☎ 8pm–2am Mon–Sat), start at 10pm, and a traditional French dinner (€60) can be enjoyed beforehand.

NEW MORNING *Map pp152–3*

☎ 01 45 23 51 41; www.newmorning.com, in French; 7-9 rue des Petites Écuries, 10e; admission €15–21; ☎ 8pm–2am; (M) Château d'Eau New Morning is a highly regarded auditorium with excellent acoustics that hosts big-name jazz concerts as well as blues, rock, funk, salsa, Afro-Cuban and Brazilian music. Concerts take place three to seven nights a week at 9pm, with the second set ending at about 1am. Tickets can usually be purchased at the door.

SUNSET & SUNSIDE Map p86

☎ 01 40 26 46 60; www.sunset-sunside.com; 60 rue des Lombards, 1er; admission free-€25; ☎ 8pm-4am; 📍 Châtelet

Two venues in one at this trendy, well-respected club. The Sunset downstairs has electric jazz and fusion concerts beginning at 10pm. It leans towards world music and sometimes runs salsa sessions during the week. The Sunside picks things up upstairs with jazz acoustics and concerts at 9pm.

WORLD & LATINO

Sono mondiale (world music) is a big deal in Paris, where everything – from Algerian *rai* and other North African music to Senegalese *mbalax* and West Indian *zouk* – goes at clubs. Latino music, especially Cuban salsa, has been overwhelmingly popular over the past decade or so. Many concert and clubbing venues (p304) listed have salsa classes; look for dancing along the Seine in summer.

CITÉ DE LA MUSIQUE Map pp174–5

☎ 01 44 84 44 84; www.cite-musique.fr; 221 av Jean Jaurès, 19e; tickets €8-38; ☎ box office noon-6pm Tue-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun, to 8pm on day of performance; 📍 Porte de Pantin

At the Parc de la Villette, every imaginable type of music and dance, from Western classical to North African and Japanese, is hosted at this venue's oval-shaped, 1200-seat main auditorium. Concerts are in the little Amphithéâtre du Musée de la Musique. Get tickets from the glassed-in box office opposite the main auditorium and next to the Fontaine aux Lions.

DANCING DE LA COUPOLE Map pp124–5

☎ 01 43 27 56 00; 102 blvd du Montparnasse, 14e; admission €12-16; ☎ 9.30pm-3am Thu, 11.30pm-5.30am Fri, 10am-5pm Sat; 📍 Mavin

Above the restaurant of the same name, this established club is famed for its salsa nights, which were credited with single-handedly passing Latin fever to most of Paris. Salsa and Latino nights still take place, but the venue also hosts other kinds of music like *zouk*, reggae, funk and garage.

LA CHAPELLE DES LOMBARDS

Map pp94–5

☎ 01 43 57 24 24; 19 rue de Lappe, 11e; admission free-€19; ☎ 11pm-6am Tue-Sun; 📍 Bastille

This perennially popular Bastille dance club

has happening Latino DJs and reggae, funk and Afro jazz concerts – in a word, a bit of everything. Concerts usually take place at 8pm on Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

LA JAVA Map p155

☎ 01 42 02 20 52; www.la-java.fr; 105 rue du Faubourg du Temple, 10e; admission €5-24; ☎ 7.30pm-3am Tue-Thu, 11pm-6am Fri & Sat; 📍 Goncourt

Built in 1922, this is the dance hall where Édith Piaf got her first break, and it now reverberates to the sound of live salsa and other Latino music. Live concerts of the world music variety usually take place during the week at 8pm or 9pm. Afterwards a festive crowd gets dancing to electro, house, disco and Latino DJs.

L'ATTIRAIL Map pp92–3

☎ 01 42 72 44 42; www.lattirail.com, in French; 9 rue au Maire, 3e; admission free; ☎ 10.30am-1.30am Mon-Sat, 3pm-1.30am Sun; 📍 Arts et Métiers

There are free concerts of *chansons françaises* and world music (Hungarian and Balkan Gypsy music, Irish folk, *klezmer*, southern Italian folk) almost daily at 9.30pm at this cosmopolitan enclave next door to the popular club *Tango* (p328). Manic but friendly customers crowd the Formica bar, with its cheap *pots* (460mL bottle) of wine and friendly staff.

SATELLIT CAFÉ Map pp94–5

☎ 01 47 00 48 87; www.satellit-café.com; 44 rue de la Folie Méricourt, 11e; admission €5-10; ☎ 8pm-3am Tue-Thu, 10pm-dawn Fri & Sat, 4pm-3am Sun; 📍 Oberkampf

A great venue for world music, and not as painfully trendy as some others in Paris. Come here to hear everything from blues and flamenco to reggae and bossa nova. Concerts usually take place at 9pm. Salsa nights with dancing lessons take place every 1st and 3rd Friday at 8.30pm; Sunday is Latino night.

FRENCH CHANSONS

Think of French music and accordions or *chansonniers* (cabaret singers) like Édith Piaf, Jacques Brel, Georges Brassens and Léo Ferré float through the air. But though you may stumble upon buskers performing *chansons françaises* or playing *musette* (accordion music) in the markets, it is harder than you'd

imagine to catch traditional French music in a more formal setting. Try the venues listed here to hear it in traditional and modern forms.

Keep an eye open for the reopening of the long-overdue *Théâtre des Trois Baudets* (Map p169; <http://troisbaudets.com>; 2 rue Coustou, 18e; ☎ Blanche), a mecca for *chansonniers* and their fans for almost 50 years till it closed in 1996.

AU LAPIN AGILE Map p169

☎ 01 46 06 85 87; www.au-lapin-agile.com; 22 rue des Saules, 18e; adult €24, student except Sat €17; ☎ 9pm-2am Tue-Sun; 📍 Lamarck Caulaincourt

This rustic cabaret venue was favoured by artists and intellectuals in the early 20th century and *chansons* are still performed here. The four-hour show starts at 9.30pm and includes singing and poetry. Some love it, others feel it's a bit of a trap. Admission includes one drink (€6 or €7 subsequently). It's named after *Le Lapin à Gill*, a mural of a rabbit jumping out of a cooking pot by caricaturist André Gill, which can still be seen on the western exterior wall.

AU LIMONAIRE Map pp148–9

☎ 01 45 23 33 33; <http://limonaire.free.fr>; 18 cité Bergère, 9e; admission free; ☎ 7pm-midnight Mon, 6pm-midnight Tue-Sun; 📍 Grands Boulevards

This little wine bar, tucked far away from the big commercial cabarets off rue Bergère, is one of the best places to listen to traditional French *chansons* and other traditional vocals. The singers (who change regularly) perform on the small stage every night; the fun begins at 7pm on Sunday, 8.30pm on Monday and at 10pm Tuesday to Saturday. It's free entry, and simple meals are served for between €8.50 and €11.

CHEZ ADEL Map pp152–3

☎ 01 42 08 24 61; 10 rue de la Grange aux Belles, 10e; admission free; ☎ noon-2am Tue-Sun; 📍 Jacques Bonsergent

Chez Adel is a truly Parisian concept: Syrian hosts with guest *chansonniers* (as well as Gypsy, folk and world music singers) performing most nights to a mixed and enthusiastic crowd. Mains cost from €7.50. The

ÉDITH PIAF: URCHIN SPARROW

Like her American contemporary Judy Garland, Édith Piaf was not just a singer but a tragic and stoic figure whom the nation took to its heart yet never letting go.

She was born Édith Giovanna Gassion to a street acrobat and a singer in the working-class district of Belleville in 1915. Spending her childhood with an alcoholic grandmother who neglected her, and a stint with her father's family, who ran a local brothel in Normandy, Piaf's beginnings were far from fortunate. On tour with her father at the age of nine, by 15 she had left home to sing alone in the streets of Paris. It was her first employer, Louis Leplée, who dubbed her *la mère piaf* (urchin sparrow) and introduced her to the cabarets of the capital.

When Leplée was murdered in 1935 Piaf faced the streets again, but along came Raymond Asso, an ex-French Legionnaire who became her Pygmalion. He forced her to break with her pimp and hustler friends, put her in her signature black dress and was the inspiration for her first big hit, *'Mon légionnaire'* ('My Legionnaire') in 1937. When she signed a contract with what is now *La Java* (opposite), one of the most famous Parisian music halls of the time, her career skyrocketed.

This frail woman, who sang about street life, drugs, unrequited love, violence, death and whores, seemed to embody all the miseries of the world, yet sang in a husky, powerful voice with no self-pity. Her tumultuous love life earned her the reputation as *une dévoreuse d'hommes* (a man-eater); in fact she launched the careers of several of her lovers, including Yves Montand and Charles Aznavour. When one of her lovers, world middleweight boxing champion Marcel Cerdan, died suddenly in a plane crash, Piaf insisted that the show go on – and fainted on stage in the middle of *'L'Hymne à l'amour'* ('Hymn to Love'), a song inspired by her late lover.

After suffering injuries in a car accident in 1951, Piaf began drinking heavily and became addicted to morphine. Despite her rapidly declining health she continued to take the world stage, including New York's Carnegie Hall in 1956, and recorded some of her biggest hits such as *'Je ne regrette rien'* ('I regret nothing') and *'Milord'* ('My Lord'). In 1962, frail and once again penniless, Piaf married a 20-year-old hairdresser called Théophanis Lamboukas (aka Théo Sarapo), recorded the duet *'À quoi ça sert l'amour?'* ('What Use Is Love?') with him and left Paris for the south of France, where she died the following year. Some two million people attended her funeral in Paris, and the grave of the beloved and much missed Urchin Sparrow at Père Lachaise Cemetery is still visited and decorated by thousands of loyal fans each year. And interest in her life and work lives on: the 2007 biopic *La Môme* (p43) was an international success and won several major awards including an Academy Award for Marion Cotillard, who played Piaf.

PARIS VIBES

Tariq Krim, charismatic founder and CEO of Netvibes.com, is among a clutch of young innovators credited with making the internet what it is. Be it tracking the future in digital space or the next best bar in his city, he is a Parisian in tune with the vibe. He has clubbed with Paris' finest first-generation electronic-music DJs, his music taste is eclectic and as work increasingly takes him around the world, he is enjoying a new weekend affair with his city. So where does he go on Saturday night? He opened his address book to Nicola Williams at Netvibes' sunlit loft offices in the 2e, around the corner from the Rex Club.

You go out a lot, right? I'm not very often here anymore (always travelling with Netvibes), and when I am it's for fun; it's interesting because now I'm experiencing Paris at the weekend. I'm very loyal to lots of places. I grew up in the Marais and spent almost all my life there and the Bastille. The 11e is my all-time favourite neighbourhood: I'm very much this side of the Seine, but you know the story... If I have to go to St-Germain I don't know where to go.

Your ideal night out? Two kinds: when you have no voice because you have to yell over the music and places where you can actually talk.

Perfect lose-your-voice places? Chez Janou (☎ 01 42 72 28 41; www.chezjanou.com; 2 rue Roger Verlomme, 3e; 🍷 Chemin Vert), one of my favourite restaurants in France, period. It's been there for 10 years and is an institution, the canteen of people like John Malkovich. I call it little New York now because so many people speak English there these days. Or **Café de l'Industrie** (☎ 01 47 00 13 53; 17 rue St-Sabin, 11e; 🍷 Breguet Sabin); that's a loud place. Then drinks at **L'Aréa** (☎ 01 42 72 96 50; 10 rue Tournelles, 4e; 🍷 Bastille), a Lebanese-Brazilian restaurant with lots of music. The owner, Édouard, is an amazing guy, super nice, and knows where to send you next, which clubs... I used to go to the **Rex** (p306). Now there's the **Social Club** (p307).

For something quieter? Two Italian restaurants: There is one I love – it could be the perfect date restaurant: **Swann et Vincent** (p273; ☎ 01 43 43 49 40; 7 rue St-Nicolas, 12e; 🍷 Ledru-Rollin). And there's **Le Rusti** (☎ 01 42 72 02 51; 8 rue des Tournelles, 4e; 🍷 Bastille): small, very trendy, lots of beautiful people.

part-Parisian, part-Eastern décor of this simple bistro looks better as the owners' punch goes down. Music starts at 7pm weekdays and at 4pm on Saturday and Sunday.

CHEZ LOUISETTE Map p169

☎ 01 40 12 10 14; **Marché aux Puces de St-Ouen**; ☎ noon-6pm Sat-Mon; 🍷 Porte de Clignancourt Here since 1967, this little bistro is a highlight of any visit to Paris' largest **flea market** (p217). Market-goers crowd around little tables to eat lunch (mains €15 to €20) and hear old-time *chanteuses* and *chanteurs* (they change regularly) belt out numbers by Piaf and other classic French singers, accompanied by accordion music; you might even get to see an inspired diner jump up to dance *la guingette* (the jig) in the aisles.

LE VIEUX BELLEVILLE Map p155

☎ 01 44 62 92 66; www.le-vieux-belleville.com; 12 rue des Envierges, 20e; admission free; ☎ performances at 8.30pm Tue, Thu & Fri; 🍷 Pyrénées This old-fashioned bistro at the top of Parc de Belleville is an atmospheric venue for performances of *chansons* featuring accordions and an organ grinder three times a week. It's a lively favourite with locals,

though, so booking ahead is advised. The Old Belleville' serves classic bistro food (open for lunch Monday to Saturday and dinner Tuesday to Saturday).

DANCE

The Ballet de l'Opéra National de Paris (www.opera-de-paris.fr, in French) performs at both the Palais Garnier (p315) and the Opéra Bastille (p314). Other important venues for both classical and modern dance are the Théâtre du Châtelet and those listed here.

LE REGARD DU CYGNE Map pp174-5

☎ 01 43 58 55 93; www.leregarducygne.com, in French; 210 rue de Belleville, 20e; admission €5-13; 🍷 Place des Fêtes

Le Regard du Cygne prides itself on being an independent, alternative performance space. Situated in the creative 20e, this is where many of Paris' young and daring talents in movement, music and theatre congregate to perform. If you're in the mood for some innovative and experimental modern dance, performance or participation, this is the place to come. The box office is open one hour before performances.

Then I go for a cocktail. **Le Fumoir** (p285) has the best collection of vodka martinis and is very quiet, especially the last room at the back. I love the idea of a vintage club with armchairs, a library full of books and international magazines, and people drinking very nice cocktails. The décor is also amazing: Art Deco – lost in New York after Prohibition.

The other place I go is a new place called **The Experimental Cocktail Club** (☎ 01 45 08 88 09; www.myspace.com/experimentalcocktailclub; 37 rue St-Saveur, 2e; ☎ 6pm-2am Sun-Thu, to even later Fri & Sat; 🍷 Reaumur Sébastopol), so successful they're opening another (p290). A similar concept to Milk & Honey – amazing cocktails, people super-nice and it's small.

Another, already known by a bunch of people, but one I love is **L'Étoile Manquante** (p287; ☎ 01 42 72 48 34; www.cafeine.com; 34 rue du Vieille du Temple, 4e; 🍷 Hôtel de Ville or St-Paul Café).

For an aperitif? Definitely The Experimental Cocktail Club or Le Fumoir.

Best neighbourhood bar? Le Fée Verte (☎ 01 43 72 31 24; 108 rue de la Roquette, 11e; 🍷 Voltaire): I started Netvibes here three years ago – imagine the perfect dream bar with wi-fi; it was one of the first. I love the idea of being in contact with the world and saying 'Can I have another cappuccino, please?!'

For live music? La Scène Bastille (☎ 01 48 06 50 70; www.scenebastille.com; 2bis rue des Taillanders, 11e; ☎ 7.30pm-6am Mon-Sat; 🍷 Bastille) and **Le Batofar** (p305), far from everything (it's the last stop) but one of the most interesting places, different types of music and lots of style.

Best concept bar? There are very few. On Elizabeth St in New York every bar is a whole experience, has an entire design. Here in Paris you still have the *vieux bistro* type, but you don't see the concept bar, or when you do see it, it's on the Champs-Élysées and tries too hard to be trendy.

A new address? L'Orange Mécanique (☎ 09 54 43 55 02; www.myspace.com/orangemecanique; 72 rue Jean-Pierre Timbaud, 11e; 🍷 Parmentier) – not crowded, interesting music and a fun décor.

Nightlife philosophy? You can be in the best place by yourself or the worst place with your friends; I would always go for the second.

Interviewed by Nicola Williams

THÉÂTRE DE LA VILLE Map p86

☎ 01 42 74 22 77; www.theatredelaville-paris.com, in French; 2 place du Châtelet, 4e; adult €17-23, student & under 28yr €12-13.50; ☎ box office 11am-7pm Mon, to 8pm Tue-Sat; 🍷 Châtelet While the Théâtre de la Ville also hosts theatre and music, it's most celebrated for its contemporary dance productions by such noted choreographers as Merce Cunningham, Angelin Preljocaj and Maguy Marin. Depending on availability, students and those under 28 can buy up to two tickets for €12 or €13.50 each on the day of the performance. There are no performances in July and August. Its sister venue, the **Théâtre de la Ville-Salle Abbesses** (Map p169; ☎ 01 42 74 22 77; 31 rue des Abbesses, 18e; 🍷 Abbesses) stages even more avant-garde productions.

FILM

Both *Pariscope* and *L'Officiel des Spectacles* (p302) list the full crop of Paris' cinematic pickings and screening times, though going to the cinema in Paris is not cheap: expect to pay up to €10 for a first-run film. Students, under 18s and over 60s get discounted tickets (usually just under €6) every night except Friday, and all day Saturday and on Sunday matinées.

Wednesday yields discounts for everyone. English-language films with French subtitles are labelled 'VO' (*version originale*).

There are a few noteworthy movie theatres over and above mainstream cinemas showing Hollywood blockbusters:

CINÉMA DES CINÉASTES Map pp144-5

☎ 01 53 42 40 20; www.cinema-des-cineastes.fr, in French; 7 av de Clichy, 17e; adult €8.70, student & child €6.80, morning screenings €6; 🍷 Place de Clichy Founded by the three Claudes (Miller, Berri and Lelouch) and *Betty Blue* director Jean-Jacques Beneix, this is a three-screen theatre dedicated to quality cinema, be it French or foreign, but always avant-garde. Thematic showings, documentaries and meet-the-director sessions round out the repertoire. Don't miss the excellent **Bar à Vins du Cinéma des Cinéastes** (p294) on the 1st floor.

CINÉMATHEQUE FRANÇAISE Map pp158-9

☎ 01 71 19 33 33; www.cinemathequefrancaise.com; 51 rue Bercy, 12e; adult/student/child under 12yr €6/5/3; ☎ box office noon-7pm Mon, Wed, Fri & Sat, to 10pm Thu, 10am-8pm Sun; 🍷 Bercy This national institution is a temple to the 'seventh art' and always leaves its foreign offerings – often rarely screened classics – in

their original versions. The association is a nonprofit collective and also holds debates, cultural events, workshops and exhibitions. For information on its exhibitions see [p157](#).

LA PAGODE [Map pp128–9](#)

☎ 01 45 55 48 48; 57bis rue de Babylone, 7e; adult/student €6/4; [M](#) Vaneau

A classified historical monument, this Chinese-style pagoda was shipped to France, piece by piece, in 1895 by Monsieur Morin (the then proprietor of Le Bon Marché), who had it rebuilt in his garden on rue de Babylone as a love present for his wife. The wife clearly wasn't that impressed – she left him a year later. But Parisian *cinéphiles* who flock here to revel in its eclectic programme are. La Pagode has been a fantastic, atmospheric cinema since 1931 – don't miss a moment or two in its bamboo-enshrined garden.

LE CHAMPO [Map pp110–11](#)

☎ 01 43 54 51 60; [www.lechampo.com](#), in French; 51 rue des Écoles, 5e; adult/student & under 20yr €7.50/6, 2pm matinée €5; [M](#) St-Michel or Cluny la Sorbonne

This is one of the most popular of the many Latin Quarter cinemas, featuring classics and retrospectives looking at the films of actors and directors such as Alfred Hitchcock, Jacques Tati, Alain Resnais, Frank Capra and Woody Allen. One of the two *salles* (cinemas) has wheelchair access.

MK2 BIBLIOTHÈQUE [Map pp162–3](#)

☎ 08 92 69 84 84; [www.mk2.com](#); 128-162 av de France, 13e; adult/student/under 18yr €9.90/6.80/5.90, everyone before noon €5.90; [M](#) Bibliothèque

This branch of the ever-growing chain (nine outlets at last count) next to the Bibliothèque Nationale is the most ambitious yet, with 14 screens, a trendy café, brasserie, restaurant, late-night bar and a trio of shops specialising in DVDs, books and comics and graphic novels respectively. MK2 cinemas show blockbusters and studio films, so there's always something for everyone. Don't miss the new branches [MK2 Quai de Seine](#) ([Map pp174–5](#); ☎ 08 92 69 84 84; 14 quai de Seine, 19e; [M](#) Jaurès or Stalingrad) and [MK2 Quai de Loire](#) ([Map pp174–5](#); ☎ 08 92 69 84 84; 7 quai de Loire, 19e; [M](#) Jaurès or Stalingrad), which face one another opposite the canal and are linked by ferry boat.

UGC CINÉ CITÉ LA DÉFENSE [Map p180](#)

☎ 08 92 70 00 00; [www.mk2.com](#); 15 Parvis de la Défense; adult/student/under 18yr €9.50/6.50/5.90, everyone before noon €5.50; [M](#) La Défense Grande Arche

One of a dozen-odd UGC cinemas in Paris, this modern 16-screen venue inside the Centre Commercial des Quatre Temps shows all the latest box-office hits, many in VO, ie invariably English. IMAX fans, don't get excited – the screen inside the dome is a regular one. Descend one floor to refuel with food and drink in style.

OPERA

The Opéra National de Paris (ONP) splits its performance schedule between the Palais Garnier, its original home (completed in 1875), and the modern Opéra Bastille, which opened in 1989. Both opera houses also stage ballets and classical-music concerts performed by the ONP's affiliated orchestra and ballet companies. The season runs from September to July.

OPÉRA BASTILLE [Map pp94–5](#)

☎ 08 92 89 90 90, 01 72 29 35 35; [www.opera-de-paris.fr](#), in French; 2-6 place de la Bastille, 12e; opera €5-150, ballet €5-80, concert tickets €10-65; [M](#) Bastille

Despite some initial resistance to this 3400-seat venue, the main opera house in the capital, it's now performing superbly. While less alluring than the Palais Garnier ([opposite](#)), at least all seats have a view of the stage. Ticket sales begin at a precise date prior to each performance, with different opening dates for bookings by telephone, online or from the [box office](#) ([Map pp94–5](#); 130 rue de Lyon, 11e; ☎ 10.30am-6.30pm Mon-Sat). Box office sales start 14 days before the performance date. The cheapest opera seats are €7 and are sold only from the box office. Note: on the first day they are released, box office tickets can be bought only from the opera house at which the performance is to be held. At Bastille, standing-only tickets for €5 are available 1½ hours before performances begin. Just 15 minutes before the curtain goes up, last-minute seats at reduced rates (usually €20 for opera and ballet performances) are released to people aged under 28 or over 60.

OPÉRA COMIQUE [Map pp82–3](#)

☎ 08 25 01 01 23; [www.opera-comique.com](#); place Boïeldieu, 2e; tickets €6-95; [M](#) Richelieu Drouot

This century-old hall has premiered many important French operas. It continues to host classic and less-known operas. Buy tickets online or from the [box office](#) (5 rue Favart, 2e; ☎ 11am-7pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm & 3-7pm Sat, 1hr before performances) on the southwest side of the theatre. Subject to availability, students and those under 28 can buy tickets for less than €15.

PALAIS GARNIER [Map pp148–9](#)

☎ 08 92 89 90 90; [www.opera-de-paris.fr](#); place de l'Opéra, 9e; [M](#) Opéra

The city's original opera house is smaller and more glamorous than its Bastille counterpart, and boasts perfect acoustics. Due to its odd shape, however, some seats have limited or no visibility. Ticket prices and conditions (including last-minute discounts) at the [box office](#) (☎ 11am-6.30pm Mon-Sat) are identical to those at the [Opéra Bastille](#) ([opposite](#)).

THEATRE

Most theatre productions, including those originally written in other languages, are performed in French in Paris. But there is the odd itinerant English-speaking troupe around, and some theatres, such as the celebrated Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord ([right](#)), stage the occasional English-language production.

COMÉDIE FRANÇAISE [Map p86](#)

☎ 08 25 10 16 80; [www.comedie-francaise.fr](#), in French; place Colette, 1er; tickets €5-37; ☎ [box office](#) 11am-6pm; [M](#) Palais Royal-Musée du Louvre Founded in 1680 under Louis XIV, the 'French Comedy' theatre bases its reper-

toire around the works of classic French playwrights such as Molière, Racine, Corneille, Beaumarchais, Marivaux and Musset, though in recent years contemporary and even – shock, horror! – non-French works have been staged.

There are three venues: the main [Salle Richelieu](#) on place Colette just west of the Palais Royal; the [Studio Théâtre](#) ([Map p86](#); ☎ 01 44 58 98 58; Galerie du Carrousel du Louvre, 99 rue de Rivoli, 1er; ☎ [box office](#) 2-5pm Wed-Sun; [M](#) Palais Royal-Musée du Louvre) and the [Théâtre du Vieux Colombier](#) ([Map pp116–17](#); ☎ 01 44 39 87 00; 21 rue du Vieux Colombier, 6e; ☎ [box office](#) 11am-6pm; [M](#) St-Sulpice).

Tickets for regular seats cost €11 to €37; tickets for the 65 places near the ceiling (€5) go on sale one hour before curtain time (usually 8.30pm) at the [discount ticket window](#) ([Map p86](#)) around the corner from the main entrance and facing place André Malraux. Those aged under 27 can purchase any of the better seats remaining one hour before curtain time for between €10 and €12 at the main box office.

THÉÂTRE DES BOUFFES DU NORD

[Map pp152–3](#)

☎ 01 46 07 34 50; [www.bouffesdunord.com](#), in French; 37bis blvd de la Chapelle, 10e; adult €12-24, student & under 25yr €10-20; ☎ [box office](#) 11am-6pm Mon-Sat; [M](#) La Chapelle

Perhaps best known as the Paris base of Peter Brooks' and Micheline Rozan's experimental troupes, this theatre in the northern reaches of the 10e and just north of the Gare du Nord also hosts works by other directors (eg Declan Donnellan, Stéphane Braunschweig, Krzysztof Warlikowski), as well as classical and jazz concerts.

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