



You wisely opted to live in the UK for the weather (!) but is it still such a conversation-starter and Plan B to all failed opening lines? Definitely! In the UK, you can talk about the weather til the cows come home! I still find it delightful that when in doubt, you can always bond over the weather. If someone disagrees with you over the weather, you know you've got a bad egg there. Step. Away. Mind you, recently, I've found weather to be quite the topic in Greece as well. The change in the climate makes for fascinating chat with taxi drivers and a welcome break to discussing the crisis.

Do you think stand-up comedy is finally gaining ground in Greece? As someone who performs in both English and Greek to different sets of audiences, a) Which language do you prefer performing in? b) which audience is more receptive? Stand-up in Greece is certainly becoming part of mainstream entertainment now, as more and more venues are looking for cheaper options with which to draw in customers. Also, there's a whole new generation which has grown up with easy access to English and American stand-up comedy online.

a. At the moment I prefer performing in English because it's the language I started stand-up in and I've also performed far more often in English than I have in Greek. But I'm hoping this will change to the point where I enjoy performing in both languages equally.
b. Well, Brits and Americans are more comedy savvy but once Greeks get into it, they laugh harder and louder. As it's still a fairly new art form for Greeks, it can sometimes take time to warm them up but the pay-off once they're on board is huge.

Tell us about 'Feta with the Queen'. With tours lined up in the UK, Australia and Greece, did you expect it to have the international success it is now enjoying?

It was my previous show, which was in Greek, that got me attention both in Greece and the UK. "Feta With The Queen" is my first solo show in English. I've decided to take it to Melbourne because it's one of the biggest comedy festivals in the world and because Melbourne has the biggest population of Greeks outside Greece. So I'm going international while retaining some Greekness which is what the show is all about! I talk a lot about my experiences as a Greek girl living in the UK and the show generally covers themes of identity and stereotyping and what it feels like to feel foreign to and part of two very different cultures. Jesus, that makes it sound like I'm giving a lecture. I'm not, it's funny. I promise. Really. Hello?

Do you think that the Greek crisis has inadvertently sparked an interest in all things Greek and has in some way been a boon to your career?

I don't know about an interest in all things Greek, but the crisis has certainly put Greece in the limelight with all its faults in sharp relief. And yes, of course the crisis has helped me. It's because of all this negativity surrounding Greece that "a Greek girl doing comedy in the UK" is seen as a positive story or something that's just different to the norm. For example, the month's run of my Greek show in Greece last year in March, coupled with my performing an excerpt of it in English at TEDx Thessaloniki in May, got me noticed and I ended up on the BBC discussing the crisis. Obviously, this raised my profile significantly. 

FETA

with the *Queen*

Katerina Vrana plays on her dual identities as a Greek living in Britain and deconstructs the idiosyncracies of both countries with a dash of British wryness and brazen Greekisms.

Women stand-up comedians are a rare breed. And for a good Greek girl to make it in the capital of witty, wry humour is quite a feat. Was this always your calling or did you just stumble into it? I've always enjoyed performing and I've always been drawn to stand-up but the path that got me here was acting, then comedy improv, followed by sketch comedy, and now stand-up. It was more of a natural progression rather than anything else. And my parents have been ridiculously supportive though er... deeply troubled by the financial aspect of my choices.

How challenging was it to break into London's competitive comedy scene?

Well, I was kind of part of it through the improv and the sketches so when I started doing stand-up, I just moved to another part of the scene rather than break into it. And even though I've been doing comedy for some time now, I'm not even close to being a household name in the UK so I'm part of the scene but haven't quite broken through to the mainstream.

Made in Greece VS Made in Britain:

Drizzle or scalding sun: scalding sun

Portobello or Monastiraki:

Both - portobello for shopping and restaurants, monastiraki for walking around and sitting outside to have a coffee

Robbie Williams or Sakis Rouvas:

neither, take them away

Evzones or English Bobbies:

both though the Bobbies might win over because they actually talk

Pub or mezedopoleio:

mezedopoleio - no contest - at all - ever

Stiff upper lip or arched eyebrows:

arched eyebrows

Olympiakos or Man U?

Oh this is a tricky one as I was raised a supporter of both... Olympiakos

Souvlaki or fish and chips:

THESE TWO ARE NOT COMPARABLE!!!! Souvlaki, of course! *mutters darkly in disgust about overbattered fish and soggy chips*

Queuing or Elbowing: Queuing

Marmite or tzatziki: Tzatziki

Sunday roast or Paidakia: Paidakia

Heathrow or El. Venizelos airport?

Well, Heathrow Terminal 5. Ok, no, overall Heathrow. I like how in Heathrow the security checks are the first thing you do, then you go on to the shops/food/gates. Whereas in El Vel they're the last thing you do so once you pass security check there is nothing to do but sit at your gate. Yawn.

