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## Festival Bytes

### A journey through the world of festivals 2014

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## INTRODUCTION

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The Festival Bytes [festivalbytes.eu] blog of the European Festivals Association (EFA) is a space for telling stories about festivals. It provides insights into festivals, places, and encounters and discusses topics such as community engagement and how festivals assume their global responsibilities through their artistic programme. What did we, the festival community, experience in festivals in 2014? This booklet shares some of our bloggers' highlights.

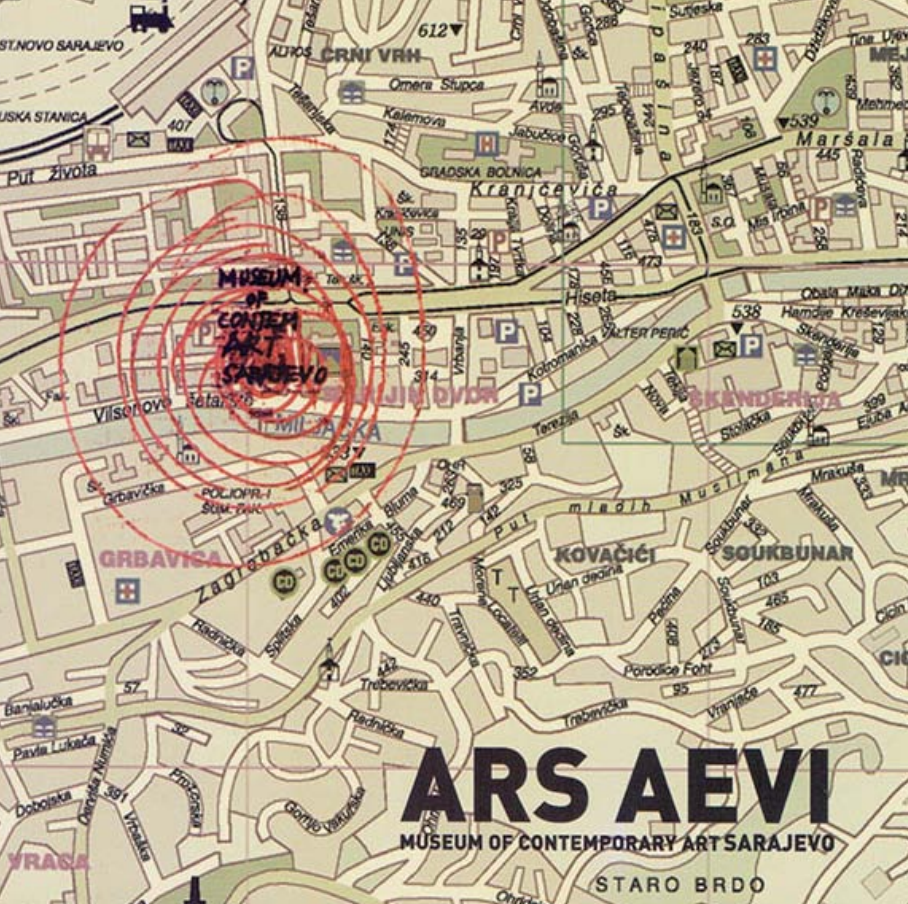
Stories cover festival experiences from around the globe. The bloggers – journalists, writers, EFA members, Alumni of the Atelier for Young Festival Managers, team members of the EFA Secretariat, friends, colleagues and festival lovers – share the passion for the arts and for festivals. The European Festivals Association offers and amplifies these voices on Festival Bytes, EFA's digital outlet for festival stories.

In 2014, our bloggers gave insights into festivals and artistic creation in Ankara, Edinburgh, Helsinki, Izmir, Lisbon, Sarajevo, and many more.

They also discussed festival issues such as the state of play of early music festivals, the role and responsibilities of festival directors, the importance of context and place, communication issues as well as the relation of arts and digital technology.

Last but not least, the participants of the 2014 Ateliers for Young Festival Managers live-blogged throughout the 7-day training programme to keep EFA's larger audience engaged in the event. This booklet includes behind-the-scenes insights, questions raised during the Atelier, and the inspiration sparked by this unique gathering of what one participant once called a "united nation of festivals".

Enjoy these 2014 highlights, visit the blog Festival Bytes for more, and be inspired to attend festivals big and small, far and near, in 2015!



Jelle Dierickx, 20 March 2014

## SARAJEVO 2014: READING THE SIGNS

Many hills and buildings of all kind, partly hidden in mist. That's the first impression of Sarajevo seen from the airplane. Once landed chaos rules. People have taken way too many suitcases, they are already packing while the plane is still hovering to its final position and the stewards are lost in translation. It will be fun in Sarajevo, that's clear.

For many West-Europeans, Sarajevo is a blind dot. Everybody was talking about the city in 1984 (the Winter Olympics) and in the early nineties (the war Europe should be ashamed of in every possible sense). Not many know about the metamorphosis the city went through in the twenty years since. And it will probably go through many more changes during the next decades.

That is at least the wish of the first person I speak to once landed, taxi driver Selmir. He expresses pride while talking about his city, about the house of his grandfather in the hills, about the old town and the many religions and cultures living once again in reasonable peace with one another. He also talks about the war and about the demonstrations going on the last months. He complains about the lack of jobs and about the greediness and the narrow minded nationalism of the politicians. All these topics will pop up again and again in talks with young and proud citizens of this remarkable city.

**(metamorphosis) if they knew / silkworms would /  
weave webs / for spiders\***

After leaving my bags in Hotel Europe (with a phenomenal view on the Old Town) I own it to my younger Self to walk first to the Lion Cemetery. That's where Admira and Bato are buried. They sadly became known as the Romeo and Juliet of Sarajevo. Having a permission to leave the city in 1993 they were both killed by snipers anyway. Admira lived for ten more minutes, hugging her love. For days the bodies were left in the open, showing the world this was not a war about religion or a country, but a

war between monsters without any morality. As a sixteen-year-old I was extremely moved by this terrible story. I kept the newspaper articles up till today and brought them even with me to my first visit to the town which was every day in the news during several years of my teenage years. The story is part of my childhood awareness: I learned there was an unknown world within Europa (which consisted for me at that time of the Benelux, the UK, Germany and France), I learned about brutality inherent to humankind and I learned about the manipulation of the media (be it for good or bad).

It turned out to be a rather long walk to the grave of Admira and Bato, but I needed somehow to honour them before visiting their city as a tourist. A candle cannot awake them from the dead, but they are alive in the memory of many people.

***you feel it pass / like a gasp\****

Enough now about the bullet holes, the tunnel of hope underneath the airport that was the way out of the city in times of the siege. From the spirit of Admira I went to the very alive presence of Leyla at Galerie Java. With passion she speaks about the presented prints of Lea Jerlagic and she suggests I should visit the Ars Aevi Art Depot. It turned out to be one of the best tips ever.

Ars Aevi is a collaboration between museums and artists from all over. On the one hand donating art to the depot in Sarajevo, on the other hand helping with an international network. It could give the city a new heart, or reanimate the old one. The red banner outside the museum says "Ars Aevi is open" as a reaction to the red banner outside of the national museum of art which says "The museum is closed". The future of Sarajevo is waiting to reconnect with the past but is struggling to cope with the now. The artists and museums donating to the Ars Aevi Depot took their responsibility at least a decade ago. Being friends, partners, having a never-ending conversations. Architect Renzo Piano even donated a design for the restructuring of the depot into a museum that could host the art works by Kosuth, Beuys, Panamarenko, Kapoor in a vibrant manner. That's the positive side of the story. The negative side is that the

project is now in a kind of frozen state. Being in a country with a hot temperament it is strange to find things frozen. In a tourist guide it is written proudly that Sarajevo was “resisting the madness of war through culture.” Twenty years later there is still enough madness that needs to be tackled. There is a lot of talk about Sarajevo as a mini-Europe before Europe, Sarajevo as a Europe within Europe, Sarajevo as a “European Jerusalem”, Sarajevo as the city where mosques, synagogues and churches of all kind stand next to each other, Sarajevo that has the possibility to rise as a phoenix if it achieves the right context, Sarajevo as a place of melancholy and resignation, Sarajevo as-Sarajevo as-Sarajevo as...

After a walk in the hills around the city it is time for the first meeting. With alumni of the Ateliers for Young Festival Managers (Görlitz, Varna, Izmir, Singapore, Ljubljana,...). The idea is that the visions of all these young festival makers combined can be a powerful and inspirational tool in spreading the values of art, culture and humankind. Instead of spending too much time in the cellar of the hotel (without any windows) we decide to visit the Ars Aevi Art Depot (again) as a starting point for our own discussions. The day after we visited one of the demonstrations that have been going on the past weeks. We talked to some of the demonstrators to try and understand what moves them, what are their frustrations and their hopes. As festival makers mostly do when they work in a city or community: trying to understand what's the heart beating beneath it, trying to contribute to the bloodstream of that specific community. We cannot understand the complex situation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in a few days but at least we can listen, look, talk and write about our experiences. In our alumni talks about “why we do what we do” it was about understanding culture, about people, impact, poetry, interaction, articulation, going beyond the aesthetics – making things fresh again. The Atelier we took part in was for most of us an “inspirational conference”. As festival alumni we can add to a “dropbox of ideas” and focus on advocacy (capacities, knowledge, trainings) to other young festival and art makers (“young” not being age related).

***in the name of who are you?\****

After the official welcome speeches and the first part of the Sarajevo Conversations in the hotel the “big dance of the peers” started. The Sarajevo Winter Festival proved to be a gallant host (offering concerts, guided tours and several visions on this complex city). The official conversations would continue the day after. Of course there were many voices, be it the ones of Nele Hertling, Jonathan May, Senadin Musabegovic or Lejla Alimanovic. Let me take the liberty to highlight the voice of Amila Ramovic. She gave an inspiring speech about her projects related to the city which was ours for a few days. She started with a historic overview of the work “The Material of Culture” by Kosuth: Illyric tribes – Roman empire – Eastern Roman empire – Slavic tribes – catholic church as an institution – a specific church of Bosnia – Ottoman empire for 400 years – Jews integrated in society (not in a ghetto) – “while people in Western-Europe had Wagner, we had men with moustaches and swords” – Austrian-Hungarian empire – mix of everything – World War I and II – the creation of Yugoslavia – communism – creation of the independent state of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1992. Sarajevo as a layered city formed alongside a river. With all the layers still visible, one power just added to the old powers.

Amila continues: “Sarajevo was never proud about its multiculturalism since it was normal. The moment the word multiculturalism turned up the problems started. Raising the question of identity. During the war this mix of identities was literally attacked and resulted in creating artificial identities represented by a kind of official folklore. Baklava suddenly became a Muslim cake, instead of being just a nice cake. But it’s the mess, the chaos that is the speciality of Bosnia. It is a kind of small Jerusalem in Europe.”

The projects of Amila are manifold: she is the executive director of the already mentioned art depot Ars Aevi. She organises the Sarajevo Chamber Music Festival, bringing together young people from the region with international musicians; combining artistic production and education. Bosnian musicians are working together with the best possible teachers from all over the world. The concerts are for free and a “classroom for the audience”. As if that wasn’t enough yet, Amila is also connected to the Sarajevo Sonic Studio which wants to show the role of a composer in society. “There are only five composers in Bosnia-Herzegovina since there is no need for them in a culture that officially tends to promote the folkloric arts and traditional music.”



Amila is one of the courageous and inspiring people that are bringing the world to Sarajevo as a fresh wind, but who are also showing how the melting pot of Sarajevo can be a mirror to Europe. In a bad and in a good way. Depending on how one reads the signs.

As Kathrin Deventer, Secretary General of the European Festivals Association, writes in her text *Sarajevo, Rising to the Occasion*: "The story of Sarajevo teaches us that time and space are fluid, in constant development; as is our opportunity to position us, citizens, in this space: our memory, awareness and our perspective on space and time give us a responsibility to take an active role in giving shape to our time and space." Thanks to Kathrin and her lovely crew, thanks to Ibrahim and his team, the EFA brought many festival makers to this city in a specific space and time, rising to the occasion, reshaping that specific space and time, giving the possibility to re-read the signs.

***the song of songs / will remain / even when words / vanish\****

*\*The (parts) of the poems are from the book "Signs" by Ibrahim Spahic, Director of the Sarajevo Winter Festival (with kind permission of the author), Arka Press, Sarajevo (2006). Translation by Ulvija Tanović.*



Claudia Galhos, 25 September 2014

## **FROM STRANGERS TO FAMILY**

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There is a festival in old Lisbon neighbourhoods that makes art with the spices of multiculturalism. What is a festival? The question is as relevant nowadays as is questioning the trend of making art with or for the community. Sometimes the two directions come together: festivals that include the community and which are made thinking of involving the community (I won't even go into discussing the concept of community here, I leave that for another occasion...). At the base of that categorisation and trend there is usually a simple market reasoning: the mere idea of following a more popular genre of arts to attract more audience and be seen as more useful. Why? Because it conveys the economic pressure of art for a purpose, art that is useful, either for tourism and masses of audiences or to concretise the idea that art is transformative and pedagogic and that by involving communities it fulfils its utility and annuls the spectre of the so famously proclaimed by various intellectuals, such as Oscar Wilde "art has no use", meaning that art has an intrinsic value in itself, for the sake of art, a value that should never be questioned because it is its most precious benefit.

All this because of a particular festival that happens annually in Lisbon and which, by being a festival and being a clear example of involving the community of certain multicultural charismatic neighbourhoods, uses these tools and art in its most popular form, but with a twist: art at its best also for the sake of art. The festival is called Todos – Caminhadas de Culturas (Everybody – Cultures' walks).

The concept was created in 2009 by Miguel Abreu with the support of the city of Lisbon. Miguel Abreu is a name related to theatre in Portugal, as a producer, programmer, creator and performer. For the concretisation of his vision he invited a couple of well-known Portuguese programmers, Madalena Victorino (choreographer, with a respected work and forerunner in the area of educational artistic services in cultural equipment) and Giacomo Scalisi, an Italian actor turned into a 'Portuguese at heart' programmer that loves art as a powerful tool to create encounters between artists and audiences. In Madalena Victorino's early works as a choreographer, she already defended that art is part of life at the same level as food and the ritual of eating and all one's other daily activities.

The festival Todos existed for its first four years in a historical quarter of Lisbon, a very problematic neighbourhood, in which the desire to enter always came with a sense

of threat, because of drugs, prostitution and criminality. They entered that quarter slowly, creating relations, trying to know people and were able, through the festival, to make the hidden rich multiculturalism that lived in the city visible to all population. This was why since the first festival in 2009 there has been a project of photographic portraits by Luís Pavão where the photos were exposed in huge dimensions on the facades of the buildings. Through this simple gesture, the diversity, the private and personal lives, the activities, artistic and cultural diversity from all parts of the world had a very public face and body that made that area more familiar and friendly.

Of course it was not just photography, and the conquest of trust, in both directions – between outsiders and the inhabitants of the place – took time. Four years still left room for development but they were nonetheless able to transform mentalities and narrow the distance between different communities through a very emblematic festival. This festival, in the same programme, proposed lunches in illegal Chinese restaurants (family houses that are known to a small underground network of people for serving real traditional Chinese food in their homes), and different kinds of concerts, for example one in an old church staring the inhabitants of a nursing home. Other examples are open air performances, for the masses, internationally renowned shows from new circus to music. And the multiculturalism that characterised that historical area of Lisbon had a sensitive but rich reflection on the programme of the festival.

Four years later the city invested in a reconstruction of that area which is today one of the new emblematic and trendy neighbourhoods of Lisbon. If you ask Madalena Victorino or Giacomo Scalisi how they feel about it, they say the transformation was careful and well done, but beyond the frontiers of the main squares there is a maze of narrow streets where most things didn't change and where it is still difficult to enter and which is in a strange state of being, as if waiting for something to happen, like water in a boiling pot.

In 2013 they moved the festival to another area of Lisbon, where the multiculturalism is not as evident at first sight as it was in Martim Moniz, Intendente and Mouraria. Since last year they work in the neighbourhoods of São Bento (a more bourgeois quarter where the Parliament is located) and more popular residential areas, such as Santa Catarina and Poço dos Negros. There is, as there is in Lisbon when we think of

the identity of the city, a miscegenation that is of different social levels and of diverse geographic origins of people. And last year, with the pretext of the festival, they started to know the dynamics of life and commercial activity in the area, by meeting each person or family that lives or works there. A large concept of family is the theme of this year's photographic project that is seen from a distance on the façades of the building of the head office, which they call House of the Worlds.

The community is completely at the heart of what they are doing, but not for its own sake but because it is related to the concept of art they believe in. Madalena says: "Arts are a weapon to best live all this constant surprise that life is." For Giacomo the discussion about art with the community doesn't matter, but he recognises that in what he does – either as a programmer or as a creator – there is always some kind of community inside it.

This year, in three intensive days (12-14 September) from morning 'til dusk, they designed a cartography of artistic-life events inspired by the concept of "people", having in mind that Portugal is celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Revolution that ended the dictatorship. The festival starts with a concert of five orchestras directed by the musician Miquel Bernat (from the collective Drumming) on the stairs of the Parliament. It includes a conference-performance – Maximum Wage – by choreographer Vera Mantero in the Parliament's senate room, and the director of the theatre company Teatro do Vestido, Joana Craveiro, presenting the piece Returns, Exiles, and Some that Stayed in the Superior Dance School, which used to be a palace. It is an intensive programme that includes performances happening in the local stores, food from different cultures, fado played on the piano by the Croatian Vera Prokic, open air cinema, or a talking corridor dispersed through the streets and gardens of that area – which will make audible excerpts from Thomas More's Utopia. The end is a wedding feast, where, for example, local people will cook traditional dishes from their different countries of origin, with music from the Todos Orchestra. This will be a performance-dining-party imagined and directed by three Portuguese theatre artists: André Amálio, Cláudia Andrade and Raquel Castro. Little by little, the life hidden inside the halls of the houses and inside the narrow and meandering streets of that area of Lisbon is opening itself to the exterior. We can sense it already, mingling more with outsiders. Through a festival that values art as a special place for encounters, a part of old Lisbon is showing its characteristics and is allowing itself to be known.



Ceyda Söderblom, 13 November 2014

**BOXING HAVIS AMANDA!**

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Magicians and illusion have always attracted my attention. I am not talking about the ones pulling a rabbit from an empty hat, but the ones staging incredible illusions or creating effects of seemingly impossible happenings to trick our perception. I am a big fan of David Copperfield, one of the most famous illusionists of our times, and admire his show making the Statue of Liberty disappear. If you google it, you will find thousands of results about his tricks. What about his motivation? What was the reason behind Copperfield's decision to make the Statue of Liberty vanish? What kind of challenge is that? Against what? Why is this attempt to make a statue, listed in the world heritage of UNESCO, disappear, even for a short while, so fascinating for people? Would it be because we see ourselves as individual-owners of the tangible elements of our shared social existence? I realised that monuments and public sculptures have been niggling me more than I am aware of, and fortunately I am not the only person bothering herself with those questions. This became evident when I had a chance to see Manta Hotel of Helsinki.

Presented by Helsinki City Art Museum and Helsinki Festival as a joint project, Hotel Manta of Helsinki was a one-room hotel, the coolest place to stay overnight in the middle of the city. The work of the Japanese artist Tatzu Nishi, being not only an eye-catching event of the festival programme, also offered its guests an opportunity of sharing their beds with Havis Amanda. Beautiful Havis Amanda (in Finnish Havis Amanda or just Manta), the statue by sculptor Ville Vallgren, has been standing on the Market Square of the capital of Finland for more than a century. Nishi's Hotel Manta that was open from 15 August to 12 October 2014, in my opinion, was a most exciting experiences; totally crazy, a bit absurd.

The room was available for booking per night and open as an exhibition for visitors daily from 11:30 am to 5:30 pm. Nishi who is keen on creating private space or home-like feeling around a public sculpture, monument or part of a building, constructed a 40m<sup>2</sup> room where Amanda rises in the middle of a king-size bed. The room, providing private bathroom and facilities of any luxury hotel, was furnished with authentic Finnish products; wall-paper inspired by characters from the national epic Kalevala and Artek design modern tables.

Not surprisingly, this provocative work of art, turning a public statue into a private experience for hotel guests and an exhibition for ticket holders resulted in a heated

debate among Helsinkiers. I should digress here, just to explain how this charming lady is important for the inhabitants of the city. She is a symbol of the capital and the centre of the local May Day (in Finnish: Vappu) tradition, the biggest public celebration of Finland. The "crowning" of Havis Amanda by putting a traditional student's cap on the statue, is usually witnessed by more than 20.000 people and kicks off the event every year. So, in a few words, hiding her away must be a tough decision to make. Recalling the outrage that happened in 1908 when the nude Havis Amanda was unveiled, Erik Söderblom, Director of the Helsinki Festival, in his own illusionary explanation states: "In those days letting her stay there was a provocation. Now the provocation was taking her away. It is funny how something that became invisible because it always was there again becomes visible by making it invisible by putting it into a box. Our aim with this operation was all in all to give the citizens of Helsinki a possibility to rediscover their city."

Yet, during a friend's gathering I found myself in the middle of a fierce discussion as soon as I mentioned that I booked the room of Hotel Manta. One of my friends was against that pay-stay experience. Although he accepted that the artistic idea was stunning, it should, according to him, have been free of charge. The guests who wished to stay in the hotel should instead have been selected by a free lottery. From his own point of view he might be right, but the whole idea hit me much more deeply. It triggered different questions in my mind, such as: Who owns the city? Or more specifically: Who is the owner of the hundreds of statues standing in the squares of any city? Are they property of the municipalities or of the community? If we possess them, why do we ignore them until they are hidden away from our sight? Whatever answer you give, initiating such a discussion is something arts must practice. This is why I loved Hotel Manta of Helsinki. I enjoyed the room for a night and slept next to the proud lady, enjoying with her the spectacular view opening onto the port.







Hasan Isikli, 6 June 2014

**WAITING FOR ONE'S FESTIVAL**

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Festivals are people's desires. Everybody awaits their festival for a whole year while the daily life continues with its regular sorrows, worries, happiness, anger and frequently apathy. When the festival starts it's the time of Dionysos: the pleasure, folly, surprise and new sensations. For the sake of being respected in society this part of humans is usually repressed due to one's cultural codes. Hence, one's festival is the duration when the subjects reconnect to their social and physical environment by new discoveries and by multiplying their perception. Some people await a wedding of a relative so that they can see other members of the family and friends. Some people wait for a carnival where they enjoy themselves and get involved in a city's tradition that transfers its values from old generations to the new ones. And other people wait for their art festivals of which they expect new surprises and discoveries each time. I am one of those waiting for an art festival: the International Izmir Festival, called İzmir Festivali by the locals.

I don't remember when exactly I attended the festival for the first time. I evoke a memory: I sit on a stone seat at Ephesus amphitheatre, warmed up by the heat of the sun. It's a summer night. Slowly, a mild breeze is coming from the sea beyond the plain. I see the hills embracing us; the spectators and the plain laying down behind the stage. I hear the crickets which play their pastoral concert. I hear the bells of the sheep returning from the mountains, and a violinist playing a solo. Suddenly I feel it; I am there at that moment.

In the course of the years, the Izmir Festival has become a series of summer memories. I used to go to the concerts at the Çeşme amphitheatre or the castle. I few scenes I remember from that teenage period: a white owl flying over the castle like in the film Harry Potter during the harp concert of Şirin Pancaroğlu, or the salty taste of popcorn during another concert.

After seven years of studies away from Izmir I was detached completely although I was still proud to be from Izmir. I was officially a local but I was merely a foreigner in my hometown, surrounded by prejudices and big concrete blocks. I decided to get engaged with a cultural organisation and remembered the Izmir Festival. I applied as a volunteer and got the job.

To work in the organisation was a different experience. Technical staff, artists and

coordinators were interacting constantly. My first impression was that there were sometimes misunderstandings due to intense and rapid communication. We were sharing the same event and place but had different perceptions because of our positioning and personal background. Under stress, I think 'A', then I may say 'B', and a colleague would understand 'C'. The second complicated issue: although I did not have an official status I was supposed to coordinate the transfer check-list to the reluctant drivers sponsored by the metropolitan municipality of Izmir. For them, 'that festival thing was a luxury, exclusive and unnecessary'. Concerning the artists, it was another complicated story. Each artist had their own personality, culture, and expectations laid down in the contract, or not; often I did not know about the arrangements. What were their borders, what mine?

When I study the websites of other EFA member festivals I understand better why some artists are often surprised by the venues' conditions. In fact, many of them perform in festivals which are organised in 'classical' venues, such as elegant concert halls, popular churches, royal or not royal opera buildings... Yes, yes, the Izmir Festival is also an art festival organising mainly concert of symphonic orchestra, chamber music and quartets. However, it is a summer festival in the Eastern Mediterranean basin and the venues are often challenging: antique sites in the countryside, excavation areas, forgotten churches, castles or open air amphitheatres in the city centre.

Many audience members, including me, are motivated by the idea to attend a festival that take place in an extraordinary space other than regular concert halls. The challenge to organise an event and to perform as an artist deserves to be appreciated: imam's song may come from the mosque around the corner, electro-pop music may be diffused from a nearby wedding hall, a car may honk the horn, planes may fly over the stage, or other 'natural' elements may have to be taken in account: the wind, some friendly street dogs crossing the scene, mother cats protecting their kittens, hunting bats, confused by the spotlights birds may fly into the wall... Indeed, if one thinks about the city's location and the budget, the Izmir Festival is a challenge in a city which struggles between the past and the present, tradition and modernisation.

In 2013, I returned to the Izmir Festival as an ethnographer. While the audience members were comparing the events and sharing their memories I was collecting my data about their interaction with the places and the performances. These historical

places, which were silent and invisible in their lives, came alive during the concert and meaningful for the whole audience.

While my head was turning around these issues, I had ultimately become aware of myself; in fact, we all played our roles: from a worker who installs the setting, to the artists who come to share their emotions and knowledge. We were there to interact culturally with the space and give meaning to a space. The antique sites were remembered and revived in our present time, whereas other places in the urban areas changed their destiny to be a grey zone. As we associate positive experiences with these patrimonies, we feel connected to them. Through the overwhelming softness of a summer night and contemplative moment of an artistic performance, we embrace all the elements coming from the environment.

The Izmir Festival has become my motivation to re-discover and connect again to Izmir. When I experience a historical place, I confront myself with the past of the city hidden by the contemporary life conditions. I take sensations from the performances and give back emotions to the place. I feel that I am unique but also a part of the continuity. There may have been a noble person, a tradesman or a peasant sitting next to me on one of the warm, stone seats. He may also have heard the crickets and the bells of the sheep. Which performance did he see?

I am waiting for the Izmir Festival to start. This summer, I am looking forward to discovering other festivals of EFA. I will open other boxes and the festivals' pasts will be unfolded. I will observe their communities, their places and their stories. I will discover other cities. First stop, though: the Izmir Festival.



Hasan Isikli, 15 July 2014

**YOUR ARTISTS ARE OUR ARTISTS**

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“You have a flight tomorrow morning? Close your eyes and try to sleep now.” He looked at me surprised. Then he smiled and slowly closed his eyes.

A Polish musician, a member of Sinfonia Varsovia that had just performed at the International Izmir Festival, was sitting next to me. The bus was going down on a dark, silent road. We had just left Ephesus to go back to Izmir city. Before falling asleep I was wondering: “Why do I always have this feeling of attachment to the artists?” After all, these artists were the professionals who came to do their job. They were paid and they performed for the festival audience, and then they were again on their way to another festival.

I remember another moment back in 2009: I was in the office of the Izmir Festival’s coordinator Ceyda Berk waiting for departure to the airport. I looked through a popular music magazine where eminent artists were photographed in a most elite way possible with artistic lighting, nice dresses, appropriate make-up and necessary Photoshop corrections. Then I spotted him: Zubin Mehta. I mean the Zubin Mehta who gave a concert last summer, the guy that us volunteers called “Zubiş” (-iş: (-oş, -uş) the local way to form a diminutive of names i.e. Hasan – Hasuş). I turned to Ms. Berk and said: “You see, I feel as if he is not a foreigner but the neighbour’s son!” She agreed absently from behind her computer: “Yes, yes, I know the feeling.”

Festivals, especially the ones with remarkable performances, embed themselves in our memories. These performances have an associative role. When the place and the artists are coded, they become a part of our environment and we adopt them. Hence, when we see the news about those artists in the media, we feel happy as if they were close friends.

I would like to remind of the discourse in EFA BOOKS 4: intercultural dialogue is not fiction. Thanks to a performance, the artists and the audience from different cultural backgrounds meet in the same place. The image of unreachable artists is subverted and they become human beings of flesh and blood. They become part of the cognition map of home and our ‘locale’.

As a volunteer at the Izmir Festival, I had the chance to interact more intensively with the artists than any spectator. Thus, which performance may assert this impact of becoming ‘locale’? In other words, which creative organisation is able to involve the

spectators in the performance in a way that they may interact more intensively with the artists and the place?

Festivals are created places. They take over some usual and unusual places that we pass in our daily lives. As Jan Figel' and Hugo De Greef tackle in EFA BOOKS 3, an art festival has the responsibility to create a place for the artists and their challenging innovations. I'd also like to quote Bernard Faivre d'Arcier: "The real role of a festival is to help to artists daring and engage the projects."

In addition to this, I would postulate the need to keep a balance between the spectators' expectations and the artists' plan by offering them to step out of their comfort zone for a few hours. In that sense, a festival manager needs sensitivity to these subjects. This may rely on some common and unwritten rules as well as long term contracts.

The morning after the Sinfonia Varsovia concert, I and Ms. Berk went to the hotel where the artists were staying. I assisted all the artists taking the buses with their luggage. We left the hotel and arrived at the airport. Just shortly afterwards, the conductor and composer Krzysztof Penderecki arrived accompanied by a colleague. This silent man was the composer of the Symphony 2 that I had listened to at Ephesus Amphitheatre the previous night.

The antique theatre had come alive with the deep sounds of percussions and wind instruments. We were literally vibrated by his art, and now he was calmly walking to the building. Considering that he came back late from Ephesus, and hence didn't sleep much, this contrast could be understood. His eyes seemed worried presumably because of his flight, the equipment, another hotel and another rehearsal somewhere else, all in the same day.

I was wondering if the artists might lose the notion of place when they rush from one festival to the next, so many of them popping up everywhere throughout the summer. For an instant, I wanted to hug him and say: "Everything is gonna be alright, dear, just enjoy wherever you go!" But no, I acted as I had been taught: I shook his hand, smiled professionally, and said: "Thank you for the beautiful concert. See you in the future somewhere on the planet." He gazed at me for a moment as if he was seeking something. Then, slowly, he turned his back and walked away.



I didn't hug Penderecki. Because a hug might be a mistake according to those elite and some local values that we have adopted. On the way back home I thought about how our actions are shaped by our social environment. The artists are not our relatives despite people romantically saying that 'we are one big family.' Nonetheless, we are connected now. This connection could grow slowly through other projects, themes or more concrete components: a specific smell, an everyday object or a building that would remind us later of that performance, that artist and that culture.

It seems that these art festivals which give places to the artists produce a cycle: through their appearance, the artists add new meaning to the venues; we, the locals, are inspired by this and change our environment giving birth to the places of desire.



Eva Nunes, 27 May 2014

## **CULTURE AND CONFLICT: HOPE AND OPTIMISM IN TIMES OF DARKNESS**

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On 13 May 2014, the European Festivals Association (EFA) was delighted to welcome the Edinburgh International Festival (EIF), and Sir Jonathan Mills, to what has become a tradition: to present the year's festival programme in Belgium. As EFA Secretary General Kathrin Deventer stated, "it is a great opportunity for us to share the relevance of an artistic programme with the audience, artists, festival directors and policy makers."

This year, representatives of the European Commission and the Education, Culture and Audio-visual Executive Agency, the European Parliament, the Flemish Community, and the Creative Europe Desks, amongst others, joined us to share an inspiring programme that, in the words of Sir Jonathan Mills, "presented almost exactly 100 years since the outbreak of the First World War, [...] is a compelling exploration of the impact of history, most especially during periods of warfare and unrest, and the immense influence exerted by a powerful few on issues of national identity, the forging of our cultures, and the lives of people throughout the world."

For EFA it was also a special moment as we were welcomed by the Kaaitheater in what we hope to be the first of many collaborations.

Guy Gypens, General & Artistic Director of the Kaaitheater, welcomed Sir Jonathan Mills and EFA, and highlighted the importance of the connection between art and what's going on in the world being a driving force for a programme such as the EIF's.

In this relation between arts and societal forces Mr. Gypens reminded that when EIF was created it was "a child of WWII" and at that time world leaders and local practitioners understood the importance of festivals and arts and culture. One can ask a lot of questions why, in the current wasteland of ecological and financial economic crisis, this evident relationship and tool arts and culture can be to do something about it is not so obvious anymore.

EFA has been working on how we can enforce the role of arts and culture in the thinking about the future of Europe. This is one of the facets of EFA's work that shall continue to be developed in collaboration with EFA's highly experienced festival directors, the young festival managers issuing from the Atelier, the members of the European House for Culture, the European Commission and the European Parliament and colleagues from different areas.

Sir Jonathan Mills began his presentation to the 50 guests present by stressing that it is especially relevant that a festival born after the ashes of WWII thinks about the centenary of WWI. When we think about the world we live in where everything is quantified to the nth degree these impulses triggered by the arts are fundamental as they give us a sense that not everything relevant in the world is explainable, utilitarian or easily codifiable in a simple formula.

When we think about the bits that we lost through conflict it would only be through poetry and music and dance that some sense of trust and hope and optimism could be achieved.

In the relation culture has to conflict quite often artists are at their most sublime in the darkest moments of our history. In the 2014 edition of the Edinburgh International Festival you may find yourself encountering many examples of this. To remember the creations Sir Jonathan Mills presented have a look at the festival brochure.

Before the closing of this moment the guests generously participated in the discussion asking questions and reflecting on the audience, the promotion and the relevance of festivals in the larger local, national and European context.

Sir Jonathan Mills will, after this edition, dedicate himself to composing his 3rd opera, for which we wish him an inspired and exciting process. We look forward to the premiere!

For now we can enjoy this year's Edinburgh International Festival (tickets can be booked online on the EIF website) and remember the Brussels presentation with some photos.

Thank you everybody who joined us!





Kathrin Deventer, 30 April 2014

## COMPOSING LIFE

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Following a concert in the framework of MusMA (Music Masters on Air), the European Broadcasting Festival at the KlaraFestival in Brussels in March this year, the next event of MusMA took place in Ankara from 24-27 April, at the occasion of the Ankara International Music Festival. In four days and with five intense workshop sessions and two concerts, a stage was set for new compositions and composers to meet, exchange, and present their work: Can Bekir Bilir (proposed by the Ankara International Music Festival, Turkey), Orazio Sciortino (proposed by the Emilia Romagna Festival, Italy), Daan Janssens (proposed by the KlaraFestival, Belgium); Adrien Tsilogiannis (proposed by the Festival de Wallonie, Belgium), Mikolaj Majkusiak (proposed by the International Festival Wroclaw Cantans, Poland), and Jani Golob (proposed by the Ljubljana Festival, Slovenia).

Seven to eight new compositions came out of MusMA this year. The core aim of the workshops is to allow for a space for composers to meet, create, test, develop, and discuss their compositions. People who entered the hardly filled workshop hall at the Contemporary Arts Centre of Çankaya District Municipality might have wondered: why? What for? A few people, no concert, no ticketing? But a few composers to meet; and a few musicians spending time together and work on new compositions?

Outside the Contemporary Arts Centre, protestors demonstrated for the persistence of Islam, of the values of Islam in society in Turkey. Going out for a cigarette, the question was there for me: what are we doing inside this hall discussing scores, the immersion in the arts, connection to the moment...? Is there a disconnection from real life happening? A disconnection from everyday life? Reality? The world we live in?

Composers are creative artists. They observe society, and translate societal issues into musical language. A lot is written into music – maybe one understands only fully understands years and years later... The composers came to Ankara and discussed a piece of music. A sensitive issue: facing and allowing criticism and suggestions for development. It is a real co-creation process, a conversation. It is beautiful to see how one can listen to and speak about compositions, their interpretations, musical languages, the tempo, the inner ear, the dynamics, the character of the sounds; and also about the relation between composer and performance, the link to society, the question what is avant-guard, the search for the new. Where does it come from? Maybe from the past? A mix? The fragments in time?

I realised that these musical questions reflect philosophical discussions about our times, our fragmentation, the decomposition of our identities as human beings. Well, I am not a composer, nor a philosopher, nor a musicologist. But these were the questions that came to my mind when following the process of the workshops.

Societies move, they act. People act with a certain set of values guiding their action. I am convinced that the beauty of music, of a moment created by a piece of art, can invite people to stand still. It can change people and define people's values: life is made of moments! The more diverse and surprising, the more these moments take people out of their comfort zones, expose them to something they do not know, enrich their vocabulary of emotions, aesthetics, and the more they open people to "the other", "the other inside of us". Art, not all, but potentially all, has a transformative power because it makes people stand still for a while.

Once more I realised that process and time are invaluable, immeasurable. They are magic! And the more we want to explain them, defend them, justify them with arguments, the more the magic disappears. You cannot change the world, but you can change one person's emotion, mind. That's all!

What can we do? What do we have to do?

It might be a little contribution, but we do our jobs to make this world a better place, right? This is a big opportunity and responsibility for a festival: The festival is the connector between the artist and the audience and creates a stage to stand still for a while. It is the stage in a certain space and time presenting arts that is relevant to that space in that time. Festival makers need to follow the footprints of the creators. They need to offer a stage for research and exchange, for risk and failure.

These are our topics at the Atelier for Young Festival Managers. How to create the best conditions, time and space for artistic pieces to be discovered by the audience? Festival directors need to understand if the piece that is offered is of that quality, of that feeling, of that message, of that intention which the festival director wants to deliver with his or her festival. He or she will think about if this piece will be able to create a unique moment for audiences to immerse and connect meanings to it.

Composers need platforms to express themselves. I believe that this is what a festival



can offer: a laboratory for creation. MusMA goes beyond a concert series; it is a real creation process with composers of different backgrounds, stories, histories that have time for four days to be together, and work, and discuss their work.

In Ankara, various side-issues were on the agenda for festival organisers who met as well: how to improve touring of the pieces? How to solve copyright issues, in particular when pieces are broadcasted on radio stations connected to the festivals? How to create links with conservatories and with other competitions for new compositions all over Europe? How to extent partnerships with more festivals across Europe?

It was nice to see festival colleagues beyond MusMA as well: Mrs Filiz Eczacıbaşı Sarper from the International Izmir Festival, and Mrs Efruz Çakırkaya from the Istanbul Music Festival, as well as other festival organisers from all over Europe who connect around the composers to shape possible ways of presenting the compositions at their festivals. Also, radio producers were present. All together we had the chance to explore our work, our possible collaborations, and we discovered Ankara, and its beautiful old city, its castle, and its fantastic food and wine.

What the seven days at EFA's Atelier are for young festival managers, MusMA is for composers: time to look into the mirror, to stand still, to question, to question more, and to reflect.

Ömer Bozkurt and Ibrahim Barisik, with the support of Mr Mehmet Basman and the Sevdâ-Cenap And Music Foundation (SCAMF), offered us a wonderful time. Next stops of MusMA are: Emilia Romagna, Wrocław and Basel. I am glad that EFA members go on with this initiative.

*On the MusMA website at [www.musma.eu](http://www.musma.eu) you can find more information about the MusMA V composers and their notes about their composition.*



Eva Nunes, 30 July 2014

## **DETECTING MOVEMENT IN SPAIN**

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And it's festival season! Well, to be accurate, between the many offers in all the different genres it's always festival season somewhere. Festivals are moments of celebration and coming together, of exchange and awe, of discussion and reflection, so it is no wonder their appeal is so great to both audiences and artists alike.

Back in the day when I was working as a tour manager I spent many hours trying to distinguish which piece would be interesting for each festival, which sensibilities would match, which audiences would welcome which form. In the last weeks, and with the news of many initiatives aiming at recognising the vast variety of festivals of multiple art forms, such as EFFE – Europe for Festivals, Festivals for Europe (the new European Commission pilot project for festivals initiated by EFA), I was triggered to refresh my memory of the festivals I fell out of contact with, the festivals I got to know and the festivals that no longer exist.

I remembered with great fondness AltVigo and the Festival de Teatro Clásico de Olite where, many years ago, the company I was working with was welcomed with warmth and generosity by their directors Lola Correa and Alex Ruiz Pastor. I also remembered, now with sadness, that VEO, València Escena Oberta no longer exists and Escena Contemporánea – Festival Alternativo de las Artes Escénicas – has said goodbye earlier this year.

Not wanting to be bitter with the disappearances I asked the help of my dear old friend Guillermo Weickert to get reacquainted with the Spanish festival landscape.

It was uplifting to hear that many festivals are still resisting like Mes de Danza in Seville, and that there are even some brave young faces around like the Sismógraf in Olot (organised since 2010) where you could see works from the well-known Malpelo, the CobosMika Cie de Dansa, amongst many others.

Another new proposal – with the support of the reputed Matadero de Madrid and Teatro Español – is the Fringe Festival Madrid. The fringe festival concept is not new: it was born in 1947 in Edinburgh when the companies not selected by the official festival (Edinburgh International Festival) decided to present the performances on their own. The Fringe Festival Madrid however is quite new – it started in 2012 – and offers a wide selection of art forms from music to theatre, dance, performance, circus, poetry and other unclassifiable forms selected from the 555 proposals received from 32 countries. As is befitting a fringe the arts take over the spaces and need not a conventional setting – rooftops, alleys, warehouses, underground; every corner of Matadero is a potential

venue and you may find pearls like *The Tempest*, a unique, hilarious rendition of Shakespeare's text by Spanish company Voadora.

Another festival with strong godfathers is the Salmón Festival. Supported by Mercat and Graner BCN it offers a two week programme with creations of artists who have been selected for the modul-dance project. An example of a festival which is taking risks and doing interesting things I was told.

Because it's also essential to give creators the opportunity to meet each other and their audiences, to exchange, connect, try out new things and develop their skills, some festivals cater to these needs; some, like the Deltebre Festival in Tarragona, make it the core of their identity. Here, over the course of two weeks, international teachers, dancers, actors and circus performers gather to live, work and play together and with the people of Deltebre. There are daily classes, workshops, performances (from both visiting and local artists) and laboratory spaces in which people can create new work.

One last discovery of the past days was ZEMOS98. Zemos98 is more than a festival; it's "a team of cultural workers" who present themselves: "We try to create critical thinking, we try to deconstruct the mass-media messages, we try to weave networks, relationships and communities. We try to work in the intersections and margins. We try to work (g) locally, behind the borders. We try to take care of our networks and we try to reuse and remix all of our contents. We try to organise a Festival every year and we try to create a New Media Laboratory called 98LAB to learn about these things. So, basically, we try things." Apparently they have been successfully trying things for quite some time. The festival is in its 16th edition, this time under the motto "Re-mapping Europe" – offering concerts, encounters, screenings, open source audio-visual source code and performance – and starting from a very engaged welcome statement: "The need to rebuild the meaning of Europe comes forth, starting from the acknowledgement of our shared vulnerability and interdependence inherent to our condition as human beings. To value and promote liberating civic practices that outline new representations for migrants, and that may shape an inclusive concept of citizenry, capable of giving back a right to be heard to those who are excluded."

Spain is struggling but the arts have never had it easy and these are a few examples of perseverance to bring us audiences, year after year, content and beauty.





Eva Nunes, 5 August 2014

**WHAT I HEARD ABOUT THE (ARTS) WORLD\***

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We took inspiration for this title from a theatre piece co-created by mala voadora (PT) and Third Angel (UK). One of the many reviews on the piece stated: “Makes you think about the world, makes you laugh about the world, makes you glad to be part of the world in all its madness – what more could you want?” What more indeed than being privileged to be part of this world which has access to the beauty of artistic creation?

What I heard about the (Arts) World shares with you some creations, projects, ideas or festivals of which we heard of from our EFA festivals, from the European House for Culture members and from our trusted friends that inspired them, us and hopefully you, as an audience and as human beings. Festivals are always making it possible to give creators the opportunity to develop their work and challenge themselves and audiences to access great original work. This season, our EFA festivals are doing this by presenting numerous world premieres, new productions and collaborating with each other. Here are some of the numerous examples.

### **World premieres**

The Abu Dhabi Festival commissioned a site-specific sound sculpture of Abu Dhabi to composer Bill Fontana and it challenged Emirati visual artist Mohammed Kazem to create a new work in response to the festival theme “Creative Innovation”.

The Berliner Festspiele – with its festival Foreign Affairs’ focus “Performing Pop” asked musicians to develop projects for the stage in unusual combinations. For instance – Indie musicians Phantom Ghost worked with visual artist Cosima von Bonin and animals for the world premiere of Retrospectres – Phantoms and Ghosts (1999–2014), or – for the closing night of the festival – British artist Jeremy Deller (Turner Prize-winner and artist for the British pavilion at the 2013 Venice Biennale) has made it his mission to prove the kinship and historical parallels between acid house and brass band music in the large scale project Acid Brass.

The Brno International Music Festival’s dare for this year – vinegar syndrome – will initiate the creation of new tailor-made pieces for the festival. Vinegar syndrome is the process of degradation of the film strip when exposed to moisture, heat or acids destroying the audio and visual components of the film. The challenge to composers is to take movies affected by vinegar syndrome as libretto and inspiration for the creation of distinctive new music and dramatic audio-visual and conceptual musical performances.

The Festival d'Aix-en-Provence commissioned a new piece – this time inspired by literature – which had its world premiere in Aix on 13 July 2014. This work by composer Manfred Trojahn is a song cycle dedicated to the surrealist poet René Char.

### **Collaborations**

One thing we know very well in the cultural sector is that to offer the best of the best collaboration is essential. And this is true for all the steps of the value chain of processes from creation to touring, all the way through producing and presenting.

The Berliner Festspiele did just this collaborating with Tanz im August – to bring to Berlin in August – two new creations: animal / vegetable / mineral by British choreographer Michael Clark and Vortex Temporum by Rosas & Ictus. The latter is also a collaboration in the creation process: between a choreographer and the renowned Ictus Ensemble.

Another example of two festivals collaborating to bring something special to their audiences: the neo-baroque ballet *The Dangerous Liaisons* directed and choreographed by Valentina Turcu and Leo Mujić was a co-production by the Dubrovnik Summer Festival and Ljubljana Festival, together with the Slovene National Theatre Maribor.

### **New productions**

Another challenge is to offer the great classic operas in new 'readings'. Audiences all over still crave the great works of names they recognise such as Mozart, Handel, Rossini, Schubert, Bach. Going to the opera is still a special event and the festivals aim to present the best productions of these timeless classics.

This is what happened this year at the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence. All throughout July the festival brought us new productions of *The Magic Flute*; *Ariodante*; *Il Turco in Italia*; *Winterreise*; and *Trauernacht*.

### **Special suggestion**

To finish up with a special treat that is a collaboration, a world premier and a special moment: *Warum?* by composer Sofia Gubajdulina.



A collaboration: in the form of a co-commission of a new work to composer Sofia Gubajdulina by Emilia Romagna Festival, Ravello Festival, Ljubljana Festival, Festival de Música de Canarias, Staatskapelle Dresden, Amsterdam Sinfonietta, Festival Pianistico Internazionale di Brescia e Bergamo and Fondazione Arena di Verona.

A world premiere: Warum? had its world premiere at the Emilia Romagna Festival on 22 July 2014.

A special moment: EFA Vice-President Massimo Mercelli will be the guest performer with the Orquesta Sinfónica de Tenerife, conducted by Krzysztof Penderecki, at the Canarias Music Festival next January with a programme including the co-commissioned work of composer Sofia Gubaidulina Warum? Wozu? Wodurch?

An extra special moment: Warum? was dedicated to EFA President Darko Brlek and Vice-President Massimo Mercelli.

*\*What I heard about the world is a theatre piece co-created by Portuguese cie. mala voadora and British cie. Third Angel.*



Premshay Hermon, 5 May 2014

## **BEING AN ALUMNUS OF EFA'S FESTIVAL ACADEMY**

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In 2012 I participated in EFA's Atelier for Young Festival Managers in Ljubljana. The wonderful 7-day meeting was at once a training, a networking event and a lab for developing new ideas. That experience has led me to the one I am writing about now.

After 60 years of existence, EFA has extended its scope and founded The Festival Academy in 2013 – a global initiative for rethinking the role of festivals today and the future of festivals in culture. I was invited to take part in EFA's "Sarajevo Conversations" (February 2014) – part of the annual meeting and general assembly, where over 100 delegates from leading festivals and cultural institutions in Europe met and discussed both practical and theoretical aspects of culture-making today.

EFA wanted to get us, the Atelier's alumni, involved in further developing the new Festival Academy. Being festival managers before and after our participation in the Atelier gives us a unique perspective on the rudimentary function of the Atelier, and the effect it can have on the lives of its participants. Our mandate was providing valuable feedback to The Festival Academy, in accordance with the needs of young festival managers. We were there to dream and bring the Atelier's alumni network, which now consists of over 200 individuals from around the world, to life.

The extent of my visit went well beyond meeting my fellow alumni. I admit, it was a chance to visit Sarajevo, the beautiful and multifaceted capital of Bosnia & Herzegovina. The hospitality of Ibrahim Spahić, Sarajevo's "Winter Festival" director, was immaculate and educational. 20 years after the siege, there is a new wind and a wave of citizens' protests. Being the 'connected' generation, a few of us alumni went to the demonstrations, showing our interest and talking with the people.

Nevertheless, the heart of this gathering was the meetings that took place. Being an alumni (and one of the youngest persons in the room), I received a lot of positive attention and interest from the members; their curiosity turned into long, fascinating discussions on the unique projects I'm involved in and talks of possible collaborations.

Back in the alumni meetings, we identified a number of key elements that the alumni network should address. We gave our feedback on the Ateliers we attended and looked forward into the future. Following the alumni meetings I was asked to speak at the general assembly. Addressing the delegates in the name of the alumni was a responsibility I was honored to accept. Having this young guy from a festival in

Israel stand in front of these titans of industry, some of which are leading festivals that have been around for as long as a century, was a formidable step that proved the commitment of EFA to nurture and develop the next generation of festival managers.

Festivals are a space that transcend borders. In a festival, it doesn't matter if you're Jewish, Muslim or Christian; it doesn't matter if your politics are right or left-wing; what matters is that you are creative, committed, that you excel and articulate a new experience for the audience.

EFA is dissolving borders in its work. I believe that the new Festival Academy will prove to be one of the most valuable, the most innovative, and the most important international communities for the next generation of culture makers.





Summa Durie, 13 May 2014

## **A COLLECTION OF COLLECTORS**

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Drizzling rain greeted 51 slightly jet lagged young festival directors who had made their way from 28 countries to this beautiful, if somewhat grey city. Like most events like this, the first few hours are always like a slightly awkward speed-dating session, figuring out who is who and where everyone is from, but what followed was quite possibly the most intense seven days of thinking, sharing and learning I've experienced. In no chronological order below are some of the key learnings I took away from the mentors of the Atelier for Young Festival Managers EDINBURGH 2014 and some of the big questions discussed with fellow emerging festival directors.

## **The Mentors**

Each of the mentors gave us a very different perspective on what it is to be a festival director and how they have approached developing their programmes while as custodians of their respective festivals. The Atelier cleverly brought together very different mentors who had worked across contexts, countries and different times – forming a linear view of contemporary arts festivals from the end of the Second World War.

Before I go into describing the mentors who were brought in specifically for this edition of the Atelier, I want to make special mention of three people who were with us throughout the seven days. Hugo De Greef, Nele Hertling and Kathrin Deventer brought their depth of personal experience and insights to all at the Atelier through talks, group discussions and one-on-one conversations. Hugo (who I may or may not think of as the Father Christmas of festivals) helped shape the discussions, Nele with her infinite wisdom humanised the experience of working with artists and working as part of a team to create remarkable things, and Kathrin reminded us that at their essence festivals are for the telling of stories and the uniting of people through these stories. What's remarkable about these three people is that they are the people looking at the future of festivals, not just in Europe through projects like "A Soul for Europe", but internationally through the Atelier. Without these three people none of us would have been in the room discussing the whys, hows and where to of festivals across the world.

## **Joseph V. Melillo – Artistic Director of the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) New York – USA**

From Lou Reed, Laurie Anderson to Philip Glass and Robert Wilson (or Bob as most the mentors called him), it is truly inspiring who Joseph has developed and presented work with, back from the early 80s through to Next Wave Festival and at BAM.

Taking chances on then unknown artist, Joseph introduced works which are still to this day making their way around the world. Joseph spoke on festivals being places for risk and experimentation, and as a festival director knowing when is the right time to introduce a specific piece to your audience. It's this innate understanding of the audience – a matching of the place, the time, the work – that makes for intelligent artistic programming. Although as Joseph highlighted, even when you think all these factors have come together works can still fail and in those moments festival directors need to back their decisions and protect the artists even if an entire audience walks. Sometimes these pieces presented a year or two later will get rave reviews and go on to tour for years after.

Some other lessons I took from Joseph, which may sound basic, but were good to be reminded of were about the process of programming and comes down to some key words starting with 'R'.

Relationships – knowing what is out there comes down to relationships. Programming a work and being able to help shape how it's presented as part of a programme comes down to relationships. Most importantly a relationship with your audience helps to place work in context for that place and time.

Research – your networks may introduce you to new works, but good programming relies on research. Joseph stressed this crucial point – research, research, research. A festival director must always be researching; new artists, new works and ways of presenting contemporary and current ideas that will resonate with an audience.

Relentless – the final 'R'. Festival directors must be relentless. Wherever they are, whatever other responsibilities they may have, they must make the time to think about the programme and how all the pieces fit together. Being a festival director is not a 9-5 job, it's a way of being – constantly searching, piecing art and works together.



## **Jonathan Mills – Festival Director and Chief Executive, Edinburgh International Festival – Scotland**

Jonathan imparted the importance of history and context in the programming of festivals. Jonathan's encyclopaedic knowledge of history reinforced how festival directors need to understand intricately the location of the festival to know what is needed in that city or place. Jonathan also spoke about ethics in programming – the fine line between artistic investigation vs. danger, and while wanting to constantly push the envelope, programming should never court controversy simply for the sake of it.

Throughout the Atelier the question of what constitutes a festival came up in various discussions. Jonathan reminded the Atelier that from beginning of humanity and throughout history, festivals have been about ceremony and ritual, and that as programmers we should never lose sight of the sense of community and celebration within our festivals.

## **Heiner Goebbels – Artistic Director, Ruhrtriennale – Germany**

Jaw-dropping, spine-tingling, awe-inspiring – only some of the adjectives that could be used to describe the programs Heiner Goebbels delivers. The scale and location of the works in Ruhrtriennale are the stuff of dreams for most festival directors, but behind the magic Heiner creates were guiding principles all festival directors can weave into their programming.

Heiner reminded us to, 'always be looking for something new, something that has fallen between the cracks, to see the world through childlike eyes and to help uncover the forgotten things'. That 'rather than explaining, an audience should experience, as if visiting a new country' and that, 'the drama doesn't happen on stage, it should happen in the audience'.

At the Ruhrtriennale Heiner has had the luxury, and one can only call it that, to work with artists for a year before the festival, have them respond to sites specifically, to sit in on every rehearsal and show the works to the public six months before the festival for response. But this process enables Heiner to build strong relationships with the artists and be trusted to advise and shape the works in his programme, the results of this are evident.

## **Bernard Faivre d'Arcier – President Lyon Biennial, former Director Festival d'Avignon – France**

Bernard too gave us a strong sense of the story of European festivals, in particular Festival d'Avignon which was started by gallerists in post-war France. Bernard, as with the other mentors, went into what it is to be a festival, commenting there are, "now as many festivals, as there are cheeses." The question in this is when is something a festival and when is it a season of programmed events? What makes a festival a festival?

Bernard also questioned festivals' reliance on touring works for their programmes. What is the responsibility of the festival to present something new or unseen, and how do you strike the balance between existing or commissioned?

Bernard echoed Heiner's thoughts on what is the space needed to absorb art. Describing the phenomena of White Night around the world and the democratisation of art, Bernard questioned whether the mass crowds attending allowed the people space to interact with the art on meaningful level, or whether people are only seeing a brief fraction of the works.

## **Grace Lang – Programme Director, Hong Kong Arts Festival Society – China**

Detailing the growth of the Hong Kong Arts Festival, Grace spoke about its move into non-traditional spaces to connect with disparate communities in Hong Kong, through performance art in the central business districts to the transformation of an old adult film cinema in to a bustling theatre.

Grace's experience was unique at the Atelier as the landscape in China is dramatically different to the EU or US. Grace spoke on the long-term collaborations the Hong Kong Arts Festival has undertaken, including year-long engagements between Chinese and European artists. This spoke to the amounts of money China is investing in the arts and a shift in touring circuits globally, with China developing partnerships with Russia and the United Arab Emirates to present big budget, large-scale touring works.

Grace's talk lead to a big discussion on the tipping point of countries like China who have been importing European arts to their audiences for years, and whether European, and Western audiences, are willing to embrace Chinese, and arts from other countries, as readily.

## **Michal Merczyński – General Director, Malta Festival Poznan – Poland**

Michal's programmes differed to the other Atelier mentors in that he works with guest artistic programmers from different countries each year, with that country being a focus of the festival. This approach and many subsequent discussions during the Atelier centred around the use of a theme for a festival and whether this helped the festival communicate a programme more clearly to its audiences, or whether this limited a programme artistically.

What clearly does work is Michal's sense of connection to his community, both in the physical sense and in the digital realm. As an anchor to his community, Michal can bring in new artistic programmers with new ideas, but adds his knowledge of what will work in Poznan to create international programmes that fit within the needs of his city.

## **Mark Ball – Artistic Director, LIFT – UK**

As mentioned, the Atelier cleverly programmed the seven days to give the participants a clear vision of what has been (history), what is (now) and where festivals are heading (future). Mark Ball's programming embodies the latter two and his processes show a shift in what it is to be a festival director.

Mark's philosophy is very much community-led, with a clear message that "we need to be doing more with the public, not for them." This leads to the big question of whether festival directors should be the purveyors of what they think the public wants to see or whether the festivals should be communicating with their audiences and working with them to develop programmes.

An example of this is when Mark became the Artistic Director of what was the London International Festival of Theatre, he instigated some independent research to look at people who lived in London who didn't attend arts events. The results showed these people connected the word theatre with 'boring', and listening to this Mark chose to remove the word theatre from the festival's name entirely. The festival is now known as only as LIFT.

The same research showed these people were proud of being from London, so Mark focused on presenting site specific works in which the audience could engage with

their city. A key message from Mark was that festivals can never assume their format or vision will remain relevant to their audience and festival directors must always be willing to question what it is they are doing.

Can I summarise the Atelier here, no. But...

The massive amount of experience these mentors imparted at the Atelier was immense and I know the 51 participants all took different things from the mentors. Context seemed to be a crucial word throughout the Atelier, especially when you have 60+ people from across the world all working in different ways.

There were no definitive answers at the Atelier, no right or wrong way, but I left with a clear sense that festivals, more than ever, are place makers, as much for their audiences and communities as they are for providing platforms for artists to experiment and present their works. In an ever digital – and perhaps because of that – isolated world we live in, festivals play a role in connecting their community to their place and celebrating what it is to 'be' in this time.

I also left the Atelier knowing that to be a festival director you have to be part-composer, part-mad scientist and above all a relentless collector of people and things. Meeting all those involved at the Atelier I'm excited to see the diversity of the collectors out there and can't wait to see what all these people put together, somewhere out there.

P.S. An extra special thanks to Inge Ceustermans and Lore Claes for wrangling 60+ festival types not only pre-Atelier but during the seven days without ever looking stressed or losing anyone.





Daniel Maposa, 28 October 2014

## **ATELIER POZNAN: A BENEFICIAL EXPERIENCE FOR ZIMBABWEAN PARTICIPANTS**

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The dream finally came true!

Elton Mjanana and Raisedon Baya waited a good three years to finally be part of the Young Festival Managers training programme. For successive editions of the Atelier since 2011, they couldn't make it though they were accepted. They, I suppose, had lost hope of going through this training.

And just as they had never imagined, Poland happened. Natalie Kombe and Daniel Maposa applied in February 2014 and were accepted for the Atelier in Poznan, Poland. Thanks to the Zimbabwe Festivals Network (ZFN) and Nhimbe Trust through the kind support of Africalia, the four managed to attend the intensive seven day training in festival management and programming. The training took place from 20 to 27 October 2014 in Poznan, Poland and was hosted by the European Festivals Association and the Malta Festival Poznan.

Speaking to the participants from Zimbabwe who were part of the 41 festival managers from 23 countries, they confirmed that the Atelier for festival managers was a very exciting experience that enabled them to think outside the box with regards to the running of festivals.

The desire among the Zimbabwean participants as they took part in this historic training was that they would acquire as much knowledge as possible so that they can be able to improve the different festivals. They would also be happy to share the knowledge acquired with other festival managers within the Zimbabwe Festivals Network family who at the moment have not had an opportunity to attend this kind of training. This quest for knowledge was quenched by the different mentors and sharing from other participants.

The Atelier is organised in a way that renowned festival directors and managers are mentors who provide lectures, presentations and inspirations to the participants. The participants also share their experiences from their different festivals. This process provides a rich interaction and transfer of knowledge among participants.

The mentors included Mark Ball (Artistic Director and CEO of London International Festival of Theatre), Nele Hertling (Vice President of the Academy of Arts Berlin), Michal Merczynski (Director, Malta Festival Poznan), Robyn Archer (Artistic Director,

The Light in Winter in Melbourne) and Hugo De Greef (Atelier coordinator and former European Festivals Association Secretary General).

The training explored important subjects like programming, fundraising and resource mobilisation, collaborations, governance and administration, and marketing and audience development. Issues of festivals' sustainability and community participation in festivals were also explored. In discussing programming, it was highlighted that there are various issues that should be taken into consideration if a city wants to host an exciting festival. These included the social and political contexts, the mission and goals of the festivals as well as the available budget.

In discussing resource mobilisation, the learning points for the Zimbabwean participants were the realisation that the majority of festivals in other countries are financially and morally supported by their national and local governments, corporates and individuals. Ticket sales contribute a tiny amount to the festivals. This is because most governments appreciate the important role festivals and arts in general play in the social, political, cultural and economic development of a nation. Some governments have therefore developed policies and legislation that promote the growth of festivals in their countries. This learning point will help ZFN to seriously consider its engagement with the government and other stakeholders.

In Zimbabwe, there is a raging debate on sustainability. This topic has created heated arguments in many public and private platforms. The issue of sustainability was discussed in detail also during the Atelier and the Zimbabwean participants felt that it was a vital issue. In the absence of sustainable festival funding models, proper structures, strong boards and community buy-in, festivals struggle with sustainability issues. The lived realities are that funding for festivals are dwindling and there is a need for serious engagements at local, regional and international levels. Sharing international trends, practices and experiences by mentors and other participants was thus very enriching for the Zimbabweans.

Apart from the lectures and the exchanges, artistic tours were organised by the hosts and they provided an insight into the arts landscape in Poznan. The infrastructure is so amazing and I could only wish that we were lucky as Zimbabweans to have such spaces for the arts. The learning visits were very inspirational.



The Atelier 2014 in Poznan has come and gone. One thing for sure is that The Festival Academy has positively impacted on the four Zimbabwean participants. The intensive one week has enabled the sharing of knowledge, experiences and ideas. The commitment to excel and share with others in Zimbabwe has been ignited. It is also hoped that this is the beginning of a relationship between the Atelier for Young Festivals Managers and the Zimbabwe Festivals Network, and more festival managers will attend future ateliers.



Tim Wilson, 23 October 2014

**NELE HERTLING SHOULD BE LOCKED UP**

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Nele Hertling should be locked up, and so should I. She doesn't exactly fit the profile of a revolutionary, but Holy Moses, she talks the talk. If by this time next year revolutions aren't breaking out across the globe, then the fault is not Nele's, it's ours – and we'll have failed both her, and the people we chose to represent with our festivals across the world.

When people gather, they are a polis, and their interactions are therefore political – in high-frequency interactions, they constitute a metropolis, and that's the home of a Festival. Wherever the concept of Festival goes, it goes hand in hand with politics.

I wonder if the Poznan Atelier is a subversive institution by nature. I feel mischievous and boisterous all of the time here, surrounded by these human beings who all speak about authority, about repression, about freedom and authenticity. Can you feel a responsibility to be anarchic? I certainly do, and I think everyone else here does too.

I've learned in the last few days about the sharpness of the tools we Festival Directors wield. I've learned that with care, we may be able to incise into an issue with programming, to stitch a societal wound with culture, or to cauterise with active audience engagement. Nele has been doctor to the European soul for nearly thirty years, and her vitality and interest is a shock. But is she finished? Is she hell. Anybody who thinks there aren't demon viruses to fight in Europe, on Europe's borders, and beyond them, needs the syringe and the quiet music, and perhaps a little of Nele Hertling's medicine.

Festival work is chaotic and fun, and for those of us still fairly new to the work – me included, but certainly not all the Atelier alumni – that chaos sometimes outweighs the significance of what we are doing. Yes, it's not the frontline nursing or fire service, but perhaps a Festival is more like that eastern preventative medicine for a people rather than western reactive medicine for a person.

A Festival interrupts the pulse, and redirects energy and attention. It ignores geography and market forces. It meets and then eats expectation, and in its place leaves a meringue, perhaps, or a glimpse of something primally, terrifyingly wild. Here in Poznan, I have felt be-wild-ered at times, and at other times, so utterly certain of Next Steps that my to-do list balloons and takes flight.

Luckily, Nele Hertling, Mark Ball and Hugo De Greef aren't gentle guides; they're loud and purposeful, unapologetic and sometimes wrong, I'm sure. The Atelier doesn't mean to give us an absolute answer, or set of codes. I think the learning is more ecological, more rounded and relative.

A Festival is both an animal of its biosphere and also an alien. It is natural and synthesised; it is simultaneously aboriginal and imported. The key is to understand that the Festival's specific biosphere is determinative and proscriptive, but it is also part of a bigger ecology: between those two focuses lies the recipe for what will thrive and what will die. As a Festival Director, that's life, that's the game.

When does the game end? When politics end. And with no disrespect to Mr Fukuyama, I don't see that happening anytime soon. And until the final whistle blows, if you need me, I'll be on Nele's team.





Albert Edelman, 19 June 2014

## **THAT OLD FESTIVAL FEELING**

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The early music movement – that is: a way of looking at repertoire with an open and informed eye to the context of the work's creation and reception, taking into account instruments, performance practice, among other things – really got going thanks to festivals. Bruges, Utrecht, Antwerp and Boston, to name but a few, have long operated as showcases for the latest research, the wildest experiments and, over time, the biggest names they themselves had helped grow. And this was long before music from the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and often even the Baroque became fashionable on 'regular' stages as it is now.

Fortunately, the motto of EFA's Atelier for Young Festival Managers, namely that festivals should 'help artists to dare, to engage in new projects', rings true also among early music festivals. Many keep commissioning (sometimes truly inventive) programmes to fit their themes, and many artistic directors give opportunities to less established but hugely talented musicians, next to the big stars.

But while concentrating so intensely on artists and what they should play, we might just forget about our audience and their needs. What were the visitors of those first festivals looking for? Are they still looking for it, and are we still providing it? And now that the 'pioneer audiences' are getting older, how can we find and engage new listeners? Keeping in mind that the ranks of 'early' music students keep growing along with their technical capabilities (and hopefully their ambition to dare), I realise we may have a real 'audience challenge'.

I think researcher and consultant Alan Brown is right when he states that festival directors are more 'architects of impact' than 'curators of art'. It might come as a surprise to some in early music, but only presenting good, well-researched concerts on a stage in a concert hall or a church no longer works as well as it did a few decades ago. At the same time, I don't think we should veer in the other direction and try to stimulate our audience by any means possible, for fear of not engaging them. For me – and, I'm sure, for many music fans – there really is nothing quite like sitting back in silence, engulfed by a great performance. Each event, especially in a festival, should be about sharing that primal, authentic feeling.

I'm excited to see some festivals move away from classic, information-heavy geographical or historical themes and embrace more abstract inspirations. Such

thematic programming allows us to ask artists we believe in for tailor-made projects, and to provide all sorts of context. But while part of our audience may be looking for (factual) insights, we all know which part we're primarily talking about: the proverbial grey heads, our pioneer audience. However, as we often do at Concertgebouw Brugge, if we offer something that's more out of the box (talks, but also more active, participative events; new concert formats; innovative festivals), a whole different audience finds their way to what is still a 'temple of culture'.

So, coming back to the idea of a director as an 'architect of impact', what I'm really looking for is a feeling. My dream festival is a surprising, transporting place that's hard to leave. No matter if it's a concert hall or a church, an attic or a whole city, or even an ephemeral, customised space – I'm thinking of something as iconic as a Serpentine Pavillion for concerts – a festival must offer a sense of community, comfort and connectedness. I'm looking less for casual visits, more for a 'pilgrimage'.

Secondly, in my ideal festival, the big names are not the main draw, at least not if they would do what they already do during the season. To surprise the audience, the artists have to be surprised as well, not necessarily by leaving their comfort zone but at least by re-exploring their product. In reality, many stars don't have the time or the will to go so far, which will leave space for others to experiment and realise their dreams. Presenting those (young) talents and their innovative projects can and should be the hallmark of any festival.

A festival that works more around a promise of quality than around name recognition may have a problem attracting an audience – even if experience suggests that there's a growing market for the unknown. A third factor in my ideal festival is therefore personal contact. By inviting the audience to witness creation, by allowing artists and audiences to get to know each other, by setting up residencies and other such laboratories, a festival can become a focal point for more than just concert goers.

In engaging the world around us in the artistic process, we can plant the seed that art isn't someplace out there for other people. Art can happen to anyone at any moment, and being a part of it has never been easier.

*The text was first drafted for the Atelier for Young Festival Managers of the European Festivals Association in Edinburgh (April 2014).*







Ceyda Söderblom, 27 March 2014

## **FROM THE 'TEMPLE OF ARTEMIS' TO 'A ROSE FOR LILLY'**

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*Abandoned buildings scare everyone  
Their carriage reminds of the brutality of loneliness  
They stand there as women of a certain age  
...women whose eyes have gone out of light;  
whose fertility was taken from their body.  
Abandoned buildings; like exhausted and sallow women*

...

The sanctuary instinct of humans goes back to the dark corridors of existence. Not only for the sake of sheltering do humans build, but to reveal the mystery of immortality. Despite our tendency to destroy, we – ironically – also know how to revive deserted spaces. The human race, confronting the spectacular temples that were constructed ages ago, marvels at its own capacity, doesn't it? As an Izmirian, as somebody living in a 8500-year-old city on the west coast of Anatolia, right in the middle of heritage of – what we call – civilizations, it is easy to say "yes".

For me, what is "splendid" is Ephesus, Pergamon – the most prestigious venues of the International Izmir Festival –, Sardis, Metropolis, Aphrodisias or Claros. Existing for thousands of years, these ancient cities carry with them the stories of those whose hands shaped the beauty. In the shadows of those monuments, among the embalmed souls of countless anonymous people who perhaps died during the construction, we, today, look for – what? Re-functionalising? Punk-cultural squatting? The contradictory bonds humans can establish between themselves and different spaces and rooms amazes me. Buildings need to be filled by people to survive, to exist, to become a living space. It perfectly works! My experience at the Izmir festival has allowed me to discover audience's expectations, satisfactions, experiences and awareness through the events at unique historical venues. There must be some secret ways beyond all the nestled needs; mingling the art and the time – past, present and future.

What about us – the human of modern times? We don't have enough time even for ourselves, while time runs a marathon. Do we continue to build glorious temples

and dedicate them to our own greatness? Do the temples of today serve similar or another purpose? My visit of the Walt Disney Concert Hall, the legendary hall of Los Angeles Philharmonic, filled my head with thoughts.

When you hang out midtown it is impossible to miss the gleaming Walt Disney Concert Hall. An icon of LA with its undulating curves, an architectural wonder of stainless steel, this masterpiece by Frank Gehry on the top of all has an auditorium with miraculous acoustics. When I saw the Dancing House in Prague for the first time – also a creation by Gehry – I was impressed by the bold thought: dancing must be the only way for a building to exist as a part of the fairy-tale façade of Prague. As for the Walt Disney Concert Hall, I felt a different kind of attraction. The building irresistibly invites you to explore what lies behind those dazzling steels. I must confess that there is something very charming about the feminine shape of the complex, proving what Paul Silvia, an assistant professor of psychology, says: “Curved and rounded objects are so much more familiar that they seem more natural and ‘right.’”

For those who can't refuse the invitation and go for the insider point of view, free, self-guided audio tours or docent-led tours are offered. To see the Gehry designed serene garden and giant rose-shaped fountain is a must. 'A Rose for Lilly' is dedicated to Lillian Disney whose initial gift of 50 million dollars made the hall possible. That rose reminded me of one of the seven wonders of the ancient world: the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus. It seems we will continue to build and dedicate.

Here, let me digress to bring in conductor laureate Esa-Pekka Salonen's impression of the building. Salonen composed *Wing on Wing* to celebrate the Walt Disney Concert Hall's opening. Stating in his notes that the composition is “an homage to an extraordinary building by an extraordinary man,” Salonen says: “Apart from being an architectural masterpiece, the Walt Disney Concert Hall is simply one of the best performing venues for classical music anywhere in the world today. Its acoustics are superb and perhaps most importantly, the whole building exudes joy, excitement and discovery – attributes regrettably seldom attached to symphonic music these days.”

To experience the marvellous acoustic of the hall you must attend a concert; the concert hall itself is not open for tours. I attended one, and can assure you will

experience the purest sound a man-made-space can provide. The hardwood-lined auditorium with its incredible pipe organ, perhaps thanks to Gehry's genius, embraces the audience and creates a spontaneous well-being. I had the pleasure to listen to the superb interpretation by Emanuel Ax of Brahms' first piano concerto with LA Phil under the baton of Robin Ticciati. LA Phil is to be congratulated not only for this concert, but for the tempting programme of the whole season. The Walt Disney Concert Hall, one of the architectural wonders of modern time, celebrates the 10th anniversary of its opening and features a rich programme of world music, popular song, and jazz. Congratulations!



Kathrin Deventer, 24 July 2014

## **TIME FOR THOUGHT AND SPACE FOR CHANGE: BETWEEN BEING AND DOING**

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Summer is high festival season all over Europe; a busy time for festival directors that is both stressful and fulfilling. With hundreds of thousands of people, young and old, attending festivals and enjoying performances these days I feel it is a good moment to reflect about the responsibilities of festival directors. We must look at their responsibility to offer the best of the arts, to create a space of encounter for artists and audiences alike. They must also be impactful with their festival as artistic performances are curated as part of festivals' socially and politically engaged programmes.

Today, the questions we ask about our world and the place of festivals in it may be different and the challenges we face may need different answers than before the financial crisis. Over the past years, festivals have commissioned impact studies full of facts and figures to show how they contribute to growth. But, and today we know it all too well, economic impacts are only a small part of the overall impacts festivals can have. Through new, more recent impact studies looking beyond economic aspects, we know that festivals play an active role in our societies, they question the status quo. We know that festivals, and the art they present, contribute to the well-being of people and a world of peace, justice and equality, as modest as this contribution may be. Still, festivals and their allies need to prove that point.

The role of a festival director, of every leader, be it one of a business or an association, is a complex one. The choices they make, the direction they take, have an impact on other people. My question is: do our times allow directors to take thorough or tough choices? Choices based on integrity and responsibility? Do directors take the time to think their decisions through? Do they have the space to make real changes?

Personality and charisma of a festival director matter. So do their intentions and values. They have to make choices and navigate the space between beauty and provocation, known and unknown, black and white. They have to identify their intentions which are the soul, the source, the driver of our acts.

A festival programme is highly personal: it shows the intention of a director and reflects the festival's mission. The space and time a festival creates is key here. Festivals allow their audiences to be inspired and take them out of their comfort zone.

Sometimes I fear that the personal development of a director and his or her

responsibility to question the very existence of every order, rule or logic we take for granted, and to offer another maybe utopian way, seems to be forgotten in our busy festival business. This is sometimes the status quo in the art world and this has to change.

The system feeds itself and has great interest to continue playing to the same old rules. And the arts community is part of it.

Be it on a professional or on a personal level, I feel it is key to take time to ask the right questions, to live in the here and now, not in the illusion of tomorrow or in the nostalgia of the past, and to give adequate answers through my acts.

I hope EFA can stand against the rigidity and self-feeding circular systems and is ready to also look into failures and mistakes as much as into stories of success and innovation as my colleague Rarita Zbranca of A Soul for Europe says. We have to take full responsibility for ourselves and our actions.

What matters to me personally is to have a space of responsibility, of integrity, of passion. My passion has implications on others. It's more difficult to define what we cannot do than what we can do. I have to ensure the quality, the content of my own actions. That's why I need to make choices, and I need to trust myself. And that's also every director's responsibility.

I want to know how festivals create a space of no competition but reciprocal learning, trust and friendship. A space of freedom, a space of opportunity, enrichment, responsibility. Not of separation, but of creation, reciprocal inspiration, of participation, a space of empowerment. How does this space allow people to question and possibly change their minds?

These are thoughts very much inspired by conversations during my time in Bulgaria when we launched EFFE – Europe for Festivals, Festivals for Europe, and when I participated in a conference in Plovdiv dedicated to Project 0. EFFE is a new platform that EFA initiated in order to give recognition to festivals and offer access to festival related information to as many people as possible. But its mission should not be to confirm the status quo, but to inspire festival directors to assume their responsibility. Project 0 is an initiative that invites to think about the impact of the arts beyond



measurable figures. Its founder, Kiril Kuzmanov, envisions an open and voluntary process, with no roles imposed on anyone; a platform to learn about this process, and oneself in this process, about how we act, share and generate our lives.

These thoughts were with me when I was talking to my colleagues during the A Soul for Europe (ASfE) retreat in the South of Turkey, where 15 arts and cultural managers from across Europe who have been shaping the A Soul for Europe network for 10 years now met. The ASfE network, a structure based on personal, voluntary engagement, takes its dynamics from personal convictions, trust and friendship, and proves the possibilities to act and grow through the inspiration of others and move things ahead together.

Also, when I was exchanging with EFA President Darko Brlek about the future of EFA in preparation of the EFA Board meeting in Trieste I couldn't help but wonder that EFA, just as every festival or cultural network these days in Europe, has the great opportunity to set the example of the importance of allowing time and space to evaluate carefully and thoroughly what a festival has to offer.

"Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive." Howard Thurman.

Let's give ourselves a chance, let's give our human stories a life balancing the being and doing.



Paul Bräuer, 7 May 2014

## **FESTIVAL COMMUNICATIONS WITH A SMALL TEAM**

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*Some insights into ways to effectively utilise communications when it comes to promoting arts, classical and traditional music festivals with limited capacities*

Attracting and engaging audiences is a key issue in the arts world. You need to appeal to completely new sectors and demographics but also communicate with your existing target groups. Looking around for know-how on how to achieve this, I have often been confronted with one problem: Many of the best practice examples and common knowledge out there are based on looking at how big players work. But how corporations use YouTube and Facebook or how the biggest and brand-advertisement-driven popular music festivals communicate with their audience does not apply to our work at Piranha Arts.

At Piranha Arts, producer of showcase festivals and conferences WOMEX and Classical:NEXT among others, we needed to find a way how to do communications on a smaller scale but smartly and up to date. I would like to share some findings from our daily experiences as well as discussions at Classical:NEXT, WOMEX and at other conferences on the subject, including a great workshop on festival communication at this year's EFA annual general assembly in Sarajevo, hosted by Colm Croffy of AOIFE (Association of Irish Festival Events) (thank you for that workshop again by the way!).

### **Write down aims:**

No matter how small your team and time budget are: Good communications require, first and foremost, a strategic, adaptable communications plan. This can be a simple thing to start, but take the time to do it in written form. A communications plan needs to start with your aims. These couldn't be defined exactly enough. There are different aims of communication, e.g.:

- You want people to find out about you.
- And you want people to buy tickets and attend your festival.
- But maybe you also want them to have a certain expectation when they come, an expectation that is not disappointed and that includes a positive picture.
- Maybe you want your audience, at least for certain concerts, to be ready to interact within a special concert format.

- Or, in addition to your festival, you want to be an interactive online platform – be it through a facebook page or website or twitter account.

In any case, you need to adapt your communications to the aims you identified for yourself, in order to do that you need to know your audience / target groups of your communication...

### **Know your audience:**

We all have many assumptions about our audience that we should put to a test. Try and find out as much as you can about your audience. And do not be shy. Sometimes a couple of phone calls reveal more than a week full of in-house planning or brainstorming.

- Send out a simple questionnaire (especially when you deal with a professional target group as we do on our conferences).
- Have employees ask the audience after the concerts.
- It is always a good idea to simply write or call some persons directly and ask them specific questions that you are not sure about.
- Big data e.g. by online ticketing.

### **Quantify your aims – fail gorgeously:**

It does not hurt to write down actual numbers you want to achieve as regards e.g. comments on your website next month or the tickets sold. But if you do not write them down, one is always tempted to forget the actual numbers, especially if you have not reached them. But it is important to learn from mistakes or failure. If you do not reach that number, you know that you have to make up your mind about either the aims or the measures taken. Fail gorgeously, they say, and learn from it.

### **Usual advertising doesn't always add up:**

Classic advertising as we know it – placing a static ad in print or broadcast media – barely is enough these days, let alone in the arts. Big media still has a role to play in overall communications but it must form one part of an overall promotional campaign.

- Digital media and especially the interactive social media presence are taking over.
- E-mails (e.g. newsletters) are still the most important channel for many festivals, though.
- Flyer mail-outs are very important, but they are costly, so it is crucial to identify a smaller but more precise target group for these mail-outs.

### **Programme facts are most important – but you also have good stories!:**

If you want to be visible in the media, your programme is still the number one media hook. Everything else initially is less important to your audience and therefore needs a good story.

For the media, you could come up with some major stories around your artists. The programme and the names of the artists/ensembles/productions can be the umbrella under which you can package related information (i.e. are any performers leading any workshops or discussions with the audience at the same event?). But there are so many more stories, and for these your own channels are a powerful tool.

### **Your own channels – Keyhole Content:**

As regards your own channels, content is king! Luckily, this content does not need to be dull or too “promo”. You are communicating an art festival – good stories and meaningful content that is wonderful and very interesting for your audience is at your hand! It is all around your creative art process, you just will have to find some personnel capacity to transport these stories.

- Provide something of what I call keyhole content. Write blogs about your festival preparation, post that permit document of the city, take pictures (pictures are most important!) of a jury session or put up an interview video, say, with a musicologist talking about this year’s festival topic or composer.
- You do not need to fear big brother. It is called keyhole content, because there is still a closed door. You do not have to tell everything. In fact an “auratic gap” between the festival and its audience is important for your image. A cooking video with your next year’s artist for example might be too far out for some of

you, for others it was perfect (as I learned at EFA in Sarajevo). Find your individual mix and your own way.

- The content you come up with also should be appealing enough to make your e-mail newsletters attractive. E-mail still is the top communication means of today. If your newsletter's subject (and content for that matter) is about something utterly interesting even for someone who didn't intend to visit your festival next year, you are building up a long-term relationship. And by the way: it feels great to share exciting stuff!

### **The message and the media channel:**

Are you dealing with online, print or broadcast media? In this world of 24-hour news cycles and the need for some media, particularly online, to produce interesting content 'round the clock it's worthwhile tailoring your media pitches to your medium.

- The smaller stories that might get turned down by print media might get picked up by online media that have more editorial space to fill and have more flexible deadlines.
- Is your festival famous for innovative outdoor formats? Then offer to write an article about this topic for newspapers, magazines or blogs.
- In the area your festival is located, find people who provide channels but need interesting content. Ljubljana Festival for example cooperated with a public touch screen provider in shop windows in the city. Some company wanted to promote this new technology, but they needed content. While testing out the new screens, people now could browse through and learn about the Ljubljana Festival's programme.

### **Word of mouth:**

A desired, yet elusive, form of marketing is out there. You should identify the most active volunteer ambassadors. You probably know how to do this in "real life", but also take people serious who always write or tweet about you online.

- Try and produce some news and content to their liking and always answer their questions, share their posts.

- But never ask them directly to promote you! Just be happy with the way they chose to spread the word about you.
- Get your artists and acts to become ambassadors! Some of them might hesitate a little, but do make it clear to them that they have great things to say and wonderful artistic work to spread the word about and come up with stories about.

### **Be effective – not too enthusiastic:**

In organising your communications with guidelines such as the above, you actually can do more in less time. Communications work will still be stressful. That is because you have so many great things to say! Enjoy it and be enthusiastic, but also take a step back now and then and cut back on what is not successful. It is better to communicate regularly than communicate a lot in one month and not at all in the next month. And do not try to be too perfect with everything. People will not love you for trying to be bigger than you are. If you are a small team and a small festival then adapt your communication accordingly, and tell people that you do only a few, but wonderful and more personal/individual things. People will understand and love you for it.

### **Use tools and tutorials and a good team:**

Online tools and tutorials can help. Here are two of the many many great articles online on how to write press releases or on how to use digital tools and – most importantly – which tools to use.

- Ten things small businesses can learn from an Apple press release (yes I know, a big player again, but this time somebody analyses it from a small business perspective)
- Ten must have social media tools for small businesses (and no, we do not use ALL of these ourselves)

The most important step, though, is to find the right team to handle all this. If for example you do not think you can learn how to manage “feed.ly” yourself, then hire somebody (maybe a young digital native intern), who can tell you how to use all these tools.



Nikola Richer, 13 January 2014 (Interview)

## **THE DIGITAL TURN AND ITS IMPACT ON THE ARTS**



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Net Culture is a new event format by the Berliner Festspiele. It discusses how the reality of our lives has been changed by the digital era. EFA talked to Nikola Richter, Curator of Net Culture, about the impact of the digital turn on the arts and cultural sector.

*What major opportunities and challenges of the “digital turn” do you see for the arts and cultural scenes?*

The first and foremost challenge is the decentralisation of decisions and the transparency of processes due to the proliferation of connections. Like the influential Dutch media theorist Geert Lovink has put it (he will speak about “social media as artistic intervention” at the next event of Net Culture organised by the Berliner Festspiele on 18 January): “It is time to integrate technology into the social tissue and no longer reduce computers and smart phones to broadcasting devices.” If we regard the “social tissue” in a broader sense as something that also includes the cultural sphere, we clearly see the need for integrating technology here. The good thing: It is happening already. Here and there.

In Germany, the Thalia Theater organised a crowdsourced voting for its repertoire, which then, unfortunately, was only partly realised. The heavy metal a cappella opera which won wasn't put on stage because apparently there was a clash of cultures between the opera team and Thalia Theater. This is sad, because the effort of the Thalia Theater was great. Recently, a German twitter week for theatres took place including theatres from Berlin, Bochum, Hamburg, Hannover and Munich: Audiences were asked to tweet directly from performances (#TTW13), and the theatre teams were tweeting from their work places, from backstage etc. Literary events, like the Open Mike for new unpublished literature, engage blogger teams (as the Theatertreffen has been doing since 2009).

The danger here is exactly what Geert Lovink points at: digital technologies aren't just broadcasting devices. They can also connect people with the same goal, and they can help them to organise themselves and to discover common topics.

*How do you implement these findings into your own work?*

Basically, for Net Culture I always ask my social media networks for interesting people to invite. I ask very openly: who do you consider influential in your work and private

lives. Thus, I create a discussion about each topic of each event with an engaged and informed group of people that broadens my horizon.

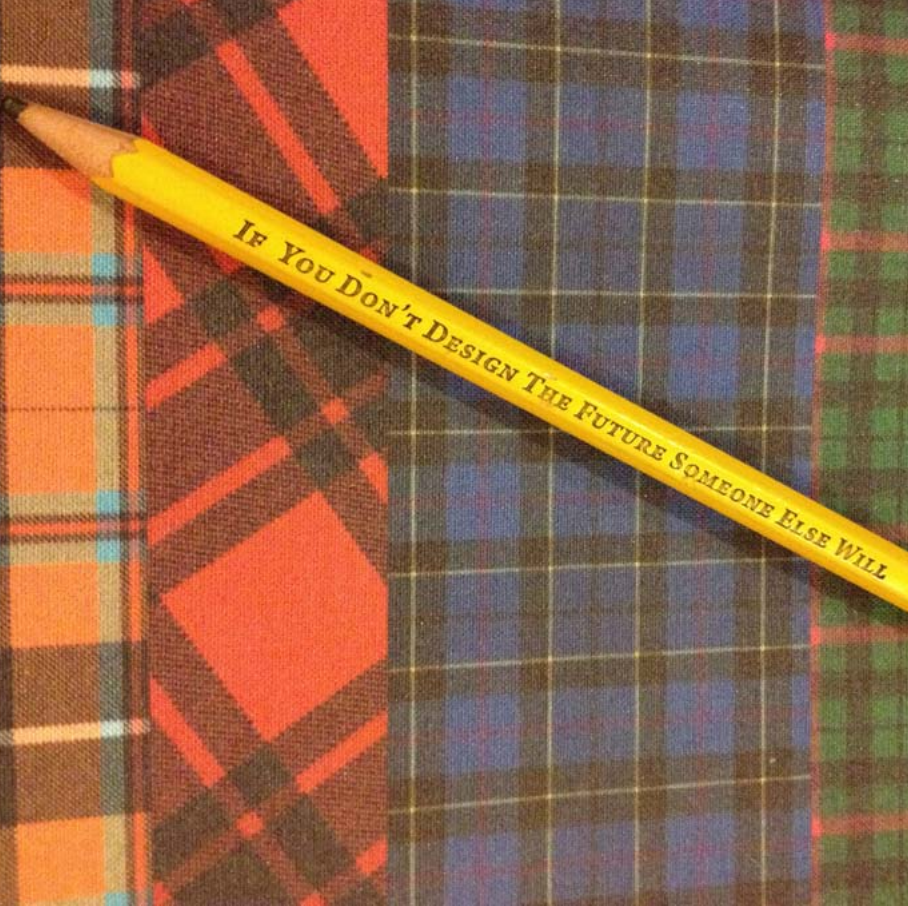
We also have a twitter account that not only tweets about the event itself, but about related topics on the web. It retweets links and thoughts by others and thus includes the audience's ideas into our stream. Because the basic question is: for whom are we staging these events? Not for ourselves or for the institution's sake, but because we like to highlight certain topics that we are interested in. We are sharing something with the audience, so that they might share something with us.

*You have a rich expertise in how to engage communities, i.e. through blogging ("Pelican-cat-cows" on Festival Bytes). The next Net Culture event also looks at new online communities, beyond facebook. How should we engage with our communities online today?*

Today, online communities are everywhere, linked to our smartphones and PCs and accompanying us from the morning to late night hours. Many people don't log out of their networks anymore: it is where they go first thing in the morning and last thing at night. More and more cultural and arts institutions are accompanying their audience in these networks on a daily basis.

Social networks exist for all sorts of different interest groups, also on Facebook, which is the largest social community in the "Western" world. There, you also find subgroups for certain topics. It is important for arts institutions to identify these subgroups for each of their events, to find out about opinion leaders in these groups (to invite them and to make them cooperative partners), and also to create a social media personality with a certain playfulness, surprise, suspense and irony. Not taking everything too seriously, releasing "non-official" information, sharing information by others on the official site, not just shouting: "Please share!"





Laura Drane, 9 April 2014

**WHAT WILL BE DIFFERENT NOW?**

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*"Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast." (Quote from Alice Through The Looking Glass)*

I started this gathering of 51 festival managers from 28 countries at the Atelier for Young Festival Managers in Edinburgh with a quote high in my mind. It's from an artist I work with, called Micah Purnell: "If you don't design the future, someone else will." And now we are almost at the last day, I have questions and questions and questions.

Why festivals?

How festivals?

What is the role of the artist?

What is the future of festivals?

How do we make work with and not just for our audiences?

How are the global changes in the 21st century impacting us as festival organisers?

What place does poetics have in the geopolitical world we inhabit?

What is the relationship between traditional and contemporary forms?

In what way can we become "architects of impact"?

How much do we know?

How little do we know?

What does it mean to buy work in and to tour/take work out?

How do we navigate the complexities of relationship between space, place, artist and audience?

Where and when and how do we create a singularity of (live) event?

What are the benefits and opportunities of limits and restraints?

Can everything be art?

Can you have a festival of... anything?

How do we engage about the value of arts and culture with the public?

What do we understand by and how do we engage with notions of risk?

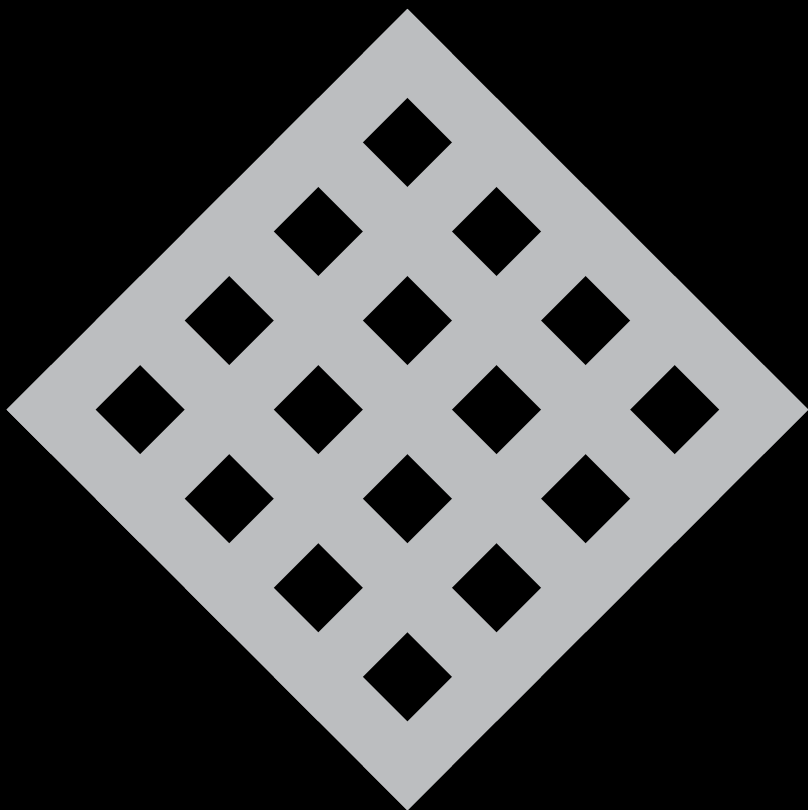
What is the power of being place-specific?

What financial and resourcing models are emerging?

What does engagement, learning, outreach, education, audience development, etc mean for us?

What will be different now?

The festival is dead. Long live the festival!



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## THE BLOGGERS

**Paul Bräuer** is Director of Communications at Piranha Arts, the producer of WOMEX – the world music expo and Classical:NEXT.

**Kathrin Deventer** is the Secretary General of the European Festivals Association. She believes in Europe and is convinced that arts and culture in general and festivals in particular play an important role in involving citizens' stronger in Europe. Kathrin is one of the founding members of the European House for Culture in Brussels and a member of A Soul for Europe's Strategy Group.

**Jelle Dierickx** is the Artistic Coordinator of the Musikfestspiele Potsdam Sanssouci.

**Laura Drane** is an independent producer from Cardiff, Wales.

**Summa Durie** is a curator & programmer from Australia, currently working as the International Programme Manager for the Ubud Writers & Readers Festival in Bali, Indonesia. [www.summadurie.com](http://www.summadurie.com)

**Albert Edelman** is an artistic coordinator at Concertgebouw Brugge, Belgium. Continuing the work he started at the Utrecht Early Music Festival, he tries to help shape the future of historically informed performance, and 'serious music' in general. He has a history as a translator, a classically trained singer and, going back to his early childhood, the wish to be a professional tourist.

**Claudia Galhós** is a journalist and author. Currently she writes about performing arts for the weekly Portuguese newspaper Expresso and directs a weekly cultural TV programme. She has written about performing arts for several newspapers and magazines in Portugal and abroad. Publications on the performing arts include: in 2009, among others, the essay "Units of feeling" in the collection "Architectures of the gaze" (Body of Letter Collection, Spain); the book "Body of Strings – 10 years of Paulo Ribeiro's Company" (Portugal, 2006); and the biographical essay "Pina Bausch – Feel More" (Portugal, 2010). In the area of fiction, she has published three novels: "Sensualists" (2001), "Summer Tale" (2002) and "The Time of Cherries" (2007).

**Premshay Hermon** is an artistic director and a multidisciplinary artist based in Israel, and Producer of UTOPIA – The Tel-Aviv International Festival of Science-Fiction and



Fantastic Film. His focus is on the role art plays in society. He is always looking for new forms of art that can deal with the rapid changes in our lives. As an artist, he has produced, directed and choreographed dance and theatre works that have traveled near and far.

**Hasan Işıklı** was born in Izmir, Turkey (1982). He holds a bachelor degree in graphic design from the faculty of fine arts and design at Bilkent University, and a master degree in IUP Applied Arts Colour, Image and Design from the section of graphic design at Toulouse-le-Mirail University in Montauban, France. After his degree, he worked for various cultural events especially at the International Izmir Festival, and he worked as a freelance graphic designer on corporate identity for companies. From 2010 to 2012, he followed a doctoral training in the department of comparative sciences of culture at University of Ghent. He currently maintains a doctoral research of arts at the department of art, music and theatre sciences at the same university. He also works as a freelance illustrator at Hillustration Studio.

**Daniel Maposa** is the Director of Savanna Trust, a theatre organisation based in Harare, Zimbabwe. He is also the Artistic Director of the Protest Arts International Festival and the Coordinator of the Zimbabwe Festivals Network.

**Eva Nunes** is the European Projects Manager at the European Festivals Association (EFA). She was the first production manager at O Espaço do Tempo run by Rui Horta and coordinator of the Theater department at Instituto das Artes/MC, and she worked with Bruno Heynderickx/CAMPAL vzw & mala voadora.

**Nikola Richter** curated the 2014 event series "Net Culture. Friends of the Internet" at the Berliner Festspiele, organised in cooperation with the Federal Agency for Civic Education (bpb.de). Net Culture looked at the impact of the digital turn on the arts. Nikola has initiated and managed the Theatertreffen-Blog from 2009 until 2013. In 2013, she started the digital publishing house mikrotex (<http://mikrotex.de>) with short literary texts from Alexander Kluge, the Syrian writer Aboud Saeed or the British "self-styled online star" Chloe Zeegen. Nikola lives in Berlin.

**Ceyda Söderblom** is the Festival Coordinator of the International Izmir Festival.

**Tim Wilson** is the Festival Director of the VAULT Festival in London.

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## ABOUT EFA

In 2012, the European Festivals Association (EFA) celebrated its diamond jubilee: 60 years of networking and connecting festival leaders, artists, emerging festival managers, experts, researchers and politicians from very diverse regions, countries and continents; 60 years of growth and active participation, artistic co-operation, professional development and action for the arts; 60 years in which Europe, the world and the arts have changed dramatically.

Europe's festivals have been some of our greatest success stories over the last 60 years. Founded by 15 member festivals in 1952, the European Festivals Association is one of the oldest cultural networks in Europe. Since then, EFA has grown into a dynamic network representing currently about 100 music, dance, theatre and multidisciplinary festivals, national festival associations and cultural organisations from about 40 (mainly European) countries.

EFA's aim is to raise awareness of festivals and the important role they play in society and for cultural cooperation around the world. EFA stands for the promotion of arts and culture in general and festivals in particular. Festivals can enhance intercultural dialogue and open access to culture to people from all walks of life.

EFA is a platform where people can meet, network, collaborate, exchange ideas and extend their horizons. EFA brings together festivals from across Europe and the world, from Scandinavia to Central and Southern Europe and countries around the Mediterranean, from Russia to the Arab world, Asia, Africa and South America – in a globalised world, festivals bridge boundaries!

EFA members share significant artistic, cultural, social and political objectives, a passion for the arts, an openness to the world and a spirit of interculturality and innovation. Each festival, be it a niche event or a large, established institution, has its own specific context. But all strive to generate a collective, stimulating and joyful atmosphere among audiences and artists.

EFA initiates and implements a wide array of international activities – from communication to knowledge sharing to advocacy. Beyond its membership, EFA collaborates with festival organisations in Asia, in the Arab world, in Africa and further afield.

Thanks to its expertise and insights, EFA connects festivals and citizens all over the world. Together with its members, EFA reaches out to artists, the media, politicians, cultural actors, colleagues, cultural researchers and the general public.

EFA offers its members:

- an open, powerful and representative international association.
- physical and virtual networking opportunities.
- platforms for setting up co-productions.
- meetings to connect with festivals and partners around the globe.
- elaborate international communication tools to support members' marketing efforts.
- a steady flow of information fine-tuned to members' needs, including news updates, internal newsletters, reports, readers etc.
- full access to comprehensive databases and research.
- exclusive educational programmes like the Atelier for Young Festival Managers and the Festival Readings under the umbrella of The Festival Academy.
- festival insights through publications such as the EFA BOOKS series, and the blog Festival Bytes.
- involvement in pioneering pilot projects such as EFFE – Europe for Festivals, Festivals for Europe, a gateway into festivals to broaden awareness and promote excellence and innovation.
- strong representation in the cultural policy debate thanks to the European House for Culture.

For more information visit our websites: [www.efa-aef.eu](http://www.efa-aef.eu); [www.TheFestivalAcademy.eu](http://www.TheFestivalAcademy.eu); [www.effe.eu](http://www.effe.eu); and [www.HouseforCulture.eu](http://www.HouseforCulture.eu); or contact us at [info@efa-aef.eu](mailto:info@efa-aef.eu).

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Abu Dhabi Festival  
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Ankara International Music Festival  
Turkish State Theatres  
Aspendos International Opera & Ballet Festival  
Festival Mitte Europa  
Al Bustan Festival  
Baalbeck International Festival  
Beirut Chants Festival  
Beiteddine Art Festival  
Belgrade Music Festival  
Belgrade Summer Festival  
Berliner Festspiele  
D-Marin Turgutreis International Festival of Classical Music  
Bratislava Music Festival  
Festival Pianistico Internazionale di Brescia e Bergamo  
Brno International Music Festival  
BOZAR  
George Enescu International Festival and Competition  
Festival SoNoRo  
Budapest Festival Center  
International Bursa Festival  
Festival de Música de Canarias  
Festival Internacional de Música de Cantonigròs  
Mittelfest  
Semana de Música Religiosa de Cuenca  
Dubrovnik Summer Festival  
Edinburgh International Festival  
Emilia Romagna Festival  
Estoril Lisbon Festival  
Flanders Festival

National Arts Festival Grahamstown  
Menuhin Festival Gstaad  
Audi Sommerkonzerte  
Istanbul Music Festival  
International Izmir Festival  
Music Isle Festival in Jeju  
Israel Festival, Jerusalem  
Ljubljana Festival  
BBC Proms  
Lucerne Festival  
Festival della Valle d'Itria  
südtirol classic festival - Meraner Musikwochen  
Mersin International Music Festival  
MITO SettembreMusica  
Mosel Musikfestival  
The Spring of Mostar  
A. Sakharov International Art Festival  
Ohrid Summer Festival  
Chorégies d'Orange  
International Music Festival Janacek May  
Festival d'Automne à Paris  
Festival Castell de Peralada  
International Music Festival A Tempo  
Prague Spring International Music Festival  
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Riga Festival  
March Music Days International Festival  
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# PUBLICATION

Date of publication: February 2015

Publisher: European Festivals Association

Design: StefanLoeckx@quasi.be

Photographic credits:

BBC-Chris Christodoulou (page 2); Hasan Işikli (page 18); Guillermo Weickert & Luis Castilla (page 34); José Carlos Duarte (page 38); Andraz Anzeljc (page 42); Clark James (pages 46, 74); Maciej Zakrzewski (page 54, 58); Concertgebouw Brugge, Concertzaal © MAFestival (page 62); Dubrovnik Summer Festival (page 70); Berliner Festspiele, Ivar Veermäe (page 80)

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Co-funded by the  
Creative Europe Programme  
of the European Union

