

Festival de Música de Canarias & International Festival Sarajevo Winter
January & February 2010
A report by Kathrin Deventer, EFA Secretary General



Two festivals kicking off the 2010 festival year

Two of the festivals kicking off the 2010 festival year – both taking place in the winter months – could not be more different: the Festival de Música de Canarias and the “Sarajevo Winter” Festival: swimming in the Mediterranean versus icy mountains – the contrast is big for many more reasons...

Festival de Música de Canarias

Of all EFA members, the festival to kick off the 2010 festival year is the Canary Islands Music Festival that celebrated its 26th edition from 8 January until 7 February 2010.

The musical roots of the festival can be traced back to the beginning of the 19th century when European opera companies stopped over in the Canary Islands on their way to South America, making good use of their stay to offer the recitals and performances which helped create a significant musical tradition.

The promise of perfect organisation, the guaranteed public response and, of course, the pleasant climate, all goes to ensure that the Canary Islands Music Festival finds a place of honour in the diaries of all the musical greats.

An important feature of the festival are the world premieres of works it commissions. Thus, the festival plays an important role for contemporary musical composition.

During my visit to the Canary Islands I could enjoy a marvellous performance of the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Vladimir Jurowski which filled the hall and amazed the audience.

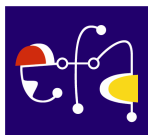
International Festival “Sarajevo Winter”

The second festival visit on my 2010 agenda was the “Sarajevo Winter” Festival – it could not have been a bigger contrast: it was a totally different experience. For many reasons.

Sarajevo – capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina – is like a metaphor of Europe. The city is marked by inter-culturality, inter-ethnicity, inter-religion as few other cities. It has been part of the Ottoman Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire and former Yugoslavia. Today, it is the economic and cultural centre of Bosnia and Herzegovina and striving to become a member of the European Union and European Capital of Culture in 2014. Where else would you find within 100 meters a mosque, an orthodox church and a synagogue? Where else would you be better reminded of the long way that many countries in Europe have gone and that – in many respects – we still need to go in order to come to a peaceful coexistence of cultures? Sarajevo tells its story: the houses that are signed by bullets, that are still destroyed are telling the story about a city in war, about a time that is not too far in the past.

On 7 February, the city was snowy and icy. Nonetheless, the festival invited Sarajevo’s citizens to participate in the festival’s opening – both in outside and inside activities – and to kick off the 2010 festival under the motto “What now – W.A.T. – World.Art.Tendency.”

Particularly striking was the involvement of students and school children who paraded from the national gallery to the city centre. Equally overwhelming was the true commitment of the artists: Asian artists from Seoul, artists invited from Kiev, from the UK, from Germany (a group from Weimar University), among others, formed part of the opening. All of them invited to stay for the duration of the festival, to contribute, to work together.



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With the presence of the Spanish Ambassador in Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNESCO, EFA, and a Member of the European Parliament, Doris Pack, the festive opening in the evening of 7 February saw the participation of high-level international representatives. It was a colourful spectacle broadcasted on national television. At the latest when the European Anthem sounded loudly in the streets of the city, one felt overwhelmed and reminded on where this city came from and where it wants to go – just as the ‘old’ European continent.



As Ibrahim Spahic, festival director, iterates, his festival is a city festival that stimulates the exchange between intellectuals, citizens and artists. The festival gives input on questions such as: For whom is a festival a platform? For artists? For intellectuals? For citizens? How to connect these groups? A Forum on the contribution of the Mediterranean dialogue for the construction of peace with the participation of many representatives from Arab and from European countries is an example of trying to find answers.



All in all, a real example of the 2010 EFA initiative “Open The Door”!



Related links:

- **Canary Island Festival:** www.festivaldecanarias.com/
- **“Sarajevo Winter”:** <http://sarajevskazima.ba/>