

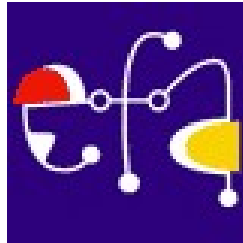
**EFA General Assembly and Conference**

**Antalya 24 April - 27 April 2008**

## **Conference**

**“Festivals in a globalizing world -  
Festivals dans un monde globalisé”**

**Friday, 25 April 2008**



## Introduction

In the framework of the 2008 EFA General Assembly from 24 to 27 of April 2008 in Antalya/Turkey, the conference “Festivals in a globalizing world” discussed various aspects on the challenges of international cultural cooperation.

General Assembly and Conference were joined by 130 delegates from 27 countries on four continents (Europe, Asia, Africa and North America) representing 60 arts festivals.

With presentations of festival representatives from Israel, Lebanon, South Africa, Jakarta, Reykjavik and the presence of the Turkish minister of Culture and Tourism, Ertugrul Günay, the conference spotlighted challenges, opportunities and obstacles of international cooperation in the festival world from the most diverse perspectives. This report summarizes the most important results of these representations.



In his welcome speech, EFA Secretary General Hugo De Greef stressed the Association’s regular contact to organisations outside of Europe and the increasing number of non-European members and thus introduced the theme “Festivals in a globalizing world”. He referred to the “Cultural Networks at Work” Conference on 7 and 8 June 2007 in Brussels, Belgium, where the “world was present.” De Greef pointed out the aim of the Antalya conference: to learn from each other and - for EFA - to work on the results of these discussions in the future.



Following the welcome speech of De Greef, Turkish Ahmet Say, Author and Music Critic, reflected in his [introductory speech](#) on the concept of “Globalization”: He defined globalization “as the total of multi-dimensional cultural aspects devised by man.” He further hinted at the different points of view regarding globalisation, provoking its anti-thetic application:

“To some, ‘globalization’ stands for the standardization of all values related to ‘man’ and promoting this to the whole world will eventually end up with the ordinary values becoming widespread. To some others, ‘global’ feature is a fact achieved by international participation like in ‘olympic games’. And to others, it is a slogan symbolising the big fish swallowing the small fish.”

By referring to these very common perceptions, Say underlined the important role for festivals to contribute to cultural creativity.

## Presentations

A series of presentations threw light on the conference’s theme: “Festivals in a globalizing world”. Presenters, especially reflecting on points of views from festival representatives of EFA members from beyond European borders and guest speakers from Asia and Africa, had been invited to depart from their local context, entering into a broader reflection on the **challenges, obstacles and opportunities of ‘Festivals in a globalizing world’**. They touched upon questions such as: How do festivals build and sustain ‘global’ relationships, and transcend physical, linguistic, religious and psychological barriers? What does globalization bring to a festival? What does one learn from ‘the other’? In how far, if at all, does one benefit? What are the most challenging projects participants developed regarding international cooperation and conflicts brought by globalization? What does a festival’s collaboration within a European network of arts festivals mean to the participants?

## 1. Karen Jeynes, Performing Arts Network of South Africa PANSa

### Summary

In her [speech](#), Karen Jeynes reflected on the conference's theme from the point of view of an African network. She described the state of play of arts festivals in Africa, explored the best practices, opportunities, needs and obstacles South African and African arts organizations or festivals experience when they try to engage in worldwide cooperation and explained why sustainable relationships between arts and cultural organizations such as EFA and PANSa are so important. She explored the difficult question if there is a contradiction between the saving of local cultures and going global and stressed the benefits and the barriers of collaborations 'across the globe'. For her, globalization has a strong economic connotation: a 'global market' - selling and buying around the globe at the most advantageous conditions. In a globalizing world, in a very naïve sense, the world is growing together.



### 1. "In South Africa arts are trying to learning walking"

Starting off with describing the festival situation in Africa Jeynes explained that for PANSa it is not possible to cover whole of Africa. In South Africa - in Jeynes' words - "**arts are trying to learning walking.**" In a global country like South Africa there are artists in every genre - "**Talent has never been a problem.**" According to an African saying "local is good", but Jeynes stressed that people don't always believe in it. Jeynes suggested that the reasons for this are the hangover from colonial days, the more "insidious" cultural colonialism of America and the country's own desire to escape from the realities of life. She pointed out that in recent years a shift could be recorded: The range and content of arts on offer broadened and a wider audience could be gained. She stressed, that here, festivals are an important factor since they reach large audiences. Festivals help to raise the profile of local artists by showcasing them in the company of international artists and foster an international dialogue. "**Sharing is key!**"

### 2. "The goal is to reach audiences beyond ones own region"

As an example for cooperation with other festivals on other continents she referred to **film**. International film companies come to South Africa to shoot their films there, which creates job opportunities and fosters the growing of the industry. **Visual Arts** do not suffer in comparison with the international scene. Galleries are very well frequented in South Africa, artist investment is catching on and artists are able to make a living. In the African **music** industry a range of music styles are present.

**Performing Arts** is the most complicated genre. **Dance** is very well supported from society and the industry is teaming with large well established companies. **Theatre** is typified by small companies, artists come together for individual projects and independent producers, and the preference of international names is evident.

The problem was according to Jeynes that local shows rarely run for more than six weeks. There are a large number of **Africaans festivals**. Africaans artists have international success especially in Belgium and in The Netherlands. The problem of **local shows** was that because of huge costs shows rarely travel within the country. She referred to the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown (a multidisciplinary event) as the one occasion where the different industries come together, which provides a possibility to reach audiences beyond ones own region and the interest of producers and directors from other areas. In the problematic theatre sector festivals help to grow audiences.

### 3. “All cultures are equal”

Jeynes explored the difficult question if there is a contradiction between the saving of local cultures and going global: She suggested that, against the background of globalization, the question one should ask is: What are the dangers to look out for? And what are the ideals to strive for? Some of the dangers are for example that smaller cultures could be destroyed by bigger cultures. This can be avoided by having a strong and clear identity and sense of self and celebrate the uniqueness. Therefore, the approach - according to Jeynes - has to be: “**All cultures are equal**”.

### 4. “Unity in diversity”

Jeynes explained how sustainable relationships between arts and cultural organizations such as EFA, a European-based network, and PANSA, an African-based network, and in particular festivals, can be built up and answered the questions if an African arts organisation’s objective should be to have global collaborations. Furthermore, she reflected on the benefits and the barriers of collaborations ‘across the globe’.

She stressed that **cultures can learn a lot from each other, about others and about oneself**. The arts are expressing feelings that are common to all human beings, so arts are accessible to everybody. South Africa can only benefit from international exposure. It is important though that this is managed properly. Jeynes suggested that the ideal to aim for was: **exchanges, skills transfer, and co-productions**. Direct exchange systems provide equal benefits to both participating parties. Openness, communication and dialogue are vital for successful skills transfer. Co-productions are a great possibility of getting countries to work together.

The motivation for an ongoing relationship between EFA and South Africa should be explored from two sides: A plus for South Africa is the opportunity to get information about festivals in general, the opportunity to learn from other countries how they deal with the impact of American culture and with similar challenges such as multilingual audiences and urban and rural populations. But South Africa has also something to offer to EFA: something unique - a culture that has something of everything, it can show how to balance tradition and modern. She concluded with the common motto of South Africa and Indonesia (and Europe!): “Unity in diversity”.

## 2. Myrna Bustani, Director Al Bustan Festival (Beirut)

### Summary

The Al Bustan Festival represents an outstanding case of a festival being a pioneer in terms of co-productions in a globalizing world. [Myrna Bustani's presentation](#) focused on this year's festival theme 'Beyond Borders' and highlighted the challenges of true international cooperation across all continents. Bustani in particular depicted the challenge the festival is facing from bi-lateral collaboration (focusing on one country and its cultural and artistic offer) to international consortia of cooperation (focusing on many countries and issues of trans-national interest).



### 1. Lebanon was a “cultural dessert”

Myrna Bustani, the Founder of the festival which started 1994 as an international festival for music and the arts and runs since 17 years, suggested that “international” means to invite artists from different countries to come together and perform at the festival. At the festival artists were introduced to Lebanese public/audience, and the Lebanon as a country was introduced to these artists. She explained the situation in her country: For a long time, Lebanon was a “cultural dessert” and classical music was called “funeral music”. Already the first festival was a breakthrough: it brought together artists from Argentina, France, Germany, England, India, Italy, Ireland, Scotland, Russia and Lebanon. The multicultural programme featured jazz, Indian traditional music, Shakespeare theatre etc.

### 2. “Festivals and music in general benefit from globalization”

According to Bustani the Lebanese - which is a multicultural public - want and appreciate a multicultural programme. She stressed that she takes globalization in its positive interpretation and described the characteristics of her festival: in the 15<sup>th</sup> edition of the festival 5 continents were

present. The **festival is a meeting point** between participating musicians from all over the world, thus it is “truly globalized in a positive sense”. In the last edition of Al Bustan Russian, Dutch and Spanish conductors took part to lead Lebanese choirs merging with Spanish and Czech choirs. She referred to **music as “a global language”** since artists from different backgrounds can communicate through music.

Festivals are mushrooming everywhere in the Arab countries, as are symphony and opera halls. Al Bustan has been a pioneer in several aspects: it introduced opera to the Lebanon, but the programme also includes contemporary music. Nothing could have been achieved without global communications, so, according to Bustani, **“festivals and music in general benefit from globalization”** and **“networking between festivals can only be beneficial.”**

Bustani reflected also on the positive and negative perceptions of globalization: One direct impact of globalization is “fusion”, but the counter reaction - to look for the authentic - was also important. Globalization opponents might fear that one day festivals worldwide will have the same programme, but this will not happen, each festival is trying to and will always have its own identity! Some fear that local cultures disappear. But with the Al Bustan Festival they actually did the opposite: the individuality of different cultures was boosted. And this was, according to her, “easily done”, since the Lebanon “is a melting pot”. The challenge was to organize a music festival against this background, but artists are courageous. She concluded describing her country as a “land of multiple identities, of junctions and encounters, a land of freedom, of windows to the world.”

### 3. Thorunn Sigurdardottir, Artistic Director Reykjavik Arts Festival

#### Summary

The Reykjavik Arts Festival located on an island in the North Atlantic Ocean between Europe and the US, has been implementing for many decades an arts festival including different artistic disciplines. The presentation threw light on the **Festival’s efforts and experiences in communicating and promoting its festival programme worldwide**. Sigurdartottir referred in particular to the question in how far the choice of a programme, the choice of artistic disciplines and the choice of international artists have an impact on the international outreach and visibility.



#### 1. “Open up the diversity of the world without losing your identity”

The Reykjavik Arts Festival is one of the oldest international arts festivals in the Nordic countries. Sigurdartottir explained that it is special because it has all kinds of different genres under one

umbrella: Music, dance and theatre, literature, visual arts, architecture, pop music and street theatre. It is special because Iceland is geographically and linguistically isolated. Therefore, they started the festivals with a mixture of genre because there was not one big audience for one arts form. They started this concept out of necessity, though now it is seen as a clever marketing strategy. Since the recipe is so close to the curiosity to the Icelanders and a part of the identity of the people living far away from the continents, Sigurdardottir suggested that such a festival could probably not be set up in a bigger society, where it might look strange and unfocused. In Reykjavik artists from Africa and South America mingle with locals. Iceland is no longer isolated.

She explained that Iceland, being located between Europe and America, wants to learn from both continents and many countries. Therefore, the festival brings in arts from far away places and new connections with Icelandic and foreign artists are built. For her the real meaning of globalization is **“to open up the diversity of the world without losing your identity.”**

The main goal of Reykjavik Arts Festival is **“to be on step with the time, and if possible a little bit ahead.”** The festival seeks to promote Icelandic and international culture in all fields of art and to co-produce with other festivals and institutions abroad (for example there exists cooperation with Al Bustan). It is exciting to mix different art forms (i.e. classic and rock/pop) and styles, since this breaks the barriers between the young and the older audience. The festival enjoys international media coverage. The aim was, according to Sigurdartottir, **“to give the small nation a stronger profile”** and concluding her speech she stresses **“you have to know your audience.”**

#### 4. Yossi Tal-Gan, The Israel Festival, Jerusalem

##### Summary

In his presentation, Yossi Tal-Gan depicted the Festival’s role as a means to promote artistic encounters crossing all kinds of boundaries: not only the continental but also the cultural, national and political. In how far is the Israel Festival for Israelis and visitors of the festival ‘a window to the world’? In how far can an arts organisation, and in particular an arts festival bringing together audiences, artists, and the public in a festive moment, be a ‘global village’? Tal-Gan raised issues that reflect upon the festival as a stage to expose and promote Israeli artists to the international arena, multicultural dialogue and co-productions and co-operations with other festivals.



## 1. Cultural sensitivities

The Israel Festival started as classic music festival, but since 20 years it is multidisciplinary: dance, theatre, modern dance, classic, jazz, world music. Tal-Gan lays down the festival's guidelines: **be careful in regards of cultural sensitivities of public and artists from around the world; no form of culture is superior to another; one form is not elitist while another is populist; classical music is not more worth than world music.**

Migration brought all different kinds of culture to the country, but also conflicts. The arts are a pioneering field of **representing the other as unique**. He suggested that the festival has contributed to communicate between groups in Israel society by joining between east and west artistically, especially as Israel is geographically situated between three continents and especially as there are three religions: Judaism, Islam, and Christianity - which have to be bridged.

## 2. Boundaries have been broken down

**Openness** has resulted in many multicultural productions, i.e. a co-production between Israel, Japan and Switzerland. To Tal-Gan said that boundaries have been broken down: local artists working in different countries can foster greater understanding between one another. He asked: Is there a general loss of identity by trying to be one big universal people? And replied: Collaboration works to uncover the cultural differences between the two participating parties and at the same time combine and create a new identity that safeguards the old identities.

Tal-Gan suggested that festival directors should strive to expose viewers to the new, to the unique and to the excellent. Festivals should be transferred into **connecting factors**, a **voice of moderation** between cultures and countries of conflict.

One should take advantage of globalization, not in order to standardize the arts, but to help expose the art and culture of the other. One should encourage and assist the local creation and artists to go global.

## 5. Ary Sutedja, AAPAF Executive Council member, Co-Founder of Jakart



### Summary

In her [presentation](#), Ary Sutedja gave the Asian festivals' point of view on "Festivals in a globalizing world" and pointed out the difficulties and the potentials of the festival scene in Indonesia.

#### 1. Festivals have to rethink their existence

With the changes the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought about, methods should be developed to cope with new realities. Sutedja stressed that festivals have a leading and important role to play in exposing these issues and stimulating discussions about them and to encourage everyone to find applicable solutions that will allow to life in the redefined world. But she suggested that festivals have difficulties of finding adequate financing. Most festivals today resort to a festival formula at the expense of dealing with issues.

The result of globalization is a new international/global culture. The danger is that Festivals would contribute to standardization. **Festivals should, according to Sutedja, rethink their existence, redefine their role as an instrument of change in the local communities and reevaluate their contributions on the global stage.**

Ary Sutedja spoke about Indonesia as a great country, but with many problems, such as hypocrisy and corruption. Therefore, JakArt tries to expose these issues through the festivals and implement changes. One should develop a new set of ideas, but it feels like "our contribution is a drop in the ocean." The theme of JakArt 2008 is "forbidden, forgotten and forsaken", meant to draw attention to serious issues of the society in Indonesia and around the world, a world of blurred distinctions. The problem is according to the festival's Co-Founder that JakArt lacks infrastructure, funding and political will. Therefore, this year JakArt organized IF - Imaginary Festival - which is a mix of reality and phantasy.

## 6. Round table

The round table brought together five directors and experts in the international festivals work who threw light on the questions: Festivals as the window to the world: Challenges of diversity and international programming beyond political constraints - can festivals bring the unknown? Are festivals ready for the challenge of diversity? How international are their festivals' programmes? How do festivals deal with the impact of globalization (mainstream versus niches, homogeneity versus particularity)? How do they master the combination between the 'local' and 'the international'? How does the opportunity of globalization threaten the individual nature which makes a local festival special?



**Participants (from left to right):** James Waters (Chair), Ary Sutedja (AAPAF Executive Council member, Co-Founder of JakArt), Allan Grige (Chair of the International Festivals and Events Association Europe), David Dittrich (Director Concentus Moraviae Festival of 13 Towns), Themis Venturas (General Secretary PANSAs)

**“We need cultures in their purest forms, but we also need to experience each other”**



Themis Venturas suggested that South Africa still suffers from the idea that things from the international stage (i.e. America) are better than what they have got. The commercial reality is, said Venturas, that a festival of just local artists doesn't attract the same kind of audience as an internationally renowned festival. South African festivals are often a combination of international and local artists. Local artist should be on the same programme as big names; through this contact some of them became international artists themselves. “Water is life giving”: “We need cultures in their purest forms, but we also need to experience each other.” A festival makes one reflect on one's own culture and move on.

**The importance of regional activities**



The focus of the Concentus Moraviae Festival is on regional cooperation and activities. David Dittrich explained that one tries to revive historical venues outside big centres and to bring first class performances to the region. But one also tries to invite well-known musicians. Nowadays, more and more famous artists are invited to attract audiences and sponsors. But many regional festivals cannot afford this and also, this becomes more difficult for other great but not as famous musicians to be part of the festival. Dittrich's suggestion is to invite young promising musicians to festivals and to support their international career. “This way we could contribute to avoid some of the negative aspects of the musical globalisation.”

**Festivals have always been global**



On the question “How facilitate international partnerships that break the traditional co-production mode?” Allan Grige replied that international networking, meeting people and thus being inspired is an opportunity. Festivals have always been global, artists have criss-crossed the world. Cross-cultural cooperation is not new. Globalization is not a matter of the fact that nowadays people have easy access to each other, i.e. can communicate via the internet. He suggested that globalization is what happens in someone's mind. People are not all globalized. The ways in which things have traditionally been done, have

to be questioned, in terms of the framework of marketing, of targeting audience groups and of staff. There is room for all kinds of new arts forms and styles. A suggestion would be that local single culture festivals and niche festivals that are just catering to one type of audience should still be appreciated and nurtured. The challenge is not to alienate others, others should be made appreciative that here one celebrates a single type of culture. Festivals have to be rooted in the place where they come from.

### **The balance between international and local is a question of money**



Ary Sutedja reflected on the balance of the local and the international. She explained that there was not a big cultural offer in Jakarta. When they started with JakArt, they decided because of the lack of infrastructure to use the whole city as a stage. In JakArt 35-40% of the content is international, 60% is local. According to Sutedja the balance between international and local is a question of money. Festivals also have an economic effect, but people don't realize this.

### **Open collaboration needed**

In South Africa there's a lack of skills in administration and infrastructural planning. South Africa has been cut off from the world for a very long time. But the Antalya conference for example is an opportunity to meet to foster more open collaboration and as a ground for future collaborations. There is a need to collaborate more on exchange programmes. Therefore, Themis Ventouras explained, one is working on the creation of an African festivals organisation. Another suggestion concerned the sharing of best practises. An initiative could be introduced where one local artist of each festival could be promoted internationally.

### **Arts Festivals and intercultural dialogue**

When the discussion was extended to the audience, the Arts Festivals' Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue was among the topics of interest. Organisations should be encouraged to develop funds for intercultural dialogue and to support festivals in their important artistic and social role inviting people to live together in harmony.

## 6. Conclusion, Martin Huber, Publisher ‘Managing the Arts Worldwide’



Martin Huber suggested that globalization has so many meanings that it is meaningless. Artists have always travelled; it is just easier nowadays. Globalization is not about standardized values. The challenge is to relate to communities. Each culture is equally important, should have a clear identity and a sense of self and be proud of its own uniqueness. Mutual respect, sharing and exchanges are needed. A festival is opening up the window of cultural diversity. Every festival is trying to have its own identity. For the organiser of a festival it is important to feel the audience. Through new media and technology, i.e. the internet, festivals can broaden their audiences. Artists and cultural organisations should explore how to communicate more effectively with their audiences and how to make use of i.e. digital communication. A festival can offer a place open for all kinds of ideas and new formats and without borders. Huber stressed that support from the Board is important as well as financial security. There is an essential need for the touring of excellent work. Reaching young people is significant and therefore education should be part of the festivals' role.