

**Festival  
Bytes**  
2013

European Festivals Association

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# **Festival Bytes**

## **A journey through the world of festivals 2013**

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## Introduction

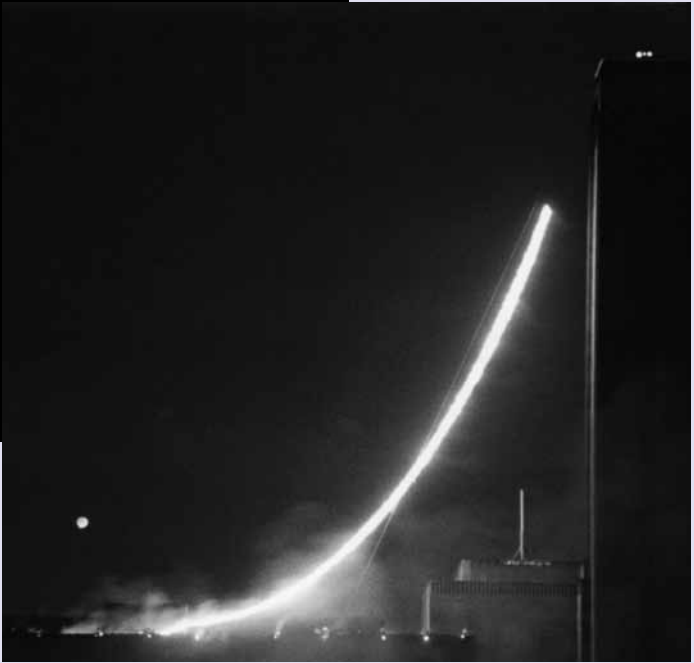
The European Festivals Association (EFA) is delighted to invite you on a journey through the 2013 festival highlights featured on EFA's blog Festival Bytes ([www.festivalbytes.eu](http://www.festivalbytes.eu)).

Festival Bytes is a space for story-telling about festivals. The blog shares the ideas of personalities from the festival and cultural sectors on the role of arts and culture in general and of festivals in particular. The bloggers make us think; they take us behind the scenes of their activities; they share their insights and expertise, exchange on their ideas and visions, and explore trends and best practices.

Looking back at 2013, our bloggers explored a colourful mosaic of festivals through sharing their thoughts on the arts, artists, places and their people, their history, their challenges, and their very specific contexts. They reflect the incredible diversity of today's societies and places all over the world.

The posts chosen for this publication feature some of last year's festival highlights – of EFA member festivals as well as new and exciting festivals and festival related activities all around the globe.

We invite you to be inspired by the stories told by our bloggers throughout 2013: EFA's members, participants of the Atelier for Young Festival Managers, EFA's team, journalists, friends and colleagues share with you their experiences in China, Croatia, Cyprus, Finland, Italy, Iraq, Kenya, Lebanon, Northern Ireland, Norway, Serbia, Spain, South Africa, and the UK.



Jonathan May, 17 April 2013

**Re-imagining place in Derry-Londonderry**

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**30** YEARS AGO the parade ground at Ebrington in Derry-Londonderry echoed to the sound of soldiers marching on what was one of the most modern military forts in Europe. In this City of Culture year for Derry the former barracks are once again full to capacity – but this time with locals and visitors eager to participate in a parade ground which has been transformed into the city's newest public entertainment space.

Excited by the prospect of creating new stories with local artists, dancers and musicians in Derry-Londonderry, LIFT jumped at the chance to take part in the exciting year-long programme of cultural activity as part of the City of Culture 2013, many events of which will be held at Ebrington.

LIFT is a festival that has been championing public art and performance for over 30 years. One of the key missions has been to use London as a stage, taking brave international artists and supporting them to create unexpected art works in public space. The Participation Producer Erica Campayne, who's been working in Derry for the last nine months as part of LIFT's commission with the Hofesh Shechter Company, believes cultural events have a unique way of re-writing how we relate to locations in the city.

“Culture can often allow people who live in the city to walk the streets differently, to travel to areas that they might not normally go and to see their locality in a different way. You likely tread the same ground without looking up or around. Theatre and carnival allow us to see our surroundings differently and to create a fresh relationship with a location. I think it can also give you different memories about a place that you've visited. If you have a particular experience you might go back there at another time and trigger that memory, make you feel differently about it.”

Derry's City of Culture team have a magnificent view of the historic walled city across the river Foyle, as well as Ebrington, the former parade ground, which until 2004 were shielded by corrugated iron and barbed wire during 30 years of the Troubles. Two years ago a pedestrian Peace Bridge was built across the Foyle, encouraging people in to each others communities. The bridge has in many ways transformed the city, and despite the often one-dimensional story presented by the press unable to look past the city's history of conflict, the City of Culture team are keen to make a different statement about Derry-Londonderry.

This type of transformation brings to mind LIFT's 1993 launch event, where the then empty former power station at London's Bankside was transformed by artists Anne Bean and Paul Burwell using the chimney as a gigantic flame thrower and the flat roofs on each side as flaming drumworks. Twenty-five drummers created powerful shadows up and down the chimney while welders and remote-controlled helicopters carried flares and flaming ropes on pulleys to the chimney on each side. The whole work plugged into

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the energy that the power station, which had lain disused and ready for demolition for many years, had once created, to conjure an intense urban song to the city. Legend has it that Dennis Stevenson carried a flyer of the event in his pocket, using evidence of Bean and Burwell's theatrical illusion over his next few years as Chair of Tate Gallery looking for new premises and in 2000 saw the Bankside power station transformed into one of the world's most acclaimed galleries of contemporary art.

"I think art gives something a soul, a feeling to a physical space," Erica says. "The City Of Culture is accelerating change in the city's fortunes by driving a step change in the economy, principally through the tourism and creative media sectors. Changing the army barracks into a cultural centre is a major way in which they are doing that. And by putting the bridge there and giving a reason for people to go and walk a route they hadn't walked in 30 years. What I love about my work with LIFT is that I get to enable artists and other creatives, many of whom represent a younger perspective, to have a voice that is often counter cultural, they can rewrite the script and re-imagine place."

"And so when we were in Derry we wanted to continue in this vein, to produce work that is engaged with the city and the architecture of it, as well as working with local people to create and perform these works." Erica is referring to LIFT's two collaborations with the Hofesh Shechter Company, *Political Mother: Derry-Londonderry Uncut*, a re-imagining of Shechter's tour-de-force *Political Mother* which features 22 Derry musicians and a new section of the show inspired by traditional folk music of the city; and *Political Mother: Shortcuts*, five new dance creations which will be performed at iconic outdoor locations across the city.

"In Derry there is so much physical history there, the city walls, the city centre, the Ebrington Barracks, the murals. On the water side you can physically see those marks of conflict that have existed and so rather than ignore them we wanted to engage that artistically."

This is at the heart of LIFT's curiosity and excitement to work with the people of Derry, matching the City of Culture's desire to reposition those places that have been quite fraught, and give people a new reason to travel across the city, allowing them to engage with place and each other in a fresh and different way.

Working with younger people as part of these projects is an important element of this. "Very often these young people seemed to be approaching the division differently to the older generation, a bit like with climate change or technology perhaps," Erica explains. "They don't feel the politics as keenly maybe and so they were also interested in being quite playful, like travelling to different parts of the city and going to areas they might not have gone to or maybe their parents wouldn't have gone to - they didn't have the same reservation about."

If creating public art gives you more freedom in a city, how does working with the people that make up the city become part of this?

"We were talking to one of the musicians where Hofesh has created a special piece within Uncut especially with traditional Irish instruments. To incorporate this into the show the Derry drummers are playing the lampeg and the guitarists have had to learn to play the bodhrán for that particular moment in the show. Traditionally the bodhrán was Catholic and the lampeg was Protestant. So this musician was saying how he has loved it and has now bought his own but that he can't tell his grandad because he would be quite shocked. But he doesn't really care, he loves the sound it makes and he has never played it before in his life because he never would have had the opportunity at school and his family would never have exposed him to it. Because Hofesh is just being led artistically about what makes the most interesting show, it is allowing them to have different experiences."

Erica has plenty of experience producing cultural activities in complicated social environments. For LIFT 2012 she produced *Unfinished Dream*, working with Iranian theatre-maker Hamid Pourazari to tell the story of refugee communities in Croydon. Like Derry, Croydon is a complicated place. It is the home of the UK Home Office processing unit for new arrivals, and therefore has a higher than usual proportion of refugees in the borough. Erica supported Hamid to create a show collaboratively with residents of Croydon, working with local partners to recruit participants from Croydon's many refugee communities. However it soon became clear that this collaboration could become more important than just a focus on the refugee community; it was about the whole community of Croydon. By the end of a three-month residency in Croydon's Clocktower, *Unfinished Dream* worked with over 220 people who were refugees and new arrivals but also included anyone who has lived in Croydon, from young people, the retired, people with disabilities and others just keen to get involved with an exciting cultural event. Performed across three levels of a multi-storey car park the audience went on a journey with the participants allowing them to have a different relationship with the performers - but also allowing participants themselves to mix and exchange culturally in ways they couldn't have previously.

With the entire LIFT team decamped to Derry for this week on our non-festival year, it seems the opportunity to build a long-term collaboration with an artist we all admire greatly, namely Hofesh Shechter, and to create a number of exciting cultural events as part of the Derry-Londonderry's City of Culture were just too good to turn down.

"It's about celebrating the physical architecture of the city as well as the people that live there, and that's what LIFT has always been committed to. Clearly it is the agenda of City of Culture as well to celebrate both the changing architecture of Derry while looking to a brighter future."





Claudia Galhos, 8 November 2013

**Norwegian dance: the movement  
of the blind slippery ice**

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**H**OW IS ONE'S PERCEPTION of contemporary performing arts – with dance and/or the body at its core – altered by the context in which it is presented? And what can be, or should be, the ideal programmatic landscape of a contemporary dance festival in a geographically, socially, economically, naturally and ecologically very peculiar context?

These are some of the questions that I bring with me while travelling towards the mythic, poetic but dark Northern Lights that Bill Bryson described in his book "Neither Here, Nor There" – a journey through Europe that starts at Hammerfest, the northernmost town of the European continent. He describes it as answering to "urge to experience what life was like in such a remote and forbidden place", the city "on the edge of the world, the northernmost town of Europe (...) a place of dark and brutal winters, where the sun sinks into the Arctic Ocean in November and does not rise again for ten weeks."

Bill Bryson asks why anyone would want to go there in winter. But imagine this: there is a reason for a pilgrimage these days to Hammerfest. And contrary to the more essential characteristic of that region, it is not because of the oil, an ever growing industry around there; it is also not because of the large liquefied natural gas, the biggest in Europe, that is being constructed in the outskirts of Hammerfest; and it is not because of the major presence of reindeers and the culture of reindeer herding – well, we shall talk about this later on in the days to come, about the killing of Rudolph as a creative performance act and culinary creation (yes, it is Santa's famous Red-Nosed Reindeer, the male leader pulling Santa's sleigh on Christmas Eve...). The pilgrimage is also not because of the very important religious presence of the Church of Norway, the state church, or even the profound relation to nature in such a place that has as impact on human beings that intensifies the connection to one's own senses leading to some kind of spiritual faith. None of these.

The pilgrimage is about an added value, and another kind of energy creation and intensification that is in question – Pichet Klunchun's dance is clearly about this... This is about the exploration of other sources of live power to such a forbidden, distant and mysterious place: it is a festival of

contemporary dance and performance arts called DanseFestival Barents. The festival had its first edition in 2003, and this year enters a new phase of its history with a new Festival Director, Jørgen Knudsen. The questions that travel with me are some of the interrogations Jørgen is also exploring with the programme of the festival. And there is an external viewer thinking and writing about the festival, each day, during its duration (from 5 to 9 November): me.

Jørgen Knudsen himself, his history and who he is as a person and as an artist, is very symbolic of the questions raised. After all, he is a Norwegian theatre director, performer and scientist, and was part of the radical collective of artists Baktruppen. He has a Natural Sciences background that still is part of his present story, even in the art he creates and the value he finds in choreography. He says the world in which choreography is used the most is in the relationships and movements of microorganisms. So, in my exchanges with him, we always came back to the questions of the very beginning and conception of life, the relevance of invisible existence of movement and relations.

In Hammerfest there is a very local and real life threatening expression that also reflects what we are talking about here: the blind slippery ice. It is a kind of ice that stays on the ground and is not immediately identified as slippery, but you can easily slip and fall... This was one of the first things I learnt as soon as I arrived at the House of Culture in Hammerfest, where the festival happens, and it is a very strong and meaningful image.

What happens is very much in sync with the yet to be largely discovered Norwegian writer Knut Hamsun (Nobel Prize Laureate in Literature in 1920). In the introduction to Hamsun's book "Hunger", Edwin Bjorkman describes his writing in a way that can be felt in Hammerfest's festival today. He writes that Hamsun should be seen as "a thinker and a poet and laughing dreamer, provided they realise from the start that his thinking is suggestive rather than conclusive, and that he never meant it to be anything else."

This is also what Jørgen is proposing – suggestive rather than conclusive is of essential importance here. With a peculiar accent, he says: "I focus differently. I present shows with different aesthetics. I bring things that I

think are worth presenting to the Norwegian people in Hammerfest, which is completely different from what I would present if I was a programmer in Oslo... In Hammerfest people are not very familiar with contemporary dance, so I have to give a kind of introduction. I present very sophisticated and high quality shows but that can be shared with a much broader community and not only with an intellectual elite".

There is also that primitive relation with nature that Hamsun also talks about in his books, especially in the acclaimed "The Growth of the Soil", a novel of the Northland. One could say that there is a similarity to the contemporary dance logic, in terms of structure, because it almost doesn't have a plot. There is "its chief interest in a primitively spontaneous man's reactions to a nature so overwhelming that it makes mere purposeless existence seem a sufficient end in itself." This particular context so poetically described as having the "northern mountains bathing their feet in the ocean and their crowns in the light of a never-setting sun" surely leaves an impression on everyone's body and relation to daily life and other people. Obviously, this is a poetic exaggeration.

But let's go back to the 2013 edition of DanseFestival Barents and the fact that it started even before it was officially open, in the spirit of what Jørgen is experimenting with in the programme.

Jørgen sees programming as "creating situations, productions, scenes." In the afternoon of the opening day, Pichet Klunchun gave a class (I am sure this is not the right term to define it) to drawing students. They were a dozen, with their drawing sketchbooks. And what was going to happen...? Pichet is programmed in the festival with the presentation of his well known and acclaimed work "Nijinski Siam". He is also programmed in a lab context, the BarentsLab, an intercultural dialogue\collaboration with Norwegian choreographer Liv Hanne Haugen that is not intended to be watched as a finished performance show...

In the encounter with the students, the nature of the festival came alive. We go back to the same issues of that blind slippery ice. There are so many things hidden under the surface of life. That is particularly true for art. And dance has a most influential importance in this relation to what is not immediately

revealed because it always convokes the personal and subjective body into its core, even in its most abstract and conceptual approach. Even when you are watching from the outside.

To draw, with words, a perspective of what is being shared is the work of the writer, like me; and to see beyond the schedule of shows, labs, and talks in the programme, and to give them meaning, is part of the same world of engaging with art through writing. And the first hidden choreography, a marvellous one, was that meeting between Pichet and the drawing students.

A world reference dancer and choreographer, Pichet showed some of the traditional Thai movements from classical Thai dance. The students were expected to see him moving and try to draw him while he was dancing. Immediately the question of time was raised. Pichet's Thai movements are very precise, mostly minimal and slow. But for the students, for their task, it was too fast. In an era when audiences are very impatient with slow movements, this was very interesting to watch.

So in the second phase Pichet froze for a while for them to draw. After a while he asked: is it ok? And the students answered: still too fast. And he went into the third phase, putting himself in classical Thai positions and staying immobile for a while. Like a model for drawing students in a formal class but in odd positions. Even that was not enough, and it was time to exchange to reach another level: the way the students were approaching the idea of drawing had to be questioned. Which was what Pichet gently and generously did.

Pichet challenged the teenagers to draw not the copy of his body moving but to capture the lines of the movement in a more freely and personal way. It is not easy to act freely... He then explained to them that while they were watching him dancing he was drawing all the time, because that is what his dance is. He is drawing circles. And this is what it is all about – the festival, the intercultural relations, the relation between two individuals, the connection to being alive, the relevance of the context we are in... The dream of freedom.

And there is a meaning to the minimal gesture you do or you see being done. It is always about finding what is hidden. It is always about having the

curiosity to go deeper. To go beyond the surface of things. Or if that curiosity doesn't exist in the person, it can be stimulated and challenged. Gently if possible... But to engage in a deepening of the relation with what is around us – a person, a question, an image, a sensation, a thought, a doubt... – you need to have information and imagination. And this is what this festival is proposing.

I still don't have an answer to the questions I came with. It's too soon. The festival hasn't even started at the moment I finish this text.



*Jack Buckley, 15 November 2013*

**Peaks of the Italian Music Festivals 2013**

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**S**OME PERFORMANCES –or more frequently, certain aspects of certain performances– live on in the mind’s ear or eye for ever. These moments change us, sometimes in a disturbing way, sometimes in a pleasurable way. There is a very real sense in which we are different ourselves as a result of the privilege of the experience. I have three such experiences plus a small coda from this year’s music festivals in Italy.

Every summer the Rome Opera go out of doors to the Baths of Caracalla where they stage grand opera and ballet in a June, July, August Summer Festival, before audiences of about two thousand. Given the setting in Ancient Rome and the time of year, this is essentially a tourist attraction. But this year there was also something rather special.

If you have ever visited the Roman Monuments by night you will know that the Italians have the extraordinary knack of uncannily bringing these old stones to life. So the first to be praised in this staging of *Dido and Aeneas* is Vincent Longuemare’s lighting, guided by the hauntingly beautiful stage direction of Chiara Muti (Riccardo’s daughter).

But this was not in the usual whoperscope Caracalla space but in the much more intimate setting of the East Gymnasium, where the audience had to be restricted to a mere one hundred and twenty. (I went on the opening night of June 13th.) There were more in the show than the audience. We felt like Roman aristocracy looking in on our slave entertainers.

Jacques Imballo’s *Aeneas* was handsome of voice and movement; he gave the feeling he was living the role. The two women (*Dido* and *Belinda*) were disastrous –serious blots on an otherwise impressive performance. Jonathan Webb conducted with his usual attention to detail which ensured admirable authenticity to the music, even though the string orchestra and voices were discreetly amplified. That was necessary in the open air, and besides, it lent an appropriate other-worldliness to the show.

Jonathan Webb’s meticulous baton was in charge again at the *Sagra Musicale Umbra’s Curlew River* on 22nd September in Perugia. Britten’s church parable was never more handsomely served than in Andrea De Rosa’s intelligent staging in the 1250 Templar Church of Santa Bevignate, much aided with Pasquale Mari’s lighting, all of which gave a new dimension to



Britten's small masterpiece. Most of all, memory treasures Mark Milhofer's performance as the Madwoman –one of the most involved and involving (us!) interpretations that I have ever seen in any opera.

Total involvement again was the hallmark of Juan Diego Florez's debut as Arnold in the Rossini Opera Festival's Guillaume Tell (17th August). When did the incomparable tenor not leave the mind's ear full of rich memories? Armanda Forsythe as Jemmy (Tell's son) was also perfect with just the right innocence of voice. Pesaro's home-grown product, Michele Mariotti, with this production, is now unquestionably among the greatest of today's Rossini conductors with stage and orchestra (Mariotti's own, of the Teatro Comunale of Bologna) always perfectly balanced. Graham Vick's staging will be remembered for striking the right balance between the spectacular and the dignified.

A short coda. The Lago di Nemi, just outside Rome, is not yet a Music Festival. But the outstanding performance of the husband and wife piano duo, Alessandra Amara and Roberto Arosio, of Mendelssohn's own four-hand arrangement of his Midsummer Night's Dream music at the Museo delle Navi Romane, on 24th August, was somehow so evocative of the lake's rich mythological history, that one came away with the feel of music again having brought a location alive. There surely are the right roots for a festival.





Ceyda Berk, 6 November 2013

**Your perception is not my reality: I am Venice**

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**W**ITH IDENTICAL FAÇADES surrounding the entire city, hundreds of bridges connecting tiny islands and narrow streets – full of melancholy – Venice itself stands for a surreal excursion towards the corridors of history and human soul. It is irresistibly mysterious and charming for anyone who is interested in arts in one way or the other. Forget about gondolas, romantic dreams, San Marco or Rialto Bridge, in this huge labyrinth city, there is a “must” art happening to see: International Art Exhibition of Venice Biennale.

Not only for viewing the refined works of contemporary art, but just for going on unexpected excursions through passages of creativity. Throw the map out. You either get lost in the city or you are drifted towards the artistic genius of the Biennale; in a bit dark, complicated but definitely provocative and inevitably intriguing flow. It is worth trying both. Some way or other dead-ends in Venice reach up to canals where you can sail into the unknown. And the Biennale, mapping obscurity of Venice with curiosity about the unknown, shakes its visitors with striking confrontations. It resembles Venice simply because – it is original and pleasurable. Like a proud woman who waits to be discovered behind her inciting beauty. In the Italian way of course: leisurely...

The 55th edition is running from 1 June to 24 November 2013. The Biennale, one of the most exciting experiences you can get in this marvellous Italian city, offers an overwhelming amount of paths to explore different layers of the creative mind. As for the visitors, I have a confession to make: it is impossible not to miss something. Just keep this in mind; please enjoy my appetizers.

Entering the Central Pavilion, where Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung’s Red Book is exhibited – for the first time in Italy - is enough to perceive that this will not be an easy journey. Jung’s book symbolises the “holy scripture” of his imagination. A manual, enriched with illustrations of his mystical vision-, articulates the realm of explorations, self-analyses.

While the quote by Jung “what you resist persists” makes my ears ring, I walk through 387 model buildings by Peter Fritz, an insurance clerk. These small buildings were founded by Oliver Croy in a junk shop wrapped in garbage

bags. Made of simple materials such as magazine paper, matchboxes or wallpaper scraps, they are an amazing proof of a human passion.

The next is a fascinating door opening into an adolescent boy's erotic dreams: Evgenij Kozlov's 'Leningrad Album'. His fantastic naïve erotic imagination shows what a youngster, not yet considered a man, might dream of while he was welcomed into the female world. It is an intimate experience leaving you with a question of "how far does one go in his fantasies?"

The winner of the Golden Lion Award for best artist at this year's Biennale, Tino Sehgal presents one of the most exciting works of the Central Pavilion. It is very sensational. Sehgal - instead of physical objects - creates choreographies that exist only in the viewer's memory. In his "constructed situations", he uses human voice, language, movement and interaction. In the middle of this work, a couple of people - the interpreters - sit or lie on the ground and improvise music, dialogue, and movements. All 'happens' there, just before your eyes, without you realising where it begins or ends. Naturally it feels more real than any paintings hanging on the walls. I took the 'situation' into my memory.

An imaginary palace that houses all the knowledge of the universe, in the Arsenale, Marino Auriti's Palazzo Enciclopedico (The Encyclopedic Palace) welcomes viewers with its glory. Curator of the Biennale Massimiliano Gioni, who named this year's exhibition after this work puts it this way: "Auriti's plan was never carried out, of course, but the dream of universal, all-embracing knowledge crops up throughout the history of art and humanity, as one that eccentrics like Auriti share with many other artists, writers, scientists, and self-proclaimed prophets who have tried often in vain, to fashion an image of the world that will capture its infinite variety and richness." As Gioni states, the exhibition celebrating Auriti's brainchild is just a puzzle around the myth of that imaginary museum.

Another must-see is paintings of Turkish artist Yüksel Arslan. Rather than using conventional paints he mixes pigments, plant extracts, bodily fluids and other substances, such as grass, blossoms, oil, coal, and ground stones. As a result of this unique formula the paintings seem like dried flowers. The flowers perfectly picked by him during his extensive readings from ancient

to modern languages, history, philosophy, music and traditional cultures. Inhabitants rarely seen on the narrow streets of the city are brought to life by Polish artist Pawel Althamer's sculptures. The work entitled "Venetians" is a surreal look-book of locals. Each character stands in different actions, with familiar emotion and facial expression. Abstract bodies made of plastic ribbons are represented by well casted faces and hands.

Escaping into the country Pavilions, Turkish artist Ali Kazma's work "Resistance" is my first stop. The multi-channel video installation is an abrupt way of confrontation with our perception of our own body. Especially the videos entitled Anatomy, Bodybuilding and School are challenging. A bare observation of what lies beyond the definition/description of the human body; as a living material or tool of human race.

There are many worth-seeing pavilions if you can survive, but my appetizers finish with a glimpse of Indonesia: Themed Shakti, this pavilion enlightens me with its motto: "your perception is not my reality". It doesn't only find a place in my text as a title but also manages to make Venice - the one I saw - heard. If I had to take the same journey from the very beginning, undoubtedly the whole experience wouldn't be the same; just because the Biennale is mostly a personal experience and as good as Venice itself.



Ceyda Berk, 12 September 2013

**You are in Helsinki: "Please walk on the grass!"**

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**D**REAM OF A FESTIVAL where the audience is subject and the art is object. Particularly in the wider range of attractive, interactive, innovative and multi-disciplinary arts that are unlikely to be seen elsewhere! In Helsinki, your dream comes true. The Festival of Helsinki, Finland's largest annual arts festival, which held its 45th edition from 16 August to 1 September, has again proved to be a vivid example of its motto: "to make art accessible for all". My mind-blowing visit to a sunny and welcoming Helsinki was a unique opportunity to feel the energy of this pocket-size metropolis through the festival.

Carrying pure light of north, Helsinki, the capital of Finland, is not only offering dream-like green areas extending into the city centre but also a dense late summer festival period with a variety of most spectacular happenings. The Helsinki Festival covers a wide spectrum of classical and world music, circus, dance, theatre, children's events, cinema, a large range of admission free urban events, and various exhibits. Thus, it offers its participants numerous ways of experiencing art. The festival is uncomplicatedly refined, and cool; it is generous like the nature embracing the city, letting its arteries grow everywhere to welcome people to take part.

### **817 performances, 37 world premieres**

The Helsinki Festival reaches an audience expressed in hundreds of thousands (attendance of last year: 230.000) in a city of 600.000 inhabitants. Over two weeks, it proudly provides opportunities for numerous world renowned artists to perform – among this year's highlights: Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg (visual art), Philip Glass (artist in residence in classical music), Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra conducted by Daniele Gatti accompanying pianist Yefim Bronfman, Yoko Ono, Volksbühne Berlin with Frank Castorf's *Der Spieler* (theatre), and Sasha Waltz with *Körper* (dance), to name but a few. The figures are quite impressive: 817 performances; nearly 6000 performers from 35 countries (The Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Great Britain, Iceland, Italy, Austria, Moldova, Norway, Portugal, France, Sweden, Germany, Serbia, Switzerland, Denmark, Czech Republic, Hungary, Belarus, Estonia, Australia, Brazil, South Africa, Japan, Peru, Senegal, Singapore, Tanzania, Trinidad,



Tunisia, Turkey, Venezuela, United States and Zimbabwe), and 37 world premieres.

The festival opened with spectacular fanfare that were performed by a foghorn orchestra and a chorus accompanied by a giant of an icebreaker cruising in the harbour and soloist singers in a fleet of hot air balloons joyously passing over the imposing scenery. Erik Söderblom, Director of the festival, states that this way the festival wanted to establish the theme of a Sounding City – a series of mostly outdoor happenings pointing at the city environment as an acoustical milieu.

Reflecting on the programme and his artistic approach Söderblom explains how the festival team created this series of events around the myth of Narcissus and Echo: “The recognition that with the modern urban environment – due to the ever present grey noise – the ear as an organ, and hearing as a cerebral process, is declining. Our capacity to understand and distinguish what we hear is most probably not as good as it was even one hundred years ago. This of course is a big thing, since it might mean that also the capacity to understand spoken word is declining.”

In this country, where nature sets the rules of the game, I can tell, from what I experienced, that people with enthusiasm responded to the call of the Sounding City. A core happening of the festival, “The Night of the Arts”, took place on 22 August. The opening of Pierre Sauvageot’s Harmonic Fields, a large outdoor installation with instruments played by the wind, kicked off more than 200 night-long events, organised by museums, galleries, shops and individual citizens. 50.000 people attended. Impressive isn’t it? Sauvageot’s statue-like instruments filled the seaside of Helsinki, the Eira beach, where the festival kindly advised the audience to walk on the grass. The prelude to this sea-wind symphony was played by the instruments built by some thousand participants in specially designed workshops.

### **Hired by the city to make art**

The Helsinki Festival made a special effort to enable the citizens of the city to be a part of the creation process. This approach, according to Erik Söderblom, is the key agenda of the festival: “The collaboration and common effort of countless art institutions and countless individuals make an arts festival of

great diversity. We deliberately put our participants in the middle of the process. The artist is there because the audience is there, not vice versa. At the same time the festival challenges its audience to look for new forms of art.”

I took a front row seat at a number of the participatory events. One of them was Tullaamo, an exhibition of 30 young people with no background in the arts who pursued their artistic vision freely for the whole summer. A real innovative project in transferring knowledge, giving opportunities to youngsters, to new ideas, and to creative formations, that makes the festival not just a stage that brings audience and artists together but a platform that enables the audience to explore their own creation and understanding of artistic definition. By the way, the Helsinki Festival operates under the auspices of the Helsinki Week Foundation, established by the City of Helsinki. These summer job applicants between 16 and 25 years old were paid by the City of Helsinki to work with three professional artist mentors in the field of dance, music and visual arts. The breath-taking result was showcased in Tullaamo, an abandoned old warehouse. The outcome of this project simply states that “art is good for you” and leaves you with the question of what artistic creation or well-accepted definition of talent is.

### **Mobile phones strictly not (!) forbidden**

The highlight of the performances I saw included an extreme chapter in opera tradition by using cutting-edge technology mediated expression or story telling on a familiar Mozart’s Don Giovanni. It was the debut production of “New Generation Opera” that introduces new artistry, new content and new technology to the evolution of opera with an ambitious approach. In this high-quality, funny and impressive Don Giovanni interpretation, the whole opera was filmed in real time with Nokia smart phones by the singers themselves and projected simultaneously onto two screens above the stage, in contrast to the flamboyantly decorated Alexander Theatre built in 1880. It is a quite hard job to make all this possible. The film crew, consisting of back-up photographers and cameramen, directors and technical staff, used wireless transmitters that came out on the market not earlier than February this year.

The production was featuring the best of the young Finnish and Swedish singers, and Tapiola Sinfonietta, one of the best classical music ensembles of Finland. It was conducted by Ville Matvejeff who is also the driving force of this project and the founder and artistic director of the New Generation Opera. Matvejeff, a 25-year-old multi-talent, worked with Erik Söderblom, who is considered to be a leading Finnish opera and theatre director. Söderblom's capacity in creating new details was evident from the beginning. His skilful way of using mobile phone cameras allowed the audience to see more of the emotional expression of the singers and took us on a tour towards the backstage.

Wearing the hats of both festival director and opera director at the same time, Söderblom says, the aim of Don Giovanni was to redefine the production situation of music theatre: "The audience knows from the start that it will come to experience a shooting situation." From this starting point, what we saw was a group of young adults, bored of having already feasted in all possible places, hiring the theatre to have a 'Rococo' theme party. And known story, when somebody starts 'singing', there is always a mobile phone to record it. This brilliant production derived its power from a roll call of fresh young vocal talent and complex video projection. Thanks to qualified film director Janne Suutarinen and his team, it was broadcasted as a live performance on the giant screen outside the Kamppi Shopping Centre and online on the LiveMusicStage website.

### **Helsinki is calling you**

Adopting "harmony and unison" as a life philosophy, Helsinki is a city that is fun and functional, a city that is calling you. If you don't want to wait until the next edition of the Helsinki Festival, you can enjoy the Helsinki Design Week (12 and 22 September) in this city that was the World Design Capital of 2012. And last but not the least: if experiencing an unforgettable event at the festival or enjoying participatory arts in one of the most exciting and lively cities of the world aren't enough for you, I recommend you to go on an excursion on the tracks of Alvar Aalto, one of the best Finnish architects of all times, who said: "We should work for simple, good, undecorated things,

which are in harmony with the human being and organically suited to the little man in the street.”

Departing from the heart of the capital, from the square opposite the parliament building where you can find the Kiasma, the museum of modern art, on one side, and the new Music Hall on the other, you can, if you walk northward without leaving the woods, reach as far as to the Arctic Ocean. It is worth trying!



Inge Ceustermans, 5 April 2013

**Lingering limbo: the festival scene in Belgrade**

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**W**HAT WOULD YOU DO if I told you that you have zero Euro for your festival?" asked Katarina Zivanovic, City of Belgrade Secretary for Culture, addressing an international audience at the opening of the European Festivals Association's (EFA) meeting of its 2013 Collective and Affiliate Members at the City Hall in Belgrade last month. Welcome to Belgrade...!

This statement was actually made a few months earlier during a meeting the Secretary for Culture held with all festival directors of Belgrade on the cultural budget; Ms. Zivanovic not only said this as a provocation! Authorities see this as a tool for innovation and are actually implementing it. Until today, Belgrade's festivals don't know precisely what their budget will be for this year.

The Belgrade Music Festival – BEMUS (founded in 1969) is the oldest and the most prominent music festival in Serbia and one of the most distinctive classical music festivals in Southeastern Europe. They don't know what will happen this year. They have engaged to host EFA's conference but they still have not seen any of the money that was allocated to them for organising it. Soon they will become specialists in debt management.

People responsible for Bitef, one of the most renowned theatre festivals in Belgrade and Europe, which has developed an exquisite national and international programme over its 46 years of existence, tell me that they have a programme for their next festival taking place in September, but no budget. They cannot sign the contracts. How can you run an international festival and make agreements with artists, especially international ones, if you don't know what your budget will be? Embarrassed they tell me that they were planning to present a piece of a legendary Belgian theatre company, but that they don't know if they have the budget for it. In 1999 for instance, Bitef was awarded the Special Prize by "Premio Europa per il teatro" for its continuity and quality. Different times...

Dear Secretary for Culture, what are you doing? Do you have any idea what the consequences of your ad hoc decisions are? Do you really think this is a joke? A game?

This strategy will not generate innovative actions. Artists have been and will always be innovative; they don't need to be thrown into the lion's den without any defence and only for the amusement of the public. And, they will not wait for a merciful hand to be innovative...

This policy (if you can call it a policy!) would only result in further isolating Serbia in the East of Europe. Serbian artists would move to other parts of the world where they are being respected, international artists would go elsewhere – what a loss this would be for Belgrade's rich festival life, as well as for the region and for Serbia, which has been developed by so many passionate people with little means over the past years.

At the same time, as always in the arts, hopeful things are happening. While some politicians seem to be trying to close borders again, the No Borders Orchestra (NBO) has started a remarkable initiative together with the Belgrade Music Festival (BEMUS), the Serbian Festivals Association (SEFA), EFA and partners from about 12 countries who have joined forces to share their artistic dreams and create a project which unites musicians from former Yugoslavia and aims to overcome nationalism, racism, xenophobia etc. The NBO has been inspired by the West-East Divan Orchestra, founded by the conductor Daniel Barenboim and the Palestinian intellectual Edward Said, where Israeli and Palestinian musicians play side by side.

"The No Borders Orchestra is about making a decision that art should represent the change that we wish to see in the world," says Premil Petrovic, the project's guru. Their political and social plan is one I would vote for!

Of course, the example of Belgrade is not unique. We cannot ignore that we are facing rapidly changing and financially challenging times. EU Commissioner for Culture Androulla Vassiliou asked the cultural sector to find new narratives; it is key for us to reformulate why it is important that we exist. This approach seems more fruitful and has been the guideline of one of the EFA meetings in Belgrade entitled "FestLab" which brought together Belgrade's cultural scene and EFA's national festival associations.

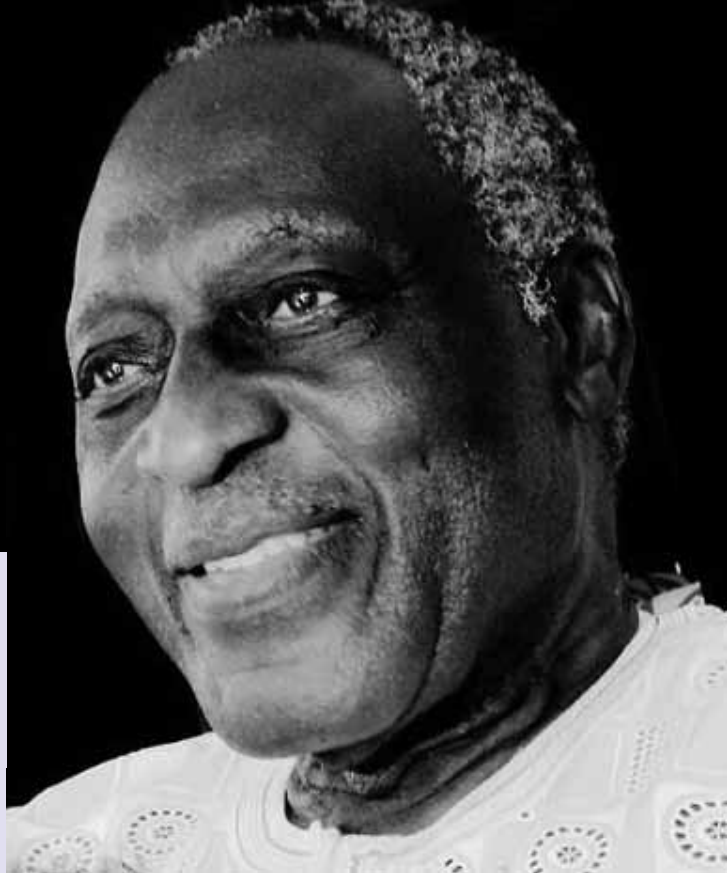
Alternatively, national government and municipality officials could think about triggering innovation by raising the budget percentage for new and innovative projects since the relation between the subventions for institutions

and established organisations versus new projects is out of balance in a lot of countries. Jurriaan Cooman, President of the Swiss umbrella organisation swissfestivals, tells us that in Switzerland only 5% of the total budget for culture is spent on new works; all the rest goes to museums and established institutions, some of which are in dire need to become more flexible. The Flemish Minister of Culture Joke Schauvliege reserved (as of 2013) 10% of the available arts budget for projects to generate renewal and creative productions. Twice as much as last year – already an improvement!

And finally I was happy to see my very good friend Milan LuDiĐ who is running Dom Omladine and the Belgrade Jazz Festival. He is facing the same difficulties but his fighting, enthusiastic and passionate spirit cannot be beaten. Keep up the good work, dear people of Belgrade, this is not the first time we are facing these challenges and we will overcome them once again! The results of some EU grants, including the No Borders Orchestra, and the very meaning of such a meeting offering an international platform for exchange and support, launching and re-confirming a collaborative spirit, are important.

And, Dear Ms. Zivanovic, it's not too late to turn the tables!





Simon Mundy, 24 September 2013

**The Sadness of Nairobi**

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**I**N WORLD TERMS the assault on the Westgate Centre in Nairobi is just another example of pointless slaughter by young men who believe that only they are right; another case of cruelty for sake of attention. Even I, the most liberal of humanists, find my tolerance of puritanical Islam wearing very thin indeed.

You may wonder why I am posting this on a Festivals blog page. The reason is to pay tribute to the great Ghanaian poet, playwright and diplomat Kofi Awoonor. He had travelled to Nairobi to read at StoryMoja – Hay Festival Nairobi; one of the world network of literature festivals that take their name from the parent festival held in Wales each year in June. Performing at a festival should not cost an artist his life.

At 78 Awoonor was an extraordinary figure in African intellectual and political life, literally an elder statesman. He wrote radio plays in the 60s for the BBC, founded the Ghana Playhouse, was a fierce opponent of military rule and apartheid. He drew inspiration for his poetry and novels from the traditions of his Ewe people and served as his country's ambassador to the UN for four years in the early 90s.

If festivals stand for anything it is the spread of ideas in the name of peace. The killing of Awoonor is the best possible demonstration of why terrorism is the opposite: the destruction of ideas in the name of dogmatic religious fascism.

We can do more than send condolences. We in the festival movement can show that such violence can best be resisted by spreading ideas of peace further and deeper. Could some EFA festivals commission some settings of Awoonor's words and have them performed on every continent? That would be a true tribute.



Simon Mundy, 19 August 2013

**Edinburgh progression**

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**W**ITH SOMETHING APPROACHING shock I realise that it is 41 years since I first went to the Edinburgh International Festival – it was my treat for finishing my exams at school and I spent a week there taking in as much music as I could. Most of all I remember an astonishing performance of Brahms' Requiem conducted by Barenboim. I went with my school friend James Robbins (now Diplomatic Editor of the BBC) to recitals in the Freemason's Hall in the mornings, opera in the King's Theatre and the big orchestral concerts in the Usher Hall. The Fringe existed but it was small and truly a fringe – mainly student groups bringing plays to a couple of church halls and some rooms along the High Street. It was barely noticeable and I don't think we went to anything.

By the time I went back eight years later as a young music critic for The Times the fringe was growing but it still only had one or two venues that would be recognisable to today; from memory The Pleasance was operating and the Traverse Theatre, then in the Grassmarket, was starting to make a mark.

By 1986, when I appeared for the only time so far as a one-man act myself (I was all of the Burwich-on-Avon Theatre Royal), the first signs were already there that the Fringe was becoming the equal of the main arts festival and that other disciplines were mounting their own events to coincide with it: TV, Film, and Books - no longer allowed to be called Literature by the fashion police). When William Burdett-Coutts took over the imposing Assembly Rooms on George Street, which had been the club for audiences to the main festival, as the first of the big fringe venues run by production companies, it was clear that the balance of power was shifting.

Assembly is not now a set of rooms (the venue itself has been modernised and all but ruined) but a company running a vast complex of spaces under its own management. It is just one of several of similar scale – Zoo, Gilded Balloon (occupying Edinburgh University's Reid Concert Hall – the great Beethoven scholar and composer Sir Donald Tovey would be spinning in his grave), Space and Pleasance. Almost all the venues that used to be used by the Real Festival have now been taken over by the Fringe.

For the thousands of young people thronging the streets and late night bars

till dawn, the festival IS the Fringe. Most don't even realise that another festival exists or, if they do, assume it is only for old rich people. The divide seems to be absolute: the Fringe presents short theatre, the generally absurd or bizarre, and endless comics. The comedians come in every shape and form from smut rock to TV minor celebrities doing 'guest' shows at the big-name venues. In between hundreds of wannabees swear a lot to make up for tenth-rate material. Perhaps only in some dance and cabaret acts is there a sense that the Fringe and the Festival could share an audience.

On Monday, sated by a weekend of aforementioned awful jokes, I climbed out of bed hours before the twenty-somethings around me and wandered over to take up a standing place at the Queen's Hall for one of the Real Festival's morning chamber concerts. It was full but, at 59 and one day, I was distinctly on the young side of the crowd. Perhaps 20% were younger than me. This was so sad because the group playing Mozart and Schubert on period instruments, the wonderful Chiascuro Quartet, are themselves all in their late twenties. They play with such glorious attention to detail and cantabile feeling that surely nobody not dying of a terminal hangover could fail to enjoy the concert – and, at £9, the standing ticket was as cheap as anything on the Fringe.

Is it too late to reclaim Edinburgh for the arts from the clutches of entertainment? Is love and patience for serious music now completely confined to those young people who actually play or sing it, together with audiences over 40 who want more than a laugh and a cocktail? I don't fear for the commercial future of these festivals – audiences are good, press interest is intense and the experience for those coming for the first time is overwhelming. I do fear for what it means, though, for the place of serious art in our culture. Or perhaps, when I turned up aged 18 in 1972, I was even then an oddity in my own generation. Quite possibly - but I wish the festival directors, impresarios and producers in the intervening years had been able to reach across the streets of Scotland's fabulous capital to each other so that I did not have to leave the city feeling quite so thoroughly depressed while everybody else partied.





Kathrin Deventer, 16 October 2013

**Reshaping the future in Nicosia**

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**N**ICOSIA. It is mid-October, 30 degrees; people are at the beach enjoying late summer in Cyprus; a city in the middle of one of the biggest islands of Europe; the capital of Cyprus, which has been a member of the EU since 2004; and a city in crisis; many buildings are empty; shops, houses, constructions not finished. The crisis hit the people heavily on an island which could be heaven, a haven for Europe. I am in Cyprus to speak at the New Narrative for Europe event at the invitation and with a presentation of EU Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou. Ms Vassiliou focuses on the future of Europe and the role of citizens, a cultural Europe, in which citizens engage actively. It seems to me that Debate about these issues is much needed in this city that has been divided since 1974. It is about involving people in the discussion, and about mobilising society to move forward together. It is about stopping to complain, and about creating bridges between different parts of society. It is about articulating needs and discovering the opportunities the cultural sector bears for the development of the island.

The discussion meets fertile ground: under the motto “Nicosia – Reshaping our Future”, arts organisations and civil society actors fight for a stronger recognition, credibility and support of culture. Nicosia is an extraordinary example that demonstrates the need of this discourse – not only on the island, but in Europe at large.

Cyprus is closer to Beirut or Damascus than to almost any European city. Exploring the city I arrive at the wall that divides the island. I cross the border in the middle of the city: passport control. Arriving in the northern Turkish Cypriot part, I am in a different country. Since 1974, the city has witnessed a lot of broken hearts, divided families, relocated houses... And the conflict is on-going. Kofi Anan last tried to bring the two parts closer together and develop the idea of a federalist model for Cyprus further. Can this division be overcome?

Cyprus seems to represent many challenges we are facing today all over the world: one island, divided; a country suffering immensely from the financial crisis; a country with a strong identity; a country in transformation and looking for new ways of expression and participation; a country suffering from groups striving for superiority with nationalistic expressions.



I am invited to the Pop-Up Festival organised by the Project Nicosia under the motto "Reshaping our Future". Yiannis Toumazis and Xenios Ioannou take me to their exhibition space. Together with students, several cultural organisations and artists they transformed empty shops in the heart of Nicosia into artistic spaces, thus revitalising the city through culture.

Across Makarios Avenue, they populate the spaces with cutting edge art, animation, product and fashion design, photography and music. Beyond their regular opening hours, the shops feature exhibitions, workshops, concerts, screenings, site-specific theatre and other interactive events thus bringing the city's largest, and most neglected, shopping street to life, and introducing visitors to some of the great new talent operating at all levels of cultural production in the city. The Festival runs until 28 October.

It not only shows that cultural activities breathe life into a city. It clearly demonstrates the need and the readiness to act, and to move ahead with a new vision for the use of public spaces. It also shows that creativity and change require free space, a space which festivals should offer: a public, open, common space for everybody allowing for dialogue with all parts and players of society involved, accessible for all, triggering participation and engagement.

100 years after the break out of World War I, Yiannis says, it is time for a new era, for a new dialogue, and for rebuilding trust of citizens.

For societies to live peacefully together constant care is needed, as well as continuous exchange and common understanding; because a society brings together the most diverse: people who not necessarily know each other, speak the same language, look the same, have the same possibilities... I felt this very strongly in Cyprus.

The future cannot be predicted, it has to be invented. We, as citizens, create our future. The crisis can be a momentum and an opportunity to re-think our vision for the future. The new Nicosia Municipal Arts Centre, close to the buffer zone, with a small theatre hall and residency and exhibition spaces, will offer a marvellous starting point for such a movement. It will open in a few months, if all goes well. In 2017, the country will host the European Capital of Culture (ECOC). Surprisingly, it is not Nicosia but Pafos.

I think that the city of Nicosia should continue to make use of the efforts already made for ECoC as an opportunity to explore deeper the common challenges we are facing in Europe. I hope the city takes its bid further and proceeds with its ideas. The wonderful and inspiring people I met should be further supported in their work and in offering their service to this haven of Europe. It's not easy, but who says that life is easy: it's every day work. To trust, to gain knowledge, not just to connect, but to really communicate, to unfold each person's capacity and talent, and to create synergies, that is the future I believe in: from co-existence to co-creation.

This could be Cyprus, and it should be Europe. Both, Cyprus and Europe, will always be there. Just like the arts. They will always be there: to swim in this infinity, with our short time we have, is such a great gift: let's not spoil it!



**Kathrin Deventer, 25 July 2013**

**“Walls of Stone, Heart of Art”:  
a vision for Dubrovnik**

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**W**ALLS OF STONE, Heart of Art” is the motto of this year’s 64th Dubrovnik Summer Festival. Yes: the walls are so significant when you enter the ‘fortress’ Dubrovnik, the Dalmatian Coast city dubbed “the pearl of the Adriatic” and dotted with beautiful Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque buildings. The Croatian city was among the first sites to be included in the World Heritage List in 1979. Dubrovnik is very appealing to people looking for vacation from their busy work life, most probably for another purpose than the festival. Walking along the old city walls in July, smelling the sea and the fresh fried fish, tasting the wine, is a luxury, I thought. The beauty of this place is overwhelming. It is the perfect setting for a vibrant outdoor festival.

Dubrovnik could be a sister of Avignon and its festival, despite being based in different parts of Europe and despite their different history, there is the same feeling of vibrancy. Both festivals are taking place in July, both are surrounded by historical walls, both are staging the most important performances in the city and its piazzas, and both are inviting people to discover the heart within the stones, or, as Krešimir Dolenčić, the festival’s Artistic Director, writes in his programme: to discover “an invisible place of emotional images, timeless echoes of the plays, concerts and sounds of the people who are part of the city, who pay visits to it, and who offer it their finest art.”

As Avignon, Dubrovnik hosts a festival born out of the turmoil of World War II. This year, the 64th edition invites the public for almost two months to the city that acts as a stage for music, theatre, dance and opera performances, exhibitions, readings, writers gatherings, film screenings and reflections (for the first time, Krešimir Dolenčić set up a collaboration with the Croatian Writers Society and a programme featuring several major writers) – a thrilling programme which intends to bring to the city young performers, new artistic creations, and big opera co-productions, a festival which both presents internationally renowned productions and collaborates with universities from all over Croatia to give young creators a professional platform to present their work.

In his career of almost two decades as a theatre director, Krešimir Dolenčić

started his directorship last December. He is an artist, and now also the director of the most important and oldest festival in Croatia. He knows how to “stage” the “heart” within the “stones” of Dubrovnik: He staged about 50 plays and operas in Croatia, Slovenia, the US and China. In 1994 the European Festivals Association (EFA) awarded him the Young Artists Denis de Rougement Award. He was engaged as a performance lecturer in Houston (Rice University), London (Trinity School of Music), at the Music Academy in Zagreb and as an assistant at the Academy for Dramatic Arts in Zagreb.

He gives a new touch to the festival – in his very personal way, and assuming a big challenge: to combine the walls of stone and the heart of art. If he had the chance to speak to the tourists coming to Dubrovnik and invite them to his festival, I am sure everyone would understand the motto of the festival. Walking around in the old city, together with hundreds of British, Dutch, Norwegian and German tourists, made me wonder: How many of these people know about the festival and attend the performances? How many of them come to Dubrovnik just for the festival? How many know to appreciate the quality of the programme, the singers, the orchestras, and the productions? Who of them can appreciate the young soloist in the production “1813. Verdi vs. Wagner”, Lana Kos, born in 1984, the *voce universale*, Croatia’s most promising young soprano?

Maybe it is already a success that some of them buy a ticket for the seats set up in front of the St Blaise’s Church, and that some stop in a nearby café to take the time to enjoy the music. Yes, probably that is already good, and part of the educative mission of a festival: though the acoustics might not be top, and the birds could not care less to add their voice to the composition, the outdoor performances surprise many people who are just passing by and are thus invited to get in touch with the music.

Then I was thinking: How many of us coming to Dubrovnik know about its past, its role in the Yugoslav Wars, for example? Leaving the city walls and going up to the mountains overseeing the coast, I could not help but think about Dubrovnik in 1991.

Conflict and peace, beauty and ugliness, good and evil are so closely connected. To be in balance requires work, every day. It requires

consciousness about both, the good and the bad; it requires memory; it requires vision for the future and a good sense of responsibility for all of us to contribute to and be part of a balanced life. There is no such thing as “natural” harmony, or beauty, or love: we have to learn to live it, to read it, to give meaning to it.

After I left, Krešimir wrote me an e-mail saying that they had an incredible, thrilling Romeo and Juliette production by the Slovenian National Ballet from Maribor for two days; so good that the festival organisers agreed to re-stage the production next year.

Let’s go again! And let’s make sure that more of those who spend time in Dubrovnik know about its heart, not only its stones.



**Kathrin and Nadin Deventer, 5 July 2013**

**Storytelling in South Africa's festival city**

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**T**HE NATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL in Grahamstown is 39 years old. It showcases South African artists and arts, and international artists coming together for 11 days in Grahamstown, a small city in Eastern Cape in South Africa with a population of 124,758: 44 venues, hundreds of performances from theatre, dance, music, jazz, comedy, and film, as well as a big fringe programme, in the middle of winter time (yes, it is freezing when the sun goes down....).

Some things we learned and discovered during our 6-day stay in Grahamstown:

▶ Who has ever heard of Rodriguez? The US based artist from Detroit and main figure in the Oscar winning documentary "Searching for Sugar Man" – an unbelievable story about the African (US Latin American) hero more known than Elvis and Bob Dylan in South Africa in the 70ies/80ies and still today! He only found out 20 years later after his life in Detroit had turned out totally opposite to the one of a rock star. He didn't make it in the States... Watch the movie! Every revolution has its hymn; Rodriguez delivered several, such as "I wonder" or "Sugar Man" and contributed to South Africa's fight against Apartheid. The film was shown as part of the film niche in the National Arts Festival.

▶ In 2014, South Africa will be celebrating 20 years of democracy. 20 years of struggling for overcoming Apartheid, for a new identity, and for a new set up of society, fighting injustice, inequality and segregation – which still is so present in today's South African every day and cultural life: the Grahamstown Arts Festival and its hundreds of performances give witness of this troubled past of a country that is still in search of its dream, dreamed by Nelson Mandela and others; the days of the Festival in July were also the days when Nelson Mandela's death was nearing every day.

▶ The crimes committed during Apartheid against oppressed people were reflected in many dance and theatre performances that had a highly political and historical background such as Biko's Quest, Asinamali, The Island, or Exit/Exist. The Biko Foundation keeps this memory alive: injustice still rules the world.



▶ Only 2 million white people live in South Africa; by the 30% of unemployment mainly black people are affected (60% in Grahamstown – and we saw this in the streets in the city). All helping hands in the Festival, says CEO Tony Lankester, are paid: sometimes, it is their only income for the whole year.

▶ The rainbow nation is looking, sometimes in nostalgia, for keeping its colours, making all colours shine: Mike van Graan, playwright of the 2013 festival edition with four pieces (world première *Writer's Block*, *Brothers in Blood*, *Panic*, *Rainbow Scars*), addresses issues concerning cultural and social racism. He is “one of the few practising contemporary South African playwrights able to construct morally complex and dramatically layered scripts dealing with highly controversial socio-political topics...” (Mail and Guardian): “As a human and family drama, *Rainbow Scars* is both funny and thought provoking. As a metaphor for South African society, the play confronts some of the key contemporary tensions between the “haves” and the “have-nots”, the “born-frees” and those burdened by the past, between a non-racial elite and an overwhelmingly black underclass. As such, this is theatre of catharsis.”

▶ Also very impressive: “My name is Rachel Corrie”, a one-woman play composed from journals, letters and emails of Rachel Corrie, an American peace and human rights activist who immigrated to Palestine and died there in the struggle for a more human treatment at the age of 23.

▶ Another figure: Of the two billion additional people on our planet by 2050 half will be in Africa (within the Think!Fest, Jason Drew looked at the future of Africa in the 21st Century). The Think!Fest, a very diverse, international and high ranking scientific, political, ecological and philosophical programme put together by Anthea Garman, includes talks with artists and directors about their plays and invites a whole bunch of very inspiring speakers from around the globe to deliver ideas, and raise interesting questions and answers.

▶ Every day, 40.000 people die because of hunger and diseases; many of them in Africa.

▶ In Cairo, during the same days of the festival, people go back to the streets to fight for the continuation of what started two years ago: the Arab revolution and the fight for democracy.

- ▶ In Istanbul, and all over Turkey, people go to the streets to fight for their right.
- ▶ for humanity.
- ▶ against fear! In a very entertaining way, Mary Scary revealed the struggle for the individual freedom and self-fulfilling, and "The Epicene Butcher", a highly original and funny piece and approach, let shine through some liberal and feminist aspects.

This is the story we were told again and again – in almost all performances. Storytelling! We are not talking about history. We are talking about reality. We are not talking about an idea. We are not talking about an image. We are talking about everyday life happening here and now. It is the life of people somewhere on this planet. Every performance we saw touches in one way or the other on issues deeply reflected in the society of Africa.

Reflecting the past, trying to understand the present, giving a vision for the future.

It is the storytelling... it is authentic, it is real: you cannot change the world, but you can change one person's life: catch the moment in time!

There is a need for this festival. It is a great meeting point for the African and international artistic community. It is a place for young people to discover the arts: incredible how many young people from all over South Africa attend the festival; how many people went to the performances at 10.00 in the morning; five to six shows every day was something quite usual for the festival audience; every day finishing at the 'Long Table' for an after-day-talk. Sure, there is a lot to be done to make this festival a festival for all in the city: sometimes, the strong police and security presence seemed to 'protect' us from the 'real Grahamstown people' living on the street...

What do we know? What do we do? Where is Europe in all this?

It seemed to us that Europe is so busy with itself. Why theatres refuse highly political pieces saying we are not dealing with this issue anymore... does that show Europe is not moving anymore?

We are responsible in this world of interdependence, of connectivity, of communities that are living together. And this is what we will bring back from Grahamstown. What can we do? What would we do? What do we have to do?

We travelled more than 7000 kilometres and 10 hours from one side of the globe to the other. And no, we didn't travel around, we didn't see the impressive countryside, national parks, the Indian ocean or the lions... We spent our six days in freezing Grahamstown, the festival city of South Africa. We experienced a powerful, colourful, inspiring journey through a rich cultural tradition, burning social and political questions and life, adjusting our own limited European perspective and questions we pose on society as just one little part of a much broader perspective. Us and the others for a big deal. We say good bye, Sala kahle – Sala kakuhle, and tot ziens!





Kathrin Deventer, 31 October 2013

**The invisible Shanghai**

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**A**RRIVING IN SHANGHAI to visit the China Shanghai International Arts Festival for its 15th anniversary, sitting in a taxi on the way into the metropolis of 20 million people, walking around in this city where I was going to spend the next days, and trying to connect to the place, made me think about places, senses, people, and festivals.

What I appreciate and strive for most in life is the community, and communicating, creating bonds and bridges with others around me. I am keen to move myself in this world, a world that should not suffer from self-destruction, unequal division of goods, and egoism. While looking into the mirror during my stay in Shanghai, I continued wondering.

I strongly believe that people are made to connect, and, if all goes well, to share and move on together, not to divide and conquer. The line between sharing and conquering can be thin and needs constant care so that egoism, protectionism, fear and resentment do not take over. Places of encounter therefore are an essential element in our lives to confront our uniqueness and our particularity in order to learn to share and appreciate ourselves and others.

The environment where people meet one another, is perceived and created in very different ways.

I know it's an old cliché to refer to taxi drivers, but let me do it: When I arrived in Istanbul a couple of weeks ago, the taxi driver turned up the music and offered me an ashtray to smoke a cigarette. When I arrived in Nicosia, the taxi driver proudly invited me for a tour of the island with stops in the mountains to taste meat and herbs, and at the sea side to taste fresh fish and fruits. Each of them created a common space in the taxi.

This is just like what happens in a festival, or when listening to music and sounds in general, or when spending time on piazzas, in cafés, and in parks; these are all part of a common space which invites me to connect with my surroundings (by the way, in Plovdiv or in Istanbul, these are the places where people take to the streets to protect and fight for them).

In Shanghai, I did not find any access to common places. I felt lost; Shanghai remained invisible for me. I was overwhelmed by the size of the city. I suffered from a sort of deadlock despite the speed; from the silence despite

the noise; the odourlessness despite the many aromas; the invisible despite the millions of lights along the Bund; the rootlessness despite the 50-floors-high skyscrapers deeply anchored in the ground; the loneliness despite 20 million people sharing the city with me. I felt literally remote from earth, from nature, but also in a human sense despite the deep and long tradition with nature Chinese people enjoy.

For a moment, with the music and the film abstracts of Tan Dun's new composition 'Women's Script', a symphony combining modern technology, ancient sound source and visual effect which premiered at the China Shanghai International Arts Festival, I was invited to the beautiful countryside of China, its waters, its old languages, its traditions, its deep roots in nature and in family.

The World Expo and its remaining, empty buildings reminded me of the incredible investment made in Shanghai in 2010, one of the great examples, just like the Olympics or other one-off events which often leave behind a destroyed community and area. In fact, instead of creating a common space, meeting places where the world comes together, this reflects an old-fashioned division of the world in states, its clichés, and its politics, and, above all, it creates an alien in the city without use or any re-invention of the space offered to a city's inhabitants to connect to one another in their every-day life.

What are people's commons today? Facebook? WhatsApp? Starbucks?

I am not old fashioned. I don't want the good old church back. But a sense of importance of common space where people meet and communities can be created: places for real. In reality!

This process to define, and give life to, can be found in the arts; it is culture in a broader sense because it questions people's perception of the way they want to live their every-day lives.

Common places can be a festival, an arts house.

It can be music, a dance piece, an installation, an emotion.

It should be a space that offers us the time and the freedom to develop ourselves; to look into the mirror (and it needs brave politicians that provide for it and think about it long-term). I am thankful for Shanghai that triggered my thinking about what I want my society to be like, and what I do not want it to be like. For now Shanghai remained invisible: yet to be discovered!







Jurriaan Coiman, 24 May 2013

**Surviving in Beirut**

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**T**HE LAW OF THE STREET is without mercy – cars, cars and more cars everywhere from Hamra to downtown. It is like a trip between two cities in Switzerland. When a car was driving into our direction in a one-way-street (we were driving in the “right” direction) the taxi driver said: “You see, we are a free country!”

And how terrible in our eyes – or how interesting – all this is:

Refugees came from Armenia in 1918, from Palestine in 1948, from Syria in the last two years; if Europe had to take in such a number of refugees as Lebanon did, the figure would be 50 million. Knowing this, it is incredible how well all is functioning; social behaviour seems to be very well, children beggars in the street are, as far as I could see, treated very nicely. But what is their perspective? The region seems to be destabilised for the next ten years.

Travelling here for research for a festival in faraway Switzerland is weird. Even though, or because of, the circumstances a lot of very interesting artists and projects can be found here, for example at the Home Works festival in the Ashkal Alwan workspace and in many other spaces all over the city.

I say “weird” because it seems to me like a “u-turn” of what we normally call humanitarian development work; in the field of arts I bring back home more than what I came with. I am witnessing once again that in those places cultural work is rooted in a necessity: it reminds me of Europe after World War 2, when people tried to build up a continent, give people a direction, hope in life, reflections on which direction their society(ies) is (are) going. Bringing these experiences back to gated Switzerland in the framework of CULTURESCAPES is my life, and I am lucky that I can do that.

Having the next Atelier for Young Festival Managers in this context can also enrich the work of EFA. So I urge all colleagues who send a young and promising employee to this training programme: listen to them when they are back! They are the future in many ways; they will take over “our” jobs in about 20 years, and need this kind of experience.



Jurriaan Coiman, 20 June 2013

**Baghdad impressions**

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**I**NCREDIBLE! It is incomparable to anything I have done so far: picked from the airport by two police cars, followed by what seemed to be a high speed race until... the police got stuck in the traffic jam too. The security logic seems backwards; just get the car in between the two police cars and you could have killed someone "important"... I was on my way to the first Forum organised by FestArab, the umbrella organisation for festivals in the Arab world. A group of students from the fields of culture, education and tourism were invited to discuss "Cultural events as a tool for dialogue, social integration and economic growth" with professionals from the cultural sector.

The place where the absolute beginning of humankind's (agri-)culture was born has suffered severely in the last 30 years of isolation, and now very slowly tries to escape that damned corner.

Nothing starts on time, musicians were prepared but it then started almost one hour late.

The next morning: a conference on cultural heritage, architecture and tourism. The same. But I am struck by the strong philosophical and charismatic personalities of the speakers. They are all above 70, and all possess a great awareness of the situation and feel the strong need to do something. Some younger participants in the audience did not speak up but were at least addressed (they dream that Iraq gets its cinema back!).

There is a huge need for inter-cultural, inter-religious, inter-social and inter-generational dialogue!

Access to culture, mobility – all things they have to start with if the cultural heritage and contemporary arts productions are supposed to have a chance to develop. With its oil resources and the possibility to benefit locally from its exploitation, in 10 years time Iraq can be the strongest country in the region. Then, hopefully the country will be able to reconnect with its important past (Babylon, Mesopotamia, Gilgamesh etc.) but also act as intermediary in this tense region on this planet.

For the moment, cultural exchanges such as co-productions will remain basic: people to people or 0.0! Is EFA ready for this too? I hope so. And I want to come back here and then see more than just our "prison" Hotel Ishtar!

On our last evening of the FestArab Forum in Baghdad we attended a concert with a Spanish flamenco guitar player and singer and an Iraqi Oud player and Poet in one of the last or first (?) cultural centres in Baghdad. The highlights were the differences in ornaments in playing around one tone in two cultures: filigree and over-aesthetic on the one hand and full of time and deep emotions on the other.

Then, a long drive to find the Oasis like Luna Park, near by the river, with many restaurants (air conditioned, at least late at night), sprinklers every five meters – as if we sit in complete fog, but in a multi-coloured, bright surrounding with many, many families... I met a Bahai religious family. They left Islam and now cannot live what they believe in.

Bagdad is different from what the media tries to make us believe: eight million people live their lives here!

I had a long conversation with the director of protocol of the Ministry of Culture, who has just come back to Baghdad after four years in the US where he was the director of the Iraqi Cultural Centre in Washington DC. We spoke about politics, the military (in these countries one of biggest problems is that they are not in one hand, the parliament, and there is a permanent danger that they do not agree and then the generals in one of the regions do what they think is right), the reactions of the West to the civil war in Syria etc.

If we make the 2015 edition of the CULTURESCAPES festival about the Near East region (really our perspective), covering countries such as Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, Iraq and if possible and existing Syria, I need more of those evenings and trips!

As I wrote in my previous blog, getting into the city of Baghdad is quite a thing, but getting out of the country, meaning first of all getting to and into the airport, is almost impossible:

I try to sum up the events of this morning: "Please, please be in the lobby not later than 6.30am. The driver will be there, and at 9.50am you have your Turkish Airlines flight to Istanbul." The driver arrives at 7.15am. Then, four controls, one with all doors open and a dog sniffing for explosives. About two kilometres ahead of the airport, we have to stop: "Wrong vehicle!" The

car is not registered for entering there. The driver turns around, calls and tries again. This exercise is repeated four times...

Michel Bourdoncle, the pianist of the concert with Darko Brlek on the Clarinet, gets nervous and also calls. "Don't worry, all will be fine!" We wait and then a sign: we get a very little piece of paper with a number and now we can follow the VIP line.

We arrive at the airport, at least 39 degrees outside, a long queue of people with their luggage who want to get into the (air conditioned) building. Our driver puts us in front of this line, the other people are not happy. The luggage is scanned, another dog sniffing our suitcases. Out of nowhere our driver appears again and takes our passports! Michel gets more nervous, what if... The driver eventually comes back, leads us to the regular Turkish Airlines check-in (how can they do normal work there?), all seems fine, only the passport controls fail. Our driver puts us again in front of the one and only point for foreigners, all their checks are for Iraqi, and, yes, we eventually enter the terminal 50 minutes before the flight takes off.

Istanbul-Zurich-Basel. Being back, I think: we live in a park here.



Jelle Dierickx, 24 April 2013

**Through the Gate of Pomegranates**

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**A** FRESHLY MOWED LAWN. That's what Granada smells like once the door of the airplane is opened. The two-day experience of the senses can begin. Before having a short night rest I meet Eva, Kathrin, Nathalie and Jacqueline at the entrance of the hotel. The team is well prepared for the storm tomorrow, and Eva immediately asks some deep questions about a possible future for Europe. Yes, this is clearly an EFA meeting. Not one second is wasted.

Early morning brings many seconds but for me it shouts only one word: Alhambra! I put on my tourist mask and face the hordes, hordes and more hordes with cameras, notebooks and backpacks. They transform the architectural and botanical wonder into a kind of anthill. Being alone and being very early I nevertheless can catch a bit of the main attraction of Granada in its radiant state.

O, the beauty. O, the motives. O, the extraordinary achievement of men. And yet one also hears the whispering at the fountains, the conspiracies, the overheated blood that runs through the ages. Before these thoughts can get the upper hand, I find Anna meditating in the court of the Myrtles. The focus is back on the sun flooded architecture at hand, the amazement. The Palace of Charles V, the Nasrid Palaces, the Mosque baths and the water plays at the Generalife cannot but leave a strong impression. One needs to close the eyes a while to recover. But that doesn't really help. Than you focus on the smell of the flowers, of the blue rain and other plants. And you hear the birds, the singing of the water that seems to be everywhere and of course the babbling of the hundreds of visitors (Japanese, French, German, Dutch, American...). The Alhambra Hub!

Today, the 18th of April, apparently is Monument Day in Spain. At the Gate of Pomegranates students of art history, dressed in blue shirts, are collecting signatures. To my surprise they are not recognised as specialists on the job market. Their slogan: "La historia del arte no está solo en los libros... está en la calle!" The history of arts is not only to be found in books... it is out in the streets. With love and in fluent French and English the students show their love for Granada as cultural capital. I hope their plea is heard.

Back in the centre of the city I cannot help but enter the Real Capilla de



Granada with the Cripta de los Reyes Católicos. The Royal Chapel with the tomb of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castille. Even after the extraordinary beauty of the Alhambra this space is powerful enough to reach my already saturated senses. Especially the Crucifixion and Nativity by Rogier Van der Weyden strike me as paintings from sublime expression. It is already clear: this city has a lot of treasures.

The sun starts to blaze in Granada and I'm enjoying the moment of writing these words before having lunch with Anna. Enjoying a paella we talk about The Festival Academy that will be launched today. We're both alumni of Ateliers for Young Festival Managers and are convinced about the importance of these gatherings. The discussion continues in the afternoon during the General Assembly of The Festival Academy with next to Anna, Odile, Darko, Michael, Hugo, Kathrin and Inge.

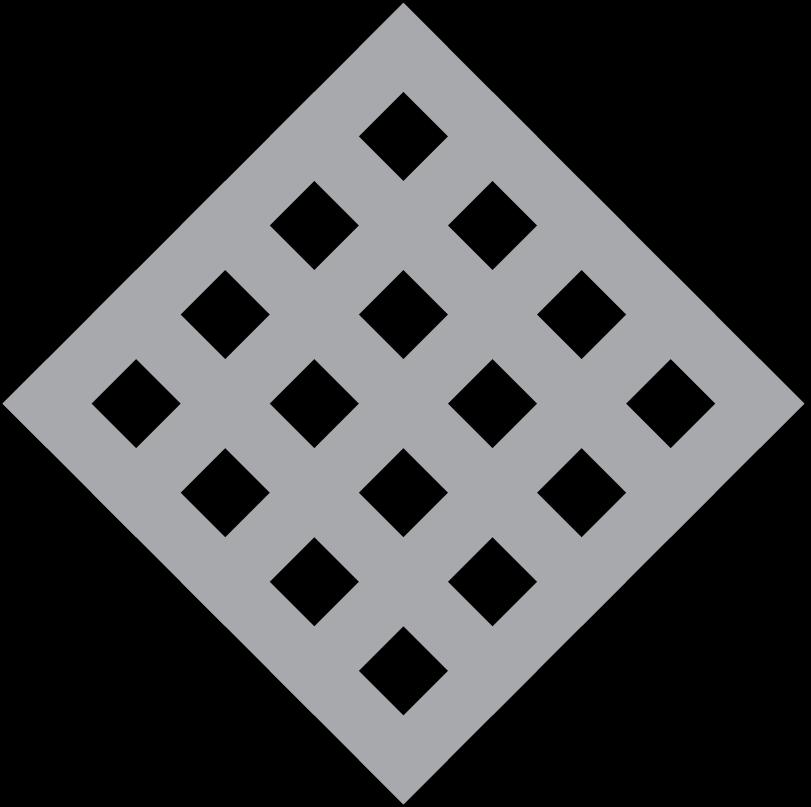
A few hours later the big festival family (more than 140 people from about 40 countries) gather for the official opening of the conference. What follows can only be described as "speeches with peacock". The animal outside that joined the speakers could be seen as a symbol for the festival makers that were present: proud, beautiful and giving a clear signal. Festivals matter.

Proud was also the Mayor of Granada who stressed the fact that we were guests in his house. He was not joking. Let it be official: the hospitality of Granada towards the EFA delegates is extraordinary. Thanks to Diego, the Director of the Festival Internacional de Música y Danza de Granada, and his team.

But first the speeches (with peacock). Darko stressed that EFA offers a strong network and is looking on a daily basis for solutions instead of surrendering to gloomy atmospheres. Odile officially launched The Festival Academy. Where could that be done better than in Granada, the city that is a symbol for dialogue? Odile spoke with open heart and stressed that Europe is there for and by the people. Yes, the young generation faces a lot of challenges. Old recipes do not work anymore. But art and culture offer new ones on a daily basis. Festivals are re-thinking the future. The Festival Academy should be seen in this context. It is a hothouse as Robyn Archer said. A seven-day

space for ideas and energy, free from pressure and constraints, where one can be innovative and dream.

Your servant evoked this dream by a Three-Minute Festival Academic Speech in Three Speeds. After that we were treated with a short dance performance in the historical space of Carmen de los Mártires and the night ended with a dinner cocktail outside the building, with a breath taking view on Granada. The Spanish wine, the smells and sounds of the hill on which the Alhambra is located and the company of inspiring people... we went spiritually through the Gate of Pomegranates.



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## The Bloggers

Festival Bytes bloggers featured in this publication and their blog posts:

**Ceyda Berk** is the Festival Coordinator at the International Izmir Festival.

- Your perception is not my reality: I am Venice
- You are in Helsinki: "Please walk on the grass!"

**Jack Buckley** is a Lancastrian who has lived in Rome for close on half a century, where he has had the good fortune to have been surrounded by stimulating company, in part as postings as the British Council Arts Officer and Visiting Professor for the Postgraduate Course in Philosophy in English at La Sapienza University. He is assiduously avoiding writing his autobiography. In 2011 he made an arrangement with Bill Kenny, founding Editor of Seen and Heard International, to be that website's Rome correspondent.

- The Festival of Britten
- Peaks of the Italian Music Festivals 2013
- Genius in the Service of Genius
- Roots and Seeds for a Festival
- Stop Press! The Florez Arnold
- Would You Want This Tough Italian Girl?
- Opportunity Makes the Thief

**Inge Ceustermans** cares about the arts and the artists. On Festival Bytes Inge will share her vision of why the arts matter. She has worked as Coordination and International Relations Manager at the Brussels based artists' company Needcompany for almost 10 years before she became the Manager of EFA's Atelier for Young Festival Managers.

- Lingering limbo: the festival scene in Belgrade

**Jurriaan Cooman**, born 1966 in Netherlands, MAS Culture Management University of Basel, Founder and Director of CULTURESCAPES, Founding Member and President of swissfestivals, Member of the European Cultural Parliament.

- Back from Baghdad
- Baghdad impressions
- Surviving in Beirut

**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.

- The invisible Shanghai
- Reshaping the future in Nicosia
- My Imaginary Sofia Festival
- Past, present, and future: a mission of a city
- Krešimir Dolenčić's vision of "Walls of Stone, Heart of Art"
- Storytelling in South Africa's festival city
- Places are sensed, senses are placed
- Visiting Ankara – the capital of Turkey
- Visiting Sochi: What future for the city?

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

- Through the Gate of Pomegranates (2). Back and again
- Through the Gate of Pomegranates

**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).

- Morning will come with the tender gesture
- Identity of Norwegian dance through the act of chewing
- The movement of the blind slippery ice

**Jonathan May** is Digital Producer at the London International Festival of Theatre. He graduated from Liverpool John Moores University in 2005 with a degree in Drama and co-founded TV Baby theatre company. In 2010 he graduated with distinction from Goldsmiths University of London with a masters degree in Performance Making and worked on a number of projects with the Live Art Development Agency. As a theatre-maker he has performed across the UK at venues and festivals including Shunt, Brick Box, The Yard and Unity Theatres.

- To Hack Or Not To Hack? (Definitely to hack)
- Concrete & Conflict: Re-imagining Place through a City of Culture

**Simon Mundy** is a poet and novelist, festival director, broadcaster and cultural policy adviser. Simon is an adviser to EFA and was a co-founder of Culture Action Europe. His blog "Mundy Mondiale" on Festival Bytes is an irreverent diary of events and observations, a wry commentary on the arts and politics.

- The Sadness of Nairobi
- Extraordinary Presteigne
- Edinburgh progression
- A First Burst of Edinburgh
- Support
- Stacks from Hay: A Festival Diary

Also on Festival Bytes:

**Nina Calopek** is the Head Producer of the Music Biennale Zagreb.

- What does an image sound like?

**Irma de Jong** is the Founder and Head of the artist management agency Cicerone Music & Art, and provides professional project management services for festivals and organisations.

- Motion in music

**Jelena Jankovic** is the Programme Editor / Producer of the Belgrade Music Festival (BEMUS), with a background in musicology (University of Arts in Belgrade – Faculty of Music) and cultural management (Université Paris Dauphine, University of Arts in Belgrade and Université Lumière Lyon 2).

- To access or not to access
- The battle for online visibility

**Karen Jaynes** is a writer, arts manager, lecturer, and general wrangler of words. Predominantly a playwright, but also she writes for websites, magazines, radio, television, novels, or newspapers. She lectures in Digital Culture; and teaches scriptwriting at SA Writers College. You can follow her on twitter, or read her blog on writing and theatre.

- Pirouetting into Cyberspace

**Nikola Richter** is the curator of a new event series at the Berliner Festspiele, organised in cooperation with the Federal Agency for Civic Education (bpb.de), “Net Culture. Friends of the Internet” which is looking at the impact of the digital turn on the arts. She has initiated and managed the Theater-treffen-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.

- Pelican-cat-cows

**Kerstin Schilling** is a Berlin based Cultural Manager and Communication /Marketing Specialist. She was one of the driving forces behind the set up of the Working Group of the European Festivals Association (EFA) “Communicating Festivals – Communicating Europe”.

- Social Media and the target group
- Lessons learnt
- Cultural organisations on the 2.0 bandwagon

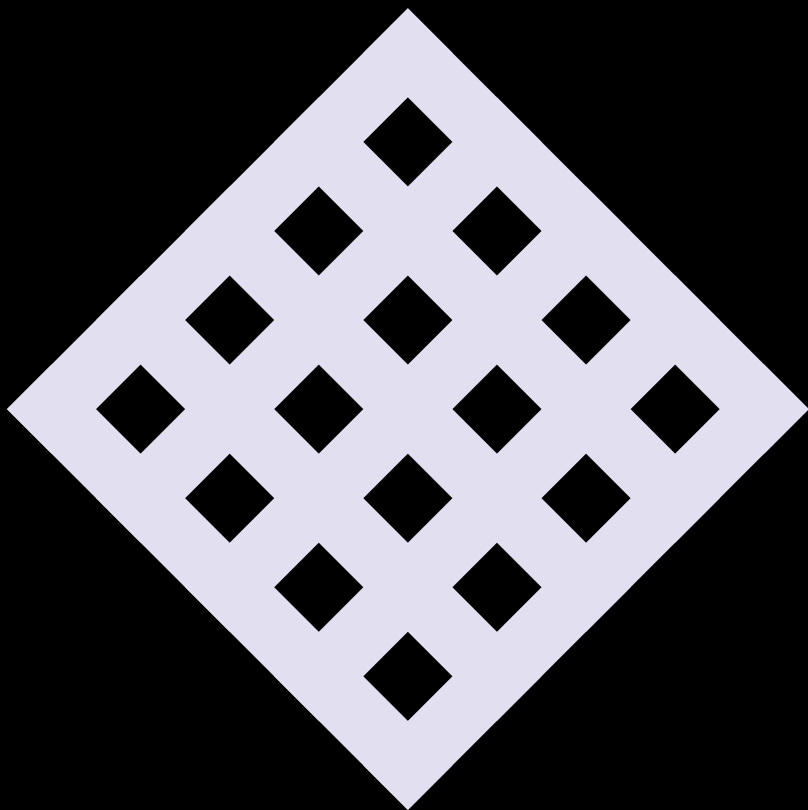
**Yuriy Vulkovsky** is a cultural researcher, consultant and practitioner. Since 1994 he has been involved in a number of research and actions projects in the fields of cultural policy, cultural management, mapping of the cultural sector, civic participation in policy-making, social impact of the arts, and others. Since 2004 he has been teaching cultural policy at New Bulgarian University and at Sofia University. In March 2009 he became Executive Director of the Foundation for Urban Projects and Research (member of ENCATC). He is a Member of the Strategy Group of "A Soul for Europe", a Member of the Initiative Committee of Sofia – Candidate for European Capital of Culture 2019 (Bulgaria) and a Member of the International Committee of Siena – Candidate for European Capital of Culture 2019 (Italy). Yuriy is one of the Founders and the Executive Director of the Bulgarian Festivals Association (member of EFA).

- It is all about listening

**Jackie Westbrook** is the Marketing and Communications Director of the Edinburgh International Festival.

- Technology seizes and shifts our perceptions of the world
- Sounds of your memory: co-creation of a musical portrait of Edinburgh





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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 108 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!

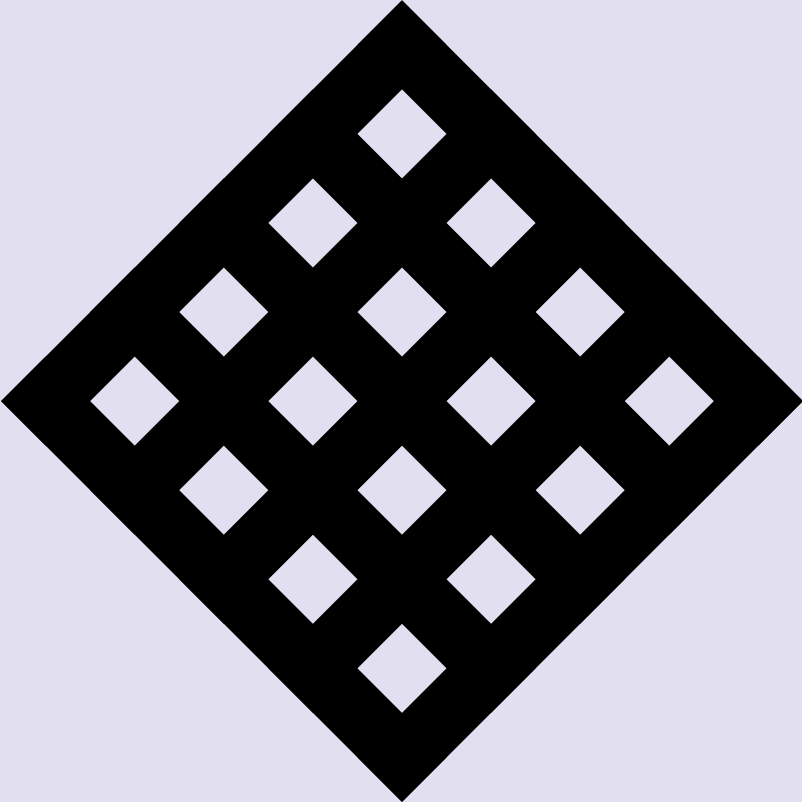
EFA members share significant artistic, cultural, social and political objectives, a passion for the arts, an openness to the world and a spirit of interculturality and innovation. Each festival, be it a niche event or a large, established institution, has its own specific context. But all strive to 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.
- strongly profiled EFA flagship projects, including EFA BOOKS, Open the Door, FestLab for Creativity and Innovation, and Arts Festivals' Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue.
- strong representation in the cultural policy debate thanks to the European House for Culture.



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## **EFA members** (As of February 2014)

Abu Dhabi Festival  
Festival Aix-en-Provence  
Ankara International Music Festival  
Turkish State Theatres  
Aspendos International Opera & Ballet Festival  
Baalbeck International Festival  
Culturescapes  
Festival Mitte Europa  
Beirut Chants Festival  
Beiteddine Art Festival  
Al Bustan Festival  
BELEF - Belgrade Summer Festival  
BEMUS - Belgrade Music Festival  
Berliner Festspiele  
D-Marine Turgutreis International Festival of Classical Music  
Bratislava Music Festival  
Festival Pianistico Internazionale di Brescia e Bergamo  
Brno International Music Festival  
BOZAR Festival  
George Enescu International Festival and Competition  
SoNoRo Festival  
Budapest Festival Center  
International Bursa Festival  
Festival de Música de Canarias  
Cantonigròs International Music Festival  
Concentus Moraviae International Music Festival of 13 Towns  
Semana de Música Religiosa  
Dubrovnik Summer Festival  
Edinburgh International Festival  
Emilia Romagna Festival  
Flanders Festival International  
National Arts Festival Grahamstown  
Festival Internacional de Música y Danza de Granada

Menuhin Festival Gstaad  
Audi Sommerkonzerte  
Istanbul Music Festival  
International Izmir Festival  
Music Isle Festival in Jeju  
Israel Festival, Jerusalem  
Festival Ljubljana  
BBC Proms  
Lucerne Festival  
Festival della Valle d'Itria  
südtirol classic festival - Meraner Musikwochen  
Mersin International Music Festival  
Festival Internacional Cervantino  
Mosel Musikfestival  
The Spring of Mostar  
A. Sakharov International Art Festival  
Ohrid Summer Festival  
Chorégies d'Orange  
Osaka International Festival  
Janáček May International Music Festival  
Festival d' Automne à Paris  
Festival Internacional de Música Castell de Peralada  
Rossini Opera Festival  
International Music Festival "A Tempo"  
Prague Spring International Music Festival  
Ravenna Festival  
Reykjavik Arts Festival  
Rheingau Musik Festival  
Riga Festival  
March Music Days International Festival  
Alla Shelest's Festival of Classical Ballet  
International Festival Sarajevo Winter  
Sarajevo Music Evenings (SVEM)  
Festival International de Musique Sion Valais  
Sochi Winter International Festival of Arts

Music Festival Stars of the White Nights  
Settimane Musicali di Stresa e del Lago Maggiore - Stresa Festival  
Tbilisi International Festival of Theatre  
European Festival of Performing Arts Timisoara -  
New Romanian Drama Festival  
MITO SettembreMusica  
Festival Internacional de Música y Danza 'Ciudad de Úbeda'  
Usedom Music Festival  
Malta Arts Festival  
Varna Summer International Music Festival  
Settimane Musicali al Teatro Olimpico  
Vilnius Festival  
Festival de Wallonie  
'Chopin and his Europe' International Music Festival  
Ludwig van Beethoven Easter Festival  
Festival de Wiltz  
International Festival Wratislavia Cantans  
Yerevan Perspectives International Music Festival  
Music Biennale Zagreb

Association of Irish Festival Events  
Bulgarian Festivals Association  
Czech Association of Music Festivals  
Estonian Music Festivals  
Federation of Music Festivals in Flanders  
Finland Festivals  
France Festivals  
ItaliaFestival  
Norway Festivals  
Rotterdam Festivals  
Serbian Festivals Association  
Spanish Association of Classical Music Festivals  
Swedish Music Festivals  
swissfestivals  
European Conference of Promoters of New Music  
Réseau Européen de Musique Ancienne



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## **EFA Board** 2014-2017

Darko Brlek, President, Ljubljana Festival

Michael Herrmann, Vice President, Rheingau Musik Festival

Massimo Mercelli, Vice President, Emilia Romagna Festival

Colm Croffy, Association of Irish Festival Events

Paul Dujardin, Centre for Fine Arts Brussels – BOZAR

Filiz Eczacibasi Sarper, International Izmir Festival

Peter Eriksson, Swedish Music Festivals

Hermann Schnitzer, Settimane Musicali Meranesi / Meraner Festwochen

Ibrahim Spahic, International Festival "Sarajevo Winter"

Hanna Styrnisdottir, Reykjavik Arts Festival

Philippe Toussaint, France Festivals

## **EFA Secretariat**

Kathrin Deventer, Secretary General

Inge Ceustermans, Project Manager Atelier for Young Festival Managers

Naima Delaere, Administration Manager

Nathalie Dert, Office Manager

Eva Nunes, European Projects Manager

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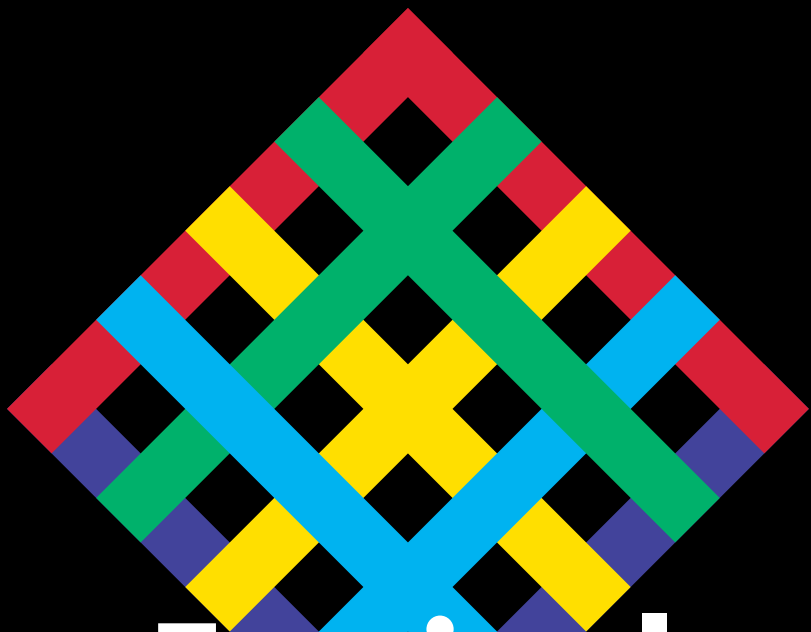
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