



FestFlash 4 - November 2008

FestFlash on Intercultural Dialogue – Arts Festivals' Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue brought to life!

„An [Epilogue](#) to more dialogue“ - Building bridges beyond 2008

“Hundreds of signatory arts festivals in Europe and the world will act as powerful messengers for a peaceful and free exchange among people and the respect for cultural diversity also beyond 2008 – the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. (...) Millions of citizens will continue to cross new bridges built by festivals, thereby demonstrating the importance of dialogue between cultures in a globalising world.” (from “The [Epilogue](#)”)



On [17 November 2008](#) in Paris, the [European Festivals Association](#) presented the outcomes of its [Arts Festivals' Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue](#). Jointly, 20 major festival directors from all over Europe and European Commissioner Ján Figel' launched a statement of festivals' future commitment to intercultural dialogue. In the framework of the conference “[New Perspectives of Intercultural Dialogue in Europe](#)” that officially concluded the EU's [2008 thematic year](#) festivals once again underlined the strength of arts and culture and in particular festivals to enhance dialogue between cultures. Read ahead [here](#).

In the spotlight...

...nordic impulses and the Balkans: the Bergen International Festival and International Festival Sarajevo “Sarajevo Winter”

Two festivals - situated in two regions of Europe – with two totally different backgrounds – and two sets of challenges: Bergen International Festival and the International Festival Sarajevo „Sarajevo Winter“ in the spotlight – united through their striving to enhance intercultural dialogue in the seat of their festivals!

In dialogue with...

...Per Boye Hansen, Director Bergen International Festival, and Ibrahim Spahic, Director International Sarajevo Winter Festival

EFA: Mr Per Boye Hansen, after the 70s you say that Bergen Festival could not “entrench itself in crumbling hegemonic culture”. A retrospective view of the “nordic impulses” explains fully its actual dimension of interculturalism. How do you define – through the ‘nordic impulses’ the impact of your artistic approach on intercultural competences in Bergen?

Per Boye Hansen (Director Bergen International Festival): Since 2006, the Bergen International Festival has put its focus on retaining a Nordic profile and the current motto is “[Nordic Impulses](#)”. We don’t aim at a common Nordic identity, but rather seek to challenge the notion of what is traditionally seen as “Nordic”. What is perceived as Nordic today is very different from the 70s. The Nordic countries are a melting pot of different identities and cultures. For us, this region is first and foremost a geographical platform, on which to create the number one meeting point for performing and creative artists from this part of Europe.

The cultural diversity of the Festival has many guises. A good example of this is Teatre Romea’s production of Peer Gynt in 2006, where the Catalan theatre company transferred their cultural references to one of Norway’s greatest national symbols.

EFA: Mr Ibrahim Spahic, it is emblematic that the organiser of the International Sarajevo Winter Festival is the “International Peace Centre”. Based in a region that has witnessed in its history and is - to some extent - still witnessing many conflicts, what role does your festival play in the development of intercultural competences?

Ibrahim Spahic (Director International Sarajevo Winter Festival): The festival *Sarajevo - Sarajevo Winter* was founded in 1984. The festival never ceased its projects, especially not during the siege of Sarajevo and the many conflicts the region has witnessed. The Festival has become a symbol of creativity based on cultural differences. Together with the International Peace Center *Sarajevo Winter* initiated and organised the project “Sarajevo, Cultural Center of Europe” from 21 December 1993 to 21 March 1994. In 2001, it was one of the key organisers of the 10th Biennial of Young Artists from Europe and the Mediterranean (BJCEM), which nowadays gathers more than 1.000 artists from 48 countries from Europe, Asia and Africa. In 2004, the Festival was a collaborator in the pilot project “Sarajevo: Intercultural City of the Council of Europe”. Together with the Council of Europe, the Festival was the coordinator of the first international, intercultural and inter-religious forum: “(Re)-thinking stereotypes – Constructing intercultural and interreligious dialogue”. Since its foundation, the international festival *Sarajevo Winter* has maintained permanent intercultural dialogue in the country, region, Europe and abroad.

The Festival is now working on the project *Sarajevo - European Capital of Culture 2014* together with the Assembly of the City of Sarajevo, which it finds will be an inimitable opportunity to affirm the prevention, through culture and arts, of conflicts and wars. It will also be a great chance to improve relations and to encourage innovative and new cultural productions.

EFA: After looking at the historical background and the specific situation of your countries and cities, let's now focus on 2008. Mr Hansen, which special projects did you develop in 2008 to reach out to different audiences (youths, minorities in the city) and in how far did you witness that your festival made a difference?

Per Boye Hansen: Through our outdoor programme the Festival invites and engages audiences from all groups of society and walks of life. Young and old are all invited to interact with professional artists. This is also true for our children and youth programme.

Culling from their multifarious encounters and experiences worldwide, in 2008, the Brazz Brothers compiled a programme that transcended limits of culture and age and included a cornucopia of musical guests: 80 young symphonists from the local county of Hordaland, Marimba Girls from South Africa, Gypsy Brass from Serbia and young Jazz Brazz players from Bergen.

Young persons of nineteen different nationalities also met the Brazz Brothers in a multinational musical performance that exploded in colour ('farge' in Norwegian): Fargespill [*see photo*] was a performance about distinctive characteristics and unity, appreciating similarities and differences, breaking boundaries in our experience of ourselves and one another. Fargespill comprised music, singing and dance from all over the world, irrespective of culture, religion and ethnic origin.

Fargespill started as a collaborative project for the opening of the 2005 Bergen International Festival, and has since then been staged many times, including performances at VossaJazz and for King Harald in 2007.



EFA: Mr Hansen, what do you plan for 2009 to enhance intercultural dialogue through your festival?

In 2009, the Festival will collaborate with the Hindu temple in Bergen and present a Ganesh Festival. The great Hindu festival in honour of the god Ganesh is a religious feast that has been celebrated for several millennia. In Bergen, each year, the celebrations take place in the city's Hindu temple in the end of May and in the beginning of June. The Bergen International Festival has now entered into a musical collaboration with the Hindu temple to provide audiences with the opportunity of experiencing great classical music and dance from southern India.

Each year in spring, we also produce '[Studentimpulser](#)'. This is a project of Bergen International Festival only for students. The event presents some of the greatest stars from the Festival's main programme, such as Leif Ove Andsnes, Håvard Gimse and Trio Mediæval, and combines them with concerts and productions by the students themselves. The event is a co-production between the Bergen International Festival, StatoilHydro and students in Bergen and is free for everybody holding a student ID.

EFA: Mr Spahic, what were the results of your 2008 projects that were designed to foster intercultural dialogue in terms of impact on the local situation and what are the future perspectives of your intercultural efforts?

Ibrahim Spahic: The *Sarajevo Winter Festival 2008* followed the theme "*Barricades Without Borders*". The Festival had a significant impact with its programme: in the course of the realisation of the topic, it promoted dialogue and exchanges between artists, the public and the media. It stimulated dialogue between different generations that engaged, each in its own specific way, in the development of a different, a juster world by tearing down barricades between the worlds that surround them and in which they live. The artists of the festival signalled that each generation is faced with the fact that there are barricades without borders in front and behind them. This creation of a new world meant life in a *virtuous, brave world*.

The festival will continue to be important for Euro-Mediterranean encounters of young artists. In a forum intellectuals from many European countries investigated the question of the role of culture and arts in the region. A music workshop for artists from the region and other Mediterranean countries was organised and will again take place in 2009 in the framework of the XIV BJCEM in Skopje to present a musical encounter of various traditions.

Furthermore, the Festival undertakes collaboration with festivals in Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and is developing a regional network of festivals that will result in a cross-border cultural exchange. This will have an effect on coexistence, peace and collaboration in the region and secure the idea that different projects of local and regional cultural production will support the affirmation of cultural differences.

Per Boye Hansen and Ibrahim Spahic will write in EFA BOOKS 4 on the responsibilities, impacts and challenges of the International Bergen Festival and Sarajevo Winter in developing intercultural competences.

FestFlash Highlights

“So What!? We are Different!” - Fest-i Kult (Ankara/Turkey) for intercultural understanding



“[Fest-i Kult](#)”, the Intercultural Film Festival of AFS Volunteer Association (AFSGD), organised in 2008 a film competition entitled “[So What!? We are Different!](#)” on the subject of intercultural understanding to help people understand the differences between cultures, using cinema to bring together cultures from all over the world. Read [more!](#)

“Diverse and Together” stresses the [Black International Cinema Berlin](#)



In 2008, the intercultural film/video festival focused on intercultural dialogue within a migratory society. The project “[A Complexion Change](#)” explored questions such as: How do we respond to the inevitabilities of population change, clash or cooperation? It supported the increase of “understanding and cooperation between individuals and groups (...) through the process of art, education, culture and dialogue”. Read [more!](#)

“Drumming for better understanding” at Tamburi Mundi in Freiburg/[Germany](#) and Isfahan/[Iran](#)



(Photo Hans Hincken)

The main goal of [Tamburi Mundi](#) is to make music together and to listen to one another: Therefore, the festival gathers frame drummers from different countries, cultures and musical aspects. In 2008, musicians and exhibitors came from the USA, Iran, Israel, India, Tajikistan, Brazil, Germany, Turkey and Italy. The future perspective of the festival is “Tamburi Mundi International”, involving different cities all over the world such as Isfahan/Iran, Rome/Italy, Istanbul/Turkey, St. Pölten/Austria and Hanoi and Saigon/Vietnam. Read [more!](#)

**Declaration continues to travel Europe:
British and Swedish festivals signed**

On [23 October 2008 in Liverpool](#), more than 50 festivals and actors from the cultural sector, including Liverpool 2008 European Capital of Culture, signed the Declaration in the framework of the Annual Conference of BAFA (British Arts Festivals Association) to commit to the objectives laid down in the text in order to enhance intercultural dialogue. Also Swedish festivals committed and signed the Declaration on [15 November in Stockholm/Sweden](#) in the framework of the celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the Swedish Music Festivals Association.

New signing parties

The European Festivals Association invites all arts festivals to sign up the Arts Festivals' Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue – also beyond 2008. Read the Open Call [here](#).

About FestFlash

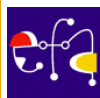
The monthly **FestFlash** brings news about festivals and their activities implemented in the spirit of the [Arts Festivals' Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue](#).

It is the roadmap to **EFA BOOKS 4** that will be published by the end of 2008. EFA BOOKS 4 showcases most outstanding examples of festivals' work and reflects on the challenges in the context of intercultural dialogue.

More on the Arts Festivals' Declaration's website at www.efa-aeef.eu where 25 language versions of the Declaration can be downloaded! To sign up the Declaration, write to info@efa-aeef.eu.

The **Arts Festivals' Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue** is an initiative of the [European Festivals Association](#) in the framework of the [European Year of Intercultural Dialogue](#).

EFA is a member of the [Rainbow Platform on Intercultural Dialogue](#) and collaborates closely with the initiative [A Soul for Europe](#).



European Festivals Association – Kleine Gentstraat 46 – 9051 Gent – Belgium

T: +32 9 241 8080 – F: +32 9 241 8089 – info@efa-aeef.eu – www.efa-aeef.eu

