
European Music Council Press Release

European Forum on Music and EMC Annual Meeting

19 – 22 April 2012, Istanbul, Turkey

Transcending Boundaries – Building Bridges

2nd European Forum on Music held in cooperation by the European Music Council (EMC) and Borusan Arts and Culture opened by UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova claiming the importance of musical diversity for societies in a globalised world

The starting keynote speeches by Melih Fereli and Martin Greve challenged the title chosen by the EMC: the bridge being an overworked metaphor, especially in the Istanbul context where experience shows that bridges can also be built for the wrong purposes. "Mark the music" was the leitmotiv of Fereli's speech, for him music education is a central element –to use the image again: education can build the bridge towards the future. Greve deplored the inequality to transcend boundaries between EU member states and Turkey, which led him to reflect on the endless discussions about identity ("imagined communities", "patchwork identity", etc.) and he concluded with the recommendation to accept the diversity in our lives: "let's forget about all the identities in the end we are all human beings".

The Forum provided a packed programme with panel discussions, workshops, project and paper presentations and wonderful concerts. Some recommendations that evolved:

The debate on artists' mobility revealed the need for co-operation between the culture sector and the administration, international NGO's in the culture field can play the role of an intermediary, when it comes to visa issues.

- Music education should be seen as an ecological system that is permeable: no longer are audience and artist at opposite ends or live and recorded music juxtaposing – the lines between these poles are liquid and as such the self-understanding of the actor
- The session 'Bridging Generations in Employment' highlighted the difficulties of starting out on a career in the cultural sector and the need to address these with innovative and proactive practices and attitudes such as those of the organisations New Deal of the Mind and Poppunt.
- Public and private funding models can promote freedom of artistic expression as well as hinder it. Bart Van Looy, professor at the University Leuven for economy, introduced the importance of market failure as a pre-requisite for knowledge based societies, which includes risk-taking and experimentation.
- The digital revolution affects the economic, social and legal framework but also the aesthetics and the use of music. The challenge for the music sector is the business models that have to adapt to the new environment – these new business models should be as diverse as the creation and usage of music. The wish was formulated that the EMC should engage more in the current authors' rights debate and contract law for artists.

Highly inspiring and interesting project and paper presentations showed the variety of musical projects in Europe and beyond – preparing the ground for new collaborations.

The concerts in the frame of the Forum were musical highlights: the Borusan Quartet's vital performance on the opening evening enthused the audience; the wonderful short performances by Erdem Simsec, Neva and Yelda Özgen and the Borusan Children Choir during the conference days made the programme a truly a musical one and the concert in the Süreyya Operasi gave an insight in the excellence of contemporary Turkish music life. The closing performance by Sumru Agiryürüyen and Göksel Baktagir took the audience on an outstanding journey of "Songs passing through Istanbul".

Alongside the Forum, the EMC Annual Meeting took place including elections for the EMC Board 2012–2014. The new board consists of

- Stef Coninx, Chairman (Belgium)
- Christian Höppner, Vice-Chair (Germany)
- Ian Smith Treasurer, (UK)
- Erling Aksdal (Norway)
- Claire Goddard (UK/Germany)
- Helena Maffli-Nissinen (Switzerland/Finland)
- Kaie Tanner (Estonia)
- Katharine Lane (UK) as a co-opted Working Group Youth member

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