

NORDIC-BALTIC FESTIVALS MEETING IN RIGA 19 FEBRUARY 2013

The meeting in Riga was the third time for this forum to meet with the ambition to establish a platform or association for Artistic Directors and Heads of Festivals to cooperate both artistically as well as in practical matters concerning festival management in the Nordic and Baltic area. In the second meeting in Stockholm in October 2012, a working group was formed to develop concrete ideas and to set the agenda for the discussions in Riga. The Riga meeting approved that the working group should continue to drive the initiative.

In Riga two main goals were set:

- 1) to form a common image and branding for Nordic and Baltic festivals based on artistic content and regional similarities and
- 2) to form collaborative relationships between individuals and festivals in order to share knowledge and increase cooperation in the region.

From this the main statement for a platform was drawn: **The NordicBaltic Festivals Platform** has been initiated to share knowledge and strengthen cooperation between arts festivals and promote the region through a common NordicBaltic artistic identity.

The platform is suggested to have an annual meeting rotating between the countries, connected to significant festivals, events or conferences where the participants could present new ideas and initiatives. The main aim would be to share knowledge and exchange the ideas, boost cooperation and develop relationships in the NordicBaltic region.

Several discussions focused on common artistic projects ie. a festival presenting NordicBaltic talent or organizing promotional concerts in prominent concert halls like the Kennedy Centre or the Barbican, etc.

A NordicBaltic platform need funds to operate The meeting discussed the option to apply for funds with the Nordic Culture Fund and with other foundations and regional funds that demand a collaboration between 2-3 partners. As a first step it was suggested to send a delegation – the working group - to meet the Nordic Council of Ministers in Copenhagen to present the platform. The meeting also prompted for a special Facebook page to introduce the platform to as many people as possible. For the same reason it was suggested to create a simple web-page as soon as possible.

How do the platform come on display in the near future? When and in conjunction with what event, festival or conference? Some of the possibilities discussed were; the Nordic Music Days in Helsinki in 15-19 October 2013, the Tallinn Music Week in March 2014, or in conjunction with the annual conference of Norway Festivals in April 2014. Looking ahead NordicBaltic Festivals should manifest themselves during the European Capital of Culture in Riga and in Umeå 2014 and in Aarhus 2017, and in 2016, in Copenhagen, there are already plans for a NordicBaltic Early Music Festival.

The NordicBaltic Festival Platform working group are:

Steinunn Birna Ragnarsdóttir, representing Harpa and the Reykholt Music Festival (Iceland)
Danas Skramtai, representing National Philharmonic Society and Vilnius Festival, (Lithuania)
Leelo Lehtla, representing Tallin Chamber Music Festival and Rapla Music Festival (Estonia)
Lisa Ketomäki, representing Turku Music Festival (Finland)
Anders Rykkja, representing Norway Festivals (Norway)
Jan Ove Hafstad, Swedish Music Festivals (Sweden)