

2nd Nordic-Baltic Festival Meeting

Stockholm 2012
12th and 13th of October
Meeting minutes

Place: Waldenstrom Hall at The Church of Immanuel (Waldenströmsalen i Immanuelskyrkan) and The Auditorium at the East Asian Museum (Hörsalen på Östasiatiska museet)

Date: 12th and 13th of October 2012

Present participants (in alphabetic order): Kai Amberla, *Executive Director, Finland Festivals*, Esmeralda Bertule, *Coordinator of International Communications, Latvian Concerts/Riga Festival, Latvia*, Steinunn Birna Ragnarsdóttir, *Music Director of Harpa Concert and Conference Center and Artistic Supervisor of Reykholt's festival, Iceland*, Lluís Bonet, *Professor of applied economy at the University of Barcelona, specializing in Cultural Economics, Cultural Policies and Arts Management, Director of the FESStudy, Spain*, Svein Eriksen, *President of Norway Festivals and Director of Vestfold Festsplene AS, Norway*, Mats O Eriksson, *Project Leader, Kungsbacka Chamber Music Festival, Sweden*, Peter Eriksson, *President, Swedish Music Festivals, Sweden*, Frida Grassman, *Coordinator, Umeå Jazzfestival/MADE, Sweden*, Jan Ove Hafstad, *Secretary General, Swedish Music Festivals, Sweden*, Kjell-Åke Hamrén, *Initiator, Musik mellan fjärdarna, Sweden*, Noomi Hedlund, *Director and Artistic Supervisor, The Music Festival of Piteå, Sweden*, Sten Johannisson-Thörne, *Marketing Manager, Opera på Skäret, Sweden*, Liisa Ketomäki, *Executive Director, Turku Music Festival, Finland*, Signe Kiis, *Eesti Concert and Estonian Music Festivals, Estonia*, Guntars Kirsis, *Director, Latvian Concerts/Riga Festivals, Latvia*, Leelo Lehtla, *Manager, Tallinn Chamber Music Festival and Tallinn Winter Festival, Estonia*, Kjell Lindström, *Director, Barockt/Kalmar Läns Musikstiftelse, Sweden*, Aleksi Malmberg, *Programme Manager, Helsinki Festival, Finland*, Ólavur Olsen, *Festival Summartónar, the Faeroe Islands*, Peter Pontvik, *Producer and Artistic Director, Stockholm Early Music Festival, Sweden*, Urban Rosengren, *producer and artistic director, Summermusic on the Peninsula, Sweden*, Anders Rykkja, *General Manager, Norway Festivals, Norway*, Danas Skramtai, *Director, Vilnius Festivals, Lithuania*, Hanna Styrmissdóttir, *Artistic Director, Reykjavik Arts Festival, Iceland*, Ieva Tamutyté, *Vilnius Festivals, Lithuania*, Villu Veski, *Producer and Artistic Director, Muhu Future Festival Juu Jääb, Estonia*, and Camilla Wiklund, *Producer, Gotland Chamber Music Festival, Sweden*, and Annasara Jaensson, *Secretary*.

Enlisted delegates with last minute reason for not attending: Björn Ross, *Copenhagen Renaissance Music Festival, Denmark* and Hivshu Robert Peary, *Greenland* and Unn Torell, *Östhammar Music Festival, Sweden*.

Summary of discussions

The purpose of networking is to encourage sharing and exchanging of knowledge and experience on both international as well as national level.

Different ideas were shared and debated. Some delegates stated that to meet annually was in itself a sufficient cooperation for the alliance, Nordic-Baltic Festival Meeting. Others voted for a deeper and more formal form for collaboration. The delegates agreed that a structured discussion on this matter ought to take place at the next meeting in Riga. To enable a rewarding discussion leading to decisions, a working group was formed commissioned to prepare the meeting.

One purpose of creating a more formal alliance is to build a common image for the Nordic-Baltic countries towards the rest of the world.. Could the collaborative platform be used to market and promote the Nordic-Baltic area to attract tourists and potential festival visitors? The way EFA functions was suggested as an example

Several discussions raised questions on whether a Nordic-Baltic collaboration should be focusing on the festivals artistic contents and programming or rather concentrate on practical issues related to the organisation of festivals. It was stressed by some that the question of funding could be an issue for the network. Several delegates was also in favour of sharing ideas and solutions on organisational structures and back office-work. While others again underlined the need for artistic exchange and collaboration. Could joint applications for common or linked projects be one solution? One way to use the economic knowledge is to exchange views and give advice on how funding is organized in different member countries. Shared knowledge of this kind could prove influential on funding policies in the region as a whole.

Some concrete suggestions brought forward:

- Create co-productions linked to national productions.
- Create a system for cross-boundary co-operations and productions promoting young talents such as artists, conductors and composers under the age of 35.

- Exchange festival programmes between festivals as a way to share and spare working efforts and economic risks.
- Exchange knowledge between festivals regarding back office staff.
- Exchange the results of successful promotion activities.
- Collaborate to make it possible to invite star artists, for example by offering them to tour Nordic-Baltic Festivals in several countries.
- Create a shared data base consisting of, for example, different genres of music matched with represented artists, artists tour-schemes etc. to make collaboration between festival organisers easier and lower costs, for example travel expenses such as ticket costs for invited artists.
- Organise a Nordic-Baltic Festival in the island of Gotland with established artists and a rising star from each country.
- Pitching or speed mating as a way for festival managers to find other festival managers to work with.

An issue emerging from the discussion was the ambition to collaborate whilst at the same keeping your own festival unique. Although there are gains to be made in sharing costs and artists, the common experience among delegates is that individual festivals have to endeavour to stand out in order to create their own platform and market value.

The Nordic-Baltic Festival Meeting could be a possible forum for delegates to work together on anticipating coming trends, develop new festival concepts, attract new audience and anticipate the needs of future audiences. What are festivals going to look like ten years from now? There is an impressive variety of festivals and in the use of festival as a concept. Today a festival could be anything between a feast and series of concerts and events linked together during several months. Due to that flexible shape, it was argued, festivals are well designed to survive and adapt to any modern reality. Thus, short lived pop-up festivals exists side by side with permanent festivals that was formed after World War II as a European peace project; one creating maximum commotion during a short time, once, and the other an art institution where the audience reserve seats years ahead.

All delegates expressed their expectations as to what results of the FESTudy would show.

Decisions taken at the 2nd Nordic-Baltic Festival Meeting

1. The meeting decided on organising an annual meeting. The next Nordic-Baltic Festival Meeting will take place in Riga, Latvia, 19-21 February 2013 on the invitation by Guntars Kirsis and Esmeralda Bertule from Riga Festival/Latvian Concerts. It will be held in connection with a musical event, namely the Great Latvian Music Award. There will also be a showcase, presenting national as well as other Baltic and Nordic artists. Further information will come from Esmeralda Bertule.

It was suggested that every annual meeting should have added value to it. It could be artistic in the form of concerts or a festival like with the Nordic Music Days in Reykjavik 2011 and in Sweden 2012, or as the music award in Riga 2013. It can also, for organisational and economic reasons, be organised in conjunction with an already planned national conference for festivals, or for educational reasons in conjunction with a lecture, a speech or a seminar.

2. A working group was formed and commissioned to map out and structure different possible ways to cooperate. The working group shall distribute its suggestions to the individual delegates to dwell on, in time before the conference in Riga. The purpose of creating the working group is to enable delegates to take well-informed decisions in the next meeting. Two concrete tasks were given to the working group: a) to discuss and suggest an appropriate name for the future Nordic-Baltic festival collaboration and b) to discuss and suggest whether the collaboration should have a formal organisation, and if yes what kind of organisation that should be, its statutes and tasks.

The meeting decided on the following five volunteering delegates to form the working group: Steinunn Birna Ragnarsdóttir, *Iceland*, Leelo Lehtla, *Estonia*, Jan Ove Hafstad, *Sweden*, Anders Rykkja, *Norway* and Danas Skramtai or Ieva Tamutyté, *Lithuania*.

3. Starting a Facebook Group. The purpose of starting a Facebook Group is to maintain and facilitate contact between Nordic-Baltic Festival Meeting delegates in an “easy going forum”, where questions and ideas concerning festival work can be openly shared between many in an instant. It is to be kept exclusively for delegates of the Nordic-Baltic Festival Meeting until the next meeting. Then new discussions on opening up the Group for other “festival related” people will take place. The Facebook Group will be set up by Alexi Malmberg, *Helsinki Festival, Finland*.