



This is the newsletter of the EURO-FESTIVAL project, launched in 2008 to study artistic festivals as sites of trans-national identifications and democratic debates. Regular features will include an update on project and partner activities; reviews of books or websites; reports on events or publications; and short articles on relevant over-arching themes. External contributions are welcome. Please contact us at [l.giorgi@iccr-international.org](mailto:l.giorgi@iccr-international.org)

### Editorial

Summer is festival time. In Austria alone, there are the Wiener Festwochen, the Vienna Dance Festival, the Vienna Jazz Festival, the Salzburg Festival, the Styriarte Festival in Graz, the Wiesen Jazz Festival (...). In the UK, there are the Hay-on-Wye Festival, the Glastonbury Festival, the Glyndebourne Festival, the Latitude Festival, the Brighton Festival and the Manchester International Festival (...). In Venice, the Biennale is well under way and the film festival is under preparation – can the experience beat Cannes? But Venice is not the only venue in Italy to host a festival. The same is also true of most other regions in Europe.

Festivals are a proof that humans are 'social' animals: let the sun shine and we are driven 'out' into the open, looking for opportunities to socialize and celebrate. But festivals are also evidence that we are political beings. When we gather, we talk and when we talk, we discuss and when we discuss, we form communities. Talking in Hay earlier this summer, Lisa Jardine reminded her 700-strong audience of Raymond William's maxim that 'the process of communication is the process of community'. Therefore, if we want to know where communities are built today and what these communities are, we should pay attention to how people communicate. It is for this reason, Jardine claimed, that as cultural sociologists we cannot afford to ignore new technologies such as facebook, twitter and the internet more generally. The same is true of festivals – all sorts of festivals, but also arts festivals.

In this second issue of the EURO-FESTIVAL newsletter, project contributors provide insight into the history and topicality of arts festivals in the European context in addition to reporting on specific events.

We hope you will find our newsletter of interest and look forward to your comments,

The EURO-FESTIVAL project team

### **The History of the Vienna Festival\* A Looking Glass at the Early History of Austria and Europe**

*Liana Giorgi, ICCR*

Today, Vienna is known around the world for its cultural and, especially, musical landscape. According to a recent study commissioned by the Vienna Tourist Bureau, Vienna is one of those once-in-a-lifetime tourist destinations. This is due to its imperial architecture, on the one hand, and its musical tradition, on the other. Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Strauss are all names associated with Austria and Vienna, particularly. Add to these names the Lippizaner horses of the Spanish Riding School and Schönbrunn and Belvedere Palaces and you have the complete 'Biedermeier' profile of Vienna successfully sold to tourists around the world. But there is much more to Vienna than this – and this was not always so: two facts that have much to do with the beginning and later development of the Vienna Festival or, to be more precise, the Vienna Festival *Weeks* – the *Wiener Festwochen*.

Officially, the Vienna Festival was launched in 1951. Following the end of the Second World War, it represented an endeavour to help Austria re-enter the international stage, both politically and culturally. At the time Austria was still under the jurisdiction of the Allied Forces, Vienna being divided into four zones: British / American / French and Soviet. For the first director of the *Festwochen*, Hans Mandl, city councillor for the Social Democratic Party, the festival was an opportunity to put Vienna back on the map of European culture and the arts. By doing so, he further wished to remind the free world that the Austrian capital had a different tradition to that espoused by the Austro-Fascists in the period from 1934 to 1938 and subsequently by the National Socialists. This was the 'Red Vienna' tradition of the First Republic (1918-1934), during which the Social Democrats introduced major social and cultural reforms. By the late 1940s,

well-known cultural institutions like the *Musikverein* and the State Opera had resumed operations – some, like the State Opera, in alternative locations – but their prestige was still tarnished and their recovery slow, not least because of the economic and infrastructure conditions prevailing at the time. Indeed, the situation was similar to that of the Salzburg Festival, which had already been re-launched in 1945, but which was stigmatized as a blemished cultural site, like Bayreuth, in view of its appropriation by the Nazi regime and the fact that well-known programme directors and/or famous conductors had sympathized or collaborated with the regime.

At the same time, the Allied Forces considered internationalization and cultural exchange, especially, as a useful means of accelerating denazification and promoting democracy. As early as 1946, an international music festival was held in Graz with the support of the British Council. Similar developments could also be observed in Germany. To mention just a few noteworthy examples, in the field of literature, Group (19)47 was established as a network of German writers committed to literature and democratic politics; in the purview of film, the Berlin International Film Festival was launched in 1951, like the *Wiener Festwochen*. Many of these cultural initiatives were conceptualized as instruments of democratization, yet they were promoted principally under the banner of ‘peace’. The first poster of the *Wiener Festwochen*, showing a putto carrying the festival placard against a blue background with the silhouette of St. Stephan’s Cathedral, bore the caption ‘Undying Vienna’. According to the festival programme of 1954, Vienna remained the ‘world capital of music’, combining ‘healthy local patriotism and cosmopolitanism’, and the festival’s own self-understanding was that of contributing to ‘change for the better’ (Programme 1952) through a ‘diplomacy of the hearts and the politics of mutual understanding’ (Programme 1954) (cited in Cerny 2001).

But the festival was more than a cultural peace initiative. It was also an instrument to help the Social Democratic city administration, which had been ousted from the Viennese municipal government by the Austro-Fascists as early as 1934, to recover its confidence, pick up the shreds of its reform activity and resume work. In an interview given to the editors of the commemorative volume *Wiener Festwochen 1951-2001; Ein Festival zwischen Repräsentation und Irritation* [in English: Vienna Festival Weeks 1951-2001; A Festival between Representation and Irritation], Helmut Zilk, Vienna mayor between 1984 and 1994 and responsible for

the *Wiener Festwochen* in the years 1980-1983, pointed out that the ‘fiftieth’ anniversary was not entirely correct, because, in fact, the Vienna festival had first been launched in 1924, i.e. in the inter-war period, within the framework of the democratic reforms associated with ‘Red Vienna’. In this respect, he echoed the programme of the 1952 festival, which was entitled ‘Twenty-five years of Vienna Festival Weeks’.

‘Red Vienna’ is the term used to refer to Vienna in the years of the First Republic (1918-1934). In 1919, Vienna was granted the status of a state within a federal state, and its government was formed by the Social Democrats, who held the majority in the capital. At the federal level, the government was formed by the Christian Socials and Nationalists. Vienna was thus an enclave within a Catholic conservative and increasingly Fascist environment on the national level. The Viennese Social Democrats opposed the top-down economic determinism of Marxism and the revolutionary claims of Communism likewise. Instead, they sought to develop their policies along the lines of Austro-Marxism, which understood change to be the result of rational modernization coupled to socio-cultural evolution. It was this political and intellectual atmosphere that witnessed the organization in 1924 of the ‘Music and Theatre Festival’, which Zilk referred to as the predecessor of the *Wiener Festwochen*.

The 1924 festival was organized by David Josef Bach. Bach had different functions in the municipal government: he was the director of the Social-Democratic Arts Agency, or *Kunststelle*, founded in 1919 to sponsor cultural events and distribute free or low-priced tickets to workers and the organizer, in parallel, of the Workers’ Symphony Concerts, launched in 1905 as a way of enhancing awareness of classical music among the working class. Bach was a social liberal who followed an inclusive approach with regard to setting up the programme of the Workers’ Symphony Concerts (Bach 1929) and the 1924 Music and Theatre Festival. The programme was ‘both classical and modern’ (Armstrong and Timms 2006 in *Austrian Studies*), linked to ‘not only the contemporary but also the avant-garde and experimental’ (Warren 2006 in *Austrian Studies*) and cut across political ideologies in terms of conductors, producers, performers or composers. The 1924 festival was ‘comprehensive’ or mixed-arts, focusing on theatre and music, but also including dance, film, dialect drama and comedy, and it also gave younger artists the opportunity to present their work. It was clearly intended as a statement against rising German nationalism and anti-Semitism,

but it also represented an attempt to contribute to Vienna's economic recovery through tourism, following a period of hyperinflation in the early 1920s.

Bach's approach to a Viennese festival was quite different to that followed by the initiators of the Salzburg Festival, even though they, too, shared with Bach a belief in humanism, albeit not his commitment to Socialism. The spiritual fathers of the Salzburg Festival were Max Reinhardt, Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Richard Strauss. Max Reinhardt and Hugo von Hofmannsthal, especially, were representatives of a generation of artists in the early 20th century who were liberal in politics, but rather conservative in cultural tastes and outlook. Like many of their contemporaries from both the left and right, Reinhardt and Hofmannsthal believed in the power of cultural aesthetics as advocated by Wagner and shared in his romantic view of nationalism as a transcendental power. In his book *Austria as Theatre and Ideology*, Steinberg (1990) calls this cosmopolitan nationalism and considers it the basic feature of the ideological basis of the Salzburg Festival.

By contrast, Bach's cosmopolitanism was less rooted in (German) national identity and both more international and more inclusive – both across space and time and with respect to social position and class. But in the late 1920s, such liberal attitudes were also beginning to become outmoded within Viennese Social Democratic circles, as anti-Semitism gradually gained the upper hand. Bach found himself becoming gradually marginalized at the *'Kunststelle'*. In 1938, he emigrated to the United Kingdom. By a thin stroke of luck, he was allowed to take his library with him, which includes many of the items related to his work in the 1920s. Today it is housed in Cambridge University Library.

A comprehensive mixed-arts festival for the Viennese, but also for visitors: both classical and modernist, contemporary and avant-garde and, not least, forward-looking, albeit rooted in tradition. This was how the 'first' 1924 Vienna Festival was characterized and what has defined the aspired goals of the *Wiener Festwochen* since 1951. Meeting these multiple and, partly, disparate goals has neither been easy, nor without friction. But the festival continues to represent a looking glass for gaining a better insight into the sociological and political processes that impact on our societies.

\*This is a short version of the chapter on the Wiener Festwochen that appears in the project's second report *European Arts Festivals from a Historical Perspective* (2009).

## The Pari(s) du Vivre-Ensemble – A Cultural Civic-Minded Festival

Esther Benbassa, EPHE

On 13 May 2004, a series of meetings entitled 'Jews and Muslims. A Shared History, a Dialog to Build' was organized at the Sorbonne and at the Institut du Monde Arabe (IMA). Esther Benbassa and Jean-Christophe Attias initiated the event, with the assistance of the newspaper *Le Monde des Religions*, the École Pratique des Hautes Études (EPHE, Sorbonne) and the Institut Européen en Sciences des Religions (IESR). The event, which took place in the context of strong tensions between Jews and Muslims, received a great response from the press and the ethnic minorities. The book giving an account of this first experience was published in March 2006 (*Juifs et Musulmans; Une Histoire Partagée, Un Dialogue à Construire, La Découverte*) and won the 2006 Françoise Seligmann Foundation Prize Against Racism. In June 2004, encouraged by this success – and long before the riots in the suburbs broke out – the initiators began to prepare another, more ambitious project combining a cultural festival, civil dialogues, the fight against racism and discrimination and the promotion of diversity: 'Le Pari(s) du Vivre- Ensemble'.

### Implementation

In order to conduct this project, they created partnerships with public and private institutions, from France and from abroad, institutional or associative, and with the media. The aim was to ensure that the event would be free; to receive the necessary logistic and technical support; to gain the assistance of as many different networks as possible and thus to reach as many types of audiences as possible; to make sure that the event would create a stir big enough to attract a maximum of people; and, after the event, to have coverage that might extend and expand its impact.

A major publicity campaign was launched for this festival in 2006 (1<sup>st</sup> edition) and 2008 (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) and the media strongly responded to Esther Benbassa's and Jean-Christophe Attias' promotion : advertisements, interviews, articles in newspapers and online, TV shows, radio and TV talk shows, which increasingly enriched and widened their action.

2006: First edition of the Pari(s) du Vivre-Ensemble

The first edition of the 'Pari(s) du Vivre-ensemble' lasted a week, from 19 March to 26 March 2006. The 'International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discriminations', which took place on 21 March,

represented the climax of the festival. By creating a festive, intellectual, open-minded and educational atmosphere, this first edition, conceived as a cultural festival, aimed at emphasizing the value of cultural diversity in and around Paris, at promoting dialogues and links between populations of diverse origins and at fighting any form of racism and anti-Semitism.

The festival followed three main focuses:

- Social debates, through roundtables and meetings in various places in Paris (e.g. Senate, UNESCO, 'Hôtel de Ville' [Paris City Hall], 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> *arrondissement* municipal centers, IMA);
- Culture, with concerts (Klezmer, Chaâbi, Kurdish jazz, raï, reggae, etc.), a contest, photograph exhibitions, guided tours to museums, TV and radio shows;
- Education, with a pilot project at Lycée Voltaire (Paris 11<sup>th</sup>); a literary contest in Parisian high schools (topic: 'My Friend, my Neighbour, the Other One. French or Foreigner, White, Gypsy, Black or Asian, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Believer or Non-believer'); workshops for teenagers at the Museum of Judaic Art and History and at the IMA; narrated walks about discriminations; a mixed soccer match.

Every activity was free. The quality of debates was excellent, largely thanks to the speakers' diversity (professors, journalists, activists, community workers, male and female politicians, etc.). In the conference room, people spoke freely and without censorship, whilst always respecting the framework of responsible and considerate conversation.

There were many highlights, including:

- A roundtable about the impact of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on harmonious cohabitation in France and Europe (at the Senate on 19 March , with the participation of the envoy of the Palestinian Authority (PA) to the European Commission in Brussels and of the Chargé d'Affaires at the Israeli Embassy in Paris);
- A roundtable about the possible role of Europe and its institutions in the fight against racism (at the IMA on 20 March, with the participation of several foreign guests);
- 21 March, a day at UNESCO about workplace, the media, education, collective memory, with speeches held by two current ministers - Catherine Vautrin and M. Azouz Begag;
- The afternoon of 22 March at the IMA (Institut du

Monde arabe), which allowed people to listen to the voices of upcoming young intellectuals and journalists 'deriving from immigration';

- A roundtable about the associations' mission to bring majority and minorities closer (at the *Hôtel de Ville* on 23 March), which opened up a fruitful and heated debate on the disagreements between antiracism movements today.

Shows were a pleasant counterpoint to the debates. What can usually be perceived as dissent or conflict was here felt as an opportunity to share a festive moment. A young and quite diverse audience came to the concerts and the photograph exhibition 'Living Together Now', which displayed pictures from the contest and was organized in conjunction with the magazine *Réponses Photo*, was very successful. Hundreds of people came to the art opening at UNESCO on the night of 20 March . Pictures of the three prize winners were published in *Réponses Photo* (April 2006, published on 15 March ) and in the UNESCO's Social and Human Sciences newsletter (#12, March-May 2006)

The literary contest in Parisian high schools gave the opportunity to award prizes to three students (including one from a technical high school). The 'Shared Cultures' workshops, organized by the MAHJ (Musée d'Art et d'Histoire du judaïsme) and the IMA, and the meeting with Parisian and suburban high school students, which took place at the Lycée Voltaire on the afternoon of 24 March, were both highly successful.

In only a few months, the website [www.parisduvivreensemble.org](http://www.parisduvivreensemble.org) had dozens of thousands of visitors. Average attendance was well above the organizers' expectations. The conference rooms (250 seats at the Senate, 450 at the IMA, 450 at UNESCO) were easily filled. The activities organized by the 'mairies' (town halls) of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> *arrondissements* were also very successful.

Due to the broad range of festival activities , the organizers were able to reach a very diverse audience (in social, ethnic, cultural and religious terms). Apart from average citizens, activists and community workers were strongly represented and enriched the debates, whilst expanding their own networks at the same time. Many people (heads of NGOs, heads of major governmental institutions or ministries, experts, etc.) came to the event from abroad (Spain, Norway, the Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland, etc.) and contributed to its international dimension.

2008: Le Pari(s) du Vivre-Ensemble, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition

The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the festival 'Pari(s) du Vivre-Ensemble' focused on the management and promotion of cultural diversity at school. Many partnerships were formed. Researchers, teachers, parents and students were at the centre of discussions about 1) the educational contents of syllabuses (in textbooks and in classes) 2) past educational experiments and the initiatives that might lead to an evolution of contents and practices.

The 2008 edition of the festival opened at UNESCO at 5.30 p.m on 19 March. This first event focused on 'Education and discriminations' and was an integral part of the events surrounding the 'International Day for the Elimination of Racial discriminations' (21 March). It started with an art opening. The exhibition, entitled 'From One Face to the Other, Perspectives on French and Algerian History, Past and Present', was put together by 9<sup>th</sup>-grade students from the Collège Léon Blum (Villiers-Le-Bel) under the supervision of their French, History and Geography teachers. The exhibition won the Prize Event for Intercultural Education. The screening took place at UNESCO from 20 to 27 March within the auspices of the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Pari(s) du Vivre-Ensemble.

2 April mainly consisted of a series of roundtables on 'How to Write and Teach Plurality at School?' that took place at the Sorbonne, lecture hall Liard. The organizers wanted the minutes of the 2 April conferences to be available immediately, which was the case less than two weeks later with a collection made especially for the occasion, entitled 'School Moving Towards Cultural Plurality' and hosted online by Mediapart.fr. The day ended with a concert by Latino-American band *Tres Colores Trio*. As in 2006, collective thinking was linked to a cultural offer (the photographic exhibition, the documentary movie and the concert).

Between 1 January and 28 April, more than 45,000 visitors (including 24,000 in March alone) clicked on the website [www.parisduvivreensemble.org](http://www.parisduvivreensemble.org). Average attendance was in keeping with expectations. The conference rooms (200 seats at UNESCO and 300 at the Sorbonne) were easily filled and the audience kept changing. Almost 350 people came to the opening at UNESCO.

Apart from average citizens, activists, community workers, teachers, union activists, politicians and journalists, etc. followed and enriched the debates with their active participation. The organizers also noticed the presence of high-school students (from

Paris and the suburbs). A professional video-maker filmed a large part of the event and a 70-minute documentary will soon be online on the website [www.parisduvivreensemble.org](http://www.parisduvivreensemble.org) (as happened with the 70-minute documentary of the 2006 edition).

Thanks to the organization in Oslo of an international workshop on minorities and cultural diversity in Europe, it was possible to get an international expansion of the festival as well as critical feedback on the event. On 15 and 16 May, 2008, more than 30 researchers and representatives of civil society met on Norway's national holiday.

## REPORTS from FESTIVAL SEASON 2009

### Brighton's Festival Atmosphere

**Brighton festival(s)**, 2-24 May 2009

*Monica Sassatelli, Sussex University*

A city festival running for several weeks may appear less of a totalizing event (or even of a total social fact) than a gated, intensive two- or three-day festival. Indeed, this is rather a more extensive experience; but if there is no wearing of wrist-band marking your belonging to the festival's separate time and space, there is no shortage of other forms of markers and festive rituals. In Brighton, signs that the Festival is approaching start to appear well in advance. First, there are the brochures: the main festival and the fringe one, but then also the artists' Open Houses brochure, Parlure Spiegeltent, the Komedia, the Fletch at St. Andrews (a novelty this year), and so on and so forth. Virtually every venue and event has its little (or big) brochure or leaflet, and they start appearing in free stands outside shops, cafés, newsagents, etc. from late February-March, so that expectations can start building up. There are copies of the main festival brochure also at doctor's surgeries and community centres. When it comes out, it is news for a while – also because some shows are immediately sold out – then it all seems to fade again. More tangible signs re-appear the week preceding the festival in a progressive climax: marquees are set up in some central squares or lawns, then fencing is prepared for road closure. Then one notices that festival banners are up. Since when? It is difficult to recollect: they seem both new and as if they have always been there, and always will be, a bit like with Christmas decorations. Indeed, a recurrent city festival creates a similar, 'seasonal' atmosphere. And similarly, that atmosphere is pervasive and potentially evident to all, but for some it means a lot, it creates a whole new world with its

own time and space, social as well as physical, whilst others may barely notice it, be annoyed by it, feel it is not for them, for whatever reasons, and so remain in their everyday world. Finally, just the night before the launch this still indefinite aura becomes tangible: in the main theatre street quite a few people, many of whom are already in their stage costumes, hand out leaflets or even enact mini-performances. This is, of course, mainly the case with the fringe events. Many exhibitions and Open Houses have their vernissages or 'private views', and that is palpable too, as one can see the smartish, wine glass-holding audience of the openings through open, lit windows or spilling into the streets.

As far as atmosphere and ritual launch, go, the Brighton Festival has developed its own tradition with the inaugural 'Children's Parade'. Started as a minor event in 1985, the Children's Parade has grown to become the constant launch of the Festival and one that is difficult to miss or ignore: 4,000 participants from 75 schools, an audience of 10,000, according to the organizers, and the local community arts charity 'Same Sky', whose history is also very much interlinked with the Brighton festival. They say that 'The Children's Parade illustrates the empowering energy of creative processes for participants, collaborators and artists'. The parade starts from the North Laine area of the city, in the so-called 'Cultural quarter', then to finish in Madeira Drive, by the sea, creating a very atmospheric event throughout: traffic is blocked for a few hours, the audience is very mixed, many children among the audience are also dressed up in fancy-dress and there are people selling whistles and little UK flags. The parade is classical in its genre (carnival-like, with papier maché art work, dancing and samba), and brims over with energy and enthusiasm. It is very varied, so it is fun to look at the different works of the different schools: commenting on them, as well as looking for friends and family in the parade, seems to be the main topic of conversation among the audience. Even in the confusion, the topics of different schools are made quite easy to understand by using banners. Lots of people are also looking at the parade's leaflet, where everything is explained. The general theme this year is 'The four elements', and many sub-themes have a 'global' inspiration (Venice, Japan Monkey God, aboriginal dreamtime, etc.). Many people are taking pictures or videoing, or taking pictures with mobile phones. One tells me that she intends to post some of these on Flickr – later, indeed, I find that hundreds of pictures sent by different people can be found tagged 'Brighton Festival'. She also says she

feels the parade is a 'bonding experience'. Further down the parade, not taking pictures but equally transfixed, another Brightonian tells me how the parade 'really touches your heart'. More blasé are a couple of tourists who came here unaware of the event, but who happily spend some of their day-trip enjoying this as an 'extra treat'.

This year, the festival presence on the urban fabric has been reinforced by the work of the artistic director, acclaimed Bombay-born, London-based, Venice Biennale and Turner Prize celebrated Anish Kapoor, whose works are scattered throughout the town, in galleries, gardens, the ex-indoor market, with the constant presence of festival volunteers as guides. The festival also commissioned Kapoor for original work as well as the 'graphic identity' of the festival this year, reproduced as the cover of the brochure, leaflets, banners, stickers, t-shirts, etc. This marks a renewed focus on the visual arts, which for several years has featured in the festival almost exclusively through the Open House programme. This is another section with quite a distinctive presence dotting the urban map, where self-defined artists, professionals, students and amateurs can exhibit by opening their own houses to the public during the festival's weekends. Initiated in the mid-1980s, this, too, has grown steadily, with the attraction of the variety of the works on offer but also – as local wisdom underlines – the fun of seeing other people's houses and the possibility of free cake. This year, the Open Houses and Kapoor exemplify Brighton Festival's international, cutting-edge, high-profile ambitions and its ongoing community festival feeling. These two dimensions are more separate on paper than in reality, and their cross-over contributes to the festival atmosphere and to the city's preferred self-representation as a creative, challenging place.

### **'Atmosphere, atmosphere' of the Cannes Film Festival**

*Jérôme Segal, ICCR*

In *Hotel du Nord* (Carné 1938), Arletty does not know the meaning of the word 'atmosphere' and, when her lover says he wants a change of atmosphere, she answers with this best-known sentence in pre-war French cinema: 'Atmosphere... atmosphere, do I have the face of an atmosphere?' The atmosphere of the Cannes Film Festival is unique and might be disturbing.

Of course, it would not be fair to complain about the lifestyle led during the Cannes Film Festival, but a few weeks' distance might be necessary to report on the experience from a critical stance. A kind of frenetic

mood really seems to overwhelm most of the festival-goers, including researchers who are conducting field work. Each day is composed of three to four screenings, press conferences at the *Quinzaine* (Directors' Fortnight), long Q&A sessions after each film screened in Critics' Week, many trips along the *Croisette* to get from one theatre to another and short interviews, usually in the depths of the labyrinth hosting the Film Market and the Short Film Corner.

The city is completely devoted to its festival, and even when the festival is over, the street scene is still reminiscent of the celebration. Iron barriers designed to prevent cars parking on the curb are, for instance, adorned with the palm which is the logo of the festival. The phone booth close to the *Palais des festivals* is covered with a piece of film reel made of metal. All the main hotels display huge film posters, usually for major productions.

Still, interest in movies is not always the reason why people make their way to Cannes. A strange feeling might arise on the long evenings or even nights – some films are screened at midnight – strolling along the *Croisette*, thronged with people. This large boulevard between the sea and the private parties on the beach, on one side, and the most expensive boutiques and hotels, on the other, plays the role of the Styx, the river between the Upperworld and the Underworld in Greek mythology. Those of the local bourgeoisie or from the ministries who have managed to get invitations to official screenings proudly swagger with those who have accreditations, showing off their badges around their necks. The different background colours of the badges as well as the small flags or discs on them create a hierarchy. So a yellow press ID with a red dot seems to be the most enviable door-opener. But as time elapses in the night, more and more people who have nothing to do with cinema just try to gatecrash private parties or, even if they are not so daring, are still queuing in front of hotels with the hope of spying 'someone', admiring big limos ... or simply scantily dressed women. At this time of the night, most of the real festival-goers have already left the restaurants where they have had dinner. For them, the evening is a good occasion to meet other film professionals, be they cinema managers, film buyers, festivals directors or film critics.

In the early morning, these professionals, who constitute the overwhelming majority of the festival audience, read all the special issues of cinema dailies distributed free in front of the main hotels or along the *Croisette*. Everyone tries to schedule the day in order

to see the hyped films, which might win awards, and finish the day with unofficial selections and market screenings. At the same time, the people who cannot see any movies start waiting for hours next to their stepladders, which they have locked with chains overnight, trying to take photos of stars when they mount the steps on the red carpet ... at 7pm for the first official screening of a film in competition.

An important black market for non-official photos is taking place. Many people just buy photos of themselves in front of exclusive hotels or close to the red carpet. Being there and proving by photograph that you have been there, seems to be enough to stand out in some sections of society. Interestingly, sects and religions instrumentalize these characteristics of the festival as a very select event. The same way that gay activists stroll along the *Croisette*, as if dressed as transvestites for a carnival, there was also a middle-aged man sitting on a bench, claiming with a large sign that 'Jesus saves'. Scientology missionaries try to catch the attention of tourists to the festival by a so-called 'stress test', intended to sell books by their guru. Representatives of the Raelian sect display a placard explaining that they are looking for a producer to finance a film on Rael, Messenger of Elohim ('extra-terrestrial beings'). Dozens of disciples of an Asian sect called 'Supreme Master Ching Hai on the Environment' use the shared concern about global warming to tout their 'association', even if they use a few diesel-powered floats to get their message across the arteries of the city.

The symbolic importance of this festival, as it is conveyed by the media, explains the fantastic and sometimes bizarre atmosphere that reigns on this part of the Côte d'Azur in May every year.

### **WOMAD Charlton Park 2009**

Jasper Chalcraft, University of Sussex

Stamina. It is a word not immediately associated with musical leisure experiences, but one that unites audience, artists and those undertaking fieldwork at a weekend music festival: WOMAD Charlton Park 2009 proved to be as challenging as it was sometimes enthralling. Whereas last year's preliminary fieldwork at Charlton Park was based on working in the backstage world and getting to know the particularities of artist hospitality (and especially their tastes in the food on offer), this year saw equal amounts of energy expended in chasing the music, the crowds and their experience of an event, which warmed up nicely and was then nearly extinguished by the rather moist

weather the British enjoy complaining about. Impressively, the festival spirit, which had found itself in full swing on a gloriously sunny and warm Saturday, remained throughout the saturation of Sunday, with even the Children's Parade soldiering enthusiastically through sheets of rain.

One type of event I was particularly keen to cover in great detail was the Taste the World series, where artists cook traditional foods from their places of origin and interact with the audience through questions, impromptu musical performances and actually letting them taste the food they have cooked over the course of an hour. These events took place in a small tent situated in a bucolic arboretum and sponsored by Riverford Organic, the UK's largest organic vegetable box distributor.

Looking at Taste the World was an attempt to make sense of how artists performed in the different spaces and contexts that WOMAD Charlton Park offers, so I studied the shifting modes and cultural content that artists used in spaces as different as the festival's main Open Air Stage, the intimate Taste the World tent and equally participatory Workshops.

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, in these more intimate spaces, with their corresponding lack of emphasis on performance, it was the personal stories and views of the artists that came to the fore. Equally though, much was revealed of the WOMAD audience on these occasions; their questions to the artists showed them to be – for the most part – interested, sympathetic and fairly knowledgeable about the places and contexts the artists came from. These mediated dialogues between audience and artists (WOMAD staff and/or managers often interceded) represent one of the most interesting areas of the festival, for where some performances on the main stages can sometimes feel a little too slick, too polished by a heavy season of touring Europe, cooking and talking about one's music, background and beliefs offered a more human experience: less consumption of culture than a stage performance offers, and more of an exchange.

This was WOMAD's third year in its new rural home, and yet despite familiarity with the grounds (the exact layout of stages and facilities has changed each year), I found the research challenging. Whilst more than 30 individual events were observed in detail, and informal interviews conducted with attendees of all ages, trying to convey the sheer volume of activity and diversity of experiences always proves a simplification, a generalization; one is left with the slightly unsettling feeling that it is participation, as much as observation,

that probably lies at the heart of how one tries to apprehend the ideas, ideals and aesthetics that run through such an event.

For more festival reports, blogs and photos, visit our '**Festival Diary**' section at [www.euro-festival.org](http://www.euro-festival.org). There you can read:

- Liana Giorgi reporting on the [Hay-on-Wye Literature Festival](#)
- Jerome Segal presenting photos of the [Cannes Film Festival](#)
- Monica Sassatelli reporting on the [Brighton Festival](#)
- Liana Giorgi and Ronald Pohoryles writing on the [Venice Biennale](#)
- Monica Sassatelli presenting photos of the [Venice Biennale](#)
- Liana Giorgi blogging from the International Literature Festival Berlin

### Publications

At the beginning of the year, the EURO-FESTIVAL project hosted several academics from around the world, meeting to discuss the role of arts festivals in contemporary society. The workshop entitled 'Public Culture and Festivals' was a great success and we thank all participants for attending and sharing their knowledge and expertise with us. The workshop proceedings will form the basis for an edited volume on arts festivals to be published by Routledge in 2010.

### The next newsletter

The next newsletter of the EURO-FESTIVAL project will be published at the beginning of 2010.

### Comments and feedback

We would be very glad to receive feedback on this newsletter. Do not hesitate to contact us if you have comments or ideas about what you would like to see covered by the newsletter, or, indeed, if you yourself would like to write a contribution.

Contact us at [l.giorgi@iccr-international.org](mailto:l.giorgi@iccr-international.org)