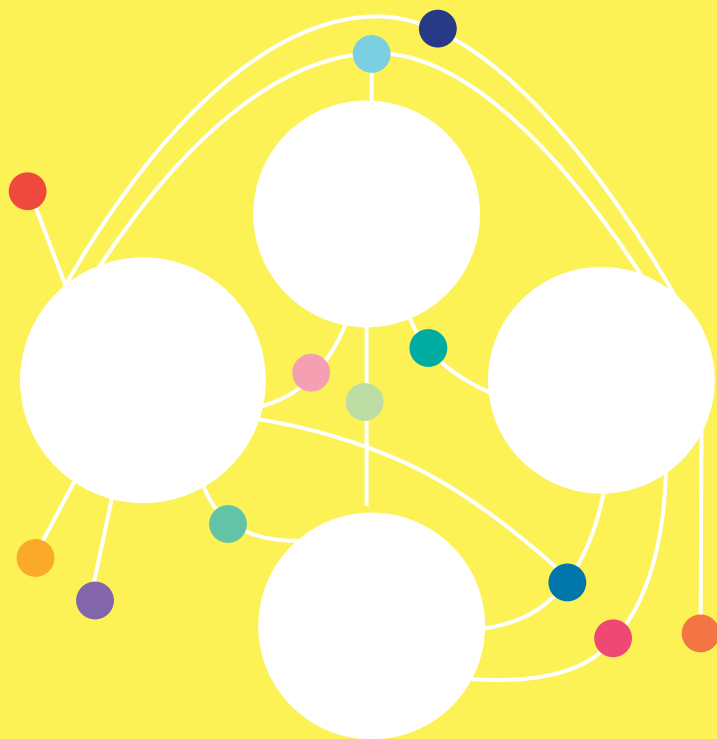


HARMONY OF OPPOSITES:

COMPOSITION AS A PROFESSION IN THE NORDIC COUNTRIES



How can we develop
a more diverse and
gender balanced music
sector with a broader
audience base?

How to create new
opportunities for
composers and promote
contemporary music in
the Nordic region and
beyond?

These were some of the core questions that were discussed on September 13th 2018 at a conference in Oslo exploring the current and future conditions for composers and contemporary music in the Nordic countries.

The conference was presented by the Nordic Composers' Council and the Nordic Culture Fund in collaboration with the Ultima Festival. It brought together over 50 central actors from the international music world.

The keynotes at the conference highlighted the importance of international networks and creating new structures, platforms, and ways of working in a more global perspective.

The need for a stronger focus on diversity and of being more open, curious, and engaging as a sector, was highlighted as well in both the keynotes and in the ongoing discussions and reactions throughout the day.

Last but not least, a clear invitation to strengthen the exchange of knowledge and experience across professions and country borders, in order to attack the existing barriers in new ways, was put forward.

This catalogue contains a compilation of ideas presented by the conference participants on how to tackle the existing challenges in the Nordic region, when seen as a labour market for composers and actors within contemporary music. Following the ideas, you will find a summary of the key notes as well as main points of the group discussions throughout the day. As inspiration for the future, the catalogue ends with a list of successful initiatives carried out outside the Nordic countries.

Keynotes were given by

Susanna Eastburn

Chief executive, Sound and Music in the UK

Du Yun

Composer, performer, and artistic director based in New York

Hanna Hartman

Composer and sound artist based in Berlin

Christos Carras

General manager, Onassis Cultural Centre Athens

and the keynotes were moderated by the journalist Lene Johansen and critically explored by the composer Juliana Hodkinson.

Ideas for inspiration

- how to move
forward



ORGANISATIONAL INITIATIVES

- How might we co-commission and co-produce?
- How might we create strong platforms to market and communicate the good stories?
- How might we remove the structural barriers of funding?

- How might we develop a more diverse and gender balanced music sector?
- How might we ensure that more composers can live from writing music?
- How might we strengthen the recruitment of composers in the future?

AUDIENCE AND VISIBILITY

- How might we communicate the good stories to a diverse audience?
- How might we expose and communicate the music in other artistic arenas?

ARTISTIC INITIATIVES

- How might we cooperate and exchange knowledge and ideas across music genres and art forms?
- How might we create platforms for artistic initiatives and occasions for people to meet?

CONNECTION & COOPERATION

Several music academies in the Nordic countries organize festivals at the academy, involving instrumental, and composition students as well as professionals and presenting music by the students.

Creating a network for sharing knowledge, exchanging projects, students, and ideas, as well as doing co-commissions and co-productions, could benefit the festivals, as well as create useful networks for students, academies, and professionals from the music sector across the Nordic region.

NETWORK FUNDING FOR CO-COMMISSIONS

Nudging actors in the Nordic region to do more co-commissions and co-productions could be done by

- ▶ making application criteria such as including distribution and marketing strategies in a project as a condition for applying for and receiving funding
- ▶ encouraging unlikely partnerships and including partners outside the Nordic region to create multiple performances of a project
- ▶ encouraging actors and supporting bodies to be more open to include and support artists and art from other countries than our own. Focusing on 'the North' should not create barriers for creating a diverse art sector and engaging a more diverse audience

FUNDING ACROSS GENRES

Funding bodies should offer more cross-disciplinary application possibilities. Encouraging works, projects, and collaborations engaging a broader group of artists with a broader background, creates new quality and more diversity, both in terms of artists involved and a variety of events relevant for different audiences.

USING EXISTING PLATFORMS AND CREATING NEW ONES

Existing networks, residencies, working communities etc. in the Nordic countries should be made more visible and accessible, in order for artists to find relevant opportunities in between existing structures, as well as initiate new platforms for exchange and distribution of works, ideas etc. A Nordic submissions database of works accessible for all artists to upload their works and get to know the works of others, could be a good idea.

EDUCATION

Academies should offer many more different entries to the composition department, as a way of attracting more qualified students with different backgrounds and approaches to creating music, and to support a more diverse concept of what it means to educate as a composer.

THINK BIGGER

New pieces should be performed 50-100 times. Promoters, ensembles, and festivals should address the value of performing pieces more than once. Also, composers should think of co-commissions in a new way i.e. by writing for music ensemble collaborations. If a collaboration involves ensembles from five different countries, the piece will at least be performed five times in five different countries.

INCLUDE THE AUDIENCE

Directors and promoters should include an audience in the programming committee and get her/him to ask questions to the planned programmes, in order to make the programme more relevant to different audiences.

MAKE IT PERSONAL

Festivals, promoters, and concert organizers should tell the feelings and the stories of the work - not the merits! - when they communicate their concerts to an audience.

A PRODUCING BODY / MEDIATOR OF THE FUTURE

We should develop a body that can mediate and produce a composer's ideas as work, and facilitate a dialogue between composers, publishers, and festivals on how to produce and communicate the works, in order to ensure optimal production conditions, environments and meaningful PR.

AN ARTISTIC AIRBNB

Artists could create an online platform for collaborating and exchanging ideas. Every artist should define the most important purposes of the idea / project and spread the word through personal networks. The platform could work as a pool and network of knowledge and competence to the benefit of freelance artists as well as promoters, festivals, and organizers.

DOCUMENTATION FOR RE-PERFORMANCES

Professional audio and video documentation of concerts is needed to generate more live performances of new pieces. (Initiatives could be carried out in collaboration with sound tech schools).

UNEXPECTED VENUES

Promoters should focus on bringing music into new spaces and places where people already are, rather than make them come to you.

SESSION I

AUDIENCE AND
VISIBILITY

Message from

SUSANNA EASTBURN

(CHIEF EXECUTIVE, SOUND & MUSIC, UK)

People working in the music sector and with composers should learn to listen better.

By becoming better listeners, we can

- 1) respond better
- 2) work more broadly within the sector
- 3) become more relevant and visible for a bigger audience.

SUGGESTIONS ON

HOW TO LISTEN TO THE AUDIENCE

- › Develop and motivate the audience together with the composers.
- › Trust the patience of the audience and their ability to listen.
- › Audience development work should be based on audience/market research and evidence-based knowledge.
- › Use hard evidence, such as Google analytics, much more.

SUGGESTIONS ON

HOW TO LISTEN TO COMPOSERS

- › Put composers first and partner organizations second, when listening
- › Start giving more resources into the hands of composers, and ask them what we could change to become more relevant and visible in more diverse arenas. An example: Sound and Music's Composer curator programme.
- › Give away control, give support, and be open.
 - 1) Composers have passion for and ideas to how music should be made and performed.
 - 2) Composers have ideas and strong opinions on how music should reach the audience.
- › Support and create the frame for other career paths than educational systems.
- › Audiences reflect themselves in the person standing on the stage. They will not consider the performance as relevant, if they cannot recognize themselves in the composer/performer. That is why it is also important to ensure diversity among composers.

Related ideas



UNEXPECTED VENUES



INCLUDE THE AUDIENCE



DOCUMENTATION OF RE-PERFORMANCE

Message from

DU YUN

(COMPOSER, PERFORMER AND
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, PAN ASIA FESTIVAL)

Context is crucial to how we see ourselves. When we talk about diversity, it is necessary to think about both context and content. Different perspectives from different contexts are necessary, as we need to have perspectives in order to see content.

Related ideas



MAKE IT PERSONAL

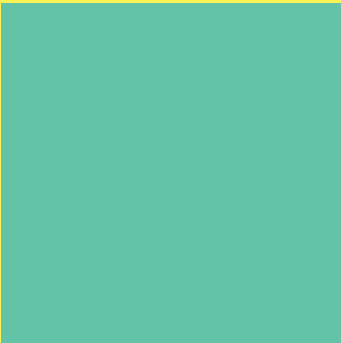


FUNDING ACROSS GENRES

SUGGESTIONS

Challenge the traditional ways things are done:

- ▶ Stop talking about export and import. The traditional way of seeing music export and import builds on the perception of national borders and should be renewed.
- ▶ Change the idea of funding commissions and cultivate the whole path of the composer rather than concentrate on individual works. We should be interested in people, not works, people, and their career paths.
 - Experiment with the form of commissioning i.e. by making it workshop based.
 - Move away from the idea of collaboration between countries towards collaboration between regions.
- ▶ Be open to the fact that new music is much more than how it is defined within a conservatory context.
- ▶ Ask what creates the notion of 'good'.
- ▶ Explore collaborations between festivals and tourism.
- ▶ Support ensemble-driven festivals.



SESSION II

ARTISTIC
INITIATIVES

Message from

HANNA HARTMAN

(COMPOSER)

Curiosity is the key to
innovation and expression:

- Be curious and you will find what you did not know you were looking for.
- Choose your own path and not the path everyone else is taking.

Related ideas



NETWORK FUNDING FOR CO-COMMISSIONS



A PRODUCING BODY/MEDIATOR OF THE FUTURE



ARTISTIC AIRBNB



EDUCATION

SUGGESTIONS

- › Create a better infrastructure i.e. in the form of a mediator between artists, promoters, and funding bodies. Shaping a career as a composer demands strategies and meetings with other people.
- › Develop plans for securing more performances i.e. by
 - connecting with musicians and conductors
 - engaging with the gate keepers
 - nudging the festivals to start prioritizing the second performance instead of only the first performance.
- › Change the educational structures so that the content of the educations corresponds to reality.
- › Be more open by welcoming and inviting artists from outside, and create a programme in the Nordic region similar to the DAAD in Berlin. That would strengthen the Nordic scene.
- › Create funding schemes for artists in a difficult situation.

SESSION III

ORGANISATIONAL INITIATIVES

Message from

CHRISTOS CARRAS

(GENERAL MANAGER, ONASSIS
CULTURAL CENTRE ATHENS)

The evolving context of today demands a different way of commissioning and collaborating. Being an artist and a composer in 2018 also means being adaptive, mobile, engaged, and innovative. An artist needs to act and take care of much more today in relation to their work, and therefore organisations need to support action and the possibilities of acting.

SUGGESTIONS

- › Support travel and exchange through match funding by bridging the gap in a touring budget
- › Create networks consisting of people with different backgrounds, as diversity is essential for building strong and useful networks.
- › Engage in Creative Europe programmes.
- › Get rid of genres.
- › Notion that funding for arts and culture rarely is about artistic quality alone but more often aims at achieving social utility.

Related ideas



FUNDING ACROSS GENRES



USING EXISTING PLATFORMS AND CREATING NEW ONES



CONNECTION AND CO-OPERATION

INTERNATIONAL INSPIRATION TO THE FUTURE

- ▶ Use the data available to acknowledge new information on your work and audience!
- ▶ Use a city's tourist tax to support the cultural scene in the city - as Spartenoffene Förderung (City tax) in Berlin.

www.berlin.de/sen/archiv/kultur-2011-2016/2016/pressemitteilung.537450.php

- ▶ Acknowledge the importance of transparency in your cultural scene and structure towards other nationalities by taking an international responsibility. Invite artists to your countries and develop a more diverse and tolerant music sector. Through the funding pool "Weltoffenes Berlin", Berlin supports artists being persecuted or on the run.

www.berlin.de/sen/kultur/foerderung/foerderprogramme/weltoffenes-berlin/

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**NORDISK
KULTURFOND**

