

Festival Production Management Training

Module III | Istanbul, Turkey | 7 - 9 November 2016

Speech by

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Opening Session of the Festival Production Management Training, Module III
07 November 2016, Istanbul, Turkey

Dear guests,
Dear partners,
Dear colleagues,

A special welcome to the presenters and to the participants at the Festival Production Management Training Module III here in Istanbul. I also welcome you in the name of Darko Brlek, President of The Festival Academy and the European Festivals Association and Artistic and General Director of the Ljubljana Festival and Kathrin Deventer, Secretary General of EFA, who regret they cannot be here today, and who has asked me to extend his words of welcome to you.

It is wonderful to see you all here since we set up this pilot edition in January in Antwerp in collaboration with deSingel International Arts Campus. From the 22 production managers from 15 countries who participated in Module I in Antwerp, we have here with us today 8 of you who have finalised Module II and have done a placement in a festival somewhere in the world: Edinburgh International Festival, Istanbul Music Festival, Hebbeltheater Berlin, Forde traditional world music festival, Holland Festival, Izmir European Jazz Festival and the Israel Festival. As you know the programme has been set up in a flexible way and participation in the different Modules can be spread throughout the year. Your colleagues from Antwerp are taking part in placements in 2017 or even in 2018.

We are very curious to hear from your experiences in the next hours and days, and how your work has developed since January. As you know this programme is very much based on sharing your experiences so please make us from this possibility to learn from each other and from the expert leaders who are here with us today.

We are delighted to find with us again Roy Luxford from the Edinburgh International Festival (UK), Jerry Aerts from deSingel International Art Campus (Belgium), Annet Lekkerkerker from Holland Festival (The Netherlands) and of course Yesim Gurer and her team from the Istanbul Music Festival who will guide you through the sessions under the coordination of Hugo De Greef. They are all

staying with us for the whole period, so there are many moments you can address them also informally during break, visits and dinners. Please make the most of it!

You are part of the first pilot edition of this training programme which will now conclude here in Istanbul. Remember that this is also still an experiment for us. You have the opportunity to define this training together with us and to steer us towards your needs and expectations so please if you have any comments, feedback, thoughts, share them with us.

As you know as well from the first module the term *production manager* is not easy to define and is understood differently in different corners of the world. The work is very personal and strongly linked to the festival's tradition and teams. Therefore, when we use the title *production manager* in this training programme we know the meaning can be very different from festival to festival, from continent to continent, country to country and even from person to person.

In Antwerp we tried to define together with you the role of a production manager. We found out that you are 'enablers', 'facilitators' or 'fixers'. And that it is sometimes about 'unlocking the artistic director' and about 'asserting your responsibilities'. And we talked about the enormous diversity of your work. We are looking forward to further define the role of the production manager with you in this final module.

We thank the Istanbul Music Festival to host this edition and to welcome us in the beautiful city Istanbul, which you will discover in the next days. We will visit several cultural venues thanks to the great preparation of the festival. Turkey is as we know going through a difficult period. Therefore it is even more relevant to be here today to make global alliances and to meet with the people working here in the cultural scene to hear from them how they face the day-to-day challenges. We hope this will be a relevant experience as well for the local scene and we wish to give our support to all those who continue working in the arts and fighting for essential rights as freedom of speech, freedom of mobility and against the xenophobia and polarisation our society is being confronted with today. And to find other ways to deal with the challenges the world is facing today. Wednesday we will all be directing our eyes to the US to see who will become the president of one of the most important nations of the world. The world might look slightly different after that day.

Together with the Istanbul music festival, we have prepared an inspiring programme during which you will also meet of course the team of the festival. We are looking forward to the next days of in-depth exchanges on festivals, on production management but also on the essence of what you are all doing – working with art and artists. One of the benefits at the heart of the Production Managers programme is the contact with colleagues and the opportunity to learn from each other's experiences. Therefore we have also included an open session with Turkish production managers to allow for more in-depth exchanges with the local art scene.

The Festival Production Management Training is the third programme The Festival Academy and the European Festival Association are running apart from the Festival Readings and the Atelier for Young Festival Managers. We welcome you also as part of the Alumni network. You will be the first group starting this network of production managers. And you will also join the alumni of the past Ateliers for Young Festival Managers which with you and 10 Ateliers now counts 400 festival managers from more than 60 countries and all continents and some 40 mentors amongst its members.

In the meantime we are already preparing the next edition of this training. The first module will again take place in Antwerp in January 2017 in a continued collaboration with deSingel International Art Campus. We will of course make use of this final Module and your feedback as well to shape and improve the future editions.

I am very much looking forward to the coming days with you, together with The Festival Academy team, Hugo De Greef, Laure Verbruggen, Yesim Gurer and Ayse Emek and other members of the Istanbul Music Festival team. Lastly, many thanks to the partners of the project and their support, with a special thanks to the Creative Europe programme of the European Commission for their generous support and deSingel for being so courageous to launch this programme with us. We also thank Institut Français and Sociaal Fonds Podiumkunsten for their contribution and finally Bomontiada to host us in their venue.



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