



CHOREOSOUND'S CULTURAL CONTRIBUTION – LISTEN TO THE WORLD! AND THE CO-PRODUCERS' PERSPECTIVE

by Anne-Charlotte Horgby

As part of the music festival Listen to the World! ISCM World New Music Days, Choreosound 09 inspired new artistic collaboration projects. At present, the Arts and Cultural Development Department is taking a closer look at the what opportunities the festival generated for the our region, and it's clear that it has strengthened the foundation for joint efforts in the Arts.

One of the major cultural events of last year was the music festival **Listen to the World! ISCM World New Music Days 2009**, from September 24 through October 4. The festival was part of a nation-wide effort, where Region Västra Götaland and Kultur i väst played a key role in funding and organising the festival events from the Västra Götaland region.

According to Maria Stålhammar, Nils Wiklander and Sarah Melin at Arts and Cultural Development/ Kultur i Väst, the western Swedish cultural scene can expect a wave of new, inspiring artistic encounters. As planners and implementers of the festival, they are evaluating the outcome. They can see that the festival established a considerable networking potential that should lead to many new dance and music collaborations.

“A new phase has now begun, where we all can assess the opportunities for further development. We have made a decisive move towards a larger context, to see what we should aim for in the future,” Maria Stålhammar, Communications Officer for the Listen to the World!/ISCM-festival explains.

Choreosound 09 was one of more than a hundred festival activities at Listen to the World! Composers from 48 countries were present, creating a diversity that was enhanced by Choreosound's international choreographers. The festival opened the door to exciting encounters between today's sound artists and choreographers – which was one of the reasons why Arts and Cultural Development entered the project as partial funder and partner in the Choreosound project, and included it in the festival programme. Another aspect was that joint efforts between dancers and contemporary art music had become less frequent in later years; yet another good reason to support this venture.

Sarah Melin, Co-ordinator at the Dance Office, also points out that Choreosound had an ambition that corresponds well with the overall activities of Arts and Cultural Development. “Arts and Cultural Development acts to strengthen the qualifications of the culture scene in our region, and inspiration from other parts of the world is one of its tools. The Dance Office focuses a great deal on strengthening the regional dance sector and creating new international networks. In this respect as well, the project suited us well. It's positive that Choreosound sent a message of openness and

accessibility by testing their material in a Public Demo and allowing for inspirational evenings in the first stages of the project.”

In the words of Maria Stålhammar, and seconded by Nils Wiklander, artistic manager of the Listen to the World!/ISCM festival: “Choreosound added strength to the festival by presenting a project that included a variety of art forms.”

“Choreosound is a great example of a project that opened the door to new players and partners, creating new interfaces in the contemporary art music context that the festival provided. Even if all analyses are far from finished, we can tell that there are extremely positive prospects for artistic spin-offs.”

One important objective of this assessment of the Listen to the World! Festival, is to learn from the experience that has been gained and make a map of the needs of cultural agents and organisers with a view to future projects. Arts and Development regards Choreosound as one of the projects that has already shown positive spin-off effects. The Dance Office has received new applications for stimulus grants from dancers inspired by the methods used during Choreosound’s artistic lab week.

The Dance Office regularly distributes stimulus grants to artists presenting interesting ideas. In addition to stimulus grants, the Dance Office acts as partner in a small number of projects every year, providing some funding and participating in a reference group.

To be viable, projects must be in line with the activity goals set for Arts and Cultural Development/Kultur i Väst, which are Region Västra Götaland’s cultural policy goals.

“We hope that new projects will lead to fruitful collaborations like the one we had with the Crowd Company and



Marika Hedemyr for Choresound. In that case, we are prepared to provide funding and planning,” Sarah Melin concludes.

Maria Stålhammar also underlines the importance of being open to follow up and to making the most of new initiatives.

“I think that only a few of all the total spin-off effects of Listen to the World! have come to light. We will see many more in the future, and hopefully for a long time. We also hope that our joint efforts will inspire people, and display the wealth that is an inherent part of the cultural scene, as well as bring about a discussion that addresses problem areas. This is a long-term effort targeted to provide effects over a ten-year period.”

Anne-Charlotte Horgby, APRIL 2010
*On behalf of the Arts and Cultural Development
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