



PRESS RELEASE

Championing Catalan Creativity and Promoting Artists Abroad: Main Focus of the 19th Fira Mediterrània

35% increase in numbers of international professionals attending Fira's artistic activities

66% of the programme now devoted to free shows, with Taverna Estrella Damm established as a focal point of Fira

84% of tickets sold for paid shows, and connection promoted between artists through joint creativity initiatives

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Manresa, 9 October 2016 - This evening, Fira Mediterrània Manresa brings its nineteenth year to a close. Since last Thursday, the Bages capital city has been transformed into the heart of popular culture, with a four-day cultural fair comprising more than 300 activities, based on tradition, dialogue, innovation and participation.

Music and performing arts from Catalonia, the Valencia region and the Balearic Islands have been the focus of Fira 2016, while a number of great international artists have also performed at the event, including **FRIKAR Dance Company**, **Baloji**, **Bachar Mar-Khalifé**, **Fanfare Ciocarlia** and **Rozalén**, with sell-out shows that met with an enthusiastic reception. A total number of 1,137 professionals attended the event.

The number of international professionals rises by 35%

Each year, the Business Area, located in Manresa Technical Museum, becomes more established as a **key hub** for business and networking in Catalonia and a must-visit location in the autumn for cultural professionals. The venue and its activities have attracted a high number of professionals, who have taken full advantage of the

business area and the services it offers.

This year **1,137 professionals** were registered at Fira Mediterrània, and professional activities were divided into four main areas: **knowledge; new performing arts projects, international reach; and innovation**. As a result of accumulated initiatives that have come about through the International and National Plan of Action, this year Fira has seen a **35% increase in the number of international attendees**, with **180 accredited professionals** compared with last year's 133. A total number of **612 attending organisations** have come to the event, 3% more than 2015.

Fira Mediterrània's organising team is particularly pleased with the high volume of business-related activities that have taken place in the Fira Business Area. All activities were well received by attending professionals: **191 professionals registered at the professional conference; speed dating sessions soared** (up to 336 sessions this year), while presentations of new performing arts projects on 7 October and shows from Europe on 8 October were hugely popular.

The third **Wine & Fest Forum**, International Congress of World and Folk Music, was also successful, with representatives from **46 festivals and 32 countries**. The event was officially opened by the Counsellor of Culture from the Generalitat of Catalonia, Santi Vila, and the Mayor of Manresa, Valentí Junyent. The Congress was devoted to musical initiatives in support of refugees and artistic export strategies.

More free shows

Following on from the trend of recent years, Fira has continued promoting the use of public space and street performance, and **free shows have increased to account for 66% of the overall line-up**. This increase in comparison with last year's event (6%) is mostly due to the free entry policy at Taverna Estrella Damm, which has become the focal point of Fira. The event has put on fewer paid shows this year (12,304 tickets - a decrease of 10%), although **high attendance** was registered (84%), as well as a significant increase in advance ticket sales, resulting in **17 performances selling out**.

Focus on collective creativity with notable results

Collective creativity has been Fira's leitmotif this year, coinciding with one of the event's main cornerstones: popular culture from a contemporary perspective, bringing tradition, innovation and participation into play. The initiative that best reflects this principle was ***Cadàver Exquisit***, an artistic game based on a process of joint creativity, with the artists David Carabén, Mercè Sampietro, Cabo San Roque and Toni Mira.

But *Cadàver Exquisit* is only the tip of the iceberg for a great number of productions at Fira based on joint participation and the reinvention of the artist-booking agent-audience relationship. In this vein, outstanding projects that champion joint and community-based participation included **Marc Buixaderas, Orquestra Integrada, Taiat Dansa**, which all demonstrated the transformational power of culture.

At the same time, Fira has promoted collective creativity by launching a series of joint

challenges to multiple artists, producing interesting results. Examples of this were seen in the work of **Kepa Junkera & Chango Spasiuk**, **Carles Belda & Carles Sanjosé**, **Chicuelo & Marco Mezquida**, **FRIKAR dance company & Raynald Colom**, **ASPENCAT with Camerata Bacasis** and **Spontus & Manu Sabaté**.

Artistic success highlights the current fertile climate for artists in Catalonia, the Valencia region and the Balearic Islands

Many of the best received performances this year were given by **artists from Catalonia, the Valencia region and the Balearic Islands**, which demonstrates that Catalan-speaking countries are becoming established as a growing and increasingly inter-connected cultural market. The fertile soil of the Catalan scene has been attested by performances from **Mayte Martín**, **Produccions de Ferro (*Peccatum*)**, **Coetus amb Carles Dénia**, **Rosalía & Raül**, **Chicuelo & Marco Mezquida**, **Joana Gomila**, **ASPENCAT**, **Guillem Albà & Clara Peya i Tombs Creatius (*Xics del Xurrac*)**, as well as others.

Participation by local residents

Fira has benefited from different types of citizenship participation, the result of a close working relationship with organisations and individuals in the city of Manresa. The Valencian company **Taiat Dansa**, with its show *Dance Generation* and motto 'dancing is a social right' has rolled out a tailor made project from scratch, with a group of 12 volunteers from Manresa, spanning different generations. The ***Cadàver Exquisit*** project involved 10 pensioners, 50 children and 13 *Geganters* and *Nans* from Manresa. The programme also included performances by the **Esbart Manresà de Dansaires**; the **Tirallongues de Manresa**, with a demonstration of human towers; the showcase organised by the **Federació de Grups Amateurs de Teatre de la Catalunya Central**, and a performance by **Camerata Bacasis** with ASPENCAT.

Fira's connections with Manresa are wide-reaching and include the city's business community through **Club Mecenes**, a sponsorship enterprise launched in 2015, with 12 companies from the local region. Also of noteworthy mention are the ongoing partnerships with different cultural agents in the city, such as Teatre Kursaal, el Galliner, Cases de la Música i d'Arrel, and others. At the same time, Fira is an **economic driver of Manresa** and the Bages region, with an impact of around 3 million euros, as estimated by FUB (2015). Throughout Fira, Manresa and its local surroundings have seen all hotel accommodation fully booked.

Facts and figures of the 19th Fira Mediterrània Manresa

Total number of activities: **301**

Artistic activities: **182**

Professional activities: **74**

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Total number of professionals: **1.137** (compared with 1,115 in 2015. An increase of 2%)

Catalans: **825** (72.6%)

Rest of Spain: **132** (11.6%)

International: **180** (15.8%)

Professional organisations: **612**

Tickets: **9.615**

Ticket consumption: **84%**

Free shows: **66%**

Sold-out activities and performances: **17**

Professional passes: **191**

Passes for the professional display of performing arts: **63**

Speed dating sessions: **336**

Stands in the Fira Business Area: **45**

Stalls in Fira Passeig: **86**

Schools at FiraEscoles: **16**

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