



20 Fira Mediterrània de Manresa
Cultura popular & Músiques del món
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PRESS RELEASE

Future, Heritage, Innovation and Mediterranean Identity - 20 years of Fira Mediterrània Manresa

Fira presents a programme based on the four cornerstones that define its twenty years of history: future, heritage, innovation and Mediterranean identity

The opening act, featuring the artists Maria Arnal & Marcel Bagés, Judit Neddermann and Joana Gomila, among others, looks towards the future, with performances from the up-and-coming young folk musician scene

El llibre Vermell de Montserrat features in Fira Mediterrània's line-up, at l'Abadia de Montserrat, for the first time ever

The 20th Fira Mediterrània will close with the burning of a large-scale *falla* (papier-mâché figure), entitled *Mar de Foc*, a joint work by the visual artist Txema Rico and Sergi Ots

Maika Makovski, Mazoni & Istanbul Street Ensemble, and Roberto Olivan present projects based on artistic exploration in the Mediterranean

Three outstanding female vocalists, Mísia, Rocío Márquez and Amparo Sánchez, perform new projects

Focus Occitània offers a showcase of the rich intangible heritage of Occitania, featuring polyphony, mythological festival creatures and traditional games

To coincide with the programme preview, tickets for some of the most outstanding performances can be purchased from today

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Manresa, 12 June 2017 · The **20th Fira Mediterrània Manresa** will take place from **5 to 8 October**. For another year running, Manresa will become a nerve centre of traditional folk culture and world music for four days. The 20th anniversary of Fira Mediterrània champions four cornerstones that have defined the event since its start - **future, heritage, innovation and Mediterranean identity**. Fira will present a unique artistic line-up and project, based on these foundations.

20 YEARS OF FIRA MEDITERRÀNIA

Fira Mediterrània Manresa was founded twenty years ago within a context of resistance to traditional folk culture. The opposition arose from a lack of conviction that traditional folk culture could be revitalised to become creative, contemporary and modern. Twenty years later, Fira Mediterrània has become the **capital of traditional and folk culture**

and a driving force for improvement and qualitative growth in traditional culture. During this time, Fira has become a forerunner of generating **avant-garde** projects that celebrate local connection, participation and integration, and proposals that promote **social inclusion**. Fira has promoted initiatives based on traditional culture fuelled by a **strong contemporary outlook**. At the same time, Fira has become a showcase that **publicises Mediterranean culture worldwide**.

Future | SABA! Young folk musicians

Fira Mediterrània launches its **message for the future by throwing the spotlight on young people** to reveal the importance of a — so far — little known scene. There is a generation of young musicians in Catalan-speaking countries focused on the importance of finding their own vocal sound and using tradition as a powerful source of creativity. They are transforming folk music by combining innovation and tradition from different perspectives.

To launch the 20th anniversary event, Fira Mediterrània highlights this trend by bringing some of the most acclaimed names of this generation to the stage. These include: the outstanding duo of 2016, **Maria Arnal & Marcel Bagès**; the vocalists, **Judit Neddermann** and **Joana Gomila**; the *gralle* and accordion duo, **Criatures** (winners of the Mediterranean Sons Competition 2016); the multi-instrumentalist and composer **Manu Sabaté**; the guitarist **Pau Figueres**; the folk group, **Riu**; the Valencia singer-songwriter, **Xavier de Bétera**; and the big band, **Rufaca Folk Jazz Orquestra - Escola Folk del Pirineu**, with Pyrenean music specialists and some of the best young jazz musicians in Spain. The unrepeatabe concert will consist of never-before-seen collaborations, which bring around forty musicians to the stage.

Heritage | El Llibre Vermell de Montserrat

Fira's commitment to reclaim and update national artistic and cultural heritage has always been a driving force throughout its existence. Two recent examples are: the closing event of Fira 2015, with the first Catalan *zarzuela*, *La Viola d'Or*, by the composer Enric Morera; and more recently, from last year's Fira, a lyrical comedy by Joaquim Serra, *Tempesta Esvaïda*. This year, for the first time ever, Fira's programme will include a performance of ***El llibre Vermell de Montserrat*** at l'Abadia de Montserrat, an ideal location for this innovative adaptation, by the ensemble **Magister Petrus**, the **Esbart Dansaire de Rubí** and the **Cor de Cambra Francesc Valls**. Based on a 1399 manuscript, the production highlights one of the late Pare Gregori Estrada's discoveries - the manuscript's connection with traditional culture and the textual reference to dances intended for pilgrims. The production follows on from the work of figures like Albert Sans, Fabià Puigserver and Pare Ireneu Segarra in previous decades.

Innovation | A Vore

Fusing avant-garde trends and traditional art forms is one of Fira Mediterrània's core features. In 2015, one proposal that piqued people's curiosity the most in this sense was **A vore**, a creation laboratory that mixed contemporary improvisation artists with traditional artists, with the goal of exposing them to the *jota* from the Ebro region. Two years later, this **ground-breaking and exploratory project** returns to Fira, now a finished production, the result of a co-production process by Mercat de les Flors and l'Auditori Barcelona. Directed by the choreographer Sònia Gómez and the visual artist Ramón Balaguer, the adventurous performance also features an innovative jazz band, Astrio, the musician, Pau Puig, and the dancer, Carme Balaguer.

Mediterranean Identity | Mar de Foc

The Mediterranean Sea is the **framework of reference** that underpins the overall project of Fira. The artistic, traditional, social and human landscape of the

Mediterranean has shaped the event's identity over time. To underline its significance, Fira will close its 20th year with a performance based on a community project, which focuses its gaze on the successive humanitarian crises that have been taking place for too many years across the Mediterranean Sea and coastline.

The project consists of burning a **large-scale falla** (papier-mâché festival figure), in the shape of a paper boat, in Manresa's Plaça Major. The visual artist, Txema Rico, will construct the *falla* with the help of more than 200 children from the area, who will participate in workshops to build this short-lived construction in l'Anònima building. The evening of Sunday 8 October, Fira's last day, the *falla* will be taken to the Plaça Major, where it will be burned in a symbolic act, entitled **Mar de Foc** (Sea of Fire). The act will include an artistic accompaniment by the stage director Sergi Ots.

PROGRAMME PREVIEW

Great artists explore traditional folk culture

Besides these activities, other noteworthy highlights of Fira's 20th programme include three prestigious artists who have undertaken an artistic exploration of traditional folk culture, promoted by Fira Mediterrània, who present their projects at Fira.

One of these artists is **Maika Makovski**, a multi-talented singer-songwriter, who won the most recent Teresa Rebull award for musical production of traditional and folk culture with *CarMenKa*. In this project, Makovski explores her origins by following the musical trail of her grandmothers, Grandma Menka from Macedonia and Grandma Carmen from Andalusia. Makovski takes the audience on a musical journey, with the help of an international ensemble of traditional musicians from different locations across the Mediterranean.

Fira will also host a concert by **Mazoni & Istanbul Street Ensemble**, the result of an exploratory journey to Turkey by Jaume Pla, the lead singer of Catalan-band Mazoni. Last January, Televisió de Catalunya broadcast "Per primer cop", a documentary about one of Mazoni's songs in which several musicians in Istanbul were given free rein to interpret the song. Based on this experience, representatives from Fira Mediterrània, in collaboration with organisers from festivals including Festival Connexions, l'Institut Ramon Llull and l'Auditori de Girona, have organised an exciting return journey in which Turkish musicians travel to Catalonia to interpret a full concert of Mazoni songs.

The third artist to search for his roots, prompted by Fira, is the prestigious Terres de l'Ebre-based choreographer **Roberto Olivan**. What would be the outcome of fusing movement, electronic music and traditional polyphony? They are three powerful elements in themselves, which have probably never been put together before. Olivan himself will reveal the outcome, together with the Belgian electronic artist **Laurent Laforge** and a trio of Occitan vocalists, Cocanha, who all took part in a creation laboratory, which was co-produced with Mercat de Les Flores.

Music

The 20th Fira line-up features three renowned female vocalists, who are widely acclaimed in their respective fields. Firstly, the Portuguese singer **Mísia**, who performs in Manresa for the first time, will present her tribute to the legendary *fado* singer Amália Rodrigues, in *Para Amália*. Secondly, **Rocío Márquez**, one of the best-known contemporary Flamenco singers will undertake the challenge of uniting Flamenco and Baroque music alongside one of the most prestigious viol players, Fahmi Alqhai, in *Diálogos de viejos y nuevos sonos*. Lastly, **Amparo Sánchez**, will bring upbeat and festive tempos to audiences with her powerful group of musicians to mark the 20th anniversary of the release of *El poder de Machín* by **Amparanoia**, an album that

spearheaded *musica meztiza* (a musical style that incorporates elements of rap, flamenco, Afro-Cuban music, samba and cumbia).

Performing arts

There will be an abundance of circus, dance and theatre at this unforgettable Fira, featuring auditorium and street-based performances. Two productions that connect audiences with modern Arabic creative arts are: ***Halka***, a splendourous example of Moroccan cultural heritage, by the **Groupe Acrobatique de Tanger**, a young ensemble of Moroccan acrobats trained in traditional acrobatics but also interested in contemporary acrobatics; and ***Displacement***, by the Syrian choreographer **Mithkal Alzghair**, accompanied by two dancers, in a traditional dance performance that reflects the transformation of the artist's town through war and migration.

Street performances at Fira include: ***Sodade***, a poetic production by the French company **Cirque Rouages**, in which an old man next to the sea delves into his memories on a never-ending tightrope, in a mix of music, poetry, mechanical theatre tightrope walking; and ***EgurRa***, a tribute to traditional dance from different locations, based on the Catalan *ball de bastons* and the Basque *txalaparta*, which are championed as key elements of contemporary dance. Directed by the circus artist Oriol Escursell, the project won the most recent Delfí Colomer award, sponsored by Sismògraf, EsDansa and other organisations. On the street, hidden beneath their shells, **Toti Toronell and Pere Hosta** come together as **Slowolou**, where they turn into snail-people and defend life at a snail's pace in contrast with the dizzying pace of society, in a production that is still under creation. Another clown, **Marcel Tomàs**, has chosen Manresa for **Cascaï Teatre** to make the leap from the auditorium to the street with an awe-inspiring production, for the first time ever.

Xarxa Alcover

For the second year running, Fira's programme features the "Off" line-up by Xarxa Alcover, a Catalan theatre network that represents the Balearic Islands, Catalonia, Andorra, La Franja and the Valencia region. This year, it consists of two children's productions: ***Hanna dels tres països***, by **Iguana Teatre**, featuring three women from different places who have all fled their homelands; and ***Renard o el llibre de les bèsties***, a free interpretation of Ramon Llull's classic, by **Teatre Obligatori**.

As part of the Xarxa Alcover line-up for adult audiences, Fira will host: **Maduixa Teatre's *Mulier***, one of the most acclaimed shows in Spain in recent years that received a Max award some time ago for best street theatre production and best musical composition for performing arts; and **Meriyanes Produccions' *Ventura***, which probes the randomness, destiny and everyday experience of two women, portrayed with empathy.

Tradition, participation and territory

As usual, Fira explores the potential of traditional and folk culture as a means of boosting participation, encouraging community work and forming connections with the territory. It does so by including in its programme an extensive representation of collective associations that work to modernise intangible Catalan heritage on a daily basis. This year, through participating in the Euro-regional project "Popular Cultures in Dialogue", **Focus Occitània** will present a showcase of the rich intangible heritage of this cultural and geographical area, based on three core elements: polyphony, mythological festival creatures and traditional games. The last aspect, traditional games, will once again enjoy a privileged position in Manresa's Plaça Major, to show how traditional games promote participation and the socialisation of culture. Fira's programme also features **Quatre per Quatre**, an amateur theatre group from Granollers, which brings their adaptation of Santiago Rusiñol's classic ***L'auca del***

senyor Esteve to the stage, to celebrate one hundred years since it was first published, in an initiative spearheaded by the Xarxa de Teatres d'Ateneus de Catalunya.

Fira's preliminary launch

Fira Mediterrània's preliminary launch act will take place some days before the official launch on 5 October, and a day of events is scheduled for **22 September** as an "appetiser". Accordingly, Manresa residents will be able to enjoy a **preliminary programme of activities**, which will include the launch of an exhibition entitled "**L'envelat**", to mark the Bicentenary of the Gràcia Festa Major, involving the Generalitat [Government of Catalonia] Ministry of Culture. The exhibition will remain open until the end of Fira, in the Plana de l'Om Exhibition rooms. At the same time, **Circ Pànic** will bring a preview of **MiraT** to Plaça Sant Domènec, which will subsequently feature in Fira's official programme. However, the star act of the day is **Bella Ciao**, a production that marked a turning point for Italian folk music more than fifty years ago, featuring great artists like **Ricardo Tesi**, **Lucilla Galeazzi** and **Ellena Ledda**. On this occasion, the show will feature guest performances by **Jaume Arnella** and **Carles Belda**, Catalan artists from different generations who share the civic and libertarian values of the Italian greats who shaped this cultural phenomenon. The concert has been made possible due to an initiative by the Manresa-based organisations D'Arrel, El Galliner and Manresa d'Equipaments Escènics, and the participation of the Centre Artesà Tradicionàrius.

TICKET SALES

The presentation of the programme preview marks the start of ticket sales for some of Fira's most outstanding performances. On 4 July, when tickets for the rest of Fira's performances go on sale, Fira will put on an event at the ticket office in Teatre Kursaal Manresa. Tickets can be purchased on Fira's website (www.firamediterrania.cat) and at the Kursaal ticket office.

PRESS OFFICE

20th Fira Mediterrània Manresa

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