

Dov Lenz:

Speech during the EMC/IMC Israel conference "Music on troubled Soils" in Jerusalem, 26 October 2008

My name is Dubi Lenz, and I work for almost 40 years in I.D.F. national radio in Israel, mainly as a musical editor and broadcaster, beside it I am an artistic director to World Music and Jazz festivals, and a journalist writing about music, tourism and... cuisine. I deal with all kinds of music but my "baby" is World Music, a term that all the people dealing with it hate it (maybe a better name could be MUSIC OF THE WORLD or WORLD BEATS).

What is the definition of World Music? God knows. To my first edition of "Hearing the World" festival (1998) I invited the singer Marisa Monte from Brazil. When she saw that this festival is dedicated to World Music she laughed loudly – "But MY music is not World Music – YOURS is. That gives you a hint what could the definition be. It's always the music of the other.

For me World Music is music of meetings – 1. Traditions, instruments, rhythms, cultures are meeting together to make a new blend of music. 2. The listener is meeting a musical culture he didn't know before. 3. Genres of music are meeting to create a new sound. It's all about encounters, collaboration, speaking together in the common language of the whole world, understandable by all citizens of the globe – MUSIC. Some journalist once described me as a "man with a child in his eyes" – although I'm passed my 60's birthday I feel really "childish" in my hopes, aims, dreams. I believe (in a very, very naïve way) in an utopic future that culture in general, especially music, can build bridges among people, religions, believes, colors, friends and foes. If you'll put 5 politicians from different countries in a closed room for couple of hours, opening the door you'll find peaces of flesh, clothes, and a lot of blood. If you'll put 5 musicians in this room, opening the door you'll find a new creation, new sounds and rhythms, something fresh and intriguing - a message of piece!!!

I always claim that in all the conventions and conferences dedicated to culture, (like the FORUM CULTURAL MUNDIAL) if the organizers will invite instead of so many speakers that send to the air hours after hours tons of words, words, words, (till they are so tired to go to listen at night to some "culture") some musicians from all over the world, putting them together to communicate in the international common language of music, doing at night a the result concert of their "talks" – the contribution to culture in the world would be much higher than all those words "grinding water". I was very happy to find out that 2 idealistic young people from Budapest did exactly this by creating CREMM - Common Routes of Euro-Mediterranean Music (www.cremm.com) – they invited musicians from Israel, Jordan, Italy, Poland and Hungary to stay for a week in Budapest – 4 days were dedicated to the work in the new bands they created (it wasn't allowed to have 2 musicians form the same country in the same band), and in the last 3 days of the weekend there was a wonderful festival of all those new bands. My dream was fulfilled by others.

Another organization that started very "BIG" in 2004 (and than vanished) is WCO – World Culture Open. (www.worldcultureopen.org). in the festival they did In New York, Seoul and planned to do as well in Pyongyang their aim was to put together cultures from all over the world, to compete and to collaborate together, bringing a message of peace to the Koreas. There are some signs that the activity of WCO will be renewed.

And, of course, CHAPEAUX to the Mediterranean festival of SETE SOIS, SETE LUAS doing the beautiful work of the common language called music.

As a little man sitting in the radio and as an artistic director of festivals I try to bring together musicians from all over the world to work together, especially Israelis and Palestinians (which is getting more and more difficult to do). One example is the first broadcasting of the song BELIBI – In My Heart – by the Israeli David Broza and the Palestinian group Sabreen. This is a song about hope, love and peace, performed by the authors and by 2 children choirs – one Israeli and one from Palestine. At 10:05 on a Sunday morning the lines were opened between my station (I.D.F. radio) and the Palestinian radio in Gaza, me and the Palestinian presenter spoke about the song and about our dream of peace, and on the same second we started to play this song. No, this act didn't bring the peace, but who knows, maybe it was a tiny path towards a better, more understandable future. (You can watch the clip of the song on youtube <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C0sdCksStfQ>).

If you want to listen to my weekly World Music radio show you are most invited to do it through the internet. Every Friday between 20:05 and 22:00 (Israeli local time) on my station's site glz.co.il. Press on the first microphone under the only word in English on the site – online – (the entire site is in Hebrew) – and you'll hear it LIVE. From the Sunday after till the next one you could listen to it on http://glz.msn.co.il/pop_video.aspx?newsid=144.

You are most invited to listen and to enjoy, and don't forget my message – through music we can walk towards a better world. I CAN DREAM – CAN'T I?