

MOERS, March 8th 2017



Musical Discoveries from Diverse Cultures

Tim Isfort Talks about the New moers festival After 100 Days in Office

On December 1st of last year, new artistic director of moers festival Tim Isfort began his work along with his (nearly) new team. Isfort is still on the road in Congo for festival programming purposes until the weekend, but in this (long-distance) chat with the festival office, he took a moment to look back at his first weeks on the job:

Mr. Isfort, as of today (Friday, March 10th) you have been in office as artistic director of moers festival for exactly 100 days. Do you regret having taken this step?

Absolutely not! It's a fantastic challenge, demanding, with a ton of surprises and it feels like it's only been 50 days right now. I always knew that this wasn't going to be a casual stroll through the city park in Moers though.

There are less than four weeks left till the announcement of the complete festival program on April 6th and just about three months till the kick-off of the festival on June 2nd. Do you nevertheless have a good feeling that everything that you set your sights on for the content of your first edition of the festival is going to work out?

Nothing ever totally works out the way you imagine it. But now, at just about the half-way mark between taking up the reins in December 2016 and our first festival, really beautiful things are taking shape, which we can hopefully announce on April 6th. Of course it's a shame when the one or other artist that we wanted so deeply to invite ends up drifting past us just out of reach – but the next time around we'll also have more time for the docking manoeuvre.

In your first statements, you emphasised repeatedly that you want to bring moers festival closer to the downtown area again. How concrete are these plans and are you on the right track in that regard?

I think it's really important that residents of Moers also be able to experience more of the festival flair again. We would like to liven up the short stretch that runs through the park between the festival hall and the downtown area with multi-faceted and intelligent installations and actions and invite people to participate. There are going to be new performance venues downtown – all of that takes a lot of energy and includes a lot of real efforts to persuade people. Sometimes I have the feeling that it is easier to

assemble the internationally respected main program than it is to win back trust that has obviously been lost. We Moersers are apparently reserved at first when it comes to that... but I have the feeling that there is also a chance for a fresh start. Well, in any case I am very excited to see how it develops.

You are set to return this weekend from Congo and you were in Myanmar in late January and early February. Are we going to be able to hear music from both Central Africa and Southeast Asia at this year's festival?

We are most definitely going to experience artists from various continents, we're going to hear music and discover unexpected things from diverse cultures. We're going to try to avoid clichés in the process. For me things start to get really interesting when new constellations occur, unexpected encounters between genres and styles. That's Moers for me.

So far you have been announcing the names of the performing bands and artists in "slices". Can you reveal any new ones today?

No way! That's it for the salami strategy! Well, OK: We have invited a hypnotic saxophone quartet: Battle Trance. Alas, anyone who thinks they are going to get uncut jazz here is sadly mistaken. And while we're on the subject of trance, we can also talk about dub: Dub Trio alternates so quickly between styles and sounds that in the end we're going to have to debate once again about the meaning of the term jazz here in Moers...

INFO BOX:

Band info for "Battle Trance" and "Dub Trio":

Battle Trance is composed of four tenor saxophonists from Brooklyn, New York, who seek to transcend the boundary between instrument and body/breath. True to their name, in doing so they put their listeners into a trance with the gently pulsing waves of repetitive patterns that combine to form subtly layered sonic textures. Founded in 2012 and under the direction of Travis Laplante, the quartet works with contrasts. At times, the four saxophones buzz ominously like an angry swarm of wasps, at times they shimmer like nervously trembling leaves caught in a stormy spring wind – while still other moments feature the mechanical precision of an insane noise machine running at full steam.

Dub Trio, also hailing from Brooklyn, are hard, fast and rough. Dub is approached matter-of-factly as a true art form here, in a musical homage to the roots of the genre as exemplified by King Tubby, shot through with and ruptured by elements of electronica, rock, punk and metal. With the help of effects pedals, synthesizers and samplers, D.P. Holmes (guitar, keyboards), Stu Brooks (bass, keyboards) and Joe Tomino (drums, melodica) reproduce live on stage the material that they have previously painstakingly assembled in the studio. A warped dub/rock crossover featuring surprising breaks lopes along into spherical sections that give way to minimalistic reggae grooves, before building via fat half-time rock beats into noisy, heavy, aggressive energy music.

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