

TROMP 2008

Final Report – Executive Summary

TROMP 2008 once again showed strong growth and improvement. The 19th edition of the Tromp International Music Competition and Festival, calendar years 2007-2008, represented a major step forward towards what TROMP aims to be: a leading international music competition for true top talent under 30 years of age in TROMP's chosen disciplines, alternatively string quartet and percussion. Ranking among the top worldwide, it is accompanied by a festival that attracts attention nationwide and by educational project activities, which reach out to various target groups in TROMP's immediate backyard, the city of Eindhoven and beyond, the province of Noord-Brabant.

Competition

The global aspirations come mainly to the fore in the competition. The invitation after benchmark to join the FMCIM in May 2007 was the first success to be noted. Membership of this organisation, which provides a platform for consultation and cooperation, is restricted to the world's leading international music competitions.

Upward movement via TROMP 2004 (string quartet) and TROMP 2006 (solo-percussion) continued with the TROMP 2008 string quartet edition. Nearly twice the number of quartets registered, with musicians of 23 nationalities from 5 continents. Ultimately, the jury selected 13 quartets for the final rounds in Eindhoven based on anonymous CD recordings.

Sadly, however, 4 quartets had to withdraw due to personal reasons (2), illness (1) and victory in another competition (1). Excuses occur everywhere, outside the music field as well, but with 4 instrumentalists per quartet the risk is obviously four times as high.

The competition course was improved with four instead of three competition rounds, including a specific round for Dutch repertoire. The English-South African Heath Quartet was finally declared winner. In addition they were awarded the MCN-Willem Vos prize for the best interpretation of a Dutch composition. The audience and the youth jury shared the decision of the international jury and consequently awarded their prizes to the Heath Quartet too. For the first time there was also a press jury, which had a preference for the third prize winner, the German Amaryllis Quartett. The Irish Callino Quartet came in second.

As part of the finals the three qualifying quartets were required to play a newly commissioned work by the English composer Steve Martland. His '*Starry Night*' for string quartet and marimba, which had to be performed with percussionist Colin Currie, proved to be a veritable *tour de force*, both technically and rhythmically.

All in all, the 2008 edition has proven that TROMP is able to organize a competition for string quartets on competitive world level. Benchmark makes it reasonably sure that by now TROMP is one of the top five competitions in this segment in the world. That conclusion is backed by more than just subjective assessments by jury members and participants and is also based on objective grounds such as the quality of the quartets that entered the competition.

Festival

The prime reasons for the festival are a larger audience and more public attention for the TROMP competition instruments and as a consequence for the competition itself. That is why the festival program focused on the public at large, with more attention for special target groups than was the case on previous occasions.

The Opening Night and the free entrance event 'De Ontlading' (translated: 'The Release') in particular attracted a lot of non-customary public due to their special programming. On the Opening Night Janacek's Moravian Songs by Iva Bittova and the Skampa Quartet preceded a performance by rock legend Todd Rundgren with the American string quartet Ethel.

In the case of 'The Release' on the final Sunday there was even more diversity with the help of partners, such as by a dance film production by Station Zuid and by a performance of After Forever- singer Floor Jansen with the Red Limo Quartet. 'The Release' was a new approach in combining the contributions by cultural partner institutions from the city and Eindhoven region. During previous editions these festival elements mostly took place on the partners' home grounds. As cohesion appeared lacking at times, the organizers opted for maximum centralization, additionally striving for more cultural interaction and cross fertilization as well as for a more widely diffused TROMP festival sentiment.

The latter was to be given a further boost by a highly visible, temporary open-air stage on the Eindhoven Market opposite the entrance to the Music Centre. However, due to numerous problems with permits etc. TROMP had to settle for a location in the shadows of the nearby Catharina church. Obviously, this was not nearly as effective.

The festival itself offered a varied and innovative program, including unique productions and collaborations of artists initiated by TROMP as well as contributions by jury members together with their regular ensembles, all linked by the central festival theme 'Four and more'.

TROMP 2008, and especially the competition finals, received many positive reviews in leading newspapers and magazines and also got a lot of attention on national radio and TV. The KRO joined TROMP as media-partner of record, but other broadcasters also contributed.

Apart from the number of visitors – for TROMP 2008 in all over 9.500 – mention should be made of a new initiative aiming to keep TROMP on the map in the period between competitions. Since the concert season 2007-2008 the foundation is co-organizer of a concert-series with performances by laureates of leading international music competitions. Amongst them, next to TROMP finalists, were the winners of the Reine Elisabeth Competition in Brussels and the Banff String Quartet Competition.

Education

Quite a few of the festival parts are of value from a cultural education point of view as well, certainly as far as the passive side – learning by listening – is concerned. This time there was a great deal of attention for high school students. First of all there was the initiative to bring a large numbers of junior high school students to the Music Centre to produce video clips based on string quartet music. Then, there was the 'Poetry & Music' project, which encouraged local senior high school students to write a poem based on a string quartet work. Furthermore, a special teaching program was developed together with the Fontys conservatory. This project included a visit by composer Steve Martland and a percussionist to the participating schools as one of the key elements.

Education at conservatory level was offered through masterclasses and the composition competition, which was organized for the first time. The competition was open to students enlisted at Dutch conservatories and required a composition for percussion and string quartet. All compositions were performed during the festival by fellow students. A special jury under chairmanship of Ruud van Eeten awarded Alejandro Orozco the first prize.

Finance

The strong growth of TROMP as competition, festival and educational organisation was made possible by an equivalent growth of available means. In the plans for TROMP 2008 the budget had envisaged increased expenditure of some 10%. However, ultimately income allowed more than twice as much, with accounts closing at just below € 600,000. Higher revenues, especially as a result of increased efforts for private funding, permitted full travel allowances for all competition participants and additionally provided room for higher quality programming and more diversity during the festival. The total result remained *break-even*.

TROMP has opted for broad base financing to avoid a dependency on a few large sponsors or charities. The Eindhoven Municipality, co-founder and partner from day one, is still the main financial partner and contributes a very sizable sum. The relative significance of this contribution is on the way down, however. TROMP 2008 got the support of 13 corporate sponsors and donations from 17 private funds.

Revenues TROMP 2008		
Municipality Eindhoven	€ 206.329	34,6 %
- structural	€ 149.529	
- incidental	€ 56.800	
Cultural Foundations	€ 170.795	28,6 %
- Province of Noord-Brabant	€ 20.000	
- NFPK+	€ 15.000	
- private funding	€ 135.795	
Sponsors	€ 129.000	21,6 %
Receipts	€ 34.372	5,8 %
Donations	€ 30.000	5,0 %
Nett interest	€ 23.729	4,0 %
Other	€ 2.500	0,4 %
Expenses TROMP 2008		
General overhead expenses	€ 46.803	7,8 %
Other overhead expenses	€ 7.705	1,3 %
Competition expenses	€ 213.573	35,8 %
Festival expenses	€ 205.942	34,5 %
Marketing / Communication	€ 122.702	20,6 %

Governance

The organisation went through some changes during the past period too. The cooperation contract with the Frits Philips Music Centre, which performs most operational tasks, was extended. The collaboration provides TROMP with access to the specialist knowledge and expertise as well as additional manpower, where and whenever required. TROMP owes special thanks to Artistic Manager Frank Veenstra and TROMP office manager and project coordinator Rob Hilberink.

In the TROMP Board some changes took place, but policies remained the same also regarding remunerations (no allowance, etc.). For sponsoring a special subcommittee was active, which overlapped with the so-called 'Dagelijks Bestuur' or Executive Board. The role of the latter body shall be enhanced and the pertinent provisions of the TROMP Articles of Association have been amended accordingly in a revision, which was finalized on 17 February 2009.

Pursuant to the new Articles TROMP is required to denote in each final report to what extent the foundation is guided by Good Governance Codes as established for the cultural sector, respectively charities. Though TROMP has been qualified as an ANBI, a public interest serving institution, it has been concluded that the Cultural Governance Code is of higher relevance at this point in time. In that connection the Board has concluded that with the finalization of the revision of the AoA and the implementation of its provisions, TROMP meets the requirements of all the Principles and Best Practices set out in said Code. In view of TROMP's biannual way of operation strategic plans, evaluations and final reports are produced, however, not once a year, but every two years.