

**Dinner Speech
by Oliver Scheytt**

EMU General Assembly
Conference 'Music Education in Europe – Music For All'
Welcome Dinner
13.05.2010, Essen (Erich Brost-Pavillon)

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

**I am very glad to welcome you to the European Capital of
Culture “RUHR.2010”!**

**When people think of European capitals and culture, cities like
Paris, London and Rome come to their mind. They think of
famous buildings such as the Eiffel Tower, the Tower Bridge,
the Colosseum and St. Peter’s Basilica.**

**Our emblem is a coal mine: The Zollverein World Heritage Site
which you have explored just recently and on which we have a
wonderful sight from up here on top of the former coal washing
plant. The winding tower you can see out there is our Eiffel
tower!**

As European Capital of Culture 2010, Essen is representing all other 52 cities of the Ruhr metropolis. With 5.3 million inhabitants we are the third largest conurbation in the European Union after London and Paris.

The Zollverein World Heritage Site is our most famous emblem because it is representative for the fundamental economic and cultural change the Ruhr region has undergone during the last century. The RuhrMuseum, located below us in this building, documents these developments in an extraordinary way.

For over hundred years coal and steel were the motor of structural change in the region. We were the most important coal and steel region in Europe. In the mid 1950s there were more than 600,000 people working in over 180 black coal mines in Germany. Today only 4 mines are left in the Ruhr region that are still in use. About 27,000 people still work in black coal mines. But many more work in the creative sector.

In former times people came to work in the coal mines and related industries, now we have become a destination for the creative class. Many companies that are global players on the world market have their headquarters in the Ruhr region. But

we also have several global players in the arts and culture business.

The Folkwang Museum, for instance, is a well-known trademark in the fine arts. At the beginning of the last century, Folkwang founder Karl Ernst Osthaus pointed out that the role of art as a way to compensate regional drawbacks is crucial for the future of the region. Osthaus' philosophy also inspired the motto of the European Capital of Culture "change through culture, culture through change". *Up to the 1930s the Folkwang Museum was regarded as one of the most progressive museums of contemporary and modern art in the world. Under the Nazis the work of the museum was massively restricted, and it suffered severe losses from confiscations. For the Capital of Culture year, the museum's spectacular collection has been reconstructed for an exhibition entitled "The most beautiful museum in the world. Folkwang until 1933".*

The exhibition "Ruhr Views" in SANAA Building here on Zollverein, on the other hand, focuses the present-day reality. Eleven internationally recognized documentary photographers like Hilla Becher, Andreas Gursky, Candida Höfer and Thomas

Struth present new views of the Ruhr and thereby show the change of the region.

One of our main goals is to create new pictures of this region in the minds of people here and elsewhere. The three guiding themes of our programme are:

- 1) The Ruhr Mythology: What makes us think?**
- 2) Re-Designing the Metropolis: How do we want to live?**
- 3) Moving Europe: What does our future here and in Europe look like?**

These three themes and the questions that they provoke are represented by images, theatre, music, language and creative industries. Our whole programme basically tells a story of change.

Did you know that we have more culture per square meter than anywhere else in Europe? We have 120 theatres, over 100 concert halls and venues, over 100 arts centers, 200 museums, 250 festivals and more than 1,000 industrial monuments, many of them having become cultural arenas. But we do not only have quantity, we also have quality. For example, Essen has one of the best Opera houses in Germany. And we have three

new concert halls within the region: the The Westphalian Philharmonic Concert Hall in Dortmund, the Mercatorhalle in Duisburg and the Philharmonie Essen.

Our cultural program for Capital of Culture year includes over 300 projects and 5,000 single events. I want to give you a quick insight into three of our main music projects.

For our big “Henze Project” the entire musical landscape of the Ruhr Metropolis is coming together to form a network of New Music in homage to Hans Werner Henze, composer and musical visionary. Between January and December 2010, over 40 partners will present Henze's musical and social projects from the early days to the present: opera, ballets, symphony concerts, chamber music and radio operas. A film retrospective, an orchestra festival, a symposium and a composition competition will all explore Henze's achievements and influence. Today, he is in Essen to attend a performance of one of his works.

Our most spectacular music event will be “!Sing - Day of Song” on the 5th of June 2010. People will be singing everywhere: on

the streets, in parks, in concert houses, in department stores, kindergartens, churches and in the Schalke football arena. 8.500 singers are engaged already to sing on the football field. Vocalist and conductor Bobby McFerrin will sing together with the whole audience of 60.000 people. But !SING also stands for an entire network of initiatives. It also stands for mediation projects, recitals, opera performances and choir concerts. !SING sees itself as a music-based citizens' movement. By calling upon people to !SING, the programme aims to restore singing as an integral part of people's daily lives.

The most important project for music schools is “An instrument for Every Child”. In the Ruhr Metropolis all children starting primary school from 2007 until 2010 have the opportunity to learn to play an instrument of their choice in small groups. The teachers are provided by the music schools of the cities in the Ruhr. This project is a complete revolution of the German music school system and will have very important long-term effects – not only on the pupils but also for the teachers and the whole system of music education. Those effects yet have to be evaluated thoroughly. Since the title of this year’s EMU-General Assembly and Conference is ‘Music

Education in Europe – Music For All’, the project “An instrument for every child” will certainly play an important role in the discussions during the next days.

As European Capital of Culture the City of Essen also stands for intercultural dialogue. We have many international connections, especially through global companies, young artists and other creative people. Please enjoy the international atmosphere here at the EMU Conference and make use of the chance to get to know different perspectives.

Besides the official Conference programme, you are invited to discover the new Ruhr metropolis, a place where in the past coal was the main source of energy and where we have now found a new source of energy: Culture – an endless source of energy!