

## Oslo Mela 2008!

### Oslo Mela 2010

Mela is again coming to town! This year's event takes place at Rådhusplassen (City Hall Square) from Friday 6. to Sunday 8. August. The festival is considered to be the biggest international celebration of culture and creativity in Norway, with artists from more than twenty countries performing with their bands, alone or together. The diversity of the Oslo Mela event makes it ideally suited to people of all ages, backgrounds and cultures.

Follow this page for more information on this year's artists and other news! The full program for Mela 2010 will be published here in June/July.

#### The history of Mela

'Mela' is a Sanskrit word which means 'meeting place'. Melas are held in many countries, but the Oslo Mela is among the biggest. The series of Mela festivals started in 2001 with a small Pakistani-Norwegian festival. The festival grew rapidly. In 2004, Mela attracted a public of 70.000, in 2005 around 200 000 and in 2006 the police estimated that 300 000 persons visited Mela during its three days. In 2008 the number probably was around 330.000. Approximately half of the audience is ethnic Norwegians and over 60% is women and children.

During its eight years more than 1500 artists have performed at the Oslo Mela – among them international artists such as Miriam Makeba, Abida Parveen, Apache Indian, Arif Lohar, Aster Aweke, Atif Aslam, RDB, Maryam Mursal, Naheed Siddiqi, Ustad Fateh Ali Khan and Stereo Nation.

The Oslo Mela is unlike many Melas in other parts of the world, because it embraces both local artists with a minority background, ethnic Norwegians in cooperation with international artists and famous artists from a number of countries. The Mela brings popular as well as classical music, theatre performances, poetry and literature, handicrafts, fashion shows and food to the public in Norway.

Mela is organized by Horisont Foundation (<http://www.horisont.org> ). In addition to Oslo Mela, Horisont stages concerts, exhibitions, seminars and cultural workshops. The cultural exchange with other countries go both ways; several Norwegian performers have cooperated with artists from other parts of the world in concerts, theatrical performances and CD recordings. A cultural exchange programme with Pakistan has been instigated and exchange programmes with other countries are being worked out.