



## Scen utan gränser (Theatre without borders) –A collaboration to develop the performing arts.

*Scen utan gränser* in Swedish, *Rajaton näyttämö* in Finnish, is a cross-border platform for the development of the arts. A number of cultural and educational establishments in Sweden and Finland have partnered to create long-term development opportunities for the arts by developing exchanges, interaction, technology and leadership.

The scheme began in 2005 with an exchange programme for touring productions between Sweden and Finland. In 2009, the two countries extended its scope and signed a declaration of intent. Today a number of theatres, educational establishments and branch organisations have partnered to build a long-term collaboration to identify and conduct development projects. The vision is a platform where countries and organisations take part in cross-border collaboration to move the performing arts forward.

Currently we have several projects in the areas of technology and innovation, interactivity and teamwork, capability development and leadership. *Scen utan gränser's* development work in stage technology is at the forefront of digital advances in the performing arts and has led to innovations in using surtitles and performance technology. The auditing continues of Finnish performance venues for the database, scenrum.nu, and has successfully intensified talks on cross-sector research and education between schools and performing arts institutions.

A direct result of *Scen utan gränser* has been an increased number of touring performances. For example, in 2011, Åbo Swedish Theatre and Wasa Theatre co-produced *Utrensning*. Quo Vadis appeared at Dramaten's Bergman Festival and in productions with Uusi Teatteri. Riksteatern toured Finland with *Bergsprängar-döttrar*. During 2012 *Hallonbåtsflyktingen* toured in Sweden and Turteatern arranged a festival of Finnish Theatre. Dramaten's *Idlaflickorna* and Riksteatern's *Dödsdansen & Vi har det bra* toured in Finland. The Finnish production *Alla talar svenska* with André Wickström was a great success in the autumn of 2012.

The Finnish language was recognised as a national minority language in Sweden in 2010. Now around 50 local authorities accept it as an official administrative language. This means that they receive state subsidies to support and strengthen the use of Finnish, including in cultural events. National cultural policy in Sweden prioritises the use and preservation of Finnish culture and language.

Both countries regard the platform as an important and mutually beneficial initiative. Interest in Finnish performing arts in Sweden continues to increase and has resulted in an increased effort by both countries to extend the exchange of regional touring productions. Shows have been interesting and reached a broad public. To overcome the language barrier shows are subtitled and engage with the audience, which has resulted in their successful reception. In 2013 Teatteri Takomos is touring with *Perheenjäsen* and *Muista minut/Minns mig* by Teatteri Avoimet Ovet Sweden and *Håpas du trifs bra i fängelset* is touring in Finland. A number of guest appearances are included.

*Med Reventberg, Västerbottensteatern*

By building networks and diversifying co-operation, we have increased demand and opportunities for artists on the international stage. Tinfo has subsidised translation of plays and arranged playwright/producer meetings with Riksteatern/Scen utan gränser and the Swedish directors' union. Finndrama, is active. Other events and workshops, leadership development, theatre manager meetings and festival visits have brought theatrical and educational establishments together, strengthening the bilateral network. The platform works for the internationalisation, cultural exchange and the furthering of minority cultural rights through artistic and production-based activity. Scen utan gränser supports community, cultural and theatrical policy goals in both countries.

***"These opportunities help us understand one another better. To get to know and discuss our mutual working cultures is always useful. It makes future guest tours easier when the technicians know one another and are familiar with each other's working methods.***

*Antti Kauppi, Ahaa-teatteri*

Scen utan gränser is coordinated by Riksteatern and Hanaholmen – the cultural centre for Sweden and Finland.