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1500 Dutchmen take to the lake

By CarinaOkula | Posted June 16, 2014 | The Hague, Netherlands

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If you've ever been to a Dutchmens' party, you know they can host an evening in style. Throw in 1500 of them, build a pontoon on a lake in front of the Prime Minister's office, recruit a couple dozen of the countries finest young artistic talents to add their vocal, musical talents to the soir e, top it off with twenty Bartenev performers from Russia, and you come up with a cocktail for an energising gathering of artistic and culinary celebrations.

That's exactly what happened Saturday night in the Hague, when the 'international city of peace and justice' played host to the 6th annual Diner en Blanc Netherlands.

Unlike in other cities across the world where the Diner en Blanc phenomenum has gathered momentum and is often shared across social media ahead of the moment, the Netherlands flash mob event remains a closely guarded secret, those on the guest list forbidden from speaking of their involvement.

With security befitting a city accustomed to hosting international leaders and vodka saluts, bus after bus arrived on queue, dropping off diners who had come from across the tiny water logged country, many pulling half a kitchen with them as they set up tables and chairs. Glasses were filled with champagne before round after round of haute cuisine was plated on the normally off limits Hofvijver, alarmed to national police should anyone have a bubble or few too many and make their way overboard.

As flutes rose and the sun went down on the Binnenhof, the star of the evening was undoubtedly the Torentje, the Prime Ministers tower, at least until the Bartenev performers made their way through the crowd and then all bets were off. The previously empty dance floor went from a scattered few to shoulder room only as the surreal creatures bounced and jived their way through the tables, bringing the entire crowd to its feet.....if champagne didn't put you overboard, there was every chance of being bounced into the water by a Bartenev balloon. It truly was the craziest thing to see! Forget the vodka, this was a-la-natural, get your groove on party material.

From diva trumpeters like Saskia Laroo who officially kicked off the dinner, the make shift dining floor was an entertainment haven celebrating the best of Dutch talent including Stefan Pop, Michelle Courtens, Esther Apituley, Kirsten Michel and the a-cappella humoristic male-choir Geitenkwark. With a rework of a previous no.1 chart topper 'Pak maar mijn hand' by Nick and Simon, Kirsten Schneider penned a moving tribute to 'Diner en Blanc'....perhaps a theme song to pop up across the globe as the summer months take hold and white picnics take over.

As is always the way, time flies when you're having fun. No doubt DJ Mark Ericsson could have played through until the wee hours of the morning with the white revellers bopping on with him, but, as the clock struck twelve, coaches turned to pumpkins and the waters of the Hofvijver returned to their normal, calm, diplomatic self, the magic disappearing into the darkness.

All good things must come to an end, even in the land of the some of the happiest people I've come across in Europe.

TAGS: blanc, haag, netherlands, white, the, dinner, en, den, diner, hague
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