

From mxd.dk: Three Dutch Festivals for New Music



Paul Gersen, Editor in Chief at Lust For Life Magazine

Every year in January, the vast majority of the European music industry is gathered in Groningen, Holland to meet, network and find and listen to new music at Eurosonic Noorderslag Festival. Eurosonic is a great stepping stone for the international European market, but specifically for The Netherlands there are also a couple of other festivals to aim for.

Earlier we spoke with [Lisa Gritter](#), who gave us some insight into the Dutch loud music market. Now we talked to **Paul Gersen**, Editor in Chief at the Dutch music magazine [Lust For Life](#), who picked three important festivals to look out for when trying to gain a foothold in the Dutch market - **Eurosonic**, **Lowlands Festival** and **Incubate**.

“I think the first step for young, talented bands is Eurosonic”, says Paul. “For Lowlands, you have to prove yourself in your own country and have some tour experience through Europe. When there’s a buzz, Lowlands will notice it. I Think an act like The Bohica’s is a nice example. Most people haven’t heard of that band (they’ve only got one EP and a few singles

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on Spotify), but they are booked for the Lowlands festival, because there's a buzz."

Incubate Festival, which is held in mid-September in Tilburg, sports over 350 acts during a week. The line-up includes several Nordic acts, and seems to pay little attention to genres - Iceland's **Sóley** and American hardcore outfit **Converge** are listed right next to each other.

"Incubate is a little bit different. They are looking for trendsetters in different fields and acts that are relevant to a genre right now: it doesn't matter how many records they've sold or how "successful" they are. If you want to hear how metal, hard rock, jazz or any genre sounds today and tomorrow, Incubate is the right place." There seems to be something to what Paul is saying, since Danish free jazz outfit **Selvhenter** is also booked for the festival.

Here's what Paul thinks about the festivals:

### **[Eurosonic Noorderslag \(ESNS\) 13th - 16th January, Groningen](#)**

The summer may be the festival season, but the best festival for me is in January. Eurosonic is the biggest and most important showcase festival in Europe. Not only are there hundreds of upcoming bands from the whole continent playing in Groningen, almost everybody that has an important job in the music industry is there. It's like a big new year's reception. During the first two days on Eurosonic, you can see acts from all over Europe. During Noorderslag the festival focuses on Dutch bands. Bands and acts like The Libertines, Chrystal Fighters, White Lies and Sam Smith have performed at the festival. When you do good at ESNS, there's a big chance a programmer will see you and book you at their festival.

### **[Lowlands Festival, 21st - 23rd August, Biddinghuizen](#)**

Lowlands has suffered some criticism during the last two years. People say the ticket price is too high and that the line-up isn't surprising enough. For the first time in years, the festival isn't sold out. Despite that, Lowlands is, with more than two hundred acts and 55,000 tickets sold, one of the biggest festivals in The Netherlands. Lowlands is more than music: it's literature, film, theatre and art. The line-up is a mix of big names and upcoming bands and focuses on different genres like rock, hip hop and dance. This year, Ben Howard, The Chemical Brothers and Major Lazer headline the three day festival, but you can also see upcoming acts like Mø, Years & Years, Rhoades and James Bay. Oh, and Limp Bizkit.

### **[Incubate Festival, 14th - 20th September, Tilburg](#)**

Incubate is maybe the most schizophrenic festival in The Netherlands. During one

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September week every year, Tilburg is the epicenter of the most diverse music genres. Incubate calls itself “the annual celebration of cutting-edge culture”. That means you can see free jazz on day one, techno on the next evening and on the last day death metal. It’s seven days of music and art. This year you can see cult-acts like Mercury Rev, The Melvins and Giant Sand. And there’s also Heavy Metal Bowling, which is exactly what it sounds like.