

Future-proof heritage:

IMATERIAL wins UPBEAT Future Festival Award

IMATERIAL of Évora, Portugal won European showcase platform UPBEAT's Future Festival Award. Launched to strengthen the industry's ethos of sustainability, the award goes each year to a festival rooted in heritage, seizing the present while not burdening the future. Handed over at the sector's global meetup, WOMEX on 27 October 2023, the award grants further professional opportunities and the perks of UPBEAT's associated partner status.

An award from the industry for the industry

The **Future Festival Award** had 8 contestants, recommended by the board members of UPBEAT - Alex Walter (WOMEX); Balázs Weyer (Hangvető); Ian Smith (Waves Vienna); Oriol Roca (Mercat de Música Viva de Vic) - and UPBEAT's sustainability specialist, Martyna van Nieuwland. To meet UPBEAT's criteria, they had to be European, represent diversity and sustainability both in programming and production, and be a relative newcomer: festivals with no more than 5 editions were considered. All UPBEAT members, 14 festivals connected by the platform had a vote to choose the winner.

The winner

IMATERIAL conveys the depths of heritage in an inspiring and hands-on manner, with flamenco, Kurdish songs and Greek electronica thrive side-by-side, concerts set in the city's opera hall and visits to archeological sites vie for visitors' attention. IMATERIAL manifests the UPBEAT mission in its programming, production and spirit. Quoting José Saramago's wise words - "You have to leave the island to see the island, we won't see each other if we don't leave ourselves." - as their motto, the artistic director of IMATERIAL, **Carlos Seixas**, expressed how content, format and location found an ideal match in Évora:

"Our goal has been to establish a festival in Évora that serves as a platform for the diverse musical traditions from around the world, fostering a sense of collective sharing, while also fostering a meaningful dialogue with the rich polyphonies of the region. This endeavor takes place in a city that is not only set to become the European Capital of Culture in 2027 but has also enjoyed the prestigious status of a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1986."

UPBEAT provides further networking opportunities at WOMEX and other UPBEAT showcase festivals to the IMATERIAL team, and offers greater visibility to the event, reaffirming the ethos of sustainability. By winning the award, Festival IMATERIAL also joins UPBEAT network as an associate partner.

The Future Festival Award serves as a tool to refocus the industry around core values that can ease the transition to future societies, for which IMATERIAL serves as a great example:

“Being a small-scale, community-focused, and inclusive festival, our core principle is to ensure equal access for everyone, regardless of their background or specific needs, to all our activities.” - Carlos Seixas summarised.

Join the effort for a future-proof industry, meet UPBEAT and IMATERIAL at WOMEX, let's shape the future of music business together.

UPBEAT Platform

UPBEAT - The European Showcase Platform for World Music is an international platform project coordinated by Budapest-based Hangvető and co-funded by the European Union. UPBEAT is a quickly growing initiative, currently counting 14 prestigious members from A to Jazz festival, Tallinn Music Week or Budapest Ritmo. The platform acts as a quality label and professional network, supporting emerging artists via its members. UPBEAT members receive support for hosting upcoming acts, making way for heritage inspired, diverse and original language music sidelined by the mainstream.

More info:

UPBEAT Awards: [Upbeatawards.eu](https://upbeatawards.eu)

UPBEAT Platform: [Upbeat-platform.eu](https://upbeat-platform.eu)

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