

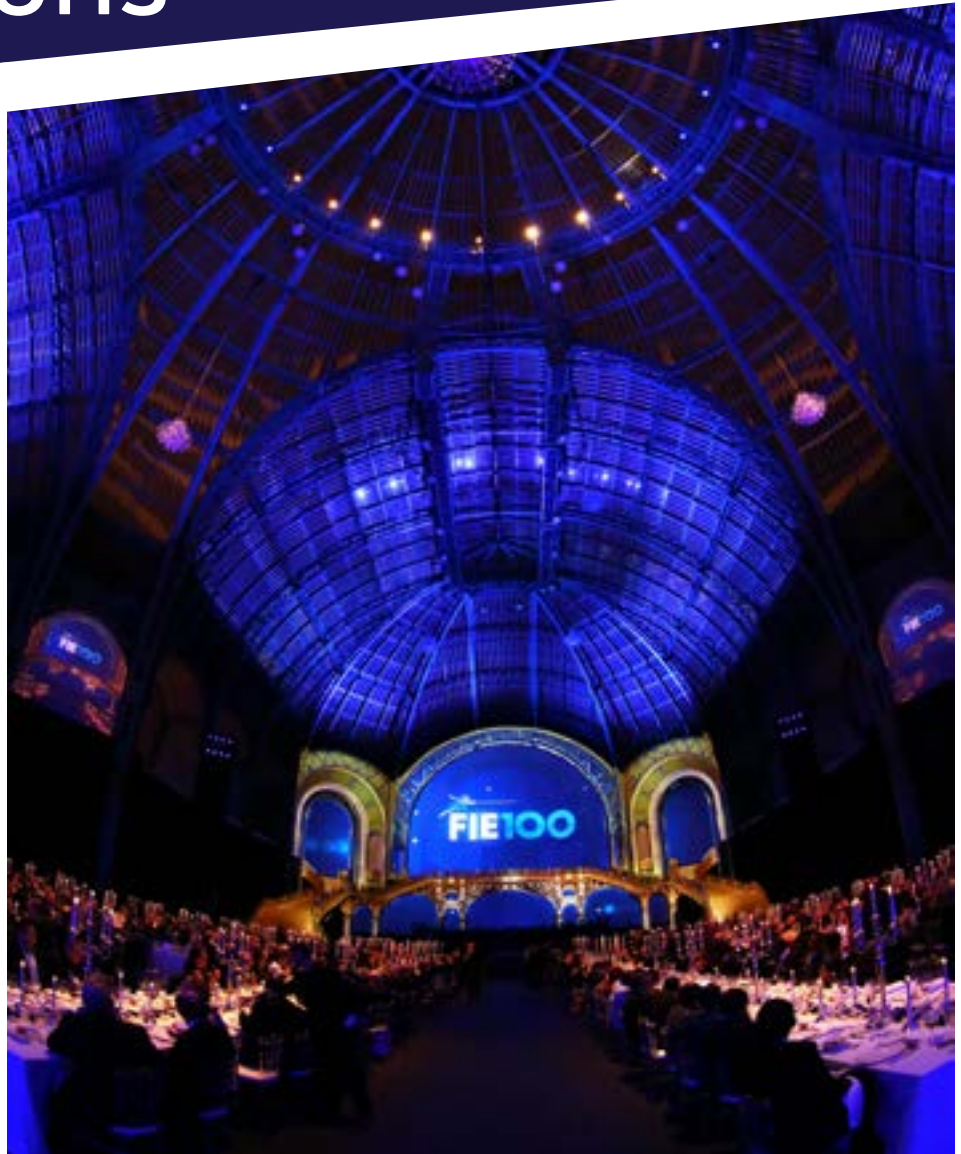
# FIE Celebrations

## FIE CELEBRATES CENTENARY IN LAVISH STYLE

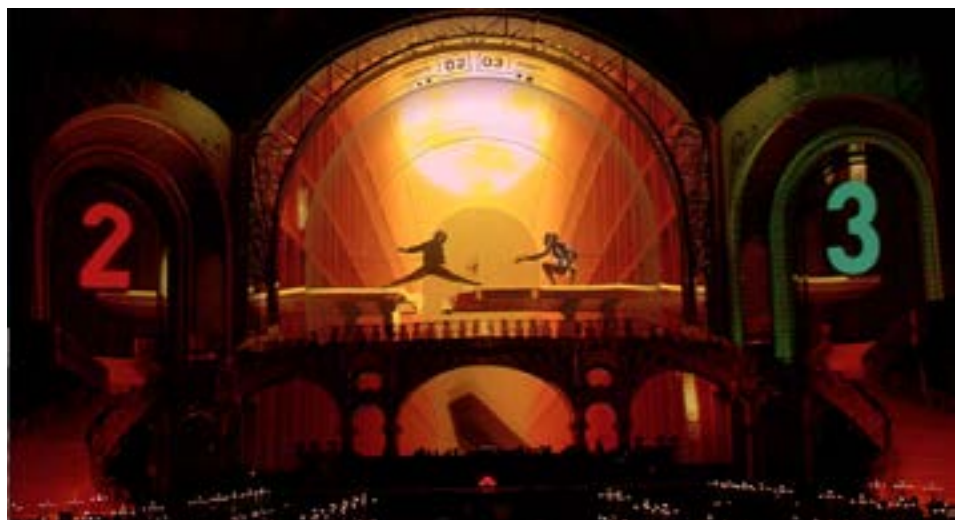
(Photos by Serge Timacheff)

FIE President Alisher Usmanov is believed to have spent around £3 million on the most spectacular fencing party ever held to celebrate the organisation's centenary in Paris.

A gala dinner for more than 1000 guests from some 140 federations in the splendid Grand Palais, a backdrop of dazzling images across an entire wall culminating in a kaleidoscopic mix of glittering swords accompanied by Khachaturian's Sabre Dance performed by the Moscow Chamber Orchestra, a scantily clad troupe of dancers from the Lido de Paris holding epees and performing a specially created anniversary ballet, a brilliant back-projected 3D epee match and a fencing fashion show in which a dozen manufacturers presented imaginative ideas for outfits of the future were followed by stunning performances from two American virtuosi musicians – Grammy Award-winning jazz trumpeter Chris Botti and violinist Caroline Campbell – all topped off with a live concert by British rock star Sting.



Interior of the main hall and backdrop



3D epee match

*"We are all masters of ourselves"*



Dinner guests assemble

Usmanov's special advisor Maxim Paramanov and his team worked for 6 months to prepare the Gala, with artistic director Nathalie Moellhausen, a member of the Italian epee team until the London 2012 Olympics and director of the opening ceremony at the Paris 2010 world championships, taking 18 months' time off from her fencing career to develop all the special events. She drew inspiration from a line in *The Book of Five Rings* by Miyamoto Musashi, "We are all masters of ourselves", to create a cleverly choreographed 3D match of five three-hit bouts in which a fencer takes a journey through five levels of fighting corresponding to the four elements of earth, air, water and fire, plus a fifth element called ether. He has to overcome obstacles related to these elements, as well as an unknown opponent whose identity he will discover if he is successful. After winning the match, our hero unmasks his opponent to reveal that he has been fighting... himself.

"The book offers a valuable lesson in any field of life," said Moellhausen. "That we are responsible for our actions, whether they end in success or failure. We are the only masters of ourselves. For me the goal was to write a story that used Mapping technology to emphasise the beauty of fencing and show how modern systems of entertainment can attract a worldwide audience."

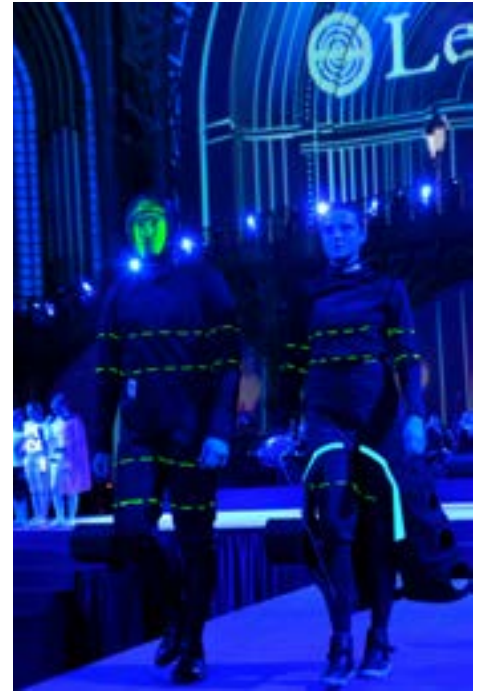


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The FIE's birthday cake was a vast three-tier construction adorned with the three weapons and effigies of fencers. Diamonds, symbol of eternal strength, were the theme of the evening. The Lido de Paris dancers wore diamante outfits and President Usmanov was presented with a sword encrusted with a huge mock-diamond hilt. He, in turn, presented FIE swords of honour to his special guests, the French Minister of Sport & Youth Valérie Fourneyron and the present and past president of the IOC, Thomas Bach and Jacques Rogge.



Fencing ballet with Lido de Paris dancers



Leon Paul's outfit of the future



The FIE birthday cake



Alisher Usmanov presents FIE swords of honour to (from left) Jacques Rogge, French Minister of Sport & Youth Valérie Fourneyron, Thomas Bach



The Moscow Chamber Orchestra plays against a fiery backdrop



Chris Botti



Sting entertains

As the older guests were driven back at midnight to their hotel (again courtesy of Mr Usmanov), the younger fencers settled down to some serious disco dancing at the after-party that went on until 2 am. Then the FIE team moved in to strip the Grand Palais of its fencing accoutrements in time to return the building to its normal art gallery function later that day.

**Malcolm Fare**

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