

## On the issue of organizing and holding music festivals

### До питання про організацію та проведення музичних фестивалів

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**Abstract.** The article reveals the peculiarities of organizing and conducting music festivals, considering Ukrainian society's challenges in the current socio-cultural situation. Despite the full-scale Russian war, music festivals are taking place in the cultural space of Ukraine, which are a manifestation of interaction and dialogue between musicians, a representative of current ideas of contemporary performing arts. The aim of the paper is to outline the problems faced by the organizers of music festivals in their preparation and conduct. The article uses general scientific research methods, namely, analysis, synthesis, and generalization, which together make it possible to reveal the essence of the organizational aspects of music festivals.

*Keywords:* music festival, organization, holding a festival, cultural event.

**Problem statement.** Music festivals have become commonplace in Ukrainian cultural life. Holding these events is one of the most difficult, albeit popular, events. In order to organize a festival, it is necessary to make thorough preparations and take into account all the “nuances.” It’s not just about choosing locations, and technical equipment, negotiating with music bands or individual performers, preparing concert venues, accommodating participants, or obtaining permission from state or local authorities. Organizing a festival requires taking into account the most minor “details,” under these conditions, one can hope to implement the planned festival events successfully.

**Literature Review.** During the period of independence of the Ukrainian state, the music festival movement has significantly revived, becoming a vivid artistic phenomenon and, accordingly, a subject of interest to Ukrainian scholars in various aspects.

These are mainly reviews of festival concert programs written by O. Dyachkova, M. Zahaykevych, O. Zinkevych, A. Lunina, L. Melnyk, I. Sikorska, H. Stepanchenko, B. Syuta, Y. Chekan, and others. The music festival has become the subject of dissertation research, in particular by M. Shved (“Trends in the Development of International Contemporary Music Festivals in Ukraine at a New Stage (1990–2005)”, S. Zuiiev (“Modern Cultural Space and Semiotics of the Music Festival (Based on Kharkiv)”), S. Savenko (“Competition and Festival Forms of Choral Creativity: Traditional Models and Modern Trends”), O. Sycheva (“Art Festivals in the Socio-Cultural Space of Small and Medium-Sized Cities of Modern Ukraine”), S. Charnetska (“Folklore Festivals in the Socio-Cultural Processes of Ukraine in the Twentieth and Early Twenty-First Centuries”), and sporadically T. Zinska (“Musical and Performing Arts in the Socio-Cultural Space of Ukraine in the Late

Twentieth and Early Twenty-First Centuries”); research by I. Bermes, S. Vytkaľov, K. Davydovskiy, D. Zubenko, Y. Moskvichova, Y. Ometyukh, O. Sycheva, I. Sukhlenko, N. Tsapenko, and others. However, today, organizing and conducting a music festival remains on the margins, so its coverage is relevant.

**Results and Discussion.** A festival is an organizational and artistic form of musical activity. It usually includes a series of concerts united by a common idea or style of music. According to M. Shved, music festivals are classified as “monographic, dedicated to the work of one composer...; genre — paying attention to a particular genre (opera, symphony, oratorio, etc.); focused on a particular performing apparatus — a symphony orchestra or intended for performance on a particular instrument; aimed at demonstrating the musical tradition of a particular era or style” [5, p. 8].

The temporal characteristics of each festival determine its status in several other events in the cultural life of the city, the region where it is held, interaction with the regional and local economy, cultural infrastructure, sources and amount of funding, etc.

A festival can function both as a one-time and systematically repeated cultural event. The practice of one-time music festivals is rare, as such artistic events are mainly dedicated to anniversaries of artists or historical dates.

Essential characteristics of a festival are its duration (short-term or long-term), and its status in cultural life (international, all-Ukrainian, regional, national). Differences between them will be observed in the festival’s prestige level, participation of professional performers and their managers, significance in the coordinates of the concert market, sources of subsidization, etc.

The timing of a music festival is often limited to a specific time frame. Moreover, if the organizers of a festival claim to make it a regularly recurring event, they try to keep the period of its holding unchanged from year to year. The practice of holding large festival events shows that success depends on attracting leading music groups and performers. Accordingly, the management of festival events

tries to plan programs at least one and a half to two years in advance, which is much easier to realize if the timing of their events is unchanged. And yet, the exact timing of the festival has a positive impact on its attendance.

The festival’s location is also vital in shaping the artistic concept, an attractive image in the audience’s minds, and even the marketing strategy. For example, the international festival of ethnic music and land art in Sheshory, Kosiv district, Ivano-Frankivsk region, launched in 2003, is trendy. It is held in July in a picturesque corner of the Ukrainian Carpathians. Fans of ethnic music, including many fans of this particular musical event, listen to performances by modern and folk bands, attend master classes on archaic instruments and environmental seminars, and get acquainted with land art. The low cost of attending festival concerts and art events, the democratic nature of the festival, and the location (the beauty of the Sheshory waterfall and nature) attract young people from almost all over Ukraine and even from abroad. The festival concept is based on a combination of ethnic music and recreation in a beautiful natural landscape.

In addition, realizing the importance of such festival projects as a component of cultural and ethnic tourism for the region’s economy, local and regional authorities create favorable conditions for them and finance a significant portion of their expenses from their budgets. Ultimately, such festivals are a positive investment in the region’s development.

Today, Ukraine hosts the following festivals: classical, spiritual, contemporary music, ethnic (folk) music, jazz, rock music, musical instrument festivals, festivals, competitions, etc. They provide an opportunity to enrich the panorama of music festival projects and expand the festival space as a universal form of dialogue within contemporary culture.

Music festivals are the most popular among the festivals of various art forms. When planning a music festival, you need to pay special attention to marketing this cultural “product,” evaluate the festival from a commercial point of view, and find answers to the traditional questions for such events. For example: what

is the potential audience of the festival, how many visitors are expected at future events, how to design an advertising campaign, etc. Even if the organizers of a music festival do not plan to make a significant profit, marketing is still necessary, as it involves the formation of a particular audience for this event. According to K. Davydovskiy, “the festival space is formed on the principle of a sacred circle: the audience that enters it acquires the status of ‘true art lovers’” [2, p. 96].

Thus, working in the direction of cultural tourism, festival organizers immediately provide themselves with a number of additional opportunities:

- expanding the potential audience of the festival by attracting listeners from other regions and foreign tourists;

- advertising the festival through travel agencies;
- additional sales of souvenirs designed for tourists;
- making the festival more attractive to sponsors.

In addition, advance ticket sales for festival events help reduce commercial risks.

Music festivals are public events and ready-made advertising products. They can be used to attract tourists to festival venues, shape the image of a city or region, change the urban environment, generate the cultural needs of festival visitors, and even draw attention to social or environmental issues.

Another attractive feature of music festivals is their additional features. This includes recording concerts on audio and video media, broadcasting shows on radio and television, producing audio and video products with recordings of previous events, promoting young artists and bands, advertising the festival, etc. Moreover, a music festival as a cultural phenomenon can attract local sponsors, a non-governmental organization, or even an international one. The above resources indicate significant reserves for music festivals.

Democracy, festivity, and creative freedom are the distinctive features of music festivals that make them accessible to the general public and different audiences and arouse more interest than traditional concerts. Widely publicized festival events are becoming attractive to other groups of people — professionals,

and amateurs. For festival organizers, such interest in showcasing the best achievements in the field of music is an incentive for new creative solutions and experiments that performers are not always ready for in normal circumstances.

Music festivals provide an opportunity for creative ingenuity. The main idea of the festival may be originality, prerogative, and the desire to go beyond the daily activities limited to the walls of concert halls.

An essential component of a music festival is eventfulness. A festival is an event that attracts the attention of television and other media. The “patronage” of the press strengthens the position of the festival organizers in relation to sponsors and organizations that finance it. Such interest is explained by the fact that music festivals contribute to a city or region’s social and economic life and influence the socio-cultural situation where they are held. Finally, a local, municipal, or capital-level music festival event needs practical information support in periodicals, on the Internet, and on radio and television.

The first stage of organizing a successful festival is the concept — the key idea and how it will be implemented. Conceptualization is understanding what and how to do, for what audience, with what resources, at what cost, etc.

According to T. Zinska, a music festival is an art project that has the following characteristics: “1) the relevance of the concept ... in the socio-cultural space; 2) compliance with the main goal and objectives in the implementation of the project; 3) coherence of the creative idea with the interests of the audience and the needs of the performers; 4) availability of information and advertising support for the art project; 5) accuracy of the project solution, when the implementation of the art project corresponds to the program of actions and means of achieving the goal” [4, p. 11].

It is crucial to choose a relevant direction for the festival event, considering the state of contemporary music culture. In this sense, one must constantly keep one’s finger on the pulse, taking into account the demands of the times and the socio-cultural situation in Ukraine. Having chosen a direction,

one has to decide on the task: to understand what will be the dominant feature of the festival, and then to clarify the priorities: is it essential to discover new names and performing groups, present new premiere works to the audience, gather like-minded people, share ideas, creative and organizational experience, impressions, etc. Very often, the potential audience and its needs help to set priorities. When choosing between different variations of the music festival genre and determining the most exciting format and direction, organizers always rely on the audience. Usually, the main attraction for the audience is the content. Fans are always eager to find out what kind of music “product” and in whose performance the organizers can offer them. And here again, the primacy of goals and objectives comes into play. The situation is two-fold: on the one hand, the desire for the commercial success of the project and access to a broader audience dictates the need to invite famous performers; on the other hand, the audience can and often does become interested in new things, including new performers. That is, the choice always gives prospects to expand the coordinates of a modern music festival.

As a rule, an organizing committee is elected to organize a music festival, which involves representatives of the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy, departments of culture, leading figures in the musical arts, heads of cultural institutions, etc. The chairman of the organizing committee approves the composition of the artistic commission (composers, performers, musicologists), whose members are responsible for engaging creative teams and performers and creating concert programs for the festival.

Organizing music festivals in Ukraine is a laborious task. As a large-scale event, the festival requires careful organizational preparation, which includes the following components: opening, closing, holding various events (press conferences, master classes, scientific conferences, creative meetings), primarily concerts, providing concert venues, creating concert programs, accommodating bands, etc. Most music festivals are a series of concerts held over several days, united by a common concept (e.g., “Music Premieres of the Season,” “Kyiv-Music-Fest,” “Two Days and Two

Nights” present new opuses by Ukrainian authors, the Forum of Young Music presents works by young Ukrainian and foreign composers, “Golden-Domed Kyiv” gives a chance to choral works by Ukrainian composers of different eras and styles).

Referring to T. Zinska, the successful resolution of the issue of organizing and conducting music festivals “largely depends on state funding and legislation, on sponsoring organizations and production centers, on musicians and music groups, on their awareness that the works of Ukrainian composers should become the basis of their repertoire...” [3, p. 386].

A significant point in the organization of music festivals is funding. “As a complex system, it has various types of support for the idea, including sponsorship, patronage, grants, foundations, etc.” [1, p. 154].

The difficult economic conditions of Ukrainian society and the war also affected festivals, primarily in terms of their material support and organization. However, even under these circumstances, these musical events take place mainly in regions where it is more peaceful.

**Conclusions.** Music festivals are an integral part of contemporary culture, one of the most popular forms of cultural life in a country, region, or city. A festival is an event in the musical life of the state; it is an a priori measure of the level of performing professionalism. A music festival provides socio-cultural conditions for the effective exchange of creative, social, and spiritual experience, the creation of new “products” of joint creativity, and the achievement of new results in the personal development of performers.

At present, music festivals are a challenging way of finding innovative and creative ideas, implementing unconventional solutions, developing innovative forms of holding them, and attracting new listeners. This obliges organizers to study the needs of the music “market,” conceptualize and design concepts, constantly monitor festival processes, and develop new marketing technologies on this basis. Statistics show that in the twenty-first century, the festival movement is, on the one hand, becoming more powerful and, on the other hand, going through a new stage of development. It demonstrates the highest professional

creativity of composers, performers, and musical groups, their interaction as a new communication system, a new cultural life model, and a music festival. Despite the difficulties of organizing, which are successfully overcome by directors and organizing

committees, festivals are essential for preserving the cultural heritage of the Ukrainian state. Large festival projects positively impact Ukraine's profile in the world as a country that honors its traditions to promote national culture.

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*Ірина Бермес. До питання про організацію та проведення музичних фестивалів*

**Анотація.** У статті розкрито особливості організації та проведення музичних фестивалів із урахуванням викликів, які постають перед українським суспільством у сучасній соціокультурній ситуації. Незважаючи на повномасштабне російське вторгнення, у культурному просторі України відбуваються музичні фестивалі, котрі є виявом взаємодії і діалогу музикантів, репрезентантом актуальних ідей сучасного виконавського мистецтва. Мета статті полягає в окресленні проблем, із якими стикаються організатори музичних фестивалів у їх підготовці та проведенні. У статті використано загальнонаукові методи дослідження, а саме: аналізу і синтезу, узагальнення, — які у сукупності дали можливість розкрити сутність організаційних моментів проведення музичних фестивалів.

*Ключові слова:* музичний фестиваль, організація, проведення фестивалю, культурна акція.