



Beating Drums at The Museum

KammarensembleN filled every corner of the Art Museum Färgfabrikken with the sounds of drums. The aim was to explore the concert space in unexpected ways, create links between art forms and attract a new audience.

Background

The Swedish ensemble KammarensembleN has a double mission to present the ground-breaking works of modern music from the last 50 years, as well as to present the absolutely newest works, commissioned by themselves. Being a rather large ensemble KammarensembleN has a preference for grand works with a “symphonic” expression.

For years KammarensembleN has been engaged in the process of renewing the concert form, and they have hardly done a conventional concert for the last 20 years. The ensemble rather engages in projects including cooperation with other art forms like film, dance, choreography etc. Furthermore the ensemble is engaged in bringing their music to new venues in order to target a new audience.

Those who thus hear the ensemble for the first time are likely to have an astonishing experience, for KammarensembleN is not afraid of the more baffling pieces of new music, and describe themselves with the words: “explosiveness and surprise”!

Aims for the project

With the concert at Färgfabrikken, KammarensembleN wanted to

- Explore the concert space in an unexpected way.
- Discover repertoire which was originally intended to do the previous.
- Commission a new work where the same intention is an essential part of the composition.

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- Reach a new audience who usually do not show up at concerts, ie. People interested in contemporary art but not familiar with new music.
- Find valuable links between music and other art forms. In this case photography and video installations.

The concert

On March 8th and 9th, KammarensembleN did a concert project at Färgfabriken in Stockholm, an old Factory, which today is turned into an exhibition space. The concert took place among a photographic exhibition with photos and installations based on mainly urban motives, and it was designed as a concert walk; the musicians moved around the hall and the two pieces in the programme were performed at different places in the hall.

There was no fixed seating but folding chairs around the room that audiences could carry along and place anywhere in the room. This gave the audience the freedom to choose from which position they wanted to listen to the music, and whether they wanted to sit, stand or walk around. Walking through the museum rooms the audience would meet a drum roll here, a knock there, whizzing cymbals here and the pounding of tom-toms there. It all melted together in a total installation of room and sound.

The man behind the drum sounds is the Irish Kevin Volans, who works in the borderland of music and installations, and at this concert KammarensembleN proudly presented two of his works: *The Partenheim Project* is a meditative work characterized by transparency and silence, but KammarensembleN found that the rooms of Färgfabriken also called for something more powerful, and thus commissioned a brand new *Percussion concerto* by the composer with funding from the Irish Arts Council.

The concert lasted for one and a half hour with a short intermission between the pieces for the musicians to change positions.

Prior to the concert Kevin Volans spoke at a seminar on Färgfabriken on March 1st, where the percussionist of KammarensembleN played some shorter works by Volans.

The venue and tickets

The building housing Färgfabriken has several rooms of different sizes and a public café downstairs open every day. KammarensembleN's two concerts were the first concerts ever at Färgfabriken, and the venue had therefore no previous experience with hosting concerts or serving a concert audience.

There were hardly any signs informing the audience that a concert was taking place but the staff was informed about it and showed audiences the way to the ticket sales and the concert room. The ticket for the concert was a combined ticket giving access

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to both the photo exhibition and the concert, and everybody with a ticket could go in and out of the space, as they wanted.

The combined ticket and free access to the room made it difficult to decide the number of people only coming for the concert, the number of people that came for the exhibition but stayed for the concert when realizing that it took place, as well as the number of people just looking into the room and checking out what happened but without staying.

Feedback

The concert got very positive feedback from audience of diverse ages. Many people also stayed and talked to the musicians and to Kevin Volans, who was present at both concerts. The concert also got a very good review in Dagens Nyheter, the largest newspaper in Sweden.

Färgfabriken were very happy about the collaboration and were willing to host more projects by the ensemble.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires were only handed out for the concert on March 9th.

Due to the concert's 'open form' and it being part of an exhibition, it was not possible to get a total number of audiences attending the concert. Around 25 questionnaires were handed out; only four were filled out and returned.

- 1. Points awarded for the concert in general:** 7, 7,5, 10. One responder didn't answer this question
- 2. Words to describe the concert:** Urban, sonorous, narrative, spatial, exciting, different, interesting, inspiring. Two responders didn't answer
- 3. The venue is:** very welcoming, easy or very easy to find, well organised, it's very easy or easy to buy tickets, not so comfortable
- 4. Reasons for attending the concert:**
 - a. It sounded like an interesting concert (3)
 - b. I attend as many concerts as possible (1)
 - c. I like Kevin Volan's music (2)
 - d. I work with music myself (2)
 - e. I study music (1)
 - f. Someone suggested that I went (2)
 - g. I wanted to do something this afternoon (1)

h. Other reason (1)

5. How did you find out about the concert:

- a. Färgfabriken's website (1)
- b. KammarensembleN's website (1)
- c. Other websites (2)

6. Did you bring friends (one responder didn't answer):

- a. I went alone (2)
- b. We were 2 (1)

7. Male or female (one responder didn't answer):

- a. Men (2)
- b. Women (2)
- c. 20-24 (1)
- d. 25-34 (2)
- e. 35-44 (1)
- f. Student (1)

8. Where do you live: Copenhagen, Flemmingsberg, Huddinge, Mörby (Stockholm)

9. What 4 or 5 words describe your taste of music: innovative, brightly coloured, contemporary, experimental, new, classical, lyrical, catchy

10. What 4 or 5 words describe the kind of films that you like (only one responder answered this question): Narrative, relevant, well written, good drama, deep

11. How often did you attend a contemporary music concert in the last year (one responder didn't answer)

- a. 10 times or more (3)

12. How often did you attend another concert in the last year (one responder didn't answer)

- a. 3-5 times (2)
- b. 10 times or more (1)

13. How much are you willing to pay for your concert ticket (one responder didn't answer): 100 SKR, 50-150 SKR, 70 SKR

14. What is your preferred concert time

- a. 7pm (1)
- b. 8.30pm (1)
- c. 8.45pm (1)
- d. 9pm (1)
- e. Don't know (2)

15. What could we have done in order to make your concert experience even better: More chairs (2), a programme that told which pieces to be played where and when, and some guidelines for the audience for how to act and what to do during the concert.

Recommendations

- Make sure that the organisation you want to collaborate with regards the project as part of their own activities.
- Involve the partners and venue in the planning. They might have some important creative input to give to the project.
- Be careful when selecting the dates. Watch out for other major events that might catch your audience.
- If there are electronics involved, be aware that you have enough budget (it usually costs more than you can imagine...)

Conclusions

The concert attracted an audience interested in architecture and photo, but not yet familiar with new music. Also, as the concerts were held in the afternoons they succeeded in attracting a lot of families with children.

This was not KammarensembleN's first project in an art space, but one of the most successful. The hall has good acoustics and the exhibition suited the music very well. There was a positive atmosphere in both audience and the staff.

Facts

Ensemble: KammarensembleN

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Date and time: March 8th and 9th 2014, 2 pm

Venue: Färgfabriken, Stockholm, Sweden

Programme:

Kevin Volans: *The Partenheim Project*

Kevin Volans: *Percussion Concerto*

Further information: <http://hem.kammarensembeln.com>