



Reopening a Long Lost Concert Hall

Sinfonietta Rīga held a concert marking the reopening of an old concert hall, hidden from the public for more than 30 years. The concert hall is located at the Latvian Academy of Science, and the concert engaged young scientists in the multidisciplinary project.

Background

Sinfonietta Rīga is a professional chamber orchestra based in Riga, the capital of Latvia. It was established in 2006 as a state orchestra and currently resides at Spīķeri Concert Hall – one of the most creative venues of Riga. The orchestra demonstrates great professionalism and performs sophisticated concert programmes, continuously expanding its creative horizons.

The main aspiration of the orchestra is to be open to different genres of music ranging from the baroque period to the most contemporary repertoire. Orchestra musicians are open to experiments in both academic and non-academic musical directions. In order to promote the contemporary music, several new compositions by Latvian composers are premiered each year. Sinfonietta Rīga also focuses on performing compositions that represent the Nordic-Baltic musical identity.

Concept

This concert combined achievements in Latvian science in the 21st century with contemporary music. The concert took place at the Latvian Academy of Science and marked the revival of the great hall, that had not been open to the public for more than 30 years. This venue is a unique part of the Soviet heritage. The project was part of the festival of contemporary art White Nights Festival, which is part of the European White Nights project, launched by five European capitals – Brussels, Madrid, Paris, Riga and Rome.

After each piece performed by the ensemble representatives of Latvian Association of Young Scientists talked about the most spectacular achievements in modern science: from law to nanotechnology and biosystem modulations, presenting the results of the research.

Aims and goals for the concert

- Diversify the contemporary repertoire of the ensemble
- Attract new audiences with a non-typical concert in a unique venue
- Provide intellectual artistic content to the wide audience
- Use an unusual and free concert as promotion for the ensemble

The target audience

As the White Nights Festival tends to engage many different target groups, this concert was a great

opportunity for Sinfonietta Rīga to reach out to new audiences. Therefore one target audience for this concert was people aged 18 – 30 who have not attended a contemporary music concert previously, but are willing to attend cultural events. These are people who might have heard about Sinfonietta Rīga but have not heard the music so far.

Also the involvement of the Association of the Young Scientists of Latvia was a chance to attract new groups of people and therefore scientists and academically educated people was another target group. Other target groups were

- Urban “diggers”
- Industrial soviet heritage enthusiasts
- Representatives of cultural industries

Process

The process towards the concert can be divided into three groups

- Artistic production (choice of repertoire, contact with composer and producer)
- Technical production (setting up the venue, logistics, additional service staff)
- Marketing and promotion (production of promotional material, posters, social media promotion, press conference of the orchestra, collaboration with the municipality of Riga on the festival marketing)

Budget

Cost of the project: 5922,47EUR

Artistic expenses – 2871,05 EUR

Technical expenses – 2869,92 EUR

Marketing expenses – 181,50EUR

Risks

Two main problems were identified in relation to the concert.

The new concert hall at the Latvian Academy of Science was never tested before and no one could predict how it would be accepted by the audience. Also the team of the ensemble worked longer to plan the logistics of the concert, than for usual concert venues.

There was a very big interest in the venue itself. This meant that the ensemble had to plan for hosting more than 1300 attendants in total at two concerts. They provided additional seating, security guards, extra volunteers etc.

Conclusions and recommendations

The contemporary music attracted a very large audience, and the music was very well accepted by the audience. No other contemporary music event in Latvia ever attracted more than 1300 people in one evening. This shows that there is a very big interest in contemporary music when it is in the right place at the right time.

This made the concert a good platform for the ensemble to inform people about the next season's concerts and collect subscribers for the ensemble's e-mail lists. Since the concert was free, fundamental financial support was necessary, but as a marketing tool the concert was very effective.

Organising the concert in the context of a city festival can save the ensemble a lot of money for marketing, bring a lot of attention and attract a large audience.

The ensemble shared their first experiences regarding acoustics, technical support etc. in the new concert hall with a number of cultural organisations.

For similar events in the future Sinfonietta Rīga would make only one concert instead of two in one evening as they did at this event, since this was physically and emotionally hard.

Facts

Ensemble: Sinfonietta Rīga, 33 musicians involved

Date and time: September 6th 2014, 7pm and 10pm

Venue: Latvian Academy of Science

Programme: Ed Benett: *Stop-Motion Music* and more

Further information: www.sinfoniettariga.lv