

INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL DETERMINANTS IN PREFERENCE OF PUBLIC AUDIENCE AT MUSIC PERFORMANCES IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

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Abstract: This paper displays the results of a survey of public music performances held during 2010 in Skopje, the capital of the Republic of Macedonia. The data concerns the number of visitors categorized by genres of music preference, age, status symbol, origin of the performers, space, and organizers. Field research included 653 musical events with a total number 545,340 visitors grouped into eight categories according to the preference of genres. The largest percentage 35 % refers to the audience of pop rock concerts with the widest age structure ranging from 10 to 55 years. The status symbol among visitors is particularly apparent when it comes to domestic and world - renowned musicians regardless of genre distribution. Yet, most visitors, 46% of them, attended public events where the performers are from mixed backgrounds. In terms of space for maintenance, most events are held in established concert spaces for classical music. The organizers of musical events are budgetary institutions and nonprofit management and private agencies, profit. Structure and size of the audience depend on their marketing skills and affect the segmentation of the audience at the public musical performances.

Key words: Social determinants; musical performances; segmentation; musical genres.

Introduction

Global music culture in the period between 20th and 21st century is characterized by the dominance of electronic media and electronic communication, digitalization, analog segmentation of the musical genres, and the musical audience. We have been witnessing the expansion of electronic media in the synthesis and interpretation of music (synthesizers, computers, etc.); the electronic media has further expanded through the introduction of the radio and the TV, satellite, cable, and *on demand*. This dramatically increases the offer of programs, stations, etc., which in turn initiates the emergence of various new sound recording media and digital formats.

The segmentation of musical genres, according to which audience communicate among themselves is one of the basic features of this period. Although branching of artistic genres is an ongoing process in human history, in recent decades it gets unprecedented dimensions. If in the past there were major population groups that had relatively homogeneous tastes, today it is almost impossible to find homogeneous preference even in the smallest population units, such as, for example, even in students from one class in a secondary school. The segmentation not only occurs between different genres, e.g., the appearance of a whole range of new genres, but also within themselves, e.g., heavy-metal, metal, or rock, hard rock, and so on. This segmentation occurs against globalization or, as it used to be called homogenization as a result of mass culture. So at this moment, along with

globalization of the whole range of different genres provenience in the world, we have segmentation in their local manifestations.

Macedonian music culture is equally affected by these changes. Generally, the electronic media have a dominant place in the focus of interest of our consumers. Satellite and cable radio television programs are widely spread among users, especially among the younger population, who are up to date with all the technological news in this field. They accept and apply them.

In such an environment, one might imagine that the old forms of communication, especially those in the category of public musical performances and concerts, would be gradually suppressed, i.e., that there would be a reduction in their percentage share in the total trade of cultural goods. But it is not so; quite on the contrary, there is an equal and steady growth of cultural communication in public performances due to the increase in leisure time on average in the whole population and the needs of man to be fulfilled in the community, even when following the electronic media. In the world and in the local terms, we witness an increasing number of concerts in all genres with huge attendance.

On the other hand, the change in Macedonian economy, from a controlled to a market economy, has been reflected in different ways in different musical genres in the past two decades. Thus, those who formerly worked on profit, market base, adapted perfectly to the new conditions. A great number of private and concert management agencies were formed, which despite their interest based solely on profits, became equal participants of musical life in the country, primarily through organizing numerous concerts, festivals, and through promotions of digital media sound recorders.

In addition, the established musical institutions responsible for generating and nurturing "high" musical culture face constant cuts in budget funds earmarked for this activity.

All these were the driving factors that lead to this study through which the real picture of musical events in the new millennium in our country will be shown. Therefore, we decided to register the factors influencing the shaping of musical life, taking into account the factors of the surrounding: internal and external, musical and non musical. From most of the factors, like social, economic, political, legal, cultural, civilization, biological, etc., in the spotlight of this paper, we set the social factors that we observed as a driving force for building and spreading the music culture through music audience.

On determining the social factors in which we conducted research as a framework, we defined empirical corpus on which it is applied. Given the sheer volume of potential population (a huge number of events, media, and environments), we decided to reflect the musical life through public musical performances in a compact cultural region, the center of the capital of Macedonia, Skopje, and in a limited period of 1 year, i.e., in the year 2010. Skopje, a major center of cultural and musical life in Macedonia, is the city with a largest population where the events have a greatest impact on the incidence and prevalence of musical genres. All national and most

important musical institutions and agencies, organizers of the concert events, and almost all music institutions funded from the Budget are located here.

Our definition of public performance includes the following components:

- the music event; the place where the music is performed, reproduced or created; which is performed in public and accessible to the audience; in which there is a group music communication.

Thus, these components include the performance of music at concerts, parties, clubs, a variety of festivities, and celebrations. In this way, they differ from other related communications in which there is individual music communication, at home or in small groups of closest social classes (family, professional circles, etc.).

1. Social determinants of public musical performances

music audience

The audience of public musical performance is considered in various disciplines. Along with the analysis of the structure of this type of audience as a social category, there are psychological and aesthetic theories that deal with the same phenomenon, prioritizing different aspects, such as emotions and experiences (Vigotsky, Hanslik, Meyer, Ingarden, Hartman, Tishler, Juslin, Sloboda, etc.). In this paper, we will focus only on the sociological theories of music.

Generally, many music sociologists think that music can provoke two tendencies in the auditorium: concrete, when the audience expresses the view derived from and for the music, and non concrete, when the audience sprouts spontaneously and acts independent of music. Since the end of 20th and the beginning of 21st century, these trends are in constant contrast due to the extraordinary expansion and differentiation of music. The result is the diversification of the audience registered in an incredibly wide range. This dual differentiation of contemporary music and audience, taken as a whole, is the main reason for the aesthetic and sociological understandings and misunderstandings that often emerge in the author listener relations.

The main conclusion of most scholars who have studied this problem is that the audience is forced to limit to what is offered, while it depends largely on what the audience has accepted earlier (Ilic 1991:260). Therefore, primarily because the individual needs do not match the nature of the whole audience, we can not talk about the existence of a whole audience; even when the scope of the audience that is interested in an event is confirmed, it does not mean that the motifs of the audience are the same.

Parallel to the globalization of a whole range of musical genres from various provenances, we have segmentation of consumers in their local music and musical events.

In the past, the general public was classified according to cultural preferences. Most

commonly, it was classified into four groups, namely, elite, folk, popular, and mass culture. We apply this general classification to the musical culture; so in the elite class are the visitors of classical music or high musical art, who in the aesthetic context of music have adopted certain rules and norms. The audience of popular music is identical to the mass audience; the difference is that it is more professional than the elite and the folk audience. The mass audience of mass art is analyzed through sociology, starting from the theories of Weber and critical theory of the Frankfurt school with Adorno, Horkheimer, Benjamin, and Marcuse (Real 2001:168). As a result of the mass media arts, this audience is connected by satisfying the needs of the industrialized society, divided a great deal and consumption-oriented to commercialized and serial products (Petkovska 1998:183). Therefore, the mass audience is usually identified by understanding the "mass" that the purpose of the event is musical entertainment.

Development of mass communication in music sparked a new way of categorizing the audience in the so-called Modern era *lifestyle*. Based on the choice of the consumer in his spare time, the manner or style of living identifies the society through the economic position, through which every aspect of life becomes a matter of style. The result of the imposition of style as a kind of fashion in the selection of musical events from the new social group confirms their tastes, attitudes, and values through their imperative economic style, although usually in a negative connotation (Chaney: 2001). This group particularly consisted of structures and a category called "neuve riche", in which it is great challenge for the mass to be identified.

The new technology has enormous influence on the development of musical taste and in attracting consumers. It guides today's fans of any musical genre to simply identify a group with similar or identical taste on the Internet by visiting Web sites dedicated to specific music (Taylor 2001: 20).

Thus from all of these, we relate most of the revolutionary changes that had occurred today in music through public performances exactly to its interaction with the audience. Musical performers succeed only if they hit and anticipate the taste of the audience. In this sense, the sociology of music cares to resolve specially the nature of interactions between the creators (composers), performers, and audience, and differentiated tastes of the audience toward certain genres, styles, and works. Hence arose the idea of this paper, in which we address to the specifics of the social determinants, in particular through preference of music genres, because they are in direct correlation with the structure of the audience.

2. Methodology and results of the research

Study of the audience of public musical events was limited only to the number of visitors. Our experience in monitoring this issue, the insight that we had in public musical events through personal presence, the recorded materials, and the continuous monitoring of information from electronic and print media, enabled us to record events and to build some initial comments and assumptions about the structure of the audience and music preference. Field research included 653 musical events with a total of 545,340 visitors grouped into eight categories according to the preference of genres. The data of the number of visitors was a special problem to us.

Very often we registered these data according to the capacity of the concert space, information by the organizers about the number of tickets sold, the importance of the event in musical life through marketing campaigns, etc. However, in the category of electronic music, because of the large number of events, we scrutinized the events to meet certain concert criteria, and in the process excluded the standard types of parties that are organized at discoteques every weekend.

From all these, it has been noticed that there is a correlation between the attendance and age, the status symbol, the origin of performers, the venue of performance and the organizers of musical life. Therefore, in the following section, we will specifically address each of these issues.

2.1. Attendance according to music genres

We have classified the data on the number of visitors into eight groups according to the genres: classical, spiritual, pop rock, folk (traditional and modern), jazz, children's, electronic, and modern ballet. Table 1 displays the data of the number of musical performances by musical genres and the number of visitors to these events. In Table1, modern ballet performances have been included along with the genre of classical music, presuming that they have the same musical genesis. On the other hand, audience in the field of modern ballet, according to the percentage of representation in the general distribution of genres, participate in less than 1%; so they almost do not change the real picture of attendance at musical events.

Table 1 : Distribution of visitors and musical events according to music genres

Genres	Number of events	% of events	By Visitors ~	% By visitors
1. Classic	225	34	109,070	20
2. Spiritual	15	2	5453	1
3. Pop Rock	71	11	190.870	35
4. Folk	53	8	55.250	10
5. Jazz	44	7	38.173	7
6. Children's	38	6	43.627	8
7. Electronic	181	28	81.801	15
8. More genres	26	4	20.975	4
Total	653	545.340	545 340	100

According to these data, of the total number of 545,340 visitors who attended musical events throughout the year 2010 in the central area of Skopje, the largest percentage of 35% attended concerts of pop and rock music. In the second place, with 20%, is the classical music audience, and in the third place with 15% are the visitors of electronic music with DJ performances. On the other hand, in the genre distribution by the number of events, the participants of pop rock music was only 11%. These differences stem from the fact that just two concerts held at the City Stadium were attended by more than 20,000 visitors. In addition to these events, the New Year's pop rock concert at the Macedonia Square was attended by more than

7,000 visitors. Given the reason for going to the square, we do not see the primary intention of this audience solely in the music event.

In the genre of classical music, as opposed to most music events, the number of visitors is lower (109,070) compared with the visitors to the pop rock music (190,870). The decline in the interest in classical music and opera is the global tendency in the world. This can be seen from the successes of the world production houses in combining classical music with pop and rock music to ensure its future and survival. Hence, the world's most famous opera singers perform along with the most popular pop rock performers or record popular songs. There are also trends for classic pieces to be performed using electronic instruments, such as the one used by the violinist Vanessa Mae.

These are again examples of removal of the genre limits that appropriately reflect the deletion of the limits of audience.

According to the data from the Bureau of Statistics, the number of visitors to the concerts of the Macedonian Philharmonia and other professional orchestras in the year 2009/2010, compared with that in the period of the year 2008/2009 increased by 9.4%, whereas the number of visitors decreased by 13.8% according to the data from the Web site www.stat.gov.mk. In the recent years, local artists with international reputation who emerged on the scene of the Macedonian classical music have become particularly popular at home, and their concerts have always been manifested with great interest. On the other hand, the decline in the living standards of the middle class and their preference for certain musical genres resulted in the reduction in the number of visitors by 3.3% in 2007 and by 2.9% in 2009.

In the third place with 15% of the total number of visitors are those who attended the events of electronic music. In this group, most of them attend the DJ performances in night clubs. The average attendance is approximately 450 visitors by event. One can notice large and constant percentage of visits in this genre due to the modern night life culture and also due to the distribution of free tickets through which the organizers compete among themselves.

As per the data base, the number of visitors to folk music covered 10% of the total audience. It builds on the official data of the number of visitors and shows that the traditional ensembles in the period 2009/2010 tend to reduce compared with those in 2008/2009 (according www.stat.gov.mk). One possible assumption is that it could be due to the large selection of folk music that is practiced in bars and cafes, and growing preference to folk music, especially to the new hybrid genres like turbo-folk in the neighboring countries. Precisely, this newly created turbo-folk genre has enormously increased the number of visitors, as confirmed by mass visits of folk singers, especially from the Republic of Serbia who visit the nearest neighborhood, to concerts. Attractive appearance of performers on the verge of kitsch, a mix of popular music tune with the use of electric instruments and pop rock rhythm, the impact of TV stations that broadcast this kind of music are just a few crucial features that influence the preference of this genre.

According to our results, only 8% of the total audience visited music events performed by children. The average attendance at these concerts include a relatively

large number of child visitors, about 1000. However, this points to the fact that children attend events in the company of adults or parents, or they attend events in the organizations of the educational institutions.

In the overall distribution of the audience at the music events held during the year 2010, only 1% of audience attended spiritual music.

2.2. Attendance by age

If we consider the audience at pop rock events according to age, we can conclude that it covers the widest age structure from 10 to 55 years. Only at rock concerts the age range of the audience is from 18 to 25 years. This is evident from the fact that at the youth rock-fest in Skopje, during the several evenings of the festival, the number of visitors was more than 3,000 teenagers.

In our environment, musical names from the former Yu-spaces attract great interest. It is a special phenomenon that is more associated with nostalgia; so the age of the audience changes and the upper age limit moves up to 60 years. The concerts that feature famous rock stars from the past generations are with identical appearance, as was the case with the appearance of the band ZZ Top.

In Skopje, the symphonic concerts of classical music have a constant group of visitors, namely, professional musicians and students of music faculties, who form the largest percentage. As for the age, the older age structure prevails. The age and structure of the visitors change at opera and ballet performances, especially long-renowned event May Opera Evenings, where the age limit is significantly expanded.

The structure of public of DJ parties according to age consisted of young population from 18 to 25 years. According to the State Institute of Statistics, free time activities of young people in Skopje increase in the group aged 15 to 24, and decrease in the group aged 25 to 64 to 4.24 hours. Many young people still live with their parents, so they do have more free time (Koviloski 2005:45).

Age range at the DJ performances increases up to 50 when world famous DJs like Tiësto perform. In our city, with teenagers and young adults up to 25 years old, there is a mass consumption of radically different genres such as turbo-folk, parallel to the presence of DJ parties.

2.3. Attendance according to status symbol

When analyzing the audience, we categorized the aspect of visits by status symbol too. At these concerts, the audience is different from the regular ones, because a new dimension of visitors appears, usually motivated by prestige or reputation of their lifestyle, which was discussed earlier. The concerts are often the places where visitors of this type are compared and ranked through their interactions according to how and how much they earn, how they spend their money, who they are, with whom they are familiar, with whom they associate, and to what extent they are

known in the immediate, even in the wider public and thus impose their musical taste and attitude.

This trend was present in the Macedonian music community, especially in the mid-90s, in the concerts of jazz music, at the Skopje Jazz festival. This trend continues in the third millennium, because the organizers hit the mood of the visitors, and it is more significant if the name of the artist is more famous, regardless of the musical genre. In this way large interest grew in this musical genre in our environment, comprising 7% of the total number of visitors in the database average of 870 visitors for the concert.

2.4. Attendance according to the origin of performers

The structure of the audience is positively correlated with the name and origin of the artist or the music band. Directly depending on who performs and how it is valued in the global music public, the event becomes a priority in the center of interest of consumers. Therefore, in Table 2, we registered the number of audience according to the origin of performers.

Table 2: Distribution of attendance according to the origin of performers

Origin of performers	Total Events	% According to events	Total visitors	% By visitors
1. Home	294	45	207.239	38
2. Foreign	117	18	98.161	18
3. Combined	242	37	240.000	44
Total	653	100	545.340	100

In the course of 2010, 45% of domestic performers are mostly present. This fact leads us to the conclusion that the presence of the domestic artists and musicians at the concert venues in the city is increasing, which confirms that the Macedonian performing arts is in a steady progress and growth. These events were attended by 207,230 or 38% of the total number of visitors. In the field of pop rock music, some of the performances of local singers and groups are repeated two to three times consecutively, depending on the interests of the audience.

Foreign performers are included in the performance of all genres, except children's and spiritual. They constituted 98,161 or 18% of the total number of visitors. Actually, this is due to the fact that the performances of foreign performers are supplemented by domestic performers, who frequently play the role of supporting bands, soloists, backing vocals, etc.

Most visitors, 240.000 or 44% of the total number of 545.340, visited the public performances where both domestic and foreign performers performed in the same evening. These events are mostly related to the electronic and pop rock music, to the most opera and ballet performances of the Macedonian opera and ballet through soloists, conductors, directors, choreographers, and concerts of the Macedonian Philharmonic Orchestra.

2.5. The locations of performing the musical events

According to our database, in the central city area during 2010, more than 30 locations were functional, where public musical performances were held. Most of the classical music events were held in established concert halls. Generally, the discrepancy in the number of concerts held in the field of classical music with the number of visitors is due to the capacity of the halls where these public musical events are held. Thus, for example, concerts of this genre take place in halls with a capacity of 80 to 750 visitors, but the performances of most famous domestic and international artists, are held only in non-standardized spaces with greater capacity. In 2010, the great pianist Simon Trpceski performed with the London Philharmonic Orchestra at the Metropolis Arena that had a capacity for 5000 visitors and more.

Several public musical performances from other genres like pop and rock music were held at the City Stadium in 2010 that had a capacity of more than 20,000 visitors. Usually, the events for which there is special interest are regularly held in the locations with the largest capacity. For example, the DJ performances, since 2003 are held in spaces with the largest capacity, halls of the Skopje Fair. In this way, it is difficult to control the age of the visitors because of mass visits.

2.6. Organizers of musical events

During the year 2010, more than 20 organizers participated in the creation of musical life in Skopje; among them were budget institutions nonprofit, profit managerial agencies, with sponsorships, grants, diplomatic missions, and foreign cultural centers. When registering the musical events, we also found performances organized in combination with private funds supported by the Budget.

The structure and size of the audience depend on the organizers of the event, i.e., their marketing capabilities. Successful marketing imprints the product in the mind of the consumer. Therefore, some of the profit organizers of musical life succeed in creating the impression in a target group that it is important to attend musical event, even if the ticket prices are too high.

Conclusion

To explore the sociological impact of determinants on the preference of musical genres, we observed the audience at public musical performances held during 2010 in Skopje, R. Macedonia. Consideration of the audience as a phenomenon in itself is a complex process that involves various tools and committed activities. This is confirmed by our field research because although at first the audience of a musical event may seem amorphous, it still consists of many different stratas and parts, of which each individually makes choices according to personal affinities or the affinities of the group that it is connected with. That is why today it is almost impossible to find homogeneous preference even in the smallest population units. Thus are observed significant differences in individual and group in stratification according to gender, age, nationality, socioeconomic status, level of education, tradition etc. In this regard, we will emphasize the economic stratification that is

present in the contemporary Macedonian society, because it influences the creation of new cultural stratification in an attempt to identify the newly created social strata.

We have chosen to consider the impact of the sociological determinants on the preference of the audience in the public musical performances through the music genres, the age, the status symbol, the origin of the performers, the area of maintenance, and the organizers of musical events. According to the genre distribution, classical music events prevail, and the greatest number of visitors are registered at the pop rock concerts. The structure of the audience according to the age varies depending on the musical genre, so the widest age structure covers the events of pop rock music.

From the research we can conclude that the sociological determinants affect the preference of musical genres that open a field for prospective monitoring and for the creation of cultural policy.

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