

MUSIC FESTIVALS IN MODERN ITALY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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SUMMARY. This study analyses one of the complex problems of modern artistic discourse – the functioning of a music festival as a special form of intercultural dialogue and its integration into a modern cultural medium. The article reveals the issues of the relationship of its components, such as the conditions for the implementation of intercultural communication in the context of a music festival; the morphological space of the multi-layer score of this artistic phenomenon; forms of intercultural communication, and sociocultural constraints associated with the Covid-19 pandemic. *The purpose of this study was to analyze the music festival as one of the forms of polyculture dialogue and its functioning in the new realities of the Covid-19 pandemic.* In this regard, both theoretical (semantic analysis) and practical (comparative analysis) research methods were used. *As a result of the study, it was proven that a music festival as one of the forms of intercultural dialogue allows realizing different semantic levels of culture, enriches spirituality, and contributes to the consolidation of representatives of different cultures, leading to a constructive solution of the problems of artistic discourse; it was revealed that during the Covid-19 pandemic, not all genre and stylistic forms could be realized, due to the difficult situation of socio-cultural isolation; a classification of new formats for holding music festivals was proposed, which take into account the current conditions for its functioning in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. The practical significance of this study is that its results can be used for further analysis of the mechanisms of functioning and broadcasting of a polyphonically complex score of a music festival.*

Keywords: music festival, the musical life of modern Italy, artistic dialogue, interaction, multi-layered score of a creative project, multicultural space

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Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has swept all countries of the world, but it was the entire Apennine Peninsula that suffered the most. The familiar images of Italy have become inaccessible to perception. They were indefinitely replaced by the deserted city streets and the image of Pope Francis praying passionately in the deserted Piazza San Pietro, as well as by the transition of the life vector of modern Italy into the format of Internet projects, common to all spheres of culture and musical life. In Italy, trust and hospitality changed to fear and hopelessness, the beauty of the flowing sound of music – to a deep cry of silence, vivid emotions – to hard feelings. In this very difficult time, when forced restrictions of freedom in the name of health security became a necessary measure, the holding of events breathed life into the gloomy atmosphere of the previously cheerful and vibrant musical life in Italy. At the same time, not only the format has changed from real-time to virtual, but also the very form of communication. That is why music festivals in Italy during the Covid-19 pandemic have become a field for the study of various forms of functioning of the musical dialogue, which has reached a completely new level of development.

The cultural vector and coordinates of the development of a modern music festival are quite complex, which is manifested in its polystructural and polyphonic content and the tendency towards the internationalization of its participants. The panorama of festival projects around the world is striking in its scale and multilayeredness, in the context of which a special semiotic discourse is formed. At the same time, among the variety of music festivals, one can single out a huge range of both genre and content diversity. This suggests that a festival is a universal form of intercultural dialogue in modern culture.

In the context of modern challenges, such a complex mechanism as a music festival had to look for a completely new format for existence. The reason for this was the Covid-19 pandemic, which hurt the arts and culture industries around the world. For example, only in Italy in 2019 – the first third of 2022, the revenue from ticket sales fell by 94% compared to last year, which suggests that the cultural sector was one of the first which took the strike of the Covid-19 pandemic. Along with the ban on crossing borders around the world, tours, concerts, and festivals were cancelled, creative venues were closed, and theatrical performances and other events were reduced or postponed.

At that time, almost half of the theatres in Italy were closed, but the region of Lombardy with the theatre capital in Milan was particularly affected². Music festivals in Italy, focused on the format of invited famous musicians, were virtually paralyzed. The artists had to go through a long quarantine, which seriously adjusted and broke the schedules and contracts.

The same situation was observed all over the world. According to UNESCO, as of April 15, 2020, 89% of countries have almost completely restricted access to World Cultural Heritage Sites³, and by April 22, 2020, 128 countries have suspended the activities of cultural-related organizations. According to research by the International Council of Museums, during the pandemic, almost all museums in the world were closed to the public, which became a serious test for European culture. The entire cultural industry of various genres and styles has been significantly affected by the pandemic. Online formats of interaction with art and the listener have replaced announcements, shows, project presentations, conferences, and meetings with the creators of bright creative projects. For example, the Venice Carnival, which was supposed to last until February 25, 2020, was not held in full format, because it was interrupted and ended three days earlier to stop the spread of coronavirus⁴.

The Covid-19 crisis has hurt culture and the arts in general. According to UNESCO, the cancellation and postponement of concerts, performances, and festivals, the cessation of film production, and the closure of museums have had disastrous consequences for the creative professions prone to financial crises. The pandemic affected more than 2.5 million audiences of creative organizations, led to the cancellation of about 12 thousand events, and caused the dismissal of hundreds of employees who were forced to apply for public assistance during the crisis. Therefore, *the purpose of this study* was to analyse the functioning of the music festival in the realities of the Covid-19 pandemic and its Covid-19-related formats.

According to the purpose of the study, the following *tasks* were set: *to analyse* the conditions for the functioning of music festivals in Italy during the Covid-19 pandemic; *to identify* culturological reflections and conditions for further development of music festivals in the context of social distancing.

² Balestra, Cecilia, and Malaguti, Alfonso. *Organizzare la musica. Legislazione, produzione, distribuzione, gestione nel sistema Italiano*. Milano: Edizione Franco Angeli, 2006.

³ Culture & COVID-19. Impact & Response Tracker. UNESCO, 1, 2020.
https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/issue_1_en_culture_covid-19_tracker.pdf

⁴ *Le Muse Inquiete. When La Biennale di Venezia Meets History. Central Pavilion, Giardini della Biennale 29.08 – 8.12.2020*. Venezia: La Biennale di Venezia, 2020.
<https://static.labiennale.org/files/labiennale/Documenti/the-disquieted-muses.pdf>

The initial presuppositions

To overcome the difficulties encountered in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, virtual and digital platforms and online technologies were introduced for the implementation of various works of art. Representatives of many creative professions had to adapt to the difficult conditions of existence in a world of isolation, to master new forms of communication with the audience. During this difficult period, the cultural industry faced a huge number of unsolved problems, including the closure of various institutions of culture and art, the budget of which was significantly dependent on tourism flows, which led to a reduction in staff; ensuring the security of cultural sites, which has become relevant in those countries where conflicts during the post-COVID recovery period led to unstable situations; a change in the entire sphere of culture, the cause of which was the general self-isolation, which affected mental health, etc. Humanity had not only to comprehend the problems of the Covid-19 pandemic era but also to find the right ways to solve them. In connection with the new challenges of the era, the rapid digitalization of life, and the emergence of a completely new format of communication, everyone's attention was also focused on life-support issues in the socio-cultural sphere throughout the world.

Among these problems, we can point out the organization and further functioning of such a complex mechanism as a music festival with its innovative management technologies in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, a curatorial strategy for conducting them, state support, the activities of financial and social institutions, funds, as well as the activities of the tourism sector, influencing the effectiveness of the created projects. Many problems remain unresolved, which makes this study *relevant and promising*.

Literary review

In recent decades, the interest in the music festival as an intercultural dialogue has fascinated many researchers, who paid a lot of attention to the issues of marketing and curating festival projects. These are presentations of festival directors, reports of presidents of financial funds and representatives of the public sector: Gaetano Armao⁵, Cecilia Balestra⁶, Alfonso Malaguti,

⁵ Armao, Gaetano. *Le trasformazioni dell'ordinamento giuridico delle Fondazioni Liriche in Italia*. Roma: CIDIM (Comitato Nazionale Italiano Musica), 2008.

⁶ Balestra, Cecilia, and Malaguti, Alfonso. *Organizzare la musica. Legislazione, produzione, distribuzione, gestione nel sistema Italiano*. Milano: Edizione Franco Angeli, 2006.

Franco Punzi, Marzia Ravenna⁷, Gianluca Sole⁸, Roberta Bartoletti, Laura Gemini, Stefano Brilli⁹. These documents contain factual material about the conducted music festivals and reveal the role of the meaningful content of such events, thanks to which directors, screenwriters, and managers gain practical experience in solving complex problems.

There are also some theoretical studies of the music festival as a multicultural phenomenon, which reveal its content aspect. The role of music direction in a modern opera performance was studied in the work of M. Cherkashyna-Hubarenko¹⁰; the process of formation and prospects for the development of the festival movement in Austria, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, Ukraine, as well as some of their aspects in Italy, were revealed in the works of M. Shved¹¹. O. Zinkevych¹² work showed a deep analytical approach, revealing the features of music festivals held in Ukraine, on the example of such cultural events as Kyiv Music Fest (Kyiv); Festival of Modern Art “Two Days and Two Nights of New Music” (Odesa) and others. At the same time, the music festival as a special cultural layer of modern Italy, with its specifics and peculiarities of the national traditions, has not been sufficiently researched, which makes this study relevant and promising.

However, art historians were not the only ones who undertook an analysis of such a complex artistic phenomenon as a music festival. For instance, the concept of “a music festival” in the context of the history of philosophy was considered in terms of dialogue thinking in the works of

⁷ Ravenna, Marzia. Il sistema delle Fondazioni Lirico-sinfoniche in Italia. *Tafter Journal*, 22, Aprile 2010. <https://www.tafterjournal.it/2010/04/01/il-sistema-delle-fondazioni-lirico-sinfoniche-in-italia/>

⁸ Sole, Gianluca. La crisi delle Fondazioni Lirico-sinfoniche italiane di Gianluca Sole, Commissario straordinario del Governo per le fondazioni lirico-sinfoniche. *Dimensione Informazione*, 0, Novembre 2018. <https://www.dimensioneinformazione.com/la-criisi-delle-fondazioni-lirico-sinfoniche-italiane-di-gianluca-sole-commissario-straordinario-del-governo-per-le-fondazioni-lirico-sinfoniche/>

⁹ Bartoletti, Roberta, Gemini, Laura, et al. *Il Rossini Opera Festival nell'esperienza degli spettatori: indagine identità, gradimento e comunità del festival. Analisi delle interviste al pubblico dell'edizione 2018*. Urbino: Dipartimento di Scienze della Comunicazione, Studi Umanistici e Internazionali: Storia, Culture, Lingue, Letterature, Arti, Media (DISCUI) Università degli Studi di Urbino “Carlo Bo”, 2018. <https://www.rossiniperfestival.it/contrib/uploads/2019-Report-Uniurb.pdf>

¹⁰ Cherkashyna-Hubarenko, Maryna. *Opera theater in changing space and time*. Kharkiv: Akta, 2015.

¹¹ Shved, Mykhailo. *Trends in the development of international festivals of modern music*. Lviv: Spolom, 2010.

¹² Zinkevych, Olena. Music speaks the language of our time. *Krytyka*, 7–8, no. 81–82, 2004, pp. 30–34.

E. Husserl¹³, M. Heidegger¹⁴, K. Levi-Strauss¹⁵, L. Humilev¹⁶, and others. Scientists considered the dialogue in the dynamics of the development of culture, actualizing such basic concepts of culture as self-identification and national self-determination. M. Buber was the founder of the scientific theory of dialogue in Western philosophy. In his book “I and You” he raises questions about dialogue between people, highlighting the role of the language through which it is carried out. The problem of dialogue through the analysis of the concept of “other” and his meeting with the “I” was developed by H.-G. Gadamer¹⁷, E. Levinas¹⁸, M. Bakhtin¹⁹ and others. For example, M. Bakhtin²⁰ considered the dialogue through the work of consciousness and viewed dialogic relations as a universal phenomenon, which pervades all relations of human life. The scientist concretized the cultural dialogue in the concept of “polyphonism” and noted its dialogism. The connotative meaning of M. Bakhtin’s “polyphonism” is diversity as an organized dialogue²¹.

The problem of dialogue from the point of view of its universality was addressed in S. Wanhill’s work “A night at the opera festival”²². The researchers also viewed music festival as one of the forms of investment and income of the city where it is held²³; as a certain experience of artistic management²⁴; as a form of human self-preservation²⁵. Special attention

¹³ Ricoeur, Paul. *Kant and Husserl. Intentionality and textuality. Philosophical thought of France in the 20th century*. Tomsk: Vodoley, 1998.

¹⁴ Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*. Moscow: Respublika, 1993.

¹⁵ Levi-Strauss, Claude. *Anthropologie Structurale Deux*. Moscow, 1985, pp. 5-20.

¹⁶ Humilev, Lev. *Ethnogenesis and the biosphere of the Earth*. St. Petersburg: Azbuka-klassika, 2002.

¹⁷ Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method: Fundamentals of Philosophical Hermeneutics*. Moscow: Progress, 1988.

¹⁸ Levinas, Emmanuel. *Time and others; the humanism of another person*. St. Petersburg: VRFSh, 1999.

¹⁹ Bakhtin, Mikhail. *The Author and His Hero: On the Philosophical Foundations of the Humanities*. St. Petersburg: Azbuka, 2000.

²⁰ Idem

²¹ Ibidem

²² Wanhill, Stephen. A night at the opera festival: The economics of opera. *Advances in modern tourism research: Economic perspectives*. Ed. Álvaro Matias et al. Heidelberg: Physica-Verlag, 2007. 345–365.

²³ Armour, Julian. Festivals more than justify city investments. *Ottawa Festivals d'Ottawa. Ottawa Citizen*, 26 June 2006.

²⁴ Bowdin, Glenn, O'Toole, William, et al. *Events management*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Elsevier, 2006.

²⁵ Agamben, Giorgio. *Creazione e anarchia. L'opera nell'età della religione capitalista*. Venezia: Neri Pozza Editore, 2017.

should be paid to the work of Paolo Giordano “Net Contagio”²⁶, which describes not only the emotions and experiences of people during the pandemic but also the functioning of culture in a new format. A series of articles by the philosopher Giorgio Agamben, posted on the open blog of the Quodlibet publishing company, also deserves mention. In his essay, “The Invention of the Epidemic”, he substantiates the theory that the world faced a more serious threat to life, but even then, did not elevate it to the status of a global catastrophe. From his point of view, the world should offer alternative forms in which communication will not disappear altogether but will find other formats for dialogue.

The range of analytical approaches to the concept of “dialogue” is quite wide: from ethical and aesthetic attitudes in the works of M. Buber²⁷ to V. Bibler’s dialogics²⁸. Thus, speaking about the problem of intercultural dialogue in its broadest sense, V. Bibler focused on the fact that culture can live and develop only simultaneously with other cultures. At the same time, each culture, like a “two-faced Janus”, is closed “on itself” and open to the outside, going beyond its limits. A culture can develop further only in such a dialogic space, where the dialogue itself is carried out endlessly, each time forming new meanings. In the 1960-80-s, the ideas of dialogism in the cultural and semiotic aspects were developed by the representatives of the Tartu-Moscow Semiotic School, including Yu. Lotman²⁹, V. Ivanov³⁰, E. Meletinskiy³¹ and many others. Yu. Lotman³² analysing the semiotic characteristics of the dialogue, emphasized the different positions of its participants and argued that communication with another culture is possible at the level of interiorization of its image into one’s world.

The concept of “dialogue” was also considered from the perspective of intercultural communication, which is the main form of existence of the music festival. At the same time, none of the studies raised *the problem of artistic dialogue* as one of the forms of implementation of the music festival. In addition, the problem of the functioning of the music festival as one of the forms of polyphonic dialogue under conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic has not been studied yet, which makes this research *relevant* and promising.

²⁶ Giordano, Paolo. *Net Contagio*. Torino: Giulio Einaudi Editore, 2020.

²⁷ Lifintseva, Tatyana. *The Philosophy of Dialogue by Martin Buber*. Moscow: IFRAN, 1999.

²⁸ Bibler, Vladimir. On the essence of dialogism. *Voprosy filosofii*, 7, 1989, pp. 5-10.

²⁹ Lotman, Yuriy. *Memory in cultural studies*. Tallinn: Alexandra, 1992.

³⁰ Ivanov, Vyacheslav. Binary structures in semiotic systems. *Sistemnyye issledovaniya: Ezhegodnik*. Moscow, 1972, pp. 34-57.

³¹ Meletinskiy, Eleazar. *Poetics of myth*. Moscow, 1976, pp. 84.

³² Lotman, Yuriy. *Memory in cultural studies*. Tallinn: Alexandra, 1992.

Methods

The study used both theoretical and empirical methods, including *the method of semantic analysis* to identify the structural components of a music festival and its morphological features; a *comparative method* to characterize those processes that arise in the multi-layered structure of modern musical culture.

The *research tools* included methods for analysing different layers of a music festival as a complex discursive dialogue and methods for collecting objective information about the holding of music festivals in Italy during the Covid-19 pandemic. This made it possible to *reveal* the genre and stylistic features of music festivals and their innovative characteristics that arose during the pandemic. The structured analysis of the empirical material made it possible to identify different formats of music festivals, to single out those that were not only held in the difficult conditions of the pandemic but were also able to reach a new level of functioning, remaining in demand.

Results and Discussion

The gradual recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic has been uneven in various spheres of culture. One of the indicators of this process, from the point of view of UNESCO³³, is the gradual opening of cultural heritage sites. As of September 14, 2020, only 62 out of 167 countries have fully opened access to various World Cultural Heritage sites. At the same time, in 44 countries access was partially open, and in 61 countries it remained closed. By September 2021, the situation has changed significantly, and with it the format of communication with the viewer. If earlier such technologies had existed but remained a niche product, then in the context of social distancing, many organizations resorted to the resumption of activities in a virtual format. For example, the Google Art and Culture service experienced an unprecedented surge in interest on the part of users during the pandemic. According to a study by Priori Data³⁴, in Italy, the largest number of downloads of the Google Art and Culture app occurred between May 2020 and May 2022 and amounted to more than 80 thousand downloads.

³³ UNESCO. *Introduction to the global map on the closure of World Heritage sites due to Covid-19 and analysis*. <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/cultureresponse/monitoring-world-heritage-site-closures>

³⁴ *Culture in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic*. Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation, 2020. <https://ach.gov.ru/upload/pdf/Covid-19-culture.pdf>

The Milan Opera House “La Scala” had been preparing to take part in the Google project for several years and accelerated this process with the onset of the pandemic. With the help of this app, a virtual tour of the theatre was organized, and musicians and artists performed an excerpt from Verdi’s opera remotely via video link.

The pandemic showed the importance and significance of culture in the life of society; therefore, measures were taken to revive events using digital platforms and virtual reality technologies. Such a surge of interest in cultural products led to some problems that needed to be solved. Thus, the introduction of technological solutions for resumption of the sphere of culture is based on the trends of previous development, but innovative forms of creation and implementation of a creative product turned out to be acceptable both for the audience, allowing them to meet cultural needs and cope with the consequences of social isolation, and for the organizers, providing alternative channels of professional communication.

The number of musical projects in the sphere of culture and art during social isolation has grown exponentially, which indicates that the festival as a form of cultural dialogue is relevant and promising. It has become a special semiotic space, the existence of which is conditioned by different forms of existence, in the context of which the exchange of content is possible.

Research material

The study analyzed the festivals held during the Covid-19 pandemic from May 2020 to May 2022. The list of online music festivals, that have hosted millions of performers and listeners, makes Italy one of the brightest, sunniest pearls of the Adriatic, where music flows, poetry sounds, and the world of art comes alive³⁵. But since March 2020, social distancing has practically paralyzed the festival movement, major events have been cancelled, the premiere dates, that were previously announced, have been postponed, logistical ties have been broken, and contracts have been terminated. This led to serious financial crises and problems in the cultural industry in general.

Not all music festivals immediately opened their venues for dialogue, and it took a lot of time for the organizers to adapt to the new formats. The organizers of those festivals that managed to master online technologies in a short time could reach a whole new level of understanding

³⁵ Gianfranco, Mariotti. *Suite della bellezza dimenticata*. Milano: Ricordi, 2014, pp. 95.

of dialogic discourse. Music festivals, that were held during the pandemic, have radically changed the format and all the tools of festivals. At the same time, the *criterion* for holding music festivals in this difficult period was their mobility, the ability to change the format of the spectacle, adjust the conditions for holding them, and introduce innovative methods of working with both the performer and the potential viewer quickly and efficiently. The conditions for participation in events, the forms of broadcasting a musical product, the genres of their presentation, and the types of media coverage have also changed.

The range of musical events presented in the study, dates to the second half of 2020 when the technological and instrumental base for their implementation was created. The material for the study was the music festivals, held in Italy during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Among such forums, the brightest event was “La Biennale” – the 64th International Festival of Contemporary Music, held in Venice in 2020 and directed by the composer Ivan Fedele³⁶ It is one of the most prestigious festivals, where world premieres are performed by the most famous orchestras, ensembles, bright soloists, which emphasizes its central role in the modern musical culture of Italy³⁷.

In 2020, the 64th International Festival of Contemporary Music was united by the idea embodied in its name – Incontri³⁸. Within the framework of the project, two temporary poles met, and intercultural dialogue was held between the work of the great composers of the past and modern innovative practices.

In 2020, the Spanish composer Luis de Pablo (born 1930), a continuer of the traditions of the Second Vienna School, received the Golden Lion award. The Silver Lion was awarded to Raphaël Cendo (born 1975) – the founder of his aesthetic movement “Saturationism”. His composing technique suggests the absence of pure sound and timbre, in its classical sense. At the same time, the musical tapestry of his works is filled with a special spectral sound, which resonates with both modern young performers and famous musicians from all over the world.

³⁶ *Le Muse Inquiete. When La Biennale di Venezia Meets History. Central Pavilion, Giardini della Biennale 29.08 – 8.12.2020.* Venezia: La Biennale di Venezia, 2020. <https://static.labiennale.org/files/labiennale/Documenti/the-disquieted-muses.pdf>

³⁷ Di Martino, Enzo. *La Biennale di Venezia 1895-2003.* Venezia: G. Mondadori, 1995.

³⁸ Ponomarenko, Olena. Temporary space of musical Venice (on the example of functioning of the international festival of contemporary music of the Venice biennial). *European Journal of Arts*, 2, 2021, pp. 46-52.

https://scholar.google.com.ua/citations?view_op=view_citation&hl=ru&user=xOMdvvgAAAAJ&citation_for_view=xOMdvvgAAAAJ:YOWf2qJgpHMC

On September 25, 2020, two premieres of Luis de Pablo took place on the stage of Teatro alle Tese: the world premiere with the work “Concierto para viola” and the Italian one – “Fantasías per chitarra e orchestra”, played by the string quartet Arditti Quartet, violist Garth Knox, guitarist Thierry Mercier, and Marco Angius –the conductor of L'Orchestra di Padova e del Veneto, one of the renowned interpreters of contemporary music. The premiere work “Delocazione”, created in 2017 by Raphaël Cendo, can be attributed to the metamodernist movement. It is characterized by the “principle of oscillation”, or “swing principle” between Art Nouveau and “... a romantic type of perception”. It is most clearly manifested in the works of poets and philosophers of the late 20th – early 21st centuries, including Claude Royet-Journoud, Georges Didi-Huberman, Rainer Maria Rilke, and Georges Bataille. The premiere work was performed by the French quartet from Stuttgart “Tana” and “Neue Vocalsolisten”, specializing in the performance of modern vocal music.

The sector, dedicated to one instrument, has been functioning at the festival for several seasons in a row. In 2020, the piano was an instrument the subject of numerous searches and experiments. Since 2020 was the anniversary year for L. van Beethoven, such famous pianists, as Leonardo Colafelice, William Greco, and Pasquale Iannone presented three concerts, which included the music of L. van Beethoven and contemporary avant-garde composers of the late twentieth century: Karlheinz Stockhausen, Pierre Boulez, Franco Donatoni and others.

On September 27, 2020, the theatrical sector of the festival presented Giorgio Battistelli's opera “Cenci” on the stage of Teatro Goldoni. The opera was first performed in English at the Almeida Theater in London yet in 1997, after which its French and German versions were released. Only 20 years after the debut, in the fall of 2019, the public saw the Italian version, directed by Carmelo Rifici, at Lugano in Scena. Francesco Bossaglia was the musical director of this project; the scenery was created by the famous Art Nouveau painter Balthus. The story of Beatrice Cenci was voiced by Giorgio Battistelli – the author of the music and the libretto, which was based on the version of the tragedy by the French playwright Antonin Artaud, written in 1935³⁹ The opera was performed by the orchestra Ensemble 900 from Conservatorio della Svizzera italiana, Lugano.

³⁹ Nardelli, Stefano. La crudeltà in musica di Battistelli. Al LAC di Lugano va in scena una riuscita nuova versione de I Cenci, per la prima volta in lingua italiana. *Il Giornale della Musica*, 26 Maggio 2019. <https://www.giornaledellamusica.it/recensioni/la-crudelta-musica-di-battistelli>

The amazing staging of this dark story balanced between melolog and opera, musical theatre and pantomime, where the actors' voices are combined with the sounds of instrumental ensemble and electronics, video sequence, and sound effects, immersing the viewer in a real "musical theatre". Finally, mention should be made of the groundbreaking work of the sound engineer, who used Ondes Martenot for the first time on the stage. The sound accompaniment by Fabrizio Rosso was amazing, as he created a kind of diffusive zone, in which the electronics (Alberto Barberis, Nadir Wassen) dissolves into the orchestral part, performed by Ensemble900 from the Conservatorio della Svizzera italiana. It was music that determined the dramatic action, in which the main characters – vocals and pantomime – are presented through the prism of the creative version of director Roberto Latini, performers (actress Anahì Traversi, mezzo-soprano Elena Rivoltini, Marta Ciappina) and clown pantomime Michele Rezzonico. They created sounds "...like characters that are moving next to the actors' bodies"⁴⁰.

In this project, Giorgio Battistelli rejected the live voice sound, appealing to the concept of the Artaud Theatre as a theatre of sounds and imitation. In his opinion, all vocal emissions, from a whisper to recitation, from stable speech to scream, from guttural sounds-noises to laughter and tears, create together with flexible instrumental parts that have become an oscillogram of emotions in this musical theatre. At the same time, symphonic scenes, with the help of human whispers, created an unsettling atmosphere that makes the dark strings of the soul resonate in each of them.

Even though social restrictions were in place in 2020, the Biennale College, created in 2014 to develop creative connections, also presented its project. The result of the work of the college since its opening day was 19 chamber works of various genres. A multimedia composition, created on the initiative of the festival director Ivan Fedele (2012-2019) using electronics, was the most innovative project, shown in 2020. This became possible thanks to the opening of the Centre for Music Multimedia Informatics at the Venice Biennale, which provided the necessary equipment⁴¹. For this project, four teams of composers, sound engineers, and video designers under the age of 35 were selected to help prepare a multimedia project lasting 10

⁴⁰ Biennale Musica 2020 (programma). *La Biennale di Venezia*, 2020. <https://www.labiennale.org/it/musica/2020/biennale-musica-2020?date=2020-09-25&sede=All>

⁴¹ Richter, Dieter. Il magico giardino di Klingsor. Un paesaggio esotico nel Parsifal di Richard Wagner e il "mito di Ravello". *Centro Universitario Europeo per i Beni Culturali. Territori della cultura*, 10, 2010, pp. 82-91.

https://www.univeur.org/cuebc/images/Territori/PDF/01/TdC1_Richter.pdf

minutes. Among them were Matteo Gualandi and Silvio Petronzio, who worked on the creation of “[Nameless_remote_memory] for cello, electronics, and video”; Luca Guidarini in tandem with Andrea Omodei created “Digital Mouth Morphology” for soprano, electronic, real-time video and feedback system; Matteo Tomasetti together with Filippo Gualazzi created the audiovisual performance “Perpetuo”; Francesco Pellegrino and Roberto Cassano wrote the play “Habitat” for tenor saxophone, electronics, and real-time video. All the teams were trained during three sessions from April to June and took part in master classes held on Internet platforms, which allowed them to implement their projects. Ivan Fedele himself – the director of the musical sector of the festival – was present at the rehearsals, and prominent mentors Matteo Franceschini (composition), Simone Conforti and Maurilio Cacciatore (musical information technologies), Andrew Quinn (video design), Thierry Coduys (sound design) worked with young artists. The debuts of the creative works of the 64th International Festival of Contemporary Music took place on October 4 at the Teatro Piccolo Arsenale.

It is important to note that La Biennale has been announcing the “Writing in Residence” contest for young graduates of Italian colleges for several years in a row⁴². The essence of the contest is conducting research in the Historical Archives. The management of La Biennale proposed the theme, related to the festival program, which had to be developed under the guidance of a mentor and submitted to the contest. This allowed us not only to cover the outcomes in the media but also to announce current problems with their further development.

Opera festivals were held in the center of Italy in many cities during the pandemic, although in a slightly different and unfamiliar format. For example, the Rossini Opera Festival-2020 was held in Pesaro, the city where Gioachino Rossini was born⁴³, having become the forty-first festival project, which took place in the abridged version thanks to the organizers’ efforts. The play “The Wedding Bill” was staged by Laurence at Teatro Rossini, the only theatre in Italy which functioned during the pandemic. The sets and costumes were designed by Gary McCann and the performance was accompanied by Gioachino Rossini Symphony Orchestra conducted by Dmitry Korchak. Of particular note is the international cast, including Carlo Lepore (Tobia Mill), Giuliana Gianfaldoni (Fanni), Davide Giusti (Edoardo Milfort), Yuri Samoilov (Slook), Pablo Galves (Norton), Martiniana

⁴² XVII. *Esposizione Biennale Internazionale d’Arte: catalogo*. Venezia, 1930.

<http://asac.labiennale.org/it/passpres/artivisive/annali.php?a=1930>>

⁴³ *Storia, Formula e metodo*. Rossini Opera Festival, 2020.

<https://www.rossinioperafestival.it/storia-formula-e-metodo/>

Antoni (Clarina) and others. Spectators were in the boxes of all five tiers. Marianna Pizzolato opened the evening with the amazingly beautiful cantata “Joan of Arc”. The entire festival program was presented at Piazza del Popolo, including the concert version of the operatic dramma giocoso “The Journey to Reims” by Emilio Sagi, as well as six concerts performed by Jessica Pratt, Juan Diego Flórez Salom, Alfonso Antoniozzi, Paolo Bordogna, Alessandro Corbelli, Olga Peretyatko Nicola Alaimo. At the end of the festival, there was a concert by mezzo-soprano Karine Deshayes, the winner of the prestigious French Award in the field of academic music “Les Victoires de la musique” in the nomination “The Best Opera Singer”.

However, the reduced format of the Rossini Opera Festival in August 2020 prompted the organizers to expand the season and postpone some productions to autumn – from November 1 to November 29, 2020, with the permission of Pesaro municipality. It should be noted that the last concert of the graduates of the Accademia Rossiniana⁴⁴ “Alberto Zedda”⁴⁵ 2020 was brilliantly performed at Teatro Sperimentale on November 1. On November 14, 2020, the Rossini Theatre performed 14 notebooks of vocal and instrumental ensembles “Sins of Old Age”, 237 piano pieces (1857–1868), and fragments from the album of vocal and instrumental pieces and ensembles (1855 – 1868) performed by Alessandro Marangoni. A day later, on November 15, 2020, the Rossini Theatre presented rare works that had not previously been performed at the festival – “Messa di Milano” and “Miserere”. The orchestra Filarmonica Gioachino Rossini e del Corodel Teatro della Fortuna was conducted by Ferdinando Sulla, the choir of Teatro della Fortuna was conducted by Maestro del Coro Mirca Rosciani. It is necessary to note the high professionalism of the performers of “Miserere” (Manuel Amati, Antonio Garés, Grigory Shkarupa) and “Messa di Milano” (Manuel Amati, Antonio Garés, Grigory Shkarupa, Svetlina Stoyanova).

In addition, the Teatro della Fortuna on November 25, 27 and 29, 2020 hosted a performance of “The Barber of Seville”, directed by Pier Luigi Pizzi with the bright cast of performers, including Juan Francisco Gatell (Conted'Almaviva), Carlo Lepore (Bartolo), Aya Wakizono (Rosina), Iurii Samoilov (Figaro), Michele Pertusi (Basilio), Elena Zilio (Berta), William Corò (Fiorello/Ufficiale). Gioachino Rossini Symphony Orchestra was conducted by Michele Spotti; chorus Teatro Ventidio Basso – by maestro del Coro Giovanni Farina.

⁴⁴ *Storia*. Conservatorio Rossini. <https://www.conservatoriorossini.it/storia/>

⁴⁵ *Accademia Rossiniana “Alberto Zedda” 30 anni*. Rossini: Rossini Opera Festival, 2013.

As part of the Accademia Rossiniana, “Il viaggio a Reims” was staged at the Rossini Theatre under the direction of Emilio Sagi, where Alessandro Cadario conducted the symphony orchestra⁴⁶.

Since during the Covid-19 pandemic, all performances were held in an empty hall without spectators, it was decided to broadcast them live free of charge via the Internet, which speaks of the attention and care of the festival organizers, who understood the complexity of the situation and tried not to lose their audience. To keep in touch with a wide audience that could not come to Pesaro due to the pandemic, the opening was broadcast live on the festival’s official website and social networks. In addition, as part of the “Italian Summer Festivals” project, it was also possible to watch an online broadcast, which was announced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in the network of embassies, consulates, and institutions of Italy, thanks to which more than 23,000 spectators were able to watch this spectacular action. According to the president of the Festival Daniele Vimini, this was an invaluable experience, although the festival was moved from Teatro Rossini to Piazza Del Popolo.

Another important event took place on September 22, 2021, at the National Rossini Museum – the opening of the exhibition “ROF 15K Quindicimila giorni: La libertà dello sguardo nell’immaginario visivo rossiniano”⁴⁷. The exhibition, prepared by the ROF laboratory, was dedicated to the first 15,000 days of the festival. It depicted the history of the festival, which goes back to the 80s, in 24 layout installations. It was then, on August 28, 1980, that the Rossini Theatre staged the first performance of “The Thieving Magpie”. The exhibition presents not only models of the scene plays, but also stage costumes, and displays of tools that were used to create the scenery, many of which have already become rarities, including three models of the play “Moses in Egypt” by Graham Vick (2011); the models of Luca Ronconi’s play “The Barber of Seville” (2005) and Pier Luigi Pizzi’s “Wedding of Aunt and Peleo” (2001). All of them have a digital version and provide an opportunity to virtually see the stage space. The last room of the exposition was designed as a mini theatre with the projection of a 35-minute film, directed by Pier Luigi Pizzi, in which the costume designer (Giovanna Buzzi), set designer (Silvano Santinelli), and stage decorators

⁴⁶ *Storia, Formula e metodo*. Rossini Opera Festival, 2020.

<https://www.rossinioperafestival.it/storia-formula-e-metodo/>

⁴⁷ “ROF 15K”: al Museo Rossini una mostra di modellini di scena celebra i 15mila giorni di vita del Festival. *PU 24. It Quotidiano di Informazione Online*, 27 Settembre 2021. <https://www.pu24.it/2021/09/27/rof-15k-al-museo-rossini-mostra-modellini-scena-celebra-15mila-giorni-vita-del-festival/312890/>

(Vanni Delfini, Cristina, and Romolo Sormani) talk about the nuances of work in the theatre. This amazing project reveals the history of the theatre and the professionalism of those people, thanks to whom this theatre annually creates a festive atmosphere.

Thus, in a pandemic, the format and key motives of the festival movement have undergone major changes. At the same time, despite the difficult conditions of the pandemic, Wagner's theme remained the key one in the festival, which took place in Ravello in 2020, dedicated to 140 years of acquaintance with Richard Wagner^{48, 49, 50}. The Ravello Foundation, together with the Campania region, the municipal administration, and the German Embassy, celebrated the anniversary date of the composer's arrival in Ravello. It is no coincidence that the city of Ravello was chosen for this as an ideal union of two musical worlds – Italian and German. In honor of this date, the organizers prepared a documentary film that aired in Italy and Germany. According to the festival art director Alessio Vlad⁵¹, the aim of such a creative tandem between the two countries was to preserve the traditions of celebrating the Day of Remembrance of the great composer.

The festival was opened in a completely new online format in the garden of Villa Rufolo on June 06, 2020⁵². Etoile of the Paris Opera, head of the corps de ballet of the Rome Opera House Eleonora Abbagnato danced a solo specially created by the choreographer Simone Valastro to the music of the Prelude from "Parsifal". With her dance, she managed to immerse the audience in the atmosphere of Wagner's magical garden, in which the composer first saw the transformation of a medieval tower and

⁴⁸ Amato, Salvatore. 1880–2020: Wagner e Ravello, i 140 anni della Città della Musica. // *Vescovado: Il Giornale della Costa d'Amalfi*, 25 Maggio 2020.

<https://www.ilvescovado.it/it/sezioni-25/storia-e-storie-12/1880-2020-wagner-e-ravello-i-140-anni-della-citt-89280/article>

⁴⁹ Antonucci, Simona. Alessio Vlad alla guida del Festival di Ravello: «Con la visita di Wagner, il Nord e il Sud hanno trovato qui radici comuni». // *Messaggero il Giornale di Roma*, 17 Giugno 2020.

https://www.ilmattino.it/salerno/il_maestro_alessio_vlad_nominato_direttore_artisti_o_del_festival_di_ravello-5293562.html

⁵⁰ *Wagner Day*. Ravello Festival, 2020. <https://ravellofestival.info/2022/wagner-day/>

⁵¹ Antonucci, Simona. *Op. cit.*

https://www.ilmattino.it/salerno/il_maestro_alessio_vlad_nominato_direttore_artisti_o_del_festival_di_ravello-5293562.html

⁵² *Mostra "ROF 15K. La libertà dello sguardo nell'immaginario visivo rossiniano"*. Museo Nazionale Rossini, 28 Settembre 2021.

<https://www.museonazionalerossini.it/2021/09/28/mostra-rof-15k-la-liberta-dello-sguardo-nellimmaginario-visivo-rossiniano/>

tropical plants⁵³. Soprano Carmen Giannattasio, accompanied by Maurizio Agostini, performed arias from the operas “Lohengrin” and “Norma”. Thanks to the Neapolitan actor Alessandro Preziosi, the online viewer plunged into the history of the medieval Ravello, which is closer to the sky than to the sea^{54,55}.

Another highlight was the Regione Lirica festival, which took place from June 25 to July 17, 2021, in Naples. As part of this project, Teatro di San Carlo presented live versions of G. Bizet's opera “Carmen”, G. Verdi's “Il trovatore” and P. Tchaikovsky's ballet “Swan Lake” on the central square Piazza del Plebiscito. It is necessary to note the deep interpretation of the concept of the performances, embodied by the conductor Dan Ettinger with the participation of world stars: Lithuanian mezzo-soprano Elīna Garanča (Carmen's party), American tenor Brian Jagde (as Don Jose), Italian baritone Mattia Olivieri (as Escamillo). The peculiarity of this production was its embodiment outside the theatrical stage, which fundamentally changed the focus of the scenery, which was the natural landscape and the architectural ensemble of the historical heart of the city with their colour scheme, while the Royal Palace and the Basilica of San Francesco di Paola became the main “heroes” of this theatrical show.

The music festival enlarged its scope, involving the audience in the performance⁵⁶. The choir, which was on the stage, visually formed a circle that framed the square from the outside. Inside it, on a huge stage built of iron and wood with a total area of 1500 square meters, the story of freedom, love, and death of the main characters of Seville unfolded. The color scheme of the historical buildings of Piazza del Plebiscito was surprisingly picturesque. This harmonic balance of music and architecture gave a special experience of perception, which, according to the Italian musicologist Roberto Favaro, literally “floated” in the center of a huge instrumental architecture⁵⁷. In addition, color dramaturgy allowed us to display the mood of the characters and place lyrical and dramatic accents in the performance itself.

⁵³ Polastri Menni, Marco. I rapporti fra Wagner e l'Italia. *Associazione Wagneriana Milano*, 28 Novembre 2017. <https://wagnerianamilano.org/2017/11/28/i-rapporti-fra-wagner-e-litalia-di-marco-polastri-menni>

⁵⁴ Sorrentino, Maria Carla. Cultura - economia – ospitalità. Un archivio alberghiero “ritrovato” come testimonianza per la storia moderna di Ravello. *Territori della cultura*, 3, 2011, pp. 76–83. https://www.univeur.org/cuebc/images/Territori/TdC_03.pdf

⁵⁵ Sannino, Maria Rosaria. Ravello, c'è Wagner nell'aria. *La Repubblica*, 07, no. 17, 2002. <https://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/2002/07/17/ravello-wagner-nell-aria.html?ref=search>

⁵⁶ Favaro, Roberto. *Spazio sonoro: musica e architettura tra analogie, riflessi, complicità*. Venezia: Marsilio, 2010.

⁵⁷ Favaro, Roberto. *Suono e arte. La musica tra letteratura e arti visive*. Venezia: Marsilio, 2017.

The images of drama and potential for action expanded thanks to brilliant acting, detailed gestures, sensual glances, mastery of singing, orchestral dynamics, and colorful lighting, which presented the dramatic idea of the opera in a different color spectrum, from soft purple shades of seduction to the crimson color of doom. All this turned the usual form of the concert into a spectacular performance.

From the end of July – the beginning of August 2021, one of the oldest festivals in Italy, dedicated to Giacomo Puccini, was held online in the small town of Torre del Lago. Thousands of Giacomo Puccini's fans from all over the world listened online to such masterpieces as "Madama Butterfly", "Turandot", "Tosca", "Manon Lescaut", "La bohème", which were performed on the shores of Lake Massaciuccoli on the stage of an open theatre with 3370 seats, located near the composer's house-museum.

Dynamism, openness to dialogue, and improvisation are important characteristics of the music festival, which distinguish it from traditional forms of artistic communication. The classical model of the concert as a dialogue with the listener is the most common in the artistic discourse of our time. However, the semantic dominant in such a discourse is shifted towards the presentation of an artistic product and its nomological nature, created according to a predetermined semantic vector (concert program). That is, the concert does not imply creative spontaneity in the "performer-listener" dialogue, since such a form is constant and focused on reproduction, while the festival is a procedural, dynamic, improvisational form. The modern listener expects from the festival (as an artistic action) a creative action, an event that takes place "here and now" with his participation. The process of co-creation in this form of artistic communication takes on a symbolic meaning. At the same time, the ties between them become open, unclosed, and frank.

In the context of a modern music festival, disparate concerts are interconnected by a complex system of symbolic relationships and are transformed into creative actions, acquiring new semantic contexts in the process of artistic communication. From our point of view, such a dialogue between performers and listeners makes it possible to reach a wider level of understanding of creative processes, differentiate new forms, integrate knowledge, expand contacts, and generate new ideas. At the same time, even the traditional forms of the concert, transforming from monologues, acquire the signs of open, semantically complex phenomena, activating the processes of interaction between the performer and the listener. For this purpose, a variety of techniques, technical effects, visualization of the general dramaturgy of the concert, etc. are used. Thus, the incrustation of theatrical elements and new technical means from other types of art into

the audiovisual score of the concert allows us to create the illusion of lively dialogue and get feedback on what is happening on stage. This technique has its roots in antiquity with its spectacularity, theatricalization, and impact on the listener.

The expansion and deepening of artistic discourse in the context of a music festival occurs through creative communication between the performer and the listener, due to which a special socio-cultural space is formed. In such an environment, creative laboratories often arise, in the open communication environment of which new ideas, style trends, and genre transformations are born. At the same time, the creative dialogue reaches the level of an intellectual discussion of musical problems with their further updating.

Conclusion

Having analyzed a lot of theoretical studies, we can state that the expansion of the range of phenomena in contemporary art is a consequence of the reflection of both artistic and sociocultural trends, which is most clearly reflected in those creative projects based on an open dialogue. Modern music projects, which are being carried out in the context of a pandemic, are characterized by content heterogeneity, caused by the processes of geo cultural globalization. Such creative actions include a music festival as a multicultural dialogue, in the context of which the interaction of different worldview systems, artistic principles, creative schools, and models of intercultural communication takes place. Various forms of creative communication function in the context of a music festival as a kind of artistic discourse, thanks to which actual models of artistic perception of the world are realized.

In the dramaturgy of modern music festivals, the idea of a dialogue of cultures is implemented from the standpoint of multiculturalism and is used to characterize different national cultures. At the same time, the problem of multiculturalism as a process of interaction between national cultures affects all aspects of their interaction. Acquiring a broader context, it is conceived as a tolerant, non-conflict coexistence of worldview layers of culture, that are different in content.

The very idea of multiculturalism, based on the parallel coexistence of different cultural layers, reflects a model of ethnic development, based on the fusion of different national cultures. As a result, a qualitatively new cultural continuum emerges, in which national, political, spiritual, and creative components are in the interaction. This idea is consonant with the

artistic practice that emerged in the context of postmodern culture, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. It is characterized by a tendency to combine heterogeneous cultural texts, styles, genres, themes, and motives to create new content. Such creative integration is focused on a qualitatively new artistic product. At the same time, the synthesis of artistic theories and practices, which are sometimes mutually exclusive, leads to the creation of a qualitatively new artistic product.

As a *result of the study*, the possibility of holding music festivals in the difficult conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic was substantiated. Despite the current situation, the music festival as a vivid form of discursive dialogue allows presenting different types of culture, contributes to the constructive solution of complex organizational issues, comprehends the deep semantic layers of the development of musical art, and consolidating different types of mentality. The article *substantiated* that during the Covid-19 pandemic, not all genre and style forms could be realized due to sociocultural isolation. In this regard, the authors *proposed* those formats for holding music festivals that consider the current conditions for their functioning in conditions of Covid-19.

The application of the results of this study is possible for creating theoretical models of dialogic interaction both at the level of personal dialogue in the context of music festivals, and at the level of interaction of different cultures.

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