

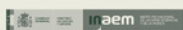
EÇOSLABS 2023

General Overview

ORGANIZA



COLABORA



APOYA



PATROCINA



Introduction

ECOS Labs are an opportunity for emerging groups to receive personalized feedback on their artistic/social project and to learn how to interact in the international Early Music market. From ECOS Festival, we consider it essential to be able to offer emerging artists direct contact with key figures within the Early Music circuit, not only to reflect on the current state of the industry, but also to be able to generate proposals that adapt to current concerns and interests, reflecting on issues beyond the merely musical. ECOS Labs are organized by Jorge Losana (Cantoría & ECOS Festival Director) and David Gutiérrez (Anacronía) and held in digital format, inviting promoters from R.E.M.A. (the European Network of Early Music), E.M.A. (Early Music America) and other distinguished institutions in which international festival programmers discuss and interact with ECOS emerging groups to address issues related to "Early Music and its value in the 21st century". This is done under the firm belief that international and intergenerational dialogue is fundamental for our resident emerging ensembles to find their place in the Early Music scene and make sure their proposals are addressing current concerns. This year, the participating ensembles were Barbaroco (France/Spain), The Gardeners (Berlin), Entrebescant (Spain) and Flutes & Frets (UK).

This year, the title is **"The Audience: what they seek, what they feel & what they remember"** and three seminars will be held that will deal with diversity, sustainability and the demographic challenge, and the role these concepts occupy in the day-to-day life of Early Music groups.

SESSION 1 - THE AUDIENCE: What they seek



Artur Malke
All'improvviso Festival &
REMA Vice-President



Suzie Le Blanc
Early Music Vancouver



Oriol Àguila
Festival de Peralada &
FestClásica President

Some key quotes

"As people who programme and organise festivals, we don't have to be comfortable, we have to question. [...] Perhaps we have too much prejudice. Learn from mistakes together, and we will try to renew our mission."

Oriol Àguila | Festival de Peralada & FestClásica President

"Performers must keep their identities and values, and find an audience that shares those same values, instead of trying to be for everybody, be yourself, only then can you build a relationship with the audience."

Artur Malke | All'improvviso Festival & REMA Vice-President

"Contemporary operas are addressing current issues [...]. This is what is popular now in New York at the MET Opera. Young people are going to see show that talk to them about their current situations."

Suzie Le Blanc | Early Music Vancouver

AVAILABLE TO WATCH ONLINE | https://youtu.be/23kqo_drEyQ

How are festivals currently addressing this issue?

Audiences attend festivals in search of more than entertainment, but rather an experience and to live something outside of their usual routine. **Suzie Le Blanc** suggested these experiences on occasions may be emotional or transformative, but in any case, there is consensus on the fact that the desire to experience “something different” is becoming increasingly challenging to address. Consumer habits have changed, and as **Oriol Águila** has pointed out, the COVID pandemic accelerated this challenge, with all festivals noting that they have not yet fully recovered their audience since the 2020 outbreak. Optimistically, this can be seen as an opportunity, not just as a problem, to create a unique atmosphere for each festival.

Audiences no doubt search for musical excellence, and festivals can gain trust by always providing high musical quality, but most consumers are now looking for added value. This could potentially mean not only aiming to offer a ‘joyful’ or ‘pleasant’ experience, but offering **new perspectives** and critical thought on different subjects that can engage different aspects of our potential audience.

Another key factor for local audiences is the chance to come into contact with the international Early Music scene, a chance to hear performers or ensembles that they would have to travel to hear on other occasions. **Artur Malke** underlines this as an opportunity for festival promoters and organisers to build bridges between **local and international dimensions**, as local audiences may also discover the high quality of local musicians while originally attending for other reasons.

On engaging younger audiences

In the case of young audiences, each festival, depending on its speciality and specific characteristics, has its own individual set of challenges when trying to appeal you younger generations. Generally speaking, younger audiences are more attracted to coming to concerts which feature younger performers. Amongst many reasons, young musicians unquestionably have more **social media presence**, which undoubtedly engages an audience that other Early Music groups and festivals rarely come into contact with. Concert venues and the way in which audiences are allowed to **occupy and relate to each space** can was also underlined as a possible threat to younger audiences, especially in spaces that are subject to larger protocol and restrictions. Attending with parents and the possibility of **generational legacy** was also mentioned as a potential benefit, alongside relating Early Music to more popular genres such as pop or jazz, with a more improvised and spontaneous atmosphere, and building bridges between music and other disciplines. **Engaging children** from a young age though education and specific proposals within festivals was highlighted as one of the best ways to ensure that down the line they may attend an Early Music concert, rather than waiting until they are teenagers or older and may find the music more unrelatable.

SESSION 2 - THE AUDIENCE: What they feel



Deborah Roberts
Brighton Early Music
Festival



Noelia Gómez
MUSEG - Festival de
Música de Segovia



Matteo Penazzi
Lugo Music Festival

Some key quotes

The power of stories is part of human nature. [...] A story has a beginning and an end, the good and the bad, the young and the old, the story has everything.

Matteo Penazzi | Lugo Music Festival

Our audience likes a mixture of things, music with poetry, dance, theatre ... so the combination of different arts is important for us. [...] We are site-specific in every event we do, [...] our audience that gets excited about where we are going to do concerts in rural or natural areas.

Noelia Gómez | MUSEG Festival de Música de Segovia

"We are always human beings, we were in the past and we are now. [...] We still have the same emotions, I want to reach those emotions whether it's a motet by Josquin De Prez or a Beethoven Symphony."

Deborah Roberts | Brighton Early Music Festival

AVAILABLE TO WATCH ONLINE | <https://youtu.be/FPFs41ruNrc>

How are festivals currently addressing this issue?

When analysing audiences there was a general consensus amongst promoters that current Early Music festival audiences tend to be on the older side, with a generally eclectic taste in music. Despite the abundant challenges to reach new audiences, satisfied attendees tend to come back, allowing festivals to develop a strong and loyal following. Despite the evident age average of the main audience, most festivals are trying to cater to younger audiences, with **Deborah Roberts** underlining Brighton Early Music Festival's "Tots" concerts aimed at audiences as young as 6 months old as one of their key proposals to reach new audiences. **Noelia Gómez**, following on the previous session's conclusions, agreed with the need to educate audiences from a young age, also advocating for activities that cater to children as potential future target audiences, ideas which were echoed by the other promoters during the session.

How can festivals provide new experiences?

Two key ideas were brought to the table, the first being the format or venue, and the second being interdisciplinarity. With internet and streaming platforms, we have at our disposal some of the highest quality (both in sound and interpretations) performances of Early Music without having to leave our homes or through our mobile devices, and therefore the audience needs an extra, more engaging experience at a live concert. With this idea in mind, Matteo Penazzi introduces the concept and importance of ensembles having a story, something to share with the audience. The inclusion of multimedia and audiovisual material can also add an extra dimension to presentations which achieve a stronger emotional connection with the audience. Including the audience in the concert process, whether it be during or immediately before or after, spreading from how to get there or posterior feedback was also suggested as a way to engage more with the audience, as our "speed of life" and attention span has changed over the last decade. Context is also recognised as a point of interest, taking performances out of traditional concert halls and churches and finding new unexpected surroundings and atmospheres, which can also in turn have their own story, is a potential motivation for audiences to attend concerts. Timetables are also a means of modifying the concert experience, by offering experiences at dawn or sundown, changing the landscape and traditional experience. Another issue addressed was that of formality within the concert, from talking to the audience, how they are seated, breaking the fourth wall and expecting audiences to be in silence. There was a shared reflection to bear in mind that most of the Early Music performed was never intended to be listened to in silence or seated in its original context, and therefore it is not always a wise decision to expect this behavior from an audience. On a final note, Early Music performers can use contemporary resources like multimedia and pop culture to build bridges between their proposal and the audience, not necessarily to compromise on what they wanted to say, but as a tool to improve communication.

SESSION 3 - THE AUDIENCE: What they remember



Jan Van den Borre
MA Festival Brugge



Suzanne Ryan Melamed
Bloomington Early Music
Festival



Josep Barcons
Espurnes Baroques

Some key quotes

People are starting to question why they should come to a concert, which forces us to be much more creative in thinking about what a concert should be.

Jan Van den Borre | MA Festival Brugge

Early Music is just the pretext, of course Early music is at the core of what we do, but it is a medium through which we get to engage people.

Josep Barcons | Espurnes Baroques

You hear all the time that it's a dying art [...]. I don't believe that, I think that the integration of multimedia and of the human factor is really going to be a saving force.

Suzanne Ryan Melamed | Bloomington Early Music Festival

AVAILABLE TO WATCH ONLINE | <https://youtu.be/YzTbprJA30c>

How are festivals currently addressing this issue?

It is clear that each festival within its context and specific audience faces its own challenges to address the changing concerns and demands of current and new audiences. **Jan Van den Borre** underlines the importance of crossing genres and art forms, which has proven a successful method of maintaining refreshing proposals and engaging new communities looking for overlaps between Early Music audiences and their interests in other activities, or by inviting artists and creatives from different genres and artistic backgrounds to experiment with Early Music. **Josep Barcos** proposes that new audiences can be reached when music is taken to rural areas that would otherwise never come into contact with this kind of repertoire, while regular Early Music audiences will generally travel from urban areas to see concerts. **Suzanne Ryan** notes that current issues such as women, colonialism or sustainability draws in a younger audience that is interested in seeing how Early Music can relate to these contemporary subjects.

What does the audience take away from a concert?

Building on the ideas of previous sessions, when reflecting on what audiences remember, there is an agreement that concerts that can be replaced with a CD are no longer maintaining audience's interest, audiences now want to see something unexpected and more spontaneous which makes them feel like they are experiencing something more authentic, outside of the preconceived schemes of what concerts have historically been in the past decades up until now. Audiences are also interested in connecting with the individuals around them, not only with the musicians on stage, in a similar way that they would to at a pop or rock music concert which allow for a closer shared experience between attendees. To this end, activities such as wine tasting or gastronomical experiences can allow the audience to "compare notes" and discuss what they have just witnessed and how they felt, which helps them connect with and process the experience, making more lasting memories of the event. From a performance perspective, festival concerts transcends the music, one of the most important things is in fact values, fully embodying the feelings or experiences you want to create with the audience and working on the human factor. It is no longer about performing under a conductor from an authoritative point of view, but rather the audience what's to see an atmosphere of trust and sharing, musicians playing together to create a sense of community. On the topic of communities, connecting with foundations and institutions that represent specific sectors and communities to find ways to bridge the gap and reach these different audiences, representing and collaborating to include broader and more diverse demographics, perhaps not directly through the concerts but through conferences, workshops and other experiences. While ensembles should taking these factors into account, especially when presenting a proposal to a festival and understanding the circumstances and context of each one, dealing with questions of diversity and inclusivity is ultimately the responsibility of promoters.

Conclusions

This year's edition of ECOS Labs has drawn a series of interesting conclusions regarding our ever-changing audience and possible strategies for improving engagement both as festivals and as artists. **Communication** draws from the story, not just when regarding the repertoire or programme performed, but even from the ensemble, venue or festival perspective, but an open and flexible channel of communication that engages the audience will ensure a more memorable experience. Regarding **context**, many traditional values also hold onto protocol that younger audiences can see as outdated, therefore surprising the audiences by presenting music in venues not usually associated to Early Music or actively trying to change the way they can relate to the space can also make a more exciting and attractive experience. Lastly, adding value to a **concert experience** by combining other artistic disciplines such as gastronomy, audiovisuals or performing arts also has a positive effect on audiences. If one thing is clear this year, it is that these conversations amongst festival programming professionals, as well as artists and musicians are a necessary and insightful way of making sure we are constantly trying to improve and build bridges, to keep an open dialogue and continue to support our Early Music sector.

A note from our Festival Director



Jorge Losana

Cantoría & ECOS Festival de
Música Antigua de Sierra Espuña

Sharing is one of the main reasons that lead us to make music, and to create this festival. That is why, since the first edition of ECOS Labs in 2020, motivated by the COVID pandemic, we have successfully managed to bring together some of the leading international festival promoters to discuss reviving, enhancing and re-learning the value of cultural heritage and how we can all do our part to engage new audiences and encourage young emerging musicians to explore the possibilities of Early Music. We are very grateful to all the experts that continue to share knowledge with us every year, and we hope that sharing these conclusions from our discussions will encourage more reflection and generate new ideas for the future.

2023 Beneficiaries



Barbaroco

Eliaz Hercelin Sanz | viola da gamba
Nico Arzimanoglou Mas | theorbo

 @barbarocomusic

"Indeed, a festival that upholds human values and is defined by terms like Sustainability, Diversity, and the Global vs. the Local, reflects a conscious and responsible place for us. It's a space in which we can progress, create, and above all, share our experiences and understandings as musicians and artists."

Alaia Belaunzaran Arruabarrena | medieval harp
Pablo Fernández Cantalapiedra | flute, percussion/voice

Beatriz Peña Rey | hurdy-gurdy / voice
Livia Camprubí Bueno | fiddle / voice
Víctor Gallego González | percussions/voice

 @entrebescant

"We propose a programme that aims to transform the concert into a space for mediation, promoting the dissemination and advocacy of historical heritage. This aligns with the overarching concern of 'ECOS Festival' regarding the reflection on the place and value of ancient music in our century, and the central theme of the concert experience."



The Gardeners

Santiago Gervasoni | harpsichord/director
Çiğdem Tunçelli | violin
Mailis Bonnefous | violin

Mireia Peñalver | viola
Neo Gundermann | theorbo
Beatriz Peña | hurdy-gurdy/voice

 @ensthegardeners

[...] ECOS Festival Lab is a crucial objective and a source of motivation and immense enthusiasm to receive guidance in better understanding the professional landscape that governs the world of early music, to engage in discussions about the socio-environmental impact we can generate as artists—both globally and locally—, [...], and above all, to meet, be inspired by, and share with other artists and festival members as a vital human element in our musical, professional, and life experiences.

Flutes & Frets

Beth Stone | flutes
Daniel Murphy | lute, theorbo and guitar

 @flutesandfretsduo

"The experience of the concert" is something that is very much on our minds at this point as we're aware that we currently give concerts that are of a more traditional style by simply presenting a variety of music, and giving some background on the pieces and instruments. We're enthusiastic about receiving advice and guidance about how to further innovate our audience's concert experience."

