

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC PRODUCT SELLING EXPERIENCE IN LATVIA AND EUROPE

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Abstract

During the age when outcomes of the creative process develop in a great diversity, the issue about product sales and appropriate marketing implementation becomes topical both in clients' attraction and in the existing products competition from the side of culture organizations' management.

The aim of the research is on the basis of the analysis outcomes of the international and Latvian leading contemporary music festivals and concert organizers' work experience determine the currently existing trends in contemporary music product sales, including the most appropriate marketing activities for clients' attraction. Within the framework of research, the survey of managers and marketing specialists (in total 22, incl. 13 foreign and 9 local organizers) of working organizations in the branch on Latvian and European scale and 138 listeners of contemporary music festivals and concerts in Latvia has been carried out.

In the research it is discovered that contemporary music from the point of priority takes the second place in European concert organizers' programmes and the third place from the point of interests among listeners in Latvia. The values included in the concert organizers' products in Europe and Latvia – high level performers' performance, an interesting programme and innovative content, coincide with the hearers' main reasons for the choice of the event. Concert organizers in Latvia also see the significance in the offer of classical values, combining them with education and alternative content, but concert organizers in Europe – educating content in combination with alternative environment.

The research outcomes reveal that contemporary music in Latvia is regularly consumed by about 40% of total listeners' number; in Europe the regular consumers' proportion reaches 50% listeners. In Latvia, despite the critical demographic situation, the tendency of concert attendance is increasing in comparison with other European countries, where it is assessed as firmly stable.

According to the obtained data in the research, in the contemporary music product sales the most essential information channel is the social media, which is used for information acquisition by 43% listeners in Latvia, but for information provision it is used by 47% concert organizers in Latvia and 40% in Europe. In the Latvian concert organizers' practice outdoor advertising (20%) is also popular and forms the point of listeners – posters (31%). Concert organizers in Europe create additional creative products for interest, apply public relations and the integrated marketing communication.

The research outcomes have revealed the need for the concert organizers to focus on marketing communication and society's education issues both in culture-policy of updates and collegial cooperation promotion among event creators in the branch for the contemporary music product sales.

Keywords: culture product, contemporary music festival, concert organizers, marketing activities.

Introduction

Nowadays formation of culture products relates to creative industry, which has obtained an essential role during the development of innovations and new technologies on the global and local level, switching from the resource consuming industry to the industry, whose main resource is human creativity. It is one of the newest branches in Latvian economics to which professionals predict fast growth and important role in interdisciplinary cooperation promotion in long-term (Klāsons, 2013). Development of creative industries' policy in Latvia, emphasizing that "creative industries create, develop, produce, use, display, disseminate, preserve products which have economic, cultural and/or entertainment value" (the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia, 2017), shows that the music branch, incl. contemporary music as a product of culture from the spiritual, non-material sphere has been transferred to the product category, subjecting it to general product sales or marketing regularities.

Contemporary academic music is one of the most innovative creative industry branches, which includes in itself original intellectual values and high professional qualities in its product formation. Academic music is distinguished with the term contemporary music (concurrently the terms "new music" and "modern music are also used), which emerged during the mid-1970s till 1990s and include in itself modernism, post-modernism, neo-romanticism etc. music (Grīnfelds, Krasinska, Lindenberga, Vēriņa, Voskresenska, Torgāns, 1984, 81-103).

While the contemporary music style has a close link to the global trends in culture, it also retains a tight bond with the most characteristic features of every state and historical events of the particular state. Latvian composer Ruta Paidere, living in Germany, has marked objective, historical conditions that have shaped the Latvian society's attitude to contemporary music and have slowed down its development: "The reasons for the low acceptance ability to modern Latvian music differ essentially from the ones in Western Europe, where the modern arts appeared simultaneously with the historical and social changes, reacting to them constantly and critically. In Latvia it was almost impossible to obtain listening experience of modern music up to the 90s – it was neither played nor broadcasted on the radio. Contacts with the European music life were quite scarce, avoiding the contact with the European contemporary music trend of the first half of the 20th century" (Paidere, 2013).

Alongside contemporary music creation, music life organizers have given their contribution to its development, including contemporary music festivals. The oldest of them in Europe are: *Festival Internazionale di Musica Contemporanea della Biennale di Venezia*, founded in 1930 and after a short break during World War II it still happens today; rich in traditions and basically the only festival which was also available for the former Soviet Union, incl. Latvian musicians is *Warszawska Jesień* in Poland from 1956; very popular are the festivals *ISCM World Music Days* organized by the organization *The International Society for Contemporary Music* founded in 1922, which happen each time in another country etc. Contemporary music festivals are a way to concentrated contemporary music product sales, also including wider varieties for the very music creators (master-classes for the young performers, joint work with the contemporary music composers, conferences dedicated to music news, establishment of new contacts). According to the marketing specialist Philip Kotler's opinion that the marketing task is to sell products, services, experiences, events, people, places, properties, organization, information, ideas, working in the consumers, business, global, non-profit and national markets (Kotlers, 2006, 13), sales of the contemporary music as a culture product according to its essence is a combination of both event and service, both experience, intellectual property and ideas and also place. Depending on the sales process activities from the theoretical point of view, the forecasting, creative and partnership marketing is applicable to it: "stating what would be necessary in the nearest future, revealing and implementing a solution, which has not been asked by consumers, but they respond willingly to it, and implementing constant work with consumers" (Kotlers, 2006, 28). Brand recognition is important to strengthen regular clients' range. According to the author Ph. Kotler's point of view, each brand represents a set of loyal

clients and the attraction to the brand is formed if the client's experience in all contacts with the company confirms that the company keeps its promises about the product provided (Kotlers, 2006, 402). Branding in marketing as essential in today's conditions has been mentioned by a number of authors, e.g. from Elita Dombrova's point of view, creation of symbols and myths is important (Dombrova, 2008, 65), but Jānis Ēriks Niedrītis has written: "The company does not think any longer that in failure (if there is such a thing) the product is to be blamed, but they think the problem is hidden in the brand – in the condition how the product is "presented" and how it associates in the customers' consciousness" (Niedrītis, 2005, 215). The author E. Dombrova also offers to apply event marketing as the expression of creative marketing- a strategic positioning instrument, which connects the brand with a socially significant event, mentioning that, if the event is chosen correctly, a positive perception of the brand is successfully developed and it is more efficient than other types of marketing, since in one event the advertisement, public relations, direct sales and other marketing activities can be combined (Dombrova, 2008, 98 - 100). Complex application of marketing communication means (integrated marketing communication) can also be considered as a topical tendency. Authors Valērijs Praude and Jeļena Šalkovska agree that it is more efficient than expensive massive advertising campaigns and promotes loyalty (Praude, Šalkovska, 2005, 44). Francois Colbert, Jacques Nantel, Suzanna Bilodeau and J. Dennes Rich say that in this case both the communication channels (newspapers, magazines, radio, TV, email, phone, posters, leaflets, CD, audio recordings, the internet) and dissemination and service channels are engaged in general, emphasising that "advertisement, personal sales and public relations as a management function are considered as the main instruments in culture product promotion, assessing the public mood, obtaining the society's awareness and agreement, and the main tool here is publicity (Kolbērs, Nantels, Bilodū, Ričs, 2007, 160 - 172). Author Ph. Kotler writes that positioning is especially important – the development process of the company's image and offer, whose goal is to take a different place in the target market's mind, announcing it in compliance with the form – to whom (target group and the need) – our (brand) – is (concept) – how (the distinctive feature) and constantly echoing with appropriate activities, so that the client would not be confused about what the company wants to say (Kotlers, 2006, 379). In practice one has to observe that the contemporary music product is topical, but at the same time a "complicated" product of culture, whose enjoyment requires from the listener certain background and listening experience. Permanent audiences develop slowly, and huge work investments are required both from the musicians working in the branch – performers, and the organizers of music concerts and festivals, thinking not only of the very product's creation, but also about its sales. This is also confirmed in the research "Culture Audience in Latvia: Situation, Processes, Tendencies," revealing that "on average one inhabitant of Latvia participates only in 8 culture activities per year (including watching TV, reading culture publications etc.)" (Society "Culturelab", 2016, 8). Regarding the quantity of audience, opportunities of music product sales are limited also due to demographic changes. Looking at the tendencies in long-term (in period till 2080) the number of the potential culture audience will decrease more and more and simultaneously the average audience age will increase (Society "Culturelab", 2016, 7). As a partly promoting condition for the necessary listeners' audience provision could be that fact that people of Latvia are comparatively active in culture mobility. 64% of inhabitants attend events both in the places where they live and also somewhere else, out of them 14% of inhabitants go to enjoy culture to other Baltic States as well and other 14% - outside the Baltic States (Society "Culturelab", 2016, 11). From the contemporary music product sales positions, the above mentioned makes concert organizers in Latvia be aware that the income from the sold tickets will decrease, but at the same time they should work on innovative methods to attract the audience, looking for listeners in different regions. In the culture product markets, the same way as traditional product markets, one has to take into account that lots of companies try to attract customers' attention and consumption, creating dense competition. According to the data by "Culture in Riga" 2016, carrying out a survey of event offer binding to one target audience in Riga City, where during the autumn and

spring season contemporary music festivals take place, it can be calculated that 57 different festivals fight for one client's interests and economic possibilities within one year, i.e. 1 festival in every 6.4 days to which repertoire theatres, concert halls and groups – both professionals and amateurs, who make concerts themselves, have to be added. Conditions of such competence confirm that concert organizers need solutions to overcome the density of events. They could also be on a governmental culture-policy level, agreeing upon the best model both for time planning and possible specialization of festivals. Theoretically expressed opinions confirm that “in the culture product market the state has got an essential role – as a subsidy benefactor and as a partner in the culture product creation” (Kolbērs *et.al.* 2007, 65). In Latvia in the culture branch working organizations' strategic operation one of the main documents is “Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia till 2030” and on its basis the Culture Policy Guidelines of Latvia 2014-2020 “Creative Latvia” developed (accepted by the CM, Order No 401), stating such branch priorities as:

- 1) Preservation and development of culture capital, involving the society in culture processes;
- 2) Creativity in life-long education and culture education orientated towards the labour market;
- 3) Competitive cultures and creative industries;
- 4) Availability of a creative territory and culture services (the Cabinet of Ministers, 2014).

On the priority list the preservation of culture capital and culture education are in the first place. The newly created culture values have not been mentioned in the strategy's priorities yet. It means that music life organizers lack political support to sell the product. It is planned to develop the mentioned priority directions in culture through the State Culture Capital Foundation (SCCF), which is the biggest financing source on the national scale and mostly deals with the subsidization of professional art projects. Development of contemporary music product (incl. activities of festivals), as part of professional artistic unit work, also claim grant from this finance support mechanism. The skill to attract financing is a topical issue for contemporary music product creators and sellers, bearing into mind that in the culture space of Latvia, overcrowded with different activities, organizers compete for the available financial resources, but self-financing opportunities of contemporary music as a culture product are limited - according to the data by the Central Statistical Bureau, in 2016 in Latvia on average EUR 25.56 per one member of household was spent on entertainment and culture in a month (CSB, 2018). However, the audience of the particular product is too small in order to provide fully the necessary income for the event implementation with such consumption expenditure. The current trends suggest that the contemporary music product sellers have to work hard on the attraction measures and managers of culture organizations have to investigate the demand for the contemporary music products, searching for ways how to apply the most appropriate marketing solutions in the creative industry environment. The main attention in the research has been paid to marketing measures determination for work with contemporary music products, studying the experience of contemporary music organizers working in Latvia and European colleagues' gathered experience. The aim of the research is to determine the currently existing trends in contemporary music product sales and the most appropriate marketing activities for clients' attraction, based on the analysis outcomes of the international and Latvian leading contemporary music festivals and concert organizers' work experience. The research is topical right now in Latvia where we have to deal with a huge amount of culture offer and information overflow, targeted to a relatively small audience of culture consumers.

Methodology of Research

General Background

Everything from the traditional marketing principles cannot be related to the culture sphere. However, lots of theoretical cognitions on the product sales in general can be taken into account and customized to work with culture products. The theoretical analysis confirms that in contemporary music sales, as a culture product, applying traditionally the advertisement on the radio, TV and printed media, the need for a direct communication with the audience and significance of public relations have to be emphasized. The empirical research, comparing Latvian and international experience in marketing application for the music product sales, has been carried out answering the questions: what values of contemporary music product sales are considered topical by organizers in Latvia and Europe? What tendencies can be noticed in the selection of the contemporary music product? What marketing activities are applied for the contemporary music product sales on the Latvian and European scale? In order to implement comparison among mutual tendencies, attention is paid to the music product offer - popularity of music genres from the listeners and organizers' point of view; proportion of contemporary music in the concert offer; tendencies of concert attendance; marketing communication means.

For data acquisition on the existing trends in contemporary music product sales in Latvia and Europe, a survey of the concert organizers and attendees has been carried out within the research.

The most important culture centres and music life organizers of Latvia involved in the research: Latgale Embassy *Gors*, Liepaja Concert Hall *Great Amber*, Vidzeme Concert Hall *Cēsis*, Sigulda Concert Hall *Baltais Flīgelis*, *Latvijas Koncerti* PLC; festivals happening in Latvia, in which contemporary music is played: New Music Festival *Arena*, JVLMA Modern Music Festival *deciBels*, Chamber Music Festival *Sansusī*, Introvert Music Festival *Ad Lucem* and delegates of the most important fair in Europe, dedicated to academic music, Classical:NEXT, knowing that the participants of Classical:NEXT are both young, talented musicians, who have just started their work and are looking for their place in the world's music cultural picture, and leading concert organizations and institutions such as *Carnegie Hall*, *The Metropolitan Opera*, *Spotify*, *Universal*, *China National Symphony Orchestra*, *Berlin Philharmonics*, *Amsterdam Concertgebouw* etc. (Classical: NEXT, 2017)

During research there were surveyed 22 concert organizers, out of whom 9 on the Latvian scale, including 4 managers of contemporary music festivals happening in Latvia and 5 marketing specialists of the most important culture centres and music life organizers. On the European scale – 13 organizers of academic music life (incl. contemporary music festivals) and managers of European most popular and most long-lasting contemporary music centres. The opinion analysis of concert organizers is supplemented with Case Study's results, surveying 138 contemporary music festivals and concert listeners' points of view in Latvia. An empirical research of the views of Latvian and European concert organizers on the use of marketing activities took place between May 2017 and November 2017, but situation analysis to find out opinions of concert visitors regarding topical marketing communication channels to sell contemporary music was carried out from June 2017 to November 2017.

Sample

Taking into account that in total 11 contemporary music product sellers work in Latvia: 6 music festivals and 5 concert organizers (4 concert halls and *Latvijas Koncerti* PLC, which does not work within the framework of a particular concert hall), in the research selection on the scale of Latvia there are included 82% or 4/5 of the contemporary music product's market creators in Latvia.

In order to cover the audience geographically on the scale of Latvia, three contemporary music festivals (*Arēna, Ad Lucem, Sansusī*) and attendees of three concert halls (*Gors, Cēsis, Baltais Flīgelis*) have been selected for the research (respectively 90 and 48 respondents have submitted their responses). Regarding the respondents, 34% of the average attendees' number have been covered within one event (according to the data of the selected organizations in 2017 – 410).

The selection of participants for the European concert organizers' opinion acquisition has been made as an improbable, applying the convenience method, inviting delegates of the music fair Classical: NEXT, dedicated to academic music, to participate in the survey. Assessing the respondents' group, 13 managers of music centres have taken part in the survey from such countries as Great Britain, Finland, Switzerland, Belgium, Lithuania, Spain, Poland, Portugal and Estonia. Regarding the work experience, 7 out of 13 surveyed concert organizers have been working in the branch for more than 10 years.

Instrument and Procedures

For the data acquisition within the empirical research 3 questionnaires have been developed: a questionnaire for the academic music organizers in Europe (in English) with 17 closed-ended and open-ended questions reveals both the country represented by the concert organizers and the length of activity, the dominating music genre in the offer, awareness of the provided values to the consumer, issues about the budget of the events and marketing activities. The questionnaire was implemented in three days – May 17-20, 2017, delivering the questionnaires in direct contact with the respondent, during business meetings, attending on site the music fair Classical: NEXT in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. Simultaneously, the second questionnaire was addressed to the *culture centres and contemporary music festival organizers in Latvia*, including 21 questions (preserving the goal of the questionnaire and the structure of principal questions). The survey was going on from May till November, 2017, sending the questionnaires to the respondents electronically on their informative email address. The third questionnaire made with 5 questions enables to obtain information on the popularity of music genres, tendency of concert attendance, determine the most appropriate marketing activities for clients' attraction and listener demographic characteristic (age, sex, education). The survey of festival listeners and concert attendees in Latvia took place from June till November, 2017, disseminating the questionnaires among the listeners in the 6 organizers' (3 contemporary music festivals and 3 concert halls – geographically to the scale of Latvia) events. The required selection was formed as the non-probable selection. The initial selection method – typical occasion, but then the convenience method were used, inviting the festival listeners and concert attendees, to participate in the survey.

Data Analysis

Microsoft Excel application was used to process the quantitative data of research. The obtained data is displayed in tables and graphs by means of diagrams.

Results of Research

Due to the empirical research, mutual comparison of three different parties' – organizers of contemporary music festivals and concerts in Latvia (n=9), festival and concert hall attendees in Latvia (n=138), as well as the international festival and concert organizers in Europe (n=13) - opinions on the contemporary music product sales, showing the tendencies in the contemporary music product's value formation and application of marketing activities.

The priority music genre in Europe and Latvia from the point of concert organizers is chamber music (Table 1).

Table 1. Music genres from hearers and organizers' priority assessment in Latvia and Europe.

| Music genre | Hearers in Latvia, total of priority points on scale 1-9 (n=138) | Concert organizers in Latvia, total of priority points on scale 1-9 (n=9) | Concert organizers in Europe, number (n=13) |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Chamber music | 502 (2 nd place) | 8 (1 st place) | 9 (1 st place) |
| Symphonic music | 474 (1 st place) | 16 (2 nd place) | 6 |
| Contemporary music | 533 (3 rd place) | 49 | 8 (2 nd place) |
| Multimedia projects | 668 | 31 | 7 (3 rd place) |
| Folk music | 628 | 30 | 6 |
| Opera | 636 | 38 | 4 |
| Choir music | 693 | 22 | 4 |
| Jazz | 582 | 16 (2 nd place) | 4 |
| Pop music | 658 | 27 | |

Regarding the festival and concert hall attendees' interests in Latvia, symphonic music has got a high priority assessment (with a total of 474 priority points, on the scale 1-9), placing chamber music in the second position (with a total of 502 priority points), but contemporary music, regarding their interests, in the third place (533 points, on the priority assessment scale 1-9). European concert organizers, in comparison with the concert organizers in Latvia, give a high position to contemporary music in their offer (it is offered by 8 out of 13 respondents) and also implement enthusiastically multimedia projects (7 out of 13 respondents).

Regarding tendencies, the number of loyal attendees and the volume of contemporary music offer in Latvia and Europe is varied. The results show that the proportion of contemporary music in concert programmes in Europe on average (70%) is higher than is Latvia (40.8%) (Table 2).

Table 2. Proportion of contemporary music in concert programmes and loyal concert attendees in Latvia and Europe (n=22), %.

| | | Proportion of contemporary music in concert programmes, % | Proportion of loyal attendees, % |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Concert organizers in Latvia, (n=9) | Arēna | 100 | 30 |
| | deciBels | 100 | 50 |
| | Ad Lucem | 50 | 35 |
| | Sansusī | 35 | 70 |
| | Latvijas Koncerti | 20 | 20 |
| | Baltais Flīģelis | 40 | 30 |
| | Cēsis | 15 | 70 |
| | Great Amber | 5 | - |
| | Gors | 2 | 30 |
| | in Latvia (on average): | 40,8 | 41,9 |
| Concert organizers in Europe, (n=13) | C:NEXT delegates (on average): | 70 | 50 |

The comparative results also confirm that abroad it is possible to count on a more permanent demand trend for organized events – the average proportion of loyal attendees in the concerts offered in Latvia from their organisers’ point of view make about 42%, in Europe it is slightly higher, making on average 50% of the people attending the event (Figure 1).

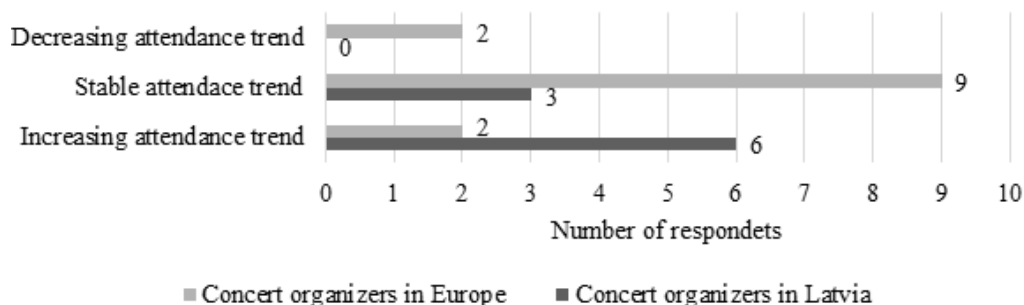


Figure 1. Assessment of concert attendance tendencies during last 3 years (from the European and Latvian concert organizers’ point of view) (n=22), number.

The tendency of the demand for Latvian and foreign events during the last three years has been assessed as increasing by most of the biggest players of Latvian music life (6 out of 9 respondents). However, according to the survey data carried out within Classical:NEXT – the situation is convincingly assessed as stable (it has been marked by 9 out of 13 respondents) (Figure 1).

The main values offered to listeners by concert organizers both in Latvia and Europe are high level performers (respectively 7 and 11 respondents) and innovative content (also 7 and 11 respondents), but entertainment is appreciated the least (indicated by 2 Latvian and 2 foreign respondents) (Table 3).

Table 3. Values of contemporary music product offered to listeners by Latvian and European concert organizers (n=22), number.

| Offered values | Concert organizers in Latvia, (n=9) | Concert organizers in Europe, (n=13) |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| High level performers | 7 | 11 |
| Innovative content | 7 | 11 |
| Educating content | 6 | 5 |
| Classical values | 6 | - |
| Alternative content | 6 | - |
| Alternative environment and activities | 4 | 5 |
| Entertainment | 2 | 2 |

Latvian concert organizers place classical values, educating and alternative content as the second, regarding the values offered by the contemporary music product (respectively 6 out of 9 respondents). Also, foreign specialists place the educating content of the events in the second place but combining it with the alternative environment (respectively 5 out of 13 respondents). The values offered by concert organizers coincide with the listeners' main reasons when choosing the event (Figure 2).

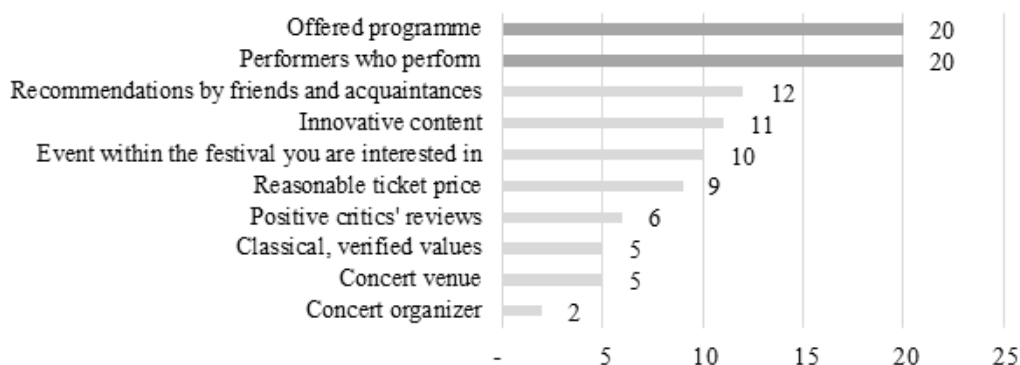


Figure 2. Reasons for concert attendance marked by concert listeners in Latvia (n=138), %.

For listeners the most important reason to go to a concert is performers who perform in the concert (20%) and the concert programme (20%). Friends' recommendations are acknowledged (12%) and how innovative the content of the event is (11%), whether the event is happening within the framework of a familiar festival (10%). A reasonable price of tickets is important for 9% of respondents. Positive references from critics about the forthcoming concerts and musicians (6%) and the venue (5%) do not seem so important for the listeners. Only for 5% of concert listeners it is topical whether classical and verified values will be offered in the concert (see Figure 2), but more than half (6 out of 9 respondents) of the surveyed concert organizers in Latvia see just in that an ensured value for the listeners (see Table 3).

From the Latvian and European concert organizers' point of view the priority means of public information are the social media, TV, Radio and press. A certain priority is also given to the homepage (Table 4).

Table 4. Latvian and European concert organizers' point of view about priority means of public information (n=22).

| Concert organizers in Latvia, (n=9) | Priority | Concert organizers in Europe, (n=13) | Priority |
|---------------------------------------------------|----------|-----------------------------------------------|----------|
| Social media | 1 | Social media | 1 |
| Printed media | 2 | WEB, information on the homepage | 2 |
| TV, Radio | 3 | TV, Radio, press | 3 |
| Electronic marketing, information on the homepage | 4 | Seasonal booklet, programme | 4 |
| Outdoor advertisements - posters, flyers | 5 | Good promotional video, CD | 5 |
| Press release | 6 | Posters, flyers | 6 |
| Clients' cards (system of bonuses) | 7 | Sales on the phone (telemarketing), email, PR | 7 |
| Oral invitation | 8 | Exhibition, <i>showcase</i> , verbal call | 8 |
| | | Invitations, events for free | 9 |

Separate means of public information in the local and international practice testify to a slightly different tendencies. In the Latvian concert organizers' practice outdoor advertising is popular (20%), but European music life organizers create a side product to the main product (CD, concerts for free, exhibitions, etc.) as a material of interest. Foreign specialists also use personal selling and public relations' techniques to create a bond with their potential clients. In Latvia the contemporary music sellers develop bonus systems for their clients (5%) (Figure 3).

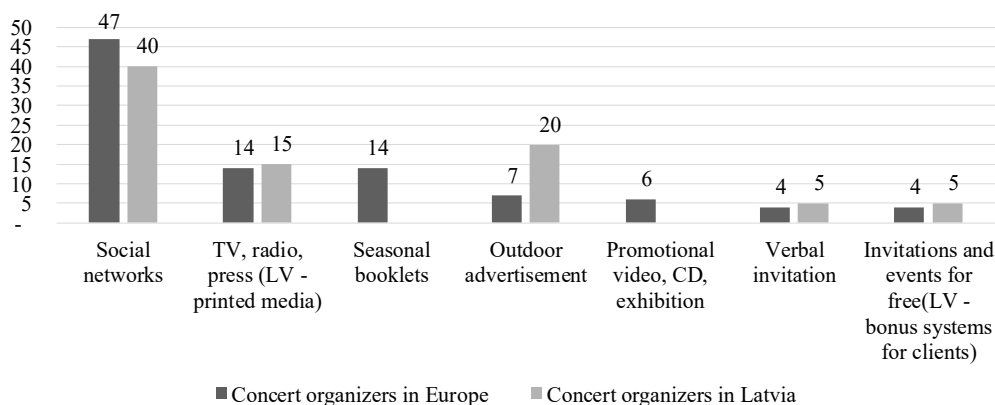


Figure 3. Application of marketing communication for listeners' attraction to concerts in Latvia and Europe (n=22), %.

The results confirm that for the contemporary music product sales both in Latvia and Europe public information mostly (respectively, 14% and 15%) happens through TV. Radio and printed press. However, the biggest circulation of information about events both in Latvia and abroad happens on the social networks (respectively 47% and 40%). The outcomes of the listeners' survey in Latvia show the same, pointing out the social networks as the most popular source of information acquisition (43%), placing posters in the second place (31%), but in the third - the press (15%). The least information on culture events is received from the TV commercials and flyers (Figure 4).

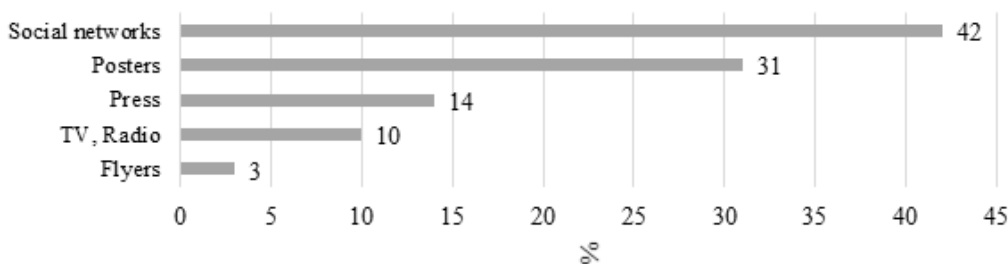


Figure 4. Concert attendees' main information acquisition sources in Latvia (n=138), %.

In Latvia marketing activities are usually started 5 months before the event, foreign specialists plan marketing activities 12 months before the anticipated culture event (Table 5).

Table 5. Concert organizers' planning of marketing measures, proportion of marketing budget and employed personnel in Latvia and Europe.

| | | Marketing measures start-up period before the planned concerts, months | Proportion of marketing budget in the common budget of the company, % | Staff involved in marketing for the concert sales, number |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Concert organizers in Latvia, (n=9) | Arēna | 6 | 6 | 3 |
| | deciBels | no answer | 0,1 | 2 - 3 |
| | Ad Lucem | 3 | no answer | 3 |
| | Sansusī | ½ - 9 | 5 | 1 |
| | Latvijas Koncerti | 6 | 8 | 4 |
| | Baltais Flīģelis | 6 | insufficient | 2 |
| | Cēsis | 6 | 5 | 1 |
| | Great Amber | 3 - 6 | 5 | 3 |
| Gors | a few | 5 | 3 - 4 | |
| In Latvia (on average): | | 5 | 5,6 | 2,6 |
| Concert organizers in Europe, (n=13) | C:NEXT delegates (on average): | 12 | 20 | 7 |

In the concert organizers' work practice in Europe on average 20% of the total budget is spent on marketing activities, and on average 7 people are engaged in marketing within one company on a daily basis, and extra forces are attracted for special events, reaching even 15 employees. The concert organizers' budget section for marketing event tasks in Latvia takes on average 6%, but the number of people working for one concert organization could be one to four employees.

Discussion

The current tendencies in the contemporary music product sales on the Latvian and European scale show a different contemporary music sales proportion in concert programmes, where in Europe it is on average (70%) higher than in Latvia (40.8%). Concert organizers in Europe are aware of a higher number of regular attendees – about 50% of all attendees, saying that during the recent 3 years the attendance has been observed as stable. At the same time concert organizers in Latvia assess the tendency of listeners' attendance as rising during the last three years.

The main values offered by concert organizers in Latvia and Europe are high level of performers and innovative content, giving entertainment the smallest value. Also, from the listeners' point of view, the most important reason to go to a concert is performers who perform in the concert (20%) and the concert programme (20%). This trend totally coincides with the theoretical guidelines of culture marketing, which without any doubts set the performer in the foreground and teach us that in the art sector artistic considerations create, first of all, the product and then try to find an appropriate audience: "Marketing does not teach the artist how to create pieces of art, the task of marketing is to combine the pieces of art and interpretations, created by the artist, with an appropriate audience" (Kolbērs *et.al.* 2007, 25).

The results of listeners' surveys point at the festival advantages in product sales, which present their brand successfully, taking into account that when a listener in Latvia is choosing a contemporary music product, they rely on their friends' recommendations (12%) and whether the event happens within the framework of a famous festival (10%) for the listener. However, the concert organizer's name seems absolutely insignificant for the listeners (2%). Therefore, the concert organizers should have to create the brand in such a way that it would represent just the event and not its "owner." The leading contemporary music festival organizers have already come to the acknowledgement to apply in their work with the contemporary music product events the marketing principles which relate the brand to a socially important event or give the consumers a chance to get identified with a certain social community or group of interests (the culture event as a chance of meeting somebody).

In the results of the listeners' survey the meaning of the visible advertisement "from a consumer to a consumer," when one satisfied listener is able to arouse an interest into another potential concert visitor, enables us to make a conclusion that the music festival practice to implement personal selling and to a particular audience, incl. loyalty programmes directed to regular clients, justifies itself. In Latvian concert organizers' practice two tendencies can be highlighted: market promotion (offering day tickets to several festival days, which makes the product's availability cheaper if buying in bulk and introducing loyalty cards with discounts) and a purposeful attraction of the particular audience (applying invitations), which is a regular practice also in the concert organizers' work in Europe. International practice also shows the role of oral invitation, telemarketing and e-mail usage. In the market of contemporary music product, the price competition can be noticed in Latvia, applying the policy of discounts, observing the attendees' social status, the number of events and advance booking. However, due to the empirical research, it can be said the ticket price is not the priority factor for the event attendance. Also, the venue does not seem so important to the listeners (5%) which contradicts with the alternative environmental value highlighted by European concert organizers.

The research outcomes reveal a certain difference in the concert organizers' opinion about the significance of the means of public information and type of marketing communication in the local and international practice. In the Latvian concert organizers' practice the outdoor advertisement is still mentioned as popular, which is used by 20% of concert organizers and as an essential source of information acquisition marked by 31% of concert listeners in Latvia. Organizers of European music life use a more creative approach to their products sales - merchandising, incl. creating products, which serve as an interest arousing material to the main product (CD, free concerts, exhibitions etc.). The common tendency in public information both

in Latvia and Europe is still TV, radio and printed press, which is also the third most important source of information for listeners in Latvia, but bearing into mind the technological tendencies of the age, the information on the organizers' websites is used a lot and the most important circulation of information about the events both in Latvia and Europe happens just in the social networks. In this respect, the best results have been achieved by the festivals which have managed to establish the listeners' "core," which helps to maintain the festival's special atmosphere and works as a "magnet" to the ones who think similarly. It has also got a theoretical approval in the author Ph. Kotler's opinion: "Consumers look for a corporative participation (*citizenship*) more and more often, which includes in itself something more than just a rational and emotional benefit. Both intermediate dealers and the very consumers are more often involved in marketing communication" (Kotlers, 2006, 37). One can also agree with the main reason why the clients are lost most often in markets of different products, parallel to the fact that clients choose a better and cheaper product, 70% choose another product just because they receive minimal or even not any attention from the seller (Kotlers, 2006, 86). It means that culture product sellers have to assess the direct contact with their audience in the product sales. From the journalist and PR specialist Sandra Veinberga's point of view, it is very important to build communication with the society (in the case of culture products – audience) according to the symmetric model – the information exchange and feedback from the society (Veinberga, n.d., 107). Knowing that contemporary music is a product whose consumption requires from listeners certain background and experience, the audience's trust and reliance is an essential aspect, which has to be achieved in the application of contemporary music products' public relations. It is topical to develop the language which is used in communication with the target audience of contemporary music and work on a high consumers' value formation and its preservation both locally and internationally.

When planning marketing communication, not only the choice of the correct type is important, but also its time management, involved staff and distribution of means. In Latvia the concert organizers' marketing activities are usually started about 5 months prior the event, foreign specialists plan their marketing activities a year before the anticipated culture event. It gives a chance to inform the potential target audience in advance, regarding the time to overtake the competitors in the fight for the clients' choice to purchase and attend the particular event. From the European experience it can be concluded that Latvian concert organizers plan the activities for their events pretty late. For marketing work implementation concert organizers in Europe engage on average two times more people on a daily basis than concert organizers in Latvia (respectively 7 against 3), which means a broader potential for creativity and performance. Also, the budget section for marketing measures in Latvia is four times smaller – about 5.6%. In foreign practice about 20% of the total budget is sent on marketing activities. To be noted, all kinds of support programmes due to the opportunities of a bigger budget, give festivals more possibilities for advertising activities, thus facilitating sales of contemporary music products. From the point of the field specialists, this specific product requires a subsidized funding. According to the composer James Dillon, the contemporary music style needs a financial support, since it has to be free from the pressure which exists in the commercial music field (Dillon, 2017). The responses submitted by the concert organizers within the framework of the empirical research confirm that in the Latvian organizations' budget the state and municipal subsidies constitute 40-65%, whereas in the European concert organizers' budget subsidies take up to 70%. The attracted grants in the funding competitions of Latvia culture projects (in SCCF and municipalities) constitute extra 4-20% in the organizers' budget, thanks to which the newly created music premieres happen in Latvia. However, a common, purposeful national strategy for contemporary music's development and promotion has not been established, leaving this work on the complicated, but for the modern society needed, product up to the organizers' initiative. Ticket incomes from the concert sales in Latvia make 23-37% of the budget, but the European event organizers respectively 10-20%. It can be concluded that concert organizers in Latvia have to provide more self-incomings, which requires a more commercial approach to contemporary music product sales.

The results of the research confirm the common and different tendencies in the sale of the contemporary music product on the Latvian and European level. The differences are not so great in the use of marketing communications, where the use of digital communication tools and event marketing is common. But the benefits of positioning the product itself in society, in terms of access to cultural policy support and access to finance, as well as the share of contemporary musical offerings, can be seen directly for European-scale concert organizers in terms of budgeting and marketing resources (including people and time). It provides organizers with the opportunity to create active complementary products for the sale of contemporary music products and to actively work with the public, in shaping its attitude in general, guaranteeing not only better attendance, but also forms of support for the implementation of less commercial projects.

Conclusions

In Latvia there is still untapped potential in work with the contemporary music offer – in the development of its values and sales, bearing into mind that from the listeners' assessment contemporary music is the third most popular genre immediately after symphonic and chamber music, at the same time constituting only 40.8% of the whole organizers' offer in Latvia.

Communication in social networks, application of outdoor advertisements and publications in the press are the most topical for contemporary music sales. Listeners want to hear high level performers, but their choice to attend the concert is more affected by the friends' recommendations than music critics' reviews. Both formation of a strong brand, which associates with a creation of symbols and myths, and event marketing and integrated marketing communications can be applied in the sales of this product. Taking over the good practice from the European experience, focusing on public relations, direct selling and merchandizing would be recommended.

When planning events, concert organizers in Latvia have to take into account that the marketing budget should be increased for 6% from the current marketing budget (sufficient financing forecast is one of the factors that helps to promote the product's recognition and competitiveness in the market), and marketing activities for the events have to be planned a year in advance, in order to achieve the expected outcomes.

The product is "specific" and sets requirements to the audience, which means that active marketing measures are insufficient from the concert organizers' side, the issue about the public information and education on the product in general is equally topical. It can be achieved by both reviewing the guidelines of the branch and granting the strategic significance of contemporary music, as well as clarifying the application of the term in the society and promoting it in the education system, also implementing public relations – publicity, the leading specialists of the branch more active, open discussions and publication of their opinions, purposeful conferences to attract and involve a wider and younger part of the society.

The organizers of culture-political solutions and closer cooperation concert organizers, agreeing upon the event plan during the year, without creating a direct competition to one another, which is also required by the total density of the events and planning, knowing that the entrance threshold in the market is low and new event organizers appear nearly every day instead of merging with some already existing market participants, fulfil their ideas within the already existing formats. Contemporary music concert organizers' mutual cooperation can be manifested both organizing one concert programme performance in several concert halls or festivals in different places in Latvia and making a joint campaign in order to promote contemporary music.

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