



Staging a Concert in The Devil's Hole

St. Christopher Chamber Orchestra staged a concert in a geological monument, the Devil's Hole in a Lithuanian forest. The aim was to attract both nature lovers, adventurers and those seeking events with a strong atmosphere.

Background

St. Christopher Chamber Orchestra is well known as a daring and innovative ensemble, which is keen on expanding its repertoire and is constantly involved in a number of original projects, such as jazz performances, rock operas or pop-events. It also has a reputation as an “old scores reviver” as well as a patron of young musicians and composers. The ensemble is familiar with musical experiments including repertoire, forms of the performance, discovering of new spaces and so on.

Concept

The idea of the concert came to the ensemble trying to overcome one of the biggest challenges: the summer time in Lithuania is very short and unpredictable, so Lithuanians try to spend every single minute possible being outside. It's very difficult to get an audience in summer time, especially when you need to convince them to attend a concert of modern music.

So, what the ensemble knew for sure was:

1. The space of the concert had to be open air and exclusively attractive by itself
2. They had to perform music in line with the space (legends, mysteries, nature)
3. It should be something never seen and heard before

So, they came to the conclusion that the The Velnio Duobe, The Devil's Hole, a geological monument in the forrest near the city of Aukstadvaris, would fit the aims and requirements perfectly.

Aims and goals

- To use the potentials of the space
- To select an appropriate repertoire of modern music in line with the space relating to nature, legends and mysteries
- To attract the attention of a potential audience who love active tourism, by emphasizing the space of the concert in the promotion material, rather than the music or the ensemble.
- To involve the local community not only as audience, but as project promoters as well.

Target audience

Choosing The Devil's Hole as the venue for the concert, the ensemble aimed to attract people who like active tourism, as well as the local community and target groups who can be described as „adventurers” and „dreamers” (these groups are especially active in summer time). Usually these groups are very far away from The Philharmonic Hall and contemporary music, so The Devil's Hole and its quite mystic atmosphere served as the way to reach them. This experiment was extremely successful as there were over 600 people attending the concert.

Most of the audience when asked, said that they went to the concert because of the unique character of the event. They were very curious to see how this mixture of the unique space, contemporary music and ensemble would work out.

Proces

- The ensemble made a list of goals
- Searched for a good venue
- Made an agreement with Trakai Forest Enterprise for the permission to use the nature monument The Devil's Hole for a concert
- Gathered a group of volunteers from the local community to assist in practical matters: traffic control, providing electricity, handing out the programmes and main information to audience
- Hired a team of technicians
- Made promotion material emphasizing the space, including old legends and scientific facts about the Devil's Hole.

Risks

The biggest risk in the project was rainy weather on the day of the concert.

The ensemble dealt with this by being prepared to cover the ensemble from the rain, and by asking the audience to bring umbrellas and coats just in case.

Another risk was the noise from electric generators needed for amplification of the ensemble during the concert. The team of technicians solved this problem by placing the generators quite far away from the musicians and audience.

The ensemble used the local community as the main marketing tool without knowing how well that would work.

Outcome for the audience

- Became part of a truly unique experience
- Had a great chance to enrich their common leisure activity. Those who already loved to visit new places experienced the music and those who already loved new music had the experience of visiting a new place like The Devil's Hole.

Outcome for the ensemble

- Strengthened their image as a daring and innovative ensemble
- Identified new target groups and found new ways to reach them
- Got experience with using the potential of a space and local community as the main marketing tools
- Gained new technical experience.

Conclusions and recommendations

Everything worked out very well, but a few things could be considered for next time.

It would be easier to choose a space for the concert which is not a nature monument. The most difficult part of the process was the bureaucratic procedures to get permission for the concert. Also it is a great responsibility to make sure that the audience will not make any damage to the wild nature.

It would be useful to make a registration form or something similar, to know in advance how many people will attend. At this concert the ensemble expected an audience of about 100 people, but more than 600 people came.

Facts

Ensemble: St. Christopher Chamber Orchestra

Date and time: August 18th 2013, 3pm

Programme:

R. Serksnyte: *De Profundis*

J. Tamulionis: *Toccata Diavolesca*

G. Pelecis: *Flowering Jasmine*

and others

Further information: www.kristoforas.lt