

The culture of festivals in Vojvodina

The culture of festivals in our environment reached its full affirmation at the end of the sixties and the beginning of seventies of the last century. During that period, traditional manifestations acquired their modern form and a number of new ones were established too.

The process came about as a result of a favourable general economic situation as well as the ambition of political circles and it kept developing a little out of control.

By the end of seventies and during the eighties, the favourable trend of creating and developing the culture of festivals, ceased to continue.

The thing is that the very procedure of creating, the status of the founders and functioning of these significant cultural activities have never been adequately regulated, both legally and financially.

In 1979, an important conference was held in Novi Sad on Cultural-Artistic Manifestations as Local Need and Contribution to Mutual Culture.

The conclusions were of follow:

- Only a small number of manifestations were the result of researching cultural requirements of working people and population of a certain social environment, the same of which were accepted by the public only to be totally neglected after a short period of celebration;
- Artistic manifestations mostly represented ideas and ambitions of enthusiastic individuals, although later, traditional cultural institutions such as theatres, museums and various artistic associations took over; Amateur associations organized activities involving amateur troupes and individuals; Radio and TV stations and record production industry also played an important part in promoting various manifestations and their participants
- Sometimes a manifestation was a result of hurt egos of some neglected scenic or other artists or institutions that had regional but not any creative potentials and was always an expression of commercial interests of both organizers and participants.

Although there were problems, the culture of festivals enriched and improved cultural life in many environments during seventies and early eighties.

Sometimes, festivals developed to an extent when they absorbed almost all available cultural budget of a local community. Thus, dense every-day events imposed themselves as a unique cultural pattern of the community.

Even though festivals have had an obvious cultural importance, the problems stated in Novi Sad are still very much present.

During the last few decades, the majority of festivals have been facing uncertain status and financial position which caused general decline in quality.

Programmes had to be reduced to a minimum, certain activities had to be cancelled which, in many local communities, impoverished cultural life altogether.

The unfavourable situation has been influenced by:

- Drastic rise of overhead expenses
- Reduction of budgetary amount for culture
- Lack of clear cultural policy
- Negative trends in economy
- Vague fiscal policy in the field of culture
- Rapid fall of purchasing ability of the population
- Rise of entertainment industry

Also, certain weakness within festivals organization has become obvious, such as:

- Poor organization and PR activities
- Decline in quality
- Total financial dependence on budget
- Lack of alternative sources of financing
- Lack of coordination amongst festival organizers
- Lack of connection with international institutions and potential donors

The possibilities of exploiting economical potentials from manifestations have also been left out:

- Issuing publications and other advertising material
- Manufacturing and selling objects of applied art
- Image "sale"
- Connecting with tourist industry

It is an imperative to find new, up-to-date solutions to make the festival culture function again, that is, to create special stimulating means which would, in context of cultural policy, urge the existence of festivals.

Calendar of cultural manifestations in Vojvodina

The Calendar represents a mosaic account of 142 manifestations in the area of film, theatre, music, literature, visual arts and folklore. Taking into account the number of events, it can be concluded that we are dealing with a unique review or an inventory of dense every-day events.

The Calendar contains all traditional and contemporary manifestations of festive culture-of international, regional, municipal and local importance.

The number, diversity and dynamics of the events, their different areas, types, artistic achievements, performers, target groups, audiences and venues, all give a true account of artistic and creative possibilities of cultures and cultural life in Vojvodina.

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