

# INTERNATIONAL CONCERT VENUES CONGRESS

**BARCELONA** 1st of June 2018

## REPORT

Once again this year, **Live DMA**, **ASACC** (Association of Concert Venues in Catalonia) and **Primavera PRO** organised jointly the **International Concert Venues Congress** on the 1st of June 2018.

Since our Spanish member **ACCES** (Spanish association of live music venues) introduced us four years ago, we have been holding this Congress in Barcelona, gathering together associations, live music venues and music professionals from all over Europe. We were proud to invite either Live DMA's members or members-members to speak on four different panels and discuss current issues in the live music sector.

*How to get better recognition? How to make venues a safer place for the audience, and especially for women? How to use venues data as a tool for advocacy? Can music venues inspire social change?*

This report sums up the discussions we had during our Congress this year, providing valuable inputs from experts, contents that would hopefully help face the current challenges and understand better the situation of the European live music sector.

### ***The Primavera Pro Award 2018 goes to...***

**Carmen Zapata** received the Primavera Pro Award 2018 as president and spokesperson of **MIM Association** (Mujeres en la Industria Musical). During the last couple of years, MIM has been fighting for gender equality in music in general and for the recognition of women working in music in particular. We could not be more proud that such an inspiring initiative succeeds in gaining public awareness and gaining considerable recognition.



# PANEL 1

## CLUBBING IN EUROPE: QUO VADIS?

### Speakers:

**Pamela Schobess** (*Club Gretchen, Club Commission, GERMANY*) – **Olaf Boswijk** (DJ and club owner, NETHERLANDS) – **Cora Novoa** (DJ, music composer, SPAIN)

### Moderator:

**Bjoern Schaeffner** (*Resident Advisor Journalist, SWITZERLAND*)

*Club culture in Europe - Exchanging best practice and experience from Berlin, Amsterdam, and Barcelona: Club culture seems to be omnipresent in 2018. That is: commercially speaking. In many European countries – such as Spain – clubland remains culturally underrated. Stereotypes related to drug consumption and security issues are persisting. Electronic music clubs might be cash-cows, but hardly are they ever recognized for their cultural value. What can one learn from Berlin that spends one million euros a year to foster a thriving cultural club landscape? Or from Amsterdam where the authorities actively collaborated with clubs to render their urban landscape more attractive?*



Recently, electronic music and club culture have gained better recognition. In cities like Amsterdam or Berlin, club culture occupies a central role, bringing a real added value to the cities' identity and attractiveness. In Spain, the situation is different. According to Cora Novoa, it is a good moment for clubs and DJs in Barcelona. While there is progress in Barcelona where bars can now program live music until 11pm, the situation in Spain remains fragmented and especially difficult in smaller cities and rural areas.

In the 80's and 90's two electronic music genres exploded: house music and hardcore electronic music, along with new behaviours to accept. It was time to take position and accepting these new tendencies, as they were getting more and more popular.

### ***Music recognition in general has a lot to do with politics.***

Berlin government has always promoted the city by using its club culture, highlighting proudly the thriving club scene.

Here is the paradox: Berlin's image has been built on club culture, however, the government does not protect people working in the sector as much as it should.

Recently, with the left coalition, the politic situation improved and the general mentality consequently changed. It is not just about money and marketing anymore. Now, all political parties have a representative of music and club culture on their voting list. Also, 1 million euros have been dedicated to prevent clubs from closures, allowing them to lead soundproofing works for example.

***Olaf Boswijk - "Club culture is a reflection of society. In Holland, the overall situation is quite good and that leads to a general acceptance of underground movements."***

While Olaf Boswijk was working in Club 11, he invited politics so they can see that his club was more than just a dark place. The Amsterdam Night Mayor started to put in place 24h licenses for projects. Trouw, Olaf Boswijk's next project, was the first to benefit from this license and the Mayor of Amsterdam even came to play a record at the nightclub. What a big statement! Olaf followed a specific strategy through his different projects: he used an old industrial building to create a multidisciplinary space involving electronic music as a central activity for a temporary project of 2 or 3 years. His latest project DeSchool was born using a building from the municipality. Olaf Boswijk's projects, and club culture in general, have a quite good reputation in Amsterdam.

***Cora Novoa - "The government thinks live music is just entertainment."***



According to Cora Novoa, such a license would be impossible in Barcelona because there is a misunderstanding problem with the politics in Spain concerning electronic music. If Ada Colau, the mayor of Barcelona, would consider establishing a Night Mayor in Barcelona, this would be quite a long process.

The government thinks live music is just entertainment and this vision is deeply integrated into the Spanish culture.

That is why Spanish institutions and politics are so long at recognising the cultural value of club culture.

***The big question being: is a DJ performance equivalent to a concert?***

Berlin clubs have been taxed at a rate of 19% since 2009, when tax authorities decided that they were places of "entertainment". The "culture" category that includes theatres, museum and concerts is subject to a reduced turnover tax of 7%. In fall 2016, German court deemed Berghain "cultural space" and from this judgment, DJ culture is legally considered as an art form with a reduced VAT on entrance fees. Also the award category "DJ artist" appeared.

### ***Clubculture does not survive in city centers.***

According to Cora Novoa, clubbing and tourism are big challenges in Barcelona. With the great amount of tourists coming to Barcelona to party, there is very little room for locals which is leading to a significant degradation of the authentic club scene. Then, there are noise issues in the streets, in part because the smoking rooms are not allowed in Barcelona.

Berlin attracts a lot of creative people and initiatives but this does not have exclusively positive effects on the city. Gentrification is a serious issue for the club scene. Rents are rising, noise complaints are increasing, as well as competition with a new cultural business attracted by the image of the creative nightlife scene. For clubs, paying for soundproofing and for higher rents also means booking less emerging artists and depriving their artistic freedom.

Therefore, clubs are often forced to move to the city's outskirts, which is problematic, according to Pamela Schobess, considering that club culture is an essential part of the city's identity. On the other hand, Olaf Boswijk is convinced that clubs also change areas and they can provide added value to underestimated neighborhoods.

### ***Festivals and clubs - yet another complicated relationship***

While festivals rely on the work on talent detection and artist support from clubs, they also are a threat to the club scene. In Spain, big festivals receive support from local authorities because for their important economic impact.

For Cora Novoa, the anti-harassment campaign initiated by the City Council is a good path for clubs to create a more welcoming nightlife and to improve the recognition on the long run. In a country which has almost no public financial support dedicated to live music, the recent commercial sponsoring of clubs by la Caixa Foundation is also some good news.

At the moment, people come to the clubs for the line-up. But the increasing popularity of club culture can actually be a danger, because when something gets popular the quality can decrease. It can become just a way to make money with a massive offer. According to Olaf Boswijk, clubs should remain heavens isolated from capitalist logic in order to preserve their authenticity.

***Pamela Schobess – “As long as there are passionate people on both sides, club culture will be safe in spite of the changes.”***

In Spain, politics do not consider clubs as cultural equipment whereas club activity should be part of the city development plans. We may be in a good moment, at least in Barcelona, but the politicians' mentality still has to change.

There is an urgent need to inform people on club culture as many politics have exaggerated ideas about it and about what is going on in the night clubs. There are a lot of people in charge of culture who do not really know what club culture means. When Pamela Schobess shows politicians around to visit Club Gretchen the reaction is always the same: “oh it's so clean in here”. There are so many stereotypes to get rid of, even in Berlin.



## PANEL 2

# INITIATIVES AGAINST SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN EUROPEAN MUSIC VENUES

### Speakers:

**Joppe Pihlgren** (Svensk Live, SWEDEN) – **Valentina Gallo** (CAP10100, ITALY) – **Marta Cruells** (Barcelona Town Hall, SPAIN)

### Moderator:

**Anders Tangen** (NKA, NORWAY)

*According to the 2016 survey on sexist violence in Catalonia, three out of ten sexual aggressions involving violence or without violence occurred in nightlife venues. Because of this, a new protocol, promoted by the City Council of Barcelona, has been used to train managers and staff of live music events. Catalonia is not alone dealing with such challenges. Other European countries show similar observations of sexual aggression in music venues and festivals. This panels aims to give insight on the different strategies employed against sexual harassment in live music events and how venues and their teams (service and security) can be trained to deal with sexual aggressions in their organisations.*



Surveys and reports have shown that sexual harassment is not only a European but an international issue. And it is not exclusive to culture.

Svensk Live, the Swedish association for live music, worked intensely on the topic of sexual harassment with its members. It all started with the mass sexual assault that happened during the 2015/2016 New Year's Eve in Cologne in Germany but also in other countries including Sweden. Consequently in the summer of 2016 there was a big buzz in Swedish media about sexual harassment in festivals, music venues, and public places in general. Live music had to take responsibility, as it was becoming a big social issue in the music sector.

Police in Sweden also felt very concerned about the sexual harassment situation and joined Svensk Live to work on the issue. An anti-harassment campaign in Swedish festivals was released

with the slogan: **“How fun is it to take care of each other?”**, and a knowledge bank with good practices in term of fighting sexual harassment can be found on Svensk Live website.

Security is a thing. But what we need above all is to educate our audience in festivals and music venues.

## ***Joppe Pihlgren: “Improving women safety in venues also means standing for gender equality.”***

In Italy there is no data on the topic of sexual harassment, no data either on women workers. Even if the problem is real, nobody speaks about it. Nevertheless, it is fundamental to understand, via data collection, what is happening and why. There is a very low representation of women in music and that is why sexual harassment is not a common topic to discuss in Italy. The treatment of the sexual harassment issue remains superficial. There is a need of bringing best practices from other countries. In Italy, there are only 8% of mixed bands and 10% of female artists. It is time to change the mentalities, to make the music sector a better surrounding for women and to take action for gender balance.

### ***“We won’t shut up”***

According to the 2016 survey on sexist violence in Catalonia, three out of ten sexual aggression involving violence or not occurred in nightlife venues. This statement needs clarifications. This third part does not correspond exclusively to harassment involving violence, which also happens a lot in public places, transports, etc. Then, in most of the cases the aggressions happen outside the venues, in the streets where people are leaving or smoking outside. That is why the prevention constitutes a non-negligible first step to stop sexual aggressions before they happen.

Festivals and public spaces are two different strategies to set up. Collaborating with politics, venues representatives, promoters and people working in nightlife is fundamental. In the end it has to be the responsibility of everyone. The Protocol in Barcelona goes through an awareness campaign in open air spaces and events, under the slogan “We won’t shut up”. As a shared responsibility between the City of Barcelona and the venues and nightlife professionals, the message has to be made the most visible possible. There is a fundamental preventive part which is about not discriminating people at the entry of the clubs, or not to have preferential prices for women than for men for example, concerning the dress code, etc. The detection and attention phase is about how to detect bad behaviours and what would be the worst scenario, the most dangerous, etc. In the places, the staff is trained to detect the dangerous behaviours and additional staff is in charge of attending the victims.

At the moment, the Protocol is an isolated initiative in Barcelona but the aim is to implement it on a national or at least regional level. There are about 10 night clubs and major festivals involved in the Protocol so far, including Sala Apolo, Jamboree, Razzmatazz, Sidecar, Primavera, Sonar, Cruilla, and more.

### ***Svensk Live campaign***

Svensk Live counts about 220 venues and festivals in Sweden. All the major festivals in Sweden are represented by the organisation. According to Joppe Pihlgren, working hand in hand with the members on this issue is very important and win-win. Sexual harassment became a big topic for the festivals in Sweden. The direct consequence was an important media pressure and the festival organisation had to react fast.

***Joppe Pihlgren: "it is still a topic in media as there is not so much to write about during the summer: but festivals are prepared to react, they are very careful with statistics and data on sexual harassment going down."***

Svensk Live made a long-term agreement with an expert non-profit association on sexuality. After a first campaign conducted exclusively by the national Police, Svensk Live, national Police and other governmental institutions worked together on a stronger campaign.

Before the elaboration of the anti-harassment campaign, they needed to have a reflection on festival spaces involving interrogations like *"What can we do before the event to prevent from sexual aggressions?"*, *"How can we take care of the victims?"* or *"How to deal with harassers?"*. The campaign adopted the slogan ***"how fun is it to take care of each other?"***, reflecting a purpose of educating people to the problem, reminding at the same time how natural it should be to respect each other's intimacy.

The aim of the campaign is to make a change in finding new ways of behaving. It also went through a digital education with a video used at different levels to reach a large audience. The overall reaction was quite positive, leading to the conclusion: *"we need education"*. In this campaign, it is fundamental to involve all the people working in the festivals as well as the audience. Such music events gather a large receptive audience so it is a great place to transmit a message and to try to make the society better, having a bigger impact than just music. Festivals have the power to influence festival goers on their behaviour and therefore to make a difference on the long-term.

### ***"Time will make us wise"***

How has the reaction been to the initiatives from the public and the authorities?

In Barcelona, the Protocol is still a very recent initiative, implemented 4 months ago. It is too soon to evaluate the campaign's impact. There was good reception from the public and the professionals who are the ones who have to implement the measures. It is just a start, the Protocol still needs time to be normalized and of course the reactions are not always positive. The collaboration between the City Council and nightclubs and festivals and the shared responsibility between the different actors went very well.

The fact that the campaign was not institutionalised was also a good thing, especially for young people. To adopt a neutral and direct message was the good strategy to adapt.

Finally, sexual harassment is a problem of society perception. Unfortunately, there is a certain tolerance towards aggressive behaviours in nightlife, because of alcohol consumption for example, justifying that people are not always acting consciously. The whole venue or festival staff needs to be trained to handle the issue but another important focus should be to create an overall atmosphere of confidence. The aim should not be to help women to flee the venue. On the contrary, we have to create the ideal conditions to make them stay and enjoy their night as much as men do. Getting rid of sexual harassment goes through making men responsible and including a better gender equality in the space.

## PANEL 3

# UNDERSTANDING GRASSROOTS VENUES

### Speakers:

**Matt Brennan** (UK Live Music Census – UK), **Maren Astrup** (Dansk Live – Denmark), **Arne Dee** (Live DMA – Netherlands)

### Moderator:

**Audrey Guerre** (Live DMA –FRANCE)

*By presenting and crossing different approaches and methodologies that analyze the European live music sector, this panel focuses on the importance of participatory data collection and research for the live music sector and gives insight on how the results can be used to results to advocacy for music venues and clubs at national levels and at the European scale. Studies: **Live DMA Survey Report** (facts & figures), **UK Live Music Census** (quantitative & qualitative study) & **Diversitet i musikbranchen** (study about 'diversity' conducted, amongst others, by Dansk Live).*



***We are the grassroots.***

Live DMA defines the music venues and clubs part of its network as *grassroots*. **Grassroots venues and clubs have a cultural and social role and are the backbone of the live music sector and its underground scenes.** The term describes venues and clubs who have an organisational and cultural focus on music: programming music is their main purpose and music experts (paid or volunteers) run the organisation. They are important in the local sphere and they encourage the next generation of young cultural activists to step in the live music sector. *Grassroots* take risks with their cultural programmes as they programme artist that deserve audiences with no expectation of direct financial benefits. By supporting artists and providing the necessary resources for talent development, the grassroots build the strong foundation of the music sector.

Grassroots have to be recognized as more than just entertainment venues. Live DMA network and its European members associations aims to show that grassroots also participate to the development of cities and rural areas.



Live DMA is the European network for live music venues and festivals, gathering 18 organisations in 14 different countries aiming to improve the general conditions of the live music sector. Elaborating tools and sharing visions and best practices have always been at the core of Live DMA's activities, to make a strong and innovative European live music sector, able to anticipate and face the new challenges. Benefiting from networking, Live DMA has developed its own Survey to create knowledge and understanding the music venues.

***Collecting data helps to build a dialog with local partners, public authorities and to claim recognition.***

These three different studies show the importance of data collection as a good way to get recognition and support, financially but not only. It enables highlighting the value of the music sector and its working force. Data collection helps building up dialogue with policy makers, and compare and analyse your situation with other countries and economic sectors. The live music sector is often not taken seriously. The statistics collected in the Survey identifies clearly the challenges, the risk live music actors take and the need of support considering its fragile economic models.

***UK Live Music Census:***

In 2012, the first attempt of a city live music census happened in Melbourne as a consequence of a local campaign to support live music in Australia. Then, with the increasing number of venues closures, other attempts to value live music have followed. In 2015, the first city live music census in the UK was carried out in Edinburgh in 2015 by Live Music Exchange. It was eventually extended to a larger national census in 2017.

The motivation to conduct the UK's first ever national live music census was to bring together different interest groups of the live music sector in the UK and to improve the conditions of live music scenes for artists. In order to do that, research was necessary.

The UK Live Music Census was built on previous work on the economic value of the music sector led by UK Music, PRS For Music and Music Venues Trust and it got inspiration from the Live DMA Survey to choose its set of questions. The focus was more to evaluate the social cultural value of live music, which can hardly be represented with numbers but is part of the narrative and important when addressing public authorities.

***"Diversity ensures quality"***

An annual study conducted with the Commerce Chamber in Denmark on live music triggered Dansk Live to take the lead on a diversity census to emphasize, among other things, the lack of women in line-ups.

The census was conducted with four other music organisations: Dansk Musiker Forbund, Dansk Artist Forbund, Gramex and JazzDanmark.

The study mostly represents the gender balance among musicians and among organizers of live music from different positions. Denmark benefits from a vibrant music scene but in which women are still underrepresented. Results of the study also show the age, education, geographic location, race, etc. of musicians and live music professionals. It constitutes a good data base to open the debate.

The study's contributors wanted to stand for diversity as fundamental element ensuring quality in the music industry.

More than just providing data, the Diversity study aims to create a dialogue with stakeholders for more diversity and a stronger music sector ready to face the challenges.

### ***Live DMA Survey***

The Survey collects data from Live DMA members since 2012 to represent the grassroots live music sector on the EU level. The results expected in terms of support can be of financial nature, but also in term of laws and regulations. Considering the European diversity, different income models are represented in the Survey. Comparing the results, there are striking differences in term of public support that can be presented and used for advocacy at national and European level. For example, music venues in Spain have almost no public subsidies comparing to music venues in France. Analysing these big contrasts allows us to understand better each country's economic models and the consequences on the live music sector.

In 5 years, since the Survey was first conducted, the response rate has increased a lot. It takes time to get the number of replies expected because we have to be prepared to answer interrogations from the members surveyed, the first being "What's in here for me?". The importance of data collection is to be continuous with it. The important first step for the Live DMA Survey was to agree on a set of questions that will be monitored in the long run. We have to respect the members' privacy while collecting data internally. Afterwards, the results can be compared and used at large scale but the most important is for the associations to be able to own their data and to use it as they want to.

### ***Data is a fundament to action***

Partnerships with universities are efficient to solve problems, leading researches on the music sector, organisations and researchers can complement each other. Focusing on a social cultural approach of the music sector can be a good idea considering that politics are interested in what voters are interested. Data is a language that decision makers understand and it helps bringing credibility to the live music sector.

The different studies presented on this panel have brought valuable results. Thanks to data highlighting the importance of grassroots but also on their fragile business models, some local authorities have increased their subsidies. Members need to understand that these concrete outcomes depend on their willingness to complete the surveys. Live DMA is planning to launch an Artist Patronage campaign, like Music Venue Trust did to get to introduce Agent of Change in the UK law. Collaborating with artists who began their careers in grassroots venues, collecting and sharing their testimonies, may be an efficient way to raise awareness, too.

## PANEL 4

### MUSIC VENUES AS HUBS FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION

#### Speakers:

**Janpier Brands** (WORM – NETHERLANDS), **Ken Veerman** (Trix – BELGIUM), **Naiara Lasa** (Sala Apolo – SPAIN)

#### Moderator:

**Elisa Thoma** (Live DMA –FRANCE)

*Pop music has the power to create social change. The venues of the Live DMA network are not afraid of assuming their social responsibility and are proactively engaging in inspiring projects that have huge social impact for their surroundings. By highlighting the innovative projects and activities of the first year of Live Style Europe, Live DMA aims to show a different facet of live music venues to defend common values and gain policy makers recognition. This panel will also be a great occasion to launch officially the new resource platform where inspiring content will be a key element.*



The first European edition of the Open Club Day conducted by Live DMA took place on February 3rd 2018 all over Europe. It was a real success in Sala Apolo, the emblematic venue in Barcelona, which also celebrated its 75th anniversary this year. Visitors could meet all the daily workers and were very interested in discovering the venue's background and singular history.

According to Naiara Lasa, Artistic and Communication team manager at Sala Apolo, the venue had all interests in participating to this first Open Club Day. Opening the doors during the day was a way to invite people who are not familiar with the venue, like children or elderly people, to discover another facet of Sala Apolo. It has been a good idea also because in Barcelona, as in other cities in Europe today, music venues and clubs have to deal with noise complaints from the neighbours. During this day, Sala Apolo along with 124 other venues in 11 countries could assume their social duty and show that what they are accomplishing on a daily basis goes far beyond just playing loud music and selling drinks.

The venue organised morning sessions with kids bringing the family all together, and it really worked, doing not only shows but also workshops. It is interesting to reduce the distance between artists and audience. It constitutes a real power that can be used to create accessibility, intimacy. For the next year the Apolo team wants to go one step further involving a recording studio and other facilities. Another thing that motivated Naiara Lasa to join the Open Club Day and made her want to repeat it next year is the really good feedback it got in the days following the event. It was quite popular also on social media and had important media coverage for a first start.

***Ken Veerman: "Music venues are tending to erase the gaps between the audience, the organisations and the artists. It's our role as music venues to write our narrative and not allow others to write it for us."***

Ken Veerman's venue Trix in Belgium did the Open Club Day and he also participated actively to the Live Style Europe<sup>1</sup> working group about Audience Diversity. He is convinced that before talking about developing our audience, we have first to agree and be clear about our values. We need to interrogate us more on why we are doing such things, organising such events, and think in a more theoretical framework. We are part of this ecosystem and we should assume it, setting our own rules. Values should be at the core, otherwise someone else might show up and impose their values.

According to Trix general Manager *"we are a too silent lobby thing; we have to change that and show that we are active and pro values."*

### ***Music culture leads to the development of a music industry***

There is an important previous work to do on defining who we are and what we aim to achieve. The term of "industry" may make us grind our teeth but since we have a commercial activity, which is selling beers during concerts for example, are not we part of the music "industry"? But of course, we also have activities that make us lose money, such as programming emergent artists for example. According to Naiara Lasa, we are part of the industry but the paradigm is changing.

So the question is: Should we step forward and be explicit about our identity and values? Or should we stay neutral and stick to our function of organising live music events?

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<sup>1</sup> *Live Style Europe* is a building capacity program developed by Live DMA and funded by Creative Europe programme that aims to empower music venues and festivals, as well as regional and national live music associations by providing them with skills and tools for an easier adaptation to the evolution of the live music sector.



***We can't afford to only focus on ourselves "Because it is crazy times!"***



Janpier Brands considers that his venue *WORM* located in Rotterdam has a role to play because it is part of the community life. The purpose is not just to host shows, but to see what they can do as venue with people living in the neighbourhood. They currently lead projects hand in hand with local residents, like "Issue Wrestling", a special event with wrestling matches where the ring becomes an alternative stage to solve current social issues in the neighbourhood. According to Janpier Brands, nowadays music venues should really assume their social role and stand against populist movements, because the current situation forces us to be more than just gigs organisers. Pop music venues have the power to take a stand, rather to raise awareness or conflict, or to make partnerships.

The difference between a pop show and a theatre play is that live music is a social activity on its own. It is not one directional where you have to be quiet and this is where the audience become crucial.