

Digital Safari #8

Sustaining Music for small jazz venues in Ukraine & beyond!

SPEAKERS

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GENERAL OVERVIEW: MUSIC INDUSTRY IN WAR TIME

The Ukrainian music industry is still struggling with the war. But, the music has not stopped in Ukraine. The Ukrainian live music sector has gained a new social role: to be supportive of the Ukrainian people, and be a place to heal with music. It's not only about the music, it's about resilience, and fighting for freedom and their cultural identity.

Even in cities situated near the Russian border, the music continues: in bomb shelters, in the underground or metro stations. The Ukrainian music industry is adapting to this new situation, and it has been quite reformatted by it.

Of course, for security reasons, big or open air events cannot take place for security reasons. But there are still a lot of new initiatives, and the music sector has found that cooperation is key to going through this, together, as shown by the creation of the new venue network in Ukraine, MayDay Art, at the initiative of 32 Jazz Club.

EXAMPLE OF 32 JAZZ CLUB: HOW A MUSIC VENUE OPERATES IN WAR TIME.

32 Jazz club is a small jazz venue of 45 audience capacity, who has been operating throughout the Russo-Ukrainian conflict, which actually started 10 years ago.

At first a modern art gallery, the place has then been turned into a jazz club and is steadily developing since then. 32 Jazz club works as meeting hub for the thriving Ukrainian and international jazz scene.

In February 2020, when the Russian invasion started, the venue had to stop its activities for a month. Yet, the team decided to still operate, to be there for their audience because they realised that culture was a very important part of the resistance. They thus reopened the venue with a project with Japanese jazz musicians. This event reunited more than 30 jazz musicians who were still in Kyiv, at a time when the city was empty because people had left for safety reasons.

The war regulations in Ukraine forced 32 Jazz club to operate differently: the imposed curfew made them move to earlier in the evening the concerts; the bombing of powerplants made them organise acoustic “candlelight” concerts where no electricity was needed to power the stage; the drop in numbers following the amounts of Ukrainian citizens who left the capital was compensated by organising charity events; and so on.

It is the various partnerships and international solidarity which made 32 Jazz club be able to receive grants and funding to continue their activities.

Dmytro Savkiv from 32 Jazz Club, as well as Mariana Bondarenko from the Ukrainian Institute are actually open to any partnerships that the European music sector would like to offer them, and they are open to being contacted for this.

COOPERATION AS KEY TO RESILIENCE, SURVIVAL, AND FLOURISHING OF NEW PROJECTS

What helped the Ukrainian music sector, and 32 Jazz club in particular, in the face of these challenges? Cooperation and solidarity.

Maria Rylander gave the example of a project they realised with the Ukrainian Institute, to invite Ukrainian artists to perform in Sweden and organise a tour with them. This tour allowed Ukrainian artists to perform and meet the Ukrainian refugee community in Sweden. This also allowed the Ukrainian music sector to meet new partners to develop projects, get funding, and continue the important activities that music venues & artists are doing in Ukraine.

Cooperation projects are key to face all the crisis that we need to face right, and that we will face more in the future: war crisis, economic crisis, climate crisis... Cultural diplomacy is crucial to our survival and resilience as music sector workers, and as humans.

EXAMPLE OF EJN'S GREEN PILOT TOUR: OR HOW CAN EUROPEAN MUSIC PROFESSIONALS CAN HELP THE UKRAINIAN SECTOR, AND THEMSELVES

One cooperation project that was mentioned was the Green Pilot Tour initiative that was launched by Europe Jazz Network. The Green Pilot Tour are cooperation projects for the European mobility of one jazz artist in at least 4 different venues or festivals, and involving at least two EJM members. Venues or festivals all over Europe can apply to the call, to get funding to organise a tour, in a fair and sustainable way. A new Green Pilot Tour call was launched in early February, and deadline to apply is on the 5th of May 2024. [Read more about the initiative here.](#)

The Digital Safari was the occasion for the Ukrainian Institute to share their openness to possible collaborations, notably on a future Green Pilot Tour. Find here a list of venues & festivals in Ukraine who would be open to apply to the call, and feel free to share this to your networks.

Mariana highlighted that the train connections in Ukraine are reliable, cheap and fast, and that there was no need to fear for artists' security while touring in Ukraine.

EJM also shared the info digest they put up about the Ukrainian Jazz music scene, which is a good resource for anyone organising a tour in Ukraine: <https://www.europejazz.net/ukraine>