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Sound, Image, Performance. The 2020 Sacrum Profanum Festival Between Real and Virtual Space

Sacrum Profanum is a festival with a long tradition and one of the flagship musical events of Krakow. The festival—combining the so-called contemporary classics with electronic music, jazz, and other genres—is known for experimenting, presenting bold arrangements and connecting classics with avant-garde. The organizers' intention to cross borders and explore unconventional forms of musical expression is accompanied by the search for new channels of communication.

In 2020, the Sacrum Profanum festival had its 18th edition, entering into its symbolic adulthood. Due to the restrictions caused by the pandemic, the festival radically changed its format. From a "live" event, it moved entirely online, but the way virtual space was used differed from online versions of other music festivals. That atypical iteration made it possible to expose the multimedia dimension of Sacrum Profanum, as well as to show its performative nature. It also allowed to try out new forms of interaction with the audience and new possibilities of connections between sound and image, as well as between music and its visualizations.

The aim of this article is to analyse the experimental 2020 online edition of the festival, with the emphasis on its multimedia dimension. The analysis is based on data collected from field research carried out within the framework of the project "European Music Festivals, Public Spaces, and Cultural Diversity"

(www.festiversities.org).[1] The main research question posed here refers to how the extensive use of multimediality facilitated the realisation of the 2020 edition of the Sacrum Profanum festival and allowed for developing a new festival formula. I will refer mainly to the reorganization of the festival space and the emergence of new types of festival experiences.

The elusive nature of music festivals and new challenges posed by the pandemic

When analyzing the nature of festivals, Monica Sassatelli and Gerard Delanty underline that "openness, innovation, hybridity, and change are constitutive and not derivative of cultural identity or specificity."[2] Festivals belong to the performative culture. "Even if the landscape is part of something strictly choreographed, (…) such performances are never completely choreographed because of the playful and liminal aspects of the event."[3]

Referring to the concept of liminality,[4] Victor Turner points out that "liminal entities" occupy the in-between space, where conventions and normality are blurred. According to Hanya Pielichaty, liminoidal[5] contexts offer

[1] A total of 7 interviews were conducted (in the period from September 2020 to August 2021) with the direct organizers of the Sacrum Profanum festival and with representatives of the Cracow Festival Office (KBF), the organization responsible for financing and executing the festival. The interviews ranged in length from about 45 to 90 minutes. The reviews of the festival's 2020 edition appeared on selected websites and in online magazines. The sample consisted of 13 online articles published both during the festival and immediately afterwards, i.e. in the period from November to December 2020. All articles were selected through purposive sampling method.

[2] Monika Sassatelli, Gerard Delanty, "Festivals in Cities, Cities in Festivals," in: Liana Giorgi et al. (eds.), *European Arts Festivals. Strengthening Cultural Diversity* (Brussels: European Commission, 2011), 54.

[3] Lasse Koefoed, Maja de Neergaard, Kirsten Simonsen, "Cross-Cultural Encounters in Urban Festivals: Between Liberation and Domination," *Space and Culture* (January 2020): 4.

[4] On the concepts of liminality see: Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process. Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); Rob Shields, "The 'System of Pleasure': Liminality and the Carnivalesque at Brighton," *Theory, Culture and Society* 7 (1990 No. 1): passim; Hanya Pielichaty, "Festival Space: Gender, Liminality and the Carnivalesque," *International Journal of Event and Festival Management* 6, (2015 No. 3): passim.

[5] The author explains: "Liminality is often perceived as a sacred in-between space whereas the term liminoid, shares similar connotations, but often refers to secular spaces (…)," Pielichaty, "Festival Space," 236.

opportunities for "critical engagement, subversion of normative ways of being, and the trying out of non-dominant values and systems within public, albeit less rigid and proscriptive, spaces."[6] It may be argued that the core quality of different leisure experiences may be expressed through the notion of liminality.[7] The liminal or liminoidal feature is deeply connected with the phenomenon of music festivals, and the creative responses of festivals' organizers to a situation of insecurity revealed a new dimension of this liminality. Festivals, essentially flexible, ever-changing and to some extent unpredictable, oscillating between organizational scripts and new ideas, between ritualized repetition and discovery, driven by elusive creative energy but dependent on very quantifiable factors (such as the physical environment or budgeting), were forced to face extremely challenging circumstances. The pandemic itself was a liminal situation, an interim phase in which the existing forms of activities, organizational practices and habits, as well as professional roles were suspended and dismantled. The crisis thus served as an imposed liminal stage obliging people to construct "transitional dwelling spaces"[8] and to search for new ways of dealing with the current reality.[9] It is not without reason that the pandemic edition of the Unsound festival, another Kracow musical event recognized both locally and internationally, was called "Intermission," signaling a moment of pause between the old and the new, and between past and future times.

In 2020 some hybrid models of cultural events emerged, allowing them to endure and re-materialize under the different circumstances. In the area of social sciences, the concept of hybridity is defined and used in many ways; in this short section only a few examples of its conceptualisation can be mentioned. Ayesha and Parag Khanna understand hybrid reality as a core feature of the "new sociotechnical era that is unfolding as technologies merge with each

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[6] Pielichaty, "Festival Space," 236. See also: Jayne Caudwell, Robert E. Rinehart, "Liminoidal Spaces and the Moving Body: Emotional Turns," *Emotion, Space and Society* (December 2014): 1–3.

[7] Pielichaty, "Festival Space," 238.

[8] Hariett Shortt, "Liminality, Space and the Importance of 'Transitory Dwelling Places' at Work," *Human Relations* 68 (2015 No. 4): 636.

[9] Sergio Eduardo Visacovsky, "When Time Freezes: Socio-Anthropological Research on Social Crises," *Iberoamericana – Nordic Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 46 (2017 No. 1): 6–16.

other and humans merge with technology — both at the same time."[10] Generally speaking, the authors view hybridity as a process of interaction between people and technologies. Hybridity may be also seen as a consequence of an increasingly media-oriented and globalizing world, a "palimpsestic model of cultural globalization."[11] The idea of "time-space distanciation" introduced by Anthony Giddens[12] may be also interpreted as a conceptualisation of hybridity. The advances in communication technologies have caused the extension of social relations and made remote interactions a significant feature of everyday life. As a result, interconnectivity and interdependencies have increased, as can be seen from the example of the online festival communities, including people originating from different cultural and geographical backgrounds. Leszek Korporowicz underlines the specific contemporary conditions in which the hybridisation occurs: intensified processes of mobility, deterritorialization, developments in information and communication technologies, and the development of virtual space.[13] According to the author, hybrid spaces are areas of constant transgressions and creative potential, especially if they also allow for different cultures to interact. They are also spaces where "physical distances lose their importance in favour of semiotic distances," which makes them more contextual and multidimensional.[14]

Thus, hybrid festivals may be considered as "spaces/areas of junctions"[15] where many aspects of parallel realities come together. "Hybridity" in the context of festivals may be related to the space (physical/virtual; public/private and private turned into or blended with public through online connection), transmission channels (social media, radio broadcasts, digital platforms), geographic dimension (local/global; national/international – thanks to broadcasting and streaming), and content (concerts and other activities: debates, digital audiovisual performances, digital workshops and games, soundwalks, etc.). Finally,

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[10] Ayesha Khanna & Parag Khanna, *The Hybrid Reality. Thriving in the Emerging Human-Technology Civilization*, 2012, TED Conferences (Kindle Edition).

[11] May Joseph, "Introduction: New Hybrid Identities and Performance," in: May Joseph, Jennifer Natalya Fink (eds.), *Performing Hybridity* (The University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 16.

[12] Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).

[13] Leszek Korporowicz, "Intercultural Space," *Politeja* 44 (2016 No. 5): 28.

[14] Korporowicz, "Intercultural Space," 19.

[15] Joseph, "Introduction: New Hybrid Identities and Performance," 20.

hybridity in a music festival framework may also refer to a fusion of different forms and dimensions of artistic expression (music, image, architectural environment, body movement, spoken word, lighting, etc.) intended to create diverse, multisensorial experiences.

The feeling of uncertainty caused by the COVID–19 pandemic affected different segments of the artistic and cultural sector, including the music festival industry. Those untypical circumstances had a serious impact on Kracow's music festival scene, too. The organizers were forced to redefine the design of their events, opting for different emergency solutions and ad hoc strategies. Some of them succeeded in creating new immersive experiences through Internet channels and hybrid formulas, reaching a new understanding of what a festival can be. Transitioning from a typical physical space, some of the events were re-materialized in new dimensions, which allowed the festival encounters to be "instant and synaesthetic"[16] as much as possible. It could be said that due to the raging pandemic and constant restrictions, the organizers of events and festivals competed in creativity to present new ideas and interesting forms of art consumption. A significant support was provided by technological tools and multimedia solutions. As Martijn Mulder stated, "The fact that a lot of creativity has been released, should not be understood as a matter of *despite the crisis* but as *fuelled by the crisis*."[17]

One of the major concerns of festival managers seems to be the question of "how to renew oneself with the available resources while respecting the legacy of the festival."[18] Evidently, the pandemic radicalized this search for the festival renewal. The unusual situation not only activated the elementary desire to survive, but also created the space for imagination to blossom. Extreme operating conditions legitimized and served as an excuse for testing, experimenting, improvising, and undertaking radical solutions more than ever before. The explosion of creative skills among festival organizers and their pursuit of novelties

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[16] Koefoed, Neergaard, Simonsen, "Cross-Cultural Encounters," 4.

[17] Martijn Mulder, "Music Missionaries. How Dutch Music Festivals Utilised the Pandemic to Bounce Forward," in: Ian Woodward, Jo Haynes, Pauwke Berkers, Aileen Dillane and Karolina Golemo (eds.), *Remaking Culture and Music Spaces. Affects, Infrastructures, Futures* (London: Routledge, 2022), 255.

[18] Mervi Luonila, Maarit Kinnunen, "Future of the Arts Festivals: Do the Views of Managers and Attendees Match?," *International Journal of Event and Festival Management* 11 (2020 No. 1): 112.

combined well with ambiguity and dynamism inherent to the cultural-artistic sector which habitually functions without developing dominant paradigms.[19]

Entering adulthood in extreme circumstances

Like many others, the Sacrum Profanum festival had to face unexpected organizational challenges. The conditions for the celebration of youth (the theme of the 2020 edition) were difficult, nevertheless the organizers saw it as an opportunity to renew and reinforce their festival's philosophy. The introduced innovations not only allowed the festival to survive, but also contributed to the reformulation and "rejuvenation" of its very idea, partly through the use of multimediality. The descriptions of the festival's main idea referred to youth and its right to experiment: '"What if…?" is a timeless question, and when you're 18 years old, you're ready for anything!'[20] A promotional text authored by the artistic director of the festival contained the organizers' own definition of youth:

> Youth is associated with physical strength, endurance, sport, rebellion, mutiny, bravado, arrogance, mistakes, popular culture, the internet, pop songs, improvisations, lustfulness, technology, carelessness, fun and oh, so much more! The program reflects all these attributes: the 18th festival pays homage to Youth. (SP Artistic Director/ webpage).

Although the definition mentioned technology, internet, popular culture and improvisations (notions that were a clear points of reference for the 2020 festival's virtual setting), its other components could be easily associated with what is habitually (and stereotypically) defined as "masculine" (physical strength, endurance, bravado). Given the profile of the festival, which is explicitly engaged in gender equality issues, this particular choice of the "attributes of youth" might be considered rather as a provocation and a play with social conventions. Nevertheless, the issue of the division between male and female attributes of youth is rather debatable and would require further discussion. While this is an intriguing topic, it runs beyond the subject matter of this article.

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[19] About this topic see: Joseph Lampel, Theresa Lant, and Jamal Shamsie, "Balancing Act: Learning from Organizing Practices in Cultural Industries," *Organization Science* 11 (2000 No. 3): 263–269.

[20] "Youthful Energy," Kraków Culture/Karnet. Cultural information website of the City of Kraków, [online] http://karnet.krakowculture.pl/en/37437-krakow-sacrum-profanum–2020, accessed on October 20, 2022.

Already in the spring of 2020, the Sacrum Profanum organizational team decided to produce an experimental edition of the event. Unlike other organizers who were anxiously following the changing situation and trying to fit into the current guidelines, they opted for a completely new format for the event. The idea was to move the whole festival to a virtual space, but with a brand new cycle of live concerts recorded previously in different locations specifically for the 2020 edition. The artists and sound technicians were present on the spot, and the only missing element was the physical participation of the public, which had access to the pre-recorded event through a digital platform called Kraków Play (Poland's first VOD platform for exploring urban culture). The concerts broadcast on the Kraków Play platform were watched by several thousand of people. As the curators stated a few months before the beginning of the festival:

> (…) It has been exciting to work on an online version of the festival, and we are thrilled about the incredible potential of the medium while being aware of the challenges it poses. The situation may never be repeated again, which means that we can join forces to test a brand-new format of culture. (SP, webpage).

The organizers considered the "online experiment" to fit very well with their festival:

> (…) experimentation and trying new things are inherent in the nature of this festival. And this is a new situation; we take it on the chin and I think we have a kind of thrill before doing it in this form. And we're kind of glad that we have that opportunity... We hope to get new listeners, so it's a kind of sadness mixed with excitement. (SP Production, interview).

As emphasized by the curators, the web was treated as a place for artistic activities and not as a reflection of those activities.

Hybridity, Multimediality, Diversity

The event, famous for its surprising program offer and unusual fusions of forms and genres, also in 2020 took care of diversity. The concerts were accompanied by performances, uncommon scenography and visualizations. The multimedia character of the festival was manifested not only by broadcasting events through various communication channels (the Kraków Play platform, social media), but also through hybrid forms of artistic content. Music was combined

with images, body movement, installations, architecture, and the interiors of various buildings. The new online format allowed to take advantage of digital facilities and showed that hybridisation is also strongly linked to the ideas of interruption, innovation and transference.[21] The organizers themselves defined their attempts as "flirting with internet phenomena". It is impossible to refer in this short article to the whole festival program, therefore I will discuss briefly just a few examples in the following section.

One of the concerts, *Music and Sport*, was aimed at capturing the unconventional links between these apparently distant fields. As one of the festival's reviewers, Adam Suprynowicz, observed:

> Music and sports have more in common than we used to admit. From long-term training to the fleetingness of a single chance which can be both a concert or a sports competition.[22]

The composers tried to translate their personal experiences in sports into the composition process and performance techniques. There were references to boxing, swimming, and skateboarding. The composition "Box of boxing" was performed by 4 musicians and 1 kickboxer. Dominik Strycharski, the author of that piece, played the role of a kickboxer "'fighting' with the sounds of the band and the virtual audience, conveying the dynamics of this duel with breaths and movements."[23] Although that clash was also interpreted as the composer's struggle with himself and with his weaknesses, it emphasized at the same time the "corporeality of the act of performance."[24] Suprynowicz suggestively described it in his commentary:

> His every movement, every blow, every battle cry, which is also a reflex of the body forced to exertion, is mirrored in the sounds.[25]

Performed Lecture combined music and the spoken word, intertwining elements of an academic lecture, performative acts and a live music concert, all this happening in one of the most emblematic lecture halls of the Jagiellonian Univer-

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[21] Joseph, "Introduction: New Hybrid Identities and Performance," 20.

[22] "Sacrum Profanum 2020 (relacje)," *Ruch Muzyczny* (November 15, 2020), [online] https://ruchmuzyczny.pl/article/507, accessed on September 15, 2022.

[23] Jan Topolski, "Dlaczego i dla kogo," *Dwutygodnik,* [online] https://www.dwutygodnik.com/artykul/9643-dlaczego-i-dla-kogo.html?print=1, accessed on 20 October 2022.

[24] "Sacrum Profanum 2020 (relacje)."

[25] *Ibid*.

sity. The organizers' intention was to show that commentaries accompanying a classical music concert do not have to take the form of silly stories or humorous anecdotes designed to amuse the audience. Music commentary can be much more ambitious and innovative. Agnieszka Lniak wrote that *Performed Lecture* "roams through various media, styles and performances – from utopian visions of the world beyond its simulacrum, to the dystopian reality of climate catastrophe."[26] Regarding the relation between music and its environment, it was observed that the academic hall not only served as a background for the multimedia spectacle, but was also "matter processed by the history of digital aesthetics."[27]

The festival organizers also made available a room for exploring graphic scores. During the last concert, the soloists from the Hashtag Ensemble tried to "follow the rhythm, order, texture and forms of different buildings, translating them into music."[28] The buildings that served as the architectural scores were the former Administrative Centre of the Nowa Huta Steelworks, the Cricoteka, the 'Way of Four Gates' Higher Seminary, and the Płaszów Locomotive Depot.[29] As one of the reviewers commented:

> Throughout the festival, we visited the spaces of Krakow's buildings, where concerts were recorded. The logical consequence was to make them the protagonists of the last evening. Four musicians of the Hashtag Ensemble translated into sounds four stylistically diverse and in their own way iconic buildings of the city. A consequential culmination of the festival, a show of the solo talents of the musicians and an excellent remedy for most boring streams.[30]

Music and social commitment—two channels, one message

The term multimediality, usually referring to the use of diverse channels of transmission or to a combination of various forms of (artistic) expression, may also be understood in a slightly broader sense, as an intersection of different areas of communication and different languages of transmission, i.e. a fusion of

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[26] *Ibid*.

[27] *Ibid*.

[28] "Youthful Energy."

[29] See the review of the #ARCHI-SOLOS concert by Agnieszka Lniak, "Sacrum Profanum 2020 (relacje)."

[30] Jan Topolski, "Przestrzenie krakowskich budynków," https://sacrumprofanum.com/aktualnosci/przestrzenie-krakowskich-budynkow-bohaterami-ostatniego-wieczoru, accessed on October 20, 2022.

artistic message with social commitment. Currently, some of the creators of the so-called contemporary classical music are looking for new forms of expression to make their work fit into a deeper social context and to be closer to the everyday reality they live in. This inclination was visible in the 2020 edition of Sacrum Profanum. As pointed out by the curators of the festival:

> (…) not only did the nature of the festival, surprisingly strongly correspond with this year's important socio-political events, but so did the themes taken up in the works presented at Sacrum Profanum. (SP, webpage).

Some of the concerts were indeed good examples of the artivism[31] trend. In the already mentioned *Performed Lecture,* there were references to ecological issues. Monika Dalach, in her composition „Carbon is the New Black," presented "a musical-visual-performative story about the textile industry and its contribution to the climate catastrophe through the optics of the global crisis and individualized perspective, combining the experience of the human body and that of the body of the planet."[32] According to one of the commentators, her performance was an "artistic intervention into the main problems of the Anthropocene, a sonic, visual, and literary intervention."[33] In turn, women collaborating within the *Female Forms* project – both as composers and instrumentalists—lent their voices to the discussion on gender inequalities in music. As somewhat provocatively stated by the organizers: they "do not want to fight on the barricades, they simply want to play what they have composed for each other. They are going to play their music, and we are going to listen to what they have to say."[34] In this way, the female musicians (but also the festival itself) contributed to the social debate on the participation of women in the music industry and on quotas. One of the compositions included in this project, a song-manifesto *Sugar, Spice & All Things Nice* by Nina Fukuoka, combined *musique concrète* with confessions about experienced misogyny. As Jan Topolski commented, the author

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[31] Artivism is a portmanteau word combining art and activism. It refers to social activism performed through artistic expression.

[32] "Młodość w Formie," *Ruch Muzyczny* (December 13, 2020), [online] https://ruchmuzyczny.pl/article/639, accessed on October 25, 2022.

[33] "Sacrum Profanum 2020 (relacje)."

[34] "18 Years Old – That Means Youth," https://sacrumprofanum.com/news/170, accessed September 15, 2022.

> took up the subject of #metoo in Polish classical music in an almost journalistic spirit, collecting confessions of friends and passing them on to the ensemble's instrumentalists by means of a seemingly dispassionate recitation. Memories of harassment and discrimination are accompanied by a sometimes apparently relaxing and sometimes disturbing layer of murmurs and looped gestures of the musicians.[35]

Another feminist project, a concert *Tova*, premiered on the day of the nationwide Women's Strike in Poland, which was a complete coincidence. The project *Tova*, combining the perspectives of five female artists and their research on ambiguous female identity, corporeality, or various forms of oppression, naturally corresponded with slogans appearing at protests across the country. One of the featured pieces was *SCREAM* by Teonika Rożynek, which Izabela Smełczyńska commented on in the following words:

> The scream, appearing in the title, is not an expression of anger, but of impotence. A desperate, silent cry. The flute here is only an extension of the voice, a muffled scream. It is difficult to find greater synchronicity in the context of what is happening on the Polish streets.[36]

According to the composer and music theorist Marta Śniady, even if "musical and rhetorical logic permeate each other," artistic and social messages must remain in balance in order to avoid "preaching."[37] Although the involvement of artists in social issues is common and their voice is important, the final product of their activity is "an audiovisual work, not a lecture". Another composer and sound designer, Wojciech Błażejczyk, emphasizes the power of expression that music gives. Although it is often ambiguous and indirect, "certain things can be expressed more clearly with music than with journalistic text."[38]

Technology-mediated relation with the audience

The pandemic situation created a fertile ground for new ways of keeping in touch and recreating a festival atmosphere. Along with the pre-recorded concerts, the Sacrum Profanum organizers also tested some (new) forms of interaction with the audience: virtual family soundwalks around the city, DIY digital workshops on making musical instruments 'out of nothing', a "Perform

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35 Topolski, "Dlaczego i dla kogo."
36 "Sacrum Profanum 2020 (relacje)."
37 Topolski, "Dlaczego i dla kogo."
38 *Ibid*.

It Yourself" score cycle to be played/performed at home using various objects and own voices as instruments, or an interactive composition PEnderSZATch by Piotr Peszat (inspired by a Netflix series, Black Mirror: Bandersnatch), a piece offering multiple alternative paths for the audience to vote on during the event.[39] The festival's Facebook fan page featured fragments of concerts, conversations with the curators, critics and artists, and a series of posts on "What #Youth means to you," presenting statements from various people associated with the festival.

The organizers drew attention to the fact that the planning and execution of the festival program proceeded, in fact, as if the event was organized "in real life":

> I was actually feeling a kind of gratitude, because Sacrum Profanum was the only festival organized by KBF [Krakow Festival Office] that actually took place this year, not by using archived materials or offering a single concert only to mark the festival's presence, to remind one that it exists (…) only this festival truly took place and the way it was held was not so far from... all the conditions that appear in a traditional festival [which] also had to be fulfilled, because those musicians had to arrive, sleep, rehearse. The instruments had to be rented and so forth (…). (SP, Production, interview).

Concerts recorded in real, physical spaces in a concrete place and time were then broadcast on the scheduled day at a precisely defined time (preserving to some extent the elements of waiting for a meeting with the artists and of sharing a communal emotional experience), but since the transmission channel was virtual, the whole festival experience turned into a "mediated experience."[40] The liveness of the event was thus determined by the time of participation in the event shared by the audience, but not by being at the same place.[41] Yet, it is worth mentioning that thanks to this virtual edition of the festival, the audience even had the opportunity to virtually 'enter' and familiarize itself with some non-obvious city spaces.

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[39] "Youthful Energy."

[40] Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, passim.

[41] On the New Understanding of 'Liveness' in the Context of Hybrid Festivals see Marta Kupis, Karolina Golemo, "Hybrid Festivals? Challenges Facing Cracow's Festival Scene during the Pandemic," *Kultura i Społeczeństwo* (2022 No. 3): 117–141.

New festival experiences and reorganization of the festival space

Before the pandemic started, a musicologist Monika Żyła shared her reflections on festival participation as a "total" experience: "For me, a festival is the moment when our musical experience begins to expand rapidly. It begins to contain much more. At the same time, it becomes related to the experience of a new space and place where we have found ourselves."[42] Changes forced by the pandemic made the question of the nature of festival experience even more important. The Sacrum Profanum team treated the unusual situation as an opportunity to redefine the experiences that their festival could bring. The organizers stressed that it was not a "typical hybrid formula," in the sense of broadcasting live concerts with a small audience through digital channels, especially Youtube or social media. They saw it, rather, as a completely different, experimental solution. As one of the reviewers commented, they went a step further than other festivals, offering ready-made quasi-TV productions.[43] The material was first prepared with the participation of live musicians, and then subjected to advanced post-production. Another commentator, Agnieszka Lniak, noticed:

> This year's online version of Sacrum Profanum was halfway between a festival of recorded concerts and a media exploration of new formulas.[44]

The understanding of "how to design festival experience"[45] is the principal component of the organizational responsibilities. The intent of the Sacrum Profanum organizers was to approach the new medium (Internet) and make the most of its artistic potential through digital tools. As Agnieszka Lniak observed:

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[42] Monika Żyła, "W stronę nowego, lepszego festiwalu," *Glissando* (February 13, 2018), [online] https://glissando.pl/artykuly/w-strone-nowego-lepszego-festiwalu/, accessed on October 3, 2022.

[43] Anna S. Dębowska, „Sacrum Profanum. To już nie zwykłe streamowanie, ale produkcje quasi-telewizyjne," *Gazeta Wyborcza* (November 1, 2020), [online] https://wyborcza.pl/7,75410,26465280,sacrum-profanum-to-juz-nie-zwykle-streamowanie-ale-produkcje.html accessed on October 25, 2022.

[44] "Sacrum Profanum 2020 (relacje)."

[45] Christine M Van Winkle, Amanda Cairns, Kelly J. MacKay, Elisabeth A. Halpenny, "Mobile Device Use at Festivals: Opportunities for Value Creation," *International Journal of Event and Festival Management* 7 (2016 No. 3): 203.

> For better or worse, the festival worked precisely to break away from such styles, which required various forms of physical presence, in favor of mediatized experience.[46]

Trying to be enthusiastic despite the unstable situation, they pointed out that they were not considering the Internet as an "inferior option". While many (event) organizers saw moving online as a forced solution, like an emergency "plan B," the curators of Sacrum Profanum gave their decision another meaning. As they stated:

> we didn't want to propose an alternative, just because we couldn't make a festival. I have the impression that this situation made us feel that we could simply propose a different version of the festival. Neither better nor worse. Just different. (SP Production, interview).

The organizers themselves announced that the 2020 edition would include not only concerts, but also "musical actions—events that play with convention and engage the audience on a different level than usual."[47] Reviewers noticed the multimedia character of the 2020 edition, especially the connection between sonic and visual layers. Sounds were "accompanied by beautiful shots, stories told through images,"[48] proving that "music cannot do without picture."[49] As Adam Suprynowicz observed: "Sacrum Profanum has managed, in my opinion, to develop a better formula for the presentation of contemporary music, characterized by respect for the role played by the visual sphere today."[50]

An important element of the (festival's) virtual edition was the search for alternative spaces for music. According to Cyryl Rozwadowski, Sacrum Profanum 2020 "pushed the boundaries of the definition of a concert."[51] The performances were recorded in unusual outdoor and interior locations of Krakow, which until then had not been used in this way. In addition to the aforemen-

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[46] "Młodość w Formie," *Ruch Muzyczny*, [online] https://ruchmuzyczny.pl/article/639, accessed on October 10, 2022.

[47] "18. Sacrum Profanum. Młodość i sztuka dawna," [online] https://sacrumprofanum.com/aktualnosci/172, accessed on October 30, 2022.

[48] Katarzyna Janowska, "Katarzyna Janowska: kultura bez tlenu [KOMENTARZ]," [online] Film (onet.pl), November 21, 2020, accessed on October 25, 2022.

[49] Jacek Marczyński, „Niebezpieczna magia obrazu," *Dziennik Teatralny,* 27 November 2020, [online] http://www.dziennikteatralny.pl/artykuly/niebezpieczna-magia-obrazu.html, accessed on October 25, 2022.

[50] "Młodość w Formie."

[51] Cyryl Rozwadowski, [online] "Sacrum Profanum 2020 przekracza granice definicji koncertów w swoim line-upie—Poptown," accessed on October 25, 2022.

tioned buildings, which became the "protagonists" of the final concert, the list included, for example, the former Cracovia hotel built in the 1960s in the modernist style, or a boxing hall.

Both the creators of the festival and commentators emphasized the unique synergy between music and architecture which was visible during the virtual edition. They observed, among others, that the organic sounds of the *Stream-forms* concert harmonized well with the ivy-covered courtyard of the MOCAK museum of modern art,[52] and the sensuality of the *ASMR* concert was enhanced by the atmospheric interiors of the Cracovia Hotel, with a golden mosaic and the greenery of fancy potted plants in the background.[53] During a performance by the Hashtag Ensemble, the singer explored with her voice the "soul" of the stairwell of a socialist realist building in Nowa Huta.[54] There were also unconventional juxtapositions: during the opening *Ars Antiqua* concert, references to early music contrasted with the space of a post-industrial hall.

It should be added that it was not only the architecture, but also nature that played an important role when it came to organizing the space for a better multimedia experience. Although the whole event could only be attended in virtual space, the originators and artists managed to create a special festival atmosphere, which, however, necessarily had to differ from that of a live event. As one of the commentators observed:

> It seems that we have learned more about virtual performances in a few months than in many years since they became technologically possible. I realized that it's a completely different world: it's harder to focus and to amaze the audience; the lights of the ramp are not enough and the smoke probably also makes little impression. An efficient performance of your repertoire is not enough, but improvisation is as addictive as ever before. Intimacy can also be recreated quite well – this is what the pioneers of covid concerts have already tried to play with. The winners were the artists who approached things unconventionally (like the Unsound or Sacrum Profanum festivals).[55]

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[52] Jan Topolski, "Czy to pandemia," https://sacrumprofanum.com/aktualnosci/184, accessed on October 30, 2022.

[53] Karolina Dąbek, "Dźwięki miłe w dotyku," [online] https://sacrumprofanum.com/aktualnosci/dzwieki-mile-w-dotyku , accessed on September 20, 2022.

[54] Jan Topolski, "Przestrzenie krakowskich budynków," [online] https://sacrumprofanum.com/aktualnosci/przestrzenie-krakowskich-budynkow-bohaterami-ostatniego-wieczoru.

[55] Bartek Chaciński, "Artyści, których nie zobaczyłem na żywo w roku 2020," *Polityka*, [online] https://polifonia.blog.polityka.pl/2020/11/30/artysci-ktorych-nie-zobaczylem-na-zywo-w-roku–2020/, accessed on September 20, 2022.

It is also worth adding that the 2020 edition progressed at a new, slower pace, and as a result the event lasted a month instead of one week. That "slow festival" gave the audience ample space to experience it more freely.

New organizational experiences gained during the pandemic made it possible to set the direction for the festival's future development. For example, the organizers started to search for new concert spaces that would be designed for a smaller number of people, but at the same time would provide a chance for new immersive and synesthetic experiences (e.g. a concert in a museum of contemporary art or in a private house).

Some commentators saw in the experimental edition a certain alternative to the "ossified" and archaic convention of classical music in a concert hall. Others, however, expressed a longing for direct contact with the performers:

> (...) The "immersivity" of musical pieces that were not conceived "for the internet" from the beginning is, in my opinion, drastically reduced through the use of the camera.[56]

For other reviewers, the digital experiment was not just an intermission in the festival routine but rather an introduction to a new era of music festival experience:

> (…) Probably, had it not been for the closed concert halls and the events moved to the web, the new form of music would not have crystallized so quickly. Something had been in the air for a long time. (…) in the current reality, the old ways of sharing recordings from concerts are no longer enough. (...).[57]

> First, I shed torrents of tears over this ailing reality which was taking away another festival from me again. When it was already known that it would take place entirely online, I was intrigued by how to transform an event of the stature of Sacrum Profanum, which by its very nature is so sonically integrated into the physical space, into a virtual one. After the subsequent concert, I already knew that, along with the „ live" version, a separate section should be the one online. (Remigiusz Kadelski, Facebook post).[58]

However, it can be expected that certain audiences will remain skeptical about this new vision of the festival experience. The ? spirit of a celebration in a real

[56] "Młodość w Formie."

[57] Wioleta Żochowska, "Komponowanie na internet," *Dwutygodnik* 296 (2020 No. 12), [online] https://www.dwutygodnik.com/artykul/9279-komponowanie-na-internet.html.

[58] The Radiospacja funpage on Facebook**,** (2) Radiospacja – posty | Facebook, accessed on August 25, 2022.

festival space cannot be fully reproduced through online events, as underlined by a Krakow Festival Office representative who claimed that the virtual version is rather

> a way of raising awareness of the festival and translating some… festival experience into a mediated form. But the festival is an event (full) of connection, of emotion that spreads in the crowd and not only in the network (...) (KBF, Program Director, interview).

Closing remarks

Unquestionably, entering adulthood brought with it a major change for the Sacrum Profanum festival. The organizers searched for and experimented with a new solution, exploring the power of multimediality. They proved that "festivals are ideas at work, not brands," to use the words of Paweł Potoroczyn[59] Particular creative endeavors related to the organization of cyclical cultural events make them at the same time "unique, familiar, but ever-changing."[60] Apparently, the pandemic (only) accelerated and intensified the changes that curators had already thought about before. The unstable situation triggered a more radical "reshaping of the creative concept of the festival."[61] As the Sacrum Profanum artistic director announced in a promotional video of the pandemic edition: "We will try to turn any limitations into an asset. We will check out a completely new festival format for you."[62] As noted by Przemysława Jackowicz-Korczyńska after the 2020 edition: "For a good few years now, composers have been outdoing themselves in experimentation; and the contestation of academic tradition—a rebellion that is beginning to become a kind of conservatism—has them reaching for electronics, field recording, video and performances that combine music with words, images, body work or politics."[63]

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[59] A speech during the UNESCO ResiliArt & Festival Cities Network debate 'International Festivals and Policy in Light of COVID–19' held online on July 28, 2020.

[60] Caroline Jackson, James Morgan, & Chantal Laws, "Creativity in Events: the Untold Story," *International Journal of Event and Festival Management* 9 (2018 No. 1): 17.

[61] Mulder, "Music Missionaries," 252.

[62] See the whole comment by Krzysztof Pietraszewski: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_IZ6M-DgUM.

[63] Przemysława Jackowicz-Korczyńska, „Wirtualne oblicza sztuki. Relacja z Sacrum Profanum 2020," *Glissando* (December 31, 2020), [online] https://glissando.pl/aktualnosci/wirtualne-oblicza-sztuki-relacja-z-sacrum-profanum–2020/, accessed on October 30, 2023.

Seemingly, the virtual "pandemic" edition of the festival helped the event to reach its high point in crossing boundaries.

Hanya Pielichaty, in her research on the liminality of the festival space, pointed out that festival spaces allow for the expression of abandonment, freedom, and "identity experimentation."[64] The author referred rather to the experiences of the audience and the artists, playing with their own identities. But in the context of the Sacrum Profanum 2020 edition, it can be said that the curators themselves experimented with the identity of the festival. It can be also argued that the crisis caused by the pandemic functioned as a "catalyst for creative development."[65] Considering the Sacrum Profanum festivals, it was the multimediality that particularly contributed to the success of the 2020 edition, functioning not only as a crisis strategy, but also as a reference point for the development of a new festival format.

It is worth stressing that musical multimediality doesn't have to refer only to the intersections of music with other forms of art. It can also be understood as an interplay of musical expression with social debate, incorporating a social message into a musical piece. In 2020, the program of the Sacrum Profanum festival resonated well with some of the current social issues in Poland. Multimediality, in its different aspects, proved to be a great support for the digital experiment undertaken by both the organizers and the artists, and enthusiastically tested by a large part of the audience of the Sacrum Profanum festival. Taking into account that some of the solutions tried during the pandemic were used in the subsequent editions of the festival, it can be assumed that it is this broadly understood multimediality that will determine the direction for this event's evolution in the near future.

[64] Pielichaty, "Festival Space," 238.
[65] Mulder, "Music Missionaries," 255.

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Summary

Sacrum Profanum is a festival with a long tradition and one of the flagship musical events of Krakow. The festival—offering the so-called contemporary classics, electronic music, jazz, and other genres—is known for experimenting, presenting bold arrangements and combining traditions with avant-garde. The organizers' intention to cross borders and explore unconventional forms of musical expression is accompanied by the search for new channels of communication. In 2020, due to the restrictions caused by the pandemic, the Sacrum Profanum festival radically changed its format. From a "live" event, it turned to an online event, but the way virtual space was used was significantly different from the online editions of other festivals. The experimental format of the 2020 festival made it possible to expose the multimedia dimension of Sacrum Profanum, as well as to show its performative and staging potential. It also allowed to test new forms of interaction with the audience and new possibilities of connections between sound and image. The aim of this article is to discuss the experimental 2020 onlineedition of the Sacrum Profanum festival, with emphasis on its multimedia dimension. Particular attention will be paid to the impact of new technologies on the reorganization of the festival space and the emergence of new types of festival experiences. The analysis will be based primarily on the material from field research carried out as part of the project "European Music Festivals, Public Spaces, and Cultural Diversity" (www.festiversities.org).

Keywords: Music Festival, Multimedia, Festival Experience, Festival Space, Diversity