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Classical:NEXT Rotterdam : film direction and staging opening night

Wednesday 16 May 2018, by Benoît Labourdette

Classical:NEXT 2018 (Rotterdam, The Netherlands) featured France. Opening evening on May 16, 2018, for 700 professionals from the classical music sector.

At the request of Françoise Clerc, head of classical & jazz of the agency <u>Le Bureau Export</u>, we designed and produced in very close collaboration the structure and contents of the opening evening of <u>Classical:NEXT 2018</u>, which was devoted to French classical music :

- program design,
- realization of videos and illustrations,
- staging of the event.

Hosted by Saskia de Ville (presenter of <u>La matinale in France Musique</u>), this evening included speeches, musical performances and themed videos.

Issue

The challenge of this project was to present to professionals from all over the world a faithful image of the French classical music sector, through synthetic videos, clear speeches by specialists and performances by leading French musicians.

The aim was for the audience to learn a lot about French classical music, within the framework of an evening organised as an interesting, rhythmic, touching, varied, funny show... with a high level of artistic requirement in all aspects, including the staging and rhythm of the show.

Content

This show was made up of videos, lyrics and embedded musical performances.

As the project was being designed, I used a precisely timed database so that I could share the exact progress of the evening with all those involved in the project:

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Video

(videos can be viewed at the bottom of this page)

An abstract video shot at the Abbaye de Royaumont (**Reconstruction**) accompanied the first piece played by the flutist Juiette Hurel. Thus, the evening started with a fully artistic approach.

- **French classical music 2018** : general video on French classical music in 2018, composed of dozens of excerpts from numerous French musical ensembles.
- **Professional sector of French classical music** : a video on the history and economics of the classical music sector (thanks to Neil Wallace for his valuable contribution).
- French artists talk about their work: artists talk about their work (William Christie, Camille Pépin, Bruno Mantovani, François-Xavier Roth...).
- Innovation in french classical music: Frédérick Rousseau, director of IRCAM's valorisation department, gives an overview of French innovation.
- Education in French classical music : Bruno Mantovani, composer and director of the <u>CNSM</u> describes how music education works.

Music

- The evening was introduced and closed by <u>Les voix animées</u>, with playful songs, whose English translation was displayed on the screen.
- Juliette Hurel, flutist, played a piece by Debussy and a piece by Eric Tanguy.
- Alexandre Tharaud, pianist, played two pieces by François Couperin.
- Fourteen Van Kuijk played a Debussy song.

Speeches

- Jennifer Dautermann, director of Classical:NEXT, welcoming speech.
- Then Saskia de Ville, presenter of the morning on France Musique took the hand on the presentation of the evening.
- Philippe Lalliot, French Ambassador to the Netherlands, recalled France's artistic and institutional commitments to classical music.

- Marc Thonon, Director of the Le Bureau Export, outlined the economic challenges and highlighted the sector's profound innovations.
- Eric Tanguy (composer) and Juliette Hurel proposed an in-depth discussion on forms of musical expression.

Pauline Lambert (Les Talens lyriques) spoke about the transmission of music.

QR Code



At the end of the evening, a QR Code displayed on the screen allowed the spectators to find directly on their phone a <u>dedicated website</u> with all the details as well as all the videos.

Method

Such an evening has high political and economic stakes. Its organization must therefore be irreproachable. To achieve this, the working method is key. Rigour and flexibility must be combined, because sometimes last-minute changes are essential to a good balance. The more rigorous you are, the more flexible you are. It is also very important that all partners can validate the content upstream.

The timed schedule of the evening has greatly evolved over the 6 months of preparatory work. Each of its updates was sent to all stakeholders (from facility managers to managers).

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This schedule was divided into numbered "blocks". One by one the films and titles of the people who would appear on the screen were put online on a private server with their corresponding number. Everyone could therefore very easily find his way around:

Thus, we were able to receive many comments from each of the partners over the months, each contributing in a very concrete way. The editing of the videos has had many successive versions, by these "iterative validations". The method of editing the videos was "agile": we were able to accommodate changes as they unfolded. As if the films were polished by multiple people like so many small sculptures in which each finds its reflection.

Agile method

It is an "agile" working method (derived from computer science methods) applied to the construction of a cultural project. This is allowed through the Internet, without using the services of the GAFA.

This document, this "scenario" of the evening allowed everyone at their level (content, lights, videos, speeches, music, stage management...) to become aware of their place in the whole, guaranteeing coherence. It has evolved enormously as the work has progressed and has also been a real decision-making tool.

Mentions on screen

Each person who appeared in the films or on stage had on the screen the mention of his name, with a graphic dressing mixing a score by Luc Ferrari ("Tête et queue du dragon", 1960) and the visual identity of the event.



It is a point that seemed very important to me for the spectators: often, during speeches with successive people, we do not know exactly who is the person who is speaking to us (even if he introduced himself). Writing her name on the screen while she speaks gives the viewer real comfort, which makes it all the better to receive what is offered.

The musicians also had their names indicated while they were playing as well as the exact references of the composer and the work played: not only are we a spectator delighted with the quality of what he hears, but we are also a spectator who *learns*, who receives precise information.

Using the same graphic design for the names and titles of people in the films and on stage contributed to the homogeneity of the evening.

Stage and light

The work on staging and light is also an essential element. We tested many combinations and worked in great detail with lighting designer Joost Ijssel to ensure that every moment of the evening had a unique lighting atmosphere. So each moment had its own particular light box. And this while remaining in a simplicity. This made the viewer feel caught up in a real show rather than a series of presentations. This artistic attention to every detail, even for things that may seem "institutional" is

very important.

There was a rehearsal with each speaker as well as a general rehearsal in the afternoon before the evening, which made it possible to clarify many details.

English subtitles

All the films were subtitled in English and the speeches were in English. During the "Voix animées" songs, the lyrics of the song translated into English were displayed on the screen, also giving the audience a greater "catch" compared to what was happening on stage, as well as a real discovery of the content of these amazing songs..:



Technique

The titles were launched from the VJing software $\frac{\text{Resolume}}{\text{N}}$ and the videos were launched from the video player $\frac{\text{VLC}}{\text{VLC}}$ for a better reading fluidity.



Team

The main work team consisted of :

- Françoise Clerc (Export Office): project management and content construction.
- Benoît Labourdette : video production, artistic direction, structuring of the work and staging of the evening.
- Lizon Lavaud (Export Office): production follow-up of the project as a whole.
- Eudes Peyre (Tipicomm): selection of video extracts for the editing and interviews.
- Jennifer Dautermann (Classical:NEXT) : project management.
- Neil Wallace (De Doelen): support of the project in its contents.
- Timo van der Heiden (De Doelen) : general management.
- Joost Ijssel : light creation.

Videos

P.S.

The three organizing structures

The Export Bureau

Direction: Marc Thonon



Since 1993, Le Bureau Export has accompanied the French music industry in the development of its artists abroad, in the field of contemporary and classical music.

Every year, several hundred projects of all musical styles benefit from his support.

The Export Office's support system is intended for French professionals active in export (phonographic producers, show producers, publishers, distributors, managers, self-employed artists, artistic agents, independent ensembles) wishing to be supported in their international development work.

The Export Office offers a variety of assistance & services: personalised advice, contacts with targeted international contacts, market intelligence, participation in professional meetings, promotional support, financial support, etc.

To develop its action, the Export Office relies on a team of 30 collaborators spread over 5 countries:

- an office based in Paris
- a network of 4 branches located in Germany (Berlin), the United Kingdom (London), the United States (New York) and Brazil (São Paulo).

In 2017, the Export Office had more than 400 professional structures members and users of its services; and nearly 500 projects benefited from its support (advice, networking, logistical support, promotion and/or financial support, etc.).

Classical:NEXT

Direction: Jennifer Dautermann

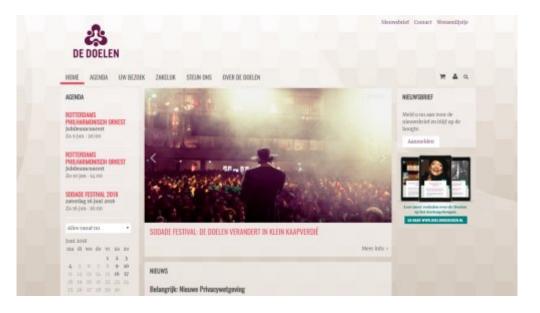


Classical:NEXT was born from the idea of mixing different classical music scenes, offering them a space for exchange and developing new collaborations between classical and contemporary music. Since its first edition in 2012, nearly 3000 classical music professionals from more than 1000 companies and 45 different countries have been involved with Classical:NEXT to make it one of the most important classical music events.

The Export Office, Business France and FEVIS are working together to coordinate a French stand at the event, bringing together representatives of nearly 20 French cultural companies and ensembles.

De Doelen

Art Direction: Neil Wallace



De Doelen is a very large concert hall and a leading congress hall in Rotterdam (Netherlands).

De Doelen is one of the largest concert halls in the country. Every year there is an international programme of concerts of classical music, world music, pop and jazz. It is also a conference building that hosts many professional events.

The 4 large halls and 30 sub halls are used more than 1200 times a year for various events: concerts in all genres, congresses and other business events. De Doelen is also a popular venue for high-level international events, including the Rotterdam International Film Festival, the Gergiev Festival and Classical:NEXT.

De Doelen receives more than half a million visitors every year. About 25% of Rotterdamers go there every year. 49% of the audience comes from outside Rotterdam.

De Doelen is one of Rotterdam's strongest cultural brands.