ELEKTRONISK TIDSKRIFT FÖR KONFERENSEN MUSIK & SAMHÄLLE

NR. 4 : 2018

M&STE: elektronisk tidskrift för konferensen Musik & samhälle Nr 4, 2018 ISSN: 2002–4622 Redaktion: Mikael Askander och Johan A. Lundin Kontakt: Mikael.Askander@kultur.lu.se och Johan.Lundin@mah.se Hemsida: http://www.kultur.lu.se/forskning/konferenser/musik-ochsamhalle-v-musik-och-politik/ Omslag: Julius Lundin "Musik & samhälle" finns också på Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/Musik-och-samh%C3%A4lle-1529924297269488/?fref=ts

Konferensen Musik och samhälle är ett samarbete mellan ABF och Lunds universitet, Institutionen för kulturvetenskaper.

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"Livet är en festival"

Redaktörerna har ordet

Kära läsare! Varmt välkomna till ett nytt nummer av tidskriften *M&STE* organ för konferensen Musik & Samhälle som arrangeras i samarbete mellan Institutionen för kulturvetenskaper vid Lunds universitet och ABF. De återkommande konferenserna har utvecklats till en viktig mötesplats. Här träffas folk från hela landet; forskare från universitet och högskolor, folkbildare från studieförbund och folkhögskolor, föreningsaktiva, folk som arbetar med massmedia; i musikbranschen och dess organisationer, samt kommunala, regionala och statliga aktörer. Här kan man utbyta erfarenheter, diskutera och inte minst knyta kontakter. Genom tidskriften *M&STE* vill vi tillgängliggöra en del av det som avhandlas på konferensen för en större publik, men också öppna upp för att synliggöra annat som är av intresse inom området.

I det här numret bjuder vi er på festival. Forskning om festivaler är ett växande akademiskt område. Och för alla musikälskare är mötet med band och artister live något av det mest värdefulla i ens musikliv. Artister själva påpekar också ofta hur viktigt det är att möta publiken. På just festivaler, musikfestivaler specifikt, sker detta i förhöjd form, då en mängd artister och musiker samlas och spelar, inför mängder av åskådare och åhörare som på olika sätt aktiverar sig och deltar i evenemangen.

Så detta nummer av *M&STE* har formats till ett temanummer om festivaler. Först ut är Jonas Bjälesjö, som redogör för festivalforskning som akademiskt område, och diskuterar, bland annat utifrån historiserande perspektiv, svenska musikfestivaler under perioden 1980 till idag. Här tydliggörs musikfestivalernas roll och de nätverk som varit avgörande för det som kallats "det svenska musikundret".

Henrik Brissman är idéhistoriker, men också musikälskare och verksam som musiker. I artikeln "Tradition och förnyelse – Korröfestivalen i förändring med samtiden" tecknar han ett inkännande

porträtt av folkmusikfestivalen i småländska Korrö. Brissman har genom åren själv bevistat festivalen vid en mängd tillfällen, och för i sin artikel såväl musikhistoriska som idéhistoriskt präglade resonemang om Korröfestivalens anda och utveckling.

I sin artikel om "americana" tar Claire M. Anderson ett grepp om fenomenet bluegrassfestivaler i Sverige. Andersson kan visa att dessa, till skillnad från sina amerikanska kommersialiserade motsvarigheter, fungerar som ett sätt att demokratisera den musikaliska kunskapsbasen. Genom att olika musiker jammar och gör musik tillsammans skapas en hållbar musikalisk gemenskap.

Johan Söderman har främst forskat om hiphop, lärande och samtida ungdomskulturer. I detta nummer av *M&STE* ger han sig emellertid i kast med en annan musikgenre: country. Här recenserar han en nyutkommen norsk doktorsavhandling om countryfestivaler som fenomen, med utgångspunkt i det norska musiklivet.

*

PS. Notera och boka in redan nu: År 2018:s upplaga av konferensen Musik & samhälle äger rum den 18–19 oktober, på LUX vid Lunds universitet. Temat i år är Musik och hälsa. Håll utkik framöver för mer detaljerad information. DS.

> Johan A. Lundin Mikael Askander

The Swedish Music-Festival Scene

Jonas Bjälesjö

Sweden has for a long time been an internationally successful country when it comes to producing popular music. One important aspect of Sweden being and becoming a prosperous music country is its popularmusic festivals. Popular-music festivals have a long tradition in Sweden, as well as in other countries, but there are some characteristics that are specific for the development in Sweden (and to some extent the Nordic countries).

In the late 1960s and early 1970s a generation of young people, mostly left-wing oriented ideologically/politically, combined international popular-music influences with Swedish music and music culture, into a new mix of genres (folk music, world music, *visa*, progressive rock, psychedelic rock etcetera) and social frameworks. This social and cultural music community was labeled the "Music Movement" **(1)**. It created a new musical landscape characterized by an extensive network of associations, organizations and venues, but also including record labels, magazines, studios and distribution. The activities included a lot of concerts, music happenings and not least festivals in the spaces they created (often by using the same amusement parks as earlier generations).

In 1970 this generation gathered twice at *Gärdet* in Stockholm for a happening, or festival, to manifest their movement. Inspired by the Monterey Pop festival, Woodstock and Isle of Wight festival these events are considered a defining moment in space and time of this music movement (cf. Eriksson 1976; Malmström 1996; Eyerman and Jamison 1998; Lagher 1999; Pettersson and Henningsson 2007).

The 1980s and 1990s saw new generations of young people organize themselves in music associations, and start running venues and promoting concerts. The activities of these new associations were based on the networks and places (for instance the *folkparker*) as well as knowledge,

experience, and to some extent ideology, of the former generations. They also developed a much more widespread festival landscape that after a while also included a lot of different stakeholders.

In the following text I will discuss the processes outlined above. That is, I will try to analyze the development and nature of a Swedish musicfestival landscape from the 1980s until today (2017). My focus is on popular-music festivals (2). My empirical material is mainly based on interviews and discussions with different festival stakeholders that I have met through my work and in my fieldwork and research around festivals in the last 15–20 years.

Music associations and festivals - reactivating movements and networks

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Music Movement started to implode due to internal conflicts, mostly along political dividing lines. At the same time a new generation of young people started to mobilize and formalize a community with the same intention: the pursuit to conquer a space, often a venue, were they could stage their music and other activities (cf. Dahlén 1989; Bjälesjö 2004; Håkansson and Lundin 2009). In the wake of punk and new wave these youngsters started new, or reactivated old, musical and cultural associations. Of crucial importance for the Music Movement's organizational structure was its own *Kontaktnätet* **(3)**, a network of musical and cultural associations, designed as an alternative to the channels these kinds of associations normally was included in.

Their activities were determined partially by national and international ideas and practices in the shape of punk and new-wave music culture (cf. Arnold 1997; Bennett and Peterson 2004; Home 1995; Kruse 2003; Laing 1985), and partially by ideas and (organizational) practice from the Music Movement (cf. Eriksson 1976; Malmström 1996; Eyerman and Jamison 1998; Carlsson 2004; Ungdomsstyrelsen 2008). But maybe most important was that they, like the Music Movement, were part of a strong Swedish tradition, with solid historical roots, of forming popular-

movement associations, especially in the Swedish working-class movement (Horgby 2007).

An important reason for the development was the fact that thanks to *Kontaktnätet*, there was already an established network to be part of and/or use. In many cases the new generation simply took over and changed the content on the basis of their own interests. In many ways the Music Movement was the foundation for these musical and cultural associations. Despite their divergences, they were influenced and affected by it. This network carried a substantial knowledge and competence where members could learn about legal agreements and permissions, how to promote and market concerts and how to act and interact within certain areas and towards different stakeholders. So these associations appeared and evolved with a rebellious rock'n'roll style and attitude in the framework of a strong Swedish tradition of grass-roots associations.

Through self-promoted actions they created alternatives to the frameworks which music associations usually were assigned to and opened up for events, especially festivals, promoted *by* and *for* themselves (cf. Eriksson 1976; Eyerman and Jamison 1998). The Music Movement festivals or events (often promoted as music happenings, music days, music gatherings etc.) were an inspiration from which these music associations adopted parts. So how did the Swedish festivals and festival landscape develop during the 1980s and 1990s?

Local embeddedness and expansion - a social capital at work

Since the extended network of music associations promoting festivals was spread all over the country, so were the festivals too. In many cases music associations more or less converted into festival promoters, where the former music association became the festival promoter. Typical for the festival landscape of the 1980s and early 1990s was that the majority of the influential and trend-setting festivals, like the Hultsfred festival, the Arvika festival, the Emmaboda festival, *Dalarock* (Hedemora), the *Trästock* festival (Skellefteå), and *Storsjöyran* (Östersund), were promoted by music associations and situated in the countryside and/or outside urban areas. The local embeddedness, identity and support have therefore been crucial. At the local level it has been important for the survival of the festival and the music association to appear and act as representatives of several different interests and youth in general through cooperation with local stakeholders, local authorities and often by including parents and local associations as volunteers in the festival production. The associational tradition in Sweden, with accomplished organizational skills and devoted voluntary work, hereby became a vital tool for practice and cooperation. At the same time, with connections to and identification with an alternative music culture and networks on a national level, it was vital to keep a balance between these different loyalties without losing neither credibility nor local footing and identity. It came down to holding on to local tradition and practice, at the same time as being rebellious and transformative.

People with different backgrounds, perspectives and interests gathered to participate (Straw 1991; Bennett and Peterson 2004). These local music scenes maintained an open-minded approach to activities and practice but often also a uniform attitude concerning its alternative community based on shared taste in music. As a result of the ability among all these music associations to build a strong local music scene, they developed both an interest in, and skills at festival production. The ability and dedication to expand a social network in different directions secured and strengthened a social capital of trust and confidence (Rothstein 2003, Putnam 2006).

These abilities and skills opened up for a version of entrepreneurship in this context that had to balance between cultural innovators and commercial entrepreneurs, between broad folkyness and alternative exclusivity, a maneuvering made easier by the sense that the combination of a rebellious rock 'n' roll attitude and entrepreneurship felt natural. DIY actually! The Swedish historian Fredrik Egefur makes a similar interpretation when he asserts that the outcome of the DIY ideal that characterized punk, post-punk/new wave and indie-pop culture during the 1980s and 1990s laid the foundation for the formation of local and regional economies around different music scenes and their music associations in

Sweden. In cities such as Norrköping, Skellefteå, Umeå, and Luleå, music magazines, record labels, venues and distribution networks emerged (Egefur 2010). At the same time economies arose around music scenes at festival places such as Hultsfred, Arvika, Hedemora, Emmaboda and Karlshamn.

The US popular-music researcher Barry Shank shows in his study of the Austin music scene how economies are created, how they build on earlier networks and how their range and diffusion are characterized by diversity. He also emphasizes that music scenes are kept together by widespread and multi-featured networks of individuals in space and time (Shank 1994). These strong scenes, associations and festivals all over the country also made the Swedish music industry more decentralized. Even if the main part of the music industry still was situated in Stockholm, these local and regional scenes/economies of music changed the social and cultural fabric of the industry. In the next part we will take a closer look at a couple of these places.

Entrepreneurship and learning processes

The media researcher Angela McRobbie's concept of *subcultural entrepreneurship* can also be used to analyze this combination of rock 'n' roll attitude and entrepreneurship, as these music associations and festival promoters shaped a common fellowship based on a set of values that was identified as criteria for an authentic standpoint in relation to the activities at hand (McRobbie 1994; Middleton 2002). This process could also be interpreted in terms of *production of authenticity* (Peterson, 1997; Connell and Gibson, 2003, 19–44), where a common cultural meaning arises, based on shared experiences of the legitimate in a non-commercial standpoint in relation to the cultural activities put into practice on commercial grounds.

With a common ground of cultural meaning, built on trust and confidence, and social capital (Bourdieu 1986; Rothstein 2003; Putnam 2006), these associations and their festivals managed to a high degree to unify activities that carried contradictory perspectives and objectives. The

adjustment of conflicting perspectives and objectives was possible partly because ideology wasn't that important. While it was a ruling principle for the Music Movement, it was more of a rhetorical attitude for the music associations of the 1980s and 1990s.

One of the paradoxes in this development of alternative music activities in these networks of music associations, venues, and festivals, is that despite its more or less marked anti-commercial and idealistic approach, it gave rise to a hotbed for a strong Swedish music industry. Through the mostly voluntary work to promote and arrange different forms of live music, these associations produced a knowledge and competence among a lot of individuals that have been crucial for the development and success of the Swedish music industry. In interviews with music-industry individuals, several of them assert the importance of involvement in music associations and their festivals for a personal career and learning process in the music industry (Bjälesjö 2013). Several of them have a background in this context, and for many of them their involvement has been a learning process in skills of administration, festival management, organization, project management, live-music production and marketing.

The music associations and the festival management through these associations have served as means for both a personal and professional development, as a context for practical learning (Carlsson 2004; Kaijser 2007; Bjälesjö; Håkansson and Lundin 2009). Also of importance were personal connections with likeminded individuals both locally and nationally, creating a bridging social capital (Putnam 2006, 22–25), which strengthened the feeling of being part of something bigger, a translocal music culture (Bennett and Peterson 2004). These relations also converted into a hands-on engagement at each other's festivals. For example, at some festivals the whole stage production was carried out by people from another festival, returning a favor or expecting the same favor later on (Bjälesjö 2013). *Kontaktnätet*, at least in the 1980s, created a sense of mutuality, an assurance that there were others with the same opportunities and problems all over the country. The willingness to help each other at different festivals might also have an explanation in the

Swedish tradition of voluntary work in grass-roots associations and for idealistic reasons.

Changes in the festival landscape

In the 1980s and 1990s several of the festivals developed from subcultural strongholds for the devoted into broader events with more stakeholders involved. The music industry, a diversity of sponsors, organizations and associations on different levels, local, regional and national authorities all entered the festival landscape to a greater extent. Festivals also increasingly became part of an established music-industry circuit of events, where established music-industry players, such as promoters, tour agents, booking agents, managers, etc., were present.

Festivals have since the beginning of the 1980s become more of a "public property"; an increasing number of both young and old visit festivals today. One often used characterization is that they have gone from being a gathering of the tribes, a meeting place for individuals that identify themselves in some way as alternative and/or independent in musical and cultural terms, to becoming big social meeting places in general. These changes follow the trend of "festivalization of events" (Jaeger & Kvidal & Viken 2012, 17) in society as a whole. One conclusion is that the festival concept is nowadays a major form of cultural production, with a tendency to arrange cultural production in festival-like ways, which makes the festival concept influence people's understanding and organizing of time and space (Roche 2011, 127–128).

A lot of gatherings, celebrations and festivities are defined as festivals today that weren't earlier. Furthermore there is a tendency that festivals stretch out in time, space and content. These processes reveal a central condition within the music-festival community: the relation between alternative exclusivity and broad folkyness. That is, there is a landscape both of festivals for dedicated music fans and connoisseurs, and big parties and social gatherings for young people in general. Whatever tendency, it has an impact on form, content and place. This relation is also central from

a music-industry perspective, where a lot of stakeholders, with different interests and agendas, get together.

As the festivals have broadened their appeal and increasingly become a concern for all and everyone, the quantity of festivals has increased, as has the amount of people visiting them. This expansion and popularity have changed both the shape and content of festivals. In 2000 the 10 biggest music festivals had 109,000 visitors, and in 2013 the number of visitors were 268,000. According to the collecting society *STIM*, 170 music festivals where organized in the year 2000, to compare with nearly 500 in 2013 (Johansson 2014). The trend in the last 10–15 years has been a rapid growth and increasing diversity. The expansion in numbers has increased the competition and made it harder for many festivals to survive. Many festivals had to cut down, change in size and/or direction or go bankrupt.

Gradually the festivals run by music associations (especially those in the countryside) declined, and from the late 1990s several of them had financial difficulties. The Arvika festival (1992-2010), the Hultsfred festival (1986-2009), Peace & Love (Borlänge 1999-2012, 2014-) and Siesta (Hässleholm 2003–2014) are some festivals run by music associations that have been forced to shut down. Hultsfred was Sweden's main festival from the late 1980s until 2006. Peace & Love was Sweden's biggest festival 2009-2012 (it started again in 2014 with smaller ambitions and another focus). During these years we can see a shift in the festival landscape of Sweden. City festivals, both small and big, with substantial music content, grew and spread all over the country, sometimes overshadowing other music festivals. Another shift is that music-industry companies that used to provide the artists have gradually entered and influenced the market, sometimes as promoters themselves. And the ownership of the largest festivals has gradually changed from music associations to music-industry companies. In 2013 the ten largest music festivals in Sweden were promoted either by Live Nation, or by the two live-music companies FKP Scorpio and Stureplansgruppen. In 2000, six out of ten festivals were promoted by music associations (Johansson 2014). There are still a lot of festivals run by music associations, but they

are no longer considered the leading, major festivals with the most visitors, the largest media coverage and the most credible line-up of artists. So what are the reasons, then, for this turbulence on the festival market? Why do some festivals have a hard time to survive?

The increase in artist fees for well-known artists, as compensation for losses in record sales, has been one explanation. A monopolized situation in the live-music industry when it comes to booking agents and agencies has been another. When festivals become more of a "public property", a kind of social and cultural festivity and meeting place in general, the music loses its prominent position. Some critical voices talk about the risk of over-establishment, standardization, lack of quality and too little focus on the music due to the growth.

But maybe the most significant circumstances presented are the shift in ownership and production mentioned above. City festivals, with other owners (municipalities, city councils etc.), objectives and possibilities are too tough to compete with, especially since towns and cities often have several revenue streams and therefore can attract visitors with free admission without losing their profits. The same goes for big musicindustry companies. They often have a firm financial stability that music associations lack, partly due to differences in objectives and perspectives. And the adjustment of conflicting perspectives and objectives mentioned earlier fix some festivals in a position that isn't compatible with the necessary commercial considerations.

Conclusion

So, what are the main conclusions that sum up the development and nature of a Swedish music-festival landscape from the 1980s until today? The Music Movement created a new musical landscape with extensive networks, a music-industry structure with an idealistic and left-wing ideological benchmark that in the early 1980s was taken over by a new generation of music associations that shaped the content on the basis of their own interests with a more pragmatic alternative orientation. Since the associations were spread all over the country, local relations and

affiliations were important and created a bonding capital as well as a bridging capital through the extensive networks. The learning processes in the music associations created skilled festival promoters; gradually they became hotbeds of competence in a music-industry network with their combination of a DIY rock 'n' roll attitude and (subcultural) entrepreneurship. These music associations and festival promoters shaped a common fellowship based on a set of values, a balance between cultural innovators and commercial entrepreneurs and a Swedish grass-roots associational tradition, which opened up for other stakeholders to take part. Out of the networks, entrepreneurial learning processes and social capital, together with "festivalization" processes in general, festivals developed into more comprehensive social events with more stakeholders involved, a professionalization that gradually opened up for the development we have seen in the last 10-15 years, with different owners and producers, different festivals at different places and to some extent with a different content and focus. Through the years music festivals in Sweden have stirred voluntary and idealistic engagement, vocational training and learning, local identity, social and cultural capital and entrepreneurship, local, regional and national development and networking, music-industry clusters and creative businesses.

Notes

(1) Sometimes this music movement was labeled *the progressive music movement* with reference to its political progressiveness, not to be confused with the musical genre progressive rock.

(2) City festivals with a broad program where the music content is just one of many cultural expressions presented will not be discussed in this text. The same goes for carnivals as well as different cultural events with a musical ingredient.

(3) "Kontaktnätet is a network of idealistic cultural associations, especially music associations, whose aim is to be an alternative to the established and commercial range of cultural activities. Kontaktnätet is a national organization and has members all over the country. The majority of them work with events in some form, it can be everything from concerts to theater and film (...)" (http://www.kontaktnatet.se, accessed January 22, 2016).

The article is a shortened and slightly modified version of the following text:

Bjälesjö, Jonas 2017: The Swedish Music-Festival Scene I: Björnberg & Bossius (eds.) *Made in Sweden - Studies in Popular Music*. New York: Routledge.

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- http://www.kontaktnatet.se Accessed January 22, 2017

Författare i detta nummer

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