

The Importance of the Network in International Music Competitions

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Abstract. Collaboration between art organisations from different fields and countries is not a new phenomenon. However, the networking of art institutions is of a more recent nature. In Lithuania, international music competitions are organised by a non-governmental public institution “Natų knygytas”. This institution holds membership in different international organisations like the European Union of Music Competitions for Youth (EMCY) and the World Federation of International Music Competitions (WFIMC). The purpose of this report is to study the characteristics of EMCY and WFIMC international networks by applying comparative analysis of scientific literature and analysis of primary and secondary documents. The article presents the benefits of networking for international music competitions in Lithuania.

Keywords: *networking, international music competitions, membership.*

Introduction

In recent decades, digital technologies have developed at a rapid rate. The Internet has connected the world into a network where knowledge can be easily accessed and other individuals reached. Modern organisations that operate under globalised conditions, aiming to expand the scope of their activity and to satisfy the rapidly growing public interests, cannot exist within a closed system (Strikaitienė and Valackienė, 2016). The need for an open system and networking was further highlighted by the COVID-19 virus that took the world by surprise in the spring of 2020. This contact disease has significantly impacted the economic situation in many countries and restricted the free movement of people. The cultural sector of these countries has been adversely affected by the closing of concert halls, museums and theatres. Meanwhile, the established sector of international music competitions has been slow to change, having operated in the network structure for more than 60 years. This arrangement has helped its members to exchange information and experiences and to seek new knowledge, as well as to survive crisis situations.

Relevance of the topic.

The necessity to adapt to the world's social, epidemiological and economic changes has demanded a reassessment of the advantages of networking. Therefore, a need to study networking and the conditions of entering into a network structure (an organisation) has emerged.

Level of problem investigation.

The network and networking interactions have been a research subject for many scholars, both in Lithuania and globally. However, there is little academic data on international music competitions. The main sources on the topic include the competition websites, specialised publications, and the legal documents of these organisations.

Scientific problem.

Why is it important for the institutions organising international music competitions to participate in networking? What are the advantages of networking? Who benefits from it and how?

Object of the article is to investigate the phenomenon of networking between members of international music competitions.

The objective of the article is to study the peculiarities of the World Federation of International Music Competitions and the European Union of Music Competitions and their membership in international youth networks.

Methods of the article: analysis of scientific literature and secondary data analysis.

1. Networking. Theoretical Aspects

Word *networking* is associated with the emergence of the Internet and knowledge sharing. More often, we hear the word *network*. The Dictionary of Etymology suggests that it was already in active use in the 16th century to refer to net-like thread and wire patterns (Etymology Dictionary, 2000). With time, the term *network* expanded to describe increasingly more phenomena, including a river network, a road network, an urban network, etc. At present, networking is usually considered in the context of organisational and business relationships. The attitude to networking in the 21st century is best reflected in the term *network society* proposed by Manuel Castells, who is the chief theorist of the concept. According to the scholar, social networks have always existed within humanity. However, what distinguishes the network society is that the use of computers and communications technologies help to create and maintain distant networks where new social relationships are being built. The concept of network is used in a variety of academic fields (Castells, 2004). The social sciences examine the relationships between people and organisations, whereas mathematics, physics, and chemistry focus on network parameters. Table 1 provides the definitions most commonly used to describe networking.

Table 1

Diversity of networking concepts

| Author | Definition |
|--|---|
| Povilaitis, & Čiburienė (2009, p. 89) | “Networking – an activity that allows companies to identify market opportunities, customer preferences, influence other market participants.” |
| Širec, & Bradač (2009, p. 60) | “Networking can be defined as a set of interdependent entities connected by common activities and resources.” |
| Jucevicius, & Kinduris (2011, p. 64) | “Networking – a specific connection, linking a defined set of persons, objects or events.” |
| Ribašauskienė, & Šalengaitė (2012, p. 190) | “Networking is considered to be the purposeful participation in the networks, focused on the collective pursuit of common goals.” |
| Bučinskas et al. (2013, p. 47) | “Networking – the process of establishing useful relationships between individuals and organisations through specialised websites and applications in order to communicate informally with other users or to discover people with similar interests, and to establish contacts between individuals, institutions and organisations for a specific purpose, goal.” |
| Skačkauskienė, & Katinienė (2015, p. 169) | “Networking – a networking process that involves making mutually beneficial connections between potential network participants and impacting the existing network.” |
| Škarpová, & Grosová (2015, p. 63) | “Networking – a tool for a company’s strategic development and innovation implementation tool, providing access to the resources, knowledge and skills needed to create and exploit new business opportunities.” |
| Strikaitienė, & Valackienė (2016, p. 385) | “Networking – the action of network participants in them, which is considered to be a very promising and innovative tool for implementing change.” |
| Heidenreich, Landsperger, & Spieth (2016, p. 56) | “Networking can be described as a set of vertical and horizontal relationships established between different organisations and measures for coordinating industrial development processes.” |

Source: Tamulaitienė, V. (2019). The impact of networking on the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises, p. 19

In summary, networking is a connection for mutual benefit. Communication between individuals, institutions or companies determines the dissemination of information in one direction or another. There is no doubt that networking plays a key role in a modern information society age. It is not only a place for sharing resources but also a resource itself (Ličkus, 2013).

Music competitions have always been an important part of the human experience. In the ancient world, Greek society considered them a central part of the worship of their gods. However, it can be said that the market for classical music competitions took several centuries to form. The first classical

music competition was held in America in 1926 by a banker, philanthropist, amateur cellist Walter W. Naumburg. He was inspired by gifted musicians who could not book a manager. The focus on media has always been fundamental to help budding musicians. Many great performers started their careers in the Naumburg Competition. Around the same time, the International Chopin Competition, founded by the Polish pianist Jerzy Żurawlew, took place for the first time in Europe in 1927, and remains one of the few monographic piano competitions in the world today (Berehova and Volkov, 2019). Later, in 1937, at the instigation of Her Majesty Queen Elisabeth of Belgium and the famous Belgian violinist Eugène Ysaÿe, the Queen Elisabeth Competition was founded. The event soon established itself as one of the key international competitions for violinists and pianists. Networks of international music competitions formed in the twentieth century continue to develop these days.

The World Federation of International Music Competitions (WFIMC) is an organisation based in Geneva, Switzerland, founded in 1957. The main goal of WFIMC is to create an international network of globally recognised organisations that, through a public competition, discover the most promising young talents allowing them to develop their careers by presenting them before distinguished juries, general. In 2016, during the WFIMC General Assembly in Yerevan, the organization's statute was updated, which defines the organisation's membership, structure, meetings, responsibilities of board members, annual membership fees, financial accounting (WFIMC, 2016).

The World Federation of International Music Competitions has different member types, access methods and conditions. Therefore, it is important to define these factors for understanding the importance of networking in the market for international classical music competitions. According to Statutes of WFIMC, the Federation has two categories of membership: the first – Member Competitions (voting members) and the second – Associate Organisations (non-voting members). The main difference between these two members is voting in the WFIMC General Assembly for an important decision. Associate Organisations are members, admitted by the decision of the General Assembly, which contribute to the mission and objectives of the Federation. These organisations may take part in Federation activities, including General Assembly meetings, in an advisory capacity. WFIMC's Yearbook 2021 states that the organisation has 11 associate members. (WFIMC, 2021). One of them is the Alink-Argerich Foundation (AAF), founded in 1999, by Gustav Alink and pianist Marta Argerich. It is a non-profit organisation focused on piano music competitions. Since the early 1980s, G. A. Alink has been collecting and compiling information on the history of piano competitions, their participants, winners, jury members. He has written six books and about 250 articles on these topics. G. Alink's thorough works and catalogues give reason to consider his approach historiographical, statistical, and reference-encyclopedic (Berehova and Volkov, 2019). The Alink-Argerich Foundation is there to give information, assistance and advice to musicians and competition organisers (Alink-Argerich Foundation, 2021). In order to qualify for admission as a member of the Federation a Member Competition must meet the following requirements: a) support the mission and pursue the objectives of the Federation as defined in Article 2; b) be an international music competition of musical performance or musical composition on a professional level; c) use a name that will not lead to confusion with similar organisations; d) state the discipline(s) included in the competition; e) be of enduring nature and schedule regularly recurring competitions; f) pursue solely artistic and cultural objectives, none designed to produce commercial gain; g) have an international character; that is, be open to participants of all nationalities, ethnic origins, religions and of both genders; h) offer all participants optimum and equal practice, rehearsal and performance conditions during each stage of the competition; i) excuse no participant from an early round of a competition; j) present a final round with orchestra, unless the competition's discipline makes this requirement unsuitable; k) pay prize money and fees promptly; l) judge competitions according to jury rules that are made known to jurors and summarised for participants before the competition; m) assemble juries of not less than seven members; n) assemble juries whose members represent several nationalities and countries of residence; o) assemble juries, the majority of whose members represent nationalities and countries of residence other than the country in which the competition is held; p) provide evidence to the Secretariat that at least two previously produced competitions have met all of the requirements set out above; q) provide all application materials for each competition edition to the Secretariat; r) complete to the Secretariat,

by electronic means and within three months following each competition edition, a Member Competition Compliance Certificate in the form prescribed by the Board; s) send a representative to or nominate a proxy for the ordinary meeting of the General Assembly at least once every five years (WFIMC, 2016). The age of participants in competitions belonging to the WFIMC organisation is not limited. However, a document approved by the 2011 General Assembly in Warsaw recommends that participants be no younger than 15 years old and no older than 35. The Board may place a Member on inactive status for any of the following reasons: membership dues remaining unpaid after six months, a Member Competition has not produced competition for two consecutive editions or was not in compliance with the Statutes. According to the data of 2021, 120 competitions on 6 continents belong to the World Federation of International Music Competitions (Fig. 1).

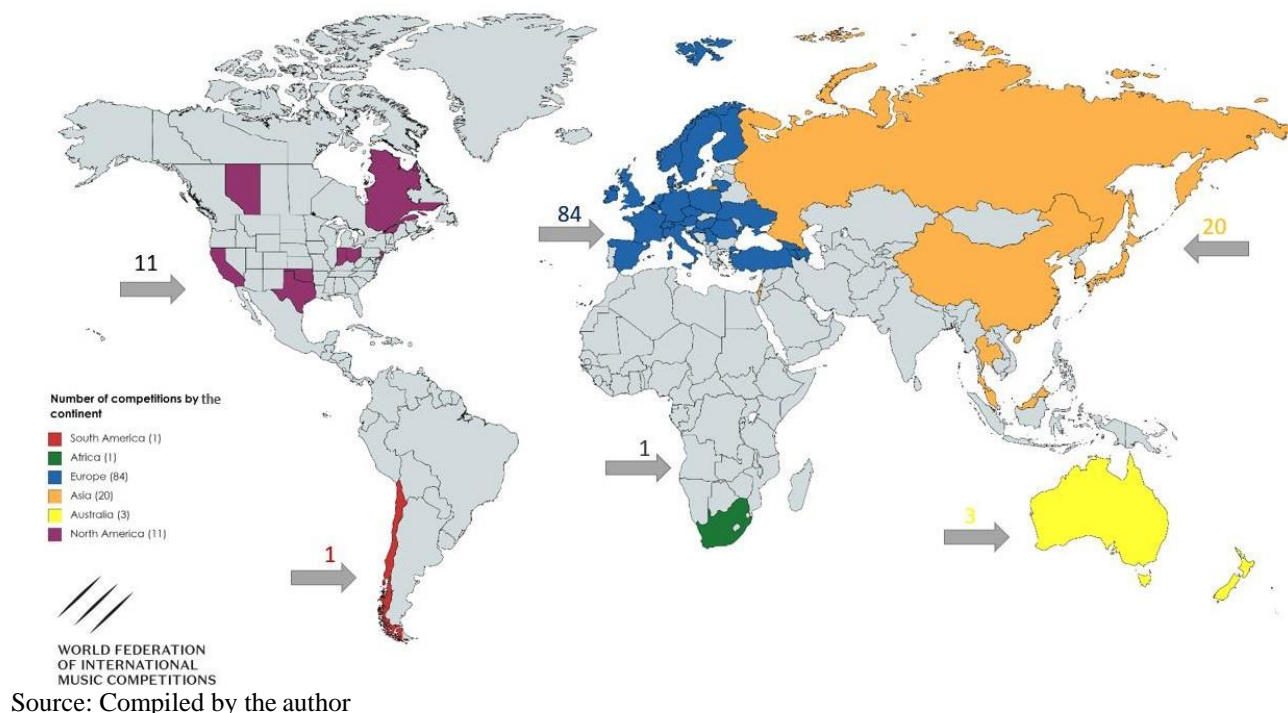


Fig. 1. Number of international music competitions by the continent

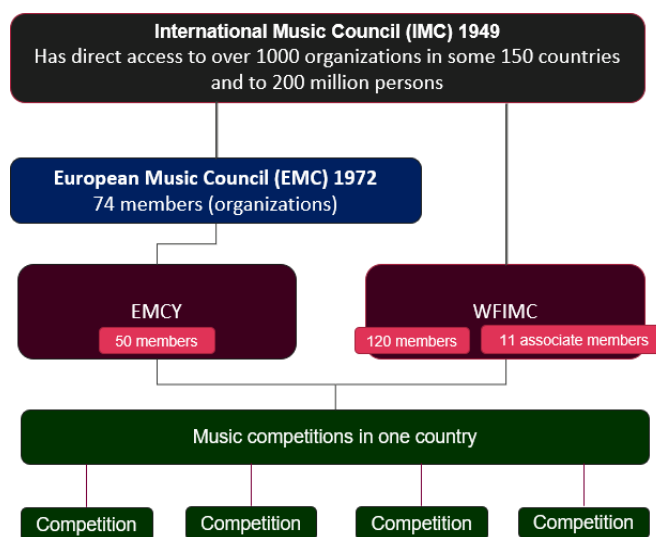
It is seen that most international music competitions take place in Europe. In the second place, according to the number of competitions – Asia. In 2012 a scientific article “Why Chinese People Play Western Classical Music: Transcultural Roots of Music Philosophy” by Hao Huang was published in the International Journal of Music. The study attempted to find out the reasons that led to the significant scattering of western classical music in the region. What accounts for such thriving involvement in Western classical music? Western classical music was determined to be better than popular music in order to educate disciplined, high-performing citizens of the modern Republic of China (Huang, 2012). According to the China Art Association, there were about 50 million Chinese children learning a musical instrument by 2018, and the piano was among the most popular options (Xinhua, 2019). As a result, in recent years, the number of international competitions in Asia has overtaken the United States.

Another important network uniting international and national music competitions in Europe – European Union Music Competitions for Youth (EMCY). It is a non-profit organisation registered under German Law and has its headquarters in Munich (Germany). It was founded in 1970 in Brussels as a union of national music competitions to develop musical education and promotion of musical talents in the pre-professional area on a European level. Since 1992 international music competitions have also been able to become members. One of the important missions of EMCY is to apply, maintain and promote quality standards at its member competitions, develop, support and promote musical education of young talents. EMCY, managed by an international board, is elected every four years

during the General Assembly. This organisation brings together nearly 50 national and international music competitions in thirty different countries, dedicated to music up to 25 years of age. According to Statute, there are the following kinds of membership of EMCY: ordinary members, individual members and honorary members. Ordinary Members are legal or natural persons who regularly organised on a national and/or international level in Europe music competitions for children and young people up to the age of 25 years. Individual members are the members of the Board by virtue of the office. Honorary members can be appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Board as recognition of special services (EMCY, 2014).

Unlike the WFIMC, all three types of EMCY members have the right to vote in the General Assembly. For a national or international competition to become an ordinary member of EMCY, the competition must meet the following conditions: a) Abide by the EMCY Quality Standards and be willing to implement them; b) has taken place at least 2 times; c) participants of the competition are under the age of 25. It is important that a new member is prepared to participate actively in the EMS network. There are also special quality standards for the competition program, evaluation, composition of the jury (EMCY, 2014).

Analyzing national and international music competitions' networking, it is important to realize that the WFIMC and EMCY are components of other, larger networks. EMCY is a member of the European Music Council (EMC), established in 1972. In Germany and uniting 74 members. The European Music Council is part of the World Music Council (IMC). It was founded in 1949 at the request of the Director-General of UNESCO as a non-governmental advisory body to the agency on musical matters. IMC's network is present in 150 countries on all continents, the main mission is to develop sustainable music sectors worldwide, to create awareness about the value of music, to make music matter throughout the fabric of society, and to uphold basic music rights in all countries. It is a powerful organisation with direct access to over 1000 organisations in some 150 countries and 200 million persons (IMC, 2021). Based on the paper's insights, a networking scheme (Fig. 2) is presented, which reflects the main networking of international music competitions.



Source: Compiled by the author

Fig. 2. Networking of international music competitions

In summary, music competitions organised in the country that meet members-competitions requirements have the possibility to become a member of WFIMC or EMCY networking.

2.1. Benefits of the network for organising international music competitions in Lithuania.

The right for a non-governmental public institution “Natų knygnas” to organise the competitions was given by the Lithuanian Council for Culture to centralise the administrative management of international music competitions and ensure their integrity. “Natų knygnas” is a professional performing arts institution that organises the five largest international professional performing arts competitions in Lithuania (International Professional Music Competitions, 2019). Three of them belongs to European Union Music Competitions for Youth: Jascha Heifetz Competition for violinists, Balys Dvarionas Competition for pianists and violinists and Virgilijus Noreika Competition for singers. Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis piano competition belongs to the World Federation of International Music Competition. The organisation’s main goals are to disseminate the highest professional level in the traditions and achievements of Lithuanian and foreign music performance art, foster and renew musical culture to create the dissemination of young performers’ works.

Further will be analysed the main advantages and benefits of these networks for the organisers of international music competitions in Lithuania and the participants of these competitions. European Union of Music Competitions for Youth (EMCY) ensures that competitions (members) who belongs to those networks, can prepare common projects for ES funds, also they can participate in projects which are supervised by EMCY. One of these projects is “Give Music a Future” in which Lithuania along with other six European countries participated in 2018.

The country was represented by two Lithuanians who appeared in competitions belonging to the EMCY network. In 2021, the public institution “Natų knygnas” together with EMCY organisation will implement the international project “Musical Storytelling” which is aimed at reducing cultural exclusion, which will be organised in Lithuania. The 2016 General Assembly of the European Union of Music Competitions for Youth redefined the benefits of winning the EMCY laureate award: a) the winner’s profile stays for two years on the main EMCY page; b) the winner gets an opportunity to improve skills in master classes; c) winner gets additional concerts; d) the winner is supported by EMCY partners. Participation in the network of the European Union of Music Competitions for Youth give the organisers of international music competitions an opportunity to find partners in larger-scale projects, as well as provides a wider audience for the winners of the competition.

World Federation of International Music Competition unites the most professional music competitions of high artistic level, cherishing long-term traditions. That is why networks that belong to this competition are being supported by countries’ important representatives. In 1994, the International M. K. Čiurlionis Piano and Organ Competition with the support of Lithuanian pianist Mūza Rubackytė was accepted as a member of the World Federation of International Music Competitions in Geneva (Bazaras, 2013). M.K Čiurlionis Piano Competition is organised in Lithuania and the educators of Lithuanian Music Academy Prof J. Čiurlionytė, Prof V Landsbergis foster it, also since 2019 this competition is fostered by the President of Lithuania Gitanas Nausėda. Competitions that are in the network of WFIMC draw the attention of the most talented musicians in the world, every year, the annual book of the federation indicates the nearest dates of the events, briefs information about the organisers of the competition, about the prize fund which reaches the target audience: music academies, professors and it is publicized on the internet. The winners of competitions that belong to the network of WFIMC have an opportunity to perform on the stages of the world’s most famous music festivals. At this moment, there are four festivals that are the partners of the WFIMC, they are committed to cover not only accommodation or travel costs but also paying honorarium for young artists. WFIMC belonging to the International Music Council (IMC) opens up an opportunity to reach even a wider audience for contestants.

The advantages of the network are only revealed during critical situations, where the experience and the help of colleagues are important, and a solution has to be found very quickly. At the beginning of the global pandemic, the World Federation of International Music Competition (WFIMC) and the European Union of Music Competitions for Youth (EMCY) held extraordinary meetings to discuss the model of the competition organisation with restrictions and shared experience in organising tours, broadcasts, possible distribution channels in distance, participants evaluation criteria in distance. These meetings helped to prepare more effectively for the Virgilijus Noreika singers competition, which was formed from 3 stages: the first two stages took place remotely, and the final round live. The latest

news and experience of other online organisations in organising competitions during the COVID-19 pandemic allowed avoiding strategic mistakes that could damage both the event's reputation and financial stability.

The aim of the international music competitions in Lithuania is to attract the most talented performers from all over the world and to spread the traditions of high professional level music performances. Moreover, it is very important to glorify the name of Lithuania, the artists who lived here and are now creating, thus the participants of each international competition that takes place in Lithuania must perform a work by a Lithuanian composer in the compulsory programme. During the first stage of the Jascha Heifetz violin competition in 2021, 49 violinists from various countries of the world performed Giedrius Kuprevičius work "Strings and Fingers", thus sharing a high-value composition that was created in Lithuania. This example proves that international events can be a place to present the identity of the host country, the artists and their created work.

Organisations that belong to these international competitions networks have an advantage over those competition organising institutions, who do not participate in the network. Inequality in the information of society can be caused by different levels of ownership and control, as information has become an independent source of productivity and power (Vytienė, Čiupailaitė, and Kirtiklis, 2017). Work in the network of international music competition organisations gives an opportunity for the organisers of competitions to establish useful contacts with professionals in this field and implement innovations that ensure even more successful organisation in the future. Contestants often choose these network competitions as they know that winning them will ensure a wider dispersion and bigger career opportunities in the international art space.

Conclusions

1. The main features of the network: common goals and similar interests of the members, active participation in the network, cooperation in the process of building innovative solutions. Sharing of information, resources in the lives of individuals, institutions and organisations had existed well before the concept of networking was defined. In the 21st century, advanced computer and communication technologies help accelerate the creation and maintenance of distant networks in which new social relationships are formed. These relatively new changes in society are leading to greater awareness of how the network functions and that it is not just a place for sharing resources, but it is a resource in itself.
2. International music competitions are united by two main organisations: the European Union of Music Competitions for Youth and the World Federation of International Music Competitions (which operate globally on six continents). The membership in these network structures is strictly regulated. These memberships must match the requirements of organisations that focus on the following aspects: continuity and permanence of the competition, accessibility for all countries that are interested in it, clarity of rules and transparent process of evaluation of participants, structure and number of the jury team, assurance of equal treatment of all participants in the competition. While comparing the documents of both networks, it has been noticed that there are differences in admitting one or another member to the competition. The main differences are in the following areas: the range of age of participants, requirements for the program, specific requirements for the members of the jury, quotas for how many participants could be declared laureates.
3. After analysing the main advantages of two networks (European Union of Music Competitions for Youth and the World Federation of International Music Competitions), based on the experience of the public institution "Natų knygytas", the influence of the network on music competitions organised in Lithuania has been determined. Direct benefits to the competition winner: promotion, masterclasses, additional concerts and support from network partners if the competition is run by the European Union Association of Music for Youth. The competition organisers get the opportunity to participate in common EU projects with other organisations in the network. The competitions belonging to the World Federation of International Music Competitions have become world-famous and their winners are included in the programmes of music festivals worldwide.

Participating in both networks ensures access to more information in times of crises, as well as contributes to the publicity of Lithuania and its artists.

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