

## **NISVILLE IN THE MEDIA**

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**Abstract.** *The Nisville Jazz Festival is one of the most important music festivals in the region. This music event has been held for 25 years and represents a cultural and artistic event, attracting more and more tourists both from Serbia and foreign countries. Proportional to its artistic importance, media coverage of the festival is also expected, mainly that of the serious media including the public broadcaster. In this paper the authors examined how the 2019 Nisville Jazz Festival was presented in the media. Analyzing the three printed media and three television programs of the national public broadcaster (RTS 1), the authors argued that not only was the festival marginalized in the analyzed media, but the very reporting was done through simple genre forms, totally disregarding the involvement and creativity that an event like this requires.*

**Key words:** *jazz, media, marginalization, Nisville, print, television.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In his book "Cultural Life in Europe at the Turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century" published in 2001, Jacques Dugast, a French professor at the University of Rennes and a member of the Weimar Culture Research Group, reminded that this period in Europe was famous for encouraging music creativity and audience education. Referring to Vienna, Dugast pointed to a description of the nature of the Viennese and a well-known German writer Stefan Zweig: "Their collective passions, which sometimes bordered on fanaticism and fetishism, guaranteed composers and interpreters an audience here." The end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century seemed to have marked the peak of the social enthusiasm related to music, which then became the expression for searching a collective identity. "Interest in music events was common to all social classes" (Dugast, 2007, p. 139), and he also noted that: "The question of culture and education in previous historical periods has never been as sharply raised as in European nations from this era" (Dugast, 2007, p. 145). The late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries

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were marked by the golden age of music creativity, while the 21<sup>st</sup> century and globalization<sup>1</sup> caused the removal of borders and more rapid mixing, influence and fusion of different types of music and music genres from different parts of the world, as well as the fact that certain music genres are favored by the audience regardless of the origin of that particular genre. This is also pointed out by Frank J. Lecher and John Boli, who stated that world culture transcends national borders and that non-governmental organizations and business corporations globalized and contributed to it (2006, p.14). Similarly, for Jacques Ranciere "the art of the aesthetic age abolishes boundaries and makes art of everything" (Ranciere, 2010, p. 16).

The past decades and years have given rise to new tendencies, habits and needs of the audience with the inevitable presence of shaping these needs according to the very social and cultural demands, expectations and needs of the people in the modern age. Music, as a part of cultural needs, can be understood in different ways, if we approach it from different angles of observation. On the one hand, music can be understood as a pleasure or enjoyment, on the other hand it can be a way of entertainment in leisure time, or the next a profession, but also an expression of a certain identity: "Musical composition is not only a record or a score, but actually a medium that establishes a relationship of understanding a piece of music – the composer as the creator, the performer of a piece of music and the listener. Musical notes and symbols establish a symbolic meaning of musical phenomena that can be interpreted either in identical or different ways" (Erak, 2019, p.178). Music has the power to connect the unconnected into a harmonious whole. For example, jazz music is "the result of a specific mixture of the heritage of archaic African music (namely, the rhythmic structure and pentatonic scale of black people) and certain elements of the European origin (in the context of harmony). What is unusual in the case of jazz is that two cultures found themselves on the third continent – North America" (Tickmayer, 2014, p.95). Music does not have to be experienced through its lyrical expression, and direction. Culturally it is often deeply rooted, historically conditioned and self-reflective. If we focus on the example of jazz music, we can see that jazz is not only a music genre, it is the example of the case when music is the witness of a nation's history, its suffering and elevation:

"Slaves who came from Africa have preserved their musical tradition which represents one of the rare connections to the land of their ancestors. In their everyday lives which included hard work in cotton fields, among other things, those rhythms and melodies played an important role in maintaining and surviving their lives in despair [...] Over time, these slaves were in conflict with traditional music that originated in Europe, because the white population had not forgotten their musical tradition, which they preserved and used in their everyday lives. Being in contact with a new music world (in some sense more developed than their tradition, in the context of European harmony), black people incorporated certain elements of this music into their musical use, but their conservative spirit mixed these influences and added elements of their own tradition. Under the influence of their style, new rules were adopted, but then entirely transformed and new musical form was born in that way" (Tickmayer, 2014, p. 95-96).<sup>2</sup>

In addition, music can also be interpreted as a specific language medium. If we start from the definition of communication, given by Radojković and Đorđević, we will see

<sup>1</sup> "World music" is based on the idea of globalization and related to Peter Gabriel.

<sup>2</sup> "Classical jazz has undergone rapid development – during the 1920s, big bands and bandleaders such as Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway and Count Basie formed the basis of the American music entertainment industry and this hysteria quickly spread and conquered territories around the world" (Tickmayer, 2014, p. 96).

that it denotes: "the process of exchanging signs and symbols" (2001, p. 22). Namely, music itself can be regarded as a specific exchange of symbols and creation of meaning, but in a wider sense, as a good basis for developing the culture of the audience as a whole. The aforementioned is particularly correct if we take into consideration the now undisputed power of the media to reach a great number of citizens, but at the same time, influence the formation of public opinion. In spite of the increasingly intense development of the Internet, the age we still live in can be called the primary age of television, which, as a powerful medium affects all our senses, creating the illusion of being here and everywhere, thus globalizing our experiences; that we are simultaneously anywhere in the world, making the concept of temporal and special distance irrelevant. The dominance of electronic media and the growing online communication and informing, gives the print media new/old roles. The need for a deeper analysis of everyday events today, in a time of rapid and increasingly frequent fake news, becomes necessary to understand the world around us. Therefore, because of all the roles they assumed since their formation and new ones that came along the trend of quick information, today it may be appropriate to speak about social responsibility of the media in creating cultural patterns, cultural values of the audience and the educational function. In that context, Mol and Zagorac – Kešer note: "Media and journalism make an integral part of the pleasure society and the economy of entertainment. They shape, permeate and circumvent that society" (2005, p.18). Since the media are the ones that give or diminish the importance of an event with their agenda and can influence the formation of public opinion, as well as the shaping of audiences' taste, in the research part the authors will analyze in what way the Serbian media have followed the 2019 Nisville Jazz Festival.

## 2. PREVIOUS RESEARCH

For almost 25 years, in the city of Niš, the month of August is marked with enthusiasm for music, similar to what Dugast (2007) presented in his description of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Viennese audience. The Nisville Jazz Festival, which is primarily a music event, but also a cultural event, gathers visitors from Serbia, the region, and abroad. Investigating the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the visitors of the festival, Šušić, Bratić and Milanović (2014) concluded that slightly more than half of the tourists were from Serbia, while the rest of the respondents came from abroad. They were mostly highly educated people, mostly unmarried and travelling multiple times in a year; also, their lifestyle had an impact onto their decision to attend the Nisville Jazz Festival. Speaking of motives, music was the most dominant motive, but curiosity and entertainment were also among the provided answers. An interesting finding of the authors is that less than 4% of respondents found out about the festival from printed media, while just over 7% found out about it on television; the greatest number of respondents were informed about the event on the internet (2014, p.132).

These findings are significant in the context of our research, because the focus is primarily on the media coverage of the festival, that is, on the assumption that media coverage of this event is qualitatively and quantitatively disproportionate to its importance, especially in the case of printed media. Given that a similar research on this topic has not been conducted, we will point to research papers with a similar topic, that were primarily focused on music, culture and qualitative-quantitative representations of these topic in the media (print, radio,

television, internet portals). Rade Veljanovski and Dubravka Valić-Nedeljković (2015<sup>3</sup>, 2016<sup>4</sup>) have monitored the works of the Public Broadcasting Service of Serbia and the Public Broadcasting Service of Vojvodina on multiple occasions. They analyzed the reporting of *Cultural News* on RTS, with the purpose of answering the question whether media services fulfill their legal obligations and devote the prescribed space to cultural events. Based on the findings, the authors concluded that consumers' communication needs for both information and cultural contents were fulfilled (Veljanovski, Valić-Nedeljković, 2016).

In the research paper "Music Programs on Serbian Public TV Channels", that was based on a four-month survey (January 1 – April 10, 2017) and 24-hour monitoring of the music program on RTS (all three programs), Vulić (2017) identified the variety of this television's music program and noted the presence of jazz music, though not in a significant percentage. During the period under scrutiny, on all three channels of RTS, variety of genres and music was noticed: "Although classical music is not present at all on RTS 1, it was still the most present one during this time period with 19%. The other music genres were represented with a much lower percentage: mixed music shows took up 8.1%, pop music 6.2%, jazz 5.5%. Although present on all three RTS channels, folk music is still the least present with only 4%" (Vulić, 2017, p.107). In the study "Art through the prism of Cultural News Program" based on the monitoring of *Cultural News* (May 2018) and which included 23 broadcasts and 170 television features, Mitrović and Vulić (2017) concluded that this program contributes to the education of Serbian citizens about activities concerning different types of art and artists from Serbia and the rest of the world:

"The results clearly indicate that different types of art were reported about; however, we would like to emphasize that the *Cultural News* editors should report more on analytical topics related to cultural policy and accumulated problems in our national cultural institutions, as well as to indicate the need for the government to invest more in art projects and culture-related projects in general" (Mitrović&Vulić, 2018, p. 16). If the critical aspect and the analytical one are absent, the quantity of reporting on these topics is not sufficient.

Furthermore, in another research project "On the Margins of the Media Agenda – (Un)privileged Places of Culture", the authors Mitrović and Vulić analyzed the content of the specialized broadcast of *Cultural News* (RTS1), which is an informative program about culture. Based on the results they collected, the authors confirmed marginalization in reporting on cultural events outside Belgrade in relation to reporting on cultural events that are organized and performed in the Serbian capital. Although the aforementioned studies are not directly related to the topic of our analysis, they give us an opportunity to place our research in the wider context in regards to reporting on cultural events in general, the role of public broadcasting services and the potential marginalization of events, such as Nisville, which take place in Southern Serbia. The fact that the international Nisville Jazz Festival which has been taking place in Niš for 25 years was not a special topic of investigation in the field of media representation, also speaks in favor of the validity and contribution of our research.

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<sup>3</sup>See: <<http://www.novinarska-skola.org.rs/sr/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Izvestaj-o-monitoringu-programskih-sema-Radio-televizije-Vojvodine-i-Radio-televizije-Srbije-oktobar-2015.pdf>> accessed July 27, 2019

<sup>4</sup>See: <<http://www.novinarska-skola.org.rs/sr/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/FR4.pdf>> accessed July 27, 2019

### 3. RESEARCH

In 2019, Nisville was organized in such a way that, for analytical purposes, it can be divided into two sections: the main festival section and the non-competition section. Namely, the non-competition section from August 2-7 was organized and reserved for various cultural and music events, which were held in the city center and were free of charge for the visitors. The main festival program was held from August 8-11 and reserved only for jazz performers. According to the organizers, in ten days 200.000 people attended some of the events of the Nisville Jazz Festival.

#### 3.1. Sample

With the aim of answering the research question: *In what way have the media reported on the 2019 Nisville Jazz Festival?*, our quantitative and qualitative analysis included a sample of three printed newspapers: *Politika* – a representative of a serious national newspaper, *Večernje novosti* – a representative of a half tabloid and *Narodne novine* – because of its local character (the only daily newspaper in Niš). In total, 22 issues of the aforementioned newspapers were analyzed, in the periods from August 2-4 and August 8-12; eight issues of *Politika* and *Večernje novosti* and six issues of *Narodne novine* (weekend double issue). Due to the specific organization of the festival we decided to follow the daily newspapers that were the subject of analysis, in the period from August 2-4. In addition, it is expected that the print media will announce the opening of the festival on August 2 and follow the events the following day. Since the first part of the festival until August 7 can be viewed as a non-competition part or the introduction into the main program, we decided to follow the coverage of the first three days of the non-competition part. On the other hand, the period from August 8-11 marked the main program of the festival and was the subject of analysis on the whole; the issues published on August 12 were also included because of the specificity of print media reporting – reporting on yesterday's events, accordingly, on August 12 we expected reports on the closing of the festival that had happened the day before.

In the case of electronic media, we followed the television programs of RTS, such as *Dnevnik 2* (Daily News 2), *Ovo je Srbija* (This is Serbia) and *Kulturni dnevnik* (Cultural News), since it is expected that RTS, as the public broadcasting service, particularly reports on cultural events. The program was followed on August 2 (the opening day), then from August 8-12 (the main festival days).

#### 3.2. Results – printed media

The analysis of the content of selected daily newspapers was performed according to the following criteria:

1. Front page reports
2. The total number of articles about the Nisville Jazz Festival
3. Genres that cover all Nisville topics

The first two parameters are of a quantitative nature – we recorded only the number of front page reports, more precisely, the number of articles on the topic. However, the criterion of appearing on front pages tells us something about the importance that a particular newspaper and the editorial board give to a particular topic, so in the wider context it can be regarded as a qualitative analysis. On the other hand, the third parameter is the one of a qualitative character. Whether a particular newspaper text was published in the form of news or an article indicates how much importance was given to a particular event.

During the researched period, all three newspapers published 20 articles about the Nisville Jazz Festival in total (Table 1), of which only one article appeared on the front page of the local newspaper *Narodne novine*. Taking into consideration that both the Guča Trumpet Festival and the Nisville Jazz Festival were organized in the same period, it is interesting that *Politika* had Guča appearing on the front pages three times during the analysis period, while Nisville did not even appear on the front page of *Politika*. Also, *Politika* published only three articles about Nisville (on 4th, 8th, 10th August), while *Večernje novosti* published five texts (on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> August) and similar to *Politika*, had given space twice to the Guča Trumpet Festival on the front page and none to the Nisville Jazz Festival. *Narodne novine* published 12 articles about Nisville, on average two articles in every analyzed issue, which was expected, given the fact it is about a local event and newspaper belonging to Niš.

**Table 1** The analysis of daily newspapers in the period from August 2-4 and August 8-11. Comparative overview and genre analysis.

The title of the newspaper:	Front page	The number of articles about <i>Nisville</i>	Genre
<i>Politika</i>	/	3	1 news 2 reports
<i>Večernje novosti</i>	/	5	1 report 4 interviews
<i>Narodne novine</i>	1	12	1 interview 1 reportage 3 news -announcements 3 photo-reportages 4 reports

With the help of genre analysis, it was found that the most represented genres were news (4), reports (7) and interviews (5). More precisely, informative genres that do not require additional effort of journalists, unlike the analytical ones, which require engagement, placing into context or fiction genres which often require the author's personal impression and experience. *Politika* and *Večernje novosti* covered the topic of Nisville only through information, whereas *Narodne novine* had coverage and three photo-reportages.

### 3.3. Results – RTS programs

The first festival day (August 2, 2019) or the opening day of the non-competition program of Nisville was an integral part of the content of all monitored informative programs on RTS 1. Also, the Nisville Jazz theatre was part of the content of the informative program *Ovo je Srbija* (This is Serbia), in the form of a report. *Daily News 2* announced the start of the big event “Shakespeare in Niš” and decided on the live coverage from Niš with the reporter Dejan Tasić. In the form of a report, in the central information program, Serbian citizens were informed about the opening of the Nisville Jazz theatre. In addition, the Nisville Jazz theatre had also found its place in a special broadcast of *Cultural News*.

### 3.3.1. Daily News 2 (Dnevnik 2)

As far as the main festival days were concerned, in the five days *Daily News 2* had reported three times about Nisville (Table 2). The first day of the festival's main program coincided with the opening of the Guča Trumpet Festival. In the central information program, *Daily News 2* (aired on August 8, 2019), the opening of these two events was announced with a joint slogan "Trumpet and Jazz Holiday", with an emphasis on the trumpet. In addition, there was a live coverage from Guča, with an announcement of the opening in the form of news, after which a special TV package with the Guča event was included. Followed by this, there was a live coverage from Niš, from the Nisville opening, also in the form of news and statements from foreign visitors.

**Table 2** Genre analysis of the coverage of Nisville

August 2	live coverage
August 8	live coverage from Niš – in the form of news and statements of foreign visitors
August 9	part of TV package – Nisville was not a special topic
August 10	/
August 11	live coverage and two statements – Bob Geldoff (an Irish musician) and Sean Kuti (a Nigerian musician)
August 12	/

On the second day of the festival (August 9, 2019) Nisville was not present as a separate topic, but as a part of a TV package of events in Serbia in the month of August and under the title "From Exit to Ivanjica", where it was briefly mentioned. On the other hand, there were a live coverage and reportage from Guča. Similarly, on the third day (August 10, 2019), there was a live coverage from Guča, in the form of news, as well as several statements and an announcement about live broadcast of the trumpet festival on RTS 3, to be aired that evening. However, there were no reports on the Nisville Jazz Festival.

On the fourth day of the festival (August 11, 2019), a live broadcast from Guča was aired, in the form of a report, and again, the announcement of the trumpet competition on RTS 2 and RTS 3 later that evening. As far as Nisville is concerned, there were live coverage and statements of Bob Geldoff and Sean Kuti (a Nigerian musician) which did not last longer than 15 seconds. One day after the closing of Nisville there were no reports about the festival itself in *Daily News 2*.

### 3.3.2. This Is Serbia (Ovo je Srbija)

As for the program *This Is Serbia* which airs on weekdays, the days included in the analysis were 8, 9 and 12 August (Table 3). On the first day of Nisville (August 8, 2019), the festival was accompanied by a live coverage in the form of a report and a statement. However, the Guča festival had a live coverage in the form of a report, one statement and reporting. Despite the joint slogan "Summer (Music) Festivals", the editorial board decided to open the program with Guča, while Nisville was placed at the end of the culture section.

**Table 3** *This Is Serbia* – genre analysis of the coverage of Nisville

August 2	a report
August 8	live coverage in the form of a report and one statement
August 9	/
August 12	/

Also, on August 9, the Guča festival was accompanied by a report and a review on August 12, while it was not reported on Nisville these days.

### 3.3.3. Cultural News (*Kulturni dnevnik*)

Cultural news is broadcast on RTS 1, at 11 p.m. on weekdays, which is the main reason why the following days were analyzed: 8, 9, 12 August (just like in the case of the program *This Is Serbia*).

**Table 4** *Cultural News* – genre analysis of the coverage of Nisville

August 2	1 report
August 8	a live coverage in the form of a report
August 9	/
August 12	TV package

On August 8, 2019, on the opening day, Nisville was announced as the "Nisville Jubilee Festival", followed by a live coverage in the form of a report. One day later, on August 9, there was no coverage of Nisville and on August 12, Nisville was given some space through a TV package that encompassed the whole festival.

## 4. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

By analyzing the content of printed media and monitoring programs of the public broadcasting service, we got an answer to the research question: *In what way have the media reported on the 2019 Nisville Jazz Festival?* The answer is – insufficiently and superficially. Since there is no evaluation standard on the basis of which we can precisely determine what number of newspaper articles or television reports would be adequate in the case of a festival of such cultural and artistic importance, we will use a method of comparison with the Guča Trumpet Festival – an event that coincided with Nisville. Although it was not our intention to compare the reporting of Nisville with other events that were reported on at the same time, the reporting on the Guča Trumpet Festival was not analyzed qualitatively. However, from the viewpoint of quantity, we cannot help but conclude that in this media race "the trumpet had victory over the saxophone". Also, three front pages of *Politika* and two of *Večernje novosti* speak in favor of this situation. Except for *Cultural News*, all other analyzed RTS programs gave priority to the Guča Trumpet Festival as far as the `quantity` of coverage is concerned.

In the case of a qualitative genre analysis, we conclude that the media chose simple forms, mostly informative ones. In all analyzed media, reports were the most frequent occurrence, while forms such as coverage or critics, the most suitable for these events, had not been used. As for *Narodne novine*, the only local media included in the analysis, the average of two texts per festival day is not insignificant, but the variety of genres was insufficient as well. Mostly informative reporting with a visual break in the form of a photo-reportage is surprising, given that it is a local newspaper reporting on a local event. The jazz music festival, outside the capital as the centre of culture, manages to attract thousands of people. Also, the media owe this festival more space, analytical spirit and creativity, especially the media that are considered to be the strongholds of culture.



However, if the statement that the media owe something to a commercial event sounds too harsh, even if it is the case of a jazz festival, then we can criticize the media for owing their audience reporting on jazz, at least equally enthusiastic as their reports on the Guča Trumpet Festival.

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## **NIŠVIL U MEDIJIMA**

*Nišvil džez festival jedan je od najznačajnijih muzičkih festivala u regionu. Ova muzička manifestacija održava se već 25 godina u Nišu i predstavlja kulturno-umetnički događaj, koji privlači sve više turista iz Srbije i inostranstva. Srazmerno njegovom umetničkom značaju očekuje se i medijska pokrivenost festivala, naročito u ozbiljnim medijima, a posebno na javnom servisu. U ovom radu autorke su istraživale na koji način je Nišvil 2019. bio reprezentovan u medijima. Analizirajući tri štampana medija i tri emisije javnog servisa (RTS 1), autorke su pokazale da ne samo da je bio na marginama u analiziranim medijima, već je i kada se izveštavalo o Nišvilu to činilo kroz jednostavne žanrovske forme, koje ne iziskuju dodatnu angažovanost ni kreativnost, koje ovakav događaj zahteva.*

**Ključne reči:** *džez, mediji, marginalizacija, Nišvil, štampa, televizija.*