

Case study

Getting big audiences for contemporary classical music

Leif Karlsson

Kroumata percussion ensemble
Sweden



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/uk/)

Published 2014 on [CultureHive](https://culturehive.org/), a place to discover and share best practice in cultural marketing

Supported by



Created and managed by



In partnership with



Background

Fifteen years ago, Kroumata was one of the few full-time chamber orchestras in the world. With generous Swedish government funding, our mission was to perform contemporary music and promote the work of Sweden's living composers wherever possible.

But audiences were very small. Swedish classical music organisations had no experience of marketing. Venues had little interest in or understanding of contemporary music. No-one was asking 'who is in our audience and what is the best way to find them'.

Kroumata wanted to lead the way so we had to learn how to build an audience.

Objectives

- To sell 2,200 tickets for a late night concert in a Stockholm church
- To reposition contemporary classical music as cool
- To build the Kroumata brand
- To promote the Swedish composers whose music we were playing.

Target audience

- Consumers of trend-setting popular culture: under 35s who dress in black, want to be part of the cultural in-crowd and to be noticed
- Students
- Opinion formers from Swedish cultural life and business
- Festival managers
- Music and dance schools
- Local authority culture departments

Process

We started early by making lists of well-networked people who enjoy spreading the word to all those around them. Then we created a detailed profile of the audience we wanted. From this we developed a working communications plan focusing on:

- word of mouth
- direct mail
- media editorial, particularly news items and interview-based features in monthly magazines, radio, breakfast and culture programmes on TV and daily newspapers
- a total of five newspaper advertisements (all we could afford)
- posters
- performing at the commercial marketing sector's annual gala evening and following it up with the next day with direct mail about the late-night concert
- information sheets to concierges in shops and hotels

Outcomes

The concert sold out: 2,200 people listened to music by Xenakis, Takemitsu and Swedish composer, Sven-David Sandström.

Two million people saw the media coverage.

Our record company called for a meeting about a new album.

The Swedish King asked us to perform as part of his State visits.

We got numerous bookings from venues and festivals.

Key points for effective practice

We gambled that we would reach our income targets and made what for us was a huge marketing investment of time and money because our goals were much wider than simply filling the concert hall. In all, we spent around 200,000 krona (£2,100) on press ads, posters, photographs and graphic design.

We hoped that the young people would return to our concert the following year but they had moved on to explore other artists.

Conclusion

The six members of the ensemble enjoyed planning and working on marketing – especially the illegal flyposting around the city. We were delighted when people started to talk about Kroumata.

The campaign wasn't out-of-the-ordinary. But it was successful because we started early enough and enjoyed the journey. We all got stuck in and so became a tighter ensemble. And the full house was a huge round of applause for us all.

About Kroumata

After 35 years of dynamic performances, Kroumata has brought percussion from the back row of the orchestra into the limelight centre stage.

www.kroumata.se