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Homage to Ezio Bosso from Bologna, City of Music and European Capital of Culture.

"For me, being there, means not just being on stage, but being there for others, being on the streets" *Ezio Bosso*

Abstract

ECOC is a longstanding project, which should also be indefinitely extended since it encompasses many forces and values.

It can overcome all the crises, from the economic ones, to the health ones, representing a form of circular economy. It does not form cathedrals in the desert, being the cities rich of dynamic life, and public and private events. It does not create white elephants, relegating artists and geniuses in ivory towers, as unique, big, and solitary events do. It engages countless forms of human performance.

The latest crisis is said to be the biggest in the last century, because from a sanitary emergency it has evolved into an economic and social disaster.

As we can see, politicians alone are not completely able to solve the interdependent healthsocio-economic problems. For that, a new vision is required, a vision that can be provided by artists. Generally, artists do have larger visions about people and societies, due to their serious educational courses of studies and their qualities and sensitiveness.

The multi-coloured background of the numerous artists involved in ECOC and the richness of their contacts, along years and among nations, may, even should, help city rulers organize modern systems of civil life, combining new techno-cultural-socio-economic and moral way of living.

Keywords: Culture, Europe, Music, Arts, Artists, Covid19.

1. Forewords

The references for ECOC are numerous, since its foundation in 1985, but the year 2020 is related to a particular situation, to a pandemic which has beaten all the world. For that, EU has decided to enlarge the 2020 nomination until the year 2021.

The pandemic has blocked not only economic and social life, but also culture and education.

OECD (2020) states that, if the economy requires years before restoring the past situation, in order to recover the educational gap, almost 20 years are thought to be needed.

António Costa, the prime Minister of Portugal, has confirmed during a conference in the

USA the role of culture to be superior to the present health concerns (www.youtube).

In any case, we should remember that culture and health are strictly interconnected, one enhancing the other.

Surely the pandemic has even been able to mentally and psychologically, kill people, not only physically. We will refer in this work to a particular case, situated between celebrity, biographical reality, music and art, to an artist who died in Bologna, UNESCO city of music and capital of culture in the year 2000.

2. Introduction

The EU Culture Programme is a multi-annual Programme, which aims to support cultural cooperation within Europe in order to bring the European common cultural heritage to the fore (Canter, 1987, Myerscough, 1994, Claval, 2000, Colbert and Courchesne, 2012, Collins and Power, 2019, Couch, Fraser and Percy, 2004, d'Ovidio and Pradel, 2013, Richieri 2016).

Evidence supports the idea that the programming of cultural events should be a systematic process accompanied by a holistic vision (Galvani, Grandi, 2011, Richieri, 2016).

Cultural events and festivals have been historically set up as instruments through which place-based communities express identities, celebrate communally held values and strengthen mutual bonds (Quinn, 2005, Van Puyenbroeck, 2021).

Against the backdrop of globalisation and the shift from government to governance, the city has re-emerged as a key spatial scale and culture has taken a leading role within that re-emergence (Walker, 1998).

The ECOC is arguably the greatest accolade to aspire to for our contemporary cities in changing and promoting a cultural mindscape, but at the same time it acts as a catalyst to the successful delivery of economic growth, like in Glasgow, 1990 and Liverpool in 2008. (Bianchini and Parkinson, 1994, Quinn 2005, (Hall & Lew, 2009), Kumar, (2003). O'Brien, 2011, Simionescu 2018). Thus, the ECOC can be seen as part of the transformation of a declining post-industrial city,

3. The ECOC program

The European Capital of Culture (ECOC) program has implications for tourism and image-generation (OECD, 2008). Hosting the ECOC for example, has transformed the reputation and image of Liverpool, with formerly negative coverage given to Liverpool's social and economic issues replaced by a 'much more nuanced view of the city' (Stevenson, 2014) 'raising the profile of the city and its arts and cultural offer', like before Glasgow in 1990.

People's perceptions are significant because they influence attitudes and behaviour, and ultimately opinions and actions.

As Richards (1996), Richards and Palmer (2007), Galvani (2001, 2003, 2007, 2009) point out, the ECOC program is part of a widespread shift in cultural policies. ¹

Tourism should be studied in the framework of a cultural system, utilizing social and

¹A newly created dataset, the Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor (CCCM) is recording the increase of interest in culture as a major resource for urban change, making all the data available online. The CCCM), a novel culture-specific dataset, gathers 29 selected culture-related indicators for 168 cities in 30 European countries, which have then been aggregated in an overall Cultural and Creative Cities Index (C3 Index) as a synthetic measure of performance. The CCCM dataset - freely accessible - can support policy-relevant questions and evidence-led urban planning.

cultural anthropology. In whatever approach, the term environment refers, in any case, to humans and biophysical factors. Anthropology so becomes environmental anthropology. Relationships between cultures should be included in cultural ecology, since this includes the inseparability of culture and nature, mind and body.

Anthropology must recognize that biophysical factors may not only be shaped by humans in a material sense, but may be culturally perceived. The environment is not just a set of things to which people adapt, but also a set of ongoing relations of mutual adaptation between culture and material context. Events in cities are important, since, generally, the main driver for travelling is based on meeting other people from various countries, places, or cultures, and exchanging their own experience, attitudes, or personal values (Canali, S. d'Angella, 2009).

4. The images of culture

Every era has its own perception of time; in any perception of time there is a different perception of identity. This establishes the relationship between consciousness and perception. The perception, contrary to what one habitually thinks, does not create an immediate and instinctive relationship with what is before us, but it produces a thickening of the experience already structured with a sense. Perception is something that goes far beyond the sensation.

Cultures differ in their expression of territoriality, although the question whether some cultures are more territorial than others has not been clearly answered.

Territoriality is a pattern of behaviour and attitudes held by an individual or group that is based on perceived, attempted, or actual control of a definable physical space, object, or idea. It may involve habitual occupation, defence, personalization, and marking of that space.

Carl Gustav Jung (1959) claimed to have proven that all humans carry within their subconscious minds the propensity to produce and appreciate behaviour, symbols, and images biologically inherited from our distant ancestors, like the love for nature. According to this framework, the ECOC's goal positions itself as a highlighter and collector of history, symbols and images inherited from ancestors to show them in a EU scene, where every European can retrace the similarity with his own past and the imagery of his identity.

From Émile Durkheim's works, we have understood that humans incorporate entire universes in their worlds (Bellah, (ed.) 1973).

5. The images of places

People try to reconstruct themselves through a change of atmosphere. If tourist destinations attracted tourists in the past decades for their landscapes, or for their image, today the force of attraction is the atmosphere in the destination, supported by new forms of culture.

For a true sustainable tourism, the tourist must be transformed more in an inhabitant, in a "living" one. ECOC has a value for the inhabitants themselves. Korpela (1989) Quinn (2010) Fišer (2016), Tucker (2013) stress that a place's loved environments may support self-esteem, in that a person gains a boost to his/her self-esteem from the qualities of the place. In other words, the evaluation of place membership impacts upon self-esteem.

The search for the roots of our culture is useful in understanding the evolution of different lifestyles and the resulting use of space (Jönsson, et al. (2000). Considered in itself, a place, whatever it may be, is the bearer of cultural meanings. The physical environment is a mere support, and it has a meaning only in relation to societies, who created history and shaped the future of the territories.

The environment interpretation, together with the territory usage or management, gives

meaning to man's history and models his mind and culture.

The diffused greater acculturation, the more active participation in political-social life of today, the realization, even partial, of a governance, makes the place of holiday a place coloured with all the aspects of everyday life. This is made more perceptible by the widespread globalization that reflects the human-social involvement, also in the substrate of the places of temporary destination.

The tourist must form a single body with the host company; must absorb the atmosphere of the place, not only breathe the air, must feel the aura of the soul, the spirit of the ancestors, the religion nebulized by nature with the exhalation of the scent of the flowers, with the perspiration of the leaves, with the essence of the gardens, with the nebulization of rain drops and rivers water.

The involvement with local communities is culturally educative, also challenging, since it involves the aspect of international cognition, more than the aspect of unbiased tourism (Hall, Lew, 2009).

Community benefits include the "celebration of the host community, enhancement of community identity, image and uniqueness, improved quality of life, pride and community recognition" (Korpela, 1989). Delamere et al. 2001, p.19, Hughes et al 2003). It results from that, that capitals generally lead on *creative economy* but non-capitals, mostly medium-sized, do better on *cultural vibrancy*. (Montalto et al. 2019).

To accomplish that, not only good managers are required, but also valuable artists and responsible citizens. ECOC is a global urban project including a European ambiance and eternal human values which are recognisable and should be shared and enjoyed by everyone for the enrichment of the personality (Macbeth, 2005, Galvani, Zaleshina and Zaleshin 2021).

The artists' position in ECOC cities is of priceless significance. They represent the past and present cultural anthropology, and foresee the enhancement of future life with culture entrenched with tourism, travels, and economy. Artists are the medium between culture and people, between places and images, between reality and imagery. They are the pole of attraction between people and places.

"Art is the perfect representation of nature and society working together and is a cultural living action, which constitutes a communicative mediation and conveys a message of elite origin for an ample public" (Galvani & Grandi, 2011, p.6).

6. Artists as city rulers

The periods of economic progress and development are not always positive in all the senses.

They may have disruptive effects on human behaviour, stimulating laziness, loss of traditional and ethical values, faith in fake culture, credulity in chattering...exaltation of negative values. At the opposite, period of crisis may enhance social cohesion, the faith in equality, solidarity, and moral values, even annihilation of negative values (Bellah, 1973, Behr, 2016).

In order not to be exposed to the winds of uncertainty, people need strong and firm values, like those called eternal values, such as the human values of respect and confidence in human virtues and social cohesiveness.

All the values could be tied to a global consciousness of being all in one (Galvani, Lew, and Sotelo Perez, 2021). All the things in the universe should be considered equal, where men are on a par with the other creatures. Surely, the man is the strongest one, because of his intelligence, but he must fight an eternal battle against nature with all its good and bad aspects. Because of the effects of this battle, he is continually gaining forces, bolstering his intelligence.

The intelligence needed to live in the world must be continually maintained and strengthened. All cultural proposals must do that. In facts, Europe has proposed the best subject for culture. The European capital of culture reinforces the highest symbols of culture, which is the city, comprehending geographical, historical, intellectual, anthropological, and archaeological culture, together with intangible values of human beings (www.europe.eu). Celebrating ECOC enhances the sense of identity, of local pride, the sense of community, of pertinence, the pride of ancient values maintained up to now (Magno, Dossena, 2015, Sassatelli, 2005, Fišer, et. Al. 2019, Habermass, 1992).

This pride lets us consider that what we are is what we have been, and what we will be in the future. All this is merged among the features of our European cities. Structure, infrastructures, men and buildings are the pillars of the cultural cathedral of humanity. What should be updated is a new crown, made of all the jewels of arts. Artists become the ambassadors of human values, they have the ability to put together past-present- future, tangible and intangible values, conscious and unconscious, mixed with imagination, in the global bubble which all life is immersed in.

The work of Ooi, Håkanson, LaCava (2014) deals with 'poetics' and politics of ECOC: the first is the presentation of ECOC in an attractive manner to win local support and attract outside attention. The second is on the grubby business of seeking legitimacy, mobilizing community support (Kastoryano 2003).

7. Bologna Capital of Culture 2000

Twenty years have passed since the exceptional expression of the ECOC event in 2000. In the year 2000 the program European City of Culture was renamed European Capital of Culture and has been opened to cities outside the European Union, with a particular view to attracting cities in Central and Eastern Europe (Hughes, 2003).

In order to celebrate the turn of the Millennium, nine cities have been elected all together in the same year, Avignon, Bergen, Bologna, Brussels, Helsinki, Krakòw, Prague, Reykjavìk, Santiago de Compostela (Galvani, 2001).

All the nine cities have been connected among themselves along the entire year.

Bologna, uniquely, had the idea - appreciated by someone - of enlarging the program to two years, adding six months before and six months after the 2000 term.

Bologna also received the UNESCO designation of "Creative City for Music" in 2004, a title granted to 47 cities in the world (Baird, Scott, 2000).

The affirmation of Bologna in the musical context began with the Conservatory of Music with the most erudite musician of the 18th century in Italy, Giovanni Battista Martini, who had been teacher of Mozart. The State Conservatory of Music is named after him; among its students Gioachino Rossini and Ottorino Respighi, must be remembered.

8. Bologna and Ezio Bosso

This paper is dedicated to a musician, Ezio Bosso who had chosen Bologna for the above mentioned reasons. He died in 2020, leaving a great moral inheritance, for the value of his person, and the vigour of his personality. We claim him as the best example of a genius artist, concerned with classic music, but also open to the large public which he was trying to educate in music, letting them to love music, adapting the classical music to the modern sensitivity, for example writing songs for filmmakers.

During the last months, because of COVID 19, Europe has been under a strict lockdown;

in Italy everyone was forbidden to exit his house (OECD 2020). The pandemic has killed the weakest ones not only physically, but even psychologically; one of the greatest musicians of this century, affected by a neurological disease, died at the age of 48. Born in Torino, he had chosen Bologna to live in, after having expatriated in the UK, since Italy, at the beginning, did not recognize his extraordinary capacities. This is often the destiny of the greatest artists in every section of the arts.

It is supposed that COVID 19 has been the cause of his death, insofar as his identity has depended on the confirmation of the crowd (Il Secolo XIX, p. 15).

He was a particularly fragile person, with a weak health, but, conversely a particularly strong energy and vitality.

In addition to his taking part into the cultural international life and the global music context, he was also recognized for his wisdom. One can say that his physical weakness had supported the strength of his mentality and the spirit of his ethics.

He has been and will be the most elevated example of the role of culture in shaping political, social, and personal behaviours. A charismatic figure who had prefigured an original leadership for a general cultural richness. He had transformed a work of art into life—or the other way round, the transformation of a living being into art.

Ezio Bosso was a particular gifted person, a new Mozart, since not only he started to play piano at the age of four, but he was also able to remember, to play and direct orchestra's entire scores, complete symphonies, all the pieces of classic music by heart. He had a particular memory, an eidetic memory, able to store and precisely remember all the cognitions he had entered, by simply reading. However, he had spent his life in studying; he was used to say: "you have to study and work hard until you forget what you are". He had a particular charisma. He has become a symbol of education and ethics for youth and adults.



Fig. 1. The pianist-composer Ezio Bosso – Image by *Trieste All News* 15/05/2020

9. Ezio Bosso's biographical notes

Bosso has described his singular life to the media: he told them that he had not chosen music, it was music that had chosen him. Surely, he had as a solid background, a deeply culture-rooted family, even in a poor context, and the example of his older brother who also was a musician.

At the age of four, he was sent to an old aunt's who taught him musical notes and how to play the piano, nevertheless at the academy he specialized in playing the cello, since his teacher had told him that this was the simplest way to earn a salary, due to the generally limited number of cello musicians. He adopted a personal technique of playing by the thumb. Unfortunately, he broke his tendons by cutting bread, so he shifted to the piano, but eventually he had to use only his personal piano in all the concerts, with modified and lighter keys, since even the fingers of his hand were in danger of breaking. He continued to travel with his instrument and his bandaged fingers.

This noticeably young and handsome man, loved by a crowd of women, began to show health problems after an accident and related clinical analyses. Clinical examinations revealed a brain cancer.

He survived the brain operations, but radiological treatments destroyed his nervous system, causing him a progressive degeneration of the neurological and bone systems which brought pains and led him to lose direction and coordination of movements. Strangely, no limitation occurred in his capacity of creating, directing, playing music. He only had to adapt instruments and sitting, since he was lifted like a child from his wheelchair. He was able to forget his suffering only by playing music.

Despite all this, when he appeared on stage, he showed an extraordinary vitality, energy, and happiness, becoming an example of force and courage. He was always smiling, because the audience was his vital element. When the spectators were forced to stay at home, during the lockdown, his vitality lost his energy.

Apart his music performances he also became renowned for his statements. Admiring his strong personality, journalists have left us a quantity of interviews.

We must not forget Bosso's speeches:

"Playing for others means enlightening them. It is a real sacrifice, it is giving all of yourself, not to be the best of the group, but to improve those around you. "Knowledge must be shared and disseminated". ... "I always say thanks to those in front of me for playing with me. "Music belongs to those who create it, those who perform it and those who listen to it".

He would frequently state that it is the people who play the music; music is not for musicians, it is for the public.

"To hear is to play; even the silence is music. Silence is a component of music since it is an interval among notes". "The music is made also by nature, in the wild, in the city, in the streets, music is everywhere, is everything. "We are the music ourselves".

He was used to say that, but his myth was Beethoven, the most complex of all musicians, but he tried to let people to love all the kinds of music.

10. They say about him

Journalists and famous artists have celebrated his memory recollecting his biographical notes , which we report from the newspaper Il Secolo XIX of Genoa, on May 16, 2020.

An article by the journalist Piero Negri (p. 15-18) in this issue was entitled: "Ezio Bosso, the sound of courage. Music to overcome suffering".

Other quotations from the same article report the words of the singer Vasco Rossi :

"He was a living proof of how much music can be a powerful weapon to deal with any situation".

The showman Fiorello:

"Your smile is engraved in our minds. You taught us how to face the difficulties of life with a smile".

In fact, no one can forget his wonderful smile, as he arrived on stage in his wheelchair. He needed special supporting tools to stay upright and to play his special piano modified by him. He continued to keep that smile and had that enthusiasm with which he entertained the audience, that was fascinated by his personality and his wonderful music.

He was himself a spectacle, demonstrating a strength that seemed to come from nowhere, from a fragile, rootless body.

Another great pianist, Giovanni Allevi, says:

"In a society that wants us to be indestructible, he made us understand the dint of fragility". Allevi's reflections deserve a complete quote, both because he is the artist closest to Bosso's specialty, and a sensitive and accultured person. He said in an interview within the same newspaper (cit):

"We would like our superheroes to live indefinitely. We knew that something was wrong, yet no one imagined that he would go away so soon, in the height of a fairy tale, of a dream finally fulfilled. Now we have the task of pulling the strings and understanding the meaning of a story that, little by little, proves to be full of meaning. Ezio made us understand something very important, which involves us all: the strength of fragility. This life is not easy for anyone: increasingly disturbing scenarios are before our eyes, in a society that wants us to be indestructible, competitive and, at the same time, immersed in an unstable and precarious condition. We would be tempted to react by drawing on strength, gritting our teeth, doing what is logical. Instead, a vulnerable musician managed to demonstrate that the authentic core of humanity is fragility, inspired by what we have inside - our passions, our dreams and not what commonly appears superficially appropriate. When you set your heart and the fragile and true side of your soul in motion, the doors magically open, in a profound division with the world. So, the beauty in us shines, in gestures and words, just like in Ezio's gaze, who embraces us in that melancholic but serene smile that comforts us of our limits. Greeting him moved me. Remembering his energy as he tried to express himself, I realize more and more that the human being is infinite, especially when he entrusts his fragility to the wings of music, poetry, art. There are no insurmountable physical limits when the heart speaks -Thanks, Ezio".

Director Gabriele Salvatores, of whom Ezio has set many films to music, says:

"Ezio taught me that as long as you have art inside, and something to express, then it is worth staying on Earth.... The love of life has always kept him alive, and he died when the music was turned off by Covid19".

Relja Lukic - first cello of the Teatro Regio of Torino:

"In a broader sense, his music is an interesting synthesis, and a new way of dealing with tradition, without denying it. As a conductor, he managed to make music understood even by those who do not have the tools to understand it. He wanted to tear down the wall created in the 1900s between the stage and the audience. He wanted a common space. It should be an example of teaching".

Davide Romano - Musician for Santa Cecilia Roma Cappella:

"Bosso kept on directing without stopping, with «heroism and dignity, without ever letting you feel the pain of the disease, but, on the contrary, by making the public discover music as an element of joy and strength".

Grazia Verasani – writer:

"He transformed musical work into a form of affection, he loved something so much that it was loved by others too."

11. Conclusions

He remains among us as an example of positivity, even in the most negative visions of our times, even also an example of education and engagement for others and a confirmation of how arts are shaping people. His commemoration in this moment is the most evident result of involvement in culture and arts, especially for a global event like ECOC, since arts are nothing less than universal. He is the humble genius, a great one who bows his head towards the people of the city, at the same time, raising the people towards the galaxy of the arts, dragging them through education, culture, ethics, example.

That comprehends all the elements that make up the density of the ECOC program. A program in which art is entertainment and total education towards a better life, where men and places are valued together, in a vision that includes the meaning of the past, to build the present, with a look to the future, full of everything that has passed, so that it may not have been spent in vain.

Human memory must be continuous, it cannot be interrupted, because culture will never die, not even with the most terrible of viruses, because culture is all that humanity has produced and collected in hundreds of thousands of years.

All this is summarized in our ancient cities.

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