



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Bologna UNESCO City of Music

UNESCO City of Music
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10 Things to know about

BOLOGNA UNESCO City of Music

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Associations

Bologna has a rich and articulated music heritage, where music plays a significant part in everyday life, thanks in particular to the presence of many associations. About 110 music associations (on a total of 602 cultural associations) registered at the City Council of Bologna are active and deal with research and training, production, organisation of events, radio programming, spaces management and selling of musical products.

It is exactly thanks to this very rich substrate of associations that the musical vitality of Bologna remained intact even in the last years, notwithstanding the economic crisis. The wide substrate of associations contributes to the peculiarity of the musical programming, not just linked to big events but actually nourished throughout the year by several events.

Indeed, such peculiarity is reflected into the economic impact that musical activities have on the city of Bologna in terms of cultural tourism and income induced by the variety of activities and programs.

Musical Institutions

The City of Bologna boasts important historical institutions as the Accademia Filarmonica, one of the most important musical schools of all times and the Teatro Comunale (Municipal Theatre), inaugurated in 1763.

Bologna is also home to the Music Conservatory "G.B. Martini", heir of the tradition of the Accademia Filarmonica, that holds, besides traditional courses, also completely innovative departments, such as those dedicated to multimedia music or jazz.

The University of Bologna was the first to establish an Art, Music and Show Department (DAMS, Dipartimento di Arte, Musica e Spettacolo). Started in the 1970s with 130 first-year students, it now counts over 7000 students.

Musical Tradition

The picture of Saint Cecilia, the patron saint of music, painted by Raphael and hosted by the Bologna National Gallery can be considered as the symbol of the importance of music in the city history and tradition.

In its long tradition of training and attraction for excellence, Bologna welcomed Mozart and Wagner: the latter received the honorary citizenship from the City in 1876. This same honour was granted to Conductors Riccardo Muti (2004) and Claudio Abbado (2009). Rossini, Donizetti, Farinelli, Verdi and Respighi also lived, studied, or worked in Bologna.

Coming to the present, it is the city of residence of some of the most famous Italian pop music song-writers, such as Francesco Guccini, Lucio Dalla and Gianni Morandi, and of world-famous jazz players, such as Steve Grossman and Paolo Fresu. Tradition and music meet moreover in the inns, which represent the core centre of the social life of Bologna, and from which the renowned song-writing tradition of Bologna originates.

Musical Events

The city of Bologna is one of the most important places for Italian and international events, seasons and festivals. The city hosts the International Composition competition "2 Agosto" (August 2nd), dedicated to the memory of the victims of the Bologna railway station slaughter in 1980, the European Jazz Festival and the Bologna Festival, dedicated to classical, baroque and contemporary music.

It is also hosts "Angelica", an international festival of contemporary music and the Zecchino d'Oro Festival (children's choir festival).

Musical Production

From the big names of song-writers and international musicians to the plurality of specialised staff and technicians, across the reality of the services that the city offers, such as rehearsal rooms and recording studios, Bologna is literally a city that lives on music. Bologna counts also many independent labels that offer recording studios, technical support to emerging bands, as well as important management offices.

Cultural Venues

The number of Libraries, Museums, Theatres, and Halls – most of them dealing with music performances, heritage preservation and cultural spreading - allows Bologna to rank among the first cities in Italy for quality and quantity of cultural activities.

Its historical Library, the Archiginnasio, which holds and keeps ancient book collections is strictly linked to the names of Rossini and Donizetti, with the Stabat Mater Room where Donizetti conducted the first Italian performance of Rossini's oratorio.

The City has recently inaugurated the International Museum and Library of Music (2004); moreover, the Bologna main Library, the Biblioteca Sala Borsa, hosts a large musical collection, freely available for all citizens. Among the theatres and the main music venues, it's worth to mention the Europa Auditorium, the biggest theatre of the Region, the Teatro Comunale, and the Apsidal Room of Santa Lucia (the assembly hall of the University of Bologna).

Cultural Fairs

The Bologna Trade Fair, opened in 1888 with exhibits on Music, Industry, Agriculture, and Fine Arts, is one of the most important economic clusters of the country. As far as art and culture are concerned, BolognaFiere is the international reference point for experts, artists and operators, hosting every year important events in the field of contemporary art such as Arte Fiera/Art First, or the International Children's Book Fair in the field of publishing for children, education and teaching,.

Manifattura delle Arti

Inaugurated in June 2003, the Manifattura delle Arti (Arts' Manufacture) today hosts the Cineteca (Film Archives), the University DAMS and the MAMbo, the Modern Art Museum of the City and is one of the key venues for the City's major cultural events. The whole area within the city walls was part of an ancient industrial and commercial district (silk and canvas industries), and was acquired by the Town Hall in 1983 with the aim of creating a big social and cultural centre.

Students

Bologna is known as "la Dotta" (the Learned), because of its famous Alma Mater Studiorum University, founded in 1088. The university environment, the presence of prestigious research centres and the cultural variety of its inhabitants, stimulate new and original artistic solutions and create a fertile and dynamic intellectual environment.

The city has always showed a pragmatic and free spirit for its "Study", welcoming within its walls students from all around Europe, fully respecting all people's freedom. This is how Bologna became the city visited by the big names of European culture: Copernicus, Erasmus, Dante, Petrarca and Thomas Becket. Furthermore, the city gave birth to personalities such as Guglielmo Marconi and Pier Paolo Pasolini. Nowadays, the presence of the Johns Hopkins University, of the Royal College of Spain and of the very recent College of China, enhances the international trend of the City's cultural life.

Lastly, the presence on the territory of Bologna of many young people coming from all parts of Italy has favoured the development of new emerging bands, music forms and experimentation.

Open Spaces: Porticoes, Squares, Courts

Bologna benefits from a series of architectural resources, such as its world famous porticoes, squares and parks, ideal locations for concerts, especially during the summer. One of the main characteristics of the cultural events in Bologna, most of which are aimed at a young public and take place in the open air, is free entrance.

Among the most important spaces are the Arena "Parco Nord", the Giardini del Baraccano (Baraccano Gardens) and the Giardini Margherita (Margherita Gardens), which every year host cultural events and performances. Moreover, the central Square of the city, Piazza Maggiore, is one of the main venues of the summer cultural festival organised by the City Council, Bé – Bologna Estate, which, in its last edition, hosted more than 1300 events (among them, 300 musical events), attracting around 500 000 participants.