

Delighting & Inspiring People

Live music and singing will always attract audiences. What could compare to forgetting about everyday life's problems and tasks to enjoy your favourite performer's voice or instrument? Filled with romance and love for every moment, spent on this planet, your soul feels young once again. With concert halls and stadiums full of spectators as well as the setting sun above hotel roof tops and Italian July nights becoming their co-performers, Berin Iglesias Art's events are more than mere music concerts. In his exclusive interview with Lara Palmer, Maxim Berin, founder of the Berin Iglesias Art production company dwells on how the most popular and spectacular shows in the music world are organised.

Lara Palmer: For more than 20 years, your company has been organising world-scale cultural events. What were the most interesting and the most difficult things during this period?

Maxim Berin: Yes, indeed, we have been in the entertainment industry for over 20 years. There have been so many events and concerts, most of them, despite all that time gone by, still alive in my memory. Among the brightest shows, revolving in the kaleidoscope of my memories, are those with **Michael Bublé**, **Elton John**, and **Robbie Williams** — always bringing immense pleasure. No doubt, they are supreme masters, which in no way diminishes the importance of our work with legends like **Charles Aznavour** — in the last five years of his life — and **Tony Bennett**, whom we sincerely wish good health for many more years to come, as well as many other stars of equal brilliance. Meeting each of them left absolutely unforgettable impressions, and one of these fine days, I hope to sit down and write my memoirs, describing all those meetings and events in detail.

L.P.: Who were your first stars?

M.B.: My first stars were classical musicians — **Yuri Bashmet** and **Mischa Maisky**. There were also concerts, featuring **Johnny Kelly** and **Scorpions**. So, the beginning was not half bad actually.

L.P.: Could you share an interesting story, related to your first shows?

M.B.: There is a story behind every single concert — from the first to the last ones. As a matter of fact, nothing extraordinary has ever happened, though there were performers missing their scheduled flight and arriving on board a private jet in the 11th hour — just minutes before the show was to start — or

musicians going on stage to discover they had no notes with them, and instruments getting lost — many an incident like these happened at one time or another. On the other hand, there have been a lot of really good experiences as well. Of the most recent ones, most memorable was an unbelievable concert, featuring **Andrea Bocelli** and **Jamie Cullum** at a festival, held last year on the incredible **Isle of Capri**. The setting was just out of this world — **The Capri Palace Hotel** roof top, a stunning evening in July, and the setting sun in the background — fantastically beautiful!

L.P.: How was your tandem and partnership with **Jorge Iglesias** forged?

M.B.: Knowing that one's as good as none and what to expect from each other, we work hand in glove for the good of the **Berin Iglesias Art** brand that has already become international. And taking into account the time span of our partnership — over 10 years now — we can conclude that our tandem was forged very well indeed. This conclusion is also proved by the fact that the number of our shows has multiplied manyfold, our geographical spread has considerably widened, and the network of our branches has notably increased.

L.P.: In one of your interviews, you mentioned that now, Russian performers are in greater demand in the world than before. What kind of performers are in demand? What is it caused by?

M.B.: As of today — I have no idea. That interview was obviously given before 2022. Given the current political situation in the world, views, tastes, interests, and priorities may be changing dramatically. Nevertheless, Russian culture has not been cancelled anywhere.



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Culture as such should not be politically motivated in the first place. Its main mission is delighting and inspiring people. It has always been this way and will remain so for all times. And that's all that should be expected from it.

L.P.: Who comprises your audiences? What kind of music do your spectators expect to hear?

M.B.: Ours are multi-faceted audiences as we arrange concert events in more than 20 countries — small shows in halls with a sitting capacity of 2,000-3,000, bigger events for 4,000-5,000 to 10,000-15,000 spectators in **The Royal Albert Hall** and similar venues, or stadium concerts, attended by 20,000 to 50,000 people. We also conduct **Picard Festivals (La Festival Picard)** as well as VIP and gala dinners for 200 to 300 guests. So, depending on the event format, performers presented, and show concept, we always have very different audiences, which we take special pride in. We can entertain anybody, be it lovers of classical music, jazz, rock, pop, opera, or ballet — you name it. Working on the highest professional level, we always find and present the best of the best performers of all musical genres.

L.P.: Have your partnership relations with stars ever grown into friendships? If so, could you share some stories about that?

M.B.: Yes, we have made friends with many performers. In our opinion, that's the way it should be. And that's what we have always been aiming at. Naturally, all people differ in characters, tastes, and temperaments. When a good musician becomes a world star, his or her views of life and people may change quite radically. Having become superstars, some individuals get carried away, becoming arrogant and 'seeing nothing below their noses', so to speak. Meanwhile, others remain quite sensible and nice to deal with. We very much respect and value celebrities remaining faithful to themselves, abstaining from 'flying to the Moon', figuratively speaking, i.e., remaining, first and foremost, human and humane — the main factor for us. The principle we follow runs: *You have no obligation to be super-professional, but being human is your ultimate moral duty!* As to names, worthy of mention are **Robbie Williams** and **Enrique Iglesias**. Among our Russian good star friends are **Igor Vernik**, **Vadim Vernik**, **Emin Agalarov**, **Denis Matsuev**, and **Maxim Vengerov**, to name just a few. It goes without saying, there are many other famous entertainers we have been on truly friendly terms with for years and years.

L.P.: What is so special about your shows? Do you think your company has a mission to accomplish?

M.B.: It's common knowledge our souls are energised by emotions. Musical events, concerts, and other shows reawaken people's pure emotions and sincere feelings. From this viewpoint, I guess we are carrying out a mission of sorts. It's all about delivering an open, pure, and sincere message to our spectators and listeners, helping them to get away from their life's problems and recall their youth by seeing their favourite performers and enjoying familiar melodies — all that is, indeed, invaluable. Together with our great team, we feel really inspired, investing all our time and energy into every single event we organise. And after the show is over, we find genuine pleasure in getting feedback from our grateful audience. That's what we consider our greatest reward.

L.P.: What's different about working with Russian and foreign stars? Which are easier to deal with?

M.B.: It's foreign stars. With them, everything is well-structured, precise, clear, carefully thought out, and verbalised beforehand. Most foreigners are prepared to take into consideration event formats, concert details, venue specifics, sponsors' and business partners' expectations, etc.

In this respect, Russian performers are not so easy to deal with as many of them are used to doing things, sort of, in the on-the-go manner and often on emotion, which sometimes blinds common sense arguments. Nevertheless, it never prevents us from being great friends with lots of fantastic performers from Russia and post-soviet countries. We love them all and often work with them, enjoying our collaboration greatly.

L.P.: What kind of strange riders have you come across?

M.B.: Common riders, describing board and lodging conditions expected, are sometimes strange indeed, which is usually prompted by big ambitions, often-times, the manager's rather than the entertainer's. In their dressing rooms, some new 'Kings of the Mountaintop' want to find things they have never seen before, such as cognac, costing 10,000-15,000 Euros per bottle or wine worth 23,000-40,000 Euros a bottle. Wishes like that look like an attempt to make the show organisers pay through the nose, so that they could make less money. *'If they don't pay us more, may they earn less!'* — this kind of thinking, I consider to be a very bad policy.

The matter is that quite often, we work for three-four-five-six months in a row, investing our own funds, only to find we cannot even return our investments or can return part of them at best. Sometimes, having invested so much of our time, labour, energy, and money, we manage to break even and jump for joy just because we didn't lose our money.

L.P.: Is there a black list of performers you'll never work with?

M.B.: Yes, we blacklist some performers. Once we do it, no matter how popular and wanted they are, or how much we ourselves, otherwise, would have wanted to have their undoubtedly wonderful music or voices in our shows, we never invite them, there being good reasons for that.

L.P.: Are conflicts a common thing in your business sphere?

M.B.: We do our best and utmost not to bring things to the point of no return, so to speak. But if the other party does rush headlong into conflict, we have to respond in like manner. At times, it, of course, leads to severance of relations unless the party in the wrong later takes steps towards reconciliation.

L.P.: Your selection of performers has always been beyond reproach. Is it dictated by the times and public demand, or do you yourselves decide which stars to invite?

M.B.: As to selecting the performers, relying on my rather good taste, I try to do it myself, certainly, taking into account my spectators' expectations and the current market analysis. So, yes, at the end of the day, each entertainer is selected either by me or by my business partner **Jorge Iglesias**.

L.P.: Are there stars you haven't worked with yet but would like to? What are your plans for 2023?

M.B.: Yes, there are stars we haven't worked with yet, **Adele** for one. We are already planning to invite **Måneskin** while I myself would very much like to work with **Lionel Richie**. Besides, there are stars I would like to engage again, such as **Michael Bublé**, as it is always incredible pleasure — both aesthetical and professional.

As to our plans for 2023, they are grandiose indeed. We are going to hold a number of festivals in **Forte**, **Marnier**, **Monaco**, **Porto Cervo**, **Capri**, **Turkey**, **Dubai**, **Marbella**, and other places. In our plans, are also a series of concerts at **The Monte-Carlo Sporting**, featuring the fantastic **Tarkan** and **Eros Ramazzotti** — our old-time favourites. Besides, we are planning to present **Robbie Williams** once again — this time in Spain. So far, it's been a very busy year for us while the rest of it is going to be even busier. On our agenda, we've got over 200 shows — a huge number of various tours, including indoor and outdoor concerts in different formats. And we'll be happy to see all friends and fans of the performers **Berín Iglesias Art** presents in our various shows.

Everybody is welcome!

