**Focus on Festivals:**

 **Contemporary European Case Studies and Perspectives**

Edited by Chris Newbold, Christopher Maughan, Jennie Jordan, and Franco Banchi. Goodfellow Publishers (www.goodfellowpublishers.com) 2015, xxvi (26) + 304 pages (figures: 18, tables: 0, bibliography: listed at the end of each chapter, Author index: pp.299-300, Subject index: pp.301-304) Price: Hb:£75/(Pbk):£35. ISBN: 191015816X.

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The contributors to this edited book provide insights that can help the reader contextualise and understand contemporary European festivals. Its 25 chapters are grouped into four sections, each with a different them. At the beginning of each section is an introduction written by at least one co-editor. These introductions are a significant help to the reader, enabling him/her to better comprehend the aspects discussed within the sections.

The first section, “Perspectives and Debates”, offers a good preliminary presentation of issues focusing on festivalisation, sustainability, and the societal role of festivals. More specifically, Nele Herting (Chapter 1) discusses the role of festivals in contemporary life, with special reference to Berlin. Emmanuel Negrier (Chapter 2) evaluates the effects of festivals in Western societies. Monica Sassateli (Chapter 3) focuses on the relationships between festivals and urbanity. Janos Zoltan Szabo (Chapter 4) examines the social functions, economic efficiency, and socialisation processes of cultural festivals. Roberta Comunian (Chapter 5) investigates the role of festivals in the creation of knowledge networks amongst artists. The last chapter of this section (Chapter 6) is written by Richard Fletcher and deals with the changing organisation of festivals in an effort to establish a sustainable future, with reference to the Greenlight Festival, Leicester.

The second section, “Leadership and Management”, explains managerial and leadership associated with festivals. It provides an effective focus on entrepreneurship, experiences, volunteering, and interactive management practices. The first chapter in this section (Chapter 7) is written by Satu Silvanto and discusses the evolution of the Flow Festival and the factors which make it successful. Lucio Argano (Chapter 8) and Jennie Jordan (Chapter 9) discuss festival leadership. Chapter 8 is dedicated to the visionary leadership of the Romaeuropa Festival, and Chapter 9 examines the effect on leadership of political and economic turmoil in European festivals. Chapter 10 (by Nevenska Koprivesk) begins with the story of the creation of the Mladi levi Festival, also discussing the writer’s experiences of the managerial requirements and practices of this event. Jacqui Norton (Chapter 11) examines the community based Diggers’ Festival from the organiser’s viewpoint, and from an ethnographic perspective. Anne-Marie Autissier (Chapter 12) provides a good understanding of volunteering in different festivals and countries. Finally, David Dooghe (Chapter 13) compares and evaluates the strategic considerations of the Caribbean Summer and Soundpiece festivals, both organised in Rotterdam.

The third section is entitled “Impacts, Communities and Places”. It focuses on the impacts of festivals on urban change and culture by examining community festivals’ diversity, multiculturalism, and the issues of identity and place. Kathrine Winkelhorn (Chapter 14) provides an interesting presentation on the way the Odin Teatret Festival involves an entire city. Luisella Carnelli (Chapter 15) investigates and interprets the relationships and interconnections between the Bassano Operastate Festival Veneto and the region. Floriane Gaber (Chapter 16) provides a unique insight into the problems that French street performers face, after 40 years of existence, in terms of gaining acknowledgement from the wider cultural sector and public authorities. In Chapter 17, three authors (Yi Fu, Philip Long, and Rhodri Thomas) join forces to discuss diaspora/ethnic minority community festivals in relation to tourism, a field where systematic research is limited. Rakesh Kaushal and Chris Newbold (Chapter 18) examine how mela (community gatherings or meetings) in the UK have been adopted in different urban locations, becoming an important part of the cultural events calendar. In the last chapter of this section (Chapter 19), Robyn Archer provides an Australian viewpoint on international arts festivals.

The final section of the edited book looks at “The Future of Festivals”. It examines societal networks and festivals, transitional identity, and citizenship, and the potential undermining of the role of festivals in the foreseeable future. Greg Richards (Chapter 20) reviews why events have an increased importance in modern societies, and influence the contemporary society network. Kathrin Deventer (Chapter 21) conceptualises the contemporary challenges of festivals, with reference to public events. Tessa Gordziejko (Chapter 22) provides a good presentation on the inherent dualism of the European festival traditions, illustrating their understanding as contemporary arts festivals. Anne-Marie Autissier (Chapter 23) examines the Les Boreales and Reims Scenes d’Europe festivals in terms of promoting knowledge, understanding, and experience within and beyond the European continent. The last two chapters (24 and 25) discuss festivals in the foreseeable future. Bernard Faivre d’Arcier (Chapter 24) writes about the future of festivals in Europe, pinpointing their contemporary role, while Steve Austen (Chapter 25) examines the future financial sustainability of festivals, which is mainly dependent on taxpayers’ money.

This is a comprehensive book providing an extensive coverage of aspects of the festival within 25 chapters, successfully presenting the evolution of European festivals and their challenges. Still, some important dimensions, such as risks and crises, disaster management, social pathogen phenomena, and ethical conflicts, are under-discussed. Moreover, the individual chapters provide a fundamental understanding of the areas elaborated upon, but is limited in terms of the level of analytical and conceptual depth. However, this edited book will be a valuable tool for students, scholars, and festival practitioners in diverse disciplines because it provides an initial understanding of European contemporary festivals and connects them in both theoretical and practical domains.

 The general reader should not attempt to read the whole book but to select the chapter(s) of interest. In addition, if the reader is particularly interested in a specific section of the book, he/she is strongly advised to also read the section’s introduction written by the co-editor(s). This will help the readers better understand the topics covered in that specific section and further comprehend the knowledge framework offered. ■ **Nikolaos Pappas.** School of Events Tourism and Hospitality, Leeds Beckett University, Leeds, Yorkshire, LS6 7QN, United Kingdom. E-mail <n.pappas@leedsbeckett.ac.uk>.