A Guide To Running A Virtual Festival With Play&Perform

Running a virtual festival may seem a daunting prospect but in fact can be very simple with no need for those organising the event to have technical expertise.

Play&Perform is an online entry system for performing arts festivals and competitions. It has built-in support for video entries, and this guide focuses on how to run a virtual festival.

We can help and support you run your festival with Play&Perform from start to finish.

What Is A Virtual Festival?

By 'virtual' we mean that entries are submitted in digital form as video recordings, the adjudicator views the videos and gives their adjudication online.

How Does It Work?

From the entrant's point of view there are three stages in the virtual festival:

1. **Make their entry** to the festival using Play&Perform's online entry system. As part of their entry they will provide a URL (a web link).

2. **Record a video of their performance**. This can be done using a mobile phone, tablet or digital camera.

3. **Upload the video.** Videos of performances videos are either uploaded to a private Dropbox account provided by Play&Perform, or to the entrants' own cloud storage (more on this later). Where appropriate entrants can be asked to upload a copy of the score/script to

Play&Perform for the adjudicator to see. This will be deleted after the event.

Where Are The Videos Stored?

There are two options for festivals to choose between:

1. Videos will either be stored in a private Dropbox folder provided by Play&Perform. Entrants will use the Play&Perform online entry system to upload their videos to the folder (they cannot view the contents of the folder, only the festival has access).

2. Entrants will upload their video to their own cloud storage (a personal Dropbox account, YouTube, OneDrive, Google Drive for example) and as part of their online entry will provide a URL that allows the video to be viewed.

From the festival's point of view the stages are:

1. Set up the available classes in Play&Perform.

2. Receive the entries.

3. Give the adjudicator access to view the video performances and provide their adjudication.

4. Send out the results to the entrants.

That's it in its simplest form. There is an option to allow entrants to view the performances of other entries in their class (as they may have done in a live performance). You can also hold virtual concerts to add to the sense of being part of the festival.

How Does Adjudication Work In A Virtual Festival?

The adjudicator's details are stored in Play&Perform and they are given a user ID and password that allows them to login and view the performances (and any associated score or script) in the classes they will be adjudicating.

The adjudicator can enter a mark and comments directly into Play&Perform which will create completed marksheets to be emailed or printed and posted to the entrants. Certificates may also be created.

Virtual Concerts

Holding a virtual concert can add to the feeling of being part of a larger event and Play&Perform can be used in conjunction with video conferencing services such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Google Meet.

You can:

- Use Play&Perform to create a concert and set the running order.

- Invite your audience to your video meeting (Play&Perform can email the invitations). Don't forget to use a password to control access to the meeting.

- Play the performance videos to the online meeting.

A Virtual Festival As A Backup Plan For A Live Event?

The Play&Perform virtual festival is increasingly being used as part of contingency planning by festivals who are aiming to run a live event but need to prepare for the possibility of restrictions such as those in response to Covid-19.

The festival details are set up in Play&Perform, entries and fees are collected as normal. If there is a need to switch to a virtual event Play&Perform can contact everyone who has made an entry to let them know and ask them to submit their video.

Play&Perform allows the festival to keep in touch with all entrants and let them know of any developments.

What About Security And Privacy?

Access to Play&Perform is through password protected accounts and the system encrypts data held for entrants.

If the private Dropbox option is chosen by the festival, once the videos are uploaded access is controlled by the festival organiser. Play&Perform as the system administrator also has access to the Dropbox folder.

If the option of using the entrants' own cloud storage is chosen, the videos belong to the entrant and are held on their (or their parent's) personal cloud storage, and they retain control over who has access. The person uploading the video is advised to make the file private and only accessible via a URL (web link). The URL web link is stored by Play&Perform.

Why Use Cloud Storage For Videos?

Video recordings can produce very large files and cloud storage services are optimised to be efficient and secure, and provide good quality video playback.

Further Information

To find out more about how Play&Perform can help you run a virtual festival, or the the many other services we can provide (creating and publishing syllabuses and programmes, timetabling, support for safeguarding and licensing requirements and much more), please get in touch.

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