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TRANSWORLD WORLD MUSIC FESTIVAL AWARDS

The Transglobal World Music Chart launched its Festival Awards in late 2017 to promote world music appreciation as a means of personal development, enjoyment, and cultural enrichment.

The awards recognize festivals featuring "world music," "traditional," or "roots" genres, aligning with the chart’s scope. The administrators have the authority to exclude festivals that fall outside the defined criteria, maintaining the same openness and diversity principles applied to the music chart.

WHAT IS A FESTIVAL

A festival, particularly an arts festival, is a recurring public event featuring a curated program of artistic activities. It involves performances by artists, whether professional or amateur, paid or unpaid, within a specified timeframe (hours or days). The festival takes place annually or in connection with a recurring external event, with dates announced in advance. Admission may be free or require payment, either in money or in kind. This definition distinguishes festivals from other live music performances or artistic events.

PROCEDURE

Award Consideration Process

Festivals can be considered for an award through two methods:

- **Internal Suggestion:** Any TWMC member may propose a festival based on the criteria listed below.
- **External Application:** Any festival may apply directly by starting the procedure on the TWMC website. The eligibility criteria are publicly available on the website.

Evaluation Process

An evaluator must attend the festival to assess it based on the defined criteria. The selection of the evaluator depends on available resources:

- **TWMC Member:** Preferred if the festival can cover expenses or if a TWMC member is available in the region.
- **Independent Local Evaluator:** If financial resources are limited, TWMC administrators will collaborate with the festival organizer to appoint an independent local evaluator. This individual should be a cultural manager from a different field or a journalist with no personal stake in the festival.

Important Notes:

- The same evaluator cannot assess a festival in consecutive years.
- Evaluators must have no financial ties to the festival to prevent conflicts of interest.

Assessment and Award Timeline

- The evaluator will review the criteria in detail, complete the assessment form with integrity and confidentiality, and submit it to TWMC administrators.
- Each award cycle runs from January 1 to December 31, with winners announced in late January or early February.

CRITERIA

The country standards and situation must be taken into consideration when applying all these criteria.

The criteria can be reviewed on a regular basis. This document was last updated in 2026. If you would like to suggest any improvements or changes, please contact us.

Artistic Quality

This assessment reviews the artistic quality of the line-up, considering whether the festival has made a genuine effort to seek out high-quality artistic proposals beyond those that may be more commercial or conventional. This criterion rewards programmes that take greater artistic risks by presenting distinctive, original and demanding proposals, as well as artists or projects that contribute meaningful artistic value to the festival.

Rating Scale (1–100):

- 100 points – The line-up shows outstanding artistic quality, with a clear curatorial effort to present distinctive, original and artistically valuable proposals.
- 1 point – The line-up shows no artistic ambition, relying mainly on conventional, predictable or purely commercial proposals.

Musical Genre Diversity

This criterion evaluates the artistic variety within a festival’s specific theme. A festival focused on African music, for example, demonstrates diversity if it includes traditional, acoustic, urban, and contemporary compositions within its scope. A world music festival emphasizing diversity should feature artists from different cultural backgrounds performing distinct musical styles. Merely having artists from different countries does not ensure diversity if their music is stylistically similar.

Rating Scale (1–100):

- 100 points – A wide range of musical styles, instruments, and moods. The lineup includes both established and emerging artists, each offering a unique sound and emotional impact.
- 1 point – The performances feel repetitive, with little distinction between artists.

Opportunities for lesser-known artists

This assessment reviews how a festival supports emerging artists by giving them meaningful visibility rather than using them as low-cost filler acts. Lesser-known artists should receive attention comparable to established stars. Because artist recognition varies by region, evaluating this aspect requires a case-by-case analysis of the lineup.

Rating Scale (1–100):

- 100 points – At least half of the lineup consists of lesser-known artists, with at least one-third of them performing on main stages during prime hours.
- 1 point – Few or no lesser-known artists are included, or they are scheduled in low-visibility slots, such as remote locations or inconvenient time slots (very early or late at night).

Communication

This evaluation checks how effectively a festival provides essential information to attendees. A well-organized festival clearly presents its program, including artist details (biographies, photos, videos, or links), venue information, transportation options, and available services (e.g., camping, food courts). The festival website should be accessible in the local language and at least one widely spoken international language relevant to the region (e.g., Arabic and French for Algeria, Spanish and English for Spain, plus regional languages if applicable). Exclusive content, such as artist interviews produced by the festival, adds value.

This criterion focuses on the clarity and accessibility of information rather than social media engagement or marketing efforts. A festival with a well-structured and informative website can score highly, regardless of its activity on digital platforms.

Rating Scale (1–100):

- 100 points – Comprehensive, easily accessible information was available in advance, covering artists, venues, logistics, and facilities. On-site, navigation was straightforward, allowing attendees to plan and participate seamlessly.
- 1 point – The program was unclear or difficult to navigate. Locating venues or schedules was challenging, leading to missed events or reliance on chance and last-minute searches to attend desired activities.

Experience for the public

This review assesses whether the festival offers more than just live performances, enhancing audience engagement through additional artistic and cultural experiences. These may include artist roundtables, workshops, masterclasses, culinary demonstrations, or online discussions before the event. The setting itself can also contribute, with a remarkable venue that enhances the atmosphere and deepens the connection between the audience and the music.

Rating Scale (1–100):

- 100 points – The festival provides a groundbreaking or transformative experience, setting a new standard in the field or making a significant artistic impact.
- 1 point – The event consists solely of standard concerts, without any additional elements that enrich the audience’s engagement or appreciation.

Logistics

This criterion evaluates the festival’s accessibility, comfort, and overall practicality for attendees. Key factors include:

- **Entry Process:** Minimal wait times at queues.
- **Seating & Rest Areas:** Availability of places to sit and rest. In urban settings, existing city infrastructure (restaurants, cafes, public seating) is considered sufficient.
- **Mobility:** Easy movement between venues without excessive time or cost. If certain locations are intentionally remote for aesthetic or cultural reasons, this does not negatively impact the rating.
- **Facilities:** Clean and accessible toilets, availability of food and water at reasonable prices.

Evaluators must account for public conditions rather than any VIP treatment they may receive.

Rating Scale (1–100):

- 100 points – Logistics were seamless, with no obstacles that distracted from the festival experience.
- 1 point – Poor organization caused discomfort or delays, significantly diminishing the overall experience.

Environmental responsibility

This criterion assesses the festival's commitment to minimizing its environmental impact. Key factors include:

- **Waste Management:** Availability of recycling bins and organized waste collection, considering local infrastructure limitations.
- **Sustainable Materials:** Use of reusable or biodegradable consumables (e.g., cups, plates).
- **Public Engagement:** Efforts to educate attendees and encourage responsible behavior.

Rating Scale (1–100):

- 100 points – The festival actively integrates environmental responsibility, with clear sustainability initiatives and public participation in reducing its impact.
- 1 point – No visible effort is made to address environmental concerns, and sustainability is not a consideration in the festival's planning.

Social responsibility

This criterion evaluates a festival's commitment to social impact, considering long-term and cumulative effects on the community. Social responsibility encompasses multiple aspects, including diversity, accessibility, community engagement, and inclusion. Key factors include:

- **Gender Awareness:** The festival actively considers gender representation in its programming. Women hold visible and significant roles, both on stage and within the organization (size-dependent). Female artists feature prominently in headline slots.
- **Accessibility:** Individuals with disabilities or health conditions can attend and participate without unnecessary obstacles.
- **Local Engagement:** The festival involves local communities through programs, volunteer initiatives, and decision-making processes. Local artists receive meaningful visibility rather than being included solely for budget reasons.
- **Opportunities for Marginalized Artists:** Artists from socially or economically disadvantaged backgrounds are included based on artistic merit rather than tokenism.
- **Cultural and Generational Exchange:** The festival fosters cross-cultural or intergenerational dialogue (e.g., hosting artists from different religious, ethnic, or territorial backgrounds in regions with historical tensions). Multilingual communication is considered.
- **Support for Social Causes:** The festival allocates part of its income or resources to NGOs, social movements, or other structural social initiatives beyond one-time charitable actions.

Rating Scale (1–100):

- 100 points – Social responsibility is an integral part of the festival’s vision. The festival meets Criteria 1 and 2 as a baseline for a minimum score of 5 and fulfils at least three additional listed factors or equivalent social responsibility initiatives.
- 1 point – The festival shows no intentional effort toward social responsibility. Any relevant actions taken are incidental rather than planned.

GENERAL EVALUATION NOTES:

We have expanded the scoring range for each criterion from 1 to 10, as used in previous editions, to the current range of 1 to 100, allowing each score to be more finely calibrated.

To receive a score of 100 in any criterion, a festival must go beyond meeting basic expectations: it has to be exceptional, something truly unprecedented. It must demonstrate outstanding, pioneering and innovative efforts, setting new standards in its field. Merely performing well is not enough: outstanding creativity, forward-thinking approaches and lasting impact are essential. The festival should challenge conventions, explore new possibilities and serve as a model for others.