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Report

Closing Timișoara 2023 – European Capital of Culture

7 - 10 December 2023

“Neverending Timișoara 2023” is a programme financed by the Municipality of Timișoara, coordinated and organised by the Centre for Projects, which marked the symbolic closing of the “Timișoara—European Capital of Culture in 2023” national cultural programme. Closing Timișoara 2023 is a programme composed of events produced by the Center for Projects of the Municipality of Timișoara, cultural organisations, and the community.

The “Timișoara - European Capital of Culture in 2023” national cultural programme is financed by the Municipality of Timișoara, the Ministry of Culture and the Timiș County Council.

The “Timișoara - European Capital of Culture in 2023” national cultural programme took place under the High Patronage of the President of Romania.



"Timișoara is a European city. Our strategy of changing the community by investing in culture will continue for years. 2023 is just the beginning of a journey in which we highlight the culture that respects Timișoara's diversity. It is our responsibility to demonstrate that, by investing in culture, you bring prosperity to the entire community. I thank all those who have contributed to Timișoara's success story." - Dominic Fritz, Mayor of Timișoara — Dominic Fritz, Mayor of Timișoara



*Neverending Timișoara 2023 - Concerts in Unirii Square
Photo: Adrian Anghel*



Programme overview and concept

The Center for Projects of the Municipality of Timișoara is the organiser of "[Neverending Timișoara 2023](#)," the event that marked the symbolic closing of the "Timișoara—European Capital of Culture in 2023" national cultural programme.

The curatorial team, hosted by the Timișoara Centre for Projects, was responsible for ensuring the artistic coherence and strategic coordination of the cultural programme implementation and for identifying and selecting the artistic programmes that comprised the closing event of the "Timișoara—European Capital of Culture in 2023" national cultural programme.

Timișoara's year of transformation ended with a spectacular event between December 7 and 10, 2023: Neverending Timișoara 2023. This multifaceted celebration aimed to **encapsulate the richness and impact of the cultural journey undertaken throughout the 2023 cultural year.**



Neverending Timișoara 2023 - Roisin Murphy Concert, Unirii Square | Photo: Cătălin Anghel



The practices and working principles cultivated during the entire cultural year were highlighted during the four days of the event (December 7 - 10). Curated performances, intellectual discourse, and sound performances collectively articulated the fundamental principles that defined the cultural identity of Timișoara: **resilience and an open and future-oriented spirit**. This retrospective was not just a simple look back but an anticipation of how these principles will continue to shape the future trajectory of the city.

The curatorial concept was built on four strategic directions:

- **Exploring five emblematic places of Timișoara and of the cultural programme:** Unirii Square, Palace of Culture, Timiș Cinema, Victoria Cinema and MX - "Corneliu Miklosi" Public Transport Museum through tailor-made cultural events, which highlighted the characteristics of these spaces and their versatility in hosting different types of cultural events, from concerts (some premiered in Timișoara or Romania), performances in seminars, artist talks or conferences, all free entry.
- **Re-affirming the cultural and artistic potential of the city** through the courage to experiment in unconventional spaces by adopting or reinstating innovative forms of cultural expression.
- **Anchoring the city in the circuit of international artists in the music area**, whose communities and audiences total over several million people from around the world and who celebrate the free, creative and dynamic spirit of the city, mirrored by female voices, current both locally, nationally and internationally, and belonging to various cultural and musical areas, whose artistic activity can create a dialogue with the attending audience.
- Debating some central themes in the city transformation by hosting the title of European Capital of Culture and **highlighting some vectors of urban transformation generated by the Timișoara 2023 Cultural Programme and exploring how they can be integrated into public policies for the coming years.**



Neverending Timișoara 2023 - Closing Gala | The Great Hall of the "Mihai Eminescu" National Theatre Timișoara and the Romanian National Opera Timișoara | Photo: Anda Usvat

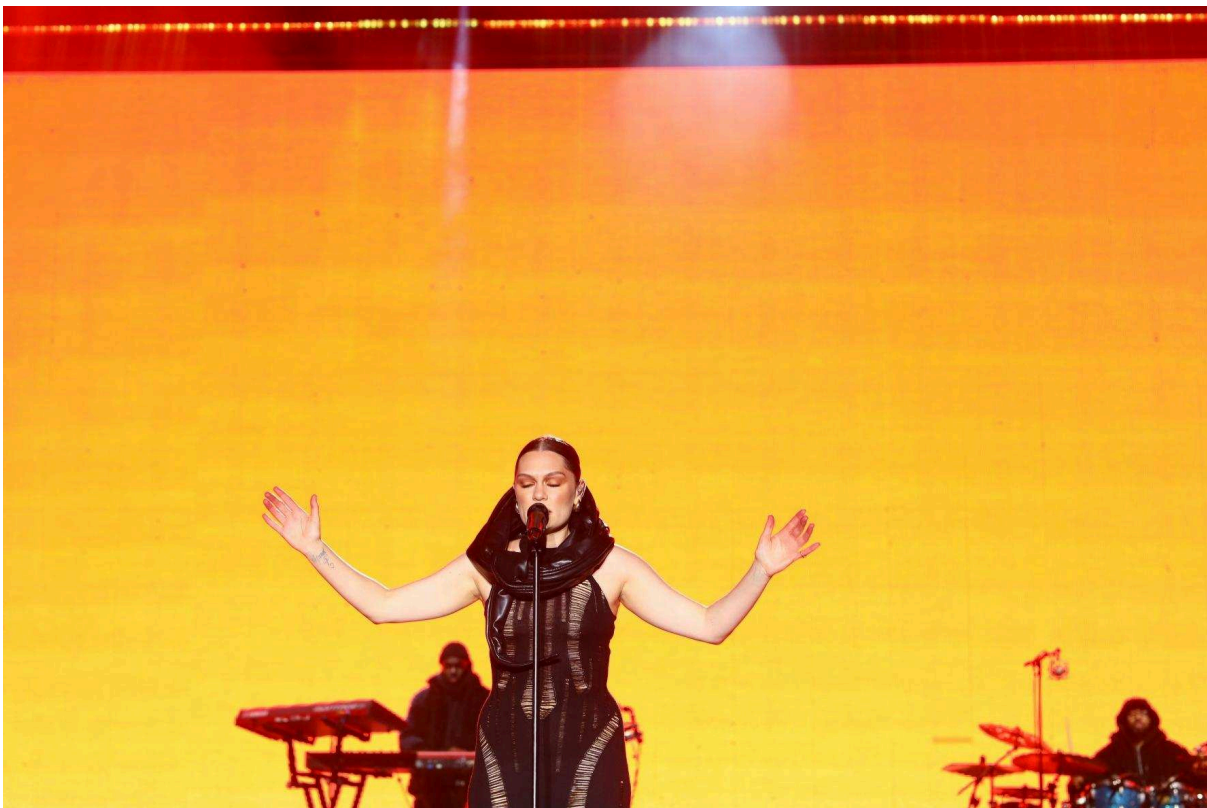
The Neverending Timișoara 2023 closing gala, held in the Great Hall of the "Mihai Eminescu" National Theatre Timișoara and of the Romanian National Opera Timișoara, took shape as a retrospective of the events and activities carried out within the Timișoara 2023 Cultural Capital. The event was articulated by artistic moments representing the diversity of the programme throughout the year, the artistic coherence guaranteed by director Bobi Pricop. A series of video narratives screened at the gala, made by Bobi Pricop, Iustin Șurpănelu, and Christine Cizmaș, invited the audience on a captivating journey through the significant moments of the cultural year 2023, crossing the years of preparation for the title and experiencing the perspectives of each cultural operator or member of the cultural programme implementation team. The gala also represented an opportunity to reflect on the involvement of those who played an essential role in taking on the programme at the city and region level.

Ever since 2016, since winning the title of European Capital of Culture, the Timișoara 2023 Cultural Programme has been the fruit of the work of cultural operators. As part of Neverending Timișoara 2023, the unwavering dedication and persistent passion for the realization of the programme were marked by a **gala event dedicated to the local**



cultural scene. The stage of the Timiș Cinema hosted a series of performances by local artists recognised for their contribution to the local music scene, such as West Brass Quintet - Banatul Philharmonic, Lucian Nagy Trio, and a dinner concert - "The Unseen Revolution" by Cristian Văduva - visual artist and Petre Ionuțescu - musician.

The concerts of the closing event were marked by a celebration of the creative capacity of the female artists Jessie J, Roisin Murphy, Katie Melua, Delia, and Emaa. The programme in Piața Unirii, completed by the German trio Klangphonics, which produces and performs live electronic music, by an aerial acrobatics show by Sonics, one of the first Italian representatives in the world of aerial theatre, but also by a unique collaboration between the Equal Voices Choir of The "Ion Vidu" Art High School Timișoara led by Maria Gyuris, and made up of 50 female students, strengthened the artistic quality of the programme, demonstrating that gender balance can be achieved in artistic programming. The strength of these voices is essential to creating a spirit of solidarity among diverse creative, social, and cultural communities. The hosts of the event in Piața Unirii were Roxana Morun and Virgil Ianțu.



*Neverending Timișoara 2023 – Jessie J Concert
Unirii Square | Photo: Cătălin Anghel*



Zona, the first performance festival in Timișoara and one of the first three genre festivals in Romania in the 90s, conceived and organised in the period 1993-2004 by curator and art critic Ileana Pintilie, was brought back to the cultural scene of Timișoara, after 30 years since the first meeting with the public, with a singular edition: the event **ZONA &** – Performance and exhibition programme, hosted at MX - “Corneliu Mikloși” Museum.

Initiated by the curator and art historian Ileana Pintilie, Zona Festival gained momentum during the period of freedom that followed the political change in 1989, also highlighting the disillusionment brought by the new democracy in a social and political space marked by numerous conflicts and the rapid reconfiguration of the categories of winners and losers in the first days of the “transition”. The ambition of the festival was originally to establish interregional contacts in a Europe that was trying to escape the isolation imposed by the Cold War.



*Neverending Timișoara 2023 - ZONA&
MX- “Corneliu Mikloși” Museum | Photo> Petru Cojocar*



ZONA &, curated by Corina Oprea and Magda Radu and conceived in collaboration with curator and art historian Ileana Pintilie, invited artists from various cultural spaces who work with their own bodies. These artists feel the same urgency and vital need to articulate fundamental questions through this expressive tool, questions that disturb human communities everywhere. As an artistic genre, performance also functions as a mode of resistance through which the body acquires freedom against the disciplinary pressures of social construction and the limits of knowledge, formulating new propositions, fictions and liberating utopias. The event programme included an intensive programme of performances (December 8-9, 2023) by SERAFINE1369, ILYICH (Anton Kats), Elvisey Pisciă, Quarto (Anna Mesquita & Leandro Zappala), Manuel Pelmus in collaboration with Anton Skaaning Thomsen, and an exhibition (8-20 December 2023) with works by Alexandru Antik, József Bartha, Sándor Bartha, Ștefan Bertalan, Rudolf Bone, Geta Brătescu, Nenad Dančuo, Oskar Dawicki, Biljana Klarić Klara & Nataša Teofilović, Suzana Fântânariu, Ion Grigorescu, Karen Kipphoff, André Stitt & Roddy Hunter, Dan Perjovschi, Lia Perjovschi, Eugenia Pop, Ütö Gusztáv & Kónya Réka, Artur Tajber, Sorin Vreme.

At Victoria Cinema, the public was invited to a session of discussions and reflections on the city transformation through the European Capital of Culture programme as part of the international seminar **VECTOR TM. Culture as urban practice (VECTOR TM)**. For two days, at Cinema Victoria, 23 speakers from 7 countries debated, together with the local community, how the cultural practices generated by Timișoara's experience as the European Capital of Culture can be supported to lead to profound transformations in society and at the city level. The seminar brought the public from Timișoara into dialogue with architects, curators, cultural operators, creators of public policies and urban strategies, consultants and decision-makers from the public administration.



*Neverending Timișoara 2023 - VECTOR TM International Seminar Culture as Urban Practice
Victoria Cinema | Photo: Ascendis*

The central question to which answers were sought was: **what are the vectors of urban transformation generated by the Timișoara 2023 Programme, and how can they be integrated into the public agenda for the coming years?** Guests like Jorge Bonito Santos - head of the Public Space Interventions Department within the Lisbon City Hall, Eugen Pănescu - delegate of Romania to the Architects' Council of Europe, Ivan Blasi - architect and programme director of the Mies van der Rohe Foundation in Barcelona or Maria Charneco Llanos - MAIO Architects were just some of the speakers present at the event. VECTOR TM has shown how culture and art are very powerful tools in the process of continuous city creation, bringing to light new dimensions that have not been considered before. Timișoara showed courage, confidence, and risk-taking to create, under time pressure, an organised support system for cultural production and consumption, which had already visible impacts on urban development. The Vector TM seminar spotlighted this complex system, intending to raise awareness of the advantages of the city and harness them through action supported by the political will to maintain this momentum.



Communication

The event *Neverending Timișoara 2023* benefited from an extensive communication and promotion campaign that included all channels from the Centre for Projects's communication ecosystem (website, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn) but also a series of channels, means and communication tools such as OOH (local and national - the event was promoted outdoors in Timișoara, but also in Bucharest, Sibiu, Iași, etc.), radio promotion, online promotion, press communication, etc.

A dedicated bilingual (Romanian - English) subsite (landing page) was created for the event (continua.Timișoara2023.eu / neverending.timisoara2023.eu). It was developed, populated and managed by the Centre for Projects team and hosted on timisoara2023.eu, a domain managed by the Timișoara 2023 – European Capital of Culture Association. The strategy and communication tactics corresponding to the closing event were complemented in coordination and synchronisation with the association team, to increase efficiency.

Neverending Timișoara 2023 had a complex and distinct visual identity created and developed by the suppliers contracted by the Centre for Projects of the Municipality of Timișoara. This visual identity, derived from the general identity of the Timișoara 2023 programme, was materialized into a suite of promotional materials intended for the digital environment and digital supports (graphics, presentation films, animations), as well as promotional materials or signage elements (posters, leaflets dedicated to the programme of events, leaflets dedicated to individual events within the official programme, postcards, stickers, banners, meshes, badges, totes and other materials). The press centre was coordinated with the Timișoara 2023 – European Capital of Culture Association team. It operated for five days and accredited **156 journalists from the local, national and international press**. According to MediaTrust press monitoring, during the proximity of the event *Neverending Timișoara 2023*, respectively November 16 - December 31, 2023, there were **5362 references to the Timișoara 2023 – European Capital of Culture programme** in the national media and social media, with a cumulative audience of **45,241,817 people**. **The advertising equivalent of these appearances (AVE) is 14,896,105 lei (2.979.221 euro)**.

In terms of online promotion campaigns, the event benefited from an online promotion campaign by Google Ads Display and Meta Advertising (both on Facebook and Instagram).



According to the report of the specialised company Mavericks, which dealt with implementing digital campaigns, we obtained a total of **10,000,000 displays** of all campaigns within approximately five weeks. We also redirected 115 thousand clicks from the campaigns, thus obtaining a **1.13% average click rate**, above the reference 1% average of some platforms. We also received over **2,700,000 views and 90,000 engagements from the campaigns**.

According to the traffic statistics provided by the Fathom Analytics platform, over **148,800 unique visitors** accessed the dedicated bilingual site continua.timisoara2023.eu during the proximity period November 8 - December 18, 2023, totalling over **281,600 visits**. Apart from Romania, the countries most interested in the site's content were the United States of America, Germany, France, and Serbia.

The most popular topics related to Neverending Timișoara 2023 in social media on the Facebook (FB) page:

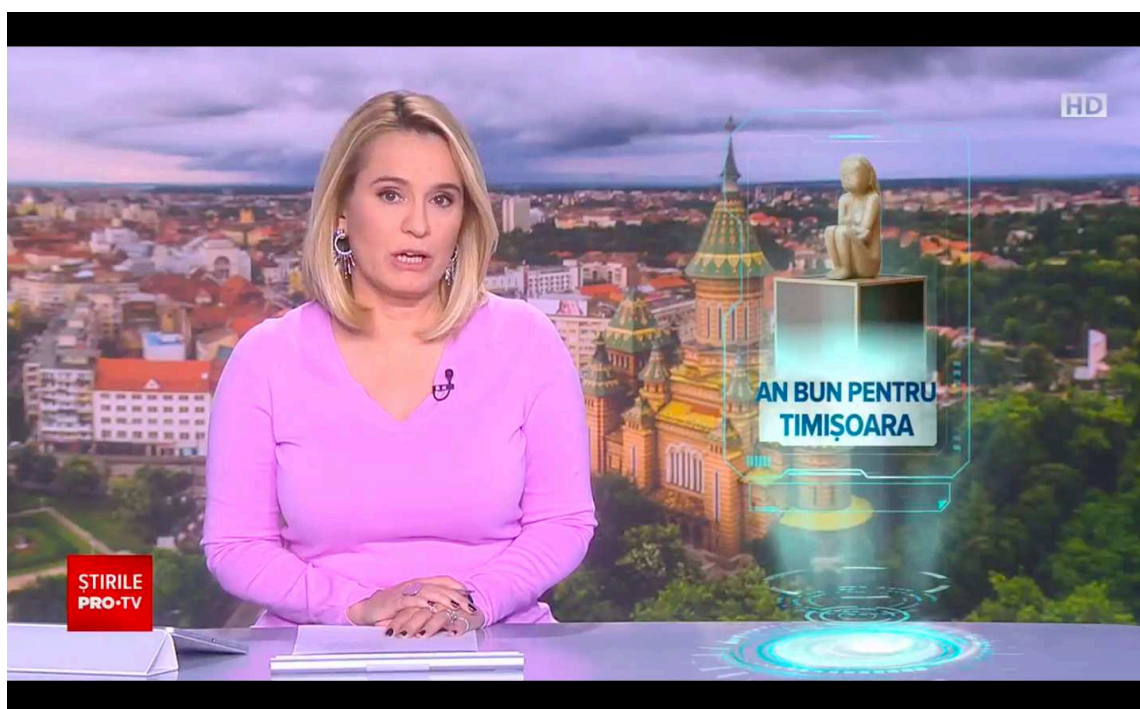
Post	Reach Facebook	Reactions Facebook
Neverending Timișoara 2023 Gala Ceremony video teaser	84,837	182
Gala Ceremony announcement	44,249	431
Timișoara 2023 video-narratives	32,484	124
Public announcement of the participants	30,327	235
"Neverending Timișoara 2023" video-narrative: Culture has a new audience	19,995	81
"Neverending Timișoara 2023" video-narrative: The hallmark of the Cultural Capital	11,724	44
Images from the concerts in Piața Unirii - Saturday, December 9	7,110	212

In the extended period November 15, 2023 – January 15, 2024, when communication was centred around the event Neverending Timișoara 2023, the Facebook and Instagram pages of Timișoara 2023 reached **1,944,437 people**.



The closing event, Neverending Timișoara 2023, organised by the Centre for Projects of the Municipality of Timișoara, was covered, according to a press monitoring report carried out by MediaTrust, by the most important central Romanian mass media:

Source, date and time of broadcast	Title	Audience
Pro TV, 08.12.23 19:30:55	Timișoara closes / ends a spectacular year MP4	1.696.000
Pro TV, 10.12.23 09:12:30	Jessie J performance in Timișoara MP4	986.000



Antena 1, 10.12.23 19:31:34	Jessie J nailed the show in Timișoara MP4	928.000
Pro TV, 09.12.23 08:15:30	Timișoara closes a spectacular year MP4	858.000
Antena 1, 08.12.23 17:34:54	Timișoara, the final bow MP4	634.000
România TV, 10.12.23 16:33:19	Jessie J nailed the show in Timișoara MP4	591.000



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Pro TV, 10.12.23 07:15:55	Jessie J, performance in Timișoara MP4	477.000
România TV, 10.12.23 12:31:25	Jessie J nailed the show in Timișoara MP4	420.000



Prima TV, 09.12.23 18:17:05	Closing Timișoara, European Capital of Culture MP4	320.000
România TV, 10.12.23 10:21:10	Jessie J nailed the show in Timișoara MP4	240.000
TVR 1, 09.12.23 20:43:23	A weekend full of shows in Timișoara MP4	175.000
TVR 2, 08.12.23 18:32:19	This weekend, the last concerts and performances MP4	172.000
Digi 24, 08.12.23 17:13:58	Timișoara, European Capital of Culture, 2023 MP4	146.000
Realitatea Plus, 10.12.23 18:33:50	Jessie J, an electrifying show in Timișoara MP4	100.000
Digi 24, 08.12.23 19:59:01	Special edition MP4	94.000



TVR 1, 08.12.23 20:44:17	This weekend, the last concerts and performances MP4	89.000
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Realitatea Plus, 10.12.23 13:38:03	Jessie J, an electrifying show in Timișoara MP4	88.000
TVR Info, 08.12.23 11:18:02	Neverending Timișoara MP4	75.000
TVR 1, 08.12.23 14:25:08	Neverending Timișoara MP4	72.000
Realitatea Plus, 10.12.23 12:41:42	Jessie J, an electrifying show at Timișoara MP4	71.000
Realitatea Plus, 10.12.23 20:47:52	Jessie J, an electrifying show at Timișoara MP4	65.000
Realitatea Plus, 10.12.23 16:32:22	Jessie J, an electrifying show at Timișoara MP4	63.000
TVR 1, 09.12.23 14:13:04	A spectacular night Timișoara 2023, at the end	56.000
TVR 2, 09.12.23 18:41:08	A weekend full of shows in Timișoara MP4	54.000
TVR 1, 08.12.23 08:28:33	Neverending Timișoara MP4	38.000



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TVR 2, 08.12.23 12:24:16	Neverending Timișoara MP4	28.000
TVR Info, 08.12.23 10:13:02	Neverending Timișoara MP4	21.000
România Actualități, 08.12.23 07:15:03	2023, a special year for Timișoara WAV	368.000



România Actualități, 08.12.23 18:08:24	Timișoara, European Capital of Culture 2023 WAV	368.000
România Actualități, 08.12.23 13:14:54	Neverending Timișoara WAV	279.000
România Actualități, 08.12.23 22:04:57	Timișoara closes a spectacular year WAV	279.000
Magic FM, 08.12.23 07:02:35	Free public transport in Timișoara WAV	189.000



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România Actualități, 10.12.23 00:02:46	Timișoara closes a spectacular year WAV	167.000
România Actualități, 09.12.23 18:03:51	Timișoara closes a spectacular year WAV	167.000
România Actualități, 09.12.23 13:08:07	Timișoara closes a spectacular year WAV	167.000
Radio Guerrilla, 08.12.23 17:02:35	"Neverending Timișoara" WAV	18.000
Radio Guerrilla, 08.12.23 16:02:37	"Neverending Timișoara" WAV	18.000
București FM, 08.12.23 10:01:56	2023, a special year for Timișoara WAV	12.000
Nine o'Clock, 11.12.23	Timișoara officially ends exercising title of European Capital of Culture PDF	10.500



Budget

Expences	RON	EURO	%
Artists	5.251.505	1.050.301	53.5%
General production	3.070.726	614.145	31.5%
Exhibition production	372.129	74.426	
Performance production	1,956,640	391,328	
International seminar production	391,328	60,730	
Other production costs (space rental, architecture services, security, cleaning, etc.)	175,545	35,109	
Other costs (UCMR, mediation programmes, insurance)	262,76	52,553	
Communication and promotion	991,216	198,243	10%
Receptions (official, exhibition openings, performances, concerts)	250,300	50,060	2.5%
Accommodation, meals and transportation (artists, guests from other CEaCs)	203,209	40,642	2.5%
Total	9,766,955	1,953,391	100%

Inclusion and accessibility

Neverending Timișoara 2023. The journey continues (December 7-10) reaffirmed the importance of organising an inclusive event, providing access for the entire community and opening spaces for meeting and learning between cultural operators and audiences with diverse abilities and life experiences.

The accessibility practices imposed by Opening Timișoara 2023 were maintained. Thus, a metal podium equipped with support bars and a ramp was installed in front of the stage, facilitating the visibility for people who use a wheelchair, as well as a safe space for people with other types of disabilities.



*Neverending Timișoara 2023 - Katie Melua Concert
Unirii Square | Photo: Ovidiu Constantin*

The hearing-impaired people in the audience benefited from the artistic interpretation of the concerts in Piața Unirii, in Romanian sign language. Lavinia Chițu and Denis Blidariu took to the stage with Jessie J, Róisín Murphy, Katie Melua, Delia, and EMAA, translated the lyrics, and played the rhythm of the music so that the hearing-impaired could enjoy a memorable performance that crossed all borders.



*Neverending Timișoara 2023
Unirii Square | Photo: Cornel Putan*

For four days, *Neverending Timișoara 2023* managed to bring the whole community together in celebrating a historic moment in the life of the city: the symbolic closing of the "Timișoara 2023 European Capital of Culture" Programme. The more than 100 events included in the official "Neverending Timișoara 2023" programme, the concerts - some of them premiered not only in Timișoara but also in Romania, with international artists such as Katie Melua, Róisín Murphy, Jessie J, and Klangphonics placed Timișoara on the European cultural map. More than 115,000 spectators participated in the *Neverending Timișoara 2023* events, highlighting the unique force of culture in bringing the community together.