

INTRODUCTION

The Ferrara Buskers Festival began in 1988 with the aim of enhancing the image of the street performer and attracting a wider public to the many beauties and charms of Ferrara. The results achieved over the years have been beyond all expectations. With its **800,000 visitors**, it has become the biggest street performers' event in the world. It also gives a major boost to the local economy, which has increasingly centred around cultural tourism (every year about 1 in 3 festival visitors state that they first discovered Ferrara through the festival). The event's success has made it a much-imitated model, and it has contributed in a direct way to the birth of a new sector, Italian street performance, which now boasts more than 200 organised events.

For the many visitors from all over Italy, with a significant number coming from abroad as well, the festival is, above all, a journey into a world of familiar and exotic sounds and an enthralling treasure hunt for the most original instruments, the craziest performances and the most dazzling costumes. It could also be described as an endless mobile party, moving in a thousand directions, with a surprise around every corner – a river of fun, charm and amazement invading the streets and squares of one of the loveliest city centres in the whole of Italy.

The euphorically peaceful atmosphere, the internationalism, the totally spontaneous involvement of the audiences and the splendid setting all combine to make the event something really special. It is not by chance that the most glowing testimonials are those of the artists and visitors themselves, who spread the news of the city and its festival all over the world and help to increase the number of fans.

The protagonists of the festival are buskers; wandering artists who, in their daily activities, try to bring a little poetry and bonhomie into the lives of people that are often too busy to listen, with their minds on other things. The degree of success depends on their ability to win over this yet-to-be-captured audience and fill their hats with tangible signs of appreciation.

Over the years, artists such as Lucio Dalla, Edoardo Bennato, the Modena City Ramblers, Angelo Branduardi and many more have shown their affection for the event by performing free – like real buskers – in past editions of the festival.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Visitors to the Ferrara Buskers Festival come from all over Italy and also from abroad.

During last year's festival about 545 people were interviewed, in a random selection from the public. They were from 56 different Italian provinces and 4 foreign countries.

In 2008, 900 artists from 28 different countries took part in the festival. There were 285 shows that were repeated a total of 1666 times. There were 3854 total hours of performance, corresponding to a non-stop show of 160 days.

In August 2008 alone, the festival's Websites recorded 4,000,000 hits. There are over 400 pages of press clippings.