

CASE STUDY: VALENCIA

PLACING MUSIC AT THE HEART OF URBAN POLICY

Deeply rooted in the collective identity of València, music has long been a defining cultural force. Today, it is also becoming a **strategic driver of economic, social and urban development**. Through the **València Music City 25-30 strategy**, the city has taken a decisive step toward **placing music at the center of public policy**.

As **Juan Pablo Valero**, Commissioner Director General of València Music City, explains:

“Valencia’s strategy places music at the forefront alongside Education and Healthcare, with a strong and growing focus on citizen participation as a core driver for inclusive and sustainable Music City development.”

*“What we want to achieve is a **unified musical agenda**, so that all the effort and investment in music become visible and reach the public in a structured way.”*



Juan Pablo Valero García
Managing Director València Music City
at València City Council

A STRONG ECOSYSTEM IN NEED OF COORDINATION

València already possessed a **vibrant musical ecosystem**: musical societies, conservatories, festivals, venues, promoters, educational institutions and an active audience. From classical music to modern music, the city’s musical life was **diverse and dynamic**.

However, the different sectors often **operated independently**.

Valero describes the situation as following:

*“The strategy is not a musical programming unit, but a **musical management unit**. The programming units function very well, but they were not unified.”*

THE ROLE OF THE MUSIC CITIES NETWORK

València joined the **Music Cities Network (MCN)** in **2020**, reinforcing the political commitment to develop a comprehensive strategy for music.

MCN connects cities that understand music as a **driver of urban development, innovation and inclusion**. Within this framework, music is not only an artistic activity, but **an essential component of urban life**.



The MCN Members officially welcoming Valencia as member of the Music cities network at the MCN Summit in 2025

The aim of **València Music City** is therefore **coordination** – creating a **unified agenda** and a clearer map of the city’s musical ecosystem.

AS LENA INGWERSEN, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE MUSIC CITIES NETWORK, STATES:

*“Our objective is simple yet ambitious: to ensure that **music is recognized as an essential part of urban life**, as vital as housing, mobility or sustainability.”*

*“València stands out as a place where this **vision is becoming reality - a city where music has emerged as a strategic engine for cultural, social, economic and civic development.**”*



Lena Ingwersen
Managing Director
Music Cities Network

MCN did not dictate a model. It offered shared knowledge, comparative perspectives and a collective laboratory of ideas. Within this **transnational framework**, València shaped its own path.

BUILDING THE STRATEGY

The **València Music City 25–30 strategy** was developed by the **Universitat de València** through the **Music for Development research unit**, in collaboration with the **City Council of València**.

Between **2024 and 2025**, the strategy was designed through an **extensive participatory process**, involving institutions, professionals, educators, associations and citizens.

As **Paula Simó** explains:

“It was not about drafting another cultural project, but about responding to a long-expressed demand from the sector itself: to have a plan that organizes, connects and gives continuity to the work already being carried out.”



Paula Simó
Music for Development
Research Group -
University of València

Vice Chair of the Board -
Music Cities Network e.V.

The resulting roadmap is structured around **five strategic axes**:

- **Live music and venues**
- **Professionalization of the sector**
- **Education and citizen participation**
- **Music tourism and international projection**
- **Governance and evaluation**

Together, these axes frame music not only as culture, but as a **structural dimension of urban life**.

FROM STRATEGY TO PUBLIC POLICY

Following the approval of the strategy, **implementation began quickly**.

A **Music Advisory Committee** was created to bring together representatives from the sector and public administration. **Thematic working groups** were established across different musical fields, and the **València Music City Office** was created to coordinate the strategy.

València Music City 25–30 is therefore **no longer a document, but an active public policy**.

As the strategy itself emphasizes, the goal is **long-term collaboration between institutions, professionals and citizens**. Participation is not symbolic - **it is a form of governance**.

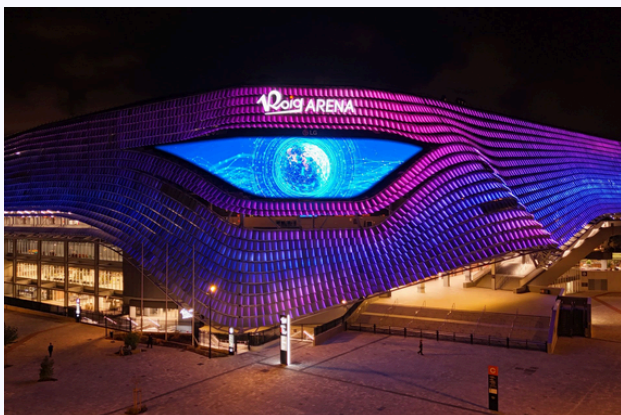
A MUSIC CITY IN PRACTICE

Through this strategy, València seeks to position itself among **the European cities that have successfully transformed music into a transversal engine of urban development.**

Music is understood not only as culture, but also as a **tool for social inclusion, economic development and community identity.** It connects **institutions, professionals and citizens in a shared ecosystem.**



From left to right: Juan Pablo Valero García, Paula Simó and Lena Ingwersen at the ceremony of officially welcoming Valencia as a music city at the MCN



For the **Music Cities Network**, València represents a clear example of how **local commitment, academic research and international collaboration** can come together to create **a new model of music-led urban policy.**

València Music City 25-30 is not a conclusion, but a starting point - an evolving framework that demonstrates how **music can become a central component of city development.**