

Listo lovedo

Pocket Music Guide

Listen To Slovenia: Pocket Music Guide

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Design: Eda Pavletič
Print: Tiskarna Januš d.o.o.
Print Run: 2000
Publisher: SIGIC - Slovenian Music Information Centre
www.sigic.si

This publication received financial support from the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia and the City of Ljubljana.



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE



City of
Ljubljana

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SIGIC, 2020

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CIP - Kataložni zapis o publikaciji
Narodna in univerzitetna knjižnica, Ljubljana
78(497.4)
LISTEN to Slovenia : pocket music guide / [editor Viktor Škedelj Renčelj ; translation Jaka Jarc, Katarina Juvančič]. - Ljubljana : SIGIC - Slovenian Music Information Centre, 2020
ISBN 978-961-92303-2-9
1. Škedelj Renčelj, Viktor
COBISS.SI-ID 31721475

Dear Reader,

this booklet will be your best guide to discovering Slovenian music, the richness, vitality and diversity of the country's musical worlds, some better known than others, but all worth listening to.

On the following pages, you can find a great deal of interesting and useful information about the best Slovenian musicians, individual music scenes, and the specifics of the musical activities in Slovenia in general. Written by acknowledged Slovenian music experts and writers, the compact and readable texts provide information about the music infrastructure in Slovenia and Slovenian music of all genres ranging from classical and jazz to heavy metal and electronic dance music.

It is an undeniable fact that, despite its proverbially small geographic area and small population, Slovenia can offer the world a great deal that is interesting and outstanding in the field of music, as its many music scenes are currently experiencing a

genuine blossoming. Meanwhile, more and more Slovenian musicians are increasingly consciously gazing across national borders and directly participating in international musical currents. This is no doubt the result of the collapse of the former common Yugoslav cultural sphere and market, which has forced Slovenian musicians to redefine how they work and communicate with their potential public. A positive result of all of these turbulent events are the lively, varied, sometimes rather elusive, but always intriguing musical activities in Slovenia.

We highly recommend that those interested in exploring and following current musical life in Slovenia or seeking contact information of the most important institution, concert venues, organizers, and producers of musical events visit **www.musicslovenia.si**.

Sincerely,
Viktor Škedelj Renčelj, editor
SIGIC – Slovenian Music Information Centre

The World's Oldest Musical Instrument

The 60.000 year-old flute found at the Divje babe archaeological site is kept at the National Museum of Slovenia. The flute is made of the central tubular part of a young cave bear's femur and is considered the oldest discovered musical instrument in the world as well as the only thus far unearthed Neanderthal-made flute. Photo: Tomaž Lauko



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Tradition That Looks Beyond Its Borders

Classical Music and Its Continuation in the Contemporary World

Primož Trdan

In past centuries, the Slovenian musical realm benefitted from contacts with the nearby cultural capitals. It took shape in the 19th century with the establishment of the first public music schools and other musical institutions and continued its formation in the 20th century with the development of the contemporary **Academy of Music** and **The Slovenian Philharmonic**, the historical successor of the Academia Philharmonicorum from the distant 1701. These are some of the foundations of the Slovenian musical tradition, which tackled its confident entry into the globalized world in the 21st century.

Interpreters of the Future

New generations of musicians entering the international musical realm today are following in the footsteps left by instrumentalists such as violinist **Igor Ozim**, flautist **Irena Grafenauer**, pianist **Dubravka Tomšič Srebotnjak**, clarinetist **Mate Bekavac**, conductors **Uroš Lajovic** and the current chief conductor of the Bremen Philharmonic and the Philharmonic orchestra in Strasbourg, **Marko Letonja**, and a series of excellent singers ranging from **Anton Dermota** and **Marjana Lipovšek** to **Bernarda Fink** and **Sabina Cvilak**.

This demanding voyage was recently resolutely undertaken by young pianist **Alexander Gadjiev**, who became BBC's New Generation Artist in 2019. Violinists **Tanja Sonc**, active in Zürich, and London resident **Lana Trotovšek** are making their mark as soloists. A new generation of excellent operatic and concert soloist singers include baritone **Matjaž Robavs** and sopranos **Bernarda Bobro** and **Nika Gorič**.

Pianist **Nina Prešiček** stands out among interpreters of modern music with her daring concert concept designs. Accordionist **Luka Juhart** is simultaneously an expert



Alexander Gadjiev caught the attention of the international public in 2015, when he won first prize and the audience award at the prestigious international triennial competition *Hammatsu* in Japan. That year, the chairperson of the panel was legendary Marta Argerich, which lent the competition additional gravitas. Photo: Shahriyar Farshid.



Nika Gorič is a young member of a line of Slovenian singers that shine on international concert and opera stages. She got her master's degree and further specialised education at the Royal Academy of Music in London, and received the "Queen's Commendation for Excellence as the all-round best student of the year." Photo: Gaja L. Kutnjak.

in modern classical music, a leading European interpreter on his instrument, and a composer. When it comes to reaching for new music, guitarists are no exception either – **Mak Grgič** established himself in the USA, where he feels equally at home performing complex new music and movie scores; guitarist and composer **Nejc Kuhar** works in Vienna, while in Brussels, **Primož Sukič** supplements his devotion to interpreting modern classical works with his own string experiments. Meanwhile, members of the **Drumartica** duo, virtuoso **Simon Klavžar** and **Jože Bogolin** are gaining ever greater recognition among percussionists.

On the home front of contemporary music, the above mentioned musicians are carrying on the work started by the **Slowind Festival**. In a period of two decades, this festival brought local musicians and listeners in touch with the key aesthetics of contemporary music. Its core, **Wind Quintet Slowind** is presently touring notable specialised festivals, most recently the Wien Modern and the Japanese Takefu Festival.

Sites of Art Rejuvenation

Slovenian musical life is in the care of as many as two opera houses: The **Slovene National Theatre Opera and Ballet Ljubljana** and The **Slovene National Theatre Maribor**, which comprise an operatic choir, ballet corps, and a symphony orchestra. There are two principal orchestras active in the capital, both of which have recently started going on ever frequenter notable international tours. The **Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra** has toured Asia several times and Europe in 2012 with Ana Netrebko, at which time they also recorded P. I. Tchaikovsky's *Jolanta* for the Deutsche Grammophon label. In 2019, the **RTV Slovenia Symphony Orchestra** went on a South American tour with Mischa Maisky.

The summer **Festival Ljubljana** is a member of the European Festivals Association (EFA). Each year, it brings the most notable interpreters of classical music to Slovenia. The early music festival **Seviq Brežice** is a member of the European Early Music Network (REMA) and is held on locations of notable cultural heritage across the country. In recent years, under the artistic direction of gambist **Domen Marinčič**, the younger **Festival Radovljica** has been presenting



Luka Juhart's chosen instrument, accordion, has been gaining an increasingly important role in the field of contemporary music to which Juhart also contributes as a composer. His second-ever composition *Unleashed* for accordion and clarinet placed among the recommended works of the 2018 International Rostrum of Composers. Photo: Andrej Grilc.



The name Vito Žuraj appears regularly on repertoires of ensembles specialised in contemporary music, such as Ensemble Modern, Klangforum Wien, Ensemble InterContemporain, or Ensemble Recherche. He is also regularly invited to collaborate with the finest orchestras such as the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester, and Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra. After he received the Claudio Abbado Composition Prize in 2017, he composed *Alavò* for soprano, piano, and instrumental groups for the Berliner Philharmoniker's Orchestra Academy. Photo: Vito Žuraj's personal archive.



Petra Strahovnik lives and works in the Netherlands where she studied with Martiin Padding and Peter Adriaansz at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague. She places no limitations on her music, she explores options of spatial perception, use of objects such as rare earth magnets, live electronics, the form of performance and so opens her music up to reflections on society, the world, or spirituality. Photo: Jürgen Fritz.

well thought-out sets of early music characterised by welcome audacity.

In part, the dissemination and rejuvenation of the art of music is also the responsibility of the publishers. The **ZKP RTV** publishing house of the Slovenian national radio and

television distributes the best recordings from the radio's archives. In the past, music by Slovenian composers also appeared in catalogues of renowned international publishing houses; today, local composers can also lean on the distribution of the **Society of Slovene Composers**. The music supply



The Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra is the leading Slovenian symphonic orchestra, tracing its illustrious heritage back to the Academia Philharmonicorum of Ljubljana founded in 1701. The orchestra has performed with highly regarded artists such as Arthur Rubinstein, Yehudi Menuhin, Ramon Vargas, Luciano Pavarotti, and Mstislav Rostropovich. The orchestra is often on tour; the European tour with Tchaikovsky's *Iolanta* with Anna Netrebko in the title role was particularly notable. Photo: Janez Kotar.



Društvo slovenskih skladateljev Society of Slovene Composers

A Key Catalyst to Slovenian Musical Creativity

The Society of Slovene Composers was founded in 1945 and has played an essential role in Slovenian musical life ever since. It currently counts 120 members. Its main areas are concert activities and pub-

lishing; its publishing department, Edicije DSS, issues sheet music and recordings of works by Slovenian composers. The Edicije DSS catalogue consists of approximately 2550 works and 120 CDs, which are available for purchase. The Society's longest-running regular concert series is Concert Atelier of the Society of Slovene Composers. Today, the Society also regularly holds concerts of contemporary Slovenian classical music dubbed Night of Slovene Composers, concerts for younger audiences named "Slovenski skladatelji mladim" (Slovenian Composers to the Young), the Unicum international biannual festival of contemporary classical music, and other events.

is also considerably complemented by a somewhat smaller, though agile, **Astrum** publishing house.

The Paths of Composers

Three great individualists had a profound impact on the older generation of composers. The socially engaged **Vinko Globokar** also went down in history as an unmatched trombonist and improviser, **Janez Matičič** is a composer and pianist who, following a long period of composing electro-acoustic music, also added new colour to his instrumental compositions, while **Lojze Lebič**'s works cultivate a noble coexistence of the archaic and the new.

Composers of the middle generation write patently personal musical stories. **Uroš Rojko** sought out his musical stance on modernism after finishing his studies with Ligeti, **Larisa Vrhunc** creates with immeasurable tonal finesse, **Milko Lazar** effortlessly plays with minimalist influences, while **Aldo Kumar**'s musical exploration evades neither sharp strokes nor beautiful melodies.

Young composers turned their sails to contemporary winds, harnessing the power of the speed of information, and using the smallness of the global world to their advantage. **Vito Žuraj** knows how to impassion even the more traditional orchestra audience with exciting aural sonority. **Nina Šenk** also puts her contemporary pen to the scores of conventional genres. **Petra Strahovnik**'s decade of experimentation with unusual instruments came together marvellously in her orchestral piece *Prana*, earning her the 66th Rostrum of Composers in 2019. **Matej Bonin** is another composer who trusts the feeling of living musical gesture and flow and frequently does so in combination with musical improvisation.

The up-and-coming interpreters of classical music and composers sketching the continuation of this tradition think beyond boundaries. Today they are transforming Slovenian musical space, centuries ago a mere province, into a counterpart easily capable of communicating even with the largest cultural centres.

At Home and Abroad

The Paths of Slovenian Composers in the 20th Century

Gregor Pompe

The watershed year 1918 also turned out to be a turning point for Slovenian music; joining a new state union enabled the final institutional emancipation of Slovenian music and thereby also its gradual professionalization. The main Slovenian musical association watching over all aspects of local concert and musical education life, **Glasbena matica**, was able to operate with even greater fervour than before the War. The Matica transformed its school into a **Conservatory** and expanded with the addition of the nationalized Philharmonic Society. In the 1930s, under the leadership of conductor **Mirko Polič**, the Ljubljana opera house also reached one of its peak periods, staging works by Wagner, new Slovenian operas, and numerous new European works.

The new political and national circumstances, however, also served to divide the Slovenian cultural environment; numerous key representatives kept to the nationalist ideology of the 19th century, while certain composers were already looking for stylistic paradigms dissociated from romanticist and late romanticist notions. **Anton Lajovic** (1878–1960), composer of some of the most successful Slovenian lieder and choral compositions, musical forms which had blossomed in Slovenia already in the 19th century, continued composing in the same vein as he did before the War. **Emil Adamič** (1877–1936) was a similar story. Pianist-composer **Janko Ravnik**'s (1891–1981) first great masterpieces for piano followed the examples set by 19th century virtuoso pianist-composers. **Risto Savin** (1858–1948) tackled the concept of a national opera. This group also includes the younger **Lucijan Marija Škerjanc** (1900–1973), who also undertook larger symphonic, concert, and vocal-instrumental genres.

Meanwhile, **Marij Kogoj** (1892–1956) and **Slavko Osterc** (1895–1941), pioneers of Slovenian musical modernism, took an entirely different path. They each approached

new music in their own way; Kogoj trusted in the subjectivism of expressionism, while Osterc favoured objectivist distancing from the new reality. Kogoj studied in Vienna with the famous opera composer Franz Schreker and later sought the encouragement of Arnold Schönberg at his seminars. The Viennese environment, spread between the emotional modernism of Mahler and Richard Strauss and the expressionism of the Vienna school, is also echoed in



Slavko Osterc fundamentally influenced the development of 20th-century Slovenian music. His international renown also enabled Slovenian music to become established in the wider international context. A large part of his works was performed already during his short life, several among them also on festival and concert stages abroad.

Author: Saša Šantel, © NUK.



Marij Kogoj and Črne maske/Black Masks

Marij Kogoj was born in Trieste, in 1898 and named Julij; however, after his younger brother Marij's death, his family started calling him Marij. He lost his father at the tender age of six, which was followed a mere year later by the departure of his mother, who left her children and disappeared. In keeping with the law pertaining to orphans, Kogoj was assigned to his father's native town, Kanal ob Soči. In 1906 or 1907, an unknown woman arrived at Kanal claiming to be Julij's mother. She rode in in an opulently decorated carriage wearing expensive clothes; afterwards all trace of her vanished. These cursory contacts and impressions must have left the child with numerous questions and traumas. There was talk of Kogoj's mother going to Egypt as a nursemaid, emigrating to America, and descending into prostitution. Given his biography, the several unusual strokes of Andreyev's drama which Kogoj poured into his opera seem strangely evocative. Particularly the words uttered by the unknown voice at the end of the first act: "Did your mother tell you whose son you are?" Similarly, we can see the fight between the two Lorenzos as a reflection of Kogoj's own split between being Marij and Julij. In Kogoj's opera, Andreyev's symbolic play treating the battle between good and evil that lurk in every human psyche becomes a reflection of the composer's own identity, his own self, and even stands as a foreshadowing heralding his coming mental illness. Andreyev's drama, set in the context of literary symbolism presents an insight into the questions of the human soul, psyche, and identity. Kogoj therefore certainly identified with several parts and emphases of the drama. Musically, he resolved them by framing a musical drama that moves back and forth between the harmonic richness of modernism, recitative expressiveness, and even sharp dissonances; on his path toward final redemption in flames, Kogoj succeeded in exceptionally melding music and language and creating the greatest Slovenian operatic achievement. Photo: © NUK.

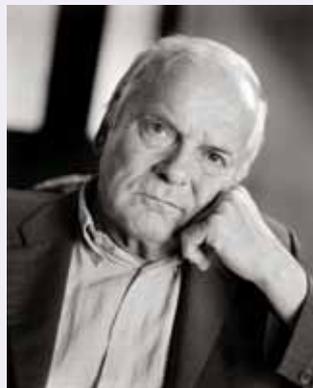
Kogoj's lieder, choral compositions, piano miniatures, and in his pivotal work – the opera *Črne maske/Black Masks* (1929), an operatic rendition of the symbolist drama by Russian playwright Leonid Andreyev.

Osterc was educated at the Prague Conservatory, where he was most strongly

influenced by the father of the quarter-tone music, Alois Hába. More than with quarter-tone music, Osterc was taken with his mentor's principal views on aesthetics, which were committed to the constant search for the new. Armed with numerous international contacts, Osterc returned to Ljubljana, where he began teaching at the

conservatory and soon transmitted his ideas to the virtually entire generation of young composers. He actively participated in the International Society of Contemporary Music (ISCM). His opus comprises compositions of all genres. His "minute" operas, tailored to the patterns established by Darius Milhaud and Paul Hindemith, are

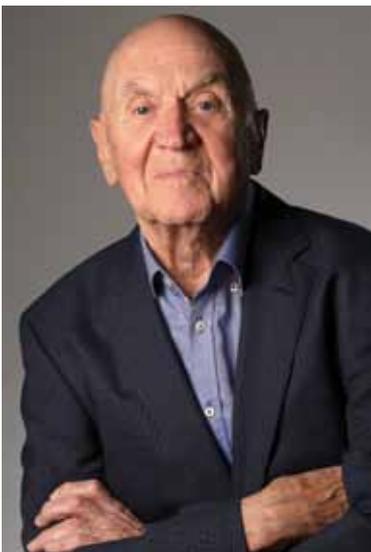
particularly worth highlighting as are his numerous works for chamber ensembles and his shorter orchestral pieces (*Suita/Suite, Koncert za orkester/Concerto for Orchestra, Mouvement symphonique, Mati/Mother*). Osterc surpassed the emotional dichotomy of late romanticism and thereby further solidified the position of the



Vinko Globokar and Extra-Musical Inspiration

Vinko Globokar (1934) was born in France to Slovenian emigrants, after which his family brought him to Yugoslavia, where he studied the trombone. Eight years later, he left to study at the Paris Conservatory. Afterwards, his career took him to other cultural centres – to Berlin, Buffalo in the USA, Cologne (between 1967 in 1976 he was professor of trombone at the College of Music there), and to Paris again, where he headed the department of vocal and instrumental research at the then newly established IRCAM centre and in Fiesole near Florence – where he got on equally well in terms of language and culture. However, Globokar's national dichotomy is reflected in the wide array of his chosen genres: he started his musical career as a jazz musician. In Paris, he made his living as a freelance musician in symphony orchestras, jazz clubs, and variety music halls. His understanding of different musical worlds resulted in his capacity to move freely between them, creating music outside the confines of genre. In this respect, Globokar stands as a supra-national non-dogmatic musician, open to a variety of impulses. In Paris, he frequented concerts of the Boulez's Domaine musical society, where he was exposed to music he did not understand. This motivated him to seek out the help of René Leibowitz, a composition professor who was considered the greatest authority on the twelve-tone technique in France at the time. Globokar studied composition with Leibowitz privately. In his teacher's milieu, he was introduced to several leading intellectuals of the time, philosophers Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Claude Lévi-Strauss, painter André Masson, and psycho-analyst Jacques Lacan, who had an impact on him. After Leibowitz, he was drawn to Berlin, where he became the assistant and student of Luciano Berio. During this time, he developed his own specific brand of aesthetics, which, in several ways, transcends music. To give music back some of its meaning and its capacity to communicate, he sought his motivation to compose outside / beyond music itself and thereby, at least at the external level, level of content, avoid the idea of pure absolute music as well as the artist's detachment from daily social life. At the first stage, the idea of extra-musicality aids Globokar in discovering new musical materials and procedures, while at the second, the composer wishes for this music to trigger thinking and pondering, but not of musical issues (materials, structure), but rather a reflection on the problems of life. Photo: Žiga Koritnik.

to compose outside / beyond music itself and thereby, at least at the external level, level of content, avoid the idea of pure absolute music as well as the artist's detachment from daily social life. At the first stage, the idea of extra-musicality aids Globokar in discovering new musical materials and procedures, while at the second, the composer wishes for this music to trigger thinking and pondering, but not of musical issues (materials, structure), but rather a reflection on the problems of life. Photo: Žiga Koritnik.



Janez Matičič graduated in musical composition and conducting in Ljubljana. Before he moved to Paris, his initial compositions were influenced by traditional musical currents. Later, while studying composition under Nadia Boulanger, he sailed into contemporary compositional currents. He first became engaged in electro-acoustic music in 1962, when he joined the *Groupe de Recherches Musicales* led by Pierre Schaeffer; he remained an active member until 1975. Photo: Janez Matičič's personal archive.

new music. His personality, stronger than Kogoj's, which was eclipsed by mental disease at the close of the 1920s, earned him the position as the central proponent of Slovenian *new music* alongside traditionalist Lucijan Marija Škrjanc.

After World War II, Slovenia received a new governmental system, which at first also affected culture. Institutions with identifiable old bourgeois or clerical ideological traits were abolished. At the same time, certain others began operating with new vitality (the establishment of the **Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra**, the transformation of the conservatory into the **Academy of Music**). Kogoj and Osterc's modernist groundwork was forgotten due to the emphasis ascribed to its ideological undertones. The authoritative roles at the Academy of Music passed to those, who

were committed to the late romanticist, i.e. traditional expression. Other composers, particularly those, who had followed Osterc before the war, retreated to the seemingly ideologically-neutral neoclassicism. This brought about four Slovenian neo-classicist masterpieces (*Sinfonietta* by **Primož Ramovš**, *Simfonietta* by **Uroš Krek**, *Serenada za godala/Serenade for Strings* by **Dane Škerl**, and *Druga suita za godala/Second Suite for Strings* by **Marijan Lipovšek**) with which the students surpassed their teachers, though they remained stylistically conservative compared to contemporary European currents. Those composers who went abroad composed differently, starting with cosmopolitans **Vínko Globokar** and **Janez Matičič**; the latter developed his own special attitude to new sound materials during his tenure at the GRM musical research group in Paris. However, the first political thaw also instigated stronger international links. The new generation of composers became familiar with musical modernism mostly through the Warsaw Autumn festival. A group of composers called **Pro musica viva** (Darjan Božič, Kruno Cipci, Jakob Jež, Lojze Lebič, Ivo Petrič, Alojz Srebotnjak, Milan Stibilj, and Igor Štuhec) resisted the stifling local musical environment. They founded their own performing corpus, the **Slavko Osterc Chamber Ensemble**. At the time, the **Festival of Contemporary Chamber Music** was also launched in Radenci. The 1960s therefore mark the victory of musical modernism with Slovenian composers writing sound compositions in which the incorporated the principle of aleatorics.

To a considerable degree, this division between composers is linked to the sufficient quality of musical infrastructure – public musical education, two opera houses, two symphony orchestras (the **Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra**, the **RTV Slovenia Symphony Orchestra**) and the opening of the large cultural and congress centre **Cankarjev dom** (1982), comprising, among others, a large concert hall, which already hosted practically all of the world's orchestras.



Uroš Rojko is a composer, clarinetist, and university professor. After graduating in Slovenia, he continued his studies in Germany with Klaus Huber and György Ligeti. This was where he first became acquainted with contemporary musical currents. He settled in Germany but also teaches musical composition at the Academy of Music in Ljubljana. His compositional style derives from auditory sound examination; he favours composing for solo instruments by drawing directly from the practical experience of exploring the instrument at hand with the assistance of the instrumentalist. In composing for larger ensembles, his creativity is guided by inspiration as well as a desire to form a strong concept and relay a full message. Photo: Andrej Grilc.



Lojze Lebič and Archetypes

Academic Professor Lojze Lebič (1934) is considered one of the classics of Slovenian music from the second half of the 20th century. Along with others of the same mind in the *Pro musica viva* group of composers, he sought his aesthetical foundations in modernism. In this context he had the utmost appreciation for the necessity of balancing rational compositional structure with the kind of musical “grammar” that enables communication with the listener. In this vein, he developed a specific

postmodern musical language, which combines modernist sound blocks with fragments of musical archetypes extending across traditional music and folk music to imaginary primordial times of music. This combination reverberates in his large choral creations (*Hvalnica svetu* (transl. *Eulogy To the World*), *Fauvel '87*, *Ajdna – glasba v času* (transl. *Ajdna – Music About Time*)) as well as in his monumental works for the symphony orchestra (*Queensland Music*, *Music for the Orchestra – Cantico*), wherein compositional refinement goes hand in hand with powerful emotional suggestibility. In these works, Lebič also managed to capture a specific national tint, which is palpable in the very coexistence of the nostalgic and the novel. Photo: © DSS.

Slovenia Is a Singing Nation

They Don't Say "Three Slovenians Make a Choir" for Nothing. It's a Fact!

Tanja Benedik

Slovenia's rich musical history and choral tradition undoubtedly contributed to the exceptional quality of choral singing in Slovenian space. There is evidence that composed music was sung here as early as a thousand years ago.

The excellent results in the field of choir singing of the last couple of decades are partly due to the Slovenian school system, which guarantees every primary school a children's or youth choir. The transition to the secondary school system somewhat diminishes interest in choral singing, being that choirs are not an obligatory part of the curriculum; later, however, at university, the said interest increases again, as evidenced by as many as three top-tier academic choirs in Slovenian university towns (Ljubljana, Maribor, Koper). Moreover, the activity is also cultivated by individual institutions such as, for example, the St. Stanislav Institute, which succeeded in establishing a successful pyramid of choirs and is already proving itself internationally. A vast number of exceedingly successful Slovenian choirs and vocal ensembles are achieving highest placements at international competitions, which is patently evident already from a cursory glance at the results of the biggest international competitions.

There are three professional choirs in Slovenia; The **Slovenian Philharmonic Choir** and two opera choirs – The **Slovene National Theatre Opera and Ballet Ljubljana** and The **Slovene National Theatre Maribor**, all financed by the state (Ministry of Culture). The **RTV Slovenia Chamber Choir** also cannot be left out. More than 2000 active amateur choirs and various vocal ensembles in Slovenia operate largely as part of various societies. Most of these are supported by the Union of Cultural Societies of Slovenia and JSKD – The Public Fund for Cultural Activities of the Republic of Slovenia. The Ministry of Culture covers part of the expenses of their operation through the JSKD. Slovenia also has numerous church choirs. We estimate that there are more than 130 000 people singing in Slovenia.

Slovenia also hosts international choir competitions. The oldest, the **International Youth Choir Festival Celje** has

been held biannually since 1963. Since 2008, Gallus Maribor is one of six European competitions for the European Grand Prix and alternates biannually with the national Naša pesem (transl. Our Song) competition (since 1970). Each year, Slovenian choirs also face each other at regional and thematic competitions across the country. In 2016, the first national competition for Slovenian choir leaders was launched in Ljubljana, called Zvok mojih rok (transl. The Sound of My Hands).

Choirs that achieved exceptional results at competitions abroad include The **Maribor Academic Choir**, the **Tone Tomšič Academic Choir of the University of Ljubljana**, the **Academic Choir of the University of Primorska** (which also runs the Symphonic Voices series of concerts in Koper), **Obala Koper**, the **Megaron Chamber Choir**, **St. Stanislav Girls' Choir**, The **Ljubljana Conservatorium for Music and Ballet Chamber Choir**, The **Saint Nicholas Choir Litija**...

Slovenian choir leaders are highly esteemed as guest conductors, lecturers, and panel members at the largest international choir events. They include **Ambrož Čopi**, **Helena Fojkar**, **Stojan Kuret**, **Karmina Šilec**, **Damijan Močnik**, **Martina Batič**, **Urša Lah**, **Petra Grassi**, to name but a few.

Slovenian choral music composers of both genders are just as successful and sought after. Some were taken under the wings of large world-renowned publishing houses such as Carus-Verlag (**Damijan Močnik**, **Andrej Makor**), Sulasol (**Ambrož Čopi**), Ferrimontana and Augsburg-Fortress (**Močnik**), Nomos, Schott Music and GIA Publications (**Makor**). In addition, choral music literature by Slovenian composers also appears on the roster of **Astrum**, the only specialized Slovenian publishing house and among the **Editions of the Society of Slovene Composers** publishing house. Lately, works by **Tadeja Vulc**, **Nana Forte**, **Katarina Pustinek Rakar**, **Matej Kastelic**, **Tine Bec**, **Samo Vovk**, and oth-

Contemporary Trends in Slovenian A Cappella Music

Recent years also marked huge advances in Slovenian a cappella music, from the first successful placements of our ensembles at the Vokal Total competition (Perpetuum Jazzile 2004, New Swing Quartet 2005, Stil Quartet 2006, Cantemus 2007, Male malice 2008, BIT 2009, Jazzva 2014, Dotik 2014, Kreativno 2015, 2016) to the global phenomenon of Perpetuum Jazzile, recent successes of Bassless (AVA a cappella award), and the international Ljubljana Vocal festival organised by the Jazzva vocal ensemble featuring the highest calibre of guest performers of the genre. The first Slovenian small a cappella ensembles included the Dust ensemble led by Samo Ivačič, who now continues his vocal mission with his work with the Vox Arsana vocal ensemble, which is best known for its collaboration with the New York Voices.



Jazzva is at the very top of Slovenian a cappella music. The members explore the human voice; they write new stories, seek out harmonies, and play with various timbres and effects. Their catalogue includes songs of a variety of genres ranging from pop, rock, and jazz to folk songs. Photo: Adrian Pregelj.



The Slovenian Philharmonic Choir is the only professional concert choir in Slovenia. It holds its own seasonal vocal-instrumental music series and a series of vocal music. It also collaborates with the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra and other Slovenian and foreign orchestras. Photo: Janez Kotar.

Facts About the European Grand Prix for Choral Singing

- On the world-scale, relative to the number of inhabitants, Slovenia has been the most successful country in finals.
- Slovenia is the only country to have three representatives among the five chosen finalists at the EGP in the same year (2010): VAL – Ljubljana Vocal Academy, cond. Stojan Kuret, Chamber Choir Ave, Ljubljana, cond. Andraž Hauptman, Šaleški akademski pevski zbor (transl. Academic Choir of Velenje), Velenje, cond. Danica Pirečnik.
- Stojan Kuret is the only conductor to win the GPE award twice; in 2002, with APZ Tone Tomšič in Arezzo, Italy and in 2010, in Varna, Bulgaria, with the male choir VAL – Ljubljana Vocal Academy.
- The VAL – Ljubljana Vocal Academy was the first and only male choir to win the Grand Prix of Europe.

10 Years of Choral Production by a Nation of 2 Million People

From 2010 to 2020, the Slovenian music scene saw the publication of more than 400 choral music publications of various genres and levels of complexity, among them more than 150 audio editions (predominately CDs), approximately 200 music scores, and approximately 50 publications of other types linked to choir or vocal music. A considerable achievement!

ers have also demonstrated that they hold important positions in the international realm of choral music.

So, next time you're looking for high-quality music, don't forget to take a peek at Slovenian choral literature, you won't be disappointed.



Carmina Slovenica, under the artistic direction of conductor **Karmina Šilec**, left its mark on the international stage as a collective, whose *choregie* concept expands the scopes of musical-theatrical art. They are a breath of fresh air on the musical scene, opening new realms of expression, intensity of experience, and communication. Carmina Slovenica's renown is justified by their appearances on stages of the most prominent festivals across the globe, numerous awards, and albums. Photo: Dorian Šilec Petek.

The secondary school singers of **St. Stanislav Girl's Choir** under the baton of **Helena Fojkar Zupančič**, advance their musical talents by undertaking a demanding repertoire of choral music. The choir's high quality is evidenced by invitations to and appearances at the world's most prestigious choral events (**World Symposium on Choral Music, Europa Cantat Festival, ACDA National Conference...**).

Photo: Janez Eržen; Graphic editing: Matej Zupančič



A Small Country's Place in a Big World

The singers of the **Carmen manet** women's chamber choir (choir leader: Primož Kerštanj) won the 2017 Eurovision Choral of the Year in Riga. In 2019, the vocal group **Jazzva** (artistic director: Jasna Žitnik) came in third.

The **St. Stanislav Girls' Choir** of the Diocesan Classical Gymnasium, which had won the exceptionally prestigious EBU Let the Peoples Sing competition in 2009, was invited to the 2017 World Symposium on Choral Music, as well as to the 2019 American Choral Directors Association's national conference.

The **KGBL Chamber Choir** was invited to attend the 2018 Taipei International Choir Festival, where they performed three independent concerts of Slovenian choral music. In 2019, conductor **Ambrož Čopi** was invited to lead the Taiwanese professional choir in performing a set of recent works exclusively by Slovenian composers.

In 2015, the **Jazzva** vocal ensemble was invited to the Europa Cantat festival in Pécs, Hungary.

In 2018, the former artistic director and conductor of the Slovenian Philharmonic Choir, **Martina Batič**, took the helm of the most prestigious professional choir in the French capital – the mixed Choir of Radio France (La Maîtrise de Radio France). She also lectures and serves on international panels at choir competitions.

In 2018, Luis Gerardo Glines (Interkultur) tweeted out 5 new promising names of the choir scene: Eric Whitacre, Ola Gjeilo, Santiago Veros, Damijan Močnik, and Eriks Ešvalds. Such eminent company!

The Gallus international choir competition in Maribor was named after Slovenian composer **Jacobus Handl Gallus** (1550–1591), an undisputed giant of 16th century European music, choirmaster (Kapellmeister), and prolific composer, who considered himself a Carniolan (a resident of Kranjska, at the time a Slovenian speaking territory).

Slovenian Jazz *à la carte*

A Brim-Full Dish of Variety

Mario Batelič

Even though the first Slovenian ensemble to feature the word jazz in their name emerged as early as 1922, jazz didn't truly flourish here until after World War II. But its beginnings were difficult because, due to its American origin, this dance-oriented musical genre was initially unwanted and at times even forbidden in post-war Yugoslavia. Jazz earned its Yugoslav residential status predominately owing to the efforts of **Bojan Adamič** (1912–1995), who founded the Radio Ljubljana Dance Orchestra, the precursor to the present day **RTV Slovenia Big Band**. Jazz became more widely popular here at the break of the 1960s. At the end of the 1950s, Slovenian jazz musicians started writing original music and 1960 marks the first Yugoslav jazz festival in Bled. Later it moved to the capital under the name **Jazz Festival Ljubljana**, where it celebrated its 60th anniversary last year. Today, there are several festivals held in various parts of Slovenia, such as **Jazz Cerkno**, **Jazz Ravne**, **Creative Jazz Clinic Velenje**, as well as concert series, which also significantly contribute to the scene (Ljubljana's **Defonija**, Maribor's **Jazz v Narodnem domu**...).

In the early 1960s, the national big band came under the leadership of **Jože Privšek** (1937–1998) internationally known also as **Jeff Conway** or **Simon Gale**, who had, during his studies at Berklee, kept company with Quincy Jones. The time Privšek headed the orchestra (1961–1995) is considered the Big Band's golden age. In the 1970s and 1980s, Slovenian jazz resounded in the sign of fusion (**Sončna pot**, **Tone Janša**) – jazz mixed with rock, new wave, and traditional bands (**Begnograd**, **Miladojka Youneed**, **Quatebriga**, **Lolita**). In the 1990s, after Slovenia seceded from Yugoslavia, Slovenian jazz musicians began developing ever greater individuality of musical expression, which enabled them to make a substantial mark as authors, both at home and abroad.

From among those whose fresh approaches to composition broke new ground in the 1990s, drummer and percussionist **Zlatko Kaučič** is perhaps one of the most noteworthy. After nearly 15 years

working abroad, he returned to Slovenia and turned to making a series of albums with world renowned musicians (Steve Lacy, Kenny Wheeler, Peter Brötzmann). He founded a music school for young jazz musicians, which gave rise to the **Kombo** ensemble. Kaučič plays the *ground drums* and uses them to create a colourful and

The Oldest (Running) Jazz Festival in Europe

The Jazz Festival Ljubljana started out in 1960 as the Yugoslavian Jazz Festival in Bled. From the very outset, it played a vital role in the integration and presentation of Yugoslavian jazz groups (particularly big bands) and later grew to serve as an invaluable annual review of new local and foreign jazz trends. For the last few years, concerts have been held at numerous venues ranging from small clubs to larger halls; The festival focuses on modern jazz along with avant-garde improvised music and places special emphasis on featuring different generations of Slovenian musicians. In 2018, the festival won the European Jazz Network Award for Adventurous Programming for its daring and visionary programme.

JAZZ
FESTIVAL
LJUBLJANA



Continuously active since 1945, the **RTV Slovenia Big Band** is one of the oldest ensembles of its kind in the world. Among others, the group featured band leaders and artists such as Peter Herbolzheimer, Mercer Ellington, Maria Schneider, David Murray, Michael Abene, Bob Mintzer, Nancy Marano, Peter Erskine, Ronnie Cuber, Paquito D'Rivera, Mike Stern, Joe Lovano, Ernie Watts, and Patti Austin. Photo: Jani Ugrin.

inventive palette of melodies and rhythmic patterns. In 2018, at the occasion of the 40th anniversary of his musical activity, he released a five-cd box set titled *Diversity*, which was recorded with guest musicians

Evan Parker, Joëlle Léandre, Johannes Bauer, Agustí Fernández and others.

Saxophone player **Cene Resnik** is developing his own unique approach; practicing

In the early 1990s, after working abroad for nearly 15 years, drummer and percussionist **Zlatko Kaučič** (photographed behind the wheel) returned to Slovenia and recorded a series of albums with world renowned musicians (Steve Lacy, Kenny Wheeler, Peter Brötzmann). He also teaches and mentors young musicians; the school for young jazz musicians he founded, gave rise to the band **Kombo**, which was recently "reincarnated" for the third time under the designation **Kombo C**. Photo: Rene Vremec.



The septet **Oholo!** combines some of the leading protagonists of jazz and improvised and experimental music of the younger and middle generations. Their debut album *Mnogobolje* (2020) skillfully meanders between “classic” jazz, African musical influences, improvisation, and experimental music. Photo: © Oholo!



Buddhism is surely a factor contributing to his methodical alternating between decisive intensity and lyrical sound. He is well at home playing with a variety of different line-ups, for example with two guitars (trio Brdonč, Resnik, Furlan), a cello (Ombak Trio, Cene Resnik Quartet), as well as alongside a hard standard rhythm section (Acamar Trio). On the album *Age of Chaos*, which was recorded at the Jazz Cerklno festival, the Cene Resnik Free Stellar Trio was joined by guest trumpet player, American Rob Mazurek.

Collaborations with American jazz musicians are an everyday occurrence for a number of Slovenians living in New York. Of these, saxophone players **Igor Lumpert** and **Jure Pukl** are particularly successful. Among his other projects, Lumpert heads the ever-shifting line up of the Innertextures (which also incorporates saxophone player Greg Ward and drummer Kenny Grohowski); together they released three albums of inspired modern expression skilfully navigating between post-bop and classical-style ballads. Pukl recently released his eleventh album *Broken Circles*, which expands the field of his exploration further.

For this purpose, he put together a quintet of musicians wherein the guitar (Charles Altura) and vibraphone (Joel Ross) play particularly important roles; aside from weaving a refined impressionist sound texture, these two instruments also assume notable solo roles, taking turns with Pukl.

Another Slovenian musician active abroad is pianist **Kaja Draksler**, who works mostly in the Netherlands. This is where she studied and gathered members for her octet (Ab Baars, Lotte Anker, Ada Rave etc.), which launched their second album *Out for Stars* in March 2020. Draksler also plays with several international line ups including the trio Punkt.Vrt.Plastik (with Petter Eldh and Christian Lillinger), to mention just one of the most recent ones. In 2013, she impressed the public with her solo album *Lives of Many Others*, which cleverly combines jazz and classical music. Classical music also holds a central role in the music she composes for her octet to verses by notable poets (e.g. Pablo Neruda and Robert Frost). Her multi-layered music congenially blends influences of old and new classical music, jazz, improvisation, and experimental music.

One of the most productive Slovenian jazz musicians, guitarist **Samo Šalamon**'s more than 30 albums feature world renowned musicians such as Michel Godard, Paul McCandless, and Tim Berne. In recent years he developed the concept of line ups with no (double) bass (“bassless”); however, in a few of his recent line ups he tackled the bass, as well as acoustic guitars, himself. In the past, his pieces were more or less structured, but in recent years he also played with a few improvisational line-ups, for example Hungarian violist from Serbian Vojvodina, Szilárd Mezei. Šalamon returned to classical structure on two albums in 2020 (*Rare Ebb* and *Common Flow*), which he recorded with trumpet player **Igor Matkovič** and drummer and cellist **Kristijan Krajnčan**.

Krajnčan heads a “one-man band” called **DrummingCellist** in which he simultaneously plays both instruments and

combines jazz and classical music. The Slovenian scene teems with similar hybrid line-ups. Trio **Kukushai** led by pianist **Rok Zalokar** plays a mixture of avant-pop, noise, and jazz. Tine Grgurevič or **Bowrain** is dedicated to hypnotic pianist minimalism. On his last album, *La Bête Humaine*, another pianist **Drago Ivanuša** immerses himself fully in a furious version of free jazz in the style of Cecil Taylor. The band **Koromač** slams hard punk and metal riffs atop frantic free jazz eruptions in the style of John Zorn. **Boštjan Simon** enriches the sound of the group **There Be Monsters** with classical and African music. The younger septet **Oholo!**'s debut skilfully meanders between “classical” jazz and improvised and experimental instances. The emergence of solo albums (aside from Ivanuša also, for example, Jošt Drašler, Gal Furlan, Vid Drašler) is particularly delectable, a clear sign of the Slovenian scene's maturity.

Igor Lumpert & Innertextures: from left to right: Greg Ward, Masa Kamaguchi, Igor Lumpert, Jason Nazary. Saxophonist Igor Lumpert has been living and working in New York since 2000. He was invited to study there by renowned double bass player Reggie Workman. For a number of years, he's been leading the ever-changing line-up of Intertextures, a band hailed by both critics and the public. He applies his singularly beautiful and strong saxophone tone with equal skill to both lively post-bop compositions and lyrical ballads. Photo: © Nada Žgank and Jazz Cerklno.



An Exceptionally Exciting and Varied Musical Kaleidoscope

A Depiction of the Creative Simmering in the Field of Experimental Music in Slovenia

Luka Zagoričnik

We aim to ride the term of experimental music, which currently mainly defines certain more fringe musical practices, across the expanses of various musical plains, styles, and genres. We apply this (overly) broad term to designate the varied creative simmering in certain segments of the present-day Slovenian music scene, which span the realms of electro-acoustic music, musique concrète, experimental music in the context of modern classical music, free improvisation, experimental electronic music, and sound art as well as their associated present-day trends. This is a diverse and exceptionally agile scene. It developed a strong infrastructure for itself (festivals, concert series, labels, international networks) and exists in the space between self-organising and DIY models, and institutional environments.

Experimental music is the successor of pre-war avantgardisms and post-war modernisms. Its early herald was the most well-known modern Slovenian composer

and trombonist **Vinko Globokar**. Another branch of experimental music stems from the tradition of electronic and electro-acoustic music that followed the heritage



Robertina Šebjanič captures the underwater world using her microphones and then applies her sound forensics to not only unveil the underwater flora and fauna's sonority, but also to lay bare the increasingly devastating effects of human activity and acute sound pollution. Her music, sound, and multimedia art, awarded at the renowned ARS Electronica and featured at well-known museums, galleries, and festivals worldwide, bring us face to face with ourselves and the aftermath we're leaving underneath the surface. Poetic with scientific acuity. Photo: Uroš Abram.

of historical minimalism and ideas of John Cage, aleatoric music, and improvisation. It is represented by the still-active line-up **Saeta** with **Bor Turel** and **Boštjan Perovšek** at its core. The latter still actively participates in the arena of contemporary field recording practices of including everyday noises in compositions and improvisations. He stretches different every-day soundscapes across an actual and simultaneously imaginary landscape between the world of man and animal, between the urban and the natural. Sound- and multi-media artist **Saša Spačal**'s fragile ambient soundscapes reverberate with the soft and quiet sounds of crickets. The works of **Robertina Šebjanič** transport us into an underwater soundscape through which the artist rigorously approaches environmental issues with the aid of science. Composer, violinist, theoretician, and poet **Nina Dragičević**'s intense electro-acoustic sound narrative reveals the astounding and cruel realities of the issues of repression, precarity, and national minority. **Brane Zorman** and **Irena Pivka (Cona Institute)** join forces with a wide circle of creators to take us to uncommon soundscapes, where

a run-of-the-mill walk transforms into a rich soundscape, and where a greenhouse or radio become sound galleries. We are in a world of sound art which spans music and modern art, perceiving sound as a unique matter outside the strict parameters of music. When the boundaries of this framework open, we can observe an intense synaesthesia of sound and image. This is the case, for example, with the works of **Tadej Droljč**, which are regularly featured at the notable **ARS Electronica**.

The field of the so-called noise music condenses, radicalises, sharpens, and intensifies all these approaches further. In Slovenia, such radical sound aesthetics stems from the music of the 1980s including the early industrial music of **Laibach**. Today, its adherents flourish more than ever before. They are associated with international networks, festivals, and labels. Members of the principal Slovenian line-up **Ontervjabbit**, **Neven M. Agalma** and **Domen Učakar** combine their experience in raw harsh noise with dark ambient electro-acoustic experiments, audio-visual narration, post techno, club music, and

The Experiment of "Festivalling"

The main Slovenian festivals of free improvised music are *Neposlušno** in Ljubljana and the Brda Contemporary Music Festival in Goriška Brda. Both festivals are significant, with strong international attendance, and include music workshops. The international congress of free improvised music, arts, and thoughts *Improcon* is the result of the collaboration between Slovenian and Croatian participants; it presents a brand new festival model based on spontaneous get-togethers of musicians with the festival's programme spontaneously generated on-site. The scene also produced several active concert series with strong international participation; these include *Defonija*, *Confine Aperto*, *Friforma* in Ljubljana, *Sunday Noise* in Bistrica ob Sotli, and *Klub Štala* in Vipava. The powerful *Zasavje Noisefest* International festival of noise music, which takes place in the suitable industrial environment of the former mining facilities and thermal power plant in Zasavje, inducts us into the sphere of noisy sound derivations. Meanwhile, the *Sonica* festival enters varied fluid creative centres by way of junctions of modern musical expressions, club culture, sound and multimedia art, audio-visual performances, and different spaces. This contemporary international festival is part of *Shape*, a strong European festival platform.

* a Slovenian word meaning 'disobedient' but with the connotation of not listening, literally 'non-listening'.



Duo **Ontervjabbit** combines DIY electronics, dark shades of ambient music, intense noise walls and clusters, and refined echoes of post-techno and industrial music. The duo is active both at home and internationally. Their latest album *Torture Garden*, inspired by Japanese Author Octave Mirbeau's cult book of the same title, is a veritable magnum opus of noise.

Photo: © Ontervjabbit.



meta-narrations; all of these are featured on their latest conceptual epic album *Torture Garden*. Alongside these two, the creators that simply must be mentioned here are **Kikiriki**, **Cadlag**, **Umdhlebi**, and **Lifecutter**, even though their approaches to the scene differ.

Aside from being an internationally established improviser, **Tomaž Grom** is also an initiator and label owner; he generates space for numerous musicians and creates in-between worlds where artistic areas converge.

Photo: Sunčan Stone.



Irena Z. Tomažin's voice is simultaneously ethereal, penetrating, and sonorous. It reveals from within a mysterious, frightening, and poetic physical nature of the embodiment of voice released in the context of freely improvised music, avant-pop, performance-, and modern classical music. It left its mark on numerous club-, concert-, gallery-, museum-, and festival stages across the globe. Photo: Jani Peternelj.

If we utterly abolish form, we enter the realm of freely improvised music. In Slovenia, this practice intensified in the last two decades and became one of the more present scenes on our musical territory. Its active proponents include its still-active pioneer, percussionist **Zlatko Kaučič** and double bass player **Tomaž Grom**. The latter collaborates with fixed and ad-hoc lineups, and both as a band member and solo act. He expands his distinct sound expression on the double bass with electronic music, integrating it in performance art and theatre, contemporary jazz, and electro-acoustic music. He created a notable audio-visual instrument known as IMstrument. Above all, his creativity and engagement co-shape mechanisms and strategies, which today lend freely improvised music a place both in the wider Slovenian cultural landscape and the international community. A plethora of improvisers follow his example. The processed drums and electronic sounds of **Jaka Berger**, **Samo Kutin's** modified hurdy-gurdy, the impressive vocal improvisations of **Irena**

Z. Tomažin, and the conceptual framework of drummer and composer **Dré A. Hočevar** all break the established perimeters of sound. While, the omnifarious work of improviser, composer, flautist, vocalist, and electronic musician **Maja Osojnik** blends all the sound aesthetics above.

This was merely a quick overview of the creative simmering in the field of experimental music in Slovenia that silently influences the main stream from the fringes. Even though often relegated to the very periphery of mainstream musical activity, this scene is the most integrated and internationally active. It holds within itself a wide, innovative, extremely exciting and varied musical kaleidoscope, which may not necessarily have a homogenous and common history in these parts, but what it does have here, are numerous convergences and in-between spaces.

Answering the Call of the Wilderness

Exploring Folk & World Music in Slovenia

Katarina Juvančič

“If music is a place, then... folk is wilderness,” sci-fi writer Vera Nazarian from the US once wrote. In Slovenia, wading through this wilderness began a long time ago, when vernacular folk music caught the ear of folklorists, whose mission was to unearth and collect these “wild” flowers and preserve them.

They created a massive archive of field recordings, which to this day provides an invaluable source and inspiration for contemporary folk music performers. We can trace the renewed interest in vernacular types of music to the 1970’s, when younger generations, influenced by the Anglo-American folk revival music as well as avant-garde music trends of the period, started to re-discover their own traditional music backyard. But it wasn’t until the late 1980’s and 1990’s that a more conscious shift towards preserving and promoting more authentic forms of Slovenian musical heritage begun taking shape. This was also when Cultural Ethnomusicological Society **Folk Slovenia** was established and the first attempts were made to popularize world music, which had just started to emerge on the global podium. The inception of world music festivals such as the **Druga Godba** festival in 1984 and the **Okarina Festival** in Bled in 1991 (both still going strong) brought an enviable number of leading world music artists to Slovenia as well as offered a platform to showcase domestic ones.

The new millennium saw an upsurge of interest in folk and world music among the younger generations, who were merging folk music with jazz, rock, world, electronic and other global popular music styles according to their own idiosyncratic music

and aesthetic preferences. This millennial musical “flock” of performers and bands such as **Katalena**, **Brina**, **Janez Dovč**, **Rudi Bučar**, and, more of a jazz-world buff, **Vasko Atanasovski** still represent one of the most active cores of Slovenian world/folk music today. With its unique blend of archival musical lore and self-penned material, solid rock rhythms, edgy vocals, and soaring harmonies, the 19-year-old band Katalena keeps rejuvenating the rustic imagery of folk and transforming it into a contemporary urban experience. To this date, they have released seven highly acclaimed albums all the while regularly touring at home and abroad. Brina, led by singer and puppeteer Brina Vogelcnik, is also a well-known name in the international world music circuit; she flirts with ancient bal-

The Festival of Other Music

Druga godba is the highest-profile and oldest world music festival in the country. First held in 1984, it remains the driving force behind acquainting the local audience with the world’s leading music acts from across the globe and

promoting home-grown talent in folk, world, or fusion music. The British music magazine Songlines has ranked it among the world’s top 25 festivals for five years.

DRUGA
GODBA

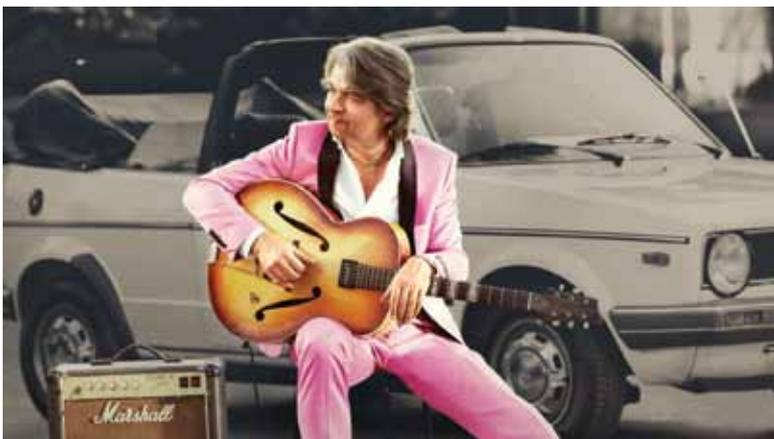


The Glitterbeat record label was co-founded in 2012 by artist and producer Chris Eckman (USA), and manager and Glitterhouse label owner Peter Weber (D) to release records promoting global hybrid and cross-genre music as well as local traditions and roots. It is based in Germany with an office in Ljubljana. The label won the WOMEX best label award for 5 consecutive years (2014-2018).

lad material adding contemporary inventions in an airy, acoustic manner. After a long hiatus, the band Brina is regrouping and gearing up for new adventures. The accordionist, composer, and multi-instrumentalist Janez Dovč is currently occupied with running his music shows, the Celinka record label, and conducting a collective of diverse musicians called **Sounds of Slovenia** cladding old folk tunes in new, pop clothing, whereas Rudi Bučar still successfully walks the line between Istrian pentatonic scales and pop-rock aesthetics of his original and traditional songs. Istrian songs and tunes are also an endless source of inspiration to the more traditional-sounding band **Vruja**.



Širom is a trio of incredibly skilled, versatile, and inquisitive musicians (Iztok Koren, Ana Kravanja, Samo Kutin) whose guiding principle seems to be to create imaginary acoustic explorative soundscapes layered with a multitude of either home-made or folk instruments from across the globe, which nevertheless remain unbound by tradition or geography. They have released three widely acclaimed albums (the last two with Glitterbeat subsidiary label tak:til) and have been touring Europe extensively. Photo: Tadej Čaušević.



With his Balkan gigolo image, **Magnifico** is one of the best-known Slovenian musicians abroad. Many of his songs are exceptionally popular in Slovenia and known abroad for their quirky mix of Balkan and popular music rhythms along with their highly specific “English”. Photo: Tomo Brejč.

Meanwhile, the well-established and still-prolific performers with music careers spanning three decades, such as **Magnifico**, **Vlado Kreslin**, and the ardent interpreter of the Balkan song lore, **Klarisa Jovanović**, continue wowing audiences at home and abroad. Vlado Kreslin, often

referred to as the Bob Dylan of the Balkans, begun his musical journey as a rock singer, and then in the early 1990s fell in with **Beltinška banda** – native Prekmurje’s elders and their shared international musical wanderings. So far, he has released 17 albums and extensively toured and col-



The group **Katalena** collects traditional Slovenian music in archives, song books, and old vinyl records and modernises it with dynamic rock rhythms and funk drive. This lends the music a more contemporary sound and makes it appealing to the musical tastes of younger generations. Photo: Luka Kaše.



Ljoba Jenčič is a singer, storyteller, and collector of folk music, whose songs relate her personal relationship with tradition. She performs primarily in natural spaces with ideal acoustics and frequently tours Europe and the world. She has released a series of her own folk-song arrangements and field recordings of folk music.

Photo: Jana Jocič.

laborated with renowned musicians. Magnifico is a different kind of beast, constantly reinventing his image and musical identity as he sees fit, from a Dionysian-esque St George to a Balkan gigolo or an old-time “schlager” singer, peppering his music with Latin, surf, reggae, funk, and Balkan beat spices.

Over the past decade, new voices have started to echo from the geographical periphery and cultural margins; these are charging Slovenian folk/world music wilderness with a newly discovered localized momentum and carefully crafted idiosyncrasies that draw simultaneously from the inexhaustible, centuries-old well of grassroots creativity as well as from novel music trends.

Steeped deeply in their immediate surroundings and armed with curiosity, a key ingredient of any musical exploration, the instrumental trio **Širom**, like their sister band **Bakalina Velika** led by farmer and songwriter Jani Kutin, explore the untamable and mystical synergies of the human and natural world through abundant sonic and vocal imagery. In the last few years, **Širom** have become one of the most internationally renowned musical acts from this neck of the woods and are also a doyen of

Glitterbeat. Glitterbeat is a renowned Slovenian-German music label with headquarters in Ljubljana, which focuses on music from the Global South.

Among homegrown rising stars of world music, **Zvezdana Novaković**, a young multi-award-winning harpist, singer, and composer, transcends the boundaries between classical music, folk, and jazz. She works with

many kindred artistic spirits from across the globe. Globetrotting musicianship and puppeteering are the signatures of another wanderer – accordionist and festival initiator **Matija Solce** (Etno HistEria, Floating Castle festival).

Witty provincial chanson-esque and obscure folk symbolism, vernacular lyrics brimming with gallows humor, social commentary, and masterful storytelling are the main traits of the **Uršula Ramoveš in Fantje z Jazbecove grape** trio as well as of their (almost) next-door quirky-folky duo **Drajnarjuva vampa**. Other interesting world music performers who perform internationally are the duo **Darla Smoking** with their fusion of dub and layered field recordings of musical traditions, **Katja Šulc** with her project of setting Roma poetry to music, and **Irena Z. Tomažin** with her sporadic experimental vocal excursions into roots music.

Wilderness is an untamable place, a sort of antidote to everything we consider predictable and safe. It’s where one can encounter strangely fascinating things. There is simply no shortage of these in the folk and world music wilderness of Slovenia. Come and hear for yourself!

Rewind and Fast Forward

Oberkrainer Music – a Slovenian-Born Genre Between Tradition and Innovation

Aleksi Jercog

Alongside choir and brass music, the *oberkrainer* music genre is one of the most popularized expressions of Slovenian musical culture. It could be said that *oberkrainer* music is to Slovenia what *country* is to the USA, what *musette* is to France, or what *liscio* is to Italy. From the earliest attempts of combining folk and popular music, which gave birth to this musical genre in the mid 1950s, *oberkrainer* music securely maintained its position on the Slovenian music scene and continues to evolve in the spirit of this tradition, though it does so in line with current trends.

On one hand, this can be observed in the introduction of contemporary techniques in music and present-day themes in lyrics. On the other hand, it is evidenced in the overhauled look of the bands themselves (which are partly exchanging their previously standard national costumes for everyday freestyle attire) and in productions, which are increasingly leaning towards pop. Of late, they are mainly promoting their music using social media and YouTube, which circulate their songs and videos across the globe. This new wave of ensembles, made up of twenty- and thirty-something year-old members, includes **Poskočni muzikanti**, **Sekstakord**, **Ansambel Banovšek**, **Ansambel Roka Žlindre**, **Ansambel Jureta Zajca**, **Donačka**, **Gadi**, **Vražji muzikanti**, **S.O.S. kvintet**, **Mladi korenjaki** (Die original Jungen Helden), **Petovia kvintet** (Pettau Quintett mit Larisa Majcen) as well as many others.

These ensembles are able to play live at various festivals, concerts, and on radio and television shows, which serve as proper springboards, particularly for the youngest ensembles. Competitive festivals with the longest traditions lay claim to more than half a century worth of history (Ptujski festival, Števerjanski festival). Non-competitive festivals and thematic concerts (Festival Avsenik, Alpski večer, Noč Modrijanov, Narodno-zabavni vikend v Begunjah), on the other hand, host ensembles boasting greater notability and richer histories; the most successful of these are **Alpski kvintet** (Die Alpenoberkrainer), **Sloven-**

ski muzikantje (Original Oberkrainer Sextett), **Ansambel Franca Miheliča** (Ensemble Franz Mihelič), **Ansambel Braneta Klavžarja**, **Vagabundi** (Alpen Vagabunden), **Ansambel Zupan** (Robert Zupan und seine Oberkrainer), **Igor in Zlati zvoki** (Igor und seine Oberkrainer), **Okrogli muzikanti** (Die Runden Oberkrainer), **Slovenski zvoki**, **Veseli Begunčani** (Die Oberkrainer aus Begunje), and the exceptionally popular **Modrijani**.

Ansambel Saša Avsenika (Sašo Avsenik und seine Oberkrainer) can be considered a sort of bridge between the young wave of ensembles and those who had already written important pages in the history of *oberkrainer* music. As a member of the third generation of the Avsenik musical family, Sašo Avsenik is making sure that people can still hear his grandfather, now legendary **Slavko Avsenik's** evergreen tunes; at the same time, he is also composing new songs which aim to make his ensemble's set list more current and win over the younger audience.

The other branch of Slovenian *oberkrainer* music is represented by the predecessor of numerous modern day diatonic button accordion players, **Lojze Slak**, who's lineup, unlike Slavko Avsenik's, also included a folk instrument – the diatonic button accordion, and, in collaboration with **Fantje s Praprotna**, also revived polyphonic boys' folk singing. Most young-wave ensembles are following in their tracks, which is primarily due to the unexpected rise in popularity of the diatonic accordion,

The Avsenik Family in the Guinness Book of World Records

It was mostly owing to accordion player and composer Slavko Avsenik and his brother, arranger and producer Vilko Ovsenik that *oberkrainer* music was even born and that it grew to the scale it has today. Even a quarter of a century since its dissolution, the Ansambel bratov Avsenik (Slavko Avsenik und seine original Oberkrainer) remains the definition of this musical genre, with several books written about it. The Avsenik Museum in Begunje na Gorenjskem displays their gold and platinum records attesting to millions of sold units across Central Europe and North America. This is how the Avsenik brothers proved that Slovenian *oberkrainer* music can also be an excellent export. Avseniki performed in exceptionally prestigious halls, such as the Berlin Philharmonics, where they held as many as three stand-alone concerts. They also filled several sports halls such as the Wiener Stadthalle and Hala Tivoli in Ljubljana. The ensemble's most acclaimed song, polka *Na Golici/Trompeten-Echo*, is at the very top of the list of most performed instrumental pieces of the world. Their march polka *Planica*, *Planica/Ski-Flug*: *Planica* has the honour of being played after every above-average ski flight at Planica Ski Flying Championships. The waltz *Slovenija, odkod lepote tvoje/Slowenien, du mein Heimatland* has conquered Slovenian hearts and become a kind of an informal national anthem. Three generations of musicians, more than a thousand original compositions, more than ten thousand concerts, thirty-four gold and platinum records, tens of awards and accolades from across the globe: already in 1990, all this has been certified, in the *Guinness Book of World Records*.



Three Generations of Avseniks at the Avsenik Museum.

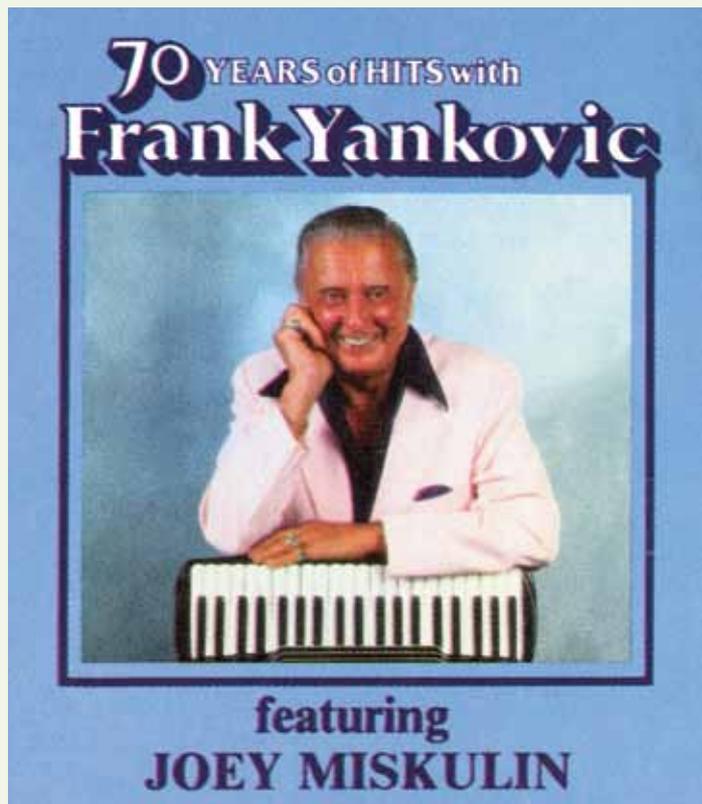
Photo: © Avsenik Museum.

which followed the first half of the 1980s. The resurgence of this folk instrument was brought about by numerous soloists, either successful performers or pedagogues such as **Zoran Lupinc**, **Toni Sotošek**, **Denis Novato**, **Robert Goter** and others.

Another interesting phenomenon is the occurrence of all girl ensembles. The originators of this wave, **Vesele Štajerke**, appeared on the scene as many as twenty years ago. They were followed by **Navihanke**, **Polka punce**, **Zapeljivke**, **Fra-**

Slovenian Polka Across the Globe

Oberkrainer music holds a certain striking self-identifying charge, which is particularly evident among Slovenian emigrants, who carried Slovenian polka and waltz songs far and wide: to Central Europe, the USA, Canada, and to a degree also to South America. In the USA, this resulted in the so-called Polka- or Cleveland style in Euclid (Cleveland, Ohio) a Polka Hall of Fame was founded, a corresponding category was established at the annual Grammy Awards (Grammy Award for Best Polka Album), and in some places Polka is even played at mass (*Polka Mass*). Accordion players who won particular fame in North America include Matt Hoyer, Frankie Yankovic, Joey Miskulin, and Walter Ostanek. Slovenian *oberkrainer* music is also fervently cultivated among Slovenian minorities in Italy, Austria, and Croatia.



Modrijani, currently one of the most popular folk-pop ensembles in Slovenia, have been around since 2000. They are known for their characteristic four-part harmonies and have won numerous prizes at Slovenian folk-pop music festivals. Every year, the group stages the now traditional *Noč Modrijanov* (transl. *Modrijani Night*); the event features varied folk-pop bands with Modrijani themselves, of course, headlining the main event. Photo: Žiga Culiberg.

jerke (Die Oberkrainer Dirndl'n), **Kvintet slovenskih deklet** (Die Oberkrainer Polka Mädels), **LadyKryner** and **Slovenke**.

Apart from the Internet, the preservation of older and dissemination of current *oberkrainer* production, is primarily in the care of television and radio stations, which broadcast it into the ether. The national TV Slovenija offers their viewers the Friday night show *Slovenski pozdrav* (transl. Slovenian Greeting). In addition, private topical television stations, such as Golica TV and Radio Veseljak also sprung up. The quality of live performances of this genre's best ensembles is ensured by Radio Slovenija's *Četrtek večer slovenskih pesmi in napevov* (transl. A Thursday Evening of Slovenian Songs and Tunes), Radio Koper's *Gremo plesat* (transl. Let's Go Dancing) and the Slovene minority's Radio Trst A's radio concerts *Iz domače zakladnice* (transl. From the Home Treasury).

Considering that Slovenian *oberkrainer* music took its baby steps almost seventy years ago in the courtyard of the Avsenik family inn, it can be said to have thus far had an upward and successful trajectory, making its way even to the stages of some of the most prestigious music halls. In all recent years, the Gallus Hall of the *Canarjev dom* in Ljubljana, the most prestigious Slovenian cultural establishment, has been hosting concerts of Avsenik's music, sometimes in the accompaniment of a symphony orchestra (academically trained composers who have arranged Avsenik's music for symphony orchestras include **Bojan Adamič**, **Jani Golob**, and **Slavko Avsenik jr.**). This musical genre is therefore performed not only by ensembles, but also brass bands, and, as stated above, even symphony orchestras.

Brass Music on Slovenian Soil – a Musical Cradle of Orchestras

Trantara-ri Now Blares Our Melody...

Boris Selko

With its first official mention dating from 1665, brass music on Slovenian soil boasts a rich tradition. Its rise and heyday ensued a bit later, i.e. from the mid 19th century onwards. When it all started, most musicians reaching for instruments were self-taught, few had musical education. As time went on, wind bands developed and transformed and today we can speak of high-quality orchestras with educated members holding secondary school and academic degrees in music. This results in top-tier performances earning Slovenian wind bands a place among the world superpowers of this musical genre.

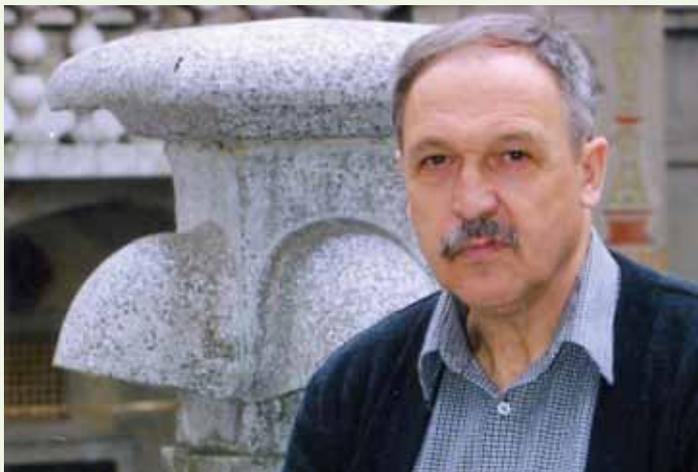
And what is the basic line-up of Slovenian wind bands? They combine winds, brass, and percussion sections; for more demanding concert pieces, these are increasingly joined by other instrument families. Wind

band repertoires include various musical genres, they put effort both in orchestral interpretation and parade performance, which includes marching and standing playing in place. This type of performance

Composing for Winds

Slovenian wind bands often reach for compositions by Slovenian composers, musical works of high, even world-class quality, which also increasingly appear on repertoires of foreign orchestras. Favourite composers include Bojan Adamič, Vinko Štručl, Emil Glavnik, and Jože Privšek (known also as Simon Gale or Jeff Conway). Recently, Tomaž Habe has gained renown as well. It is not unusual to come across wind-band music by composers taking more modern approaches such as Milko Lazar, Igor Krivokapič, or Rok Golob. A new generation is also on its way, exemplarily represented by Peter Tovornik and Aleksander Čonč.

Photo: Tomaž Habe's personal archive.



According to WASBE (World Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles), the roughly 350 year-old **Godbeno društvo rudarjev Idrija (Idrija Miners' Wind Band Society)** is the oldest wind-band society in Europe. Photo Robert Zabukovec.

most often also involves majorettes and folklore groups. All musical experts are sure to be aware of the famous phenomenon of **Ansambel bratov Avsenik** (Slavko Avsenik und seine original Oberkrainer), a band which pioneered the so called *oberkreiner* music. Their line-up also included what could be dubbed a miniature wind band, i.e. winds, brass, and a rhythm section while their music used 2/4, 3/4 and 4/4 time signatures, which are also most characteristic of brass music.

The mere level of complexity of the scores as well as the musicians' and artistic directors' aspirations for increased quality also resulted in a greater number of highly edu-

cated members. There are many examples of wind band members making music their profession. Studying at respected universities across Europe and the World brought many among them world renown and esteem as musicians or musical experts. Therefore, wind bands in Slovenia are a kind of cradle of excellent musical artists and performers. We would not be amiss in viewing them as incubators of high-quality personnel.

Slovenian wind bands are also active and successful internationally. Numerous competitions, festivals, and other ways of proving quality hardly ever conclude without them achieving top results. This has been

Because It's All So Lovely Here!

A Ride on the Highway of Slovenian Pop-Rock

Jaša Lorenčič

It was the year 2003. The group **Siddharta** shook the sold out central football stadium in Ljubljana with its “northern rock” in the accompaniment of the RTV Slovenia Symphony Orchestra. Thirty thousand people attended. A Slovenian band proved capable of matching what **Metallica** did four years ago at the same stadium. Right before joining the European Union, when Slovenian pop-rock videos competed with news programmes in prime time, it felt as though the present finally arrived in Slovenia too. Afterwards, we were left with the realization that everything they can do abroad can be done in Slovenia as well. This was enough for the young indie rock band **Koala Voice** to ironically sing today: “Because it's all so lovely here!”

A Colourful Transition

The great importance of the proportion of the foreign vs. the local was best known to those, who erected the historical pillars of the local musical scene. Slovenia was the Yugoslav republic whose progressive music (**Buldožer**), punk (**Pankrti**), new wave (**Lačni Franz**), and synth pop (**Videosex**) inspired other republics. As these bands returned from Zagreb and Belgrade with

accolades and compliments, they became legitimate generators of the Slovenian musical scene. **Laibach** demonstrated that it was possible to get even further and break into the West. In Slovenia, external validation has always been valued differently than local validation.

The only act to conquer Slovenia and then proceed to infiltrate the former Balkan

Gesamtkunstwerk Laibach

The band **Laibach** has been provoking and moulding the world's music scene since the 1980s, not only with its ever-current music, but in all of its activity, covering all artistic and socially-political spheres as part of the NSK – Neue Slowenische Kunst collective. Under the slogan “Art is fanaticism that demands diplomacy.” it even formed its own NSK state. Photo: Ciril Jazbec.



Waking up with wind bands: Every 1st of May (International Labour Day) at dawn, Slovenian wind bands roam their local areas playing marches door to door. The event is called **Budnica** (transl. May Day Reveille) and is one of Slovenia's most representative wind band events.

Papirniški pihalni orkester Vevče (The **Papirnica Vevče Wind Orchestra**), **May Day Reveille**.

Photo: Andrej Radselj.

proven over and again by **Mestna godba Kamnik**, **Godba Slovenskih železnic**, **KUD Pošta Maribor**, **Laška pihalna godba**, **Godba Cerknica**, **Pihalni orkester Krka**, **Orkester Ave**, **Papirniški pihalni orkester Vevče** and numerous other wind bands.

The Slovene Brass Orchestra Union is an umbrella organization which comprises most Slovenian brass and wind bands and collaborates exemplarily with the two professional orchestras, those of the police and the military. It runs projects hand in hand with JSKD – The Public Fund for Cultural Activities of the Republic of Slovenia and also has the support of the Ministry of Culture. The Union is a member of the International Confederation of Music Societies CISM and, by extension, UNESCO, which lends Slovenian wind bands a formal legal status in the international musical mosaic.

There are more than 150 active Slovenian brass and wind bands (with more than 10 000 members), which is an enviable number for such a small territory. These are subdivided in four levels of difficulty of which “artistic” is the highest. There are also veteran brass and wind bands while youth orchestras guarantee that brass music will also endure in Slovenia in times to come.

“Trantara-ri now blares our melody...” is the translation of lyrics to the instrumental-vocal march by **Bojan Adamič**, one of the great Slovenian composers. In its interpretation, the composition is a reflection of the Slovenian wind musicians' favourite activities, i.e. playing and delighting audiences both at home and abroad.



Koala Voice are considered one of the most beloved Slovenian indie-rock groups of the younger generation; with their many appearances at various European (showcase) festivals and other venues, they also thoroughly caught the ear of the international public. Photo: Saša Huzjak.

market without neglecting the former was **Magnifico**. When foreign labels wanted to hear more songs like *Hir aj kom hir aj go* (2014), he realised “there’s no place like home”. Never in the mainstream, but always flirting with it, he continuously gets better at charming the varied post-transition multitudes at home as well as, for example, in Belgrade, where his *Pukni zoro* is sung at Marakana, their largest football stadium, as though it were a naturalised folk tune even though *Magnifico* wrote it at home, in Ljubljana. Even his mother asked him, if he really wrote the song himself! If he spent the 1990s following contemporary influences to challenge the local wholesome tradition, he is now a successful “retrologist”.

Path to X

At the break of the millennium, the determination of the public radio and television station Slovenia (radio Val 202, TV Slovenia) finally ended the local (pop) rock’s wait for its pedestal, though it was unaware of the phenomenon at the time. This relatively successful transition was crowned by Siddharta’s stadium concert. This band contemporised **Big Foot Mama**’s hard

garage rock and then attempted to follow the example of Laibach by, somewhat less successfully, seeking their path (to x) abroad before becoming part of the Slovenian classic hard rock cannon and humbly though respectfully demonstrating that rock can make its way into every Slovenian town and village. This triggered a change that eventually came to fruition. Now small Slovenian towns are discovering that they can provide a concert experience which nearly equals those in Ljubljana, Maribor, and Koper.

If you want to see Slovenia scream and jump to hard guitar music, you can’t miss with the sworn and unchanging Bigfoot Mama, or **Mi2**, whose social criticism through the megaphone of locally patriotic souls is overtaking nostalgia, whatever it once was. If you lean more towards the pop end of the scale, the band **Tabu** remains active and, in spite of changing their singer for the third time, does its best to keep (its own pace of) putting out hit songs, while increasingly carrying the baton of Slovenian pop rock. In the past decade, this genre changed direction from guitar-riff driven bands (**Nude**, **Društvo mrtvih pesnikov**)



As soon as the Slovenian-Croatian duo **2Cellos** unpretentiously published its debut video *Smooth Criminal* on the Youtube platform, they became a word-wide crossover phenomenon. Throughout their career, the duo lined up a plethora of instrumental hits comprised of arrangements of well-known pop and rock songs, as well as classical music and film scores. Lately, both Slovene **Luka Šulić** and his Croatian colleague **Stjepan Hauser** have been focusing on solo careers, which will follow the trajectory set out by the initial line-up. Photo: Simone Di Luca.

to individual distinctly pop-oriented leading men (**Jan Plestenjak**, **Omar Naber**) and particularly women (**Neisha**, **Lea Sirk**, **Raiven**), who make up the specific but also sonorously brave heritage of the famed Slovenska popevka pop festival.

The Dan D Experiment

Meanwhile, the Novo mesto-based band **Dan D** demonstrated that it was possible to move away from the rock (media) mainstream. After their song *Čas* (transl. Time) in 2004 became a big hit and enabled them to perform almost everywhere, they completely changed direction with their acoustic concert series *Tiho* (transl. Quietly) and confined themselves to the garage. At first,

only colleagues and fellow townspeople were invited to join them, however later, as per the old adage of the mountain not coming to Muhammad, there followed a pilgrimage of all those who wanted to hear a changed rock music, which dared to be different, contemporary, and to evolve. Among “premiere league” bands, it was **Elvis Jackson** who most successfully treaded foreign soil, getting even as far as opening for Faith No More.

Koalas and the Two Millennial Snowflakes

If ever a promising band should truly lament a temporary “breakdown” of the van taking them across Slovenian borders, it



In love with one another and their music, the ethereal **zalagasper** (Zala Kralj & Gašper Šantl) enchanted the international audience at the 2019 Eurovision Song Contest. Photo: Ana Šantl.

is Koala Voice. This indie rock four swiftly conquered club venues, larger halls, the public, and won critical acclaim ensuring their place as the opening act for the Pixies. Yes, it all went quickly.

Among other ways, Koala Voice also crossed the elusive line between alternative and mainstream music by playing at the main state commemoration ceremony, which is unusual even for established Slovenian rock performers. Therefore, it is neither exception nor rule, but rather millennial ingenuity which can address the public at the right time and widely enough for their tune to make it to a popular television series (Ekipa Bled). This generation is not only comprised, but defined by similar bands, such as **Mrfy**, **Joker Out**, and **Fed Horses**. All these play finely tuned, genre-specific, and genuinely reckless rock, while their concerts are populated by a cross-section of their peers and those who prefer mainstream music.

And if you want to find out about all the places a band can play in Slovenia and then abroad, a highly colourful answer will be supplied for you by the band **Prismojeni profesorji bluesa** (Wacky Blues Pro-

fessors), while **Stray Train**'s hard work and efforts have demonstrated that hard rock can also be re-imported to Slovenia.

The Slovenian festival **Gora rocka** (transl. The Mountain of Rock), which has now become an annual event, presents a cross section of the pop rock scene. Slovenia continues to hold competently organised secondary-school (Špil liga) and university (ŠouRock) competitions, which still adhere to guitar rock. However, where the key yearly mainstream musical event – EMA the final selection for Eurosong – is concerned, guitars very, very rarely prove successful. EMA is the ultimate media prism of the music scene. This is why it resounded so much more with **zalagasper**, a duo, which re-examined the parameters and even purpose of mainstream. These “millennial snowflakes from a galaxy far, far away” won the public vote, indicating a possible musical future, whatever it may once become.

Slovenia – a Wild Land

A Small Country of Metal People

Ivan Cepenec

Even though the small country of Slovenia only sparked the interest of the world metal audience in 2004 with the appearance and development of its Metalcamp festival (later changed to **MetalDays**), it has since become the home of an exceptionally dynamic and rich metal scene, which is shaped by numerous bands, concert organizers, various clubs, and festivals.

Until 1991, it was part of the large Yugoslav scene. Local bands, such as for example **Pomaranča** (Orange), **Interceptor**, **Sarcasm**, **Epidemic Zone**, **Xenophobia** created, gigged, and attempted to break through abroad. However, economic and

political reasons stood in their way. It is a known fact that, even then, the Slovenian scene already had something to offer the world; The Koroška region's locals Xenophobia were close to releasing an album with Nuclear Blast, one of the biggest metal

What Else Matters?

With the slogan “What Else Matters?”, the current and best-known Slovenian metal music festival MetalDays is continuing the mission first undertaken by the former Metalcamp festival. It is continuing the tradition of an integrated metal holiday presenting a line-up of 80 bands in 7 days each year including world-renowned acts. In addition, it also provides less established and especially unknown bands sailing the waters of extreme music with the opportunity to perform. Of course, there is more to the metal holiday than just bands; the experience includes anything a metalhead could desire – from cocktails to various sporting and adrenaline-filled activities, all this surrounded by stunning nature at the confluence of two crystal-clear alpine rivers.

Photo: Stipe Surač.

METALDAYS





Noctiferia are considered the first Slovenian metal band to break out into the world whose every publication transcends the boundaries of extreme music. They are currently preparing an album of remakes of **Laibach** songs in collaboration with renowned performers of this music scene such as **David Vincent (Vltimas, ex-Morbid Angel)**, **Attila (Mayhem)**, and many others. Photo: Alen Orlič.

labels in the world today, while metal enthusiasts worldwide consider the split CD by doom metal groups **In A Spleen** and **Obscurity** one of the most sought after albums.

As the years passed, political-economic changes in Slovenia and particularly Slovenia's accession to the EU in 2004 facilitated the growth and expansion of the the Slovenian metal scene. Today, at least in metal circles, the country is most frequently associated with its MetalDays festival, which is not only unique in its duration and concept, but also prized for its strong ecological tone. And it is this festival that often introduces Slovenian bands to foreigners and serves as an excellent springboard launching them into the world. This article will focus on a few line-ups whose current activity irrefutably attracts the attention of the world's metal audience.

First there is **Noctiferia**, the first Slovenian metal band that also succeeded to perform beyond their country's borders. They have been playing continuously for 25 years

and it is worth noting that they have been evolving and changing throughout this time. From groove, through death and black metal, to gothic rock, they successfully incorporated it all into their constantly transforming DNA. They even recorded their acoustic album titled *Transnatura* in collaboration with Slovenian musicians from other musical genres, while the band is currently focusing on making an album covering songs by the legendary **Laibach** in collaboration with performers from the world-wide metal scene.

Perhaps even more renowned right now, is the death metal band **Within Destruction**. In the course of 10 years, this band became one of the most widely recognised names of Slovenian metal because their excellent Internet promotion, very good albums, and perseverance earned them a home at the Unique Leader Records, which is considered one of the best-known labels on the death metal scene. They are also the first Slovenian metal band that toured the USA repeatedly as well as played in Asia. They too have evolved with each record; since



The brutal **Within Destruction** comprise two members from Slovenia, one from the USA, and another from Italy. They offer something new with each new record. On their current *Yokai* album, what started out sounding like classic American melodeath metal, has become a combination of slamming death metal and trap. They toured the US and Asia several times, criss-crossed all of Europe, and are now announcing a forthcoming invasion of Australia. Photo: © Within Destruction.

their early beginnings of playing melodic death metal they have grown into a destructive slamming death metal force, and are, with their upcoming album, already transforming into a modern technical death metal band, which sees no shame in flirting with other genres, such as trap.

Srd is the leading name of Slovenian black metal; it is slowly taking over the world under the umbrella of The Sinister Initiative lead by the legend of Swedish depressive black metal Niklas Kvarforth. They first commanded attention with their black 'n' roll debut, which included their musical rendition of the poem *Soči* by Slovenian poet Simon Gregorčič; next, they covered most of Europe earning high praise at the English Bloodstock festival and elsewhere. They are already stirring things up again with their new material, which will probably be entirely in Slovenian, an approach which is, at least on the world black metal scene, regarded highly.

We mustn't forget to mention the exceptionally loud **The Canyon Observer**,

whose vision of drone-noise-post metal evolves further with each new album. Their most recent independent single *Urn*, which they launched as a Christmas single, consists of a single 17-minute song, and is more diverse and varied than many contemporary metal albums. Among others, The Canyon Observer's performances have predominantly attracted the attention of English organisers, who invited the band to several festivals; they are also the first Slovenian metal band to have toured Cuba.

Eruption and **Vigilance** stand out in the traditional metal circles. Both of these bands' albums regularly exceed the limits of speed-, trash-, and power metal; they also both found their homes at foreign labels, and frequently perform abroad.

It is therefore obvious that, considering the country's small size, the Slovenian metal scene is copious, active, and dynamic. Even if you only explore the names above, you are sure to discover a lot, and this is only the tip of the iceberg.

Where Have All the Troubadours Gone?

Singer-Songwriters From Slovenia

Katarina Juvančič

Slovenian singer-songwriters make up a flock of sundry birds who put their message across using a cornucopia of musical forms, literary styles, and approaches to performance. These modern musical storytellers can be found busking on streets, strumming away in private living-room concerts, or luring crowds to big concert halls with their lyrical, intimate, socially engaged, or protest songs.

The first Slovenian singer-songwriters emerged in the late 1960's; **Tomaž Domicelj**, **Aleksander Mežek** (known abroad as **Alexander John**), and **Andrej Šifrer** built their fame largely on American

folk music legacy of masters the likes of Woody Guthrie and Bob Dylan. But by the mid-70's, a new wave of singer-songwriters emerged, who favoured idiosyncratically and artistically blending poetry with mu-

sic, a style which culminated in **Tomaž Pengov's** lyrical *Odpotovanja* (1973), and **Marko Breclj's** lushly orchestrated and chanson-like tracks on *Cocktail* (1974). Their breakthrough inspired many youngsters, who developed the "six-strings-and-one-narrative" template further. The most distinguished among them, the husky voiced **Jani Kovačič**, added socially critical lyrics and sharp guitar riffs to the equation and cultivated subtler notes drawn from traditional songs, chansons, and beat poetry.

Throughout the 1980's and the 1990's, the singer-songwriter scene became more di-

versified, professional, and broad-based, incorporating rock band frontmen **Vlado Kreslin**, **Zoran Predin**, **Peter Lovšin**, **Andrej Guček**, grassroots bard **Adi Smolar**, feisty poetess **Ksenija Jus**, and master of dialectal tales **Iztok Mlakar**, who rarely appears in public, yet remains the best-selling singer-songwriter in the country. Some of the most influential singer-songwriters came from abroad and are now an inextricable part of the Slovenian "songwriter's landscape" – **Chris Eckman** (from Seattle, USA), and **Damir Avdić** (from Tuzla, Bosnia – Herzegovina).

The first decade of the new millennium



Singing for a dustbin: **Kantfest International** is a competitive festival for singer-songwriters from Slovenia and beyond held annually in the town of Ruše (NE Slovenia). The three winners are awarded actual dustbins – a wordplay on *kantavtor* (Slovenian word for singer-songwriter, which derives from the Italian *cantautore*) and *kanta*, meaning *dustbin* – a metaphor for the marginal status of singer-songwriters. Photo: © Kantfest International.

Bob Dylan of the Balkans

Vlado Kreslin is known as a kind of Slovenian Bob Dylan. Along with his then band Beltinška Banda, he was responsible for igniting renewed interest in the nation's folk music heritage in the 1990s. A number of his songs have become folk standards, while others have inspired novels, feature films, and doctoral dissertations. He has toured extensively at home and abroad, appeared in movies, documentaries, and also scored for film and theatre. Photo: Polona Eržen.





Tomaž Hostnik (in the picture alongside his *Drajnarjuva vampa* co-member) is a classically trained pianist, whose approach to composition melds his considerable academic understanding of music with elements of chanson music in the style reminiscent of Tom Waits. Tomaž's lyrics are marked by dialect, gallows humour, sharp social commentary, obscure folk imagery, raspy vocals, and inventive melodies, all of which are staples of a masterful storyteller. Photo: Tomaž Hostnik's personal archive.



Peter Andrej, singer-songwriter and Kantfest organiser: "If the Slovenian language were as widespread as English, Slovenian singer-songwriters would be world-famous stars." Photo: Nejc Ketiš.

saw the advent of a new generation of singer-songwriters, such as **Tadej Vesenj**, **Matej Krajnc**, **Andraž Polič**, **Boštjan Narat**, the late **Katarina Avbar**, and duets such as **Gal** and **Severa Gjurin**, **Katarina Juvančič & Dejan Lapanja**, and **Jani Kutin (Bakalina)**. Many of these honed their craft at the **Kantfest International** festival, which was established in 2002 to cultivate and showcase fresh talents as well as provide them with a stage and studio experience. The local and international platforms for singer-songwriters have been expanding ever since, enabling a new breed of modern troubadours such as **Martin Ramoveš**, **Daniel Vezoja**, **Tomaž Hostnik** (duo *Drajnarjuva vampa*), **Jana Beltran** (duo *All Strings Detached*), **Sandra Erpe**, **Jakob Kobal**, **Samuel Blues**, **Ditka** etc. to grow as performers and give fresh momentum to the singer-songwriter scene.

Outside the Mainstream, Into the Future

Following the Course of Alternative and Indie(pendent) Scenes

Andraž Kajzer

Already while it was part of Yugoslavia, before gaining its independence in 1991, Slovenia was renowned for its alternative music. This was chiefly due to its innovative and alternative bands like **Laibach**, **Borghesia**, **Buldožer**, and **Pankrti**, though events such as the yearly overview of the alternative scene of the time – the Novi Rock festival, headed by the now legendary concert promotor Igor Vidmar, certainly played an important part as well.

After Slovenian independence, Novi Rock endured until 2000, the very next year the baton passed to **Klubski maraton** (transl. Club Marathon) – an annual competitive selection of six new bands, which continues to scour all of Slovenia to this day under

the auspices of **Radio Študent**. With more than 50 years of heritage, Radio Študent remains one of the most important pillars of the local alternative scene. Klubski maraton gave a leg up to a number of bands and individuals, who continue to shape the re-



Damir Avdič is a master of heavy though catchy riffs and lucid thoughts poured into sharp verses. For years, this singer-songwriter, formerly known as "the Bosnian psycho", has been living and working in Slovenia, where he predominantly collaborates with performing artists and composes for theatre. Photo: Jože Suhadolnik.



The band **The Canyon Observer** is the embodiment of the verse by M. J. Lermontov “as if in storm lurked calm and peace”. In recent years, they demonstrated with each new edition and performance how to push to boundaries of both their own and their audience’s limitations. Photo: © The Canyon Observer

silient core of individuality in music and approaches. During this time, **Metelkova** was established in the capital, at first as a squat and later an autonomous cultural zone with regular and abundant musical events. Its clubs continue to resonate with the extensive Slovenian network and beyond.

Through the years, the penetrating and exploratory approach to music has taken many performers abroad. Line-ups ranging from the free-punk-jazz band **Miladojka Youneed**, and avant-punk band **2227**, to the heavy-hitting **Demolition Group** cultivated their cutting-edge sound already in the 1980s, a period strongly influenced by characters linked to the FV institute. Later, bands also came out of the Metelkova’s **Gala hala** club and its **Kapa** label. Both **Srečna Mladina** and **Moveknowledge-ment** influenced new generations, while, in addition to touring Europe, the ska band **Red Five Point Star** also frequently played in South Africa and across the pond. During this period, the Prekmurje region also reared an enviable scene with the Slovenian alternative mecca of the time forming around the MIKK club and the **God**

Bless This Mess label headed by the band **Psycho-Path** and later **ŠKM banda** and **Hexenbrutal**.

Through the years, Slovenian alternative music became exceedingly diversified, which is why the intertwining variety of musical expressions of today is difficult to define. **Moonlee Records**, active since 2004, is one of Slovenia’s internationally better connected independent labels. Slovenian bands that must be mentioned here are Psychopath’s successors **Werefox**, the indestructible-in-concert **Nikki Louder**, and the electrifying punk singer-songwriter **Damir Avdić**, originally from Bosnia–Herzegovina, who has been active in Ljubljana for years. In the course of time, the Kapa label similarly opened its doors to different expressions; in recent years they put out albums by a variety of different bands ranging from the post-metal **The Canyon Observer**, which boasts a Cuban tour, the ex-Yugoslav rock inspired punk rockers **Čao Portorož**, and the shoegazing **Haiku Garden**, who are currently one of the most enduring Slovenian bands on the international map.

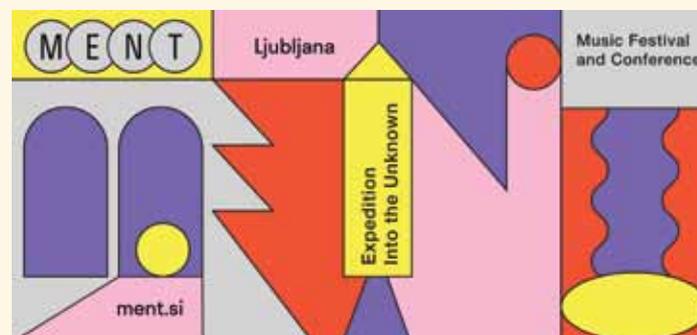
The label also collaborates with **Darla Smoking**, a band grooving on world music samples, and pianist and producer **Bowrain**.

Audiences have always welcomed the scene’s eclectic character, as evidenced on local stages and at festivals. Among the latter, we must mention the **Sajeta** festival in Tolmin, the Škofja loka based **In Memoriam prof. Peter Hafner, Trnje** in Pivka, **Kunigunda** in Velenje, the festival of labels **Tresk**, Maribor’s **Lent**, and Ljubljana’s **MENT** festival. On the other hand, genre-based festivals **Punk Rock Holiday** and **MetalDays** are also very popular.

The Slovenian alternative scene is small and well connected. For example, a member of the ŠKM banda and Hexenbrutal, **Iztok Koren**, is currently performing across

the globe with **Širom**, a band which makes “imaginary folk music”, while one of the more notable Slovenian rappers **N’toko**, who actually performed at **Glastonbury**, is also the former frontman of the afore mentioned Moveknowledge-ment. A multitude of rappers of both genders such as **Mito**, **OYGN**, or the modern-day trappers **Matter** attest to the fact that hip-hop is alive and kicking too. These performers are also closely associated with **YGT**, the producer duo and VJ, who have in recent years mostly been publishing with small foreign labels. Both ensembles are also closely linked to the Slovenian **rx:tx** label, which is one of the main players on the boutique electronic scene and also the home of concert delicacy **The Jimmy Barka Experience** – a line-up of two DJs and drummer.

The Best Indoor & Best Small Festival



Though festival MENT Ljubljana focuses on the local, regional, and Eastern European scenes, it nevertheless hosts bands and music professionals from all over Europe. In recent years, the festival hosted representatives of various festivals (Pohoda, Tallinn Music Week, Iceland Airwaves, Les Trans Musicales, Le Guess Who?, Haldern Pop, Taksirat, Pop-Kultur, Glastonbury, Sziget, Atlas Weekend, Colours of Ostrava...), music-related companies and agencies such as record labels, music agencies, concert promoters and venues, managements, music media, sync agencies, PR agencies, networks, distributors, as well as many music export offices. The conference is heavily attended by professionals from the region – especially Croatia, Serbia, and Macedonia, and from nearby countries: Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Italy, Germany. MENT won best indoor & best small festival at the 2017 European Festival Awards.



The Pantaloons 'drum & brass' trio derives its inspiration both from Guča-style horn players and the contemporary London jazz scene. Even though their music-making is limited to the tuba, saxophone, and drums, their playful tunes combine influences of jazz, funk, breakbeat, dubstep, and more. Photo: Eros Brajko.

Another boutique label, **Kamizdat**, focuses primarily on experimental electronic music. They publish albums of **Shekuza**, another member of Moveknowledge. **Warrego Valles** – an experimental electronic duo that manages the **Pritličje** space and the **Grounded** festival is another highly active client at this label, while noise producer **Lifecutter**, who is also one half of the ambient noise duo **Ontervjab-bit**, also often performs abroad.

Alternative music in Slovenia certainly isn't afraid to fuse genres. The sounds of Africa are the wheelhouse of band **Neseari Kakalulu**, which is also close to the hearts of a plethora of Slovenian jazz inspired bands, be it punk jazz band **Koromač**, brass-playing **Pantaloons**, electrified **Etceteral**, or the self-made **Mart**. On occasion, bands forming this scene also move closer to the mainstream – for example, in recent years, in spite of their youth, **Koala Voice** covered nearly all of Europe. Other bands that are also not afraid to be accessible include **Malidah**, either on her own as a more experimental solo act or with her band **Liamere**, the futuristic **Futurski**, the synth-pop band **Torul**, which frequently

performs in Germany, and **KYK/JA**, whose unique expression combines 1990s RNB with Slavic influences and which regularly tours abroad.

The **Human Host Body**, **Leechfeast**, the more rock-oriented **Body Says No**, and dance-oriented **Karmakoma** travel lagging heavy guitars. The **It's everyone else** is a must-see live, this Leipzig based industrial synth duo is published by Austrian label Noise Appeal. In recent years, Klubski maraton turned up a bunch of promising niche bands – such as the ultra-productive lo-fi aesthetics enthusiasts **balans** and the grunge trio adhering to DIY principles, **7AM**.

These underdogs possess an enviable innovative and penetrating expression. Music that conforms neither to the needs of the market or patterns is of utmost importance and possibly also utmost longevity. All those listed above stand as indispensable building blocks of an extremely diverse scene, which is laying foundations for future generations and simultaneously leaving traces of original expression abroad, just as their predecessors had done before them.

Can They Kick It?!

How Far Do the Slogans of Slovenian Rhyme-Kickers Fly?

Borja Močnik

In the pioneer years of Slovenian hip hop, i.e. from the mid 1990s to the start of the new millennium, Slovenian hip hop practices and their associated initiatives happened in bursts. The mere historical fact that the today no-less-than-legendary American line up The Roots played Ljubljana as early as 1994 is a kind of validation, but what is even more surprising is the number of Slovenian rappers who jumped on stage at the tail end of the concert to pass the microphone with the group.

In those years, Slovenian rap albums were dropping sporadically. It started in 1994 with **Ali En**'s cult album *Leva scena* and continued in 1996 with the conspicuously named Maribor-based duo **Dandrough**'s debut album. We could mark the end of the first period with the thus-far best-selling Slovenian rap album *Trnow stajl*. It was recorded in 2000 by **Klemen Klemen**, Ljubljana's master storyteller and perhaps even the best-known of all Slovenian rappers.

Today, the situation is, of course, entirely different, events are fragmented and players better organised. In Ljubljana, the area of the former **Metelkova** squat has for years been the scene of a monthly event known as Rapetek (transl. Rap-Friday), which hosted numerous regional and world-renowned names of rap. Two genre-specific festivals Bring the Noise and the regionally specialized Hiphop Reunion are both run by **Mrigo**, a rapper activist from the small mining town of Velenje, which itself boasts an exceptionally vibrant rap scene.

The renowned veteran of "alter rap", the lucid and skillful lyricist **N'toko** stands out among internationally

acknowledged Slovenian rappers. This former national freestyle champion spits rhymes in both English and Slovenian and has quite a few international tours under his belt, extending as far as Japan.

The language barrier naturally resulted in

A Global Aesthetic With a Whiff of Rural Authenticity

According to radio announcer, event promoter and organizer, and all-round connoisseur of the scene Jizah, Slovenian hip hop "... utilises global hip hop aesthetics and iconography but adds a whiff of rural authenticity and specific local tint – always respecting the laws of slang and walking the thin line between underground authenticity and commercialism."

Photo: Jizah's personal archive.





N'toko is a multi-award-winning national freestyle rap champion, and one of the few Slovenian rappers who also writes in English. He is no stranger to foreign countries; he even appeared at the Glastonbury festival. He frequently performs with live bands. Photo: Borut Peterlin.

a specific local feature of beat makers having greater potential for an international breakthrough than the main protagonists – MCs. Let us list a few; the first of these beat makers, who is not tied exclusively to the

hip hop scene, is the USA-based **Gramatik**. In the past, he has collaborated with the likes of rap giant Raekwon. Standing out among the younger generation are the Maribor-based youth **Emiljo A.C.**, who re-



The **Gala Hala** venue in Ljubljana can accommodate approximately 350 visitors and hosts around 100 events of differing genres yearly. One of its regular series is **Rapetek** (transl. **Rap-Friday**), which features well-known Slovenian and foreign hip-hop performers. Photo: Andrija Željko



Senidah is unique on the Slovenian and broader Balkan music scene insofar as she is practically the only Slovenian artist to cross over from R&B to trap pop. In the last five years, she has become a star of the local ex-Yugoslav pop scene.

Photo: Matic Kremžar.

cently contributed a large portion of beats to the album *Black Rock* by New York veterans Onyx, and the somewhat mysterious **Hyu**, who, in addition to producing for a heap of local rappers, also demonstrates the unmistakable appeal of his music in collaborations with various pop vocalists.

Perhaps the greatest potential for breaking through internationally can be ascribed to the “commercially successful” producers aiming at streaming platforms, radio waves, and regularly uploading countless viral videos. Regionally, the top breakthrough artist is the exceptionally successful **Cazzafura**, who is in charge of producing music for the currently best known female Slovenian “pop trap” singer in the space of former Yugoslavia, **Senidah**. She consistently tallies record numbers of streams and other musical industry statistics in the Balkan area.

The team of **Dravle Records**, gathered around producer Damjan Jovič, is another company with the potential to line up international collaborations in the context of current rap, trap, and RnB-related pop trends. The Slovenian rap scene awaits the emergence of a new wave of English tongue aerobics while keeping an eye on the company of niche and pop producers, who have either already stepped onto the global scene or are well on their way to do so.

Between the Clubs and the Inquisitive Music of Pressing Keys

In the Small Land of Wide Panoramas of Electronic Music

Borja Močnik

The first regular electronic club nights in Slovenia started relatively early. The possibly very first one was navigated by **Aldo Ivančič**, the head of the cult EBM group **Borghesia** in as early as 1991, at the longest-running club in Ljubljana, **K4**. Things began unfolding much faster in the second half of the 1990s. On one hand, this is reflected in the international breakthrough of the currently most famous Slovenian DJ **Umek** and remarkable publishing exploits of certain producers, most notably duo **Random Logic**, who were strongly influenced by the electro scene and Detroit techno. On the other hand, by the end of the millennium, the club scene branched out, solidified, and brought about a striking and, relative to the country's size, disproportionately monumental rise of drum 'n' bass, which was primarily the result of the efforts of the **Radyoyo** team.

From then on, particularly in Ljubljana, the supply in the arena of club culture has remained enviably consistent and, relative to the city's size, quite extensive. It is undeni-

ably a particular characteristic of Slovenian space that it serves as the breeding space of a surprisingly numerous company of curious and technically skilled DJs, who are

The Unexpected Beathead Who Conquered the United States

Producer and DJ Gramatik from the coastal region of Slovenia specializes in mashing up hip hop beats, EDM, and electronica. After unexpectedly topping the Beatport charts more than a decade ago, he decided to move to New York. Today he is a major electronic music touring artist. His latest album *Re: Coil Deluxe* was released in 2020. Photo: © Gramatik.



Borghesia was a progressive collective for social taboo confrontation formed in the 1980s. Not only were they crucial pioneers of EBM and post-wave music on a global scale, they also included a cutting-edge visual and video component. In recent years, the initiative was resurrected by its driving-force duo of Aldo Ivančič and Dario Seraval, who assembled a collective of new, younger musicians under the same name. Photo: Jože Suhadolnik.

regionally well connected but lack regular international appearances. The number of producers that consistently publish with labels at home and abroad is also encouraging. Exceptional Slovenian institutions releasing electronic music include niche labels such as **Kamizdat**, which focuses on publishing fringe as well as radical electronic music by local performers and works under the Creative Commons licence, and the **rx:tx** label, which has been, for a number of years, supplying a wide array of sounds by local and foreign performers irrelevant of genre, ranging from purely ex-

perimental noise and beeps, to more radio-friendly tunes. Also noteworthy, is the **Phi** label, which specialises in vinyl publications of fringe house club music and is also involved in organising club events.

The incredible diversity of the local scene is evident even from a short overview of its more visible key figures. The mainstream remains dominated by Umek and his company **Viberate**, whose mode of operation is entirely corporate. The most internationally established Slovenian producer of the last decade is the USA-based **Gramatik**,



Warrego Valles members, DJs & queer activists Nina Hudej and Nina Belle, explore the fringes of forward thinking club- and experimental electronic music. They're also active as promoters and curators of niche electronic music events in Ljubljana such as the Grounded Festival or the day-to-day programme at Ljubljana's notable Pritličje venue. Photo: Luna Woelle.

who produces a sort of hybrid of hip hop and remnants of EDM. Underneath the surface, away from the mainstream, producers and DJs **Christian Kroupa** and **Ichisan** secured an enviable number of publications and performances abroad. The former, in the field of experimental techno and house, and the latter in nu disco. Experimental techno duo **Warrego Valles** also publishes regularly. Some of the younger DJs and producers joined the contemporary trend of genre eclecticism in an imaginative and distinct way. They play and produce musical hybrid recordings of house, breakbeat, ambient music, downtempo,

jungle... Among these, Ljubljana-based masters **Vid Vai** and **Simm** stand out.

We needn't fear for the future of the Slovenian electronic music scene. There is a regular influx of new home-grown music, which meanders in various directions. New boutique festivals are emerging, such as **Stiropor** and **Butik**. In recent years, the scene has also received validation from trendy foreign institutions; the most obvious examples of these were recent appearances by Boiler Room and the Amsterdam Red Light Radio in Ljubljana.

DJ Umek has been in the business for around thirty years and is easily the most popular Slovenian DJ and producer of electronic dance music. He is regularly ranked among the world's top DJs. Photo: © Umek.



Collecting Societies



IPF, k.o.

The Collective Management Organisation of Performers and Producers of Phonograms of Slovenia, k.o. (IPF, k.o.) is the only Slovenian organisation managing the neighbouring rights of performers and phonograms producers (record labels). It collectively manages and protects the rights of Slovenian performers and phonogram producers in Slovenia and abroad, as well as, based on international contracts, the rights of foreign performers and phonogram producers in Slovenia.

www.ipf.si



AIPA, k.o.

The AIPA, k.o. organization primarily deals with collective enforcement and securing of the rights of authors, performers, and producers of audio-visual works. AIPA has been operating under the Copyright and Related Rights Act since October 2010. Based on bilateral agreements, mandates, and other types of authorization on the part of coauthors, performers, and producers of audio-visual works, AIPA enforces and secures rights around the globe. AIPA is a full member of international organisations CISAC, SAA, SCAPR, Agicoa Alliance, FERA, and AEPO-ARTIS.

www.aipa.si



SAZAS Society k.o.

SAZAS Society k.o. is a collective management organisation for the protection and promotion of musical authors' rights in Slovenia. As a collective management organisation operates since March 12th, 1998 when the state authorisation was issued by the Intellectual Property Office of Slovenia (SIPO) – SIPO's authorisation no. 800-3/96 for collective management of authors' rights in music, covering: performing rights, mechanical author's rights and for the distribution of private copying levies. SAZAS is a full member of CISAC – International Confederation of Societies of Composers and Authors since 1996 and BIEM – International organisation representing mechanical rights societies since 2003. (source: <https://www.sazas.org/English-forms>)

www.sazas.org



KOPRIVA, k.o.

The KOPRIVA society is a collective organisation in charge of implementing the right to fair compensation for audio or video recordings made for private and other personal use (personal reproduction). The compensation is due authors, performers, phonograms producers, and film producers; Kopriva turns the compensation over to the following organisations: AIPA, IPF, SAZAS, and ZAMP (Slovenian Authors' Society).

www.kopriva.si

Formal Music Education in Slovenia

Music education in Slovenia is conducted on three levels: the primary (primary music schools), secondary (parallel instruction at a secondary music school or conservatory or at a music high school), and university level.

Many Slovenes study music in their teens and if they later decide to pursue a career in music they can choose from among three university courses: one at the Ljubljana Academy of Music, another at the Musicology Department of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Ljubljana, and a third at the Music Department of the Faculty of Education at the University of Maribor.

Univerza v Ljubljani
Akademija *za glasbo*



The **Academy of Music at the University of Ljubljana** offers courses in the musical arts (composition and music theory, orchestral and other instruments, voice, and sacred music) and music education. Courses are available at the undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate level. The Academy also comprises a number of large instrumental and vocal ensembles as well as chamber ensembles. Each year, the Academy holds three series of public events: concerts of larger ensembles, chamber music concerts, and soloist concerts. The academy also participates in a number of international projects. Academy students have won important international prizes and successfully perform on both Slovenian and international concert stages.

www.ag.uni-lj.si



The **Department of Musicology** at the **University of Ljubljana's Faculty of Arts** is the only Slovenian higher-level educational institution offering musicology and ethnomusicology courses at all levels. The department is involved in a number of national and international research projects, holds scientific symposiums, and hosts guest lecturers from abroad. It publishes the musicological periodical *Muzikološki zbornik/ Musicological Annual*.

<https://muzikologija.ff.uni-lj.si/en>



Faculty of Education

The **Department of Music** at the **Faculty of Education** at the **University of Maribor** trains future music teachers for all levels of instruction. In addition to specialised teaching methods, students also study composition, instrumental performance, and vocal technique.

<https://pef.um.si>



The music workshop for children at the **Sajeta Art & Music Festival**. Sajeta focuses on creative original music practices irrelevant of musical genre or of the divide between serious and popular music. The festival emphasises experimental, improvised, electronic, and fringe line-ups.

Photo: Iztok Zupan.

Want to know more about music festivals in Slovenia? Turn the page!

About Music Slovenia



Music Slovenia

Music Slovenia is a consortium of numerous Slovenian musical institutions, which promote Slovenian music nationally and internationally. The aim of Music Slovenia is to establish connections between various actors on different Slovenian musical scenes and to encourage them to participate in national and international collaborations in order to increase the visibility and popularity of Slovenian music worldwide. Music Slovenia is officially represented by SIGIC – The Slovenian Music Information Centre.

Do you want to learn more about Slovenian:

- music festivals,
- concert venues and concert organizers,
- music labels,
- music studios,
- music institutions,
- music promoters and agencies,
- **musicians and their music?**

For further current information about Slovenian music and musical infrastructure visit www.musicslovenia.si



About SIGIC



SIGIC

SIGIC – The Slovenian Music Information Centre is the central information point for Slovenian music, musicians, music professionals, and current music events and activities. The organisation systematically promotes Slovenian music and musicians, both nationally and internationally. To this end, SIGIC connects with numerous musical institutions in Slovenia and around the world, and is a full member of IAMIC, the International Association of Music Information Centres. SIGIC publishes a web music magazine called **Odzven**, which offers critical reflection on and analysis of current musical activities of all genres. It also releases compilation CDs featuring achievements by current Slovenian artists of individual musical genres.

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Momus *Monumenta musica Slovenica*

MOMUS

SIGIC – The Slovenian Music Information Centre developed project MOMUS – Monumenta musica Slovenica in collaboration with the Faculty of Philosophy and 119 institutions and individuals. With their help more than 200 monuments were compiled and documented in two years. In 2018, SIGIC published a Slovenian interactive musical guide to said monuments and so participated in observing the European Year of Cultural Heritage, which aims to encourage as many people as possible to discover and experience European cultural heritage. The online publication's interactive design includes digital and digitised visual materials along with detailed descriptions of the monuments and associated persons from the field of musical art.

www.momus.si

Answer Correctly and Win a Prize

- What was the original name of Marij Kogoj, author of the famed Slovenian opera *Črne maske/Black Masks*?
- Which festival is considered the oldest (running) jazz festival in Europe?
- Which Slovenian singer-songwriter earned the nickname Bob Dylan of the Balkans?

Send your answers to info@sigic.si

(Hint: all the necessary information can be found on the pages of the booklet you are holding in your hands.)

Correct answers will win practical prizes, i.e. Music Slovenia/SIGIC genre compilations of your choice.

