Dušan Bavdek’s Opus Presented at the Phillips Collection

On Thursday, December 12, the Phillips Collection in partnership with the Embassy of Slovenia and George Washington University presented a concert of music by Slovenian composer Dušan Bavdek. It was in 2009, when The Phillips Collection created a unique concert series in which leading European composers introduce their works with performers they select.

Now in its fifth season, this year the opening Leading European Composers concert featured the music of a Slovenian composer.

Prof. Bavdek is one of the leading personalities in the Slovenian musical life and one of the most prominent contemporary composers in Europe. He is a professor of composition and harmony and head of Department of Composition and Music Theory at Ljubljana Academy of Music. Often he has been a guest lecturer at different conservatories and universities, he has lectured master classes and adjudicated at international festivals and competitions. In 2003, Bavdek was Secretary General of the ISCM World Music Days in Slovenia. Until 2013, he was a board member of the European Composers’ Forum (ECF) and its delegate to the Board of European Composers and Songwriters’ Alliance (ECSA). He is also artistic leader of the...
International Concerts of the Society of Slovene Composers.

Dušan Bavdek’s opus pieces Awakening, 1st String Quartet, Intermezzo, Dark Memory, The Gestures of Dead Era, and Hoquetus I were on this occasion presented by musicians Matej Zupan (flute), Jože Kotar (clarinet), Franc Kosem (trumpet), Vasili Meljnikov (violin), Gorjan Košuta (violin), Franc Avsenek (viola), Miloš Mlejnik (cello), and Hinko Haas (piano) who are all renowned professors at the University of Ljubljana School of Music, and Simon Klavžar (percussion) who is an established professor at the Ljubljana Music and Ballet Conservatory. Moreover, all musicians are also recognized members of the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra or RTV Slovenia Symphony Orchestra, and outstanding soloists as well as members of various chamber music ensembles.

On Friday, December 13, Prof. Bavdek delivered a lecture titled The Peaks of Slovenian Music through History to the Present Time at George Washington University. Conversation was mixed with performances by the visiting performers from Ljubljana. Within the frame of the lecture, Prof. Matej Zupan spoke about the 50,000-60,000-year old Paleolithic bone flute excavated in the “Divje babe” cave in Slovenia, which is the oldest preserved musical instrument in the world. Even before the lecture at GWU, Prof. Zupan presented this unique find of the oldest instrument in the World at Janney Elementary School in Washington.

The lecture at GWU, however, also included the presentation of the works of the prominent Slovenian renaissance composer Iacobus Gallus Carniolus, and of Slovenian composers from the 17th through the 20th centuries, such as Lucijan Marija Škerjanc, whose piece was on the occasion performed by violist Prof. Franc Avsenek.

The program was supported by the Society of Slovene Composers, SAZAS and The Academy of Music in Ljubljana (University of Ljubljana’s School of Music), which is a leading musical educational and artistic institution in Slovenia. There are several musical ensembles at the Academy, namely symphony, wind, string, guitar, baroque, and accordion orchestras, mixed, female, chamber and choral choirs, as well as numerous chamber groups and a big band. With their international performances, the symphony orchestra and some chamber groups have proven to be among the best such ensembles in Europe. The Academy of Music collaborates with numerous related institutions across Europe and the U.S. and, in this way, successfully manages globalization, which demands intensive connection with the rest of the world and, from teachers and students, constant control of quality and nourishing of national culture.

Lecture at the GWU on Peaks of Slovenian Music.
On Sunday, December 8, the alumni of The National Capital Area Chapter (NCAC) of the Fulbright Association were welcomed at the Embassy of Slovenia by Ambassador Božo Cerar for their annual Christmas gathering.

Like last year, Sunday’s event included a performance by the DC jazz-piano band, as well as tasting of culinary specialties of different countries, since the members of the association are students, academics, business people, and government officials who come from diverse backgrounds, and have at some point participated in the Fulbright exchange program. Opening remarks were made by Board President of Washington D.C. Fulbright Alumni Club, Mr. Ali Ishaq, followed by a welcoming speech by Slovenian Ambassador, Mr. Božo Cerar. In addition, a short film about Slovenia’s geographic, historical and culinary features was shown.

The Fulbright program, supported by U.S. Congress, is the international exchange scholarship program between the U.S. and partner governments of 155 countries, including Slovenia. Since 1964, when the first Educational Exchange agreement between the U.S. and the now former Yugoslavia was signed, over 350 Slovenian scholars have taken part in the program and even more Americans visited Slovenia as part of their grant, some of them also joining the embassy for the Sunday annual event.

Talking with the Ambassador.

Address by Mr. Ali Ishaq, president of the NCAC and Ambassador Dr. Božo Cerar.

Around 100 Fulbright alumni attended the event.
Pahor’s Necropolis Presented at the Guadalajara International Book Fair in Mexico

Between November 30 and December 8, the Mexican city of Guadalajara hosted the annual International Book Fair (Feria Internacional del Libro de Guadalajara). This year, this meeting of the Spanish-language publishing world again hosted authors, literary agents, librarians, booksellers and more than 1,935 publishing houses from 43 countries. Work of the most distinguished and recognized writers from all over the world was presented to some 750,000 visitors of the fair, among them also the acclaimed book Necropolis written by Boris Pahor, a Slovenian writer, who celebrated his 100th birthday on August 26. The book was translated into Spanish by Barbara Pregelj and Gemma Santiago Alonso and published by publishing house Colofon in 2010.

The acclaimed author and a living witness to the horrors of 20th century totalitarianisms, Pahor is a member of the Slovenian minority in Italy. The survivor of fascist persecution and of several Nazi concentration camps received the European Citizens’ Prize, conferred by the European Parliament on individuals or groups that have made a significant contribution to mutual understanding and fostering of ties among E.U. countries.

Growing up in Trieste, he witnessed the persecution of Slovenians by the Fascists before WWII, was imprisoned by the Nazis during the war and was banned from entering Slovenia by the Communists. However, Pahor is considered one of the best known Slovenian writers. His fame in Europe stems from publications about the atrocities in Nazi concentration camps, but in Slovenia and among Slovenian minority in Italy he is well known for his social and political engagement, in addition to his writing. His novel Necropolis describes his experience of the Nazi labor camp Mittelbau-Dora near Nordhausen, Germany.
Hrastnik

Hrastnik lies in a region called Zasavje (Central Sava Valley). The name of the town derives from a Slovenian word for oak tree (hrast), since the inhabitants had to cut oak trees that were available in the area to build their houses and factories. The area was inhabited already in Roman times since the only possible transportation and trade route in the region was the river Sava. Already more than two thousand years ago, its inhabitants built many shrines to thank the river gods for their lives, as river Sava was dangerous and many Romans lost their lives while travelling.

Nowadays, the Hrastnik museum holds a collection of Roman objects, and remains of Roman shrines can be seen in Podkraj near Hrastnik. In Podkraj stands also a small, but architecturally interesting church from the 16th century, dedicated to St. Nicholas, a patron of sailors and merchants.

In the last two centuries, the majority of the locals have been employed in the glass, coal, or chemical industry. Today, the glass and chemicals factories still operate, but many people also go to work in neighboring towns like Trbovlje or Zagorje ob Savi. Coal mining in Hrastnik began in 1822, but its production was limited before 1849, when the town was connected to the Austrian Southern Railway. Nowadays, visitors can explore the town’s underground by entering through the Sava mine entry and experience the routine of miners from a few decades or
even a century ago.

Hrastnik is also known for glass manufacturing. The international spirits competition SIP (Spirits International Prestige) AWARDS that took place this year in Las Vegas, NV, presented awards to three bottles produced by Steklarna Hrastnik glassworks. One of them was the Steklarna Hrastnik’s design of a bottle of Slovenia vodka brand. Still nowadays in front of an old glasswork factory near a workers’ colony, stands a mansion, called Villa de Seppi. It was built in 1894 and named after Emma de Seppi, who kept coming to Hrastnik every year during the summer for vacation.

The first school was opened Hrastnik in 1860. It was originally operated for miners’ children at the miners’ restaurant, but became a public school in 1872. A separate school building was built in 1879. A German-language school was established in 1907 and operated until the end of First World War.

Šavna Peč, a village above the town, is known for its national cultural monument dedicated to Anton Sovre, the greatest translator of ancient Greek works into Slovene language. Near the monument, visitors can visit a granary with an ethnological museum collection of 70 different items like photos and notes about the village, museum collection about Anton Sovre and traditional agricultural tools.

EDUCATION

Slovene Language Courses in 2014

Between January 27 and February 7, 2014, the Centre for Slovene as a Second/Foreign Language at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, will organize the 20th Winter School of the Slovene Language. The intensive course of Slovene is aimed for those wishing to learn as much language as possible in only two weeks, and also learn about Slovene culture and society. The accompanying program, the cost of which is covered by the tuition fee, includes lectures, workshops, cultural events and sport activities. For more information see: http://www.centerslo.net/l2.asp?L1_ID=1&L2_ID=14&LANG=eng

The Spring School of Slovene Language will take place between February 24 and May 29, 2014. The 220-hour course is intended for anyone who would like to devote one semester of...
the academic year to learning Slovene. Lessons are scheduled for Mondays to Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Pionirski dom, 15 Vilharjeva, 1000 Ljubljana. The language course includes various activities for learning about Slovene culture and societies whose topics complement and broaden the language classes in the classroom and will be held every other Friday. More information can be found at: http://www.centerslo.net/l2.asp?L1_ID=1&L2_ID=83&LANG=eng

An 80-hour Afternoon Course of Slovene language will be held twice a week, each for 3 classroom hours. Lesson times are suitable for anyone who is employed, and are scheduled between February 24 and June 2, 2014. They will take place on Mondays and Thursdays from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. at the Pionirski dom, 15 Vilharjeva, Ljubljana, Slovenia. More information is available at: http://www.centerslo.net/l2.asp?L1_ID=1&L2_ID=8&LANG=eng

A morning course of Slovene will take place between February 25 and June 3, 2014. An 80-hour course, twice a week for 3 school hours each, will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Pionirski dom, 15 Vilharjeva. More information can be found at: http://www.centerslo.net/l2.asp?L1_ID=1&L2_ID=11&LANG=eng

An intensive 40-hour morning course of Slovene from March 10 to 21, 2014, will offer the opportunity to learn basic communication patterns in Slovene or to refresh what one has already learned. The course will be held from Monday to Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., at the Pionirski dom, 15 Vilharjeva, Ljubljana. More information is available at: http://www.centerslo.net/l2.asp?L1_ID=1&L2_ID=79&LANG=eng
At the end of the course, the participants will receive an official Certificate of Attendance at a Slovene language course at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ljubljana.

Let’s Taste Slovene is a 30-hour afternoon course for beginners (A1) that will be held between March 27 and June 5, 2014, once a week for 3 classroom hours on Thursdays from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. at the Faculty of Arts at 5 Tobačna, Ljubljana, Slovenia. Application forms for the course are available at: http://www.centerslo.net/l2.asp?L1_ID=1&L2_ID=121&LANG=eng

TO DO LIST

**READING: Gabriela Babnik at the Library of Congress**

Recipient of European Union Literature Prize Gabriela Babnik will discuss her latest novel, Dry Season, in which she examines interactions and cultural clashes between Europe and Africa.

**When:** Tuesday, December 17 at noon
**Where:** Library of Congress, European Division conference room, LJ-250 (2nd floor, Thomas Jefferson Building)
**More information:** http://www.loc.gov/rr/european/calendar/calendar.html
**Slovenian film DUAL at the 26th Annual AFI – EU Film Festival in Silver Spring**

Now in its 26th year, the AFI European Union Film Showcase continues its tradition of bringing the best in European cinema to Washington audiences. This year’s selection of more than 50 films includes award-winners, international festival favorites, local box-office hits and debut works by promising new talents, plus many countries’ official Oscar® submissions for Best Foreign Language Film. Slovenia will be represented by the film The Dual (Dvojina). DIR/SCR Nejc Gazvoda; SCR Janez Lapajne; PROD Aleš Pavlin, Andrej Stritof. Slovenia/Croatia/ Denmark, 2013, color, 102 min. In Slovenian and Danish with English subtitles. NOT RATED

When: Saturday, December 14 at 11:00 a.m.; Monday, December 16 at 9:45 p.m. 
Where: AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center, 8633 Colesville Road, Silver Spring, MD 20910 

**Concert of Sacred Songs at St. Vitus Church in Cleveland.**

The St. Vitus Christmas Choir, consisting of nearly 60 soprano, alto, tenor, or bass singers, will perform its annual Concert of Sacred Songs, sung in English, Italian, Latin, and Slovenian. The choir will be accompanied by a string quartet, with Mr. William F. Patrick, master organist, performing on the restored church Holtkamp organ with 1,500 wooden and metal pipes. The choir is under the direction of Mr. John Sršen.

When: Sunday, Dec 29, 2013, following the 10:00 a.m. mass 
Where: St. Vitus Church, 6019 Lausche Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44103. 
More information: Stane Kuhar, (216) 361-1444; email: skuhar@hotmail.com

**Ansambel Saša Avsenika in Cleveland, OH**

Slovenska Pristava, Slovenian National Home and The Slovenian Hour present the grandson of the legendary Slavko Avsenik, who continues the Avsenik tradition. In February, Sašo Avsenik will introduce his sound to North America; however, his Cleveland, OH, concert will be the only one in the U.S.

When: Wednesday, February 19, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. 
Where: The Slovenian National Home, 6417 St. Clair Avenue, Cleveland, OH 
Tickets: (440)537-1941 
$20 pre-sale | $25 at the door | students $10.