

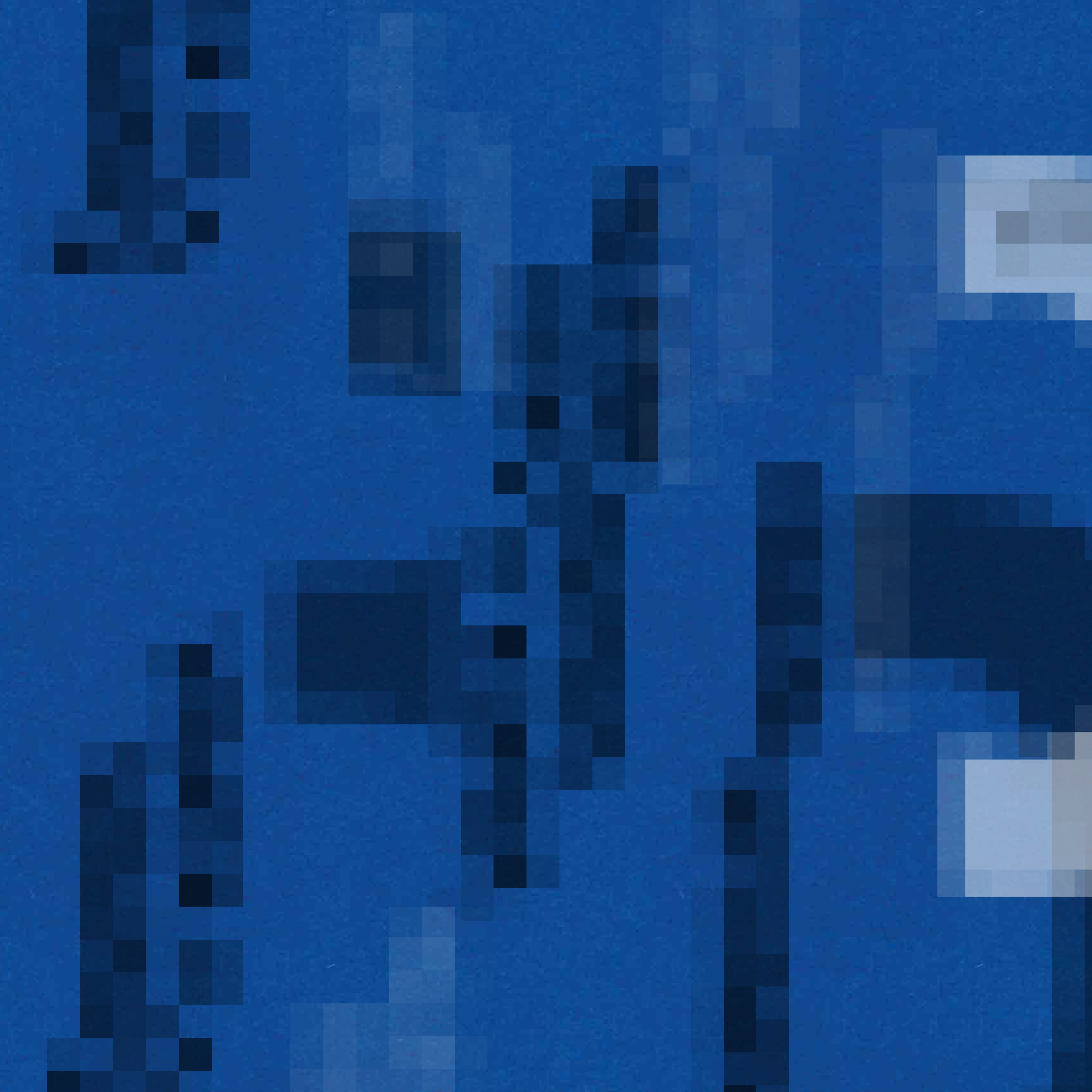
NARODNI DOM MARIBOR

Thirty years

1992–2022

THE GATE TO THE CITY





THE GATE TO THE CITY - 30 YEARS OF NARODNI DOM MARIBOR

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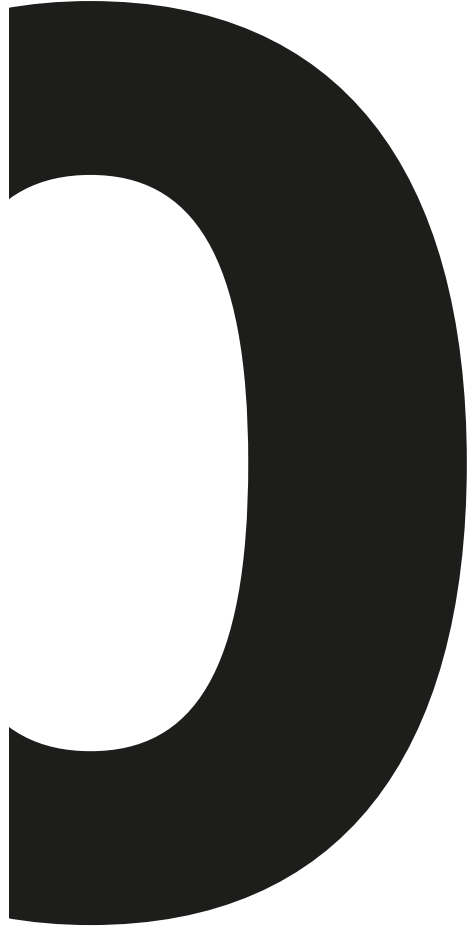
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SE THE GATE TO THE CITY

1992-2022

Thirty years

NARODNI DOM MARIBOR



Dear readers,

You are holding a book that you can thumb through to see a chronological account and a collection of photographs, or read well-rounded essays, works of fiction, statements, reflections, and recollections. This monograph was issued at the 30th anniversary of Narodni dom Maribor and is an homage to past work and a manifestation of creative endeavour and efforts to recognize culture and art.

The opening thoughts are provided by the general manager of Narodni dom Maribor, **VLADIMIR RUKAVINA** pg. 7. **FRANCI PIVEC**, the all-seeing eye of the cultural and social scene, writes about the birth of an organization and steers us toward the “why and what for” it was founded and exists pg. 10. Historian and archivist **ŠPELA VALADŽIJA** provides a structured summary of the history of the Narodni dom building and the organization of the Cultural and Event Centre Narodni dom Maribor, focusing on important milestones pg. 17, while her chronological overview runs throughout the entire book as a historical timeline. **TONE PARTLJIČ** takes us back in time with his short story and his memory of a friend, and shows us how Maribor and the Narodni dom building looked like before the Second World War pg. 36. Writer and farmer **NATAŠA KRAMBERGER** writes two letters, one heading to Maribor from Berlin, the second from Jurovski Dol pg. 46. Next is a set of poems by four young poets from Maribor, born in 1991, 1995, and 2003, that is after the Yugoslav People’s Army handed over the Narodni dom building back to the city of Maribor. We invited them to talk about culture, the city, Narodni dom, doors and gates, and much more through poetry: **HELENA ZEMLJIČ** pg. 52, **MATIC AČKO** pg. 53, **MILA KODRIČ CIZERL** pg. 55, and **TOM VEBER** pg. 57. Musician and philosopher **BOŠTJAN NARAT** and his literary essay take us through his memories and reflections about the festival pg. 60. **KATJA BECK KOS**, **URŠKA BREZNIK**, **HANA REPŠE**, **MARKO BRUMEN**, **PETER TOMAŽ DOBRILA**, and **KAROLINA BABIČ** discuss dilemmas, conflicts, and intersections of institutional culture and the independent cultural scene in a “cloud-based” written conversation pg. 76. Ethnologist **JERNEJA FERLEŽ** outlines the city as a multitude of settings in her literary essay pg. 92. Long-standing and loyal classical music concert-goer **MARKO KOŠIR** makes his picks from the programme pg. 108, while the positioning of classical music in the city’s cultural field is one of the central topics of the essay by musicologist **KARMEN SALMIČ KOVAČIČ** pg. 112. Singer-songwriter, poet, teacher, and subtle observer of culture and all thing beautiful, **BOJAN SEDMAK**, sets course in his journal for a trip through his thoughts while experiencing the 30th Festival Lent pg. 118.

Aside from these essays, works of fiction, and other texts, the book takes us through short statements, recollections, thoughts, and congratulations from various individuals, ranging from those who helped shape the programme for visitors and fellow travellers of Narodni dom Maribor over the last thirty years: **MAGDALENA TOVORNIK** pg. 15, **MITJA ROTOVNIK** pg. 19, **GREGOR LEDNIK** pg. 23, **RADOVAN VLATKOVIČ** pg. 37, **KARMINA ŠILEC** pg. 41, **TINA VIHAR** pg. 43, **VID KMETIČ** pg. 47, **SVETLANA MAKAROVIČ** pg. 49, **VOJKA MIKLAVČ** pg. 51, **RICHARD TOGNETTI** pg. 61, **MARTINA MAGDIČ** pg. 63, **URŠKA KOŠICA** pg. 65, **ALENKA KLEMENČIČ** pg. 89, **NIKOLAJ SAJKO** pg. 89, **PRIMOŽ PREMŽL** pg. 93, **MOJCA KASJAK** pg. 97, **MARKO LETONJA** pg. 109, **VASJA SAMEC** pg. 111, **JANEZ VOUK** pg. 113, **ROBERT SCOTT** pg. 121.

Karolina Babič, editor

With the people because of the people and

FOR THE PEOPLE

Thirty years have gone by in a heartbeat. During this time, we've seen many mayors and ministers come and go, but mostly we've seen a great many visitors come to our events. We set out with remarkable enthusiasm that I dare say we kept to this day. We set out at a time when the city was nurturing what seemed to be almost like some kind of lethargy, at a time when the prevailing sentiment was that nothing can be done anyway.

The city is certainly different today. Perhaps also because of what we've been doing over the last thirty years. As our opinion would suffer from subjectivity, we wish that others speak out about what we did well or less well, perhaps changing the consciousness and subconsciousness of our city while doing it, those who followed what we do, creators and people who know how to think Maribor. This is exactly why, until the moment I'm putting pen to paper, I haven't read any of the contributions; I'm going to read the book only after it comes off the press. It may make me glad, it may make me less so, but I will certainly accept the tale it tells about culture and Maribor and about our place in this story.

The timeline in the book, with all its data, milestones, and shifts, is certainly true; these are attested and verifiable facts, even though there are many moments and names it fails to address, as they are countless in number. I do wish to add, however, that it was all done by people. The team, which kept growing and changing, consisted of more than just the regular employees of the institute; its connective power in the culture of Maribor extended to virtually every line of institutional and non-institutional culture. It connected the people. Co-created with the people.

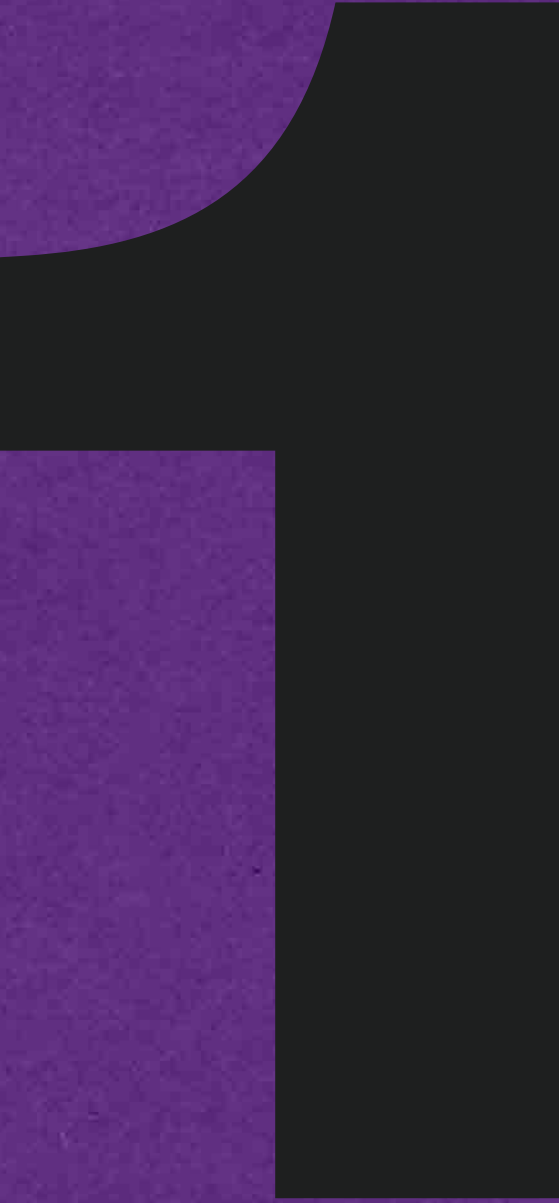
Each and every one of them left a mark on the operations of Narodni dom Maribor, and I'd like to use this opportunity to thank the people, first and foremost. People who cared. People who were working chiefly for the people and because of the people.

I'd also like to thank Maribor, this marvellous, sometimes a bit odd, envious, yet exuberant and, with its addled relationships and unpredictability, actually amazing domain of ideas and actions that create progress, even though the city sometimes almost refuses to have it.

The road appearing ahead of us is rather clear, especially if we look at it with heart. This is why we're pushing on with heart. There will be obstacles, but this is where lies the challenge that evokes creativity, passion, spite; this is what we're building on.

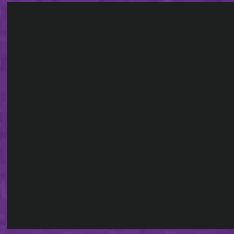
We were never ordinary. Not the city, not us.

Vladimir Rukavina



Gate

OF TIME





Raft on the Drava

30 YEARS OF THE CULTURAL HUB NARODNI DOM MARIBOR

FRANCI PIVEC

At the birth of public institute Narodni dom Maribor

When the Yugoslav People's Army was leaving Maribor in autumn of 1991, it thoroughly pillaged its Dom JLA before it left, which it had renovated quite nicely just a few years prior. Forty-five years after being given ownership of Narodni dom by the city of Maribor, which was not even its owner (after a year, the rightful owner needed to be found when making the land register entry, which was the cooperative Posojilnica), it handed Narodni dom over to the Regional Headquarters of the Territorial Defence, which was not entitled to this property. (There were quite a few nonsensical developments and lost years in the transfer of ownership from the Ministry of Defence to the city). What in the world was going through the minds of the leaders of the city when they surrendered the symbol of Slovenianhood and civil society in Maribor to the army in 1945, the same army that already had at its

disposal all the largest buildings in which it could have easily found a place for its events? In similar vein, the Narodni (Sokolski) dom was turned into Dom JLA in Novo Mesto as well, where the army then built a new house for itself in 1977 and the old one has been left to rot ever since. In the case of Maribor, I can think of a few likely reasons for this inexcusable surrender:

- after the war ended, the army was the most influential factor and the representative of the new authority, which is why it was impossible to deny it any wish or request;
- because local agents of the anti-occupation movement have all been shot dead, Maribor was led at the time primarily by "delegated" imports from other parts of Slovenia, who were not familiar with and failed to consider the significance of symbols and values of the city;
- Maribor identified with a fortress – a bastion on the border, which was previously reflected in the mentality of German Maribor toward Slovenians

and later repeated in the mentality of Slovenian Maribor toward Germans, with the heightened presence of JLA manifesting the latter;

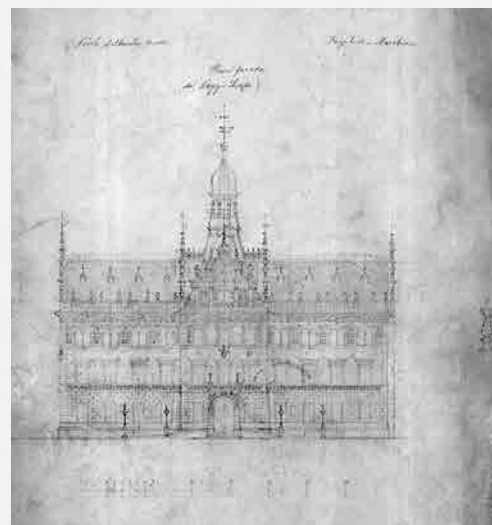
- the occupying authorities had treated the building with all the destructive force they could muster and the building was later levelled in part by allied bombs, so the city may have acted in self-interest when it transferred ownership to JLA in order to avoid a major cost;
- it is also true that there were periods, during the time when the manager was Alojz Perhac, for example, when Dom JLA actively opened up to the city and allowed the hosting of interesting cultural programmes.

One needs to remember that the symbolism of Narodni dom began to wane unexpectedly already after the First World War, first because it was largely demolished by the Austro-Hungarian military that was housed there and the building therefore needed renovation that the city government was quick

1890

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF POSOJILNICA

Posojilnica in Maribor was established in 1882 to make the Slovenian people living in the city as financially independent as possible. Jernej Glančnik, its principal and the chair of Slovanska čitalnica (Slavic Reading Room), was the main catalyst of the idea to build their own representative building. In 1890, the general assembly of Posojilnica decided to build Narodni dom in Maribor that would house Posojilnica's headquarters and, aside from various Slovenian organizations, Slovanska čitalnica (1861), whose premises were previously scattered across the taverns and inns of Maribor. For this purpose, Posojilnica purchased in 1892 a corner lot between the former Badgasse (now Ulica slovenske osamosvojitve) and Nagystraße (now Ulica kneza Koclja). The task of designing the building was entrusted to Czech architect Jan Bedřich Vejrych (1856-1926), a graduate of the Charles-Ferdinand University in Prague.



Jan Vejrych, Design sketch of the front of Narodni dom in Maribor

to avoid, until Posojilnica, managed by dr. Pipuš, again came to the rescue after a couple of years (1924). The question then arose what the building should be used for in the new reality once former “German” cultural buildings became available. Suddenly the premises themselves were no longer the problem but their maintenance was, and even more so the funding of groups that would be providing regular programmes in these buildings. The “former German” funding model with admission fees did not work due to post-war poverty and the audience’s lack of interest, which was first experienced by Nučič in the theatre. In any case, Narodni dom was no longer the centre of social gatherings in the city. Vlasta Stavbar summarised the media coverage at the time by saying it would be best if it were turned into a “refuge for all national and cultural non-party associations in Maribor”. Naturally, using the building for such a purpose relegated Narodni dom to the fringes of the cultural scene.

According to Monika Pemič, one of the arguments given by dr. Jernej Glančnik, the chairman of Posojilnica and, at the same time, the chairman of Čitalnica, for having the palace located next to the planned bridge in the extension of Kopališka ulica included business reasons as well, as Narodni dom was envisaged as the business centre of Slovenian capital. These expectations were somewhat tempered after the “German bridge” was later relocated and businessmen in post-war Maribor no longer needed the cover of Narodni dom to pursue their activities. It is rather sad that the people of Maribor almost wouldn’t have known the identity of the undisputed father of Narodni dom if it wasn’t for

the removal of JLA’s gift plaque (from 1946) that took place in 1993. It turned out that a rather smart person simply turned the plaque over and thereby preserved the initial inscription of the names of people credited with constructing the building, with Glančnik as first-named. His parallel among the Germans of Maribor was Anton Götz, who, nearly at the same time, built a complex intended for culture that was later rather unfortunately named after Union brewery. The close connection between culture and the economy which facilitated the creation of other “narodni dom” buildings also in Ptuj, Novo mesto, Celje, Trieste, and elsewhere set an example that triggered the construction, all of which was done by voluntary labour, of hundreds of cultural houses, fire houses, gymnastic association houses, mountain huts, and many other buildings that have left a mark on the Slovenian landscape and the life of local communities. These were much more prominent in the past compared to today, when this common good is often devalued and poorly protected against private interests.

It was only after Slovenia became independent that the city actually became the owner of Narodni dom for the first time. The building was again in need of renovation, having been demolished by already the third army in a row. The question that arose after both World Wars became relevant again as well: what should this legendary palace be used for? This was a task for Tone Partljič, vice-chair of the city’s executive council for social activities, and for his right-hand man, Goran Rajič. As usual, the first step was to establish a committee (for the renovation and revitalization of Narodni dom) that,

buoyed by the results of a citizen survey, as befit the spirit of the new time, proposed to the city’s general assembly to dedicate the building to culture. A decree was passed as early as end of June 1992 to establish the public institute Cultural and Event Centre Narodni dom Maribor and this was the basis to form the council of the institute and run a tender to select its manager, Vladimir Rukavina. Three months later, the new institute took over the management of the Narodni dom building, however, due to urgent renovations, it took until Prešeren Day of next year for the institute to move into the building and it had to operate in the cultural wing of the Rotovž building until then.

The decree clearly provides the purpose for which it was established: to regularly provide cultural goods across all fields of art, organize cultural festivals, promote cultural achievements of artists from Maribor and the greater region, and manage a part of the founder’s public infrastructure in the field of culture. However, it would be wrong to assume that there were no divergent opinions in this regard; the concept of a cultural and event centre was new and the drawing of any parallels to Cankarjev dom was more akin to rambling rather than reality. The deliberation on who should occupy Narodni dom was more factual and was vigorously tackled back then by the leading cultural politician, Tone Partljič. As reported by Večer, he believed that “political parties have no place in it” and “I absolutely [...] do not agree with the idea that it should be used as a refuge for all those associations that were left without a place to stay. We don’t want a collection of offices with binders in their cabinets

10. 7. 1898

SIGNATURE OF MEMORANDUM

There was no consensus among members of the cooperative about either the location of Narodni dom or whether it was necessary to build it at all. They also had reservations about the rationale of constructing such a lavish building, seeing that the money could be channelled to Slovenian farmers across the land and thereby help strengthen their economic position to ward off German pressure. In the general assembly of 1897, those in favour of constructing the building, worth an estimated 114,000 guildens, won with a tight majority. On 10 July 1898, the memorandum was signed by nationally conscious Slovenians, members of the building and lending committee and members of the supervisory body. Narodni dom was finished by the end of 1898.



Memorandum, 1898

and all kinds of diplomas hanging on their walls; we prefer to give these associations a chance to develop their activities". Another testament to the variety of opinions on the role and programme of activities of the public cultural institute were the candidacies for its manager, as, other than in case of Rukavina, they were not based on relevant experience but rather perceived as just another public office position in the city administration.

The strategy that manager Rukavina came up with, and one that was supported by the institute's council, was to speak less and deliver as many projects as possible: already in the first season, between September 1992 and June 1993, eight employees took care of 279 events that were visited by a quarter million people. Those that stood out were *Koncertna poslovalnica (Concert Management)* with the revived Mariborska filharmonija (*Maribor Philharmonic*) and the immensely attractive international festival Folkart, which enjoyed the patronage of the International Council of Organizations of Folklore Festivals and Folk Arts (CIOFF) ever since it was held for the first time in 1989 to commemorate the 25th anniversary of KUD Študent. Festival Lent was announced in December 1992 and was actually held next year, bringing 100 events across thirteen venues that were visited by 180,000 people. A wave splashed across the city, people were satisfied, the media were full of praise, and sponsors got interested. Narodni dom Maribor quickly became the public cultural institute with by far the largest self-financing share in Slovenia, which, on top of that, channelled its earnings into strengthening the team and creating

new programmes. Its regular activity was expanded with the Comedy season programme, Glasbeni september (Musical September), youth cycle, and jazz cycle. Festival Lent was even quicker to develop by featuring new content and turning into a European event.

The most recognizable element of Festival Lent is the raft on the Drava River next to the Water Tower, a scenery embedded with impressions and symbolism of the mighty Drava, the picturesque old port, the domineering grand bridge, the mysterious Jewish ghetto, all positioned on the thousand-year-old border between the Aquileian Mediterranean and the Salzburgian *Mitteleurope* that was drawn by Charlemagne. The stage on the Drava River is not an approximation of a real stage in a theatre or concert hall but rather a palimpsest with its very own stories that are revealed if we only have the right outlook and willingness to be surprised. The Lent raft was a story of coming and going, of remembering and forgetting, a lifeline, a homestead community, and the whole wide world atop Heraclitus' unstoppable *panta rhei*.

Culture and Maribor

Gary Weaver speaks of culture as an iceberg: only 8% can be seen, heard, and felt above the water, whereas the majority is hidden underwater and consists of beliefs, values, mental models, and myths. Above the surface lie language culture, music, architecture and design, stage performance, dance, events, literature, and mass media in addition to celebrations and flags, fashion, games, fun,

and cooking. A few years ago, there was plenty of surprise after we added to Maribor's cultural programme streets and squares, trees and city vineyards, creative industries, festivals, cultural tourism, cultural education, social aspects (attitude toward the elderly, children, persons with limited mobility, migrants), and a few other fields that are "in no relation to the city sector." This is the first problem of Maribor's culture; the city refuses to see in it even that which is plain for all the others to see. Why? Because a view of culture that has been narrowed down to the extreme reduces its significance, which makes it easier to force it into a corner. It is common knowledge what the base of Slovenian "Manchester" is, which decides how much we can afford in the archbuilding! However, it is ironic that, at the same time, the real Manchester communicates to the world its intent to "position itself among the most prominent European cities that are synonymous with creativity, culture, sports and using the best knowledge bases." Yet we don't need to look to England at all; the challenge is much closer at hand: Ljubljana declared the director of its summer festival as the person who contributed most to the developmental transformation of the city. In both these cities they were able to compute that they earn their living with culture.

It is even harder to comprehend culture that works below the surface and has a 92 per cent share in all of our doings. These are mind knots that are difficult for us to realize despite the fact that they are fatal: the understanding of time (remembrance, vision of the future), ethics (honesty, fairness,

26. 2. 1898

FIRST ASSEMBLY OF MEMBERS OF
POSOJILNICA IN NARODNI DOM

50. 11. 1899

OPENING OF NARODNI DOM
IN MARIBOR

By relocating to Narodni dom in 1899, Slovanska čitalnica solved its problems with lack of space and became the centre of Slovenian social and cultural life, which lasted until the end of the First World War. Aside from the cooperative Posojilnica, which financed the construction, and Slovanska čitalnica, Bralno in pevsko društvo Maribor (Reading and Singing Society Maribor) and Zgodovinsko društvo za Slovensko Štajersko (Historical Society for Slovenian Štajerska) with its museum and early historical archive had moved into Narodni dom as well. Ljudska knjižnica (People's Library), the first public library in Maribor, was established as part of Slovanska čitalnica. These were joined by other societies, such as Sokol, which were part of the Slovenian national movement.



Narodni dom around 1899

equality), solidarity (equity, common good), social standing (privacy and public, authority, family, the self). It is how we perceive friendship, discipline, health, cleanliness, beauty. It is the attitude toward the elderly, children, women, foreigners, rules, work, leaders, animals, the living environment. It is the approach toward religiousness, public institutions, democracy, culture, upbringing and education, sex, marriage, consensual resolution of disputes. And it is also about ways of communication: kindness, hate speech, body language, expression of emotions, physical contact, anonymity online. We could try and more properly categorize and describe these elements of this below-the-surface culture in greater detail, however, we intend only to signal how broad is the span of culture that we live and that constitutes our civilised nature, and that determines whether our lives “either hell or heaven be”.

An apt summary of what was said earlier is the notion of “quality of life” in the sense of how an individual perceives their position in life in the context of culture and value systems they live in, and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards, and worries. No local studies are available on this topic, but there are plenty of them in the world that lend themselves to the indisputable conclusion that art and culture heal and can be applied as therapy to treat many illnesses, including dementia and depression. In addition, taking part in cultural activities has a major impact on the overall satisfaction of people. We know that being active in music improves learning abilities in math, speech, and literacy. Every euro spent on culture nets a

Reminiscence about a raft

The raft often appears as the setting of events in art, with the most dramatic example being the large-scale painting by French Romantic artist Théodore Géricault, who painted the horrors of castaways on a raft on the thirteenth day of them being hopelessly adrift without food or water. Géricault took a criminological approach to a topic that shook the world two hundred years ago when the frigate *Méduse* ran aground due to incompetent captainship and a large group of passengers who were unable to secure room for themselves on lifeboats tried to save themselves with a makeshift raft. The raft became the scene of human misery and displacement, leading even to cannibalism. The *Raft of the Medusa* was a critical depiction of the times that secured Géricault a spot in the world’s most important gallery, whereby those responsible for the tragedy were never brought to justice.

Karpo Godina, whose mother, the beloved theatre actress Milena Godina was born in Trieste and later moved to Maribor, depicted in his canonical film *The Raft of the Medusa* the art and the artists who invent cosmopolitan art in a small-town setting – a kind of raft lost in the depths of Balkan fog. At the time when the film was made, Radomir Konstatinović developed the popular “small town philosophy” that remains chronicled in the magazine *Treći program* (1969): “It is not and it cannot be any different! History, in all its absentmindedness, forgot about us ... The ghost of a small town – forgotten by history – tries to turn misery into privilege by himself forgetting (just like applying the hair of the dog) history and eternalising himself within himself with this forgetfulness, sworn to last beyond time. Time is on the other side, where global chaos and the chaos of a deadly open world begin ... There mustn’t ever be a metamorphosis into something like this, there mustn’t be any action, only passivity is permitted, to leave everything to the state as it is. But even this act of leaving is an action in and of itself, a kind of negative activism. Passivity is a wilful choice and its language (inactivity, non-ambition) is the language of taking sides wilfully. This is most frequently overlooked, as the townsfolk of a small town, born in a closed world, refuse to see themselves as its subjects, but rather as its objects.”

The small town is the habitus of populists, who feel defeated because they are the defenders of yesterday, inadaptable to the new times and endangered by the openness of the processes of change. They are highly suspicious of people who freely respond to new trends and options with the capacity to learn, communicate, and be creative. Populists regard diversity that is inherent to art and culture as the undermining of identity as if they knew what it is, despite never having contributed anything of value to it.

6. 7. 1906 and 24. 5. 1907

**FOUNDING OF SOKOLSKO DRUŠTVO
MARIBOR - MATICA (SOKOL SOCIETY
MARIBOR - HEADQUARTERS)**

On 6 June 1906, preparations were launched to found a branch of the Sokol society in Maribor as well, which was to be chaired by Ivan Dimnik. The founding assembly of the society Sokol Maribor was held on 24 March 1907 in the restaurant wing of Narodni dom. Doyen Fran Rosina, second doyen Vladimir Sernec, and chief Emanuel Ilich became the first leaders of the board.



Training assembly of “Sokol” at Športno društvo Maribor, 1906

25. 5. 1909

UNVEILING OF MUSEUM COLLECTION

Zgodovinsko društvo za Slovensko Štajersko (1903) that managed a museum and archive unveiled a museum collection for the public in the premises of Narodni dom.

return of 2.01 euro and two thirds of tourists travel the world because of culture, not steaks. Maribor cannot be any different from the more researched environments, the level of development of art and culture has a decisive impact on the closeness of the community and reduces the feeling of loneliness and endangerment here as well. It is not surprising that developed cultures increasingly include culture among the indicators of their innovativeness, consistency of regional development, competitiveness, and sustainable development.

The honest advice that Oton Župančič shared with Rudolf Maister, the liberator of the city of Maribor, was that Maribor will need to take on the cultural functions that Trieste, Gorizia, and Klagenfurt previously provided to Slovenians. After a hundred years, it would be interesting to take stock of the extent to which this came true. In all fairness, measuring cultural development is far from easy, a fact noted by a study done by the research centre in Ispra in 2019. The European Commission-supported study included an empirical comparison of cultural and creative vitality of 168 cities in thirty European countries, focusing on:

- cultural vibrancy of a city, which covers cultural infrastructure, programmes, and participation in culture;
- volume of employment in culture or the “creative economy of a city”;
- openness of the environment to cultural production, which includes the level of diversity, tolerance and trust, quality of city governance, availability of quality higher education centres, and similar.

The sample captured 91 European Capitals of Culture (EU), 22 creative cities (UNESCO), and 53 festival cities (EFFE). Aside from Ljubljana, the sample included Maribor as well. Different approaches to measure and evaluate cultural development were combined into the C3 index (Cultural and Creative Cities Index) as a synthetic measuring unit for cultural activities. The study emphasised the sensitivity to investing in culture as a path for the city to achieve uniqueness and “create a difference” that will satisfy its citizens and attract skilled individuals (Florida’s “creative class”), investors, and visitors. The aim of the comparison between cities based on twenty-nine indicators was to enhance the understanding of strategic alternatives in city governance and discover best practice examples that helped others achieve progress.

The researchers did not allow themselves to be swayed by the uber-importance of national capitals, whose influence in Western Europe is getting smaller yet is all the more pronounced in Eastern Europe. The set of indicators focused also on smaller cities, which are successful in emphasising culture as a comparative advantage and which make up for the smaller volume with intensive use of social networks. Let me list a few for illustrative purposes:

- Hertogenbosch by virtue of its excellent presentation of cultural heritage;
- Cork and Ghent as music capitals;
- Florence and other cities in culturally decentralized Italy;
- Umea, Leuven, Bologna, etc. with excellent, culture-susceptible universities;

- Linz, Eindhoven, and a series of other cities based on their pervasiveness in multimedia.

Aside from Ljubljana, Slovenia is represented on this map only by Maribor, and seeing that Maribor does not have any specific comparative advantage designation, we can assume that it was eligible due to having held the title ECoC 2012. This title still holds significant potential, which we highlighted in the previous local cultural programme, and recent years have seen successful development of at least some of the plans, such as the revitalisation of “Western Lent”, renovation of city squares and parks, Rotovž cultural centre. Why couldn’t Maribor run on second city syndrome as well, which drives the development of Glasgow, Rotterdam, and many other cities from the European Capital of Culture family?

With the fiftieth anniversary of the University of Maribor drawing closer, we also need to re-evaluate the coexistence between the city and the university by following the lead of university cities comparable to Maribor: Aalborg, as the “city of knowledge”, Linköping, which is about to relocate the student campus into the city’s historic core, Ghent, which is about to transform into a “student city”, and other similar projects where culture is the key motivation.

Narodni dom for a playful Maribor

A historically torn city, the collapsed centre of heavy industry, a sleepy town with the oldest population, the decaying old city core on the Dra-

14. 8. 1909

FOUNDING OF DRAMATIČNO DRUŠTVO
(DRAMATIC SOCIETY)

In 1909, the theatre groups of Slovanska čitalnica and Bralno društvo merged and founded the society Dramatično društvo that operated under the name Slovensko gledališče (Slovenian Theatre) in the rural room of Narodni dom.



Narodni dom around 1899, theatre hall

1914–1918

MILITARY OCCUPATION
OF NARODNI DOM

va – these are the most common labels given to Maribor, where, over its thirty years in existence, Narodni dom has staged 25,895 events as part of Festival lent, 805 classical music concerts, and 1,871 theatre plays that were attended by a combined 14,839,924 visitors. This made Maribor a city where things happen. The frequency of events defines the meaning of the city as a gravitational point. It even defines its volume if we account for visitors of events and add them up as occasional citizens to the city's permanent citizens. With Narodni dom's programme, Maribor is no longer the same as it was before!

By following the paradigmatic book *Eventful Cities* (2010) by Greg Richards, we can identify and explain the tendency of cities to preserve their competitiveness in a period when criteria of economic development are no longer unambiguous and predictable by leaning on their own values: history, environment, creative energies, and talent. Culture, which is showcased through events, is becoming an increasingly important reason for the existence of cities. In all fairness, this is far from new, as ancient cities were created around the agora or the forum, which later led to church processions on squares and military parades down city streets. Industrialism introduced the price of time and narrowed down culture to spare time, all while burdening it with the task of boosting consumption. This gave rise to managerial approaches to fests, games, (trade) fairs, festivals. The industrial crisis and the arrival of information and communications technologies at the end of the century have put culture into a new position to act as the motor



I vividly recall the moment when, as the chair of the general assembly of the municipality of Maribor, I took part in the event when Dom JLA was returned to the city of Maribor. This was done by the then-Minister of Defence, Mr Janez Janša, accompanied by the leadership and MPs of all three houses of the former municipality and many of its citizens.

What followed was an interesting surprise as, after the plaque bearing the sign "Dom JLA" was removed, there stood a plaque bearing the sign "Narodni dom" – exactly what this magnificent building was called before! Regardless of the plethora of political parties and different opinions, we were unified in our belief that life in Narodni dom should continue on a cultural note that is accessible and understandable to the broadest audiences.

But unity was nowhere to be seen when it came to selecting personnel: who should lead the institution and shape its substance? My proposal to select Mr Vladimir Rukavina was met with strong opposition from Demos, which then held the majority in the socio-political house; after several attempts I was able to convince one half plus one MP that he was the best choice. As this was the last item on the agenda of a long session of this house, "my" MP, the late Mr Bojan Praznik, had had enough and wanted to leave the session. His departure would make electing Mr Rukavina impossible, which is why I firmly decided to keep him at the session at all costs. My hand grasped his knee tightly under the meeting desk and stayed there until the vote was passed successfully. This was the first and last time in my life that I made such an indecent move, but it paid off. Over the last thirty years, Gogo and his team have exceeded all my expectations. Maribor remains a city that welcomes cultural diversity from all over the globe in a variety of fields and has an audience that accepts, understands, and rewards it.

Sincere congratulations and here's to many more years!

*Magdalena Tovornik,
Chair of the General Assembly of the Municipality of
Maribor between 1990 and 1994*

26. 9. 1918

**FOUNDING OF NARODNI SVET
ZA ŠTAJERSKO (NATIONAL COUNCIL
FOR ŠTAJERSKA)**

Activities in Narodni dom declined after the First World War broke out, as many men who carried out these activities had to join the army and the building was taken over by the military. Towards the end of the war, after the May Declaration campaign, Narodni svet za Štajersko was founded in Narodni dom on 26 September 1918, which promoted major Rudolf Maister to general on 1 November 1918 in Narodni dom, entrusting him with the task to defend the city and Slovenian Štajerska.

5. 1. 1920

FIRST MARIBOR ELITE DANCE

On 5 January 1920, members of Društvo mariborskih akademikov (Maribor Academics Society) organized the first Maribor elite dance in Narodni dom, which was then held on the same day until the Second World War and was the annual opening event of the dance season in Götz Hall (now Union Hall). These dances were among the most important social and cultural events in the city.

1921/1922

**PUPPET THEATRE IN
NARODNI DOM**

In winter 1921/1922, the City Czech Club founded the string puppet theatre in Narodni dom and, together with the Sokol society, began staging Slovenian shows in March 1922.

of a postmodern city, which was further exacerbated by the fall of the “Eastern bloc” and the waning of social democratic solidarity. Culture was supposed to revitalise cities, become commercially profitable, and turn into the agent of new (creative) entrepreneurship. The European Union embedded all of this into the “European Capital of Culture” project that began in 1985. The overarching aim of the project was to make culture profitable, an idea we weren’t quite able to grasp in Maribor and we resorted instead to siphoning public funding. We had a similar understanding of the international project of “creative cities”, which was founded based on Glasgow’s experience with ECoC. After drawing a line under all these misunderstandings, it shouldn’t come as a surprise that we are having difficulties in evaluating the contribution of Narodni dom to the transformation of Maribor into a place where culture happens, into a playful city.

Gone are the times when cities were able to attract investors by offering free-of-charge locations, cheap labour, subsidised energy. What counts today is the city’s cultural image, its symbolism, all of the characteristics appreciated and sought by people from the “creative class”, who have the unmistakable ability to recognize the preferences of a city: preference for something new, inclusion, interculturality, diversity, and tolerance. The richness of the cultural offering or playfulness of the city are essential in this regard, as they:

- improve quality of life in the city;
- promote creativity;
- create new partnerships;
- broaden general knowledge;

- bring economic and social benefits;
- grow local and global recognition;
- support civil initiatives.

Events give flexibility to programmes of permanent cultural institutions, uncover new physical environments for cultural productions, create spectacle and atmosphere, attract new audiences, and offer more for less money. They appeal to artists because they steer them toward new approaches and solutions depending on the performative environment and the time they have available. As for the spectators, they offer them contact, closeness, and dialogue, which are sorely lacking in this digital age. New meeting places are created, trustworthy spaces, the rhythm of the city changes, global culture can be experienced. The city is being festivalized, which means that “everyone gets into the zone”; not only the performers but also the merchants, restaurant workers, athletes, educators, librarians, taxi drivers, etc. And certainly, the audience. This is not achieved by simply increasing the number of events, but is rather the result of a special turnaround that cannot always be predicted. In case of Festival Lent, this is most certainly true for Folkart.

When hearing the name Maribor, there are far more people who think of its cultural aspect than its football and Sharon Zukin already regards culture as the dominant euphemism that presents a city as the sum of interesting experiences lived in the city, from cultural tradition to high culture and, naturally, pop culture. In this way, Narodni dom fulfils the purpose it was founded for.

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1924

FIRST RENOVATION OF NARODNI DOM

At the twenty-fifth anniversary of its opening, nearly all the rooms, including the grand ceremony hall, were renovated by October 1924.



Participants in the 12th congress of the Yugoslav Association of Professors, 1931

29. 10. 1926

DISCOVERY OF MEMORANDUM AND OTHER DOCUMENTS DETAILING THE CONSTRUCTION OF NARODNI DOM

In the night from 29 to 30 October 1926, a storm broke off the tip of the tower with the apple and tin wind spinner, which fell on the stairway extension that was still under construction. It did not cause any major damage. The record of repairs was added to the original documents in the tube that carried the memorandum and the tube was placed back into the tip of the dome.

Narodni dom Maribor,

THE HEART AND FACILITATOR OF THE CULTURAL SCENE

ŠPELA VALADŽIJA

History of Narodni dom, focusing on landmark events in the period 1898-2022

Posojilnica, the successful financial cooperative in Štajerska, completed by 1898 the construction of a building at the intersection of the former Nagý street and Kopališka street. The building, designed by architect Jan Vejrych, was given the name Narodni dom. At a German march, the Slovenians' new acquisition was labelled a "castle rising amidst the German fortress", as Slovenian events held in the new lavish building put the German citizens of Maribor at unease. (Hartman, 1998)

The building's exterior alone was raising national consciousness; it was regarded as the representative building of Maribor at the time and held major significance for the Slovenian part of Maribor's population, Slovenian cultural societies, and further cultural development. (Potočnik, 2003) Pos-

ojilnica's first assembly in the building was held on 26 February 1899. Narodna slovanska čitalnica v Mariboru (*Slavic National Reading Room Maribor*), the central Slovenian society that promoted the use of Slovenian language and made sure that Slovenians were "being educated and took delight" in this spirit, finally moved into the building on 1 May 1899. Čitalnica was the foundation of the Slovenian theatre and music scene and became the heart of Slovenian social and cultural life until the First World War. On 30 November 1899, Narodni dom finally opened its doors to audiences from all classes. *Omne tulit punctum*, "he has gained the applause of all", were the closing lines of the ode to a diverse cultural scene given at the opening ceremony, which was organized by Slovanska čitalnica and attended by several thousand visitors, as well as at the event organized a week later by Bralno in pevsko društvo Maribor (*Reading and Singing Society Maribor*). This event was for the children as well, who were paid a visit by Saint Nicholas. (Društveno

življenje, 1899)

Aside from Posojilnica, Slovanska čitalnica, and Bralno in pevsko društvo Maribor, Narodni dom also housed Zgodovinsko društvo za slovensko Štajersko (*Historical Society for Slovenian Štajerska*) with a museum in the small hall on the second floor, a library, and a budding archive, and the society Sokol. (Hartman, 2001) High school students met in rooms in the basement. Slovanska čitalnica then founded Ljudska knjižnica (*People's Library*), the first Slovenian public library in Maribor. (Hartman, 1998) They held theatre performances, concerts, assemblies, lectures, the annual grand fest of the Ciril-Metod company, dances, and dance classes for the Slovenian youth. The establishment of Narodni dom marked a major milestone for the theatre scene as well. Slovenian theatre groups of Čitalnica and Bralno in pevsko društvo initially operated as stand-alone entities. Theatre performances of both societies were hugely popular and attracted audi-

1950

FOUNDING OF LUTKOVNO
MARIONETNO GLEDALIŠČE
SOKOL MARIBOR MATICA
(STRING PUPPET THEATRE
SOKOL MARIBOR HEADQUARTERS)

The theatre operated in Narodni dom until 1941 under the management of Vojeslav Ipavec.



Parish puppet stage in Narodni dom in Maribor, 1930

ences from places near and far. In 1909, the groups merged into Dramatično društvo (*Dramatic Society*), which caused social and cultural life in Narodni dom to bloom. The society called Slovensko gledališče (*Slovenian Theatre*) took it upon itself to connect all Slovenians in Maribor. Performances were well attended, drawing visitors from as far as Prekmurje, Prlekija, and Dravsko polje. The audience consisted of Slovenian intellectuals and the bourgeoisie, who took the stalls seats, and drew plenty of interest also from workers, servants, and farmhands, who took in the shows from the gallery, and high school students, who were the greatest in number and packed the standing room. (Potočnik, 2003) One of the most visited performances before the First World War was the play *Ben Hur*; on 2 March 1913, a staggering 1020 people crammed into the theatre and some were even denied entry. Slovensko gledališče also staged plays for children, as they believed that this fostered early development of national consciousness. (Ferlež, 2019) Most play reviews and critiques sang praise to performances in Narodni dom – serving on the one hand as an invitation to audiences to go see Slovenian plays, and on the other hand as a tool of combat for Slovenian culture and against German attempts to banish it. Societies rode these high spirits to merge with one another and, on 19 April 1914, on the 500th anniversary of the inauguration of the last Duke of Carinthia, held a ceremony with a sheen “the likes of which Maribor has never seen”. This way, they drew attention to the former political independence of Slovenians. (Potočnik, 2003)

Following the military occupation of Narodni dom,

the societies lost their space. Many society members were called up for the army. The library and museum stopped operating as well. (Stavbar, 2002; Potočnik, 2003) On 18 November 1914, board members of Dramatično društvo decided to “temporarily suspend theatre performances, given the war situation.” (Hartman, 1996) Slovenians in Maribor have been strengthening their national campaigns again since the beginning of 1918 and revived the engagements of Slovenian societies. After a four-year pause, they staged a concert in the middle of summer by the renewed choir of Slovanska čitalnica, which performed in the dining part of Narodni dom, as the concert halls were still occupied by the military. On 18 August, more than a thousand people, mostly Slovenians, gathered in Narodni dom to commemorate the birthday of Emperor Charles I, even though they stood firmly behind the future state of Yugoslavia. In the first month after the fall of the monarchy, Dramatično društvo was not able to stage any plays, as most actors had not yet returned from the war, the stage and hall in Narodni dom had not yet been made ready, and there was a shortage of fuel and lighting. (Hartman, 2002)

In autumn of 1918, preparations were underway in Narodni dom for the military takeover of Maribor and the Štajerska region. Narodni svet za Štajersko (*National Council for Štajerska*) was established on 26 September 1918, which promoted major Rudolf Maister to general on 1 November 1918 in Narodni dom, entrusting him with the task to defend the city and Slovenian Štajerska. Posojilnica funded operations of the Slovenian army with two million kronor. The army occupied Narodni dom all the way

until the end of 1918, when ownership was again returned to Maribor. (Hartman, 1998; Stavbar, 2002)

After a four-year pause, Dramatično društvo thus again organized a New Year’s Eve event at the end of 1918, which featured singing and band performances. After the war, Maribor’s Narodni dom no longer held the role of national, cultural, and social centre of Slovenians. Theatre activities were relocated to the theatre building, which had better technical stage equipment, while the Kazina Hall opened its doors to many activities that have previously taken place in Narodni dom. (Hartman, 1998)

The founding of Vojna godba za Spodnji Štajer (*Military Band for Lower Štajer*), which was founded by general Rudolf Maister for propaganda and representation purposes, had an important impact both from a national and cultural perspective. The band held promenade and folk concerts in Narodni dom and held its first symphonic concert on 24 March 1919 in Götz Hall. Joining them in their next concert was violin virtuoso Zlatko Baloković, who held a solo concert in Narodni dom just a few days prior, as Narodni dom hosted classical music concerts as well. (Godina, 1985; Potočnik, 2003) Narodni dom also hosted prominent concerts organized by the music school, which, after two years in operation, came under the remit of Glasbena matica. After composer Oskar Dev came to Maribor later that same year, so many singers answered his call in May 1919 to attend the first ever singing rehearsal session in the small hall of Narodni dom that they ran out of sheet music copies. The male voice choir was 114 members strong and made its first public

1959

FOUNDING OF GLEDALIŠČE MLADEGA RODU (THEATRE OF THE YOUNG GENERATION)

Gledališče mladega rodu was founded in June 1939. The theatre staged educational shows and shows with a high artistic value that were based on dramatic literature for the youth and hand puppet shows.

1941–1945

MARIBOR UNDER GERMAN OCCUPATION

Following the German occupation of Maribor, Narodni dom was confiscated as early as 7 April 1941 by ordinance of the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood and then handed over for use to the land of Štajerska. By order made in 1942, the title to the building was given to the city of Maribor. Several offices of Štajerska domovinska zveza (Homeland Association of Štajerska) operated out of Narodni dom during the occupation. Books confiscated from Slovenian libraries across Štajerska were delivered to the building and later burned, with many books destroyed also during the bombardment on 14 October 1944. The books that remained were lost immediately after the war when masses of refugees, prisoners of war, and soldiers moved through the building that lay in ruins.

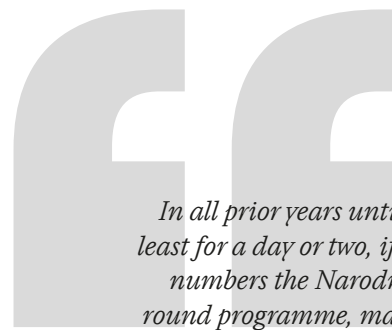
1946

FOUNDING OF KONCERTNA POSLOVALNICA MARIBOR (CONCERT MANAGEMENT MARIBOR)

appearance on 25 May 1919 when the remains of Petar Zrinski and Krsto Frankopan were being transported from Vienna to Zagreb. Following this performance, the singers began to rehearse regularly and laid the foundation for Glasbena matica, which was founded on 5 September 1919. It became the leading institution of Slovenian musical life in Slovenian Štajerska. Aside from being active in singing, education, and orchestral music, it expanded its field of activity to issuing new music publications and, with the concert bureau, to organizing concerts. The concert bureau was in charge of raising the level of musical culture by organizing concerts by local and foreign music artists and aligning on time slots with other societies. (Potočnik, 2003)

Posojilnica still had its office space in Narodni dom. In the first few years after the upheaval, Slovanska čitalnica remained an important centre of social life in the city, but the new environment reduced its scope of operation to Ljudska knjižnica in čitalnica (*People's Library and Reading Room*). On 1 January 1919, they returned to their former offices, but since there was no heating, work conditions in the winter of 1920 were inadequate and the library did not open at all. 1921 marked the 60th anniversary of the founding of Slovanska čitalnica and the society set for itself the goal to renovate and open Ljudska knjižnica, which required purchasing cabinets, equipment and new books, and appointing a permanent librarian. They were provided with financial aid by Posojilnica. The society's library and Ljudska knjižnica were the first to merge and after that special library checkout arrangements were made for the youth department and special library cards introduced for Sokol members. Despite growing membership numbers, the libraries were plagued by financial issues and held only modest volumes of newspapers. In 1927, Posojilnica decided to remodel the building and Ljudska knjižnica had to move to the ground floor. With financial assistance from members of Slovanska čitalnica, the library was beautifully redone and now exuded a metropolitan air. In the beginning of 1932, Slovanska čitalnica opened Čitalnica za revije (*Magazine Reading Room*) in the waiting room of Ljudska knjižnica. Regardless of financial issues, seeing that Posojilnica no longer supported it either, Slovanska čitalnica existed until April 1941 when it was done away with by the occupying authorities. (Potočnik, 2003, 2005)

In the period between the two World Wars, the building also housed Sokol-Mat-



In all prior years until my retirement, I frequented Festival Lent at least for a day or two, if not longer. I was always surprised how few in numbers the Narodni dom team was, who, on top of the rich year-round programme, managed to close the season by hosting a festival as the pinnacle of their activity. Not only is this cultural event a nice gift to the visitors, it is also a message to the Central European public about the unique breakthrough power of Maribor. No wonder then that people from the other side of the border like coming to the festival.

I found out early on that one of the reasons why this team is able to do it all is because it is led by a personality with a cosmopolitan vision, permeated with humanist values and a belief in the liberating power of art. The team believe Vladimir because he is always there for them and never waivers.

The team knew that there was a chance they could lose him after Maribor won the candidacy for the European Capital of Culture (ECoC), mostly on his merits. I know this for a fact because I was there when the decision was taken; I was on Ljubljana's side of the camp. Everyone expected him to leave them and take the helm of institute Maribor 2012. Vladimir avoided this challenge; his heart has always burned most for Narodni dom and Lent. He stayed with the team even though it would have perhaps been better for Maribor if he had taken the wheel of ECoC in real time.

My message from Ljubljana to the people of Maribor is that they can be proud of Vladimir and glad that he and his excellent team will remain in charge of Narodni dom and Dvorana Union hall for another five years.

*Mitja Rotovnik,
Director of Cankarjev dom between 1982 and 2014*

18. 5. 1946

**FIRST TWO CONCERTS OF
KONCERTNA POSLOVALNICA**

Concerts performed by the Trieste Philharmonic Orchestra, Jakov Cipci, conductor; Giusto Capponi, viola; Union Hall.



Concert bill

1946–1991

DOM JUGOSLOVANSKE ARMADNE

After the end of the Second World War, the Narodni dom building was taken over by the military, which rebuilt it and renamed it to Dom Jugoslovanske armade (known among the people of Maribor as Dom JLA/JNA). The legal status of the building was regulated on 22 September 1946 in unclear circumstances by way of a decision of an ad-hoc general assembly of Posojilnica, according to which Posojilnica bestowed the Narodni dom building onto the military in exchange for other buildings.



Back side of commemorative plaque in the lobby of Narodni dom, 1993

ica, the regional administration of the Sokol society in Maribor and the Sokol Kreditna zadruga (*Credit Cooperative*), the Yugoslav-Czechoslovak League, national defence organizations Jadranska straža (*Adriatic Watch*) and Narodna odbrana (*National Defence*), Slovensko žensko društvo (*Slovenian Women's Society*), and Dramatično društvo (*Dramatic Society*). The liberal Zveza kulturnih društev (*Association of Cultural Societies*) had its headquarters in the west wing of the building, while the high school society Napredek (*Progress*) and academic societies Triglav and Jadran (*Adriatic*) were operating on the first floor. (Hartman, 1998; Potočnik 2003)

Dances were one of the most popular forms of socializing in Maribor. They were organized by societies and associations that often had political undertones. The people of Maribor were eager to have fun and attended events even if they did not agree with their political orientation. On 5 January 1920, members of Društvo mariborskih akademikov (*Maribor Academics Society*) organized the first “elite” dance in Narodni dom, which was afterwards held on the same day until the Second World War and was the opening event of the dance season in Union Hall. These dances were among the most important social and cultural events in the city. The organizers, including those who held “non-elite” dances, were competing among themselves for the most original decoration, which was entrusted to, among others, the “fest commander” BSc Arch. Eng. Jelenc and other architects. Dance events featured both standard dances as well as novelties that popped up in different dance seasons. 7th and 8th

grade high school students hired a dancing master for their dance rehearsals and most often booked the small hall in Narodni dom. Sunday afternoon dances for the youth in Narodni dom were very popular as well. They prepared a short cultural programme, which was followed by a dance for high school youth. The Sokol society held annual New Year's Eve parties in Narodni dom that were the talk of the town, as well as Mardi Gras events on Shrove Tuesday and Saint Nicholas gifting events for children and adults. (Godina, 1985) Members of Društvo Jadran, emigrants from the Primorje region, were known for their successful singing scene, the popular event Jadranska noč (*Adriatic Night*), public open-air fests, and other cultural events. Wishing to bring the Karst environment closer to the visitors, they erected a Karst house in the gallery rooms of Narodni dom, complete with the original fireplace and cellar, where they sold Teran wine, Dalmatian wines, saltwater fish, and Karst prosciutto. This is how typical dishes from the Primorska region were introduced to the plates of the people of Maribor. They also celebrated all the birthdays and name days of immediate members of the ruling Karadorđević family. (Potočnik, 2003) Starting in 1930, Zgodovinsko društvo held social evenings for historians and friends of history. (Potočnik, 2005)

Before Narodni dom underwent its first renovation, the newspaper *Jutro* described the state of the building at the twenty-fifth anniversary of its unveiling with these words: “Soldiers were cleaning the marvellous hardwood floor with water, and the quantities they kept pouring over it caused the timberwork below to rot. They also largely demolished the dec-

orated walls, stole everything from the stage, and generally destroyed everything they could.” Until October 1924, nearly all the rooms were renovated, including the great festival hall. The wall separating one of the larger rooms from the country room in the dining part of the building was torn down, which created a hall for major events. The restaurant owner who later wished to further expand the dining rooms was given approval by the district board to proceed with the expansion, subject to certain conditions, with the following among the more interesting ones: “A hygienic spittoon must be installed in each guest room and the following sign must be attached to the wall above it: *Do not spit on the floor.*” (Stavbar, 2002) In 1931, Posojilnica commissioned a remodelling of the stage in the great hall, which made it suitable from then on only for smaller shows and performances. By virtue of reducing the stage, the small hall on the second floor was made bigger. (Hartman, 1998)

In the winter of 1921/1922, the Czech Club founded a puppet theatre in Narodni dom for Czech children and, together with Sokol, began staging Slovenian shows in March 1922. The education section continued with puppet shows in the small hall of Narodni dom in the next seasons as well. The work of the puppet theatre grew and became popular in the 1930s. After 1930, shows for children were held on Narodni dom's new stage every other Sunday. They were one of the few institutions that provided children's entertainment and education, including for children from the youth home and the orphanage. They staged up to thirty shows per year, with a single show drawing an average of 180 visitors.

1950–1965

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF THE MARIBOR PHILHARMONIC

Between 1959 and 1965, the Symphony Orchestra of the Maribor Philharmonic was an important carrier of the domestic cultural scene and the central driving force behind the musical blossoming. The orchestra was founded by initiative of maestro Demetrij Žebre and with the support of Ferdo Filipič, the founder and manager of Koncertna poslovalnica at the time. The orchestra appeared in a staggering 98 concerts during its fifteen years in operation.

15. 5. 1950

FIRST CONCERT OF THE MARIBOR PHILHARMONIC

Symphony Orchestra of the Maribor Philharmonic, Demetrij Žebre, conductor; Union Hall.



Symphony Orchestra of the Maribor Philharmonic, 1954

(Potočnik, 2003) In June 1939, Gledališče mladega rodu (*Theatre of the Young Generation*) was founded that staged a repertoire for the youth and introduced hand puppet shows. The theatre staged pieces that were high in educational and artistic substance and were based on dramatic literature for the youth, and thereby provided art education and development. They achieved this through their artistic section, pedagogical and psychology section, and organizational section. The first show they held in Narodni dom was Fran Levstik's *Martin Krpan*, which was a great success. (Potočnik, 2003)

After the beginning of the Second World War, the chief of civil administration, dr. Sigfried Uiberreither, delivered a decision in April 1941 that all societies, organizations, and associations in Slovenian Štajerska must suspend operations, effective immediately. (Potočnik, 2003) Once Maribor was occupied by the Germans, Narodni dom was confiscated on 7 April 1941 by ordinance of the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Reich Commissioner for the Consolidation of German Nationhood and then handed over for use to the land of Štajerska. Several offices of Štajerska domovinska zveza (*Homeland Association of Štajerska*) operated out of Narodni dom during the occupation. Starting in the summer of 1942, the building served as the headquarters of the office for Slovenian books and, aside from the great Kazina Hall, a collection centre for books confiscated in the region of Maribor and Slovenian Štajerska. On one hand, their work entailed sorting and selecting books for Austrian and German libraries and institutions and, on the other hand, destroying Slovenian books. Selected books were

put into wooden crates and taken away, however, seeing that they were not able to transport them all at once, they stored them in the bowling alley in the courtyard of Narodni dom. A traffic shutdown and a bomb that fell on the books on 14 October 1944 prevented the books from being taken away. Those that remained undamaged were destroyed by the masses of refugees and prisoners of war who moved into the rooms of Narodni dom in May 1944 and used the books in lieu of furniture and as heating fuel. (Stavbar, 2002) As circumstances would have it, a booklet from 1924 entitled *Listki*, written and signed by Ksaver Meško, returned to Narodni dom. Miloš Pregel sent it to Narodni dom in 2014, along with a letter in which he described how he had saved the book from being burned: "The enclosed booklet was a unit held in the library of Narodni dom in Maribor (before the Second World War). In spring 1941, I was in 2nd grade of the 3rd National People's Boy School in Maribor, on Ruška cesta. One day, a few days after school began under the occupation regime, a soldier came to our school carrying some paper, and the whole class, including the teacher, had to head over the bridge to Narodni dom. A heap of books was ablaze on the courtyard there; the fire spanned 2-2.5 m. I believe the date might be recorded somewhere. We went to the end of the arcades on the 1st floor where the great hall is, and there was another hall with some shelving with books scattered all across it. You could see that some shelves were already cleaned out before. In the corner I noticed 10 or so books on the floor and I meant to hide one of them in the bushes across the street (at the dental clinic). When I passed the arcade, an officer appeared out of some dark niche

(maybe the stairway?), tapped his stick on the book, and I had to put it on the floor next to three similar books that already lay there. I then returned to the room and gathered *Naš dom* and *Živa* magazines and took them to the fire. But I still hid this booklet under my shirt. Ever since then, this booklet accompanied me wherever I went, until this day. I'm proud of it." (Pregel, 2004)

Cultural reconstruction of Maribor began soon after liberation. Ferdo Filipič, the first director of Koncertna poslovalnica, the founder of Kulturno-umetniško društvo Jože Hermanko (*Culture and Art Society Jože Hermanko*) and the manager of Večer (at the time named Vestnik), channelled his unprecedented will and organizational skills into continuing Maribor's music history that had been interrupted by the war. As the first of its kind in Slovenia, Koncertna poslovalnica Maribor began operating in spring 1946, first as Koncertni biro Glasbene matice (*Concert Bureau*), which was later renamed to KUD Jože Hermanko. (Salmič Kovačič, 2016) The first two concerts of Koncertna poslovalnica Glasbene matice in Maribor, performed on 18 March 1946 by the Trieste Philharmonic Orchestra led by Jakov Cipci in what was then the hall of Telovadno društvo Maribor (*Gymnastic Society Maribor*), now Union Hall, enthralled the people of Maribor, both the youth in the afternoon concert and others in the evening concert. (Koncertna poslovalnica Glasbene matice v Mariboru, 1946) *Vestnik* reported that for a number of days, "the people of Maribor could hardly await the Trieste Philharmonic Orchestra and it was impossible to take even a single step without hearing people talk about the arrival of the es-

22. 11. 1955

**PETER PEARS, TENOR;
BENJAMIN BRITTEN, PIANO;
KAZINA HALL**

The central figure of British music, composer, conductor, and pianist Benjamin Britten, whose impressive oeuvre consists of more than 800 orchestra, chamber, and particularly vocal pieces.

10. 4. 1956

**CZECH PHILHARMONIC,
KAREL ANČERL, CONDUCTOR;
UNION HALL**

11. 6. 1964

**DOCUMENTS DETAILING THE
CONSTRUCTION OF NARODNI DOM
(MEMORANDUM) FOUND
DURING RENOVATION**

While renovating the roof, the tin dome was removed and disassembled, which revealed a half a metre long tube made out of zinc in the top of the tip that carried a wind spinner under an apple. Inside the tube was a memorandum dated 10 July 1898, a copy of the Czech newspaper Svetozor of 1 July 1898, and a document from 1926 detailing the repairs done on the building.

teemed guests. The youth was the first to gather on Trg svobode on Monday, even as early as 12 o'clock, and the entire square filled up soon after. The Triestinos were running slightly late, but the masses that gathered on the square did not give up. Once the first bus arrived, excitement shot across the entire square and people greeted the Triestinos with loud cheers. The excitement and cheers refused to die down." (Sprejem Tržaške filharmonije v Mariboru, 1946) After Koncertna poslovalnica was already an established organizer of concert events, they founded Mariborska filharmonija (*Maribor Philharmonic*) by initiative of maestro Demetrij Žebre and with the support of Ferdo Filipič. They held the first concert on 13 March 1950 and Mariborska filharmonija enriched the city's symphony programmes until 1965 when it stopped operating due to financial issues. (Salmič Kovačič, 2016) On 10 November 1965, the music workers of Maribor founded the society Glasbena mladina Maribor (*Musical Youth Maribor*), which was the first of its kind in Slovenia. The key figure in the founding and operation of the latter was composer Aleksander Lajovic. Glasbena mladina operated as an equal partner of Koncertna poslovalnica. "Music should find its way to the youth and the youth will find its way to music," was how they described their mission at the time and accompanied the event by a concert by soloists of the Croatian Opera, "who sang arias from four comic operas and thereby showed the youth one of the ways to deliver music. The youth received the concert with a warm applause." (Glasbena mladina Maribor, 1965; Pirš, 2020) To commemorate its tenth anniversary, Radio Maribor broadcast the show *Glasbena mladina* for the first time on 15 De-

ember 1975. The show was on air once per month and lasted half an hour. The concept of the show depended on events organized by Glasbena mladina Maribor, Koncertna poslovalnica Maribor, and other events associated with the music scene. Shows were created by members of Glasbena mladina Maribor. (Radio Maribor, 1975) In 1969, acting on the initiative of pianist Janko Šetinc and in cooperation with dr. Sergej Vrišer, Festival baročne glasbe (*Festival of Baroque Music*) was created with Koncertna poslovalnica, a prominent Maribor-based event that developed from baroque music nights held in the Maribor castle. The ensemble Collegium musicum was founded parallel to and for purposes of the festival. In the first thirty years after the war, the concert scene in Maribor saw a major rise with Koncertna poslovalnica Maribor. Both the number of concerts and concert-goers were increasing year after year. The people of Maribor had the chance to experience world-class domestic and foreign soloists, orchestras, and chamber music groups. After the death of Ferdo Filipič (1978), Marjeta Čurman took over as manager of Koncertna poslovalnica. In this period (1978–1992), Koncertna poslovalnica, aside from Glasbena mladina Maribor and the Puppet Theatre, operated as a working unit in the cultural organization of Kulturna dejavnost Rotovž (*Cultural Activity Rotovž*). (Salmič Kovačič, 2016)

After the war, Narodni dom was taken over by the Yugoslav People's Army, albeit in circumstances that were rather unclear and based on a decision of the ad-hoc general assembly of Posojilnica in Maribor. An inscription in Serbo-Croatian was added to the back side of the commemorative plaque in

the lobby, which said that the citizens of Maribor have gifted the building to the army, which rebuilt it and changed its name to Dom JLA. (Hartman, 1998) Afterwards, the institution was used for organizing and developing educational, cultural, teaching, social, entertainment, and sports activities for JLA military personnel and members, as well as for the people of Maribor. The building hosted movie and theatre shows, cultural and art events, literary evenings, academies, quizzes, concerts of serious, folk, and popular music, and exhibitions. In 1975, they counted 130,000 visitors of various events. (Stavbar, 2002) One of the most interesting events that Dom JLA hosted at the time was Festival Kurirček, which took place in Maribor between 1963 and 1992 and was the largest literary, music, and art festival for children and the youth in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. To commemorate JLA Day at Dom JLA, they held five literary performances for soldiers and primary and high school students of Maribor on 17 and 18 December 1962, which were attended by 3,000 children and 500 adults. Festival Kurirček helped spread recognition of literature, raised awareness about the importance of reading and literacy among the youth, and allowed them to have personal contact with writers and poets. (Mikić, 2014)

In the 1960s, the Narodni dom building was in need of extensive repairs. *Večer* reported that "they have been carefully renovating it for some time now and are making sure that they maintain its original structure, which is of particular importance when renovating parts of the baroque hall, which is one of the most beautiful in Slovenia. Work in the hall is

10. 11. 1965

FOUNDING OF GLASBENA MLADINA MARIBOR (MUSICAL YOUTH MARIBOR)

The society Glasbena mladina Maribor was founded in the renovated hall of the Musical Education Centre and was the first of its kind in Slovenia. Glasbena mladina Maribor became part of the International Musical Youth Association (Jeunesses Musicales International), the most important youth music organization in the world. To commemorate its tenth anniversary, Radio Maribor broadcast a monthly show entitled *Glasbena mladina*.



Večer, 11. 11. 1965

progressing slowly, as renovating the moulding requires special care and is done in cooperation with the Maribor office of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage. They renovated the entire building, built a new dome for the tower, installed central heating and an air conditioning unit." While renovating the roof, they removed the tin dome and disassembled it, which revealed a half a metre long tube made out of zinc in the top of the tip that carried a wind spinner under an apple. Inside the tube was a *Spomenica (Memorandum)* dated 10 July 1898 with the following inscription: "This here house was built in 1897 and 1898 by Posojilnica in Maribor after the designs made by architect Jan Veyrich in Prague for the Slovenian people in the city and its surroundings." The paper was signed by nationally conscious Slovenians, members of the building and lending committee and members of the supervising body. The tube also contained a copy of the Czech newspaper *Svetozor* of 1 July 1898, which reported that the building was built in Czech renaissance style, while the great hall was built in still baroque style. The article also mentions frescos by painter Ladislav Novak, which were never made. What is interesting is that the tube also contained a record of a storm in 1926: "In the night of 29 to 30 October 1926, the wind broke off the iron tip of the tower with the apple and tin wind spinner, [which] fell on the new part of the stairway extension that was still under construction. It did not cause any major damage. All repairs were done by tradesmen: Ivan Živic, construction, and Fr. Karba, sheet metal worker in Maribor." (Posojilnica Maribor, 1926) In the spring of 1964, the discovery of these artefacts was witnessed in the office of Narodni dom by the

chief of Dom JLA, major Milovan Godina, principal of the Maribor Regional Museum, dr. Sergej Vrišer, and prof. Bogo Teply. (Podkrajšek, 1964) The artefacts were discovered for a third time during the renovation in 1993 and this time, they included documents, newspaper articles, and photographs of the renovation in 1964 and coins. The artefacts were then taken over by the Maribor Regional Archive and were replaced in the copper tube with microfilms depicting the artefacts. (Skalicky, 1993)

The young people who wanted to socialize while preserving cultural heritage most likely could not have imagined the impact they would have on the course of cultural history of Maribor when they founded Kulturno-umetniško društvo Študent (*Culture and Art Society Student*) on 21 May 1964. This was the beginning of cultural engagement by students in Maribor. The sections Akademska folklorna skupina Študent (*Academic Folklore Group Student*) and Akademiški pevski zbor Maribor (*Academic Choir Maribor*) have been operating continuously until this day. Aside from these two, former sections included a theatre and art section and a contemporary dance section. A number of renowned cultural workers came from the ranks of KUD Študent who pursued, and continue to pursue, their creative and professional careers and mission in various cultural institutions and associations across Slovenia. In 1989, in celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of KUD Študent, Akademska folklorna skupina Študent organized the first International Folklore Festival and gifted it to the city of Maribor. (Kordelc, 2010) The closing performances by local and foreign folklore groups sent the audience on Vojašniški

Culture and sport are the identity of our city. Just like Ljudski vrt is synonymous with sport, Narodni dom is synonymous with culture. For many people, the door to the world of culture opens in Narodni dom and not only through the window of Festival Lent.

For 30 years already. I believe that this door will lead many more into the world of culture and, at the same time, provide many of us with plenty of diverse cultural endeavours. This is why – here's to many more and thank you, Narodni dom, for the first 30 years.

*Gregor Lednik,
Director of Marketing and PR,
Zavarovalnica Sava*

1969–1995

FESTIVAL BAROČNE GLASBE (FESTIVAL OF BAROQUE MUSIC)

The first Festival baročne glasbe, a new addition to Maribor's culture created by Koncertna poslovalnica Maribor, was held between 19 May and 10 June and between 15 September and 17 October 1969. The initiators of the festival were dr. Sergej Vrišer and pianist Janko Šetinc. In a span of twenty-five years, the festival, which developed from baroque music nights held in the Maribor castle, firmly positioned itself as a renowned classical music event in the city. This also led to the founding of Collegium musicum Maribor, the ensemble of Festival baročne glasbe, which was the central ensemble of the festival that combined the most excellent local musical performers.



Collegium Musicum, 1983

trg into a frenzy. (Skalicky, 1989) The next year, the festival was named Folkart and it became part of the international festival association CIOFF®. In 1991, Folkart marked the independence of Slovenia. The opening ceremony began with a performers' procession from Trg svobode, the location of the central event where Slovenia was declared independent, down to Rotovški trg, the main location of Folkart. When the venue was being set up, the flag of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia was raised on stage but it was replaced by the flag of the independent Republic of Slovenia already at the evening opening ceremony. Due to the war, the festival had to be called off after two days and all the events were cancelled. At the same time, they organized a daring rescue mission so that all the visiting groups could return home. (Ilec, 1991; Mencinger, 1991)

When the Yugoslav People's Army was withdrawing from Slovenia in 1991, it handed over Narodni dom Maribor to the Territorial Defence. It was then passed under the authority of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Slovenia, which commissioned it for management to the Municipality of Maribor. (Hartman, 1998)

The general assembly of the Municipality of Maribor passed an ordinance on 30 June 1992 establishing the public institute Cultural and Event Centre Narodni dom, which was registered on 10 September 1992. Narodni dom continued and built on the tradition of the most important programmes of the city's cultural scene: Koncertna poslovalnica (1946), the oldest of its kind in the territory of former Yugoslavia, Glasbena mladina Maribor (1965), Festival

baročne glasbe (1969), which was renamed to Glasbeni september (*Musical September*) in 1993 and to Festival Maribor in 2008, and by then the already well-established Folkart. In October 1992, Narodni dom, under the management of Vladimir Rukavina and with the vision to revive cultural heritage in order to give back life to the people and the city, began its first season in operation. The building was renovated at the time as well. The newly-founded institute initially operated out of the Rotovž town hall and moved to Narodni dom on the Slovenian cultural holiday of 8 February in 1993. It was then that the Narodni dom building truly reclaimed its position as the heart of the cultural scene. (Narodni dom Maribor, n. d.)

On 30 November 1993, at an event commemorating the seventy-fifth anniversary of the battle for the northern Slovenian border, the original front side of the memorial plaque in the lobby that JLA had turned over in 1946 was unveiled again. The plaque pays tribute to persons "in the management of Posojilnica, the supervisors, and the building committee", and to architect Jan Vejrych. (Stavbar, 2002)

In 1993, the institute, aside from other events, revived Mariborska filharmonija, which operated between 1993 and 2004, and organized the first Festival Lent that became the largest open-air festival in Slovenia and one of the largest in Europe. With Festival Lent, they developed an innovative model connecting culture with sponsors and thereby facilitated that the quality cultural programme remained free of charge or at a symbolic price of a festival pass ("lenta").

Today, Narodni dom Maribor delivers its mission by organizing concerts by world-class international symphonic and chamber orchestras and soloists as part of Orkestrski cikel (*Orchestra Cycle*) and Komorni cikel (*Chamber Cycle*), by providing cultural education to children and the youth as part of Mladinski cikel (*Youth Cycle*) that follows the tradition of Glasbena mladina Maribor, by running Kulturni dnevnik (*Cultural Diary*), Art Camp, and the Kekec season programme, by organizing music projects available to subscribers to the cycle Jazz v Narodnem domu (*Jazz in Narodni dom*) and to non-subscribers, by running the season programme Komedija v Narodnem domu (*Comedy in Narodni dom*), and by staging shows produced in-house and in co-production. Narodni dom led the project to acquire the title European Capital of Culture Maribor 2012, acted as the temporary secretariat of the European Capital of Culture Maribor 2012, and became the ECoC Maribor 2012 brand manager in 2013. By managing buildings in Maribor with cultural heritage designations (*Narodni dom*, *Dvorana Union* (*Union Hall*), *Karantena*, *Vetrinjski dvor* (*Vetrinj Mansion*), *Vodni in Sodni stolp* (*Water and Judgement Tower*)), it provided the opportunity for non-government organizations to operate in these buildings, all while securing locations for own and visiting programmes. (Narodni dom Maribor, n. d.) Even during the epidemic, Narodni dom was the first to bring back cultural events that we were able to experience from home, such as concerts from the tower, as well as those we were able to see in-person again, ensuring thereby that cultural goods were available to the broadest possible audience even in 2020 and 2021. In 2021, Narodni dom used its se-

2. 5. 1972

SVIATOSLAV RICHTER, PIANO;
UNION HALL

22. 8. 1972

MOSCOW PHILHARMONIC,
KIRILL KONDRASHIN, CONDUCTOR;
UNION HALL

2. 10. 1973

ST. PETERSBURG PHILHARMONIC,
NEEME JÄRVI, CONDUCTOR;
VIKTORIJA POSTNIKOVA, PIANO;
UNION HALL

10. 1. 1975

MOSCOW STATE
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA,
VERONIKA DUDAROVA, CONDUCTOR;
FARHAD BADALBEYLI, PIANO;
UNION HALL

17. 5. 1976

STUTTGART RADIO
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA,
SERGIU CELIBIDACHE, CONDUCTOR;
UNION HALL

ries of events Glasbeni balkoni (*Musical Balconies*) that were part of the campaign “Five Minutes to Midnight! Fighting for Culture” to draw attention to the state of culture, cultural institutions, creators, and cultural workers, who were pushed to the brink of survival by the epidemic, and to event-goers, who lost access to cultural events. They managed to link up with like-minded people on a state-wide level and create a unified front in the fight for culture. (Rukavina, 2021)

The fight for culture was exactly where it all began. And yet, despite several global-scale crises that still accompany culture until this very day, we are able to see that dedicated cultural workers, both past and present, have strived to revive and rebuild cultural life in Maribor every time it was destroyed. Narodni dom thus continues to keep its doors open to ideas, combining and spreading them with quality cultural programmes dedicated to both children and adults, always in pursuit of its mission. It all began long ago with an idea, born out of a fervent search for a house that would lead to cultural and economic development of Slovenia at a time when German bourgeoisie was prevalent in Maribor and all cultural institutions were German. It turned out that the supporters of this idea far outnumbered the detractors and to this very day, Narodni dom, which is far more than just a building, continues to serve the purpose it was built for. It is a house that connects the culture of the city of Maribor with renowned Slovenian and global culture, the nascent culture, and visitors eager to experience the hustle and bustle of culture.

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1978 – 1992

KULTURNE DEJAVNOSTI ROTOVŽ (CULTURAL ACTIVITIES ROTOVŽ)

Stand-alone work units that operated under the aegis of the city organization Kulturne dejavnosti Rotovž until 1992 included: Koncertna poslovalnica, Glasbena mladina Maribor, and the Puppet Theatre. Vladimir Rukavina served as the manager of Kulturne dejavnosti Rotovž from 1 December 1991 until 30 September 1992. In 1992, the organization ceased to operate and the city established two stand-alone institutions: Lutkovno gledališče Maribor (Puppet Theatre Maribor) and Narodni dom Maribor, which continues to maintain the programmes of Koncertna poslovalnica and Glasbena mladina Maribor.

17. 5. 1978

BBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA LONDON, CHARLES MACKERRAS, CONDUCTOR; FELICITY PALMER, SOPRANO; UNION HALL

29. 8. 1979

ST. PETERSBURG PHILHARMONIC, ALEXANDER DMITRIEV, CONDUCTOR; LEV MIKHAILOV, TRUMPET; VLADIMIR KRANEV, PIANO; UNION HALL



St. Petersburg Philharmonic, Alexander Dmitriev, conductor, 1979










Džambo Aguševi Orchestra, 2021, Dejan Bulut

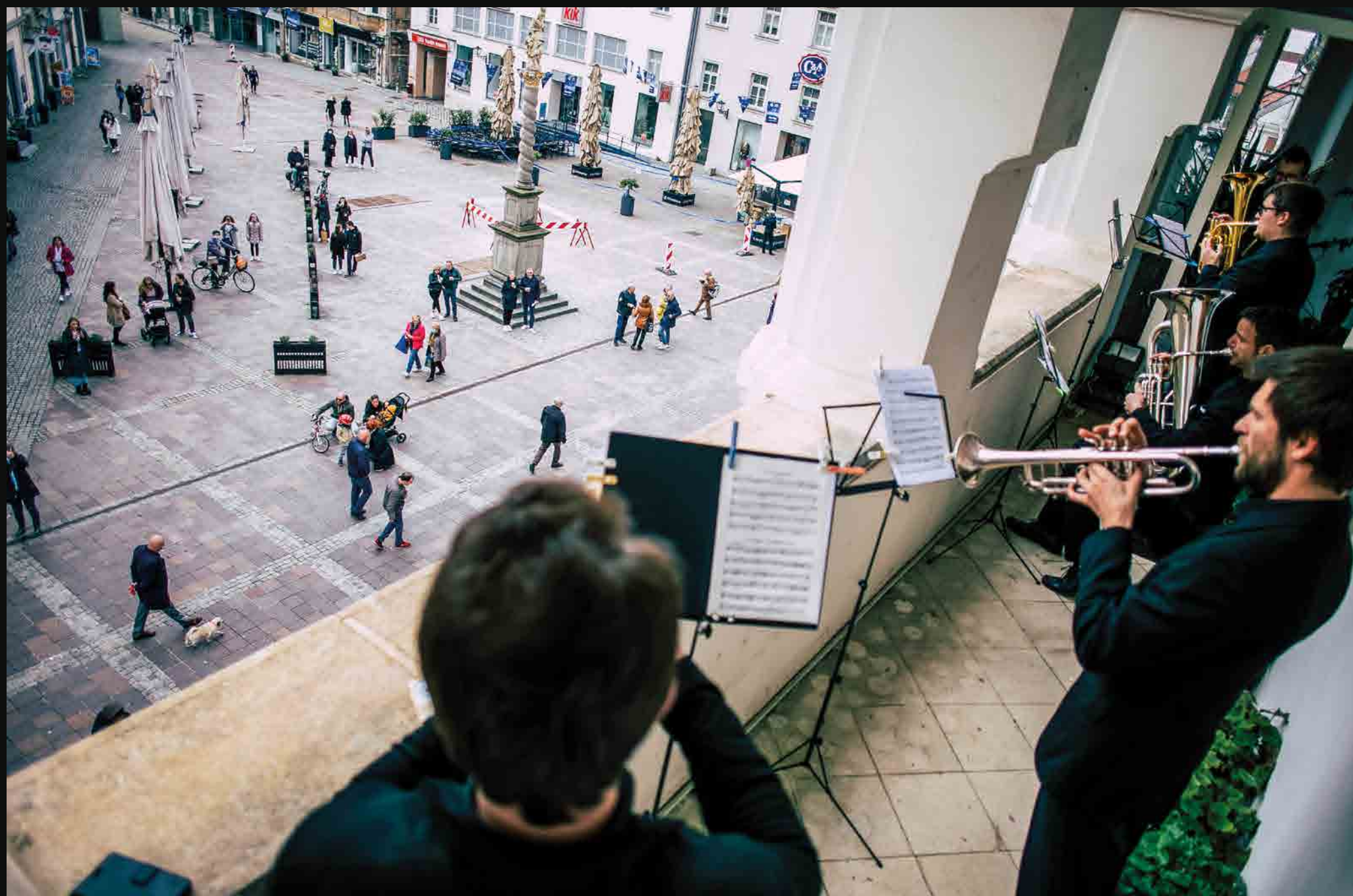


Summer Art Camp, 2013, Dejan Bulut





WHOSE
WATER
IS IT?



Brass Quintet BBS, 2021, Janez Klenovšek



Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Khatia Buniatishvili, 2016, Dejan Bulut



English Chamber Orchestra, Julian Rachlin, 2017, Dejan Bulut

A kid from Primorje

IN NARODNI DOM

TONE PARTLJIČ

Neighbours in the railway colony, where the father of sixteen-year-old Pepi finally got a company apartment in a series of those identical railway-sponsored houses, called Pepi *the lad from Primorje*. This sure made him angry. What's with the lad thing? He was called boy or kid in Povžane and at school in Materija. And why do they still insist on adding *Primorje* after he has lived in Maribor for two years? Was it just to make sure everyone knew he wasn't from around here? And does this really need to be emphasized every single time? Good thing they weren't calling him "Čič", just like they called nearly everyone else from Primorje who fled to Štajerska to escape the fascists. Even if they came from Trieste proper. When co-workers in the railway workshops once said to his father "Hurry up, Čič," he lost his nerves and made it known loud and clear that he was Slovenian ... "Listen to me now once and for all! My great-grandfather Jozo may have been a descendant of the Uskoks, but my parents were Slovenian Istrians for hundreds of years and my mother even hails from Karst. Who are you calling Čič, 'orcodio! Do you even know where Čičarija

is? I'm a proud Slovenian, not like you who still make eyes at the Austrians despite living in your very own Yugoslavia. We, Slovenians from Istria, we're now under the Italians, fascists are beating us down and burning our homes, and we still look down on these Wops, not like you who still look up at these Germans much too politely. You, Hanza, when we went to that German store, you bade them *Guten Tag*, and now you wanna call me Čič, 'orcodio! We from Primorje, we love Yugoslavia much more than you who still want to be under Austria or cosy up only to the Croatians, or just be alone in some kind of mini country of yours!" This shut the entire workshop in the railcar factory right up.

At home, Pepi didn't agree with his father on a lot of things, but this act of his in the middle of the workshop made him proud. His father's temper was the talk of the entire colony and by now everyone knew that it's better to leave him alone. And truth be told, his father wasn't all that popular among the people living in the colony.

Pepi also wasn't too sure what Ol' Pukmajster Hanza meant when he said that this nutjob Barbič from Primorje should be left alone because word on the street is that he had been a member of Orjuna years ago. When he asked his father if he had had anything to do with Orjuna, he was told to never ask such a dumb thing again.

But he also heard about himself how that Primorje lad had "ants in his pants"; and even if he didn't understand it at first, he took it as some kind of silent acknowledgement rather than a criticism, and that when they spoke of these ants in his pants, they spoke of his curiosity, determination, and boyish bravery. They probably alluded to how he was always running around, to his haste, inquisitiveness, to him sticking his nose into things that others preferred to leave alone. He did feel that he was rather popular in the colony though, much more than his sombre father. He was also one of the best students at the junior school of commerce and he organized school celebrations of national holidays, first with his professors and later even by himself. Together with his classmates, he

24. 11. 1979

L'ENSEMBLE ORCHESTRAL DE PARIS,
JEAN-PIERRE WALLEZ, CONDUCTOR;
MAURICE ANDRÉ, TRUMPET;
UNION HALL

IVO POGORELIČ, PIANO;
UNION HALL

25. 5. 1984

NORTH RHINE-WESTPHALIA
STATE PHILHARMONIC,
LEIF SEGERSTAM, CONDUCTOR;
HEIDRUN ANKERSEN, ALTO;
UNION HALL

1989

1ST INTERNATIONAL FOLKLORE
FESTIVAL MARIBOR

Members of Akademska folklorna skupina (Academic Folklore Group) wished to create their very own festival and donate it to the people of Maribor to commemorate the 25th anniversary of Kulturno umetniško društvo Študent (Culture and Art Society Študent or KUD Študent). The international cultural non-governmental organization CIOFF® (Conseil International des Organisations de Festivals de Folklore et d'Arts Traditionnels) immediately recognized the festival as successful and took it under its wing. Until this day, Folkart remains the only Slovenian festival officially recognized by CIOFF.



1st International Folklore Festival Maribor, 1989

performed on St. Vitus' Day, reciting Župančič's poem Glad; with the entire class. It was his idea to have two reciters take turns in reciting the main part of the text, a male and a female voice, while the entire class joined in as a recital chorus, just like in Greek dramas. It earned him great praise from professor Kralj.

But that didn't stop his class teacher, Mrs Grmek, from reprimanding him. On one occasion, she wrote the sentence *"The Slovenian people reject Russian communism."* on the blackboard. She didn't really mean to get political; it was more so they could all observe spelling specifics and the use of capitalization. But Pepi, on his best rebellious behaviour, declared loud and clear: "I'm not too sure what communism is, but I don't reject it. I'd rather be a Slovenian communist than one of Korošec's clericalists." After his father read the reprimand notice he was given because of his misconduct and for making political statements, he pulled out the belt from his pants, but when he swung the buckle, Pepi was long gone from the small kitchen ... He was racing on his bicycle toward the main bridge to see Lončarič Jožek to ask him if he could spend the night at his place ... Cause all hell is lose at home.

There were plenty of secondary schools in the city. The most important were the classical and the modern high school and the academy of commerce, but there were many others, various music, commerce, agriculture, teaching, forestry, trade, parochial ... schools. "Let Ljubljana have its university and its handful of students, we

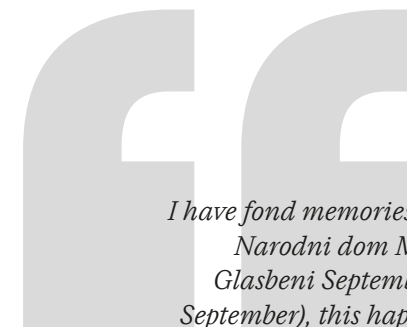
have our thousand and more students who are not taught academic, office-based erudition, but rather attend the school of life. This is why Maribor's economic development will be much swifter than that of the university city of Ljubljana," the city bigwigs kept repeating. But just in case, they founded their own People's University in the city on the Drava River.

Every autumn, the streets filled up with high school students from Maribor's surroundings. They came from Koroška, Pohorje, and Dravsko polje, but most of them came from Slovenske gorice and Prlekija. They brought to the city youth, certain kinds of high school joys, stories about high school loves, they wrote romantic and patriotic songs ... There was never a dull moment. In libraries, the theatre, in schools ... they said that they could close down if it wasn't for high school students.

They sometimes invited them to take on part-time jobs, in the theatre for example, to work as stagehands. Pepi and Jožek even made it on stage once; at some event, they were part of the choir in an aria from Nabucco. They even wore stage clothes, dressed as young Hebrew slaves, and sang:

*Hasten thought on golden wings,
Hasten and rest on the densely wooded hills,
Where warm and fragrant and soft
are the gentle breezes of our native land ...*

They weren't doing the entire opera; it was just an event to commemorate some anniversary of the composer Verdi. The theatre wanted to give the



*I have fond memories of Maribor,
Narodni dom Maribor, and
Glasbeni September (Musical
September), this happy, amazing
festival. Sparks were flying from all
the energy and creativity, brilliant
concerts and passionate audience,
enthusiastic rehearsals, and
pleasant socializing. For me, it was
certainly a wonderful experience of
a time lived with a rare intensity. I
wish Narodni dom Maribor plenty
of success, inspiration, strength,
and perseverance – for new decades
of vitality and creativity!*

*Radovan Vlatković,
artistic director of festival
Glasbeni september (2000-2003)*

NARODNI DOM RETURNED TO THE CITY OF MARIBOR

When the Yugoslav People's Army withdrew from Slovenia, it handed over Narodni dom Maribor to the Territorial Defence. It was then passed under the authority of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Slovenia, which commissioned it for management to the Municipality of Maribor.

1991

10. 9. 1992

PUBLIC INSTITUTE CULTURAL AND EVENT CENTRE NARODNI DOM MARIBOR ENTERED INTO THE REGISTER

The institute was founded by the city of Maribor. Today, the Municipality of Maribor (MOM) is registered as the founder of the institute.

Narodni dom bo upravljaval javni zavod Kulturno-prireditveni center

Dom odprtih pobud

NOVO USTANOVljeni CENTER. DELNO SE BO FINANCIRAL IZ OBČINSKIH IN REPUBLIŠKIH PRORAČUNSKIH SREDSTEV. DENAR BO DO ISKALI PRI SPONZORJIH. PRITEKAL PA BO TUDI SKOZI LASTNE DEJAVNOSTI, BO KOORDINIRAL IN ORGANIZIRAL KULTURNO IN PRIREDITVENO ŽIVLJENJE MESTA

Usoda nekdanjega Doma JLA, prej in kasneje pa znova Narodnega doma, je končno postala jasnejša in določena. Mariborski poslanci so namreč po dolgih polemikah, ki so se vlekče mesece, začele pa so jih še številne afeze in aferice, sprejeli odlok o ustanovitvi javnega zavoda, ki so ga (še samo z izbiro imena so bile težave) poimenovali Kulturno-prireditveni center Narodni dom Maribor. Njegov direktor Vladimir Rukavina ga bo upravljaval s pomočjo sveta Narodni dom, ki ga bo ustanovila mestna skupščina.

Kot smo že pisali, bodo dejavnosti centra kulturnogostinstvo-družabnega značaja: »Naš namen je pod eno streho sprati, ki so namenjene celoviti promociji mesta, tovrstne dejavnosti bomo spremljali z ustrezno ponudbo kulturnih in družabnih prireditvev, obenem pa zagotavljali, da se v te namene v skladu s programsko zasnovno in razpoložljivimi termini izkoristijo zmogljivosti Narodnega doma. Najpomembnejša stvar pa je usklajevanje vseh, ki bodo Narodnemu domu prinašale dobiček, s tistimi, ki bodo potrebne podpore.« Ena od spremljevalnih dejavnosti iz prve skupine bo gostinska ponudba – uredili bi kavarno, po možnosti tudi night club oziroma jazz club. Denar iz te spremljevalne dejavnosti bi center kot popolnoma neprofitna organizacija po-

Narodni dom treba odšteti 73 milijonov tolarjev. Ker tega denarja naenkrat ne bomo spravili skupaj, bomo najprej za plese usposobili veliko dvorano,« razmišlja Vladimir Rukavina in se poistoma jesi na občinarje, ki so tako dolgo odlašali z oddajo Narodnega doma v upravljanje. »Veliko več bi je lahko bilo storjeno, zdaj pa smo zamudili tisti ugodni trenutek, ko so se ljudje po januarski predaji doma iz rok obrambnega ministristva v občinske identifikicirali z usodo doma, z njegovo preteklostjo, ko se jim je zdel zelo potreben.«

Cepraj bo delovanje Kulturno-prireditvenega centra težilo k samofinanciranju, bo denar-

Večer, 18. 7. 1992

opera chorus and some of the best amateur singers a chance to take part in this magnificent choral music. The slaves naturally included men, women, and children; and appearing among the youngsters were the two boys, who volunteered for the part themselves. Maestro Mitrovič told them that they should sing in a quieter voice, but it was Pepi who yelled his heart out how *warm and fragrant and soft are the gentle breezes* and thought of the breezes rustling the olive trees around his family house in Povžane. Oh, olive oil from Primorje! He nearly threw up in Maribor when he tried the black, thick pumpkin seed oil from Štajerska for the first time. He told his mom that pumpkins and pumpkin seed oil were for pigs and that the people of Primorje should eat nothing but olive oil ... “Even Christ ate his salad only with olive oil,” he claimed. Yet when his mom asked him where he got that from, he couldn’t remember.

He often roved around Maribor by himself, ideally on his bicycle, and got to know it as he pleased. When he saw the rafts at Lent, he nearly burst with laughter and kept talking about the kinds of cargo liners that were moored in the port of Trieste and in Rijeka, while these rafts were nothing but wooden river toys. He often meandered up to Kalvarija and spent ages looking at the city below. He had to admit it was beautiful, with the Drava glistening in the sun and the green Pohorje that painted a wide range of pretty colours in autumn. He loved riding his bicycle along the chestnut alley, cheekily putting one hand into his pocket and, if there were any girls around, whistling some song

from Primorje. He sometimes put both hands in his pockets, letting go of the handlebar completely, while the children playing there shouted: “Look, this lad’s doing it *fraihandlih*.”

If he was riding around city streets, he always took a turn behind the Franciscan Church down to the Drava. And he always stopped in front of Narodni dom, looking at it with almost wistful eyes, thinking with fury about Narodni dom in Trieste that was burned down by Italian fascists. His father was at work in Trieste right at that time and at home, he repeated the story about the flames, heat, and smoke at least a hundred times. And of course, about the Italian police that didn’t allow for the fire to be hosed down ... Those wily Italians! He really wished to enter Narodni dom because he heard that they staged plays there, had choir rehearsals and performances, that there was a Slavic reading room, that they held New Year’s Eve dances.

Then he found out there was also a public library in Narodni dom. Books were stacked on tall shelves and they hired high school students, mostly to climb up and down the ladders and have them help the librarian, sir doctor Avgust Reisman, twice a week, because students were quick to reach the books on the topmost shelves. The library sometimes checked out up to two hundred books in a single evening. He immediately began to open the heavy wooden front door, propping up against it with his whole body, amazed at the beautiful interior, looking for the right office, but was told that he should head to the first floor ... There were plenty of large doors that said Puppet Theatre, Youth

Theatre, Slavic Reading Room, Dance School, National Loan Company. “The whole of Maribor is in here!” he said to himself.

The lady in the office where the doors said *Slovenska čitalnica* and *Ljudska čitalnica* told him to come back on Friday at five, find the sir chief librarian, doctor Reisman, and he would be the one to decide ... On Friday, he found in Narodni dom the attorney, sir dr. Reisman, who was respected because he defended the people of Maribor in Austrian courts during the First World War. He now ran the library on top of his law office. Reisman looked at him over his glasses and it was obvious that he immediately took a liking to this self-confident kid with his slightly striking blue eyes and thick, untamed, and wavy hair. After he told him that he hailed from Istria, he said with kindness in his voice:

“What, you’re a refugee from Primorje? I thought that your words sounded different and more sonorous than those of us from Štajerska.”

“I am from Primorje, we talk differently there, our vowels are sunny and sonorous because we are close to the sunny Mediterranean!”

Mister Reisman smiled and said: “Well, we do need to help our brothers from Primorje. But since you’re about to work in a library, I must ask you whether you have ever read a book at all.” “Sir, we have several tens of books at home, the rest we left in Povžane. It’s true that pops doesn’t read books other than Karl May, but my mom and I read everything we can get our hands on. Including our people, Erjavec, Pregelj, Bevk, as for Gregorčič, I can begin reciting him right this moment ...”

“Let’s leave that for some other time. Well, get your

1. 10. 1992

**LAUNCH OF FIRST SEASON OF
NARODNI DOM MARIBOR**

In its first season, which ran from 1 October 1992 until 24 June 1993, Narodni dom Maribor organized 138 events that were attended by 39,500 visitors. The highest number of event visitors, i.e. 782,426, was registered in 2012, while the most events were held in 2018: 2219.

6. 10. 1992,

**BIRGIT KOLAR, VIOLIN;
LEONORE AUMEIER, PIANO;
KAZINA HALL**

The first concert organized by Koncertna poslovalnica under the aegis of Narodni dom Maribor.

8. 2. 1995

**RELOCATION TO
THE NARODNI DOM BUILDING**

The institute moved into the Narodni dom building on the Slovenian cultural holiday of 8 February in 1993. In the first year of operation, 8 employees and external associates organized 279 events that were attended by more than 243,000 visitors.

8. 2. 1995

**FIRST SHOW OF THE COMEDY
CYCLE IN NARODNI DOM,
BALKAN SANTA CLAUS,
GLEDALIŠČE GRAPEFRUIT, LJUBLJANA**

hands on some writers from Štajerska now!"
"Which one?"

"I don't have the time for a lecture now, there's people waiting at the counter. You'll find new books by these authors yourself, and get to know them. The new, young generation right now is doing a rather good job writing. You'll figure it out. And I do believe you and can see that you're smart, Jože! You won't be mad if I don't call you Pepi, right?"
"Actually, sir, I'd prefer it! Everyone calls my mom Pepina too, even though she prefers to be called by the name in her birth certificate, which is Josipina. And I'm quicker to climb a ladder than a monkey!"
The doctor smiled at this true Mediterranean eloquence and said: "Be here on Tuesday at four, Jože, you can help us then, we will be checking out books until eight in the evening." And he was off to tend to those waiting to return or check out new books. He had to stifle a laugh when he thought about the boy from Primorska. Pepi stayed back and had a few closer looks around the library. He also saw two guys who were looking for books, one high up on a ladder, but they were looking at him with surprise and slight aloofness, and since they didn't utter a single word, he left without saying goodbye.

This is how, without saying anything to his father, he began working at the library twice a week and sometimes an extra day or two, even on days when the library was closed, archiving, putting away, sorting, cataloguing new books. He proudly told his mother though, promising her that he would bring her interesting books to read. He was nevertheless somewhat surprised when, after a few

weeks, he overheard doctor Reisman telling someone in the hallway that the boy from Primorje had ants in his pants. He smiled. By now he had had plenty of chance to see the library inside out. It had just been moved to the ground floor again, it had a reading room, and he had read in the paper that "*Ljudska knjižnica in Narodni dom exudes a metropolitan air.*" It made himself feel a bit distinguished too. In the year of nineteen twenty-two, the library started out with four thousand books. Now, just over ten years later, the number grew to more than eleven thousand. They were stored in large beautiful wooden cabinets made by carpenters of Maribor, who volunteered to make them and donated the wood too.

There were also some crates with locks that kept books the authorities banned from being loaned out. Most of them were German, published by Rote Fahne Verlag, which meant Red Flag Publishing House. While these were not communist books, they were equally dangerous because they were Marxist. But Pepi also found in the pile a small brochure, Marx's *Communist Manifesto*. He took a look inside, read the first sentence: "A spectre is haunting Europe — the spectre of communism." This made him put the book down quickly on the bottom of the crate. Then he smiled and said to himself: "He's right, this Marx, I'm scared myself already," and he locked the Rote Fahne crate ... The other two boxes kept books by NOLIT publishing house from Belgrade, which stood for Nova literature. Those were leftist, including Marxist books, some even translated from Russian where the Bolshevik revolution was happening, which the au-

thorities in Belgrade were avoiding like the plague ... Reisman once told him: "These books in here are in prison. I call them the jailbird books. Smell it, Jože, this box reeks of communism! Or it might be a pleasant smell, depending on one's nose!" And he winked at him and smiled. "This is weird," Jože wondered, "In Italy and Karst, Mussolini is locking up people, but in Yugoslavia, they are locking up books!"

Among all the high school students who worked in the library, he was the first to know where any book was. He told his mom proudly: "We have eleven thousand books and I know for each and every one of them what cabinet and what shelf I can find it on!"

"Don't let your vanity blind you, Pepi," his mom scolded him.

"But it's true!"

And plenty of this self-praise was in fact true. He also quickly picked up on which men read *Tarzan*, which high school students are looking for Karl May, which ladies check out romance novels, who is interested in alpinism, which readers are after travelogues ... He was like a monkey climbing up and down those ladders. In time, he was able to tell the readers apart by their professions, some by their names. He himself suggested to them books that he felt they liked to read.

One day, he was beckoned over into the corner and away from doctor Reisman by two men, who were young teachers. He then looked at their library cards and remembered their last names. They were Milan Apih and Franjo Vrunč ... They told him in

1995–2004

**FOUNDING OF DRUŠTVO MARIBORSKA
FILHARMONIJA (MARIBOR
PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY)**

The second period of activity of the Symphony Orchestra of the Maribor Philharmonic, which sprung back to life after a 28-year hiatus. Narodni dom Maribor arranged for substitute performers, soloists, and conductors and, together with the Slovene National Theatre Maribor (SNG Maribor), provided a new quality that further developed the opera orchestra of SNG Maribor as well. The Symphony Orchestra of the Maribor Philharmonic operated at an enviable level in terms of quality of performers, tore down the usual confines of the programme, and attracted into its ranks both renowned local and young aspiring artists, famous international names of classical music, and jazz creatives. With 108 concerts in a span of 12 years, the Symphony Orchestra of the Maribor Philharmonic made sure that concert halls and other venues were filled to the last seat. The orchestra ceased operations in 2004.

1995

**PROMENADE CONCERTS IN
THE CITY PARK**

Narodni dom Maribor revived the tradition of holding promenade concerts in the City Park, including Sunday Concerts in the City Park pavilion. Today, the programme is known as Koncerti v parku (Concerts in the Park).

a low voice that he should lend them a few books from those locked crates. He told them he was not allowed to. "Everything is allowed if you have the guts for it, boy. You're Primorje-born, you have more guts than these wimps here in Štajerska!" They told him then that they wanted Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State and Marx's Capital* ...

"Stand right here the next time, I'll get it to you in my own closed bag, I have to get it ready, but you need to return the books to me and to me only, otherwise I'm getting the boot from the library ... And bring the bag back too."

"Certainly", said Apih.

"Well, my pops says that communists never give anything back, all they do is take!"

The men laughed, but Vrunč came back in a week and took the books. Then came some student from Zagreb, Herta Hass, then an unemployed teacher, Branka Jurca, there was Milica Šaup, and some guy named Ante Novak ... they all wanted books from the locked crates. Apih waited for him in front of his home after he got off work and told him: "I can see you already know that we're communists; don't be afraid. We're underground. And since we know what underground is, no one's going to know. And you're our underground librarian. No one can catch even a whiff of this, otherwise we're all gonna get locked up. This whole thing with the books and us, this is confidential, pure conspiracy. So, not a word. Underground and conspiracy. If you get through this, then we can talk, understand!"

Naturally, he was doing this in secret and on very

rare occasions, quietly and carefully. But he certainly wasn't quiet when he was offering books about Tarzan or more recent Slovenian books, Kranjc's *Pesem s ceste, Pod svobodnim soncem* by Fran Saleški Finžgar or *Miklova Zala* ... He felt that he was popular. But he also felt that books have connected them in some special way, that they were using those books from the crates to do something harmful to this King Alexander ... One day, while he was checking out books, he was called over by dr. Reisman, who pointed out a gentleman waiting in line and told him: "Be careful and extra nice to the man standing behind in that line over there, the one with the black hat. This is a member of the library board, doctor Niko Vrabl, and the principal of the Maribor prison ... I think he's observing how we work ..." When he saw Branka Jurca standing in line, he shook his head at her so that no one saw it and didn't accept the books she wanted to return. Besides, there were already reports in the newspaper *Jutro* that one could get Marxist books at the library. After that, he laid low in the library for a few weeks. But he wasn't completely inactive, as his classmates and him were already planning the next big resistance campaign ...

Maks from Ruše, who was expelled in the meanwhile from the college of education, convened the boys on Sunday evening in Magdalena Park. Once he saw there was no one around to watch them, he pulled a tiny brochure from behind his shirt and said: "Look what I have! This is the *Manifesto, Communist Manifesto*. Marx and Engels. Listen to the first sentence!" But Pepi was faster and began reciting: "A spectre is haunting Europe — the spec-

tre of communism!" Everyone fell quiet and looked at him with surprise.

"Now you see I have more than ants in my pants, I have a brain too!" Maks then lent the *Manifesto* to Cvetko from Pobreška cesta and told him he had to read it in secret and get it back to him in two days. "You're all gonna get it afterwards. But everything has to be ..." Pepi was faster again: "Hundred percent conspiracy!" Even Maks, who was a good friend of his, looked at him with surprise ... But before they parted, the leader from Ruše added: "There's going to be a bang before the holidays. And we're going to light the gunpowder!" He then gave them a speech and explained how they should form trios and no one should know what trio anyone they know belongs to, because they were now putting their fate on the line. And yes, Pepi was right, underground and conspiracy!

Everything was business as usual at the library, the only difference being that Pepi was even more *underground and conspiratorial*. He also noticed that his underground borrowers kept coming less frequently and that they were more careful. Before the Easter holidays, dr. Reisman asked him:

"Are you headed anywhere for the Easter holidays? Your family I mean. Going for a visit?"

"My mom would like to go to Povžane, but she can't get a permit from the Italian office!"

"If you don't have any other plans, and if your parents allow it, come to see me in Počenik with your bicycle!"

"Where's that?"

"In Gorice. Jakobski dol, then take a left and ask for

FIRST FESTIVAL LENT

Narodni dom Maribor organized the first Festival Lent. Festival venues, which were neatly positioned across the part of the city known as Lent on the left bank of the Drava river, hosted the following events in a 14-day span: 5th Folkart, diverse (including jazz) concerts, opera, theatre plays, street theatre, and children's events. Festival Lent grew into the largest international multicultural open-air festival in Slovenia and is one of the largest festivals of its kind in Europe. It is one of the most recognizable brands of Maribor, turning the city every year into an international microcosm of culture. At its very beginning, Festival Lent introduced the concept of high culture and pop culture that is available to the broadest range of audiences at an affordable price, with numerous sponsors contributing to this feat. The festival promotes cultural exchange by inviting artists working in different genres from Slovenia, Europe, and the entire world. Festival Lent was one of the foundational programmes of the European Capital of Culture Maribor 2012 (ECoC Maribor 2012).



Main Stage on the Drava, 2022

All events of Festival Lent from 1993 on are available in the online database Festival Lent Archive.



Počenik and the Reisman family. You can try our ham and potica ... You have to get to know Maribor's surroundings! This city has the most beautiful surrounding region in Slovenia with all the vineyards!"

"I can't imagine it to be more beautiful than our Brda!"

"Come and you shall see. One hour by bicycle!"

Pepi promised and, oddly enough, his father didn't mind either. He did tell him that this attorney Reisman was a socialist and all of these people were under the influence of Austrian social democrats. Pepi tried to tell him in vain that this doctor certainly didn't like Germans and that he was on Maister's side when the upheaval happened ... "Fine, go, just don't ruin my bike and don't get hurt!"

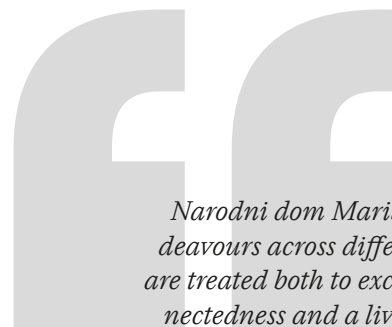
Pepi asked Kovačič Jožek whether he wanted to join him, but he said he had to go home to Tomaž pri Ormožu, because families have to be together when they take the blessed Easter breakfast.

So he darted on his bicycle across the Drava River bridge in the beginning of April, on Easter Monday, waved hello to the Church of Saint Joseph in Studenci and said dear Jesus, you who have risen from the dead, thank you for the nice weather, and kept pushing the pedals toward Košaki, descended on the other side toward the beautiful Pesnica valley, pedalling even while riding downhill and thinking he could easily be the cycling world champion, seeing that he's already the champion of Štajerska, no big deal, then turning right under the railway overpass, riding a few kilometres next to the Pesnica River overgrown with alder and willow trees, then turning left toward Jarenina before St. Šmarjeta, the road got steep for a while, then into a valley and up the hill again, it was hard riding goddamit. After an hour, in Jakob, he asked an old woman who was just returning from holy mass where to find Počenik. "Y'goin' to see attorney Reisman?" she asked.

"Yes, how do you know?"

"Everyone who's a stranger here and looks like they're from the city are here to see Reisman."

So, he rode on, asked for directions at another house and was shown a country house, not very big, but bigger than the others around. The surroundings and



Narodni dom Maribor has been at the forefront of cultural endeavours across different levels ever since it was established. We are treated both to excellent art events and the experience of connectedness and a lively community that Narodni dom Maribor creates. Not only is it a unique institution in the city – Narodni dom's programme features a wide range of productions of music and performance genres, the dedication to its mission made it possible for it to bring to Maribor the most prominent international artists, all while persistently creating a nurturing environment for a variety of events and responding to important societal developments. This dedication is both characteristic and impressive.

Throughout the last thirty years, Carmina Slovenica and Narodni dom Maribor have enjoyed a steady partnership in a multitude of fields: from visiting performances at the Glasbeni September festival, concert cycles of the Maribor Philharmonic Orchestra, Festival Lent and youth programmes, all the way to practical production in the realization of Carmina Slovenica's programmes. All delivered with utmost responsibility and accompanied by humour.

Our sincerest congratulations go out to all those, be it current or former, who have managed, shaped, and kept Narodni dom developing. We celebrate past achievements and look forward to new ones. Ever since its beginning, it was managed exceptionally well and we wish for it to bloom tenfold in the next ten years.

To Narodni dom Maribor and all its staff, may you have a wonderful celebration of this anniversary!

*Karmina Šilec,
Artistic Director of Carmina Slovenica*

1995

**MAIN STAGE AT THE WATER TOWER
(LATER MAIN STAGE ON THE DRAVA)**

What began as a rather modest venue soon developed with the help of sponsors and the stage on the Drava became the symbol of the festival. In 2015, the Main Stage on the Drava was cancelled for the first time due to a lack of funding, which is why the Jurček Stage was relocated from Dravska ulica to the Water Tower. The festival was held without the Main Stage on the Drava in 2016 and 2017 as well. A new venue on Trg Leona Štuklja was set up upon the initiative and with the funding by the institute's founder (MOM). In 2018, the Municipality of Maribor decided that the Main Stage needed to return to the Drava river. With this in mind, they renovated the pontoons and built a new floating stage measuring 30 x 30 m and a new removable landing that served as the stalls seating and standing room for visitors, which gave the festival a new dimension, as visitors finally had room to dance. Including the bleachers, the Main Stage on the Drava had a capacity of nearly 3,000 people. In 2019, the Municipality decided that the stage on the Drava will be discontinued, which is why the Main Stage moved to Trg Leona Štuklja, while the bay next to the Water Tower was used as a combined venue for the Večer Stage and Jurček Stage.

30. 11. 1995

**UNVEILING OF ORIGINAL FRONT SIDE
OF THE MEMORIAL PLAQUE IN THE
LOBBY OF NARODNI DOM**

At an event commemorating the seventy-fifth anniversary of the battle for the northern Slovenian border, the original front side of the memorial plaque in the lobby was unveiled against that JLA had turned over in 1946. The back side featured an inscription in Serbo-Croatian that the citizens of Maribor have donated the building to the army. The original front side of the plaque pays tribute to persons "in the management of Posojilnica, the supervisors, and the building committee", and to architect Jan Vejrých.

courtyard were neat and clean, a large chained dog barked, and his boss from the library stepped into the courtyard. "So, you did make it. Was it hard to find?" He shook his head. A woman in country clothes, but still nicely dressed, appeared in the doorway and said: "So you made it for the blessed breakfast. You are Jože, aren't you, or Pepi as you call yourself? My husband told me a lot about you. He said ..." "That I had ants in my pants, right?" "Boy, no foul words shall be spoken on Easter Monday. As punishment, you're saying a prayer before breakfast!"

So, into the house they went, there was an old lady sitting next to the fireplace, whom the doctor introduced as his mother ... They said the *Lord's Prayer* and the *Hail Mary* and then she offered him white bread, while a large white plate was temptingly filled with horseradish, smoked pork ribs, cuts of ham, peeled hardboiled eggs, glasses were filled with wine, well, only half a large glass for him and grandma ... He felt as if this was the best food he had ever had, and he was ready to admit that the Istrian Easter feast was neither better nor as tasty. Well, aside from prosciutto maybe ... The doctor then invited him to his room, where he spent an hour rummaging through books.

When the wife was fixing up lunch, even though the Easter breakfast made them full for quite a while, the doctor took him for a stroll around the orchards of Počeničnik, the meadow at the creek, they even entered the forest that leads to Vučja jama. There lay a felled beech tree, waiting for the owner of the forest to cut it up and take it away ... Mister Reisman sat on it and Pepi followed his lead.

"Dear Jože Barbič, you know very well that I care about you more than the other students helping out in the library. You went through a lot down there, not only you, the entire family did when the Italians got, not got, stole Slovenian Primorje. You're a good learner and know your way around books. You've seen for yourself that I'm not breathing down your neck. But I also see that some members of our library no longer check out their books with me or our secretary but with you, in secret ... You've also become too arrogant and there's word in the city that someone is loaning out these forbidden books ... The prison principal himself came to see us. He's a member of the board and has the right to control us. There's even talk that he will replace me as the principal of the library. Stop this, Jože! And that Apih and Vrunč and the others, they are communists! Us socialists, we believe that workers need to be helped and we fight for their rights too and for better laws. The communists, they want revolution, they are looking to spill blood, they want power ... Watch yourself, boy! This is why I invited you, so I could warn you in private. Quit playing around, I won't be able to save you if some detective or informant comes in disguised as a reader and tricks you into giving him one of those forbidden books ... Jože, stop this, it's not only about you, it's about our library too. It's true we still have the study library and doctor Glazer, but most of our readers won't go there ... it's too posh for them. No, no, don't. Don't say anything, I said what I had to say, enough, that's the end of it. Let's go back into the house and have that soup now."

He was a bit red in the face. He wanted to ask how long his boss had known about it, when did he spot all of it for the first time.

When he was riding back to Maribor in the early evening, spring was already in the air and everything smelled of young leaves and flowers, and he heard the cuckoo calling. He carried some food from the Easter feast for his parents. He was deep in thought. Is doctor Reisman of Počeničnik right? In part? But this world needed change! Kind, smart, loving words of socialists were not going to cut it, something else must be done and this is why people were so scared. Some of losing their riches, even their lives perhaps, while others of being even more miserable and poor. People are scared and even that brochure said: "A spectre is haunting Europe ..." The soil around him was coming to life, leaves were budding and white snowdrops were beginning to blossom ... It's beautiful in a different kind of way than in Brda and Istria. Apple and plum trees, but no olive tree in sight. Slovenia is beautiful everywhere in its own way.

Later, when pedalling down Kopališka ulica back in the city, he was tired but glad to be nearing home. And glad there was this beautiful Narodni dom on the right. And that he could walk inside.

Three months later, he was sitting in investigative detention. Not because of the books and Ljudska knjižnica. He was arrested, along with other students and some unknown youngsters and adults from other trios, because of a massive under-

1995/1994

**FIRST SEASON OF KOMEDIJA
(COMEDY) SEASON PROGRAMME IN
NARODNI DOM**

Owing to the artistic vision of Tomaž Pandur, SNG Drama removed lighter genres from its repertoire. Narodni dom Maribor stood in as the Burgtheater and filled the niche, which brought new quality onto the theatre scene of Maribor's cultural life.

15. 4. 1994

**SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF THE
MARIBOR PHILHARMONIC, SAMO
HUBAD, CONDUCTOR; IGOR OZIM,
VIOLIN; UNION HALL**

The people of Maribor adopted maestro Samo Hubad as one of their own. He manned the conductor's podium a staggering ninety-nine times, appearing in concerts organized by Koncertna poslovalnica of Maribor. The audience always rewarded his concerts with thunderous applause. The fondness was mutual, which is attested by the conductor's decision in 1994 to bid farewell to his illustrious artistic career with an appearance at the Union Hall in Maribor.

1994

**INTRO TO FESTIVAL LENT
PIŠE SE LETO**

Štajerska's traditional stadium rock concert at Snežni stadion, which was organized by Smiljan Kreže at the end of every school year, was coupled to the Festival Lent programme in 1994 and 1995. Later, after 2014, the concert became part of Festival Lent and was held in Festivalna dvorana Lent, on the Večer Stage, and on Trg Leona Štuklja and Rotovski trg.

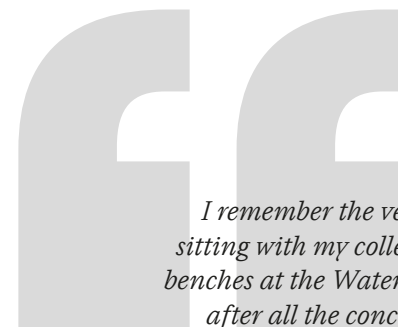
ground operation against the state ... In the night of 22 to 23 April 1934, they were dropping leaflets all across the city with the message *Death to King Alexander! Long live the revolution!* After long house raids, interrogations in investigative detection, questionings, and beatings, the authorities brought a court process. Appearing among the names of those who were charged were Milan Apih, France Vrunč, Karl Audič, Marijan Vesenjaka, Drago Nemeč, France Fijavž, Cvetko Zagorski, Janko Kanižar, Alojz Gerbec, Miroslav Gerbec, Ante Novak, Miroslav Novak, Sonja Kukovec, Mileva Sedlaček, and Jože Pepi Barbič ...

A day before the process, those whose parents had the money to afford them were visited by attorneys to defend them before the prosecutor. Attorney Avgust Reisman sat down next to the accused Pepi and said: "Jože, I'll be defending you. Free of charge. You just keep your mouth shut!" And the head of the library made sure that the kid from Primorje was handed only a conditional discharge and that the process was set aside for the most part and annulled in the remaining part because the majority of those accused were minors. The process was later dubbed the *Kindergarten Process*. He was nonetheless expelled from school and was not allowed to go into the city centre anymore.

Doctor Reisman and Pepi, the kid from Primorje, ran into one another on the street every now and then, but never again in the library. Two years later, doctor Niko Vrabl, the principal of the Maribor prison, replaced doctor Reisman as the head of the library. Pepi moved on from the library to the theatre.

Author's epilogue:

Jože Barbič, whose real name was Jože and whose real last name was very similar to Barbič, was born the same year as my mother, which made him twenty-three years older than me. Despite the difference in age, we became very close friends, including on account of having worked together in the theatre where he directed some of my comedies. I heard the story about his work in Narodni dom in his own words. He had a very hard and tumultuous, yet prolific life. Even though he returned to Primorska, he is buried in Maribor. When he was dying, I visited him in the hospital. In a weak voice he told me: "I'm gonna be buried in Maribor in the same grave as my pops and mom. When they are taking my urn from the crematorium to the chapel of rest at Pobrežje cemetery, tell them it is my dying wish to take it through the former railway colony and past the theatre and Narodni dom. I used to be a librarian in Narodni dom and it was a second home for me and worth double to me. It reminded me of the torched-down Narodni dom in Trieste and of the time when Maribor was my second home. You're gonna take care of it, right?" The black hearse of the funeral home carrying the urn of Pepi Barbič, the former kid from Primorje, made a stop in front of Narodni dom in May 1996. The driver kept looking at his watch and it wasn't until five minutes have passed that he took a turn toward Pobrežje.



I remember the very first Festival Lent, sitting with my colleagues on the wooden benches at the Water Tower every evening after all the concerts have ended, with Sinek bringing us drinks while we shared impressions and took notes of everything that we still had to do the next day. And how we could hardly wait every evening for the guys from Večer to bring us, always around midnight, the festival page that they were publishing in their daily newspaper every other day. I also remember how, a few years later, the floating stage on the Drava was taken over by the dancing and singing Māori, men with their characteristic martial arts moves and battle cries and women with their swinging hips, twisting and spreading their hands toward the sky in every direction, while my colleague and roommate Alenka and I were slumping with exhaustion on the stairs of the east side stands after a long day at work. When the girls broke into a soft and harmonious Māori lullaby, it moved us to tears.

*Tina Vihar,
member of Narodni dom staff since 1993;
producer of Mladinski cikel (Youth Cycle),
Salon glasbenih umetnikov
(Salon of Music Artists), and Promenadni
koncerti (Promenade Concerts) in
the City Park pavilion*

1994–2007

FESTIVAL GLASBENI SEPTEMBER
(MUSICAL SEPTEMBER)

The baroque festival was renamed to Glasbeni september in 1994 by initiative of Janko Šetinc, who initially remained its artistic director. Despite having been devised as a greatly expanded baroque festival with a greater number of performers, it kept moving farther away from the concept. After Janko Šetinc, it was Radovan Vlatković who took care of programme direction for a few years (2000–2002), followed by the programme council of Koncertna poslovalnica, which was managed at the time by Brigita Pavlič. The long-standing tradition of the baroque festival was broken once the festival changed its name and contents, but this began a new tradition that brought diverse and more contemporary content-driven concepts.



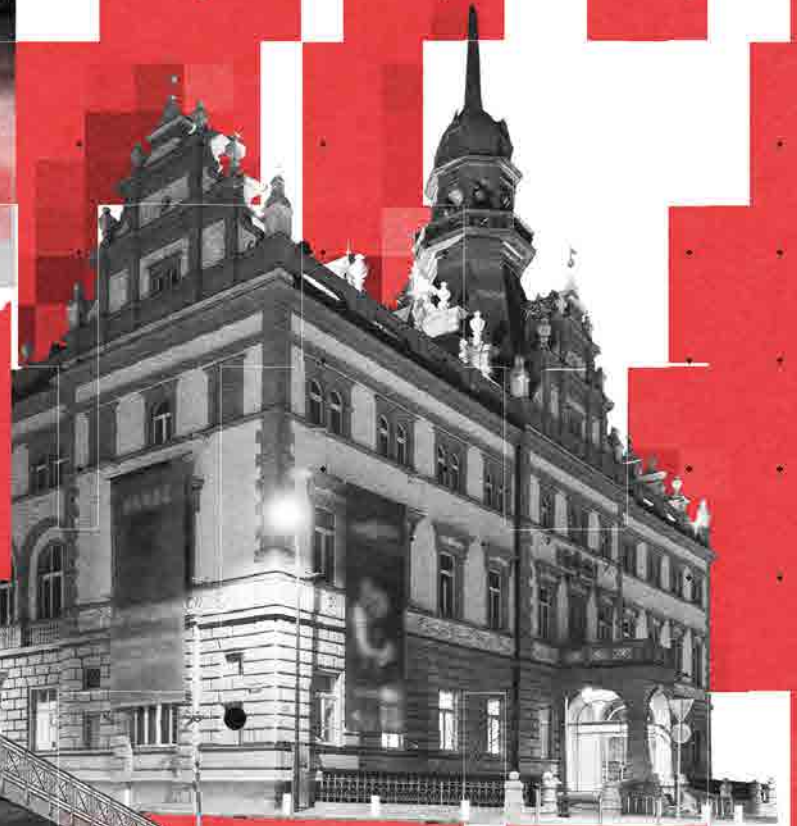
Glasbeni september, 1998



Gate

TO THE CITY





Two

LETTERS

NATAŠA KRAMBERGER

**in rosa luxemburg square, berlin,
june 2022**

dear m.,

for every four-leaf clover i find, i get four catastrophes in return. lately, i find about seven of them a day, and then all hell breaks loose. but you know how it goes. a four-leaf clover makes you happy no matter what. i keep stacking them in notepads or into the pile of receipts in my wallet where they lay drying until i go to the store for bread and dried straws, as fragile as a butterfly's wings, spill out of my coin pocket instead of money. oh, would you look at that miss, a four-leaf clover, i say to the cashier waiting for cents and she doesn't say anything because she thinks i'm taking her for a fool. i don't have the right accent to do small talk at the checkout; but there's nothing i can do, i'm just that disorganized. someone who's a bit more responsible in dealing with their own luck would

carefully file the four-leaf clovers from mauerpark into their herbarium with a bow and then there's me, ungrateful like a spoiled child, bam, into the first corner, wherever i can find a folded piece of paper that i can keep them in.

how are you, where are you, what are you up to? i miss your voice, downright physically. i can't shake the feeling that my life is passing me by like a train that just wouldn't come that night. i mean: maribor's train station is certainly too small for all of its potential. left or right, but what about the third option? if the train to Ljubljana were the first to arrive, i'd gone there, but the train to vienna was first and that was that. sorry i'm bringing this up again. if you got back from the seaside a bit earlier, this train thing wouldn't mean anything. but you didn't and i didn't and now we're not, well we are. how little it takes for four-leaf clovers to turn into an obsession. they evoke the duty of happiness while everything around us is falling to pieces.

today, i went and sat in front of the international acting school near nordbahnhof station to wait for the lassie who started a fire in my apartment. she put a pot of chicken on the stove at six am and went to sleep, and just so happened to close the kitchen door and the bedroom door on top. if it wasn't for the neighbour who heard the fire alarm on her way to work and called the fire brigade, she'd probably die of asphyxiation. she spent half a day in the hospital hooked up to oxygen. nothing was lost in the fire, other than the pot, because the gas went out by itself at some point. a miracle. as for the apartment ... nothing but a smoke kitchen. how can one single pot produce so much smoke! it probably goes without saying that i repainted all of the rooms in march after what must have been a hundred years; thinking about what i spent on natural clay and lime paints still gives me a headache.

i'm airing out, i'm airing out. the stench is everywhere and the housing agency sent me a letter on

1995

MINORITE CHURCH TURNS INTO A
THEATRE AND CONCERT VENUE
AT FESTIVAL LENT



Miss Semfina and Mister Mimo, 2000

1995

CHILDREN'S LENT BEHIND THE
MINORITE CHURCH AT
FESTIVAL LENT



Minoriti Stage, 1997

own motion that this kind of smoke causes cancer. one can always rely on own motion in orderly countries. being properly informed is the best medicine.

once the neighbour sent me a blabbering sms about a fire in my house, i should have immediately taken the train to vienna and then on to berlin with the sleeper train, but i was stuck at the station in maribor. in the afternoon, after she was finally released from the hospital, my tenant, bawling into the phone, kept telling me how her best friend died in the exact same way, how she suffers from insomnia and has no idea why she didn't hear the alarm, she didn't hear it all, no part of it, not even a little made it into her brain, she must have already been unconscious when it went off. she's going to take full responsibility, full, full, full, repaint the apartment, scrub the floor, freshen up every painting on the wall with alcohol, she's so happy to be alive, madre mia, how can she ever thank the

neighbour, a thousand times. then she hung up, turned off her phone, disappeared off the face of the earth. all i know about her is that her name is teresa gonzales, 24 years, from mexico, and that she's attending the international acting school in berlin near nordbahnhof station.

in moments like these it is downright painful how provincial i am. i can't forgive myself for having worried about her. that brat! all the people i know stopped renting out their apartments to people under forty a long time ago. no frat boys, and certainly no sorority sisters, they burn down your apartment and before you know it, they're gone with the wind. they are not capable of being independent. they don't know how to clean, which is why they destroy your toilet with acid that eats away the ceramic, making the faeces eat into it and you can never again flush them down with just a single toilet tank load. they do forward rolls on the writing desk and break three legs out of four and all the

Were it not for Festival Lent, Maribor would know no indolent midsummer. This is a very special and geographically limited time of year that sets in the day after the festival ends. It could perhaps be compared to the Italian Ferragosto, as the people of Maribor head out to the seaside en masse on the very first day of indolent midsummer, while the now empty city slowly sinks into a pleasant midsummer dreaminess and silence.

Indolent midsummer is inseparably connected to the phenomenon known as indolent midsummer fatigue. This has absolutely nothing to do with indulging in the traditional cornmeal dish of polenta, but is rather the consequence of lencing. And this is what the people of Maribor have perfected over the last three decades of Festival Lent.

Vid Kmetič, Rajzefiber

1995

NA FESTIVALU LENT
MED DRUGIM ENRICO RAVA QUARTET
THE DUBLINERS

1995

JUDGEMENT TOWER WITH JAZZ
PROGRAMME AT FESTIVAL LENT

The Judgement Tower became a festival venue and, with a series of unforgettable concert experiences, has created a unique festival family throughout the years – a loyal audience that appreciates a vintage musical oeuvre. The Judgement Tower brings a special festival atmosphere and is a festival staple, with the exception of 2012 when the Špeglicelt venue was set up at Benetke due to the ECoC Maribor 2012 programme, and 2020 when concerts were held in the Minorite Church because the Judgement Tower was undergoing renovations.



Janez Bončina Benč & Janezz, 2018

drawers, and they infest the wall of the freezer with cubic meters of ice because they keep opening it (all they know how to cook are frozen pizzas), causing the fridge to overheat and die.

black walls, carcinogenic stench, broken down fridge, broken desk, and destroyed toilet. quite a record for two weeks' worth of tenancy.

you're keeping the security deposit, right, said the neighbour. security deposit? i rented out the apartment to her for two weeks. what could possibly happen in two weeks. the poor soul was so very young and so very desperate. it's impossible to find an apartment in berlin. you needs to understand your fellow people, particularly the younger ones; we all went through bad times; everyone deserves a chance; this type of nonsense, unworthy of a european capital. no security deposit. not even a micro nano four-leaf clover. while waiting for her in front of the school she said she was attending, it came to me that, despite all the effort i'm putting in, i'm never going to be qualified for life.

one time, we were heading out from lent, andreja, glorijsa, mirko, and i. we spent the entire evening sitting in the festival press tent and, for reasons unknown, i was wearing pumps. we went uphill from the water tower towards narodni dom and were enjoying the moment when festival people

were closing down the stages and all the music went silent. not a soul around, only our footsteps. and then mirko quips: you can tell if someone doesn't know how to walk in high heels. and you can hear it too.

i miss your voice, downright physically. i'm traveling to amsterdam tomorrow for a literary tour. it's already been three years since the translation of my book was published, but then came covid and it's only now that we'll be able to hold some public readings and make up for lost time. another nonsense. what's lost is lost; it's already done, already lost; you can catch up on your math classes that you missed with a sore throat; but life ...

the train station in berlin has sixteen platforms and trains going in all directions. i need to wear a mask in the coach until i reach the border with holland, i can remove it once we've passed the border. the same train, the same people, the same virus, only the inspectors are different. i thought that i'm never going to rent out the apartment again to anyone, you can't even breathe in it, but then emma appeared out of nowhere. emma is from australia, was living in saint petersburg until march and working as a russian translator. when the war began, she had to pack up pell-mell and leave despite having just bought a house in russia. because she got vaccinated with sputnik, her

own country wouldn't let her in because it doesn't recognize this vaccine. the war never affects everybody equally, for some it's total. emma now lives in my apartment, carcinogenic. as long as she has a roof over her head, she said, the stench doesn't bother her. besides, it's summer and the windows are wide open.

i'm heading straight home from amsterdam. home down south i mean. i'm tired from how things turned out. once i make it to maribor train station, i know exactly where i am. left or right, two options, no complications. definitely too small for all the potential, but potential is a medal for herbariums with a bow. you stack them on the cabinet and they sit there collecting dust that you wipe off only when you have people over.

come on down if you have the time. i can't even remember the last time i was at lent.

sending hugs,

n.

12. 4. 1996

**SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF THE
MARIBOR PHILHARMONIC,
NIKOLAI ALEXEEV, CONDUCTOR;
DUBRAVKA TOMŠIČ SREBOTNJAK,
PIANO**

Gala concert at the
50th anniversary
of Koncertna
poslovalnica.



Symphony Orchestra of the Maribor Philharmonic and Dubravka Tomšič Srebotnjak, 1996

in quarantine, jurovski dol, july 2022

dear m.,

these cows are not normal with their mooing. our cattle wholesalers are now building a new stable next to the old one, and i simply can't believe it. nobody says anything. trucks at ten pm, trucks at midnight, trucks at three am. i'd be howling like a buffalo too if they were hauling me around at this time of night. truth be told, i'm already howling because i can't sleep. i can't and i can't and i can't, for three days and nights now. i'm sweating and changing pyjamas, coughing, wheezing, trying to break fever but the thermometer refuses to fall below 38. polona said that insomnia is one of the symptoms of the current variant, her sister's not getting any sleep either. until recently, i could fall asleep whenever i had a moment of time, standing up, crouching down, with a rock under my head instead of a pillow. yesterday, out of sheer desperation, i dragged a deckchair outside under the birch trees in front of the house in the middle of the night, out into the open, breathe life in, and all that did was make me shiver so i had to go back to the house to get a blanket (every step feels like i'm climbing triglav) and a pillow on top because the deckchair was too hard. then i was pulling



What is the city of Maribor to me?

*It is the city where I was born, at Slovenska cesta 10,
on New Year's Day 1939.*

*It is the city of my bitter memory of the year of my childhood
1950, of living together with my brutish,
bigoted grandfather Kovačič.*

*It is the city of the wonderful premiere of my drama Mrtvec
pride po ljubico at Tespisov voz theatre,
directed by Tomaž Pandur.*

*It is the city of my first chanson recital entitled Namesto rož
at the Slovene National Theatre Maribor,
directed by Tomaž Pandur.*

*It is the city of my one-month unhappy love affair
with some musician from Maribor.*

*It is the city where I was able to appear, only just once, with
my fellow chansonniers in a concert at the festival hall.*

*It is the city where my colleague, multi-talented artist Aphra
Tesla, founded the Svetlana Makarovič residency.*

*It is a city just like any other Slovenian city, where half of the
people adore me and the other half wish
I would drop dead as soon as possible.*

*It is a city that seems farther away from Ljubljana
with each passing day.*

Well then, hello from afar, Maribor.

Svetlana Makarovič

1996–2009

BRIGITA PAVLIČ AS THE DIRECTOR OF KONCERTNA POSLOVALNICA

Under the leadership of Brigita Pavlič, Koncertna poslovalnica multiplied the number of concert events, changed its corporate image and marketing strategy, introduced commentaries before concerts and interesting discussions, and sparked the interest of the younger generation of musicologists in writing reviews. Koncertna poslovalnica Maribor, which has been led by musicologist Barbara Švrljuga Hergovich since 2009 and has since recruited additional producers to its staff, continues to provide a year-round diverse programme of musical experiences as part of its Orkestrski cikel (Orchestra Cycle), Komorni cikel (Chamber Cycle), and Mladinski cikel (Youth Cycle).

1996

PUBLICATION OF KAJ KJE KDAJ (WHAT WHERE WHEN)

The first issue of Kaj Kje Kdaj, the monthly event bulleting of Narodni dom Maribor, was published in 1996. Aside from event announcements, the bulletin also features articles on past events.



First edition of Kaj Kje Kdaj, 1996

Editions of
Kaj Kje Kdaj
dating back
to 1996 are
available via
the link below.



the blanket over me, taking it off, howling at the moon, cursing mosquitos, counting minutes until dawn, and listening to those poor cows that were mooing so hard it echoed all across the valley.

sorry about the delirium, but when i say commuter, i'm usually thinking about human animals. this here goes far beyond all my expectations about being committed to the road. czech, slovak, and hungarian cows that arrive to jurovski dol in the middle of the night, just to travel on in a few months to italy, austria, or lebanon. to be slaughtered. from this point of view, jurovski dol certainly has more direct lines (or should i say connections?) than maribor, probably even more than ljubljana. well, one can never fully rely on connections, even if they are direct. the direct line from birth to death has never been more global. on a local level, if you know what i mean.

this guru of yours, who lives off light, made me laugh. i had to imagine how you're covertly nibbling on pine cone nuts under some secret pine tree or slurping sea salt off rocks because you're so hungry, but then i remembered i do actually know a guy myself who's living off the sun, aside from an occasional glass of vodka or wine. there's all sorts of people, all sorts of nourishment. well, this guy keeps his fasting technique close to the vest, he doesn't force others who come to visit him to starve, i feel this is quite important. how long do you plan on staying there? i'm keeping my fin-

gers crossed that you'll be back alive and well and if i'm alive and well too, i'm taking you for a sandwich. or would you prefer vodka and wine?

i had this great intention to write a letter about the parked bus to all my childhood friends, but then came this kovid. if i'm being honest, those letters probably wouldn't happen even without it, i simply cannot get myself to open the computer. it repulses me, must be the fever. not in my body, outside. i'm trying to fool myself that things will be better in winter even though i fully know even now that i'm going to be so backlogged by then that my aversion will be even greater and my headache even worse and the catastrophe total.

before i took the deckchair under the birches, i did write a few heat-of-the-moment mails last night: nothing but cancellations. this is the real cancel culture. erase what you can't do. only a sick person can see or something. the longer the fever (in my body and outside) persists, the clearer it is to me just how overheated i am on the inside. i could probably go to sleep in the fridge and it wouldn't make a difference. into the cold storage with half cows. ah, no. that was a bad joke. really bad. forget it. i know, i could delete it, but lately it's been a struggle to write even a single sentence so striking out words once they made their way onto the screen would be horrible fouling of my own nest. sometimes i wonder about how much nonsense makes it into newspapers and books because writ-

ers are having a bad day, but then i have to stop quickly. i remember how i once spent a day with fireworks fixers at lent and then had to write a feature about it and how i gave the feature such a stupid title that mirko was making fun of me for years after. i had to look it up in večer's archive: i couldn't remember whether we had changed the title before we published it or not. of course we did. well, mirko did, but it was most likely glori-ja. not just a bad day, a writer could be having a bad century: if she's backed by editors who got her back, embarrassments can be avoided.

speaking of archives. it's really weird reading a twenty years younger version of yourself. twenty? twenty-two actually. i'm having a hard time hearing these numbers. a hard goddamn time.

because i still miss you, i also began writing a letter to you in the middle of the night, but then the chills came all over me and i had to take a reality check: my body can't possibly know that letters to friends don't count as work. the posture is the same, the keyboard is the same, the seat is equally hard and the thoughts equally atrophied. now, after a sleepless night, i'm trying to pick up where i left off, and the thermometer in my mouth confirms i'm still where i was. here.

the bus! i have to ask kaja and maša because i could be imagining it. but i really think that a worker bus with wooden seats used to be parked

18. 5. 1996

**16TH CONVENTION OF THE
FEDERATION OF EUROPEAN
CARNIVAL CITIES**

Narodni dom Maribor and Poetovio Vivat hosted the 16th Convention of the Federation of European Carnival Cities (FECC), which was a major recognition for Maribor and Ptuj and an opportunity to promote Slovenian culture.

1996

**JAZZLENT VENUE NEXT
TO ŽIČKI DVOR**

The first JazzLent venue was next to Žički dvor. In 2002, Rotovski trg became the JazzLent venue, followed by the Minoriti Stage the year after, the courtyard of Stari radio on Vojašniški trg in 2008, and the auditorium of the Maribor Puppet Theatre, Minoriti, in 2014. In 2008, JazzLent was coupled to the JazzPodij programme. This music project is of special significance for Slovenian jazz music and selects one Slovenian jazz musician every year to present the most creative, diverse, and quality jazz music figures in Slovenia.

1996

JURČEK STAGE AT FESTIVAL LENT

The stage on Dravska ulica was renamed to Jurček Stage as an homage to Jure Lipuš, who left his unique mark on Festival Lent until his untimely death in 1995.



Vlado Kreslin, 1993

in front of roškar's cottage when we were kids. a TAM truck was definitely parked there, for more than one year or maybe two or maybe even three (time is a weird category). stranded on the side of the road like a sunken ship stranded on the rocks, the only difference being that it wasn't a ship but the abandoned tools of the trade of my father. i have to tell you more about that too someday; it was a nice truck, aesthetic, pinkbeige like little piglets, much nicer than the bovine trucks i've been observing the last few nights. there are many reasons why, on some random day in my childhood, it was left stranded on the side of the road like a wreck, but i don't care much about them. i'm fine with the memory how we could hide rather efficiently in its banger, which is what we called the little pinkbeige trailer, from all watchful eyes. my brother was there hiding along, but he was younger, just a baby.

i'm much more befuddled by the bus than the truck though. i don't know if it's real or if i've copied it from some movie, so vividly that i see it as my own memory. in any case, i daydream that, some day when i'm grown up and rich, i'm going to park, once and for all, the orangebeige bus with wooden seats on the side of the gravel road that leads to my farm and i'm going to build a village/city in it called commuters. it's gonna have roots instead of wheels and a bar instead of the steering wheel. living on the seats will be the people i love, commuters, ready to take a trip over

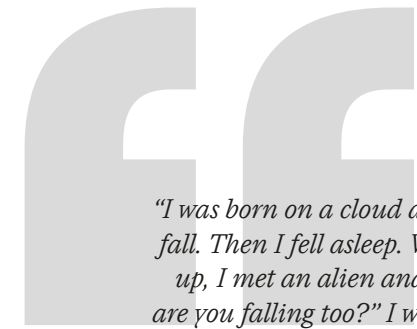
the landscapes created by time. like my grandpa, who worked in metalna and took a bus just like that every morning and every evening, monday through saturday, sometimes even sunday, along the route jurovski dol-maribor. this was a direct and efficient line, unlike now when we get our mouths stuffed (like it were a spiking thermometer) by sustainable development, while public transit got stranded in the realm of science fiction.

i'm afraid that my worker bus with wooden seats will need to come to jurovski dol down the same road as those poor cows i hear howling like buffalos in the nights when i can't sleep because of fever and that are counting down the months left in their lives. but perhaps not. perhaps, sitting quietly in a hidden corner of some abandoned garage in melje or košaki, there's a specimen of the kind that could enrich our gravel road. orangebeige. brown. most likely rusty. but maybe it still works.

it's probably time to move (that's what it's like being a commuter).

when did you say you're coming?

n.



"I was born on a cloud and began to fall. Then I fell asleep. When I woke up, I met an alien and asked him, are you falling too?" I will carry this wonderful short story in my mind forever. It was written by an eight-year-old in the creative writing workshop Jaz, snežinka (I, Snowflake) that Mars held as part of its Čitalnica na dvorišču (Reading Room in the Courtyard) for the Kulturni dnevnik (Cultural Diary) programme. Lucky mentor! I hope that these feelings of lightness, falling, and meeting aliens stay with this little boy forever. This happy snippet is just one of the many in my life connected to Narodni dom Maribor.

Vojka Miklavc, teacher, self-employed professional in culture; she co-creates the programmes Art Camp, Vilinsko mesto (Elven Town) and workshops Kekec, Mladinski cikel (Youth Cycle) and Kulturni dnevnik (Cultural Diary) as an external associate of Narodni dom Maribor.

1996

FIRST STREET THEATRE FESTIVAL ANA DESETNICA AT FESTIVAL LENT

Street theatre shows have been a staple of the programme ever since the first Festival Lent, whereby 1996 was the first time organized the street theatre festival Ana Desetnica, which began right at Festival Lent.



Veles e Vents, Xarxa Teatre, 2000

Three stories

ABOUT DOORS

HELENA ZEMLJIČ

I.

I hear somewhere that a door caused them to move a bridge To build a new one because the door did not frame the right space of language and all that belongs to it Now there are two bridges One swift wide to carry many paths the other only steps and still they're closing it down To have in silence run the river below it as if it were not there Only in wintertime stumbling lights the gentle cold of noses and snow There are two bridges and you need both of them so very much like the door knows nothing of the language that it opens

II.

A glass door is the worst choice when a fire starts Even if you see through the world without fire is too far Your brain cannot comprehend that safety can be felt but not reached A door like this has no handle to burn yourself on no obstacle preventing you from pushing it open uncovering it You run into it like a fly singing thy wings The ability to pass through walls is buzzed over by the will to survive

III.

There is a space so unfinished that fire is the only precious thing There is a scream in it equal to language and that is all there is It never stops spreading and there is more and more of it and less This space is the only one without a door

1996

ŠPORTNI LENT (SPORTS LENT)

This was the first time that Festival Lent combined physical activity with culture and created an attractive collage of sports events.

1996

AT FESTIVAL LENT

Some of the artists who appeared at Festival Lent: Stephane Grappelli; Lester Bowie Brass Fantasy & 7 Caribbean Steel Drummers; Ray Charles & The Raelettes.



Ray Charles, 1996

A small CHRONICLE OF MEMORY

MATIC AČKO

Chapter I

The graffiti stops you like a stair
planes of the city are no longer aligned
the word keeps getting stuck like
wine tingles when it goes astray into your windpipe
there's something you need to cough out
to narrow your eyes then
you look through and
the city is becoming only a
web of stick-based sketches
only in the coordinates of memory
of naïve hearts
you continue along the stairway
to a higher memory
the difference between here and there is
avoiding any measurement
and stops you again at the top
a piece of plaster rustles below
the sole
incites arbitrary tension
between the walls of a narrow passage
you feel like a float in the artery

above a light over the arch
below hair almost hers
sets behind the walls
you read the red graffiti
and smile
you know these words
and they know
the city

Chapter II

The pavement is beginning to ripple
under the weight of the darkening sky
the cobblestones the smallest cubic particles
of this reality
pushing each in its own direction
toward the entropy of the city
just like people
so many in a hurry
some still
swirling behind the walls
in the corners of intimacy and empty cans

you push through
drifting in the half-lust
of perfumed bodies
you want more from this music
than is possible
something fails to open
it stagnates inside you
not connected with who
but rather with what
a tin memory
you leave yourself be carried
by her and by them
again and again
we're almost
there

Chapter III

Behind a glass wooden
steel door
you enter another persona of yourself
forming under the lights

5. 7. 1996

OPENING OF KIBERNETIČNI
LABORATORIJ (CYBER LAB) – KIBLA

Multimedijski center KIBLA (KiberSRCeLab) was a project born out of a collaboration between Narodni dom Maribor and Open Society Institute and was the first cybercafé in Slovenia. Aside from Kiber kavarna (Cybercafé), it included Galerija KIBLA (KIBLA Gallery) and Študentski informacijski center (Student Info Centre). Since 1998, Multimedijski center KIBLA is a stand-alone organization operating under the name KID KIBLA (Kulturno-izobraževalno društvo KIBLA / Culture and Education Society KIBLA), whose headquarters and a part of its premises are located in Narodni dom.



Večer, 11. 7. 1996

the music encapsulates the smell of the room
 we recognize ourselves in the reflections
 completely anew in
 the anonymity of known faces
 the sound of the accordion is bouncing off differently
 because you know
 what happened
 on the balcony
 nobody jumped
 it will never let you go
 memories are swirling
 in golden frames waiting
 on the white stairway
 steps almost hers are rising
 from the ground floor
 off the arches
 and chandeliers
 are spreading
 the acoustics
 of time

waiting behind the door
 the night deconstructs borders
 fences are thinning out in secret
 handkerchiefs dance with plastic bottles
 tribes of observers
 mix attorneys of solitude
 get lost in muted
 rhythms intersecting
 the wind carries nothing but
 the murmur of new premonitions
 we are invisibly haunted
 clutched by your
 breath in the shadows
 you keep questioning
 your legacy
 that which remains crushed
 in the cracks between
 the cobblestones you forget
 just so
 you find it again
 in your dreams
 almost

Chapter IV

We were dancing you know
 far removed from our cradles
 far removed from those years
 we never arrive
 the river only kneads us through
 recycles our paths
 without final destinations

26. 1. 1997

PREMIERE OF PLAY SLUŽKINJI

The first in a series of many in-house productions that were a significant refresher of the cultural scene in Maribor. In 1997, Brane Šturbej received a special jury award at the 32nd Borštnikovo srečanje (Borštnik Festival) for his role of Claire. Directed by Janusz Kica, cast Brane Šturbej, Alojz Svete, Radko Polič.



Služkinji, 1997

51. 1. 1997

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF THE MARIBOR PHILHARMONIC, WOLFGANG SEELIGER, CONDUCTOR; BRANIMIR SLOKAR, TROMBONE; UNION HALL

No

TITLE

MILA KODRIČ CIZERL

*

I walk through the door onto the street,
 which is still unfinished.
 which still smells like schvitz, like smoked, like the sun, like the rain.
 this smoke does not mangle and does not minimise.
 through the windows I hear the sounds of making love, cooking, music, and washing.
 this street is narrow. it's falling apart and twisting from being
 gently squeezed by children's hands.
 everyone carries a mirror –
 attaching it to the wall, if the reflection is clear enough.

I sometimes imagine that the last brick missing
 is my footstep.

*

I'm sitting on the stairway of the city.
 beside me a friend who despises bombs and
 another, who thinks they're a natural phenomenon.
 a detective with a funny moustache knocks on my door.

I'm sitting on the stairway of the city.
 It's raining. and just like in a dream, as if I'm swimming in honey,
 I'm clinging to the stairs,

so I don't slide into the river.

I wouldn't want the current to carry me away.
 I want to stay here forever.
 there's a small crowd of us here on the stairs.
 the detective opens the door and asks us,
 what we have done with the stairs,
 and then reaches across the table and
 passes me a glass of water. I take it and
 see in it the river. I see in it the current.
 I see stones on the bottom and grass. I see a fish.
 and I see myself being carried away.

as if I'm dreaming, as if I'm swimming in honey.
 this warm river which is not honey.
 I wouldn't want the current to carry me away.

a siren begins to wail.
 and I'm looking at these chipped stairs we're sitting on.
 I wouldn't want the current to carry me away.
 I'm clinging to the stairs and everything
 is exactly where it needs to be.

1997

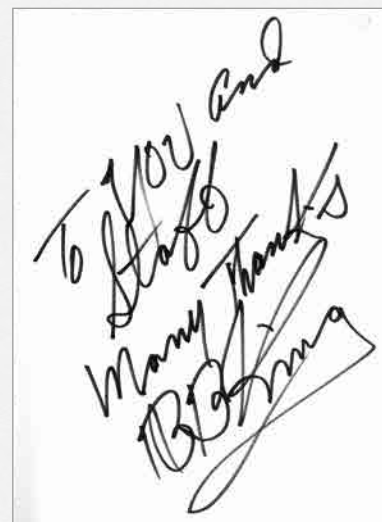
YOUTH CONCERT CYCLE

In collaboration with
 Glasbena mladina
 Maribor and Opera
 in balet SNG Maribor
 (Opera and Ballet of
 the SNG Maribor),
 the Symphony
 Orchestra of the
 Maribor Philharmonic
 performed a series
 of concerts for the
 youth.

1997

AT FESTIVAL LENT

Some of the artists who
 appeared at Festival Lent:
 Jimmy Witherspoon;
 Paquito D'Rivera & The
 United Nations Orchestra
 (returning in 1998);
 Maynard Ferguson;
 B. B. King & Band; José
 Feliciano & Band.



Guestbook, 1997

*

when I'm waiting for you, I'm always chipping away at the stairs.
they were already chipped when I came and
I could never help myself,
I had to get my teeth into something un-finished.

and in all the years of waiting I chipped down every one of them,
other than the highest.
and now I'm trapped on the highest stair
waiting for you.

everything is exactly where it needs to be.

it never seems like I'm trapped,
because I like waiting for you.
I see you tramping along lent,
up and down and up and down.
earphones in your ears, book in your hand
and sunglasses that keep your hair out of your eyes.

I watch you appearing before me,
I watch you writing into your notebook.
I pressed my legs against my torso and leaned my face toward the sky.
I'm sitting on the highest stair in front of the door,
while you're strolling along lent.
past the cafés, past the courtyards, past the tower.
up and down and up and down,
up and down and up and down.

I know you hear the music.
I know you're swimming through honey.
I know everything is where it needs to be.

*

do you remember the first Saturdays of the month?
sirens at twelve o'clock,
which made the walls of our apartment block wobble?
foundations cracked and the windows squeaked –
we were left on an empty floor.
there's an identical apartment block on the other side of town, no walls and all.

this is the first time I'm driving past this block alone
and through this city
and past the chipped stairs where I wrote my first poem.
love and attention were supposed to be the same thing.

there's a creek behind my house.
just like this river I see from the stairs.
home is where I want it to be. and the home I like most is this stair,
where everything is exactly where it needs to be.

well, do you remember these sirens, the first Saturdays in the month?
they were replaced by music.
every first Saturday in the month at twelve o'clock.
somewhere in the middle of this city we found a tree that bears fruit,
and we decided to dance.

1997

**LIVESTREAM FROM THE
MAIN STAGE ON THE DRAVA ON THE
FESTIVAL LENT WEBSITE**

The first livestream
from Slovenia
made even
viewers from the
United States of
America excited.

15. 5. 1998

**OPENING OF GLASBENI KLUB
NARODNEGA DOMA (NARODNI
DOM MUSIC CLUB)**

After the
Judgement
Tower was
renovated, there
was no more
room for jazz
concerts, which
were then moved
to the cellar of
Narodni dom.



Ohad Talmor Newsreel, 2020

Poetry

FROM THE TOWER

TOM VEBER

I stand before this house
 this magnificent building with countless windows
 swathed in the reflection of history
 opening like eyes
 toward a small figure
 on the other side of the street
 perhaps it is laughing at me
 perhaps it is mocking me
 perhaps it is ignoring me
 and my history
*I don't know you
 do you know me?*
 who am I
 a tiny man
 whose hands wish
 to touch your memories
 will you allow me to knock
 to enter
 in utter silence and without being noticed
 I'd brush my feet
 against your ancient floor
 my tiny ears

I'd press against yours mighty walls
 and listen to the murmur
 of forgotten times
 when the air circulating inside of you
 was softer perhaps more willing
 when scurrying across your floor were
 other feet
 other fates
 and up to the spire of the tower rang
 laughter
 from the mouths of people
 I will never get to meet
 never know their names
 and the reason for their joy

when I touch you in my thoughts
 when I wonder about a time forgotten
 about all those people
 pulsing hearts
 can you feel
 my mind filling up with pictures
 older than my body and memories
 can you feel how life

9. 5. 1998

FIRST CONCERT BY IZTOK
 MLAKAR AT GLASBENI KLUB
 NARODNEGA DOMA

Between 1998 and 2018, Iztok Mlakar appeared in 74 concerts and plays in the Narodni dom club, the Judgement Tower, the Small Stage, the Rotovž Stage, the Grand Hall of Narodni dom, and at the Union Hall. Every concert of his at Glasbni klub Narodnega doma sold out in mere moments.

1998

VEČER STAGE AT STARA TRTA
 (OLD VINE) AT FESTIVAL LENT



Večer Stage, 2012

seeps into life
eager to learn
about history
about wondrous moments
of eternity.

It is rather humanlike
for humans to attribute human characteristics
to animals plants objects and buildings
to everything we're attached to in one way or another
or have a special affinity or interest in

take buildings for example they don't have a pulse
nor a mouth or hands
they don't know how or what they're named after
what their function is
and why on these particular days and hours
crowds of people gather within them

so, if you wish to find out more about the history of Narodni dom
you cannot simply walk into the reception room or one of the halls and call
"Oy Narodni dom were you scared during the second world war
of getting hit in the head by a bomb?" or
"Oy Narodni did you ever get involved with another Narodni dom
was there any drama I heard you no longer speak to Narodni dom in Celje?"
the history of buildings is recorded in different documents and notes
written by human hands
and thought of by human minds

there would be no Narodni dom today without hard-working and selfless people
who built it from sheer nothing brick by brick wall by wall
breathed into it substance and mission
filled it with art
that finally made it a gathering place

home of the nation
home of the people

there's no Narodni dom without culture created by people for the people

there won't be a Narodni dom without people
who will visit these halls in the future as well
leaving aside for a couple of hours
the heavy bags of everyday
and lean on the soft waves of music
slip for a moment into foreign bodies
into foreign worlds
look for a few instants
into the sharp strokes of a brush
the captured moments of other perspectives
other lives
before reality comes knocking on their forehead again
and the thought of the last bus.

Narodni dom
is not just Narodni dom
the tall building on ulica kneza Koclja with a well-preserved façade
Narodni dom is also festival Lent
Vetrinjski dvor
and Unionska dvorana
Narodni dom is not just a place
made of bricks and cement
it is a place of ideas
a site connecting the past the present the future
a juncture for people with a vision
and a common mission
to give a home to Art

AT FESTIVAL LENT

Some of the artists who
appeared at Festival Lent:
Chico Freeman (returning
in 2007); Dr. John; Tania
Maria; Brad Mehldau Trio;
James Brown; Ray Anderson
(returning in 2010); Les
McCann.

ODPRTA PLESNA SCENA (OPEN DANCE SCENE) AT FESTIVAL LENT

Odperta Plesna scena has
been a part of the regular
programme set of the Republic
of Slovenia Public Fund for
Cultural Activities – Regional
unit Maribor since 1992 and
a staple of Festival Lent since
1998. It showcases a variety of
local and visiting contemporary
dance masterpieces and is an
opportunity to recognize world-
class young artists, ponder
topical themes, exchange ideas,
and promote contemporary
dance art.



Fight Bright, 2019

and what are Culture and Art without people
 without a live tenacious life
 without sweaty hands
 a racing pulse
 panting up the stairs
 when five minutes before the show starts
 the power goes out completely
 only two very pretty words in the tender documentation
 while us artists are
 in the dark

Narodni dom
 today is not only the home of the people of Maribor
 today this home stretches into the world
 it weaves
 connects
 and enriches
 with people
 and institutions
 from foreign cities and countries
 it is a mosaic of the most diverse cultures nationalities views and philosophies

Narodni dom is music and theatre
 dance and a temple
 of all things culture
 it is a home
 it is a language
 it is a view
 into the world
 .

Poetry from the tower

Let a song rise above the city
 let its might burst aflame
 across all the nooks and crannies

a song as bright as the brightest stars
 on a night when lovers gaze into each other's eyes
 let it bring into the open all that is phony
 dark shadows and figures
 let it shine a light through them
 to turn them into pearly drops of dew
 on a spring morning
 when the wind begins to awaken
 small wishes
 desires

song of light
 let it ignite the spark of hope
 in everyone who wanders
 down paths without a light
 without peace and fulfilment

let the song of culture spread across all roads
 let it reach deep into our hearts into our homes
 to awaken the desire to create
 to have our hands reach again for a brush or violin
 for the heavy boots of everyday to be replaced with dance shoes
 for the head overflowing with the world
 to stop for a moment in the now
 and see again
 colours
 lift our faces oh song
 for the corners of our mouth to turn skywards again
 estranged arms to form a hug again
 for people on opposite banks
 to unite again
 as one.

8. 12. 1998

PREMIERE OF THE PLAY
 ŠPIJK POGUM

A successful theatre play for children produced by Narodni dom Maribor that was equally exciting for adults. Directed by Matjaž Latin, based on the play script by Mateja Koležnik and Gregor Fon, cast Milada Kalezič, Irena Varga, Jure Ivanušič.

1999

VENUES OF FESTIVAL LENT
 SPREAD TO GLAVNI TRG AND
 CITY STREETS

1999

JAZZGETO -
 A PLACE FOR JAM SESSIONS
 BEHIND THE JAZZLENT STAGE

1999

CHILDREN'S FOLKART
 AT FESTIVAL LENT

Children's Folkart, organized by the Republic of Slovenia Public Fund for Cultural Activities - Regional unit Maribor and Zveza kulturnih društev Maribor (Association of Cultural Societies Maribor), showcases both foreign and Slovenian children's folklore groups. It is recognized by the international folklore festival organization CIOFF.

1999

KGB VENUE AT FESTIVAL LENT

The Bubbling of the Unknown

OR HOW THE CITY GOT ITS LEGS

BOŠTJAN NARAT

The year was 1994. Uroš and I were seventeen. We came to Maribor for Lent, for the festival. Ok, Maribor is my hometown and I've been coming back non-stop for all my life – whether it's at all possible to return is a special kind of question, more on that later perhaps – but this particular visit had absolutely nothing to do with my three Fates. If Lent were located on the banks of Savinja, we'd simply gone to Celje, if it were at the seaside, we'd have boarded the train to Koper, the city wasn't important, what was important was the festival. We wanted to breathe that air, we wanted to be part of the action.

The festival programme was of secondary importance to us. In part because our budget was radically limited, and Maribor was only the first stop on our ambitiously planned route. We wanted to hitchhike across Europe, travel up, down, and around the entire Old Continent, and concert tickets were filed under "can do without" in our very vague cost breakdown. The second reason was less obscure: we weren't interested in sub-

stance; we were after feelings. Being part of the audience was not enough, we wanted to be part of the festival.

This duality makes me excited to this day. Festival events are special, be it concerts, theatre plays, film screenings, or street performances. It is true that every event forms a certain community – people who spend two straight hours together in a theatre or concert hall share an experience and this experience can be major, significant, essential. But the community created by a festival always has much greater potential. The multitude of events, their temporal density and spatial closeness akin to a pileup – the festival community can have immense social and political power. A festival is a place where something can happen. Strike that: a festival is a place where anything can happen.

Pileup may be a funny word, but I like it and it certainly fits the description of what's happening at Lent. If you want to see the perfect gig by a

band, you go to one of the concerts on their tour – there, everything is polished and controlled to perfection and there's a rather slight chance of surprise, either positive or negative. But if you want to see the rawest and perhaps most honest iteration of the band, go to a festival. The noise from the surrounding stages, a stream of people constantly traversing from venue to venue, less time to rehearse – the rules of the game are quite different for performers too when it comes to a festival. And this invisible, yet very much real line between stage and audience seems more porous here. At a festival, we're all together.

Uroš and I took this festival community idea very seriously, which is why we arrived to Maribor armed with our guitars. One of the beauties of a festival is also that people are everywhere, not only at venues, and all of these people walk around with open eyes and ears, always hungry with anticipation of two anonymous young stars in the making. While the reactions of passers-by to our street performances did not exactly affirm

1999

AT FESTIVAL LENT

Some of the artists who appeared at Festival Lent: Reggie Workman (returning in 2009); Chucho Valdes; Benny Golson.

50. 11. 1999

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF NARODNI DOM

In celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Narodni dom building, a commemorative envelope and postage stamp were issued in collaboration with Filatelistično in numizmatično društvo Tabor, Maribor (Philatelic and Numismatic Society Tabor, Maribor). The postage stamp was used to stamp outgoing mail on 30 November 1999.

2000

LAUNCH OF JAZZ CYCLE IN NARODNI DOM

this, their indifference didn't make us lose courage. We're getting there, it's going to happen, someone's about to notice us. Let's not forget, anything can happen at a festival.

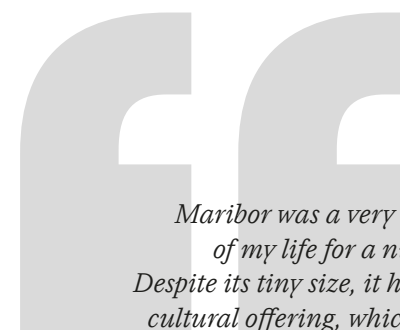
And we actually did get noticed. It was getting late, near midnight, events were finished for the most part, there were fewer and fewer people, and Uroš and I found ourselves under the arches of the old bridge. Our musically attuned ears immediately caught up on the amazing acoustics of the place and we instantly decided to break into another one to bid farewell to this festival day. What's it going to be? *Child in Time* by Deep Purple, we've only done this one six times today.

Today, there's no way for me to hit that highest part of Ian Gillan's legendary warbling, the years and all the gigs I smoked have taken their toll, but back then, I was actually able to make it through the entire piece and was immensely proud of it. My vocal acrobatics always made an impression, I was always noticed. The rendition we gave un-

der the arches of the old bridge was no exception in this regard. The piece just got off the ground when all of the sudden two cops appeared out of nowhere.

What exactly do we think we're doing? Are we out of our bloody minds? Don't we know what time it is? What's with all the yelling?! An avalanche of more or less reasonable questions was followed by a request to show IDs and us having our details taken. Once the officers did their thing, they commanded us to get the hell on home. Faced with the finality of the system, we ducked our heads and complied. Tomorrow is a new day and our road was just beginning.

Over the next twenty-four hours, we set a peculiar record: we had our details taken five times and in three different countries, no less. The midnight run-in under the bridge was followed by a morning showdown at the Maribor train station. We got dropped off there by my father, who took a moment to go to the ATM, during which time we



Maribor was a very important part of my life for a number of years. Despite its tiny size, it has an amazing cultural offering, which is owed in no small part to Narodni dom Maribor. I humbly accepted the invitation to direct the festival and absolutely loved doing it. I used Festival Maribor as a laboratory; we were testing ideas and moving boundaries. The audience accepted and loved it. The weirder we got, the better the response was. Such a degree of openness can only be found in an environment with a high level of cultural awareness.

*Richard Tognetti,
artistic director of
Festival Maribor (2008–2015)*

As told to Sense of Place
(www.abc.net.au/radionational, 6. 7. 2019).

27. 5. 2000

**SALON MARIBORSKIH GLASBENIH
UMETNIKOV (SALON OF MARIBOR
MUSIC ARTISTS) IN NARODNI DOM**

Salon mariborskih glasbenih umetnikov was created in cooperation with Društvo orkestrskih glasbenikov Maribor (Orchestra Musicians Society Maribor) and was designed as a concert marathon in which eleven chamber ensembles from Maribor, ranging from a trio to a full chamber orchestra, appeared in three halls of Narodni dom in a span of six hours.

1. 7. 2000

TERRAFOLK AT FESTIVAL LENT

The group Terrafolk was born at Festival Lent. After a concert was cancelled, the manager of Koncertna poslovalnica, Brigita Pavlič, suggested to members of the band Terra Mystica, woodwind player Boštjan Gombač and guitar player Danijel Černe, to join forces with Bojan Cvetrežnik, violin player of the All Capone Štrajh Trio.

2000

AT FESTIVAL LENT

Some of the artists who appeared at Festival Lent: Monty Alexander; Ray Brown; Alfredo De La Fé & Orchestra; Dhafer Youssef (returning in 2008 and 2012); Bélla Fleck & The Flecktones.

accidentally set off the car alarm. And there he was, man in uniform. We got saved by pops, who had a word with mister copper and gave us the money for a ticket to Vienna. Since we were budgeting, we bought tickets to Graz and hitchhiked from there. We held our thumbs in the air on a motorway on-ramp, which was something we naturally shouldn't be doing, so we had our details taken once more. Once we finally made it to the Austrian capital, we made a beeline to Stephansplatz to earn a schilling or two with our guitars. A very nice representative of the authorities informed us that we could do this only under very rigorous terms, which we naturally didn't meet. And, yes, he took our details again. We hit the road and got on a train to Bratislava, where police officers took our details on the train station for a fifth straight time. No particular reason, we were just two kids with nowhere to go in a foreign city in the middle of the night.

But let's not leave it just at anecdotes – it gets interesting when two beings infected with festival atmosphere collide with the system and this clash can be read and considered in the broader context. In its fundamental meaning, the festival phenomenon appears to be completely harmless – a party like any other, but as I said earlier, the event has great social and political potential. The fact alone that festival activities attract a great crowd of people is everything but harmless. See, all these people are not only there for the party, for the beer and barbecue, they gather because of culture and art. Art, if we consider it in the

full-blooded sense, is often at least a bit “harmful”. Art loves to walk on the razor's edge, put pressure on neuralgic points of social and human tissue, and examine poorly researched and darker spheres of our being. In this sense, art is always there to derail us, get us off our balance, comfort, routine. Until this stays on an intimate level, it is my or your problem. But once this becomes a collective experience ... Yes, a festival is a place where anything can happen.

Naturally, it is rare for this potential to materialize, but this does not diminish the importance of its existence. A festival bubbles – which, in all likelihood, was exactly why Maribor's Lent was so exciting to two seventeen-year-olds from Ljubljana. As if the Drava was bubbling in tune with the boiling of the festival, threatening to overflow its banks a little at a time. Perhaps the way in which we crossed the line was radically infantile: warbling a bruised and battered rock classic under the arches of the old bridge at midnight, this is lightyears away from any reasonable revolt or relevant artistic expression. Yet the lesson was clear nonetheless. The festival is under the watchful eye of the authorities, always has been, always will be. In part because it is simply the authorities' job to maintain public peace and order and because honest people need their sleep. Yet it is also because the authorities know that anything can happen at a festival. And this “anything” falls in the sphere of the unknown.

The unknown bubbles in a multitude of ways, and

the political aspect, due to which the authorities always have and always will keep a watchful eye on what's happening at a festival, is just one of the many. It is likely the most important and most interesting aspect if we look at a festival as a social phenomenon, but I was not thinking about this dimension when I was seventeen; I experienced everything on a much more intimate level.

Many years later, I stumbled upon the book *Homo Ludens*, in which Dutch historian and philosopher Johan Huizinga provides a detailed analysis of the notion of play – Huizinga views it as one of the key phenomena that helps us understand human society and history. He uses play as a tool to tackle nearly everything: politics, war, law, economy, culture, art, sports, social relationships, customs, hierarchy ... Play is a way in which we live our social roles and play our lives. What William Shakespeare captured into a single sentence as the famous poetic foreboding about the world as a stage and us as players, Johan Huizinga developed into a comprehensive system and a complex analysis.

The notion of play is extremely wide, ambivalent, and almost paradoxical. At first glance, play appears to be a wholly relaxed activity – in this sense, we take it as the wasting of time that only those who are not serious can afford. Serious and busy human beings do not have time to play.

What about when a die is cast, a bet is made, the roulette or even the cylinder of a revolver starts to spin? All of a sudden, play turns into something

2001

SALON MARIBORSKIH GLASBENIH UMETNIKOV BECOMES PART OF FESTIVAL LENT

Concerts by Salon mariborskih glasbenikov created a new festival venue – the Synagogue. In the following years, concerts were also held in the Cathedral, the Church of St. Aloysius, and in Union Hall. Since 2012, the programme of Salon mariborskih umetnikov also includes the winners of Tekmovanje mladih slovenskih glasbenikov (Young Slovenian Musicians Competition) – TEMSIG that has been organized by Zveza slovenskih glasbenih šol (Association of Slovenian Music Schools) since 1972.



String Quartet Feguš, 2011

2001

AT FESTIVAL LENT

Some of the artists who appeared at Festival Lent: Kenny Wheeler; Esbjörn Svensson; Alfredo Rodriguez & Los Acerekô.

2001/2002

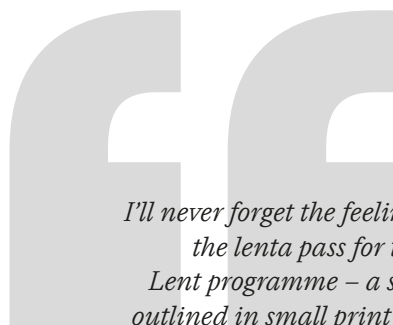
LAUNCH OF SMALL STAGE SEASON PROGRAMME

The new venue in the cellar of Narodni dom gave birth to the season theatre programme Small Stage in the 2001/2002 season, which consists of popular one-man comedy shows.

bloody serious. In other words, play can involve many things, our fortune, or even our lives. And even in less fatal instances the notion of play as a non-serious, relaxed, and leisurely activity quickly proves deficient: “Children’s games, football, and chess are played in profound seriousness; the players have not the slightest inclination to laugh,” says Huizinga (2003, p. 15). It is illusory aporia that was perhaps best articulated by Pushkin in his epigraph to the *Queen of Spades* (2000, p. 5):

“In nasty weather
They would all get together
And play;
On the table now fifty
Or, God help them, twice fifty
They’d lay
And whenever they won
They’d chalk up the sum
On a slate.
So in nasty weather
Quite busy together
They played.”

Another contrast to the seeming lightness and casualness is the connotation of holiness, which may well seem more historical in nature, however, is no less important and interesting because of it. The best example are certainly the ancient Olympic Games that had a strong ritual dimension on the one hand, while on the other hand, they put a temporary stop to all wars and hostilities. The seriousness of war takes a back seat to the non-seriousness of play, the time of play is the holy time of peace.



I’ll never forget the feeling when, as a newly minted girl from Maribor, I bought the lenta pass for the first time in 2008 and got my hands on the Festival Lent programme – a single piece of paper, a broadsheet featuring a table that outlined in small print the 16-day programme across 15 (or even more) venues. I was in shock and kept looking at it, completely still and quiet, for at least fifteen minutes before I had to admit that I simply won’t be able to make my own choice of concerts I wanted to hear. Over the years, I’ve learned that visiting Lent requires a different kind of planning. What you need to do is start in spring, when the first snippets of the programme see the light of day, by asking, noncommittally and in passing, other folks who have much more concert mileage than you do what they look forward to (and they aren’t able to hide their excitement anyway), by planning your seaside holiday so that it doesn’t overlap with Lent (but, if you’re smart enough, you still take off from work), by getting grandma to agree early enough to taking on babysitter duties or by starting to convince your children precisely when Lent rolls around that they’re big enough to spend an hour or two home alone in the evening, by losing at least one child of yours at Art Camp at least once until you learn that the smartest thing to do is set up shop on the promenade with a beer and friends and grab your children whenever they happen to roam past you ... Or by simply giving up on any plans and simply letting yourself be immersed in the festival, to let it wash over you and take you away, to carry you from the park to street theatre at Slomšek, onward to the uproarious laughter in Vetrinjski place and down to the music at Drava, to become part of the stream of people that takes you from one Lent venue to another, which are never in the same place, to intoxicate and confuse you with a cacophony of sounds, smells, faces, and tastes that fill the city during this time.

*Martina Magdič,
Slovakian transplant in Maribor, passionate organizer and
executive producer of cultural events.*

8. 6. 2002

**SYMPHONY NO. 8 –
“SYMPHONY OF A THOUSAND”**

The Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra, the Symphony Orchestra of the Maribor Philharmonic, the Slovenian Chamber Choir, the Consortium Musicum Choir, the Opera Choir of the SNG Maribor, the Youth Choir of RTV Slovenia, the Carmina Slovenica Choir, the Junior Carmina Slovenica Choir, the Domžale Chamber Choir, Hartmut Haenchen, conductor, Rita Cullis, soprano, Henrieta Lednarova, soprano, Mateja Arnež-Volčanšek, soprano, Julia Bernheimer, alto, Mirjam Kalin, alto, Wolfgang Milgramm, tenor, Jože Vidic, baritone, Anatoli Kotscherga, bass; Tabor Hall, Maribor. Symphony No. 8 – “Symphony of a Thousand” was a magnificent event that was staged by the Slovenian Philharmonic and the Maribor Philharmonic to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the Slovenian Philharmonic. The concert featured a staggering 400 performers.



Symphony No. 8 – “Symphony of a Thousand”, 2022

What about freedom? We quickly run into ambivalence here as well, as play is still subject to a system of rules that make it logical in the first place. This is reflected already in games played by children, these allegedly freest of all beings. At first glance, their actions may rightfully seem freed from the seriousness of the world of grown-ups, but on the other hand, children are quick to eject the spoil-sport from the circle that is captured under some sort of magic spell and is separated from the outside world (Huizinga, 1992, p. 18). This separation is reflected as an actual spatial separation – the hopscotch outline or the border line on a football turf determine the playground in a similar way. Play happens within the line, everything on the other side of the line is not, cannot be, and must not be directly linked to play. But this separation is even more apparent in terms of time. Play proceeds within strict limits of time that restrict the applicability of its rules. Once play is over, its rules are no longer binding.

Play is “different from ordinary life” (Huizinga, 1992, p. 31). Something similar could be said for a festival, this uncontrolled bubbling of the unknown. A festival happens within the same magnificent aporia and includes, in some not completely understandable yet very natural way, all the paradoxes and contradictions I mentioned earlier. It has its own venues and paths between these venues, its very own map, it has a programme and rules, it has a beginning and an end – it appears that all parameters are clear, yet the sum still cannot be put into words. What really is

a festival? I have no idea but I like it.

Going back in time, a specific time that is, to 1994. The third iteration of Festival Lent and I, a seventeen-year-old kid with a guitar, a textbook example of an adolescent with big dreams and even bigger insecurities. Well, not that I needed puberty to be insecure in Maribor. My attitude toward my hometown was always a bit traumatic, most likely because of what I wrote at the beginning: I kept coming back to Maribor to find out every time that it is not possible to come back. I was born in this city and that was that. And then I became a Ljubljana native. When I was young, I could always bet on running into someone in Maribor who told me that this was not ok.

It started even earlier, in my childhood. Whenever I came for a visit, the first thing my uncle did was check whether any webbing was growing between my fingers. The names I was called, like swampman and Ljubljana boy, were never said maliciously, yet they still hurt a little. And why shouldn't we park here? Because of the license plates? I don't get it, but I'm just a kid and there's much I don't get.

Many things changed after we became independent, though not necessarily for the better. Maribor fell into an economic and atmospheric depression and the city seemed infinitely sad to me during those years. I was a teenager by then and therefore particularly susceptible to such feelings. And I felt guilty – it was pure nonsense, but it still

found plenty of room in my teenage mind. Visits to the family? My grandpa was still blaming everything on communists, the only difference being that his ire shifted from those in Belgrade to those in Ljubljana. Naturally, I had absolutely nothing to do with all of it, but his political treatises still made me feel weird. It was all Ljubljana's fault and I was from Ljubljana. Of course I knew that he harboured no ill will toward me – he was my grandpa and he loved me to the moon and back. But this weird and nonsensical feeling of guilt paid it no mind.

Honestly, Maribor and I were rather similar to one another at that time. We both had big dreams and even bigger insecurities. We both too frequently compared ourselves to others and we both saw almost nothing but faults in us. We were both troubled teenagers who were no strangers to sadness. We didn't walk, we stumbled.

But Maribor had Lent. In fact, this was when Maribor first got Lent, in 1992. It got a festival that needed only a single punch to shatter the slightly morose atmosphere and bring life to the banks of the Drava. Life that was literally bubbling. And the bubbling began right when the city seemed deadest. True, it began and ended with the festival. But it was something, something major. Let's not forget, anything can happen at a festival.

Let me go back for a moment to my obsession with comparisons: Ljubljana doesn't have Lent, never had it, never will. It will never have a festival that

2002

AT FESTIVAL LENT

Some of the artists who appeared at Festival Lent: Esma Redžepova Teodosievska & Amala with chamber orchestra (returning in 2008); Taj Mahal and The Hula Blues Band; Sara Tavares.

25. 9. 2002

**MARIINSKY THEATRE ORCHESTRA
ST. PETERSBURG, VALERY GERGIEV,
CONDUCTOR; GRAND HALL OF THE
SLOVENE NATIONAL
THEATRE MARIBOR**

Gala concert to commemorate the 10th anniversary of Narodni dom Maribor.



Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra St. Petersburg, Valery Gergiev, conductor, 2002

is so deeply and thoroughly ingrained into the tissue of the city and that would break through to its every cell. Ljubljana has its Festival Ljubljana – or Ljubljana Festival, and I'll spare you my comments about the troublesome grammatical decisions – that will always be the domain of elites and tourists because of its slightly bourgeoisie air. It has Jazz and Druga godba, both of which are nothing short of excellent, but are too niche to speak to the city as a whole. Ljubljana has a number of other festival events, but none of them have that pileup feel and they bubble in a completely different, far less intense way than the festival on the banks of the Drava. Ljubljana doesn't have Lent.

Right, let's leave Ljubljana aside once and for all, may it be where it is, on the other side of the tropic of donut – I'm not sure who I stole this phrase from but it's far too excellent not to use. Maribor is a great city, one that doesn't stumble anymore, at least not as often and as clumsily as it did in the nineties. Maribor is a unique and lively capital with a proper attitude toward its past and a vision for its future. Any look into the future should be based on the memory of the past, including on times of insecurity, of stumbling times. Lent helped the city get its legs, while the bubbling of the festival made Maribor rediscover the firmness in its step. And march toward 2022.

Now what? How should I end this and how should I keep marching forward? What should I wish for myself and others, for the city and the festival in the future? This is where the ants take the floor

– they are all too familiar with the bubbling of life and the potential of the community. This is what four black ones say, the ones that Anja Štefan writes about:

Four black ants were picking grapes.

"The years go by," said the first. "We're no spring chickens anymore, whether we like it or not. We're maturing – just like grapes."

"Nice," said the second – because she loved ripe grapes.

"When I was young," added the third, "I had so much light, so much zeal and strength. I sometimes don't have them anymore."

"That may be so," chimed in the fourth. "But I don't believe that all maturing does is take away. It gives you something, too. At least to me: a clear mind, a good nose, and solid ground."

A clear mind, a good nose, and solid ground. Let this be my wish for my city and my festival.

Sources:

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Puškin, A. S. (2000). *Pikova dama*. Gyrus, Ljubljana.

Štefan, A. (2022) *Štiri črne mravljice. Od jutra do jutra*. Mladinska knjiga, Ljubljana.

When I was still a teacher at Angel Besednjak Primary School, we took on an ambitious international project Sanjaj svoje sanje, izdelaj jadrnico (Dream Your Dreams, Make a Sailboat). Wishing to present the project to a broader audience, we joined the workshops for children at Festival Lent, where the visitors made 222 boats from natural materials. On the last day of the festival, we put tea candles on the boats and let them float down Drava River before the closing fireworks began. The response was fantastic and these were the beginnings that led to the establishment of Zavod MARS in the next few years, followed by the first Art Camp and Kulturni dnevnik (Cultural Diary) in 2008.

*Urška Košica,
producer in Narodni dom Maribor*

2002/2005

MLADI MLADIM (FROM THE YOUTH TO THE YOUTH) CYCLE (TODAY KNOWN AS MLADINSKI CIKEL / YOUTH CYCLE)

Mladi mladim cycle gave the young an opportunity to see chamber concerts for the youth as part of Glasbena mladina Maribor. Preference was given to young artists from the Štajerska region. The cycle also featured music hours for primary and secondary schools and they regularly cooperated with Glasbena mladina Maribor. In the 2003/2004 season, the cycle was transformed into Abonmajski cikel za mlade (Season Cycle for the Young) that included six concerts of various genres. The concerts, which were of an educational nature, often featured renowned music artists. After popularity and attendance grew, the programme was split into dedicated programme lines: Pizzicato for children in primary school classes 1 through 3, Crescendo for children in primary school classes 4 through 6, and Furioso for children in primary school classes 7 through 9 and secondary school pupils.



Tesla, 2019





Vilinsko mesto, 2019, Igor Unuk







Folkart, 2018, Marko Pigac



Folkart, 2016, Saša Huzjak





Aqua Forte, 2017, Saša Huzjak



Đorđe Balašević, 2016, Boštjan Lah



**KATJA BECK KOS
URŠKA BREZNIK
HANA REPŠE
MARKO BRUMEN
PETER TOMAŽ DOBRILA
KAROLINA BABIČ**

Dear Urška, Hana, and Katja, dear Peter and Marko,¹

We're here in this virtual space in Drive, taking part in a written conversation, to put down a few thoughts of ours in this experimental format about the always intriguing topic of the relationship between the independent or non-institutional cultural scene and institutional culture, both in the broader sense as well as in the narrower environment of the cultural scene in Maribor and, to narrow it down even further, on the case of Narodni dom Maribor. Other than Marko, all of those taking part in this conversation are presently active in non-governmental organizations or work as freelancers or private professionals. We all bring plenty of experience in dealing with non-institutional and institutional culture (my, my, what big words). I'm convinced that we can all openly discuss the good and not so good parts of this relationship, what could be done better, what's hopelessly bad, what's marginally acceptable, and what's kind of neat. And seeing that a variety of comments popped up in the sidebar of our Drive talk that made our discussion more colourful, we decided to leave them in the version that's about to be published. We invite readers to have a look at the sidebar when reading this text to see the tangents we went off on and the way our minds have wandered at times.

Before we began our written conversation, we met up for drinks in the Water Tower, well, some of us did, and immediately plunged into a discussion about premises, the management and use of buildings that are part of public cultural infrastructure, and about societies and other organizations that move, and continue to move, from one of these premises in Maribor to the other. And about personal experience with precarious work on the independent scene and the transitioning of personnel from NGOs to public institutes. Also about personal circumstances of people who opt for such a transition. And about the lack of ideas on how to make working on the independent scene attractive to young people. It was a warm and pleasant conversation and one we should have more often.

Marko Brumen

Fun fact: I'd never have gotten into the culture had I not been a regular at the bar in Kibla when I was a student and met Peco there. From there I moved in one way or another to Pekarna and other societies and institutes, then on to freelancing. Narodni dom Maribor is only my present, and not necessarily last, place of action.

Peco then spent some time at the Ministry of Culture in the meantime but came back/had to come back. :-)

¹ Ed. note. In the beginning of summer of 2022, I invited Katja Beck Kos from the society Hiša!, Urška Breznik from Pekarna Magdalenske mreže, Hana Repše from the institute Zavod Mars, Peter Tomaž Dobrila from KIBLA, and Marko Brumen from Narodni dom Maribor to take part in writing this group conversation. I also invited Žiga Brdnik, co-creator of GT22, but life has gifted him with so many beautiful moments in this time that he simply didn't have the time to take part in creating our group missive. I thank you all for your time and the interesting back-and-forth.

2005

**THEATRE AND CHILDREN'S SHOWS ON
ROTOVŽ STAGE**

The Rotovž Stage, located on Rotovški trg, was created in 2003 to host theatre and children's shows. In 2013, the theatre programme moved to Stari radio, where it shared the venue with the JazzLent programme. The programmes then moved to the open-air stage Minoriti in the new amphitheatre of the Puppet Theatre Maribor.

2005

**JAM SESSION IN THE MINORITE
CHURCH AT FESTIVAL LENT**

2005

AT FESTIVAL LENT

Some of the artists who appeared at Festival Lent: Mercedes Sosa; Olodum; Taraf De Haïdouks; Malia.

KAROLINA: Nothing comes from nothing. Something was happening even before 1992 when Narodni dom Maribor was founded. The Academic Folklore Group at KUD Študent organized the first Folkart festival in 1989. As we all know, some members of this association later formed the driving force behind both Narodni dom Maribor and Festival Lent. There has been a type of umbrella organization in Maribor since 1978, the s. c. Kulturne dejavnosti Rotovž, which combined Koncertna poslovalnica, Glasbena mladina Maribor, and Lutkovno gledališče under the same roof. And in 1991, when the Yugoslav People's Army was retreating from Slovenia, it handed the Narodni dom building over to the Slovenian army, which gave the building to the Ministry of Defence, which in turn handed it over to the city of Maribor. An interesting mix of circumstances at a certain moment in time during the transition towards the birth of new country: societies, enthusiasts, public cultural organizations, vacated building used by the military, the city, and a few more spices sprinkled on top. Stirred in a melting pot of the moment – and Narodni dom is born. We can identify in this example some of the elements that are still present on the Slovenian culture scene. Public cultural policies structure the field of culture in the spirit of duality: public institutes, which provide certain public services on the one hand, and the independent or non-governmental cultural and art scene on the other. And, in order for the whole thing to function at all, to develop, to create something new, to go beyond some of the lines, we naturally need young people, we need NGO people, enthusiasts, and we need the right moment in history when the door to new opportunities cracks open for a brief moment. What do you think; what is the position of public cultural institutes and what is the position of the independent scene? Does this duality, this division, make sense? What is the relationship between these two crucial types of players, which can't really live one without the another, yet still frequently judge or avoid one another, while there are also instances when they're able to co-create excellent things as well as instances when they make other arrangements? What is the good part of this duality, this relationship? And what is the bad part when it comes to the development of culture?

MARKO: Reasonable or not, that's the way it is and most likely will be; duality is the result of different working conditions and principles. It's a pity that we don't extract more benefits from this duality, benefits brought by cooperation and the fluidity between both ends of the same "stick". Naturally, cooperation always involves the question of personal chemistry and wants, regardless of cultural policies. That certainly could and should be more inclusive and reward these kinds of connections and cooperative actions ... but these are still possible as long as there's willingness and interest on both sides. I'm not familiar with cultural policies of that time or with the players, who was what to whom – but the basic fifth element always appears to be drive, which either finds fertile grounds ... or it doesn't.

Katja Beck Kos

Marko, this is probably that spice that Karolina mentioned earlier and Hana speaks about drive too. For me, the question with cultural policy is whether we can bring these two elements – drive and at least some kind of openness of key people/institutions to cooperate, seeing that we have no influence over personal chemistry – into the system, to make them immanent to the system, which will in turn encourage new cooperation, and not fall asleep in the meantime on existing, established connections, channels, cooperative actions.

2004

AT FESTIVAL LENT

Some of the artists who appeared at Festival Lent: Eric Burdon & The Animals; David Byrne; Sierra Maestra.

2004/2005

CHILDREN'S SEASON PROGRAMMES KEKEC AND PIKA

Theatre shows for children were offered for the first time as part of the Kekec season programme and catered to children up to nine years of age. Shows for older children were featured as part of the Pika season programme, which was discontinued in the 2006/2007 season. The Kekec season programme has an educational and formative orientation and is part of the cultural development programme of the city of Maribor, as it contributes to the growth of cultural values, a higher culture of living and greater confidence, creative orientation, and a positive identity of the youngest theatre-goers.



Heidi, 2019

HANA: I think each has its role and both are important. They each fight their own battle within the limits of its own battlefield and solve issues that appear in that – because in the end, it's always about funding needed to deliver set goals, communication between all involved, and the will of individuals to get it done as well as possible. In the end, it always seems to me that the human factor is still the most important, but in most cases, there's no room in an NGO for those who are less driven and who wish for stability. Then again, it depends on the structural setup of the NGO and what it strives for. Most often, it's comprised of driven individuals from a single field with the same mindset. In this regard, what's lacking the most is the professionalisation of support personnel such as accounting, finance, legal, marketing, and, last but not least, management. NGOs whose foundation is built on volunteerism or unpaid work through internship far outnumber those that are built on hiring and paying to cooperate with experts in a certain field. This is where Narodni dom offers a helping hand on many occasions as well; to be specific, I'm talking about Stanka and her unwavering will to help at any time. Narodni dom also provides us with technical support, as we don't have our own equipment to stage events. Well, we're very glad to make Turkish coffee for them whenever they come for a visit. :) But I do have far less experience with other public institutes. The puppet theatre is also very ready and willing to cooperate, but their mission is much narrower and perhaps "open" in a different way because of it.

KATJA: In fundamental terms, Slovenia operates under the principle of the "German system" of cultural management that gives preference to domestic ensembles, e.g. Slovenian National Theatres and philharmonic groups with in-house ensembles, choirs, orchestras, and in-house original production; it doesn't operate under the "Benelux" principle that makes premises needed to create and stage shows (theatres, concert halls, etc.) available to crews, "associations" who take their original plays/concerts ... on the road across the country in a rather autonomous way and present themselves to local audiences. Both systems naturally have their pros and cons. The "German system" provides greater security to artists by way of permanent employment and facilitates thereby that art develops independently from the market, however, it requires a much greater volume of funding and often leads to institutions becoming rigid and unresponsive to present needs. This is something we can prevent by doing a better job promoting cooperation between public institutes and NGOs. Narodni dom (as well as other municipal public cultural institutes in Slovenia) is more of an example of the "Benelux" principle and therefore has an extremely high level of professionalism in the lines that constitute the support environment of art, i.e. management, stagecraft, accounting, etc. What I wish for is for public institutes and NGOs to focus more on developing their strong suits, their roles: to have public institutes take care of stability, support environment, stagecraft, management, marketing, sales, and to have NGOs take care of creating and developing new contents, to experiment. There are cases of successful cooperation work like these in Europe.

Hana Repše

Well, I'd like to correct myself here – stability is absolutely not the right word. :) ... who wish to twiddle their thumbs and get paid for it. Or are content with delivering marginally minimal goals of the organization and not looking for anything more.

Karolina Babič

@katja

Do you think that strong public institutions will survive or will major social and technological changes and new, say, more "participatory practices" fundamentally change the core "institutions"? This is a more theoretical question: what will institutions of the 21st century look like? Will they blend in with users, with the community more? Have you noticed a tendency that the boundaries of institutions are fading somewhat, becoming less pronounced?

Assigned to Katja Beck Kos

Katja Beck Kos

Hm, you may be right, they are fading. Perhaps this is even something I would wish for. The integration of NGOs and public institutes is certainly happening outside of Slovenia as well and is more or less prolific. The practice of involving the audience, visitors, is another trend that's been going on for more than 10 years and is definitely positive in my view. Co-creation is "in". The question is, whether this is not just masking a very neoliberal idea of increasing the volume of precarious work – promising freedom to precarious workers, who bring fresh ideas into institutionalized work, until they burn out because they can't please all their partners in the projects they work on simultaneously. Yes, I certainly wish for the boundaries to get blurred and for public institutions to perhaps take on only the role of providing the framework of the engagement and maybe help out with marketing, but we need to ensure a more stable status for external associates as well.

Jazz festival IZZVEN was created by the initiators of the concert cycle Skrite note (Hidden Notes) under Multimedijski center KIBLA. The festival later ran in cooperation with Narodni dom Maribor that organized the event as well. Ever since its beginnings in 2000, it has constantly featured a contemporary musical offering from all across the globe that builds primarily on the creative tradition of jazz and ethno music and their fusion with contemporary influences. In 2004, KIBLA and Narodni dom Maribor joined forces for the first time to hold the 5th Jazz festival IZZVEN. The festival went on hiatus between 2008 and 2010 due to a lack of funding. After it has been revived in 2011, it became part of the ECoC Maribor 2012 programme a year later.



IZZVEN, 2004

URŠKA: I feel that the existing cooperation work involving non-governmental organizations and public institutes shows that these mostly happen completely organically, which is why they are of rather high quality. Perhaps we find common grounds in content, maybe in the premises we work in, or we share advocacy activities. I think that cooperation is the most noble particularly in the latter field, as this is where a spirit of camaraderie and the sense of sharing is often reflected within the culture and art community. Katja, I agree with you that both types of players should have the option to continuously develop their strong suit, which is something that should be recognized as a priority primarily by the local community (i.e. the municipality).

PETER: Our history is quite long. The oldest known traces of settlement in the Maribor area date back to the late 5th millennium BC, to a time when the Copper Age was just beginning. The first mention of Maribor as a settlement was made in 1204. It defied the sieges of Matija Korvin (King Matjaž, who's still asleep under Peca mountain) in 1480 and 1481 and the sieges of the Ottoman Empire in 1532 and 1683. In 1680, the plague spread across Maribor and its vicinity from the neighbouring lands. As an act of gratitude for surviving the plague, the people of Maribor erected a plague monument in 1681, which was replaced in the 18th Century at Glavni trg by the plague monument crafted by Jožef Štraub. The monument is still there to this day.

Maribor was the fastest developing city in the country until the Second World War. However, during the war, when it was taken by the occupier, it got bombed by the allies and it became one of the most destroyed cities in Yugoslavia, as a staggering 47% of all buildings were destroyed. It wasn't until 1954 that the majority of damage caused could be repaired. Under Yugoslavia, Maribor was one of the largest commercial and industrial centres in the country and region and had around 120,000 inhabitants at the end of the 1980s or the beginning of the 1990s, after which its population has steadily declined.

Hana Repše

I think this is another thing that happens organically and is reflected in the ups and downs that institutions experience on a curve – institutions navigate between delivering goals/missions and the needs/wants of the audience ... I feel that it's been proven particularly in recent periods that they all need to change how they operate and reconsider their contents. I also feel that the most prominent question today has again become how to build up the audience (again). I feel that there's a split between what the audience wants and what the audience needs. And this is where I see a great urgency to make a joint stand and to have stronger support/understanding of the issues of culture in the municipality.

Karolina Babič

@urska

Yes, I feel this is a very important question; do those that provide funding (municipality, state, EU institutions) have proper understanding of the distinction between these different roles of institutional and non-institutional culture when they're setting the terms of funding? Or do they, counter to the above, put too much pressure on each side to take on the function and form of the other side, which in the end leads to the independent scene being increasingly forced to institutionalize and public institutions forcibly taking on ad hoc projects that are beyond their primary mission?

Assigned to Urška Breznik

Urška Breznik

Aside from the Department for NGOs at the Ministry of Public Administration, I don't think any of the other institutions, either local or national, fully understand the difference or, in other words, they don't understand the meaning and role of non-institutional culture (and, hence, the role of NGOs). I'm convinced that public institutes are also forced to a certain level into projects that are not part of their primary mission, while some public institutes have lost (for a variety of reasons) the common thread of their operation and are trying to find it through ad hoc projects.

Marko Brumen

Peter, I think that your answer, though certainly erudite, is in no relation to the question and topic; I suggest dropping it from the final cut for readability purposes. @karolina

Karolina Babič

Hm, I'm not quite sure either what drove Peter when writing this; was it simply the late hour or was it an intentional factual intervention?

Unknown Author

Reply to Karolina Babič (08.07.2022, 14:23): "..."

Good morning. Thank you. It's an intentional factual intervention that conveys that we were not born yesterday and that Maribor has its own history, which is a testament to why we are where we are. Narodni dom itself is 123 years old, not just 30. And it's still intact. These are the facts that also led to today's "scene", governmental or non-governmental. Whereby the once multicultural and tolerant Maribor was destroyed by the Austro-German occupier that was the first and only in the city's long history to dare execute genocide, ethnocide, and culturicide. I hope this will never happen again. Formalisms aside, it's us who suffer the consequences too. Because all of you others write about present situations, primarily about your own status. KIBLA is 26 years old, we were the ECoC ten years ago, and to me – unlike the other contemporary aspects – it was about the historical aspect.

*Ed. note.: "Unknown Author" is Peter.

2004

CONCERT CYCLE NOVI JAZZ (NEW JAZZ) IN NARODNI DOM

The concert cycle Novi Jazz in Narodni dom was created to offer the city events that are recognizable, interesting from a cultural and tourism perspective, and attractive for visitors from the broader (international) region. Special attention in the programme was given to exclusive projects and global or Slovenian premieres of musical pieces.

22. 5. 2005

PREMIERE OF PLAY CINCO IN MARINKO

A play coproduced by Narodni dom Maribor and Produkcija Oskar. Author Mate Matišič, directed by Branko Kraljevič, cast Vlado Novak and Konrad Pižorn.

2005

FEMI ANIKULAPO KUTI & THE POSITIVE FORCE AT FESTIVAL LENT

KAROLINA: New approaches and new contents in culture and art and new socio-cultural movements are mostly created on the independent scene and then, over years and decades, often gradually move to institutional culture, while the independent scene continues to plough new fields or sometimes even casts an offended glance after the lost child that wandered into mainstream. To illustrate, the critical perspective of the operations of public institute Kino Šiška in Ljubljana accuses the rock scene of having been institutionalized. How do you feel about this? Not necessarily about this particular case, but rather about this that the non-governmental, independent scene is a kind of incubator, an experimenter of new socio-cultural practices that are gradually being institutionalized and thereby change the systemic structure of society, that is, its institutional structure. Can the independent scene accept such an identity, the function of some kind of temporary wet nurse that later needs to “return” the child to mother state? I know I’m stretching this metaphor rather wide. I believe that this thesis is the greatest possible compliment to the independent scene. Or is it?

MARKO: Right, well. Theory is not really my thing ... but I feel the non-governmental/independent scene is much more than what you mentioned. If anything, I think that the role and importance of small NGOs, including amateur, is underestimated. Yet on the other hand, I can easily picture more permanent formats of cooperation between the two sectors also in terms of incubation and research that preserve the best of what both of them have to offer ... but now we’re getting into realpolitik phantasy. It’s not impossible, though. Provided there’s understanding and willingness on both sides to seek solutions “within the system”.

HANA: Our colleagues are leaving to join the economic sector, too. And yes, it’s very difficult to retain personnel, particularly in the marketing line, because it’s easy for them to get a job elsewhere with all the experience they gain in culture. In some way, us NGOs can perhaps be a springing board for young people because we often provide the first job experience, both through volunteerism and through other work formats. Personally, my challenge for the near future is to design the strategy of an institute in a way that it’s able to keep at least key personnel for a more long-term window, but at the same time, I think it’s important (maybe because I’m a teacher) to maintain the role of incubator, develop new ideas, and thereby introduce new young people into the culture sector.

KATJA: In some way, this is the natural process of organizations, things coming full circle: first, we’re NGOs, then we get rigid, we institutionalize, and then we search for the creative charge. What was that one by Nietzsche, @karolina, you’re probably going to know this one – first comes the child, then the camel, then the lion, and then back to the child ... (well, perhaps some of us always prefer to be just children and are scared of lions 😊). But it is interesting how Živa dvorišča came to be; the idea was born within the realm of Narodni dom/Festival Lent, because Goro and Marko and Gogo were looking

Karolina Babič

Great that you mentioned amateur culture, Marko. Yes, it’s rather unfair that we so often forget to mention it when we speak about the field of non-institutional culture.

Katja Beck Kos

Go on, Marko, give us some more here. What are those sustainable formats that you can easily picture? I really want to hear your insight.

Marko Brumen

From the perspective of working in a public institute, e.g. annual slots à la “annual exhibition” would certainly mean a lot; this way, amateur associations would know in advance when and how to do what, while the slots would be booked and not found ad hoc like some art of what’s possible. And don’t even get me started about better marketing for various singing schools and similar year-end productions.

Katja Beck Kos

Hana, I feel the same way; yes, we need to take care of stability, yes, of course, but we are also too quick to become too rigid and too similar to public institutes, and instead of creativity, we focus too much on securing funding and stability. It’s a bit schizophrenic. @hana, do you think that we would be more relaxingly creative in (stable) public institutes?

Hana Repše

I don’t know – it certainly is more stable. But I do believe in any case that people are usually more creative when we’re outside our comfort zone, but again, to each his own. :) It would be wonderful to have some open space for new contents, inclusive of legal, finance and advisory, and marketing support from a public institute. I think that, given our skillsets, creators always spend sooooo much time on this field of engagement because we pick up those skills primarily through experience ... Personally, I’d very much welcome having a support network of lawyers, finance experts, and PR people I could turn to for help, who would know how to help and guide me in solving problems with permits, “pre-funding”, and the like. :) In some ways, I find it neat that I have the freedom to create new contents because I’m more of a starter than someone who insists on continuity. Having multiyear contracts for regular projects would already mean the world to us. Standard practice now is that everything gets pushed back to the last moment year after year, again and again ... and when the clock hits two minutes to midnight, we always hear the old phrase “same as last year”.

2005

CONCERT OF YOUNG BANDS IN THE MINORITE CHURCH AT FESTIVAL LENT - BEGINNING OF MLADINA STAGE 2006-2019

The Mladina Stage was moved to Jazz Club Satchmo in 2011 because the Minorite Church was undergoing renovation. A year later, it was combined with the Creative Underground stage at Udarnik cinema and the combined stages returned to Jazz Club Satchmo a year later, in 2013, where they remained until 2019 when the Mladina Stage was hosted on the Small Stage in Narodni dom and celebrated the fifth anniversary of its cooperation with RH 202, the electro music radio show broadcast by radio VAL 202.



Otium, 2008

to connect street theatre with local capacities for a call for proposals that the Ministry of Culture had at the time. They put together the concept, applied with it to the Ministry of Culture and then ... then I got the description of the idea on a single A4 sheet and, with Goro at my side, began to elatedly discover a dimension of the city I had not known until then. And yes, the first producer of Živa dvorišča was an NGO from Ljubljana, Gledališče Ane Monro, which was possible at that time that predated the ECoC. And this is actually the system that would be worth pursuing in the cooperation between NGOs and public institutes: a) calls for proposals that promote experimentation and cooperation (just look at the number of international exchanges that are owed solely to Erasmus, and don't get me started on the community of Erasmus kids!), b) a public institute that not only loves to cooperate and recognizes the value of NGOs but also talks to them face to face!, and c) proactivity and creativity of NGO creators who develop an idea and bring it to life. So, yes, cultural policy quite often is the decisive factor!

URŠKA: Non-governmental organizations can have two functions; they can maintain the status quo in a certain field and prevent factual, absolutely necessary change (e.g. there are NGOs that are directly supported by governments to destabilize countries, etc. and are in fact already "institutionalized"), or they can be crucial for the survival of a certain idea, format, solidarity-based types of actions and habitation (remember what was happening to NGOs working in culture, environmental protection, working with refugees and asylum seekers under the previous government). Whenever either an NGO or some of its content becomes institutionalized, it is crucial to identify whether this content was not perhaps appropriated by a public institute. If that didn't happen, fine. But if this did happen, it is only normal and right that there's antagonism. When NGOs are created from the bottom up (which, again, should not be taken for granted), they are almost always the generator of more progressive and more inclusive types of relationships, processes, and contents.

KAROLINA: Urška, you're speaking about the exact same issue, which has two very different dimensions: if public institutes appropriate contents of NGOs, which makes these contents that NGOs, by having good contact with the field, recognized as a key need of the audience as part of s.c. basic services that the state and local communities provide to the public through public services, that's OK (providing that services are provided with the requisite quality and that the NGOs that developed these contents are not completely cut off and destroyed in this process). However, when appropriation happens with the aim of destroying the potential and transformative power of civil society, it makes it a political assassination of the democratic structure of society, as was the case in the last two years at the hands of the former government. But even the first option leaves a "big open wound", as the transfer of contents from the independent scene to public institutes, this mainstreaming, often leaves behind a socio-economic devastation of groups of people and independent organizations, who are left empty-handed in the long term after having invested a lot of hard work and creative engagement be-

Hana Repše

Urška, you're right; I too often take it for granted that the only possible NGO form should be bottom-up. :)

Hana Repše

I think that if persons who were drivers of these contents remain on the project, it can turn out well. This way, the contents preserve the right driver, stability, and their position to develop is a bit better. I think it's easier to develop the same content by working under a public institute, whereas the terms of a call for proposals often force NGOs to develop something new and they don't have proper room for good continuity and appropriate growth.

Hana Repše

It may well stay a wound, but we can also take it as a place with a better reference starting point for an NGO to repurpose itself and proceed with either a different story or some complementary story.

Marko Brumen

@karolina, do you have any good concrete example of this practice?

Karolina Babič

Yes, fab labs and co-working spaces across Slovenia are a good example; there are cases both in MB and LJ that have withered away or are about to, while different public development agencies and public institutions have incorporated these contents that were purely the product of "garage" development and EU funding was channelled to these public providers that took over these contents. On the one hand, it's OK that there are 3D printers in libraries, on the other hand, however, many freelancers and non-governmental people have been developing these programmes for decades and are now out of the picture when serious EU funding became available.

2006

ARCHIVE OF CONCERTS OF KONCERTNA POSLOVALNICA

Database containing the archive of concerts of Koncertna poslovalnica from 1946 until today, compiled at the 60th anniversary of Koncertna poslovalnica Maribor, was released in 2008 and is available at



25. 9. 2006

PREMIERE OF PERFORMANCE OD TIŠINE DO GLASBE

Performance produced by Narodni dom Maribor as part of Glasbeni September 2006 is original project of Jure Ivanušič and Marko Vezovišek.

2007

EXPERIENCE PARK AND CHILDREN'S LENT IN THE CITY PARK AT FESTIVAL LENT

Shows for children – Children's Lent moved to Vetrinjski dvor in 2014.

cause once their work is mainstreamed, they turn into completely non-competitive providers and are completely cut off from the market, if we use this metaphor. How should this phenomenon be tackled? After all, it's hard to define some kind of "protected fields" for the independent scene. Or is it?

URŠKA: Karolina, I don't think it's really about needing protected fields but rather about understanding what's happening in a certain (local) environment. There's a need to be receptive to what's happening and developing in grass-roots environments, where things grow from needs and wishes and are generally more authentic and more radical. And how to support these contents without them being devoured by bureaucracy, mainstream, or perhaps a public institute looking for new content for itself. Of course it's quite all right from time to time if some contents migrate to a public institute, but, as I said earlier, only if all the players in the local environment agree on that and no one is worse off because of it.

PETER: Maribor, as we have it, was the European Capital of Culture 2012 with partner towns Murska Sobota, Novo mesto, Ptuj, Slovenj Gradec, and Velenje. Connecting and unifying. With a plethora of sustainable dimensions that offered answers to and opened paths for our city. It appears that, after several years of hiatus, we've again become an open and cooperative community, and let's persist and continue on this path. Let the sole purpose of definitions be that we can discuss them.

There's no singularity or duality but rather "multipliality", even multipolarity, even if this is understood differently these days, a "multi-fulness" that, unlike emptiness or nothingness, reflects the nuances of local art, creativity in co-existence. Just like "public" and "non-governmental" cannot have unambiguous designations, it's also not possible to define "social" and "private" with formal documents, seeing that everything is intertwined not only in culture but in every field of our engagement. It's difficult for me to use metaphors because what we do is non-metaphorical and completely realistic and real. Here and now. In this time-space. There are as many questions about what happened until now as there are ideas, considerations about what's next. We still insist on openness and cooperation. And have lasted for 26 years.

KAROLINA: What about the people on the independent scene? Constantly in a rather precarious situation, they/we cast envious glances at those with indefinite term contracts in public institutes. Plenty of independent creators and producers in culture are looking and waiting for the moment when they can switch to a more stable work environment. What do you think, is this switching nothing but a loss for

Multikultivator

I was thinking of cases from culture where programmes were copied without involving the original creators ... There probably are cases, but I couldn't think of any.

*Ed. note: "Multikultivator" is Marko on a different computer.

Multikultivator

I wish chiefly for more broad-mindedness and spirit on the part of decision-makers to better involve these trailblazing, pioneer creatives into these processes. Cultural policy is and always will be nothing but words on paper – it is us, the people who actually pursue cultural policy. And we can either be formalistic bureaucrats without a mind of our own or creative producers who connect various potentials into something more. Let me go back for a moment to baseline: the formation of ND was certainly not inscribed into the foundations of cultural policy documents of the time – but there certainly was an idea, political will, a vision. Why is it that there's so much less of this today, obviously so – and if it does exist, it's stomping around like a bear among honeybees?

Unknown Author

Reply to Karolina Babič (08.07.2022, 14:24): "..."

2007

STAND-UP COMEDY IN NASKOV DVOREC AT FESTIVAL LENT (TODAY KNOWN AS STANDUPLENT)

Stand-up comedies moved to the courtyard of the restaurant Zlati lev in 2009 and to Vetrinjski dvor (formerly Naskov dvorec) in 2011.



Tadej Toš Live, 2020

2007

AT FESTIVAL LENT

Some of the artists who appeared at Festival Lent: Joe Zawinul; Maceo Parker, Living Colour.

the independent scene? Or perhaps crucial for public services that public institutes need to provide? In short, people working in culture develop and hone their skills on the independent scene, get sick of working precariously, and switch to a public institute the first chance they get. Is that so? What's the downside of this? Are there any upsides? Does it even make sense to theorize about that? We probably can't expect for freelancers to remain freelancers until the day they die purely on principle, or can we? And can public institutes develop their future personnel internally or is it better they recruit them from the independent scene? What do you think?

MARKO: Just like Peco said ... moving from one system to the other is normal, or at least should be normal, but I'm afraid that the switch from the public to the private sector is far less frequent, especially because of unstable working conditions and lower social security. Even though it would be very welcome in terms of expertise. Personally, I feel that "internally developed personnel" is quite a poor choice, at least in the creative part of cultural production, because the entire essence of diverse experience and different, new perspectives of production is lost if all we teach someone is to work like they've done in some institution "for a hundred years." On the other hand, provided there's enough funding, the managements of public institutes have plenty of options to work with external associates on a longer-term basis and provide them with essential content-related skills to create; meh, this practice is just as rare.

HANA: Leaving aside the credo of the "higher" goal of delivering cultural public good, I simply cannot avoid the consideration of practices from the commercial sector that we, the NGOs don't apply enough in a way. It's true that precarity is very present in culture, types of employment are not stable, an 8-hour work day is unheard of. Yet in some way, it's always about the reconsideration of supply and demand and I feel it's very important in this game in culture also to respect the work and the worker, however, both often get lost, including when it comes to payment. Either because precarious workers themselves don't know how to set a price, because there's constant haggling involved here as well – even though it would be much simpler and more transparent for both sides if there were a fee list that would protect project/precarious workers. The bigger problem I see in this regard relates to the Municipality of Maribor and calls for proposals. Yet, with the (not really so) broad range of options, it's ultimately up to the individual to decide. I think that it shouldn't become standard practice for someone to switch to a public institute at some point and thereby buy themselves peace based on the stripes earned on previous jobs. I think it's more important to strengthen NGO structures so that NGOs could provide similar stability. But both need to do what we do by keeping in mind that we need **young blood** if we want the scene to stay alive.

Karolina Babič

@hana, you're again going back in part to what we discussed when we met for drinks: what about the young people? How to motivate them to work in non-governmental organizations, motivate them for the independent scene? Young people probably have a vastly different frame of mind and values and therefore don't think about the differences between working in the independent scene and in public institutes in the same way. Or do they? And there's plenty of digital nomads among young people; how to bring them into working in culture then, either institutional or non-institutional?

Hana Repše

Young people probably need to be recognized also through the prism of their interests ... Over the past few years that we've been doing internships for high school students, we've encountered high school students who'd prefer working with us, but they still need money, which is why they rather spend their summers tending bar than in culture. I think that volunteerism in culture shouldn't be taken for granted. I think we're the ones who should focus on the young and their needs more. It's true they need experience, but they also need money, especially high school and university students who don't have other social transfers.

29. 9. 2007

PREMIERE OF PLAY TAŠČA MI JE C...

A play coproduced
by Narodni dom
Maribor and Adeo
film. Author Georges
Feydeau, directed
by Janja Glogovac.

8. 11. 2007

PREMIERE OF PLAY ALI SE RESNICA IZPLAČA?

A play by Metka
Trdin, produced
by Narodni dom
Maribor.

KATJA: Allow me this short digression: I'm actually taking my annual vacation right now and I'm still doing this interview ;), not that I take this interview as work ... Would I if I had a job in a public institute? Probably. I've asked myself many times over my more than 20 years of working in culture (with nearly 20 years of service and 0 days of employment in the public sector) whether it wouldn't be easier to simply take a job in a public institute and not have to worry about who's putting money in my account every month and whether there will be any money next month at all. And I always decided to walk my own way. This is why I think that switching comes down to personal characteristics and value systems of individuals, who wish to move to more solid systems because it's easier for them to work there, easier to pursue their mission, easier to make their visions come to life. We need both! And despite the fact that we miss the people we worked with, lived with, developed contents with, I'm talking about "personnel" leaving for public institutes, very very much and it's not really possible to fully replace them, it is these very people who represent an important point of entry and contact between public institutes and NGOs because they understand processes of both NGOs and public institutes. They're very important for the system as presently structured! And now we come to perhaps the biggest mistake in the perspective of both NGOs and public institutes: we're all in the cultural sector, we're all in the same boat, which means that we have more common interests than it may appear. Wouldn't it be better to make a joint stand to increase the budget on a sector-wide level compared to e.g. the Ministry of Defence?

URŠKA: It's quite likely that some of it depends on the individual's value system, while some of it depends on circumstances that life gets them into and that force them to make a certain decision.

I'd highlight two things: the rigidity of operation of public administration or some public institutes can make a person quite socially disengaged and makes them see insurmountable obstacles in everything and anything. At the same time, I'm also seeing that there's not much interest in Maribor in working for non-governmental organizations. The latter is most likely connected also to working conditions we mentioned earlier and the pay in this business.

PETER: Multimedijnski center KIBLA was founded on 4 July 1996 and is celebrating its 26th birthday. In the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia this day was celebrated as Fighters' Day. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia met on this date in 1941 in Belgrade and called for a country-wide people's uprising. The day was made into a public holiday on 26 June 1956. In Slovenia the day is no longer celebrated as a holiday since 1991. The environment is broader than what our eye can see. Understanding differences, resources of the city, and the capabilities of us or anyone else who's coming is identical to accepting similarities in the cultural

Karolina Babič

@katja but this is probably not the exact same boat, is it? I mean, both NGOs and public institutes experience serious problems in their work because culture is constantly pushed to the margins of public policies, yet the problems of one and the other are very different. Do you see it as a problem that e.g. employees of a public institute do not understand the problems of NGOs, while freelancers and employees of NGOs do not understand that it's not all rosy in the world of public institutes? :)

Katja Beck Kos

In any case, it's better for the sector to have a united front at least towards its funding entities. This necessarily leads to better information flow, communication, and as a result, we all have a better understanding of challenges and advantages and, last but not least, the role the other plays. Perhaps the greatest challenge here, one that answers some the challenges highlighted earlier, is what's the role of public institutes and the role of NGOs/independent cultural workers? Having these clearly defined would perhaps prevent improper/erroneous appropriation of contents by public institutes, etc. in the sense that the public institute would provide premises and marketing, while NGOs would develop quality contents.

Hana Repše

I think this is one of the key problems. If we could provide regular wages – at least minimum, I believe that more people would opt for cooperating. But how can this be done? This brings us back again to the feeling of stability.

Marko Brumen

I don't understand the relevance of this. Peco?

Karolina Babič

This sentence gives our conversation an interesting context. All in all, it shows that you, Peter, have taken the side of "metadiscourse" in this group conversation.

Unknown Author

Reply to Karolina Babič (08.07.2022, 14:24): "..."
Yes. To provide historical perspective.

20. 1. 2008

FIRST POST-SHOW WORKSHOPS AFTER A PLAY FOR CHILDREN UNDER THE KEKEC SEASON PROGRAMME

Following the play for children Jajce under the Kekec season programme, creative workshops for children were held in cooperation of Zavod MARS Maribor (Institute MARS Maribor) that provided informal cultural education. The workshops were based on the play and made both children and their parents equally excited. In the next few years, they became an indispensable part of any theatre play or concert for children as well as other events held as part of Kulturni dnevnik (Cultural Diary).



Workshops, 2019

7. 5. 2008

PREMIERE OF PLAY BONTON

A play produced by Narodni dom Maribor. Directed by Matjaž Latin, cast Dunja Zupanec and Tomaž Gubenšek.

life of Maribor as it is. We know one another and we're doing different programmes, but what's most important is that we cooperate.

KAROLINA: What about the issue of space? In terms of public cultural infrastructure and other aspects of space requirements for culture and art? Marko, you work in this intersection between those who look for premises and those who manage premises. What have you noticed regarding premises, the need for premises on the one side and capacities on the other? Urška, your organization uses public cultural infrastructure and has lost public cultural infrastructure as well; you're a case study of both good and not so good cooperation between NGOs and public institutes in terms of space, I think. Or am I wrong? Hana, what about your experience. And Peter, Kibla is able to meet a part of its needs for premises rather well by cooperating with a public institute, with Narodni dom to be specific; as for the remaining part, you need to rely on renting in the open market, right?

URŠKA: Karolina, it seems to me that the **problem of space** is the result of a broader problem the public space available for non-profit contents is shrinking, which is characteristic of capitalist processes that are happening in cities. Under its current mayorship, Maribor is losing space available for free-of-charge socializing and non-institutional cultural engagement. We're also witnessing a fundamental lack of understanding by the municipality of the mission of non-governmental organizations, as they are being regarded for the most part only as amateur, hobby associations rather than professional organizations that operate on a non-profit basis. At Cultural Centre Pekarna, our organization is involved in a rather complex and continuous process of balancing relationships between the municipality as the owner of buildings, the public institute as the technical manager of buildings, and non-governmental organizations, collectives, and the self-employed as autonomous programme-based users. This process is defined with the Governance Model of CC Pekarna that was created in 2010 at **the international conference New Times New Models** and approved by the City Council of the Municipality of Maribor. It was the first model of its kind in Slovenia and clearly defined the management of premises such as CC Pekarna and is, in theory, an excellent model of cooperation between the municipality, the public institute, and NGOs. However, the last two years have proven that **no matter how good a model is, it can still fail if the public institute and/or the Municipality of Maribor get new management that has (have) their own agenda and simply choose to ignore existing documents or interpret them as they please.**

Our presence in Vetrinjski dvor is a completely different story; it's more than clear that Narodni dom understands the role and mission NGOs have in society and provides them with extensive support.

Unknown Author

Reply to Marko Brumen (05.07.2022, 10:49): "..."

We cooperate with everyone, both with public institutes and NGOs, as well as with corporates, the state, the municipality, etc., which I feel is important because it's clear from all that's been written that personnel flow runs from NGOs into all directions, but even when they work elsewhere, you, Marko, in ND for example, we still cooperate. Or with anyone, anywhere.

Hana Repše

Another problem with space in Maribor is its multipurpose character. It's true that ND understands and facilitates activities in VTR (Vetrinjski dvor) – but I think that VTR tends to get overcrowded sometimes and, at the same time, doesn't have a clear vision of the type of tenants it wishes to have there. While it's true that we all have the chance to cooperate, there's no permanent audience that would attend diverse events. Every organization brings something else to the table. However, in practice, there are major advantages of VTR/ND; their tech equipment that we can borrow from ND and the marketing of contents in VTR, even though there may still be some room for improvement here.

Urška Breznik

Perhaps Marko could share a bit more given the fact that he was involved. :)

Hana Repše

I fully agree with everything you wrote. I think that a major problem is the lack of understanding of the pulse of the city and the lives of people and the complete lack of a vision for the city that would include cultural activities as an important element of the city's essence.

2008

NA FESTIVALU LENT

Na Festivalu Lent med drugim:
Buckwheat
Zydeco; Omara
Portundo
»Gracias«.

2008

FIRST ART CAMP IN THE MARIBOR CITY PARK

Art Camp is a stand-alone culture and education family festival held during Festival Lent and throughout the summer on weekends. Initially (as part of the Experience Park), Art Camp hosted creative workshops, shows, and various cultural adventures during Festival Lent and provided a platform for various talents, artists, and institutions from different fields. In 2014, Art Camp contents were extended throughout the entire summer under the name PoLentni or Poletni (AfterLent or Summer) Art Camp. Art Camp is designated as a sustainable programme of ECoC Maribor 2012.



Art Camp, 2019

PETER: KIBLA's homebase is located in Narodni dom that was the only one willing to open its door for us when we were looking for premises in 1995. We're eternally thankful for that. Our community can serve as an example of symbiosis, one that has been going on for 26 years now. It has been, it is, and it will be a learning and instructive journey. There was no need for excessive repetition. We got it done, even if the intonation and dance steps were sometimes different. Through reciprocal respect of work and activity. With help and support. Simple, sometimes more, sometimes less. Just like in life and with life. This is why these 30 years are also our 30 years, and our 26 years are also their 26 years. Despite the 4-year difference, they are and we are. Godspeed. Aside from premises in Narodni dom, we rent the KIBLA-PORTAL premises at Valvasorjeva ulica 40 in Studenci, where we've had the largest space in Slovenia dedicated to modern art since 2012. We have mostly Aleksandra Kostič and Dejan Pestotnik to thank for that. Spanning over 2.000 m² of area, the space hosted over the last ten years numerous solo and group exhibitions, new-media and music festivals, and audio-visual and educational events, international conferences and symposiums, presentations, and lectures. Until 13 July 2022, we're hosting Majski salon (May Salon), the annual exhibition of Zveza društev slovenskih likovnih umetnikov (Association of Societies of Slovenian Fine Artists – ZDSLJU) that combines 218 artists with over 600 pieces of art under the title Modra črta – Od renesanse do novih medijev (Blue Line – From Renaissance to New Media) and is the largest exhibition of all times in Slovenia, including in historical terms: 113 years have passed since the 1st fine art salon was held in Maribor in 1909. This year, we're celebrating the 10th anniversary of this space. Since 2020, it's also been the base of KIBLA2LAB that is part of Mreža centrov raziskovalne umetnosti in kulture RUK (Network of Centres of Research Art and Culture RUK), in which we cooperate with the Public Institute Delavski dom Trbovlje and Culture and Education Society PiNA from Koper.

MARKO: I'd rather not even comment on that because ... there are enough premises. What's missing is "simply" the understanding of their function, potential, and willingness to cooperate with culture in using these premises in a flexible, open manner. Just a bit of imagination, a bit of vision on the part of bureaucrats. Empty shops on Koroška cesta, empty lots in the former MTT, complete and thereby even more shameful lack of regulated relationships and premises in CC Pekarna, vacant spaces in Karantena, the rise and fall of Tkalka, the agony of ownership of the Casino or Grand Café at Glavni trg, the mysterious placement of the building on Orožna 7, the sale of the donated building on Ruška cesta, the sale of Jeraj's studio, the failed renovation of buildings dedicated to culture, all of them of poor quality ... all of these are reflections of a lack of imagination and will, the incapacity to create proper conditions

FIRST FESTIVAL MARIBOR

In 2008, Glasbeni september was renamed Festival Maribor, which built a strong reputation among local and foreign classical music enthusiasts. The festival is successful in catering both to the most demanding music connoisseurs as well as those who are just taking their first steps into the world of classical music. Starting in 2014, the festival had a co-production relationship with Narodni dom Maribor. Its concerts were shaped for a number of years by Australian violinist, composer, and conductor Richard Tognetti. Between 2010 and 2016, Festival Maribor operated as a stand-alone organization under the name Glasbeno društvo Festival Maribor (Musical Society Festival Maribor). In 2016, cellist and conductor Nicolas Alstaedt joined the team as the head of the festival ensemble and resident musician. Until and including 2015, the festival was led by Brigita Pavlič, whereas Barbara Švrljuga Hergovich took over as director in 2016. Also in 2016, the festival introduced a new line to its festival programme – Festival Maribor med otroki (Festival Maribor Among Children), which is intended for children and families. As of 2017, Festival Maribor is again part of Koncertna poslovalnica of Narodni dom. It is designated as a sustainable programme of ECoC Maribor 2012.



Festival Maribor opening concert, Haydn Philharmonic, 2019

for work, even transitional. Yet, looking at Kibla and Narodni dom, Vetrinjski dvor, Karantena, we see that different modes of use of property are possible, reasonable, economical. Why isn't there more of that then?

Just to clarify a few things regarding the *New Times New Models* conference: I have mixed feelings about it, even though I was part of the team and one of the players. Why? Because the conference was just one of the highlights of a process that lasted several years (!) and involved massively tiresome and, until that point, fruitless conversations with the Office of Culture of the Municipality of Maribor about future arrangements and renovation of CC Pekarna. At the same time, this conference was nothing but a gimmick, a sideshow really, a collateral achievement; a kind of format that municipal authorities could understand and that catered to them, where we discussed how to further confirm, examine some solutions of the CC Pekarna co-management model. The same solutions that we had developed before the conference anyway at community workshops that were organized within the project much earlier and based on long-ago obtained knowledge about the pile of unfounded fears and reservations of the Office of Culture of the Municipality of Maribor on what to do with this "property" in which they saw no content. Anyhow, what we did with the conference was just what some ideal Office of Culture, one that understands its role, would need to do. And after we did the homework instead of the owner and found solutions for how to use CC Pekarna that were to the owner's AND the users' liking, someone, deep within municipal authorities, put this document, which was approved by the city council, on the bottom of the file in the drawer and made sure that it never saw the light of day again. I wonder why?

KAROLINA: Yes, on the one hand, there's cooperation relationships between NGOs and public institute Narodni dom that are positive for the most part (even though there's most likely room for improvement here as well), while on the other hand, there's the story about unsuccessful communication and failure to honour agreements between the municipality, public institute, and non-governmental and independent cultural workers in the CC Pekarna case. And we have the nascent Rotovž Centre, where we would wish for prolific cooperation between NGOs and public institutes in the governance of this new centre. Cooperation between institutional and non-institutional culture in this new centre will probably show how much and what we have learned on the Maribor cultural scene (and in political circles) over the last decades.

Multikultivator

New Times New Models (NTNM) was a project of Pekarna Magdalenske mreže in cooperation with the European network TEH that was financially supported by the European Cultural Foundation. *New Times New Models* investigated models of practices in the development of independent cultural centres, focusing on:

- a) Specific self-governance models
- b) Relationships with regulatory bodies and the private sector with the aim of improving these relationships to improve cultural development in Europe.

This was the basis or baseline to develop a governance model for CC Pekarna that the Municipality of Maribor approved in 2010 and that remains undelivered to this day.

Pekarna Magdalenske mreže organized the international conference NTMM in January 2010 and was planning to hold further conferences on this topic. A blog was created and a book was published.

2008

KULTURNO-IZOBRAŽEVALNO SREDIŠČE (CULTURE AND EDUCATION CENTRE) AND KULTURNI DNEVNIK (CULTURAL DIARY)

Kulturno-izobraževalno središče (KIS) was the only project dealing with cultural activation of the youth when Maribor made its European Capital of Culture application. It became a cultural project of distinct quality, covering independent and self-contained projects in terms of contents: Kulturni dnevnik, Čitalnica na jasi (Reading Room on the Glade), Art Camp, and Šolska umetnost mladih (School Art of the Youth). KIS connects programmes of various cultural institutions into a joint event programme called Kulturni dnevnik. The aim of Kulturni dnevnik is to bring young viewers into contact with all types of cultural institutions and develop young visitors into active participants in the region's cultural scene. It includes various concerts, theatre and puppet shows, opera, ballet, dance and movie shows, workshops at the gallery, museum and the library, and traditional events. In the 2020/2021 season, Kulturni dnevnik was attended by 1214 children from 14 primary schools. It is designated as a sustainable programme of ECoC Maribor 2012.



Cultural Diary, 2019

PETER: By the way, seeing that you mentioned Rotovž Centre that will house Umetnostna galerija Maribor (Maribor Art Gallery – UGM) as well; we got “fun” feedback from the Office of Culture and Youth when Kibla applied for co-financing of Majski salon: “Standing out is the item rental of specific locations where the reported cost is extremely high and cannot be covered from the call for project proposals. The call for project proposals is aimed primarily at and gives priority to the production of artworks and/or the organization of exhibitions and does not anticipate to a major extent to cover costs of infrastructure and/or depreciation.” First of all, these phrases are nowhere to be found in the text of the call for proposals, which refers to “justified co-financing costs”, and second, I hereby ask the decision-makers what are the costs of premises and costs of infrastructure and depreciation that the Municipality of Maribor pays for UGM on a monthly and annual level, and the costs of services. Someone who uses such phrases to reply to a realistic cost sheet for Majski salon, which obviously includes all other costs, has no clue either about the art production by NGOs or about the prices we have to pay, let alone about the actual costs of the overall project or the largest exhibition in Maribor since forever that are indicated in the project proposal. Let me give you another detail; there are 213 artists taking part in this year’s Venice Biennale, the 59th International Art Exhibition, and there are 218 artists taking part in ZDSLU’s Majski salon 2022. This is an international exhibition as well and the most important overview of Slovenian fine and visual art in the last few years, and we should be honoured that it’s taking place in Maribor. The exhibition should be supported without asking a single question and they should facilitate that it is extended at least until mid-September when the school year starts, but this won’t be possible because of the cost aspect. **Maribor’s narrowness and narrow-mindedness kills.**

KAROLINA: These very dilemmas about spatial requirements for culture and art that we have arrived at when our conversation is drawing to a close are a telling depiction of the massive gap between institutional and non-institutional culture that we have detailed here. Funders that don’t understand the difference between baseline criteria for producers from this and the other side and the needs arising therefrom disrupt both this and the other side and the option of fruitful cooperation between the two on top. In closing, I would like to reiterate my wish for the future in that, in the case of Rotovž (and others as well, let’s say CC Pekarna), we become better at using the opportunities that the options of co-using spaces of public cultural infrastructure offer as “settings” for new cooperation and co-creation by public, private, non-governmental, and other creators of our cultural and broader social life.

Thank you, dear counterparts, co-creators, and co-chroniclers of these ponderings. Katja, Hana, Urška, Peter, and Marko, thank you for this open, lucid, and lively debate. See you around!

Multikultivator

Yes, I completely agree, but ... from a broader historical perspective, it’s always been this way, right? 😊
I’m always nothing short of amazed by Kibla’s persistence in navigating the mazes of call and cultural bureaucracy; it’s admirable, but on the other hand, I miss this clear, balanced, and loud argumentation when present and future cultural policies are being discussed. I admit that the engaged position of Pekarna Magdalenske mreže is much closer to my mindset and I see that much has changed because of it in Maribor’s landscape, even if it did happen later than we would have wanted.
Yet and still ... it’s moving.

4. 9. 2008

**CAMERATA SALZBURG,
RICHARD TOGNETTI, CONDUCTOR
AND VIOLIN**

Opening concert
of the first Festival
Maribor.

2009

**LAUNCH OF WORK AND
PROGRAMMES FOR THE PROJECT
MARIBOR 2012 – EUROPEAN CAPITAL
OF CULTURE MARIBOR 2012**

Acting on the initiative of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia, KID KIBLA prepared the concept of ECoC Maribor 2012 in November 2005. Activities of Narodni dom Maribor played a vital part in the city of Maribor being awarded this title. In 2009, Narodni dom Maribor and the Municipality of Maribor signed the Agreement on the financing of activities to prepare and implement the project Maribor 2012 – European Capital of Culture. Narodni dom Maribor carried out tasks needed to prepare and implement the project until 31 July 2010. These tasks were then fully taken over by the newly-founded public institute Maribor 2012. Since 2014, Narodni dom Maribor is the manager of the ECoC Maribor 2012 legacy contents and brand.

Our journey took us through three wonderful decades. It was funny, hilarious, actually, it was rich, crazy, out of this world. It could be grim and worrisome at times, yet always redeeming, filled with inspiration and, last but certainly not least, very successful. These 30 years have shaped us, made us stronger, and taught us plenty. The main lesson for me personally was that changes are the only constant in our everyday lives. But if these changes hurt culture, which is the cornerstone of existence of every nation, we simply cannot accept them. See, we humans are funny creatures – only in the absence of culture do we realize how important it is.

*Alenka Klemenčič,
member of Narodni dom Maribor staff since it was founded;
first business secretary of Narodni dom Maribor and producer
of International CIOFF® Folklore Festival Folkart.*

Many memories of mine are connected to Narodni dom: the first concerts of the symphony orchestra I heard as a child, unforgettable high school moments at rock and jazz concerts as part of Festival Lent, after-parties at Minoriti, occasional, and to this day the first real concerts I played as a soloist or member of the chamber group as part of the Music Artists Salon, first appearances with the Symphony Orchestra – the Maribor Philharmonic Orchestra, appearances with world-class musicians at Festival Maribor, and I could go on and on.

I'm thankful for all the magical moments and the wonderful partnership we share in our joint projects. Cheers!

*Nikolaj Sajko,
cellist, programme director of the Carpe Artem cycle, member of the
Symphony Orchestra of the Slovenian National Theatre Maribor*

2009–2012

**ČITALNICA NA JASI (READING ROOM
ON THE GLADE) IN THE
MARIBOR CITY PARK**

Čitalnica na jasi was one of KIS's programmes designed to promote books and book-related activities. A diverse range of literature was made available between May and September to visitors of all ages in the Maribor City Park. Fairy tale hours held by the Maribor Library were very well received as well. Čitalnica na jasi kept its name until 2012, when the programme was split into various formats and integrated into the activities of Art Camp and Vilinsko mesto (Elven Town) that commonly take place in Vetrinjski dvor.



Reading beach, 2018

2009

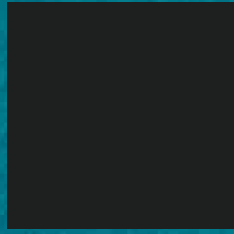
**FESTIVAL ŠOLSKE KULTURNE
PRODUKCIJE (FESTIVAL OF SCHOOL
ART PRODUCTIONS) AND ŠOLSKA
UMETNOST MLADIH (SCHOOL ART OF**

One of the programmes of Kulturno-izobraževalno središče (Culture and Education Centre) was dedicated to presenting school productions to the broader public. The programme included chiefly theatre, dance, and music shows.

3

Gate

TO MEMORIES





The City

AS A SETTING

JERNEJA FERLEŽ

I read that in the middle of the century before last, someone left a basket with a newborn baby at the front door of a house in the old part of the city, right next to the main road. I look up the address that the old house number translates to today, and head out there. By the way, it's rather close to Narodni dom but that wasn't around yet back then. I find the location; I'm looking at it and try to picture what it was like. The scene where a child was abandoned. Even though this true story that happened long ago has nothing to do with me personally, I'm touched by it and it gets my mind racing. About how the street looked like, about the person who laid the basket down on the steps – probably the same steps I see in front of the house. About the child, about the people who found it. Did it cry? About the weather that day. About myself. About my father, who was left behind by his mother in some place too when he was just a baby. About the shift in time that puts both events into context. About the contexts of today. About the children of today that we leave behind in a different way. Almost every time I pass the scene of this long-ago abandonment, a new thought pops into my head, sometimes mixing

with the haste that steers me toward another point in the city, yet the scene of abandonment of a child always crosses my path at least a little.

The curbs they replaced on the city park promenade bring back a picture from my childhood. Pops is carrying wafers, we both nibble on them while we walk. To get closer, I step on the curb and keep walking on it down the entire length of the promenade. I'm taller and it makes me feel older. When you're a child, it feels good to be feeling older. We nibble on the wafers, I grab him under the arm, just like I've seen my mom do. That makes me feel even more grown up. But – where is mom? She's probably where she usually is when pops and I have the time to wander up and down the promenade – she's on call.

Second picture. My pops is taking me to the pharmacy Pri gradu. We ring the bell, there's a small hanging bell on the locked door. A round bump in a wooden casing. A round eye appears on the other side of the round peephole. I know it's my mom's. She opens the door and hugs me. I don't

know how I know this, but I remember she felt bad that she was on call again and we were alone again. I remember being proud that my mom is the on-call pharmacist. I remember that she later took up her studies and then went to work in a school so she could get holidays and weekends off. So she wouldn't feel bad when we came ringing the bell and she would be looking through the peephole and not be able to stop herself from opening the door and giving me a hug.

I meet a friend of mine on the corner opposite the bus station. She takes me to Melje. We have no plan; we just go for it. She shows me where she used to live, the house is gone, replaced by a multi-lane road and the parking lot of a supermarket chain store. She tells me who used to live in this house and that house, where the store was, what one could buy there. She remembers what she saw through her window. She takes me to a place in the back and shows me where the place where the pool used to be. I had no idea that there ever was a pool there. She tells me about swimming in the pool. A bit up the road, she shows me a small garden, a

2009

AT FESTIVAL LENT

Some of the artists who appeared at Festival Lent: Solomon Burke; Keziah Jones.

10. 10. 2009

PREMIERE OF PLAY SVOBODNI ZAKON

This comedy produced by Narodni dom Maribor has had more than one hundred reruns and was awarded the Žlahtna komedija prize by vote of the audience at Dnevi komedije 2010 (Comedy Days), while Tadej Toš was awarded the title of best comedian by vote of the expert jury at Dnevi komedije 2010. Directed by Samo M. Strelec, cast Nataša Tič Ralijan and Tadej Toš.



100th showing of play Svobodni zakon, 2012

2009

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The Municipality of Maribor and Narodni dom Maribor sign the Agreement on programme management of public cultural infrastructure for the following buildings: Karantena, Narodni dom, Water Tower, Judgement Tower, and Union Hall. By way of this agreement, the Municipality of Maribor authorized Narodni dom Maribor to carry out programme and organizational tasks associated with the management of these buildings.

patch she used to visit with the lady who babysat her and who cultivated this speck of land. She remembers what used to grow in the garden. We head up a small hill – this is where her baby sister used to ride her bike. There's a factory, the primal cause of all feelings. The reason we're walking around, so to speak. I'm listening to her, trying to see the picture, imagining them how they splash around the pool, spin the wheels and buy bread rolls while I'm walking on the promenade curb about two kilometres away and watch the eye looking back at me with a guilty conscience through the pharmacy peephole. She tells me she remembers what I was like as a child and I tell her how I remember her. All memories are connected to a specific place. To the setting of the action. Visiting this particular place, even though it is quite different now, triggers the most vivid memories. At a certain point in time, the snapshots of our memories spill over into the spirit of time through the eyes of a child. Her memories spill over into my memories. They attach to the images of a construction company that used to stand in the same environment. Time and time again, I try to imagine it while looking at the space that has changed completely. It was transformed by the roads that runs through to faraway places, toward the north and the south. My friend, a native of this part of the city, remembers the buildings, but not the company. She wasn't told these stories.

I'm giving a lecture about the origin of the café and the events that have left a mark on it in history. I list quite a few of them when a lady in the audience speaks up and says: excuse me, you forgot a very important one. And names an event from

Jančar's novel. She gets me all confused, this lady does, because I'm talking about events that actually happened. People really did construct this building, someone designed it, a real person. Someone, again a real person, rented the café and ran a business in it. Then others came along, took off the sign with the name the café was called until then and put up a new sign. Tenants came and went. Real tenants that you can find at the Pobrežje cemetery today, provided their graves haven't been forgotten. Or unless they're buried somewhere else. You just can't equate an event from a novel to document-based facts. He didn't really sit here. He sat here in the writer's thoughts. Sure, sure, but the writer's thoughts, before they were given a boost by his imagination and his talent, drank from the atmosphere of this place, which he probably knew. Either personally or through someone who told him about it. He envisaged it as one of the settings of the broader story. This is a place of action. The setting of the novel. I switch to the image of the same place as described by another friend of mine. On their way back from the market, her grandmother always took her to this place for cake. Her mother used to spend time here with her friends, they were smoking so much, them and the other guests, they could hardly see one another through all the smoke. I see them despite having never actually seen them. I see my friend and me in the same place – in one of my most movie-like memories. We turn off the alarm, we're wearing hats and we have a flashlight. We can't turn on the light and it's cold. All of this makes us look like burglars. Burglars who break into a place to shine a light on display boards and see the exhibition. Cultural guerrilla.



The thirtieth anniversary of Narodni dom brings back memories of numerous exceptional and unforgettable concerts, mostly classical and jazz music. I will always remember them: Lalo Schifrin, Valery Gergiev, Krzysztof Penderecki, Mischa Maisky, Igor Oistrakh, Dubravka Tomšič Srebotnjak, Marjana Lipovšek, Stephane Grappelli, Paquito D'Rivera, Richard Galliano, and numerous other world-class musicians.

The people of Maribor are sincerely grateful to programme curators and organizers for the musical pleasures brought by global artists that they host in Maribor.

Congratulations on your first thirty and best wishes going forward!

*Primož Premzl,
Primož Premzl Art Cabinet*

2010

ŽIVA DVORIŠČA (LIVE COURTYARDS)
AT FESTIVAL LENT

Živa dvorišča first came to life as a part of Ana Desetnica at Festival Lent and later established themselves as a stand-alone permanent programme that was created based on a series of initiatives (by Ana Monro Theatre, the book *Mariborska dvorišča* (Courtyards of Maribor) by Jerneja Ferlež and a movie shot by Bojan Labović based on the book) and in cooperation with Društvo Hiša!. The programme Živa dvorišča revives the courtyards and streets in the city core by inviting various cultural creators and involving the citizens. In terms of content, the programme combines theatre plays, spatial installations, workshops, and unusual events. A part of the programme of Živa dvorišča was integrated into ECoC Maribor 2012 and remains a sustainable programme of ECoC Maribor 2012.



We, the children of socialism from our backyard, 2020

Here, I recall, is where they read the votes of the jury that graded the best group costumes after the carnival procession. How we snuggled together, all of us more or less in costume. How we waited for them to call our names. Here is where we screamed that he's done a few decades later, with helicopters flying over our heads. It gets loud, merry, and sweet-smelling here every November 11th and quiet every November 12th – the draws of the broom and the wheels of the trash cart are pretty much all you can hear. The smell is still there. By the way, smell is an excellent memory trigger. In a span of a few years, workers occupy this place with a decisive step to read their strike demands out loud. On New Year's Eve, this is where firecrackers go off, fireworks light up the city, and the song loses more and more of its tune. Midnight kisses are longer than others. And they smell differently. Right here, in this place. What would happen if fireworks went off at the same time when helicopters were circling over the demonstrations? Would the setting handle such a mixture of genres? It doesn't have to, they never happened at the same time, we've never witnessed such a cacophony.

My memories, memories of other people, stories and snapshots from readings, they all jostle and accompany every move through the city. This is where Živa dvorišča staged a magical theatre play – how we fought to see it. The courtyard is cute and small, and there were many of us, as one does during Lent. This is where I saw a movie with someone, over there, I held hands with someone else, this is where I saw a puppet show with my firstborn, over there, I was buying lettuce, this is where my mom

bought me a bun and a frankfurter. This is where I was in dire need of a toilet. This is the balcony that Vrišer, as a child, watched Maister on, as an adult. Over there, Milli and a friend had their photos taken. This is where we awaited the beginning of the capital of culture. It was freezing. Over there, we queued up for French fries with mayonnaise and a toothpick. In this very place, just a hundred years ago, stood a horse stable and a pigsty, and a smithy and a farrier's shed out back in the courtyard. The horseshoe imprint remained in an unusual place. This is where my mother took me for classical music concerts. A classmate, who later became a violinist, sat in front of me. All that I took away is some feeling for rhythm and the sound of words, if that. This is where the brothers were playing tennis when the wife of one of them was giving birth on the other side of the city, in another important setting. This is where I listened to a concert – I don't know whether those on stage were actually jumping or whether this is just what they're called. I certainly know that I had warm feelings at the time for someone who was a punker and worked at a factory. That was where we danced, that was where we had frog legs, that was where my daughter and I lifted a stone and were looking how the dirt under it came to life. This is where I caught the scent of the linden tree, which still reminds me of love in May. This is where she was yelling at me from the other side of the street. This is where we read the paper together every morning in utter silence. The images come and go when I move around town, when I go to buy bread, when I'm rushing to work, when I go pretty much anywhere. Every piece is a setting, every piece is a starting point for a feeling, thought,

memory. If a place has a smell, it makes the memory even stronger.

Most settings and most memories are personal. Or – while settings can be public, there's many of them, but whatever extends beyond their materiality, that's personal. Personal feelings and memories give them dimension, turning them from a flat image or hollow space into a setting. Without this, they're simply material facts. Once they're filled with a person's experience, they get the potential to become a place, a setting. To transform into a spatial framework of memory. This is the difference hidden in the difficult to translate and small, yet essential distinction between the meaning of the English words space and place that are part of all anthropological definitions and discussions about space. While the former denotes the concept of space as a material fact, the latter denotes a person's experience, feelings, and meanings. They are translated into Slovenian as *prostor* and *kraj*, but in everyday use, the word *prostor* in Slovenian often encapsulates both meanings. Space is simply there, urban space, naturally, is there because it was shaped by humans. But it is not until humans populate it with experiences and becomes aware of it as such does it get its meaning. At first, for the individual. Then, through a set of personal experiences, agreements on shared use, and expert decisions made by various stakeholders, the meaning of places for the community is developed. Parallel to this, attachment to space and spatial identity are developed as well. A space, without having this purpose in and of itself – this could only be had by those who

2010

AT FESTIVAL LENT

Some of the artists who appeared at Festival Lent: James Blood Ulmer (returning in 2021); Fred Wesley; Shibusu Shirazu Orchestra; Matt Bianco.

2011

STREET FOOD FESTIVAL SLADOLENT AT FESTIVAL LENT

The first event of its kind in Slovenia, Sladolent's exquisite food, cooks, and chefs made it an integral part of Festival Lent's creative and multicultural offering. In celebration of the first Sladolent show under the domed tent located at Maribor's Benetke, which was held as part of ECoC Maribor 2012, world-class Slovenian chefs created 14 new Slovenian dishes, ready to be consumed as street food. Sladolent then moved next to the Water Tower and remained a festival staple all the way until the epidemic.

2011

ELECTRO MUSIC VENUE CREATIVE UNDERGROUND IN UDARNIK CINEMA AT FESTIVAL LENT

designed it – co-shapes our lives. Us as persons and us as parts of a community.

In his famous book *The Image of the City*, Kevin Lynch writes about how our mental image of urban space is created through visible elements, such as buildings, roads, parks, bell towers. He categorizes the elements of a city's image as paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks. These act as some kind of visual and mental anchors, some kind of signposts in space. The means of creating a personal mental map. These anchors make the space familiar, homey, all while facilitating orientation within it. When urbanists – and Lynch was an urbanist as well – design cities, this is surely important. There's certainly no way for them to know how we will hang our experiences on spaces, on these protruding anchors and less visible nooks and crannies, how exactly we will position our acts of being within them. There's no way for them to know exactly where we will walk and, just as we can't, they can't predict in advance where we will make a certain experience. But they can try to design spaces in a way that makes us comfortable, makes paths logical, makes the space clear, and for us to find our way in and around it. They design it by considering the whole and by being attentive to individual parts at the same time. The city is a mosaic of countless sequences. When we discover and experience it, we are actually conquering it part by part, space by space. Urbanists design them to give us a place to dive into walking, driving, dancing, talking masses on some occasions, and to move away from them and be alone, at ease, on others. They can even plan them in such a way that some areas are left unde-

finied, leaving them to us to spontaneously pick our favourite paths, and the urbanists mark them only when the paths we have taken are already showing. A friend of mine who is a linguist mentioned that language changes in a similar way by following the principle of paths that have walked themselves. It seems to me that language and space generally have much in common.

Urbanists and protectors of heritage can prepare, but also preserve for us spaces that will excite us, surprise us, make us happy, build our identity. They can try to create them in such a way that makes us grow attached to them. Even if they don't quite succeed, we will still get attached to them, perhaps in a different way. This is just the space we were put into, we build a relationship with it, otherwise we don't exist. It's nearly certain that we will act emotionally when they want to tear something down, to extend something, change something. We are used to old anchors and we are going to miss them in a way – even if it makes the space prettier and more functional. We will nurse memories and personal experiences from former spaces. We will tell about them to descendants, all while using new ones and slowly getting used to them. These new spaces are exactly what our descendants will get to know first through their own experience and they will, after these spaces change again sometime in the future, transfer the cycle of nursing and remembrance to their descendants in the next generational shift. Probably. Hopefully.

When Ana Svetel wrote a few years ago about the new fence around her old primary school, I winced

at how similarly we were affected by this. When she wrote in mid-quarantine that she doesn't give a hoot about designated pathways in the park and tramples all over the grass during the lockdown, I was amazed at how similar our feelings are when we lumber along the same paths, even though we don't even live in the same city for most of the time. When she wrote that one of the ways we domesticate places is by giving them names, I thought how official and unofficial names turn urban spaces into places with meanings, accumulated experience and, finally, memories. She reminded me how I always loved Lekarniška ulica in Maribor. It might be because it's narrow, picturesque, and secluded. It might be because it's where Živa dvorišča held the show I mentioned earlier, it might be because it's where my mom, the pharmacist, was looking at me through that round peephole of the out-of-hour pharmacy Pri gradu when I was a little girl. I don't know why, but I love strolling down the unassuming, narrow Lekarniška. I love the man that stands next to where the street begins from the side of Glavni trg for hours at a time, looking like some kind of self-proclaimed street porter. I love him, even though he's sometimes the reason I don't take this street but rather the other one that is parallel to this one, only much more populated. I love thinking about why it's called that, seeing that there aren't any stores on it anymore, let alone a pharmacy. I rummage around and find it. I like how this back-street in the middle of the city carries the exact name that it does. Even its name makes me like it. If it were to be renamed all of a sudden to, say, Ozka ulica or Naljubša steza, it just wouldn't feel right.

2011

THE FIRST LENTING AT FESTIVAL LENT

Visiting Festival Lent is a special experience for everyone and evokes the feeling commonly referred to as "lenting", which the organizers first presented at the festival in 2011. At Festival Lent, both the visitors and performers are active participants in the most enjoyable party in the city where everyone does lentening their own way, yet we still do it together. Some experience lentening as the first kiss, others by experiencing something new, crazy, unique. Lentening means seeing big stars on stage and small stars in the sky. Lentening means all the unique stories lived by visitors and performers across festival venues, courtyards, streets, in the park, at the Drava river, up and down Lent, and all over the city.

2011

AT FESTIVAL LENT

Some of the artists who appeared at Festival Lent: Uwe Kropinski & Jamaaladeen Tacuma; Cyro Baptista; Jimmy Cliff; Trilok Gurtu; Ebo Taylor.

8. 10. 2011

PREMIERE OF PLAY MAKS SEKS ŠOP

A play produced by Narodni dom Maribor. Directed by Samo M. Strelec, cast Jagoda Kralj Novak and Gojmir Lešnjak Gojc.

What's unusual is that I wouldn't get excited even if they would spruce it up. Have it repaved, its house-fronts renovated, have the chipped house corners repaired. I know it's counterintuitive, but eroded buildings excite me in some, perhaps a bit bizarre, way. I feel that they're genuine when they look like this, eroded. That they exude the periods they have lived through. Periods that span beyond the periods of our individual lives. Even if we are longevous. Obviously, passing is part of their existence. And at the same time, they have this not fully predictable potential. I don't often have the courage to say that this is how I think. I'm afraid my colleagues would give me suspicious looks. This is why it was so redeeming when I read the thought of Miloš Kosec about how he feels that ruins and crumbling buildings are inspirational because they trigger different thoughts about a lost past and alternative futures. Finally, a thought that matches mine in its unusual preference for all things crumbling. And that matches photographs shot by Bojan Golčar. But it wasn't until I read Kosec's text and caught his hint that I realized that the alternative, which might still make me welcome the renovation of my oh-so beloved Lekarniška, is connected to spontaneity, to the act of determining use by consent, through the opinions of people who truly use the space and will be willing to imprint on it their footsteps and experiences even after it has been spruced up. New experiences alongside the old name of the street. I'd like it if someone would ask themselves in a few generations' time, just like I'm asking myself today, why on God's green earth is this little street called Lekarniška. And then go and find a source that would explain it. It strikes me: what will this source

look like in a hundred years? Will it be analogue, will it be, what's far more likely, digital? Perhaps it will simply be integrated into our descendants? Will it be retrieval-based? What will this retrieval look like? Will the street still be here? Will there be anyone alive interested in why the street is called what's it called? Will it still be called the same?

The city is thus the ultimate setting. Planned, spontaneous, inadvertent – different. In any case, it is the setting of our lives – of our hastes, slowing downs, meetings, and solitudes. And in any case, it is also a space where we move, deliberate at first and more and more spontaneously as time goes by, almost by heart, from point to point, from setting to setting. It grows on us, not necessarily only in a good way, but it certainly does grow on us. With our moves, both quotidian and those rarer ones, we weave a web of meetings, while on the other hand, our relationships and our obligations determine our moves. We perceive urban spaces, both private and public, as our own and only rarely do our thoughts spread to the realization that every space is our own only in a certain period. In other periods, this same space was, and is yet to be, the space of other people, ancestors and descendants. Which certainly gives us the responsibility to use it, shape it, and preserve it in rational ways.

As a matter of fact, we always move around town as individuals. What is then that makes some places not only the settings of individual experiences but also the settings of community actions? Spaces of meetings, celebrations, shows, protests. Such meetings are probably most often concentrated in

spaces that were envisaged and designed for this. Halls, stadiums, squares, bars, swimming pools, playgrounds, cemeteries, stores ... But there are some where such concentrations are rarer and less expected. It seems they have a different charm that, at least for me, is stronger because it is spontaneous and remarkable.

Community settings are both indoors and outdoors. We can think about them in the broader and narrower sense. If community settings in the broader sense encompass everything – from shopping malls to sport stadiums and parks, community settings in the narrow sense are spaces where organized cultural events take place. This description is awkward to say the least, as it inevitably triggers the need to contemplate what culture is. Culture itself can have a broader and narrower meaning and various connotations. But this would perhaps take this contemplation too far at this very moment. Let's understand settings in this context in the narrower sense – as spaces of concentration caused by experiencing, in conditional terms, cultural contents as a group. Are city squares, streets, and courtyards, but also suburban glades and lots in front of firehouses settings that are equal to concert, theatre, and cinema halls? They are surely not identical, they're very different. They require greater focus from the audience due to numerous stimuli, all while usually offering a more appealing, broader, and less predictable visual backdrop accompanied by inevitable sound interventions. In some way, they give the action a broader context, they position it differently. Squares, promenades, waterfronts, even roads are not spaces dedicated to theatre, film, puppet the-

2012

MARIBOR 2012 – EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE

In the year of ECoC Maribor 2012, Festival Lent celebrated its 20th anniversary and was the largest Festival Lent to date and the largest individual festival that was part of ECoC, despite being somewhat smaller than originally envisaged in the European Capital of Culture application submitted to Brussels. Festival Lent was one of the most resounding programmes of ECoC. The full programme of KIS was delivered as planned as well, featuring programmes Kulturni dnevnik, Art Camp, and Čitalnica na jasi. Following a brief hiatus, festival IZZVEN was reinstated as part of ECoC, which, aside from JazzLent, was the only jazz festival in Maribor, with the programme also featuring the cycle Novi jazz in Narodni dom. Orkestrski cikel and Komorni cikel were also important ECoC programme segments, while other programmes of Narodni dom Maribor implemented this year were linked in content to ECoC as well.

22. 6. 2012

FIRST ZBOROVSKI BUM (CHOIR BOOM)

In cooperation with the National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, KIS designed and delivered the project Zborovski bum, which brought together choirs from 35 primary schools. 1433 children simultaneously performed 12 songs on Trg Leona Štuklja. This opening event of Art Camp and Festival Lent was attended by then-President of the Republic of Slovenia, Danilo Türk. In 2013, the event went national: 4744 children from 154 primary schools in Slovenia sang at Ljudski vrt Maribor stadium. Since 2013, Zborovski bum has been held biannually.

2012

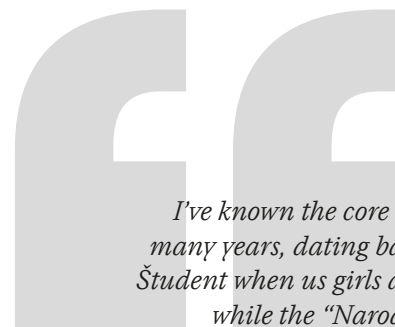
AT FESTIVAL LENT

Some of the artists who appeared at Festival Lent: Erik Truffaz; Tigran Hamasyan; Marc Ribot; The Skatalites; Macy Gray.

atre, and music events. But they can briefly turn into such spaces. Not only because of the sounds, smells, weather conditions, and their picturesque nature that blend into the experience, but also because they are spaces that we have furnished with our prior memories and experiences from completely different circumstances. Once these feelings mix, the dimensions of experiences widen. And these multidimensional experiences are, in a way, more genuine. They are exceptional and therefore charming in a different way. Even unpredictable. Perhaps the wind will blow, perhaps the rain will come pouring down on us. A loud vehicle might pass. Perhaps the birds will be loudly marking their territory at that exact time – this is what they are believed to do when they're chirping. They are not signing happy songs or exercising their vocal cords, they're marking their territory, at least that's what the ornithologists say. Perhaps, while listening to an opera aria or watching a street theatre show, we will catch wind of a quarrel from a nearby apartment, perhaps someone, in an effort to drown out the action, will crank the local radio up to eleven. A dog barking is a near certainty. Perhaps a linden tree that just blossomed will spread its pleasant smell or, if air pressure is low, we will catch a whiff of the nearby septic tanks and drains. The city is an interlacement of all these actions and if they connect in an unexpected and not fully planned way, there's something exciting in that.

Semi-public or even fully private spaces are a truly special kind of setting. A concert in the living room, a puppet play in the courtyard, a theatre play in an abandoned factory hall ... All of these dimensions of experiencing are joined here by the allure of entering into some kind of intimacy. The exceptionality of being allowed entrance into a space that we cannot enter uninvited. The feeling of special welcomeness and thereby special responsibility – to the event, to the host, and to the setting.

All this is a city. It is a space and a place. We the citizens are both individuals and a part of the community. The spaces we inhabit, and the places that we furnish with our experiences, memories, and meanings, are our ultimate, multi-purpose settings. But they're also the settings of those who came before us and those that are yet to come. As Lynch puts it: *At every instant, there is more than the eye can see, more than the ear can hear, a setting or a view waiting to be explored.* He says that moving elements in a city are as important as the stationary. And that we are not simply observers of this intertwined spectacle, but are ourselves a part of it when we move through it with the other participants. We are the ones who upgrade spaces into places.



I've known the core team of Narodni dom Maribor for many years, dating back to those pleasant times of KUD Študent when us girls danced in the dance group Magra, while the "Narodnis" danced folk in the Academic Folklore Group KUD Študent. Those were the Golden Eighties when we toured together. "Step on it, chauffy", and off we went. It was cute.

Over time, we became co-workers. Older, more mature, but still passionate in our pursuit of art and culture in the city. Cultural Diary, Art Camp, Festival Lent ... all the events I am involved in with all my heart and dedication, and I'm very grateful that I can be a part of what's happening at the front and centre in our city. Whenever our Platform wishes to stage a co-production and we book the Small Stage or the hall in Vetrinjski dvor mansion, I'm very glad to hear that it's "not a problem".

Well, there might be a problem or two every now and again, don't get me wrong. But we work it out. Without any hard feelings and with plenty of optimism. This is what counts the most.

30 years is a great anniversary. Let it be known and heard that the team is doing a good job!

Congratulations to you all!

*Mojca Kasjak
Independent artist in the field of culture,
dancer, choreographer, dance teacher, artistic director of
the Platform of Contemporary Dance.*

2012

**FESTIVAL PASS "POPOTNI LIST"
(TRAVEL PASS) REPLACED BY "LENTA"**

2012

**MARIBOR - 2012 WORLD
FESTIVAL AND EVENT CITY**

The International Festivals and Events Association awarded Maribor the title IFEA 2012 World Festival and Event City. With the award Maribor joined the ranks of much larger cities such as London, Sydney, Dubai, Reykjavik, Edinburg, Nice, Sao Paulo, Ottawa, Rotterdam, and Moscow.

27. 9. 2012

PREMIERE OF PLAY UBEŽNICI

A play produced by Narodni dom Maribor. Adapted and directed by Nenni Delmestre, cast Maja Blagovič and Vladimir Jurc.

2012

**DOCUMENTARY FILM TISTI DNEVI V
LETU**

Tisti dnevi v letu is a documentary film about the memories of summer, about carefree and easy times; it is a story about meeting, hanging out together, about lost opportunities, and, at the same time, a video note of the 20th iteration of the festival as seen and experienced by the team of Življenje na dotik (Lifetouch), a programme strand of ECoC. EnaBanda (known as Društvo Smehomat at the time) carried out the project in cooperation with ECoC Maribor 2012. Screenplay and directed by Nina Cijan.



Orlando Julius, 2016, Saša Huzjak

Erik Truffaz Quartet, 2022, Blaž Črnič









Richard Tognetti, 2014, Dejan Bulut



Nicholas Altstaedt, Haydn Philharmonie, 2018, Dejan Bulut



The vegetable orchestra, 2019, Dejan Bulut



Adriana Magdovski, Matinee for babies and toddlers, 2021, Dejan Bulut





A Quick Look

AT THE PROGRAMME

MARKO KOŠIR

I've been following the musical scene in Maribor since the beginning of the 1960s. Working from memory, I randomly selected six symphony and chamber concerts. My choice wasn't motivated solely by world-class quality, but also by the significance of the concert for culture in Maribor and the connections of foreign artists to Slovenia and Slovenian artists. At times, I also compared the same type of music from different eras. I avoided theorization in my writing. I simply write about concerts the way I experienced them.

My first pick is Božični gala concert (*Christmas Gala Concert*) that took place on 15 December 2000 in the Grand Hall of the Slovene National Theatre. The star of the evening was internationally acclaimed Argentinian conductor, composer, and pianist Lalo Schifrin. While the concert programme was compiled to fit the occasion, it was nonetheless prepared very carefully. In the concert, Schifrin also played piano alongside Aleš Avbelj.

As told by Schifrin and noted in the concert bill, he studied conducting with Mariano Drago at the university in La Plata, which runs a conducting department established by Mariano Drago that was the first of its kind in South America. Mariano Drago is none other than Maribor native Drago Mario Šijanec, who, due to unfounded allegations that he had breached the form of protest known as cultural silence (or in other words, due to the envy of some of his conductor colleagues), left Slovenia in 1945 and continued his art career in Italy and Argentina, where he became one of the leading conductors in South America and the leading teacher. Schifrin thus had a direct connection to a Slovenian artist. But that's not all. All of the teachers of Venezuelan conductor Gustavo Dudamel, who is nowadays a global star, studied with Šijanec in La Plata. Hence, Dudamel, by virtue of his teachers, also had a connection to Slovenian conductor Šijanec.

Schifrin visited Maribor on a number of later occasions and had a few excellent concerts with the Maribor Philharmonic.

Another concert that was significant for Maribor's cultural life was the concert at the 100th anniversary of the death of Giuseppe Verdi that was held in the Grand Hall of the Slovene National Theatre on 11 May 2011, when the Maribor Philharmonic, accompanied by soloists and the choir Ivan Goran Kovačić from Zagreb, performed Verdi's *Requiem*. It is not often that we get to hear Verdi's *Requiem* on our concert stage, as it is a rather difficult piece, similarly to Beethoven's *Symphony No 9*. In all my time as a concert-goer, each of these two masterpieces has been performed in Maribor three times. To put the significance of the anniversary of Verdi's death in special focus, Maribor-born Marko Letonja, internationally acclaimed and already then, and still to this day, one of the best Slovenian conductors, was chosen as the maestro. The soloist quartet was internationally acclaimed as well. They were able to secure star soloist Francisco Araizo for the very demanding tenor part, as well as soprano C. M. Lapponi, Dunja Vejzović, former soprano in Karajan's rendition of Wagner, who on this occasion took on the mezzosoprano part, and excellent

2015

**FOLKART UNDER HONORARY
SPONSORSHIP OF UNESCO**

At its 25th anniversary, the CIOFF® folklore festival Folkart was held under the honorary sponsorship of UNESCO and its Director-General, Irina Bokov. Folkart was the first and only festival of its kind in the world to have been awarded such an honour.



Folklore group of New Zealand, 2010

2015

**VETRINJSKI DVOR UNDER
THE MANAGEMENT OF
NARODNI DOM MARIBOR**

The Municipality of Maribor authorized public institute Narodni dom Maribor to carry out programme-related and organizational tasks associated with the management of the Vetrinjski dom building in addition to other buildings. Vetrinjski dvor is intended for cultural contents that relate primarily to activities in the art studio and art studio residence industries, as well as cultural activities of cultural and other organizations operating in the public interest.

bass Ned Barth. Unfortunately, Lapponi and Araiza seemed indisposed, which caused the quality of the performance to suffer rather significantly. I would therefore grade the concert as merely good. However, Letonja should be praised for carefully preparing both the orchestra and the choir, as they both delivered on their parts rather solidly.

The Munich Symphony Orchestra gave a concert in Union Hall on 11 November 2001, led by Clemens Magnus, with Arabella Steinbacher as the soloist in Brahms's Violin Concerto. The second piece in the concert was Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*. In his review that appeared in *Večer* on 20 November 2001, Tone Žuraj graded the concert as excellent. However, he failed to notice that the piccolo clarinet¹ position was occupied by the first chair clarinet of the Maribor Philharmonic, Srečko Kovačič. Berlioz used this type of clarinet for special effects. The story goes like this: the clarinet player of the Munich orchestra caught a stomach bug while travelling to Maribor. The orchestra tried to find a substitute on the fly, but they weren't able to secure one before they reached Maribor. Kovačič played the same part on 9 April 1999, when the same symphony was performed by the Maribor Philharmonic. His German colleagues paid tribute to Kovačič at the end of the concert when all of them were still on stage.

The Antwerp Royal Flemish Philharmonic made

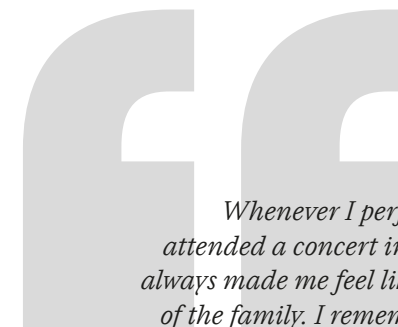
a stop in Union Hall on 25 January 2006. Led by amazing Belgian conductor Philipp Herrewegh, the excellent Belgian musicians performed Weber's overture to *Preziosa*, Mozart's *Symphony No. 39, KV 543*, and *Symphony No. 2* by Robert Schumann. Herreweghe demonstrated in this concert how a conductor can create a world-class art event simply by having a good orchestra. Herrewegh is quite at home with pieces from the late Classical and early Romantic period, but he also specializes in Baroque, with emphasis on J. S. Bach. He is one of the best European conductors and is a guest welcomed by many major orchestras.

The concert stayed with me because of the excellent renditions of Mozart's and Schumann's symphonies.

Next up is a chamber concert. On 31 May 2007, Hugo Wolf Quartet performed in Union Hall, among other pieces, the following works by Slovenj Gradec-born composer Hugo Wolf (1860-1903): *Intermezzo in E-flat major* and *Serenade in G major for String Quartet*, called the "*Italian Serenade*". Even though there was no major anniversary of Wolf's birth or death, the concert did make us remember Wolf, who spent part of his life in Maribor as well.

The Borodin Quartet appeared in Union Hall on 3 November 2009 with a very interesting programme.

¹ Small clarinet with a shrill sound, mimicking the voice of Berlioz's lover Henriette Smithson.



Whenever I performed in or attended a concert in Maribor, it always made me feel like I was part of the family. I remember how the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra and I always looked forward to playing the Union Hall, as both the organizers and the audience always knew how to give that little bit extra that makes you feel you're no longer the only one on stage. This is everything one can wish for at that moment and also one of the reasons why many musicians keep coming back to Maribor.

*Marko Letonja,
conductor*

60 years of Koncertna poslovalnica Maribor, 2006

2015

AT FESTIVAL LENT

Some of the artists who appeared at Festival Lent: Tony Allen; Medeski Martin & Wood; Manu Katche; Bill Evans; Uriah Heep.

2015

FIRST VILINSKO MESTO

Vilinsko mesto is the most extensive project coproduced by Vetrinjski dvor and was created to bring a vibrant pulse into the city core during festive December. In 2014, the cultural programme was organized as a festival for the first time and coproduced by Društvo Hišal in cooperation with Zavod Mars Maribor and numerous other organizations and individuals. Narodni dom Maribor is involved in the project through Vetrinjski dvor and acts as the master producer that coordinates the programme, ensures the delivery of the joint programme, and provides all-around promotion of individual events under the joint and recognizable name Vilinsko mesto. Narodni dom Maribor also provides the majority of necessary programme financing.



Stroll with Bajka o svetlobi, 2017

They performed Shostakovich's *String Quartet No 3 in F major, Op. 73*, Schnittke's *String Quartet No. 3*, and Beethoven's *Grand Fugue, Op. 133*. This gave us a chance to see how string quartets developed from Beethoven to Shostakovich. *Grand Fugue* is the final act in Beethoven's oeuvre of sixteen string quartets that, according to some experts, are some of Beethoven's best work. Shostakovich's *String Quartet No. 3* was created just over a hundred years after Beethoven's *Grand Fugue*. I got the impression that Shostakovich's quartet is a continuation of Beethoven's oeuvre and that there hasn't been much change in the field of string quartets during this hundred-year period. This affirms the great artistic value of Shostakovich, who is certainly one of the greatest, if not the greatest composer and musician of the 20th century.

Forty-six years after the Czech Philharmonic last appeared in concert in Maribor, we were again paid a visit by this excellent orchestra on 26 February 2016 in Union Hall. They performed the first three pieces of Smetana's *My Fatherland and Dvořák's Symphony No. 6 in D major, Op. 60*. Conducting the concert was Jiří Bělohlávek, one of the best Czech conductors of the time. Listening to the concert, I remembered the concerts this orchestra performed here in 1964 and 1970, with Vaclav Neuman appearing as conductor on both occasions, and the excellent sound recordings of the Czech Philharmonic with conductors Vaclav Talich, Karel

Ančerl, and Rafael Kubelik. This time, the concert exceeded all expectations. Following a successful international career, Bělohlávek has been the chief conductor of the Czech Philharmonic since 2012 and recorded the symphonic poem *My Fatherland* with the same orchestra for the British record label DECCA in 2014, which was one of the artist's final acts. He died in 2017, aged only 71. At the concert in Maribor I was able to compare Bělohlávek's world-class rendition of the first three sentences of *My Fatherland* against those of Matačić, Kubelik, Ančerl, and Talich, and I found that Talich's from the distant year of 1954 and Matačić's from 1979 were still the best.

We again met with Beethoven's string quartets in Maribor on 19 February 2018, when the Casals Quartet, which bears the name of the great Spanish cellist Pablo Casals, performed in Union Hall. The programme featured *String Quartet No. 3 in D major, Op. 18*, *String Quartet No. 2 in G major, Op. 18*, *String Quartet No. 7 in F major, Op. 59*, *Rasumovsky*, and *String Quartet B 267* by Giovanni Sollima (born 1962). It was an excellent performance by the young musicians. The first two of Beethoven's quartets belong to the earlier period, while *Quartet No. 7* belongs to his middle period. Naturally, it was the latter that was the most pleasing. Breathhtakingly beautiful music and excellent performance made for a superior artistic pleasure. The concert was rounded up rather nicely by Solli-

ma's *String Quartet B 267*, as it matched well with Beethoven's music that predates it by nearly two hundred years. The concert stayed with me because of the intense and excellent performance by the young musicians.

After a hiatus caused by the Covid-19 pandemic that lasted a couple of months, classical music returned to Union Hall on 7 June 2020. Appearing in concert this time were violinist Žiga Brank and pianist Petar Milič. They performed *Three Romances, Op. 94* by Robert Schumann (1, 2, and 3) and Beethoven's *Spring Sonata* and *Kreutzer Sonata*. The concert went down rather well, as performances were solid. When the artists returned to the acoustic concert hall, we greeted them with a warm welcome and applause.

The penultimate concert in this selection is the concert by Swedish Chamber Orchestra that took place in Union Hall on 28 January 2022. Conductor and concertmaster was Katarina Andreasson, filling in for Martin Fröst who had fallen ill, while the soloists were soprano Mojca Erdmann, whose mother is Slovenian, and clarinetist Kevin Spagnolo, who was a last-minute substitute for the billed clarinetist and concertmaster Martin Fröst.

The programme of the concert entitled *Mozart in Prague* featured works by the great Salzburgian:

2014

MARIA JOÃO OGRE AT FESTIVAL LENT

25. 4. 2015

PREMIERE OF PLAY
POSLUŠAŠ SRCE ALI GLASBO?

A play produced by Narodni dom Maribor. Written and directed by Rok Vilčnik, cast Barbara Mrak and Denis Horvat.

2015

AT FESTIVAL LENT

Some of the artists who appeared at Festival Lent: Al Di Meola: Elysium & More Unplugged; Hugh Masekela; Bill Frisell.

6. 12. 2015

PREMIERE OF PLAY
SLADOLED

A play produced by Narodni dom Maribor and Novi Zato. Author Miro Gavran, directed by Samo M. Strelec, cast Iva Krajnc and Zvezdana Mlakar.

Symphony No 38 in D major, KV 504, entitled the “Prague Symphony”, *Overture to the opera Don Giovanni, KV 527*, scene for soprano “*Bella mia fiamma ... Resta, o cara*”, *KV 528*, and *Clarinet Concerto in A major, KV 622*.

The excellent Swedish musicians were flawless in their delivery and the concert stayed with me in part because the last-minute substitutions of both artists worked out very well. Clarinetist Kevin Spagnolo was particularly convincing with his artistic power and charisma, which earned him ovations after he finished his performance.

In 2013, in one of the afternoon concerts of Festival Maribor, 17-year-old pianist Nejc Kamplet performed the first sentence of the *First Piano Concerto* that his father Robert Kamplet dedicated to him. After the concert, I visited the young pianist in the dressing room and asked him to sign the concert bill. The young man was surprised and could not hide embarrassment. Unfortunately, I misplaced the autographed concert bill and can't seem to find it. He performed his father's concerto in its entirety at a charity concert of Festival Maribor on 9 January 2014 in Union Hall. While true that Robert Kamplet's concerto is a more contemporary piece, it is rather pleasing to the ear and the fact that the piano part was played by his son Nejc gave it special appeal. I met Nejc again at a concert on 17 September 2020 when he took part in performing

Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy* for choir, piano, and soloists at the Grand Hall of the Slovene National Theatre. The concert was filmed by RTV Slovenia and I was able to have another look at it later. The performance was solid, but could have been even better with a better conductor. Naturally, this doesn't apply to Kamplet, who tackled Beethoven's piano part with ease and excellence. Sheet music page turning duties were handled by his brother Robert, who is developing into a concert pianist as well. Also taking part were the symphony orchestra, choir, and soloists of the Opera of the Slovene National Theatre Maribor.

This year, we had the chance to catch Nejc Kamplet at his solo recital on 25 May in Union Hall. He performed Beethoven's piano *Sonata No. 29, Op. 106*, which is subtitled “*Hammerklavier*”² and is the greatest and most thunderous piano sonata of this great composer. The second piece was Ravel's *Gaspard de la Nuit*. The additional dimming of lights in the concert hall was supposed to heighten the effect that the performance and the piece were thought to have on the audience, but it was quite the opposite. This piece by Ravel certainly doesn't need any help of this kind. The third piece performed by Kamplet was the masterful *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*. The audience showered the young soloist with standing ovations. Kamplet presented himself as an artist that is transitioning into his mature creative years. He is surely looking at a successful concert pianist career.

² Piano with hammers, also used to refer to older pianos.

10. 6. 2016

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF THE SLOVENE NATIONAL THEATRE MARIBOR, MARKO LETONJA, CONDUCTOR

An homage to the 70th anniversary of Koncertna poslovalnica of Narodni dom Maribor, the oldest concert management office in Slovenia. The bill, which included a piece written by Maribor composer Vito Žuraj, featured world-class Slovenian soloists, such as Bernarda Bobro, Jože Kotar and Andrej Petrač, as well as the Symphony Orchestra of the SNG Maribor under the baton of Marko Letonja, who enthralled the audience that rewarded the performers with standing ovations. The anniversary was further commemorated by the release of a journal entitled 1946-2016 – 70 let Koncertne poslovalnice Maribor (1946-2016 – 70 years of Koncertna poslovalnica Maribor) and two resounding exhibitions; *Odtisi glasbe* (Imprints of Music) at Union Hall and Maribor, *prestonica glasbe* (Maribor, Capital of Music) on Trg Leona Štuklja.

2016

AT FESTIVAL LENT

Some of the artists who appeared at Festival Lent: John Scofield & Brad Mehldau & Mark Guilliana; Orlando Julius & The Heliocentrics.

2017

AT FESTIVAL LENT

Some of the artists who appeared at Festival Lent: Gogo Penguin; Bob Geldof & Band; Omar Sosa Quarteto Afro cubano; Pharoah Sanders Quartet.



It was KUD Študent and today's Narodni dom crew were members at the time. At a remembrance event commemorating the earthquake in Skopje we performed at a festival there as representatives of Slovenia. We did the festival in Skopje a few years in a row, and later appeared in Belgrade and Rijeka. Representatives of groups from the various republics of former Yugoslavia asked us after a while when we would organize a festival in Slovenia. It was KUD's thirtieth anniversary. We held a festival at the Ljudski vrt stadium. It was successful. Dr. Bruno Ravnikar was a delegate of the International Council of Organizations of Folklore Festivals and Folk Arts (CIOFF) at the time and he saw the concert. He proposed organizing an international CIOFF festival. So we did. We named it Folkart. This is how it began. And Festival Lent followed shortly thereafter.

*Vasja Samec,
long-time artistic director of
AFS Študent in Maribor*

What Makes A CITY “BIG”

KARMEN SALMIČ KOVAČIČ

Cities have always, anytime any of them was founded, been labelled either big or small in terms of their population. Just like countries that are measured in square kilometres of their surface area. These are geography facts but also facts that are taught and that make up a considerable part of the curriculum in the school system. Sources provide countless data about industry, economy, politics, and history of a certain nation or country. In most cases, the most relevant question is which country is the biggest according to size, population, richness in natural resources, size of economy and military strength (superiority), and so forth. The case is similar with cities. At least in terms of ranking parameters. I doubt that any high school student has ever come across the question of which city has the most developed culture and which country “produces” the most artists or, say, cultural events.

Slovenia, this modest little country in the heart of the European half-continent that was able to win its independence after spending long centuries

in bitter submission, has finally been given more room lately in the global conversation and press. It’s actually becoming a phenomenon of sorts and has been garnering more and more attention precisely due to its territorial diminutiveness. Not only as an interesting, safe, and “green” tourist destination, but also as one of the best by the volume of remarkable achievements in sport, science, and culture per capita. Interesting. Modern humanity finally managed to progress in immeasurable terms.

See, culture is not some bulletproof way to make a profit. More like a bulletproof way to make a loss. Its profits are not measured in money, capital, shares, cryptocurrency ... This is why most powers treated it more like a nuisance until now – a good-for-nothing, but one that can’t be completely cut off from the budget either. If nothing else, because of institutions built by our (much) more culturally conscious ancestors – from culture houses, libraries, museums, to opera houses and theatres – that cannot be torn down overnight because it is ration-

al, due to a certain tradition behind them, to fill them with content, cultural workers, and provide at least minimal funding for their operations. It is rather likely that the question about the rationales, products, “profits” of these endeavours has been on the minds of politicians for ages as well.

What is it then that culture brings if not profit and permanent growth of capital? Momentary sensory-mind-emotional (visual, auditory) pleasure for the audience when watching a theatre play or concert, for one. In addition, it broadens one’s horizon, informs subconsciously, encourages thinking, facilitates aesthetic or emotional experience, brings together the similarly minded, facilitates an exchange of views and tastes, the feeling of belonging to a certain social group, social environment, is an opportunity to have fun, motivates, etc. In short, we could say that it fills the “soul” or, in other words, what we carry inside. But what good does all this do after the lights go out, and countless hours spent on creating such a piece and the event that showcased the artwork vanish into thin

2017

EXHIBITION BARVE IN ZGODBE
FESTIVALA LENT (COLOURS AND
STORIES OF FESTIVAL LENT) IN THE
MINORITE CHURCH AT THE 25TH
FESTIVAL LENT



Colours and stories of Festival Lent, 2017

2018

NEW PROGRAMME STRAND
AS PART OF FESTIVAL LENT, POZOR!
MUZIKA NA CESTI (ATTENTION!
MUSIC ON THE STREET)

A new programme strand featuring mid-day and afternoon concerts was introduced to make the streets of Maribor even more alive. Concerts were held at various venues, chiefly on Grajski trg, Poštna ulica, and Gosposka ulica, while events that took place in the park in the morning and afternoon were linked to the festival’s evening programme.

2018

EXHIBITION OKNO V SVET (WINDOW
INTO THE WORLD)

Exhibition in the Minorite Church at Festival Lent to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the 30th International CIOFF® Folklore Festival Folkart.

2018

LAST CONCERT BY ĐORĐE BALAŠEVIĆ
AT FESTIVAL LENT

air when the play or concert is over. Also vanishing into thin air are the hefty material costs needed to put something on stage. So – what good is culture?

The Ancient Greeks would never have come up with such a question. They were aware that sports and culture have healing qualities. For the soul and body that is, as the former works on the latter and vice-versa. Given the staggering amount of money we spend on healthcare in our country (even before and after Covid-19!) and our decade-long dealing with excessively long waiting times, overflowing waiting rooms, throngs of people without access to a personal physician because they simply don't have one, we could say that we're a rather sick nation. Not only physically. We're also among the leading countries in the world according to suicide rate, unfortunately, and no figures are available on how many young people give up on life every year. And how can you blame them. They have no access to psychotherapists because there aren't any (other than those you need to pay for by yourself), which means the healthcare system is not of any great use to them. Besides, the stigma attached is still too great for parents to take the first step instead of them, if they even have the time to recognize and hear what's happening to their child. Sadly, young people also aren't getting any help from art that would validate their good sides or encourage their creativity, as it has been nearly banished from the high school system. Because exact sciences are what counts. After all, we need to ensure the development of these sciences and global technological progress. Progress of the

kind that can wipe us all off the face of the Earth at any time. On top of its numerous admittedly positive impacts that save lives and make the lives of people easier or research what is yet unknown like, say, black holes in space.

Scientists have only recently ramped up studies and research into the impact that taking up art has on the development of one's brain. Now that they have proper equipment to study and measure activities in this part of the human body. Which was made possible by the development of exact sciences and technology. You see, this is the only path the Western man will ever take. The one and only. But the realizations that all of this brings are similar to those known by ancient cultures millennia before us. Instead of learning from them, we exterminated their members or locked them up into reserves. We are dehumanized exploiters and murderers. Even an animal will kill only when it's hungry.

Yet art allows eternal truths and beauty to break through to a person directly, all the way to the subconsciousness, emotions, and the greatest depths of human essence. Artists and performers know this process very well. When One flows through the artist into the artwork and connects all the people, who can experience it as consumers. The only way for them to experience it "live" is through cultural events and people who organize these events.

These people can therefore have a very important mission. The most important of all in fact. They also take care of the inner peace and health of peo-

In its thirty years of operation, Narodni dom Maribor has left an indelible mark on the city, and not only as the organizer of Festival Lent. To me as a musician, the work of people from Narodni dom meant innumerable opportunities for concerts where I was either involved as a performer or that I simply enjoyed as a listener. As a professor at the Maribor Conservatory of Music and Ballet and the conductor of the Maribor Conservatory Big Band, I also need to highlight the willingness of Narodni dom to cooperate with young musicians, who are thereby provided with excellent conditions to perform.

*Janez Vouk,
classically trained musician,
conductor of Maribor
Conservatory Big Band*

2018

SIGNATURE OF MANIFESTO AGAINST HATE SPEECH

By signing the manifesto against hate speech, Narodni dom Maribor joined the project Parole Ostili (Hostile Words).

2019

GRAND HALL OF NARODNI DOM RENAMED TO GENERAL MAISTER HALL

50. 5. 2019

UNVEILING OF BUST OF DR. FILIP TERČ IN THE LOBBY OF NARODNI DOM

Dr. Filip Terč, pioneer of apitherapy, was a member of Slovenska čitalnica and, as a member of the board of directors of Posojilnica, one of the founders of Narodni dom.

2019

BOMBINO AT FESTIVAL LENT

2019

EXHIBITION BY FESTIVAL MARIBOR

Exhibition during Festival Maribor in celebration of the 50th anniversary of Festival baročne glasbe and 25th anniversary of Glasbeni September, the predecessors of what is now Festival Maribor.

ple. Something that's not really in anyone else's interest. Aside from the military industry, the food and pharmaceutical industry naturally need to be supported as well. The second takes care of the third, very secretly, with its harmful additives and makes sure that people are never fully healthy, all while shaping the people's dietary habits. Medicine heals only illnesses, the consequences, while there are very few questions about the causes. Otherwise the volume of drugs sold wouldn't be what it is now. And thus the circle is completed. What's important is for money to change hands.

Doing art, engaging in self-contemplation, and reading philosophy would reverse the course of this circuit, but this is something modern consumerist society is not keen on. Making people more humane, better informed, more tolerant and happier would make them less interested in buying a new car or yacht than they are now. Perhaps they would rather spend this money to buy a painting or become the patron of some theatre, play, concert, artist. But seeing that art education begins in early childhood, as does the development of artistic creativity, all it takes to get exactly what you want is to prevent people from having enough of both in the school system. Nowadays, nobody is interested in the fact that doing art activates other centres in the brain and thereby improves all cognitive processes, including those needed for exact sciences – from memory to the capacity to solve the most complex math and physics problems – or even heals major human illnesses. On the other hand, art therapy of all types is on the rise, which is nonetheless some

kind of positive harbinger of new times and does engender some hope for change.

This rather extensive introduction had the sole purpose of making it easier to place the activity of Maribor's tricenarian into the broader environment, space, and time. Celebrations, hosted in a building that is again dedicated to cultural contents, are held to commemorate the anniversary of its work and mission, the mission of an organizer, facilitator, and promotor of culture and cultural events in Maribor under a new name, Cultural and Event Centre Narodni dom Maribor.

This role is certainly not devoid of tradition in Maribor. As a matter of fact, it began already with Narodna slovanska čitalnica (*Slavic National Reading Room*) that was founded immediately after the one in Trieste and even before the one in Ljubljana in 1861, since we're already discussing Slovenian culture. It is snippets like these that we like to boast about in the second largest city in the country, seeing that we usually come in second after the capital in everything and everywhere. Perhaps being always relegated to second place and having to compete with the first-ranked is good for motivation. But money can easily end any ambition. Because there's simply less of it, as the size of a city is the decisive factor when money is being doled out from the same bag. It's even worse if you're so geographically remote from the centre of the country that it takes people a few hours (by car or train) to reach you and they therefore come to see you, or come to see what you're doing with this

money, less frequently. Because you have your own media, it's more difficult for those from Ljubljana to report on what's happening in the land on the wrong side of Trojane and in the end, you simply give up. You become a country within a country, a nationally conscious Štajer'c.

But ... that's all in the past too. With the exception of that part about money, the rest stopped applying quite some time ago. By building motorways, Slovenia became a free-flowing country when it comes to the production and consumption of culture. Someone from Ljubljana no longer has any qualms about coming to Maribor for a play or concert; and vice-versa, someone from Maribor has none about coming to Ljubljana. The bigger problem are stereotypes and prejudices on both sides. One the Štajerska side, there's this complex that manifests itself in self-sufficiency, pride, and ignoring the scene in Ljubljana, while in Ljubljana, we can hear: "we are the capital". But ... it wouldn't hurt if someone were to count the people from Štajerska among the cultural workers and artists in Ljubljana. Once they get there, they turn into Slovenians and work for the good of the nation. They simply head where it's easier for them to survive and where the conditions to work and develop are better. The capital is certainly better at providing this, and going abroad even more so.

But their deficit is felt in the second largest city in the country. It is equally felt also in the structure of the population and the audience. Not in the production of cultural events, though. Most of

22. 4. 2020

**FIRST CONCERT IN
THE TOWER OF NARODNI DOM**

Soon after the first epidemic-related lockdown Narodni dom Maribor was the first in Slovenia to set up the smallest and the most unusual concert venue: with the help of a 360-degree camera positioned in the tower of Narodni dom, viewers at home were able to watch a livestream of concerts performed by various music artists.



Marko Grobler, 2020

24. 4. 2020

**MUSO RIDES AGAIN - LIVESTREAM OF
DJ EVENING FROM NARODNI DOM**

Milan Latin – Muso curated a selection from the rich oeuvre of Festival Lent that he was co-designing for more than two decades as an expert music consultant.

21. 5. 2020

PLAY V ŽIVO

A play by Tadej Toš as the first theatre show in Slovenia after the epidemic-related lockdown of cultural institutions.

the credit for this over the last thirty years goes to none other than Cultural and Event Centre Narodni dom Maribor. With its diverse offering of cultural events of all types and genres and the quality of their selection, it spread the name of the city far and wide, even beyond Ljubljana. By supporting the development of young talents from Maribor that are nowadays global household names (including Luka Šulić, to name just one), and by bringing to the city world-renowned art legends from all continents, ranging from jazz to classical music and all genres in between. Artists who came to know the audience of Maribor also from a production perspective (Radovan Vlatković, Richard Tognetti) and those who appeared on several stages or several times (e.g. James Morrison at JazzLent and with the Maribor Philharmonic, and Oscar and Grammy Award winner Lalo Schifrin); artists who remembered the city by both of its festivals that are among the most esteemed in the world (Festival Lent, Festival Maribor) and who will always gladly return to the city. In addition, it continuously provides education to the youth and a diverse offering of classical music through a series of cycles. It was one of the initiators behind the founding of the second Maribor Philharmonic (1993-2004), which, just like the first one (1950-1965), was sadly not meant to be.

Although none of it was completely new or invented yesterday. Koncertna poslovalnica has existed since 1946, Glasbena matica held concerts in Maribor already before the second war, same with events by Slovanska čitalnica before that, etc.

Everyone tried their best in their own way, as befit the time and circumstances. They kept inviting esteemed musicians even then, both Slovenian and foreign, took care of musical offspring, held festivals ... The Baroque Festival, designed by Janko Šetinc, was later (1994) renamed to Glasbeni september (*Musical September*) and is today known as Festival Maribor (2008), for example. Summer events at Rotovski trg and Mednarodni folklorni festival (*International Folklore Festival*) developed more recently into Festival Lent, Folkart, etc. Youth concerts were being organized even before Glasbena mladina Maribor (*Musical Youth Maribor*) was founded (by initiative of Aleksander Lajovic) in 1965, the stage hosted the Maribor Philharmonic, and the people of Maribor were treated to the Vienna Boys Choir, the greatest orchestras and musicians of the time, from Peter Pears, Lazar Berman, Antonio Janigro, Kendal Taylor, André Navarra to Ivo Pogorelić, and more. And lest we forget Slovenian stars and conductors: Dubravka Tomšič, Igor Ozim, Marijana Lipovšek, Samo Hubad, and more.

The first director of Koncertna poslovalnica, Ferdo Filipič, was just as driven as the ladies who came after him (Metka Čurman, Brigita Pavlič, Barbara Švrljuga Hergovich), he was, however, the first to show how to handle these things, including by having heart, and being sophisticated and broad-minded. As a matter of fact, after Slovenia became independent, everything was simply given a makeover and new volumes to align with changes brought by modern times.

Perhaps we could say that with the founding of the Cultural and Event Centre Narodni dom Maribor everything that has been around for a century and more in terms of events simply blossomed into what nobody thought possible and into all possible directions. Owing to the ambitious general manager Vladimir Rukavina and his innovative and attuned team, who, just like their predecessors, sought expert support also from external associates (with classical music, these initially included Aleksander Lajovic, MSc Janko Šetinc, dr. Manica Špendal, later Uroš Lajovic, Marko Letonja, Irena Grafenauer, Mate Bekavac, and numerous younger musicologists, musicians, and experts). The cultural diary, which included theatre season programmes and similar teaching methods as it does today, was part of Glasbena mladina Maribor already when it was managed by Štefka Rajšter. Under Manč Kovačič, her successor, the majority of the youth cycle already consisted of in-house productions. Today, programmes for children are even more plentiful and even split according to the children's age.

There can be no doubt that our thirty-year-old birthday boy carefully studied the tradition and heritage of its predecessors and respectfully developed it into a success story. One that is not only successful in all aspects, directions, music genres and forms of art, but also "big" in a cosmopolitan sense, just as a city becomes "big" if its heart and soul is culture that breathes and pulses in the city on such a scale.

24. 5. 2020

SUNDAY CONCERTS IN THE CITY PARK PAVILION

Godba Ruše, the first open-air concert after the epidemic-related lockdown.



Godba Ruše, 2020

25. 6. 2020

PREMIERE OF SVET' VEČER, THE FIRST PLAY IN THE THEATRE CYCLE TEATER NA KULNU

Narodni dom Maribor took the crisis that the coronavirus epidemic caused in the field of culture and art as a challenge: in order for shows to find their audience with as few obstacles and as soon as possible in those uncertain times, it designed a new cycle of theatre events – Teater na kulnu in the cellar of Narodni dom. Shows were held in rooms that, many years prior, first needed to be cleaned of piles of coal before a stage could be set up. A play produced by Narodni dom Maribor. Directed by Samo M. Strelec, cast Nataša Barbara Gračner and Vlado Novak.

Faces AND NAMES

These are just a few faces and just a few names of all of those who have been creating the programmes of Narodni dom Maribor with utmost dedication. Aside from employees, there were more than six hundred associates every year who participated and contributed, which amounts to a total of nearly twenty thousand faces and names over three decades, who worked together to create programmes for nearly fifteen million visitors, visitors with faces and names.

Franc Ambrož
Luka Belšak
Mateja Bombek
Andrej Borko
Sabina Bračič
Miloš Brankov
Uroš Brankov
Marko Brumen
Tanja Budna
Gregor Čerič
Boris Črnič
Metka Čurman
Anton Embreuš
Peter Filipič
Bojan Golnar
Nataša Goričan
Boris Hojnik
Ciril Horvat
Marinka Jerman Jelek
Urška Jodl
Damijana Jurc
Samo Kacijan
Simona Kenda
Alenka Klemenčič
Mirjana Kolesarič
Neli Koletnik
Urška Košica
Alenka Kotnik
Marjan Kovačič
Andrej Krštinc
Silva Saksida Kuret
Milan Latin
Gaber Lesjak
Beno Lončarič
Boštjan Matko
Mateja Meh

Matjaž Melliwa
Mirjana Mladič
Darko Mulec
Tadeja Nedog
Maša Novak
Maja Orbanič Pirš
Stanka Osterc
Teja Osterc
Brigita Pavlič
Danica Pečenič
Mitja Praštalo
Tina Princ
Mojca Pušnik
Branka Pušnik
Marjan Rajbenšu
Štefka Rajšter
Jure Rubelj
Vladimir Rukavina
Davorin Sel
Darko Sel
Jože Skarlovnik
Maša Stošič
Sabina Špendl
Manja Štebih
Barbara Švrljuga Hergovich
Špela Valadžija
Denis Valentan
Matea Verhovčak
Valentina Vihar
Iris Vindiš
Rajko Volovšek
Mišel Vugrinec
Milan Živkovič
Gašper Zemljč
Katja Žižek
Željko Žukina





Years

WORTH OF LENT

BOJAN SEDMAK

Thursday, 23 June, 8:53

Festivals, festivals, festivals ... Appearances at the Velenje Lirikifest were followed by Boršnikovo srečanje, then it was on to presentations as part of Dnevi knjige. And now, the thirtieth Lent, which I will tackle in the evening by reading poems *Trideset vrst* at Živa dvorišča, dedicated to MB poetry in Dialogi, on the day that the festival programme refers to as Before Lent. Well, before the first Lent thirty years ago, there was another Lent before Folkart, which doesn't formally count, but it did happen; a heap of events with a more urban tone that were created in the second part of the 1980s by people different from the tireless ND team that came in later. Before the war, Bobi and Kljuka, speaking into massive walkie-talkies, were talking about what should be going on and what was actually going on at the river, and we, the acquaintances who were eavesdropping on their coordination efforts at the time, kept graciously turning the word Drava in their codes of "Drava one calling Drava two" into trava.¹ On one of those long-ago evenings of Sumer Events, I was

literally the opening act when I staged a solo singer sit-down in Mesarski prehod. It was at least as solid as my next appearance, which already counted as a formal performance in the mid-1990s at Jurček Stage and was eternalized in the newspaper with the review "... impressed numerous listeners." And this was at a time when the festival bill included stars à la B. B. King, Jose Feliciano, Paquito de Rivera, ha ha ... Oops, I'm already over a thousand characters without spaces and the nine-day party hasn't even really begun yet. Apparently, I'm going to have to hold myself back so I don't run over the agreed number, for three hundred gross. And I'm going to have to zigzag in style between journalistic accuracy and poetic license, between panegyric and critique. So, this is neither the time nor the place for me to ramble about either Putin appearing on CNN and his 30% increase in Russian trade with China, or the three business meetings and thirty high school students I'm about to take to Kibla for an exhibition and tea instead of their last hour of class. I have to schedule a meeting with the editor of this mono-

graph to discuss the beings and numbers of the 30th anniversary of Lent and Narodni dom.

Saturday, 25 June, 1:37

Friday morning rock 'n' roll shower in the gym of the Prva gimnazija high school for the end of the school year event – the high-energy sounds of high school bands Štrom, Venera je daleč and Štenge make the hair of their classmates and professors tuck itself behind the ears. Later in the city centre I'm carried away from Partizanska ulica into what was once Modna hiša, now the homebase of MitOst, the international conference of civil society organizations that chose the city in the north of my little homeland as the location of this year's symposiums. In the afternoon, I take in the wise words of Melita and Orlando in the National Liberation Museum as I listen to them discuss *Krušni oči*, Uršič's novel about Hutter published by Premzl's publishing house, with Hutter's descendants, who were drawn from the Netherlands by this event, on hand to witness it. An excellent presentation under the sun that's falling

¹Grass; also a colloquial term for marijuana (ed. note).

2020

FESTIVAL LENT POSTPONED TO THE
END OF AUGUST DUE TO THE EPIDEMIC

Festival Lent was held at the end of August and had fewer and smaller venues compared to the past. There was no Main Stage, and the Večer Stage was set up at Rotovški trg. All events were held in full compliance with measures adopted to prevent the spread of the virus. Given the epidemiological situation, Festival Lent was the largest festival held in Europe at the time.

2020

FESTIVAL MARIBOR

Regardless of changes to the programme and measures adopted to prevent the spread of the virus, Festival Maribor was carried out successfully.

6. 11. 2020

FIRST CONCERT FROM AWWWDITORIJ

Awwwditorij is a cycle of events from various programme strands that were livestreamed online, allowing viewers to watch cultural events from their homes during the second lockdown of cultural institutions. The most resounding event was the concert from Komorni cikel featuring Luka Šulić on cello and Evgeny Genchev on piano.



Luka Šulić, Evgeny Genchev, 2020

down and the rain that's shining bright assembles in the park a wonderful medley of writers, historians, and admirers of the prominent industrialist philanthrope and, accompanied by a robust red, makes words gush through our veins and mouths. The evening is reserved for Počeni škafi and their springy New Orleans-like swing in the Judgement Tower. From there, I let myself get carried away to the Water Tower for the Open, where Marko, in all his litness, is hopping to the rhythms of Boco's and Igor's guitars. And it's already time for Laibach at Minoriti where, despite the admirable allusions to the always topical Nazism, I strangely find myself yawning, not knowing exactly whether it's because of the length of day-long contacts or because of the pompous *Gesamtkunstwerk* of the legendary icons. Anyhow, I cannot help but let my thoughts wonder to my memories of Jani, Milan, Ervin on the brink of the eighties and critically mull over some comment by Žižek how the Laibachers were once as important as Duchamp's revolutionary urinal installed at a museum, while in his eyes they later became nothing but a simple urinal. And when his highness Peter Mlakar, truth be told, the charmer of parochial house cooks, begins his sermon to the people and the state, I seek refuge under the mighty oak, amongst the rappers, where nary an after party-goer is bothered by the fact that the thunderous bass makes it impossible to fully understand the lyrics, but "y'all already know for a fact" that fans of EMKay, Amo & Co know all the punchlines by heart.

Saturday, 25 June, 23:53

Thunder from the speakers ended the opening day and drumming and numerous workshops in the Art

parc kicked off a new, Saturday programme. Soki's drumming school kept calling drumstick spinners old and young to take their place behind the large percussion on Triglav stage and they made the audience rise with resurrected pop, rock & metal hits of decades past. And wherever you looked, acquaintances and friends kept popping up, buzzing for small talk and joyous waves of the hand. There was too much of everything around for something more in-depth – by now an annual knock on the organizers – and one had to wait until the evening, under the dome of the Judgement Tower, for music magi Marko Črnčec, Nino Mureškič and Jure Pukl, jazz cosmopolitans from our corner of the world, to come to life. The names alone, digital percussion, krin, kanjira, conga, khartal, handsonic, frame drum, wave drum, kalimba, vocoder, sounded like poetry and they certainly turned into it in Nino's magical hands, interwoven in sound with keyboards and woodwinds. And then, just as an aside and to bid you goodnight, one could listen to Toš's schticks from the Puppet Theatre even behind the wall of the market.

Sunday, 26 June, 16:07

Something tells me I have to transition into a different, more spiritual, perhaps even essayistic phase; these annual MB Dionysia are documented with as-they-appear mood swing-induced outbursts on the interwebs anyway, where they are set to remain in the cloud for all of those who wish to relive them post-fact. In the context of the permanent present, this is done by Jaša, who kicks ass on the web and is on-site at all of the different locations at once for all of those who don't feel like standing or sitting there and prefer to follow the action lying at home,

hugging their mobiles. Well, what topic would I welcome next to me on the couch on this beautiful Sunday afternoon while eager national cyclists are kicking up dirt outside my window? Should I try the profile of a typical Lent-goer or perhaps a typical non-Lent-goer? Does this festival type like the certainty of most people being on the scene while he himself is not because it gives him a somewhat heightened sense of control over the action? Or is it that he just doesn't attend the shows of certain artists because he had experienced them before somewhere? There you go, for example, I won't be attending tonight's theatre piece Čudež because it already made me laugh just recently, primarily Jaša Jamnik and Tina Gorenjak did. And I won't go to see Adi, because I've heard him many times and besides, his appearance at a friend's funeral a week ago left me deeply touched already. And Teo Collori & Momento Cigano have made my bottom jaw drop once before in Izola at Mef's, they were also rather splendid at the Borštnik award ceremony in SNG MB, and on top of that, their CD is in my rotation right now and I was in the Judgement Tower yesterday and am going to be there again tomorrow. Phew, while scanning the lines above, I immediately punch out another oops – is it proper to list cultural events in a piece for a monograph that are not explicitly noted in the festival programme? So why am I talking about bands from Prva gimnazija high school, the international MitOst, the discussion about Uršič's book at MNO, and the rendition of Bach, performed by my friend, violinist Tamara Bakardzjev, I'm about to catch at Aloysius Church? Well, I am about to head out early, five minutes to five, to hear young up-and-comers from the Con-

2020

VILINSKO MESTO

All concerts of Vilinsko mesto were livestreamed directly into the homes of concert-goers. The elves also wrote down riddles for the people, who took to the streets and squares of Maribor to find clues and answers.

12. 4. 2021

PET PRED DVANAJSTO! KULTURA ŽIVI!
(FIVE MINUTES TO MIDNIGHT! CULTURE IS ALIVE!), CONCERTS ON BALCONIES

Glasbeni balkoni (Musical Balconies) was a safe way to bring culture closer to the people again. Concerts were held on balconies and arcades once per week until mid-August 2021. The project, which was organized by Narodni dom Maribor, developed into a Slovenia-wide protest by cultural workers entitled Pet pred dvanajsto! V boju za kulturo! (Five Minutes to Midnight! Fighting for Culture) that was heard far and wide. The campaign brought together cultural institutions and individuals from all across Slovenia and warned decision-makers that people have been locked out from cultural events for too long and that artists and other cultural workers were on the brink of survival. This is why, on 29 April 2021 at precisely 11.55, balconies all around the countries erupted in the sounds of music, recitations, and dance shows.



Igor Leonardi, 2021

servatory of Music and Ballet play jazz standards in the park, and later to the little fountains on Glavni trg where Sweet tooth trio is about to perform. Goodness, how pushy are proper nouns in overshadowing common nouns; will the latter, like sun, grass, children, water, air, freedom, be able to withstand the pressure of advertisers with personal and brand names? And concerning synchronicity – what timing of this writing should I put down, its beginning at 16.17 or its end at 16.34?

Monday, 27 June, 4:16

At the time when dreams are deepest, when night is almost no longer night and not quite day yet, the bricks in the walls of Narodni dom begin to murmur and give themselves over to reminiscing and gossiping. “That gentleman in the back row at last night’s comedy kept laughing at all the wrong places ...” “Yes, it was almost exactly like half a century ago when he laughed at some top singer, who fell into the cymbals amidst the fog, the fog that was all around us ...” “And later this very gentleman performed at the same stage quite a few times ...” “When he was just a teenager at prom ...” “And then he danced as a professor at proms of other generations ...” “I remember him most when he was just an ordinary solider, when we were still hugging the JNA,” one of them huffs from behind the plaster, as if it carried a covert listening device, “he was called into some officers meeting and he wasn’t even the right guy, someone else with the same name should have been there, but the municipality mixed up the invitation cards and he was privy to classified reports on the security situation in the city as an in-

significant reservist; the captains and majors were fuming at students who wrote in their paper that the country is going mad and he thought that he had to be in that meeting because he had signed his name under such opinions ...” “Aha, this is why he was so fond of the theatre of the absurd whenever he directed an event in here ...” A voice came from the ceiling, a brick who has heard much of everything in the history of the building, a hook carrying the chandelier in his forehead, and his sentences ending with German syntax: “Enough, we’ve a long Monday ahead, off to bed!”

Wednesday, 29 June, 2:07

The highlights of the decades of Lent, with all of the global art royalties who have graced the city, can be effectively posted on a few nice billboards, and the nine billboards on the fence of MNO are a testament to that. Just like the t-shirt that Šega wears in the backstage of the Jurček Stage. The group at the table are making wisecracks, and I ask him to stretch out a bit and show whatever’s below the Living colour script on his belly. Aha, Macy Gray; it was pouring cats and dogs, the audience didn’t mind, they were glad to dance under umbrellas and without them, this year’s weather is much easier on the festival despite the occasional humidity ... VIP clientele under Vinag’s blue logo is philosophizing and imbibing, imbibing and philosophizing ... Pigac disturbs their conversations with his shutter clicks, Črnič is passing anecdotes from the organization’s history, Škvorc is inviting everyone to stand-up shows in Vetrinjski dvor, Ženko is waiting patiently for the time to come to start rigging up the sound system

for Folkart on Štukelj square ... The always excellent Duo Atanasovski and guests are ferrying souls from under the Water Tower over the river and into the sky ... And when the evening is slowly ending, Erik Troufaz and his trumpet deliver professional blows into the magnificent midnight at the LGM auditorium ... The hours captured in these few sentences, immortalized in the point that once they were and are no more yet still remain, that they will continue to shine as the highest of lights alias “highlights”.

Thursday, 30 June, 23:52

Spent the afternoon listening to the record Space Sailors in Reflections & Odysseys by trio Rymden, who had the LGM auditorium mightily shook until midnight last night. These global sounds even made yesterday’s rather solid covers, such as Grooveland’s *Higher Ground* by Stevie Wonder in the Triglav park or Pohorje ekspres’ renditions of the Joplin, Hendrix, Geldof tray over the bay at the tower, pale in comparison. The voice of the breeze through the canopies was no match for the vocals of Darja Švajger tonight, which made it absolutely necessary to round up an evening spent with her with a bottoms-up and a bear hug. The street theatre, however, the weakest point of this year’s cultural bacchanalia, couldn’t be saved even by the rubber men and women hanging from jack lifts over Glavni trg or the acrobats sitting on mountains of stacked chairs next to the Plague Monument without any regard for danger. True, the culprit of this current critical stance toward the ecstasy of communication is most likely the ball-in-pinball-machine syndrome; if one is constantly bombarded by attractions from all sides, the stress

2021

**PRIZMA AWARD FOR COMMUNICATION
CAMPAIGN PET PRED DVANAJSTO!
KULTURA ŽIVI!**

Slovensko društvo za odnose z javnostmi (Slovenian Public Relations Society) awarded Narodni dom Maribor the Prizma award for excellence in communication in 2021 for its communications platform Kultura živi!

11. 9. 2021

**100 DRUMMERS WITH SOKI
AT LENT AFTER LENT**

Marko Soršak – Soki celebrated his 30th anniversary of being a drummer and cooperating with the most prominent Slovenian musicians and bands with a concert on Glavni trg.

2022

30TH FESTIVAL LENT

Jaša Lorenčič summarized all the action of Festival Lent’s 30th anniversary in a journal that is available at



of not wanting to fall in the hole leads one sooner or later to react only mechanically and this surely needs to break out somewhere. For example, by not being able to muster even a single smile to reward the efforts of performers at the s. c. ladies night stand-up gig in Vetrinjski dvor. Or, while listening to the lukewarm pop novelties of Bajaga i Instruktori on Štukelj square, by being the most enthused when having a long stare-down with some poodle that was obviously interested in a man leaning against the wall and calmly sipping on his beer.

Saturday, 2 July, 11:03

“Boki poky, where’ve you been?” “Cila myla, I saw Kutu, Gustafi, stand-up and the Police Orchestra.” “Andhowwazit?” “People were in full electro trance mode for Kutu, dancing ...” “You as well?” “No ...” “Well, what ...” “I had a seat, swiping on my mobile ...” “You’re not normal ...” “If you listened to Šimek, you’d know what’s not normal ...” “Danke, nein, what about at Drava ...” “We danced to Gustafi in Rovinj, remember, Cumbia Istriana, THC balun?” “Was that the time when we headed into the wrong direction thinking we were going in the right one?” “No, that was on Hvar ...” “What about Art Camp?” “The best, meditated at a super spot, on a bench somewhere between Reiki masseuses and Roma mothers with strollers ...” “What did you like most?” “Police Orchestra, when they played You are always on my mind ...”

Sunday, 3 July, 8:49

Štajerska rejoices, rendition by Predin, Mef, and a bay full of in-the-mood swans, and soon, at midnight,

the formal end of lenting, without fireworks thanks to those with a brain. And just like that, the Sunday morning thought that pops up after the after-party how a lot of things can be done, but nothing has to be done, is mixed with the realization drawn from experience that euphoria sooner or later slide into more balanced positions and then, either gradually or suddenly, into their very own contradictions. The cancellation of last night’s jazz concert caused by a strike of Oslo airport staff is thus perhaps a symbolic affirmation and announcement of rising civil unrest due to wealth disparities, inflation, energy, food, migration, viruses ... And the nice weather enjoyed by this year’s festival is most likely a harbinger of upcoming climatic drought ... Including a draught in sponsors’ budgets earmarked for this and the other festival; by selling off our common jewellery to line their pockets, indigenous idiots have also wasted the resources for such events to operate, as supranational corporations commonly don’t care for growing white chrysanthemums to be worn in the button-holes of national cultures. Anyhow, it’s time for me to go over what made it onto these pages in these past days in the prescribed length and genre ... And yes, hi there, I’m making an intentional exception not to delete all the interjections I availed myself of in this ad-hoc minimalism, well, ha ha, woah, there we go, phew, oops, oy, uh-huh ... Finally, it is only proper, right, and necessary to extend to Narodni dom and its team, who are taking care of a plethora of cultural institutions in the city, my heartiest congratulations on their anniversary, a toast, and many more years to come, pop, hiss, ride onward for our native land with cultural enthusiasm.



Festival Lent is a significant part of Maribor’s comprehensive offering and image and important for its reputation. I came here armed with the most detailed tourist guide to Slovenia in English (Lonely Planet, A/N) that devotes plenty of room to the festival, which is becoming better year after year. There can be no doubt that Festival Lent needs to be given plenty of credit for putting Maribor on the tourist map.

*Sir Robert Scott,
Chairman of the Selection Panel
for ECoC Maribor 2012*

2022

**EXHIBITION NARODNI DOM MARIBOR
SREDIŠČE KULTURNEGA DOGAJANJA
(CENTRE OF CULTURAL SCENE)**

The exhibition, created by Narodni dom Maribor in cooperation with Multimedijски center KIBLA, presents, aside from thirty years of history of the institute Cultural and Event Centre Narodni dom Maribor, the story of more than a hundred years of Narodni dom in comic strip format created by Gašper Krajnc.

15. 10. 2022

**CEREMONIAL ACADEMY CELEBRATING
THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF
CULTURAL AND EVENT CENTRE
NARODNI DOM MARIBOR**

Premiere of documentary film Za vsakega nekaj (Something for everyone) directed by Bojan Labović and presentation of monograph Mesto, dom, vrata. Narodni dom Maribor – 30 let (The Gate to the City - 30 Years of Narodni dom Maribor) that, aside from featuring a broad variety of chronological documents and photographs, is a place for more than 30 individuals to reflect and create, ranging from those who helped shape Narodni dom Maribor to visitors and fellow travellers.





Quadro, eVenti Verticali, 2022, Marko Pigac

Thank you