



The Patron of the 2017 Ljubljana Festival is the Mayor of the City of Ljubljana, Mr Zoran Janković.

PRESS RELEASE

Ljubljana, 20 July 2017

**LJUBLJANA FESTIVAL – CULTURAL HUB
AT THE HEART OF YOUR SUMMER CULTURAL EXPERIENCE**

*The varied and interesting programme of this year's Ljubljana Festival continues in August. Opera lovers are particularly well served. The programme includes the chamber opera **Svadba (The Wedding)** by Serbian-born composer Ana Sokolović, Puccini's **Madama Butterfly**, a staple of the opera repertoire, and the Slovenian premieres of the Mariinsky Theatre's productions of the third and fourth parts of Wagner's immense Ring cycle, conducted by Valery Gergiev. The Slovene Philharmonic String Chamber Orchestra will be appearing with a series of outstanding soloists, among them accordionist Richard Galliano, violinist Dmitry Sitkovetsky, flautist Boris Bizjak and UK-based Slovene soprano Nika Gorič. The programme also includes chamber music from flautists Michael Martin Kofler and Martin Belič accompanied by pianist Stephan Kiefer, Trio Astra with pianist Gian Maria Bonino, and the contemporary music ensemble MD7. A more informal atmosphere will be provided by Marko Hatlak and singer-songwriter Iztok Mlakar, Vlado Kreslin with his traditional Križanke concert, and Elvis tribute band Sam's Fever with a concert dedicated to the King of Rock'n'Roll. Fans of musical theatre will have another opportunity to enjoy the hit Slovene musical **Vesna** and sing along with all-time classics of the genre at a concert dedicated to **Highlights from West End and Broadway Musicals**. Finally, the closing concert of the 65th Ljubljana Festival, featuring great works from the classical repertoire performed by St Petersburg's Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra under legendary conductor Valery Gergiev, is an experience not to be missed.*

Great operatic works

Svadba (The Wedding) is a chamber opera in the Serbian language for six female voices a cappella and occasional percussion accompaniment. The music and libretto are by the Serbian-born, Montreal-based composer **Ana Sokolović**. The story centres around young bride-to-be Milica, as she spends the night before her wedding with her friends, preparing for her impending marriage. The work received its premiere in Toronto in 2011 and since 2015 has been travelling around European festivals in a new staging from the Festival

d'Aix. This is its first performance in Slovenia.
(22 August at 8.00 p.m., SNG Opera & Ballet Ljubljana)

The **China National Opera from Beijing** returns to Ljubljana, this time with Giacomo Puccini's popular opera **Madama Butterfly**. Since its foundation in 1952, the China National Opera has worked hard to ensure the highest level of professionalism and has consistently encouraged the development of new musical talents. In charge of proceedings is the musical director and chief conductor of the China National Opera, **Yang Yang**, one of the most active young conductors in China. The opera is directed by **Li Dandan**. The roles of the betrayed Japanese geisha Cio-Cio-San and her great love Lt Pinkerton are sung by **Yao Hong** and **Li Shuang**.
(23 and 24 August at 8.00 p.m., Cankarjev Dom)

Two monumental music dramas by German opera revolutionary Richard Wagner – **Siegfried** and **Götterdämmerung** (Twilight of the Gods) – receive their first staging in Slovenia. To mark the bicentenary of Wagner's birth in 2013, the **Mariinsky Theatre** and **Valery Gergiev** brought the first two parts of his great tetralogy to the Ljubljana Festival. This year they return with what promise to be magnificent stagings of the third and fourth parts, thus completing the Ring Cycle, the pinnacle of Wagner's compositional oeuvre.
(29 and 30 August at 6.00 p.m., Cankarjev Dom)

Orchestras and conductors

The concluding evening of the 65th Ljubljana Festival will be a memorable one, thanks to the presence of St Petersburg's **Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra**, one of the oldest ensembles in Russia, and its famed conductor **Valery Gergiev**, who has been the chief conductor and artistic director of the Mariinsky Theatre since 1988. With a programme including works by Beethoven, Prokofiev and Shostakovich, the orchestra will be joined by a rising star of the piano firmament, the Uzbek pianist **Behzod Abduraimov**.
(31 August at 8.00 p.m., Cankarjev Dom)

Renowned soloists

More flute music will be offered by the well-known Austrian flautist **Michael Martin Kofler** and the acclaimed young Slovene flautist **Martin Belič**. Both are members of the Munich Philharmonic. Accompanying them on the piano will be **Stephan Kiefer**, a member of the Radio Filharmonisch Orkest from the Netherlands. The concert programme focuses on the works of Theobald Böhm, a composer who was himself a flautist and who made a significant contribution to the development of the flute as we know it today.
(2 August at 8.00 p.m., Križevniška Church, Križanke)

Also appearing with the **Slovene Philharmonic String Chamber Orchestra** are French accordion and bandoneon virtuoso and world-renowned composer **Richard Galliano** (1 August at 8.00 p.m., Slovenian Philharmonic) and the internationally active Slovene soprano **Nika Gorič**, who is currently completing a doctorate in the opera department at the Royal Academy of Music in London, where she was recently awarded the prestigious Queen's Commendation for Excellence as the best all-round student of the year. (3 August at 8.00 p.m., Križevniška Church, Križanke)

Violinist and conductor **Dmitry Sitkovetsky** has appeared at major international music festivals in Salzburg, Lucerne, Edinburgh, Istanbul and Newport. He performs twice at this year's Ljubljana Festival, as both soloist and conductor: first as a soloist with the **Slovene Philharmonic String Chamber Orchestra**, with works by Tchaikovsky, Dohnányi and Bartók (7 August at 8.00 p.m., Križanke Church), and then sharing the stage with the outstanding Slovene flautist **Boris Bizjak**. (9 August at 8.00 p.m., Križevniška Church, Križanke)

Renowned Italian pianist and harpsichordist **Gian Maria Bonino** comes to the Ljubljana Festival with a programme drawn from the classical piano repertoire of Haydn and Beethoven, which he will perform on a fortepiano built in 1803 (Anonymous, after Johann Schanz). (8 August at 6.00 p.m., Križanke Church) On the same evening he will also perform with **Trio Astra**, consisting of three outstanding young string players from Moldova and Italy. For this performance, Bonino will play a fortepiano from Schumann's time, built in 1845. (8 August at 8.00 p.m., Križevniška Church, Križanke)

With its very first concert on 20 November 2002, the new line-up of **MD7**, which describes itself as an "ensemble for contemporary music", set out the path it intended to follow: as the interpreter of works that consistently take into account the specific make-up of the ensemble and are written for it. The founder and artistic director of the ensemble is the composer Pavel Mihelčič. MD7's jubilee concert will be directed by the acclaimed American conductor **Steven Loy**, who has lived and worked in Slovenia for a number of years.

(28 August at 8.00 p.m., Knights' Hall, Križanke)

Musicals

The programme of the 65th Ljubljana Festival includes another chance to see the musical **Vesna**, which was premiered in June this year. The new musical is the work of the proven creative team that brought the hit musical *Blossoms in Autumn* to the stage three years ago. As the summer draws to a close, the story – adapted from Slovene cinema's first romantic comedy – reminds us once again of the green of spring.

(16 and 17 August at 8.30 p.m., Križanke)

Don't miss the evening of **Highlights from West End and Broadway Musicals**, featuring popular show tunes from the two world capitals of musical theatre. Accompanied by the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra, four experienced soloists will sing a selection of well-known extracts from musicals, including many legendary hits. The orchestra will be conducted by **Robert Purvis**, who in addition to his many years of experience conducting musicals can boast several collaborations with Italian opera companies.

(21 August at 8.30 p.m., Križanke)

For a relaxed summer atmosphere

Pioneers of tango music in Slovenia, accordionist **Marko Hatlak** and his group **FUNtango** have developed their own distinctive style that is both fiery and sentimental. This year they will be appearing alongside the popular songwriter, actor and singer **Iztok Mlakar**, whose first performance with Marko Hatlak last year, featuring a selection of pieces from

his own repertoire, was rapturously received. Hatlak and FUNtango have expanded the "new tango" repertoire with unique arrangements of great classical works, the musette of French master accordionist Richard Galliano, and Hatlak's original compositions.
(10 August at 8.30 p.m., Križanke)

Slovene rock and folk music legend **Vlado Kreslin** returns to the Ljubljana Festival for his now-traditional concert. As always, he will be joined by an interesting selection of guests. Given that the recipe of previous years remains unchanged, we can once again expect a musical treat.
(25 August at 8.30 p.m., Križanke)

As we mark the 40th anniversary of the death of Elvis Presley, we remember the biggest hits of the King of Rock'n'Roll. Formed in 2012 with the stated aim of reviving **Elvis's** music through their own interpretations, Slovene group **Sam's Fever** were proclaimed Best Elvis Presley Cover Band in Europe at the 2015 European Elvis Festival in Bad Nauheim, Germany. They will appear with Jazzva, a Slovene a cappella vocal ensemble with a growing reputation, and the energetic accompaniment of the RTV Slovenia Big Band, enhanced for the occasion by a string section. The evening will be further enlivened by the dancers of swing group Retronom.
(29 August at 8.30 p.m., Križanke)

We would like to express our sincere thanks to the **City of Ljubljana** and its mayor **Zoran Jankovič**, without whose generous support it would not be possible to put on a festival programme lasting more than two months. We would also like to express our gratitude to all our sponsors and supporters. Thanks are also due to the media for their coverage of our events, and to all who attend the festival.

Thank you for taking the time to discover the Ljubljana Festival programme.

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The founder of the Ljubljana Festival is the City of Ljubljana, which also provides financial support.



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The founder of the Ljubljana Festival is the City of Ljubljana. The Festival has been a member of the European Festivals Association (EFA) since 1977.