



The founder of the Ljubljana Festival is the City of Ljubljana

The patron of the 2019 Ljubljana Festival is the Mayor of the City of Ljubljana, Mr Zoran Janković.

PRESS RELEASE

Ljubljana, 11 September 2019

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

SUMMER IN THE COMPANY OF TOP ARTISTS

The summer draws to a close and with it the 67th edition of the Ljubljana Festival, which offered a rich variety of genres and the company of renowned foreign and local artists. Among the unforgettable highlights were the appearance by the legendary tenor Plácido Domingo in the role of conductor, the official opening with Verdi's Aida and thoroughbred Lipizzaner horses from Lipica Stud Farm, flamenco evenings with the passionate María Pagés, concerts dedicated to two of the greatest bass guitarists Marcus Miller and Stanley Clarke, opera arias performed by Thomas Hampson and Elena Mosuc, the modern dance company Aterballetto, Mahler's Second Symphony with soloists Valentina Farcas and Bettina Ranch, the most beautiful choirs performed by the Munich Radio Orchestra with the Bavarian Radio Chorus, Russian musicals Onegin's Demon and The Master and Margarita, the "mirror" interpretation of Verdi's La Traviata by the Teatro Regio from Turin, the wonderful prima ballerina Svetlana Zakharova, the farewell tour of Zubin Mehta with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, and many other exceptional chamber concerts. In just over two months, the festival included more than 88 events featuring more than 4,000 artists from more than 40 countries. For the fourth year in a row, the Ljubljana Festival also took place on pleasure boats on the river, offering a unique view of the city and performances by students from the Academy of Music and the Conservatory of Music and Ballet in Ljubljana, while a series of masterclasses by internationally acclaimed professors was this year's addition to the festival. In the closing days of the festival, Marko Hatlak will join forces with guitarist Vlatko Stefanovski to present his new music project on September 21. For lovers of fine arts, an exhibition of works by the sculptor Zmago Posega will be on display until September 30. We end the 67th Ljubljana Festival with even more enthusiasm, with sold-out venues and satisfied listeners indicating that we have attracted many new visitors this year as well. We should not, of course, forget the loyalty of our sponsors and the support we receive from the City of Ljubljana and its

Mayor Zoran Janković, which enable us to invest in an even more impressive programme with every new edition.

Looking back

The festival summer was very successful, offering more than 88 events that were seen by more than 62,000 people from Slovenia and abroad in just over two months. Despite the occasional storm, all the events were successfully carried out. Moreover, we were able to enhance the programme in August with a concert by the Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra from St Petersburg, conducted by world-renowned Valery Gergiev.

Records and highlights

This year's Ljubljana Festival was again marked by records and notable events. The largest number of journalists and TV crews were present at the opening event, the performance of Verdi's famous opera *Aida*, which was staged especially for Congress Square and jointly produced with the Croatian National Theatre Split, the Slovene National Theatre Maribor, the Slovenian Philharmonic, and the Lipica Stud Farm. This year's Summer Night concert was dedicated to the legend of Slovene popular song Marjana Deržaj; Vlado Kreslin and guests celebrated the 28th anniversary of his first Ljubljana Festival appearance at Križanke; Dmitry Shishkin performed with the Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra from St Petersburg, while his teacher Epifanio Comis performed with the Ensemble Goffriller; two musicals inspired by literature, *Onegin's Demon* and *The Master and Margarita*, were performed in Slovenia for the first time – with Sergei Shilovskiy-Bulgakov, Mikhail Bulgakov's great-grandson, involved in the production of the latter. Križanke saw the Slovene premiere of the musical *Grease* and the final performance of the Slovene production of the musical *Mamma Mia!*, while the staging of the *La Traviata* by the Teatro Regio from Turin involved the installation of a huge mirror, weighing about two tons.

We also organised presentations at home and abroad: at the City of Ljubljana offices with Ljubljana Mayor Zoran Janković, a member of the management board of Zavarovalnica Sava Miha Pahuljet, the general manager of *Delo* Andrej Kren, Petrol's head of corporate communications Aleksander Salkič, a member of the management board of Telekom Slovenije Vido Žurga, Krka's head of public relations Ljudmila Kastelec, the general manager of Energetika Ljubljana Samo Lozej, the CEO of Trimo Trebnje Božo Černil, and the CEO of BTC Jože Mermal; at the Consulate General of the Republic of Slovenia in Klagenfurt in the presence of Consul General Milan Predan; in Zagreb at the Palace Dverce with conductor Ivo Lipanović, director Dražen Sirišćević, and Zagreb's head of the education department Ivica Lovrić; in Trieste with Oscar Cecchi and Tom Vrana; in Lipica, which we reached from Ljubljana with a special Festival Train courtesy of the national rail operator Slovenske Železnice, with Sežana Mayor David Škabar, the acting CEO of Holding Kobilarna Lipica Lorela Dobrinja, the director of Slovenske Železnice's passenger division Boštjan Koren, and Bojan Pretnar; and in the Knights' Hall at Križanke, in Pergola, and in the Radisson Blu Plaza Hotel Ljubljana in the presence of other performers and event organisers.

Other points of interest

We are very happy with the extraordinary response from the media this year: more than 500 journalists, photographers and camera operators obtained accreditation for the events of the 67th Ljubljana Festival and, between them, contributed more than 1,750 articles and news items in the period from 19 March to 5 September, while the membership of the Ljubljana Festival Club rose by 2,540 new members this year, the highest figure to date. We offered live broadcasts of event openings and press conferences on our website, our YouTube channel, and the Ljubljana Festival Facebook page, and we also posted information about events on our Instagram account.

Twenty years have passed since the International Fine Arts Colony was established; we opened the exhibition *Hommage à Zmago Posega*, immortalising the sculptor's ten years of creative work; the concert of the Milan La Scala Chamber Orchestra was held as part of the tARTini project, financed by the Slovenia-Italy cross-border cooperation programme; for the first time, we organised masterclasses which took place under the artistic direction of Branimir Slokar; we deepened our partnership with the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra, which has become the resident orchestra of the Ljubljana Festival; and we significantly expanded our collection of festival brochures with the Festival Restaurant Guide. Festival premieres included: the Russian musicals *The Master and Margarita* and *Onegin's Demon*; the opening performance of Verdi's *Aida*, staged especially for Congress Square in collaboration with the Croatian National Theatre Split, the Slovene National Theatre Maribor, the Slovenian Philharmonic, and the Lipica Stud Farm; and the play *Life is a Circus*, which was produced in collaboration with Zavarovalnica Sava, the main sponsor of the 67th Ljubljana Festival, and URI Soča.

MAESTRO ZUBIN MEHTA RECEIVES THE GOLDEN ORDER OF MERIT

The President of the Republic of Slovenia Borut Pahor conferred the **opening concert Golden Order of Merit** on **maestro Zubin Mehta**, one of the greatest conductors of the modern age, who earned the decoration for his outstanding contributions to musical creativity and inspiring efforts to connect people and nations with music. Mehta first introduced himself to Slovene audiences six decades ago, when he visited Ljubljana at the invitation of Marijan Lipovšek, the then director of the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra. At that occasion, Mehta conducted the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra. He returned to Slovenia in 2003 and performed with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra and opera singer Marijana Lipovšek. He performed with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra three more times at the Ljubljana Festival – in 2007, 2015 and 2019 – while in 2008 he conducted the Orchestra of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino.

New project by Marko Hatlak

September will be brightened with a concert by Marko Hatlak, whose new project, the **Marko Hatlak BAND**, ventures into pop, Latin, funk and rock. Drawing inspiration from Jamiroquai, Stevie Wonder, Michel Camilo, Prince and Jože Privšek, he translates this into an energetic, entertaining and rhythmic blend of youthful dance music. Hatlak has dabbled in various genres ever since the start of his performing career – expanding his range constantly, from classical and contemporary to tango and world music. In the Marko Hatlak BAND project he is both accordionist and vocalist, as well as composer and lyricist. The music has a genuine band feel, with plenty of virtuoso passages and rhythm. To play it, Hatlak has put together a group of top musicians – on drums,

percussion, bass, keyboards and violin – and allows himself to be inspired by their virtuoso playing and positive energy. The onstage chemistry among the performers is playful and occasionally humorous. The concert will also be an opportunity to hear songs from Hatlak's new album *Ko ni Noč in ni Dan*. With the great guitarist **Vlatko Stefanovski** joining the band on stage as a special guest, an unforgettable musical experience is guaranteed. The group released their first album in autumn 2018 on Dallas Records.

(21 September at 8.00 p.m., Križanke)

A bright future

We end the 67th Ljubljana Festival with even more passion for our work, and the belief that we have once again enthused many new visitors. The greatest evidence of our success is the fact that the festival is able to boast a carefully chosen programme, first-class performances by some of the world's leading artists, and ticket prices that are accessible to a wide range of people. These are the reasons why the festival sells out, and why it also attracts visitors from neighbouring countries. A further contribution to its success comes from the numerous special offers available, including packets of tickets for multiple events and a 40% discount for young people still in education (a scheme that allows us to help raise the cultural awareness of the younger generation). We should not, of course, forget the loyalty of our sponsors and the support we receive from the City of Ljubljana and its Mayor Zoran Jankovič, which enable us to invest in even more impressive programmes.

It is in this spirit that we are already preparing the programme for the forthcoming 68th Ljubljana Festival. Until then, you are cordially invited to the **27th edition of the Young Virtuosi cycle**, which begins on 17 October 2019, **the 35rd Slovenian Music Days**, running from 15 to 22 April 2020, and the **Winter Festival**, which takes place from 2 to 6 February 2020 and will help raise Ljubljana's profile as a top cultural destination even during the winter months. Thank you for your support and interest in the Ljubljana Festival, and we wish you a pleasant autumn.

More information and tickets at ljubljanafestival.si.

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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.