TAMBURA: A CROATIAN FOLK IDIOM

By John Morovich

When we think of tambura music, we imagine swirling dancers in lavishly embroidered garments on the dance floor or a large group of people encircling an orchestra singing with joy. It is hard to imagine a Croatian gathering without tambura. There was a time however when the tambura orchestra did not exist and even a time when tambura could have likely died out.

The tambura, also called tamburica or tamburitza, is a family of stringed instruments that includes the bisernica and brač that play the melody and harmony, bugarija that plays chords, berda that functions as a bass, and the cello, which ties the melodic structure and bass notes together often with ascending and descending scales. Contrary to popular thought, the tambura orchestra did not originate in Croatian villages, rather in the cities.

Prior to 1850, the tambura was a solo instrument that could be used to accompany a singer, or a group of kolo dancers or played for the musician’s own amusement. But during the Croatian Renaissance (Hrvatski Preporod), a sense of Croatian national identity arose and a fellow by the name of Pajo Kolarić decided to form the first tambura orchestra in the city of Osijek, in Eastern Croatia. Kolarić and others at the time saw that other people in Europe had national instruments – Italians had the mandolin, Spanish had the guitar, Russians had the balalaika, and so on. The once primitive stringed instrument got a make-over. Various sizes and shapes with standardized tuning were designed in order to have each instrument in the family cover an octave of a piano.

Young men who were apprentices or students in the cities, then brought the tambura back to their villages. The new musical “fad” in large part replaced bagpipes, drums, flutes but was in some areas integrated into violin orchestras.

Tamburica music enjoyed increased popularity in the years between the two World Wars and was encouraged by Seljačka Sloga, the cultural arm of the Hrvatska Seljačka Stranka (Croatian Peasant Party).

See TAMBURA, page 4
Dear Fellow Croatian Americans and Friends of Croatia,

This year we are celebrating the 15th anniversary of CroatiaFest. Our annual Pacific Northwest festival of Croatian heritage and culture has become a first rate event.

CroatiaFest is unique in that attendance is free. At CroatiaFest, the public at large gets a glimpse of the beauty and richness of Croatian culture, and the Croatian American community’s enthusiasm.

This year’s CroatiaFest will begin, as always, with a Vigil Mass at St. Joseph Catholic Church on Saturday, Oct. 6. Following the Mass will be the annual Croatian Dance Party at the Russian Community Center, with out-of-town as well as local entertainment, dancing, a sing-along and Croatian food. Two outstanding Tambura bands will be coming from Pittsburgh and Chicago and will play both Saturday night and on CroatiaFest’s main stage on Sunday.

CroatiaFest’s main event will take place on Sunday, Oct. 7 at the Seattle Center Armory.

CroatiaFest will officially kick off with a morning Donors Brunch for contributors, followed by opening ceremonies at noon. Donors who contribute $100 or more to CroatiaFest will have an opportunity to meet Croatia’s Ambassador to the United States at the brunch.

CroatiaFest will feature all-day performances by some of the finest Croatian music and dance ensembles from the United States and Canada. The Croatian Ambassador will present the 2018 Outstanding Croatian Awards. And this year, an exhibit in the Art Gallery will include photographs of Croatia taken by local Pacific Northwest photographers.

Other highlights will be a wine tasting featuring Croatian-American vintners, authentic Croatian food booths inside and outside the Armory, Croatian cooking demonstrations, and live

See CHAIRMAN, page 5

CroatiaFest Coordinators: Cathryn Morovich and Kristen LeMieux
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CroatiaFest Coordinator 2004-2009: Alma Franulovich Plancich

CroatiaFest is produced by the local Croatian-American community and is part of Seattle Center’s Festál, a year-long series of cultural events that honors the richness and diversity of our region.
CroatiaFest 2018 will feature two extraordinary tamburitza bands: Sinovi Orchestra of Chicago and Tamburaški Sastav Ponoć of Pittsburgh. Many of you have had the pleasure of being entertained by Sinovi Orchestra of Chicago. This very popular band has performed in Seattle at several past CFU picnics and was the headline band at CroatiaFest 2011. Three musicians are graduates of the famed Duquesne Tamburitzans.

The members of Tamburaški Sastav Ponoć of Pittsburgh are also graduates of Duquesne Tamburitzans. This will be their first appearance at CroatiaFest.

Each group has a unique style and repertoire. Both bands will perform at the Saturday night kick off dance and sing-along at the Russian Community Center on Oct. 6. Doors open at 6 p.m. Admission is just $10 at the door. A la carte dinner will be prepared by the Seattle Jr. Tamburitzan parents. No host bar will feature Karlovacko Pivo, slivovica, wine and a variety of soft drinks. The dance and sing-along party will start at 7 p.m. and end at 11:30 p.m.

Sinovi and Ponoć will also be appearing on the main stage at CroatiaFest on Sunday, Oct. 7. The schedule of performances will be announced in the CroatiaFest Fall newsletter and will be posted on the CroatiaFest website in the coming months.

More detailed information about these two talented groups will appear in the Fall CroatiaFest newsletter.

Would you like to recognize someone who has contributed to preserving the rich traditions and culture of the Croatians? You have an opportunity to make your voice heard by submitting a nomination for this wonderful award. Each year the CroatiaFest Board of Directors seeks nominations for the “Outstanding Croatian Award.” The winner will be honored by the Croatian Ambassador and our own Croatian Honorary Consul, Dr. Frank Brozovich, at the festival.

The award criteria are:

- A person from the Croatian community who has demonstrated leadership and commitment to preserving and sharing the rich and beautiful traditions and culture of Croatia with people in our region and around the world.
- Someone who has worked with others over their lifetime to keep the Croatian heritage a living tradition in the Pacific Northwest.
- A person who has created gathering places for Croatians to share their cultural traditions and who has educated the broader community about Croatia and its traditions.
- One who has worked to insure that the Croatian culture is visible and present in the American fabric of all cultures.

To nominate, submit the form at www.CroatiaFest.org.

Past recipients:
- Maria Franulovich Petrish, Anacortes
- Richard L. Major, Seattle
- Alma Franulovich Plancich, Seattle
- John Petrinovich, Tacoma
- John A. Morovich, Seattle
CROATIAN CONSULAR DAYS

Start planning ahead for Consular Days at CroatiaFest! This is your one chance to schedule an appointment in Seattle, rather than traveling to Los Angeles for Croatian government business.

This year, the Consul General of the Republic of Croatia, Siniša Grgić from Los Angeles, will have two staff members on site to allow for more appointments and document processing.

This is a tremendous opportunity to bring applications, notarize, certify or renew your Croatian documents, passports, fingerprints, visas or citizenship. To prepare for your appointment, please check on the Consulate’s website, www.us.mvp.hr, to ensure you bring all documentation and materials necessary for processing.

PLEASE NOTE! Croatian citizenship applications require an extensive amount of paperwork, gathered and prepared in advance. Review the website, contact the Consulate General’s office as soon as possible and start now to take advantage of this tremendous opportunity!

To make an appointment or ask questions, contact Petra Radojević in the Los Angeles Consular Office at 310-477-1009, ext. 4 or crocons.los-angeles@mvep.hr.

We extend a heartfelt thank you Consul General and the Consul Staff for once again partnering with CroatiaFest and for their dedication to ensuring accessibility to the consulate services!

OPPORTUNITIES FOR DONORS

GiveBIG

Mark your calendars for GiveBIG on May 9! Join CroatiaFest in fundraising to help continue the preservation and education of Croatian culture for future generations of Croatian Americans and the public.

GiveBIG is a ONE-DAY, online charitable event put on by The Seattle Foundation helping nonprofits in the Greater Seattle area to raise money.

To help support CroatiaFest, please go to givebig.seattlefoundation.org on May 9 and donate to CroatiaFest! For any questions on donating, please contact us at info@croatiafest.org.

Souvenir Programs

Our souvenir program receives rave reviews from other Festál participants and Croatian organizations throughout the United States and Canada. The program is funded solely by advertisers. You can advertise your business or congratulate family or friends for special events in their lives: graduation, marriage, birth of a child or grandchild, etc. Over 1,000 programs are passed out free of charge to festival attendees. Your ad will appear for one year on the CroatiaFest website under the “Advertisers” link.

Advertising in this beautiful publication costs $500 for a full page, $300 for a half page, $200 for a quarter page, and $75 for a 2-inch-by-2-inch ad. All proceeds support CroatiaFest. Call Mark Ruljancich 425-898-3598 if you have questions or to place or renew an ad.

Tax Deductibility

With the passage of new tax legislation, there has been some confusion regarding the deductibility of contributions. You can still deduct your donation to CroatiaFest if you itemize your deductions on your 2018 tax return, rather than take the standard deduction. CroatiaFest is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit corporation and qualifies as a charitable deduction.

TAMBURA

Continued from page 1

Compositions for full tambura orchestras were composed for concert settings and were published and distributed all over Croatia and to the United States and Canada. At this time, the largest mass Croatian immigration to the U.S. was happening, and the young immigrant men wanted a connection to the old homeland for themselves and for their young families. Tambura orchestras began to pop up wherever there were large immigrant populations (Pittsburgh, Chicago, New York, San Francisco) and even in the small mining towns. Washington State was no exception, and by the 1930s there were at least three active groups, including one that rehearsed in the Pippich grocery store in the Riverside Neighborhood in West Seattle, Bellingham and Roslyn.

78-RPM recordings of Croatian music were being released by Columbia records and tambura orchestrations were being arranged by Rudolph Crnkovich. Soon there was a common repertoire, uniquely Croatian American, as many of the immigrants were hearing these songs for the first time. In 1937 The Duquesne University Tamburitzans were formed and began touring across the United States, increasing the popularity. But in World War II, it was greatly curtailed as the Duquesne college-age male students were off fighting the war. This left an all female ensemble.

In the Puget Sound Region, there is a long history of tambura music, largely due to the efforts of instructors past and present including Andrew Skrivanich, Anton Susanj, Walter Susanj, Tom Krmpotich, and Pauli Boroevich. At CroatiaFest 2018 we will bring back a new and improved version of the history of tambura music and Croatian folklore, entitled Život Naš Je Američki, Srce Croatie (Our Life American, Hearts Croatian) in our historical panel section located on the 3rd floor of the Amory.
During CroatiaFest 2017, CroatiaFest’s organizing team was honored to display Plovput’s historic “Lighthouses of Croatia” exhibition of gorgeous photographs.

Because the “Lighthouses of Croatia” exhibit was so well received, one of our committee members had an idea: “Why not ask our local photographers to display their photographs of Croatia at CroatiaFest 2018?”

Many of you have traveled to Croatia and have taken beautiful pictures of the spectacular scenery, ancient architecture and colorful locals. At this year’s festival, the Art Gallery theme will be “People and Places of Croatia,” featuring your photographs. We encourage you to submit your best photographs of Croatia to our committee for consideration.

Anyone who is a native Croatian, is of Croatian origin, or is a spouse of a Croatian is eligible to participate. Photographs must be of Croatia, i.e., taken in Croatia. The art gallery committee will choose which photos best meet the theme and criteria of the exhibition.

Please email a copy of your photo entry(s) to Dunja Ruljancich at dunjarul@comcast.net before July 1. Please submit up to five photos for consideration.

Winners will be announced shortly after Sept. 1. The gallery committee will contact the selected photographers in time for them to prepare their photos for exhibition. The size of the exhibited photos must be at least 9”x 9” or larger. They should either be framed or mounted on press board and ready for hanging on display boards.

Photographer Milena Soree has agreed to display some of her beautiful photographs for the gallery exhibit. She will also have some of her prints at CroatiaFest for sale. Photographers whose work is included in the art gallery are also welcome to sell prints of the photos displayed.

So go through those photographs you took when visiting Croatia, pick out those that tell a story or capture a “People and Places of Croatia” moment – and submit your best entries!

**CHAIRMAN**

*Continued from page 2*

Skype lectures directly from Croatia. A special Croatian Consular Day will allow you to apply for Croatian citizenship, visas and/or passports, and receive firsthand advice on property ownership and inheritance.

CroatiaFest is honored to host once again Croatian Ambassador to the United States Pjer Šimunović and Croatian Consul General Siniša Grgić.

Through the years, CroatiaFest in Seattle has become one of the premier events of Croatia’s worldwide diaspora. It is possible because of your support, attendance as well as financial.

Let us keep the flame burning. Be a donor, as well as attend. All donations, large and small, are important. (A CroatiaFest donation is tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.)

Consider giving $100 or more and attending the Donors Brunch. Join us as we kick off CroatiaFest 2018 and enjoy the opportunity to talk personally with Ambassador Šimunović and Consul General Grgić.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Frank Brozovich
Honorary Croatian Consul
CROATIAFEST 2017 IN PHOTOS
CROATIAFEST 2017 IN PHOTOS
CroatiaFest 2017 embraced the theme “A Fish Swims Three Times: In the Sea, In Oil and In Wine,” wholeheartedly celebrating our maritime heritage, our agricultural heritage, and our traditional food and cuisine. Of course, in true CroatiaFest form, we also did much more!

The stage performances at the Seattle Center Armory were absolutely stunning last year with 12 wonderful local, American and Canadian dance ensembles and bands. We were privileged to have two new groups join us: Vokalna Skupina Korijeni of Milwaukee, Wisconsin and Kardinal Stepinac of New York, and we welcomed back the ever popular Rakija Bend of Chicago.

We were also honored to partner with the Croatian Ministry of Culture and Plovput Split-Croatian Lighthouse Authority to showcase 30 unique and gorgeous photos of Croatian lighthouses from along the Dalmatian coastline. From our month-long exhibition at Solo Bar on Lower Queen Anne to the display at CroatiaFest, it was a huge success! We are very grateful to the Croatian Embassy in Washington, D.C., and the Croatian Ministry of Culture for all their efforts to make this happen and bring to our community such a beautiful collection.

The Skype room was buzzing with excitement as we watched a live cooking demonstration from Konoba Dundo Maroje in Dubrovnik. Hostess Marija Grgurevic and the surprise guest appearances from some of our Seattle friends made the whole hour so much fun!

Later in the afternoon, Attorney Don Markusic of Zagreb took questions from the audience on land use and property matters. Don is an incredible resource! We received so much positive feedback from attendees stating that Don was a tremendous help explaining processes, and giving direction and advice.

The jewel of our festival this year was the beautiful art gallery displays by Lita (Ancich) Dawn and Tim M. Jovanovich. Lita’s charcoal and Tim’s linoleum block prints were displayed among vintage Croatian costumes that truly brought our gallery to life. It was an honor to have two such distinguished local Croatian-American artists share their gifts of art with the community.

Cuisine, a defining feature of our culture, was consumed again this year with our all-volunteer food vendors selling sarma, palacinke, lamb roasted on a spit, cevapcici and more – each delicious and authentic.

A separate food activity found sisters Alenka Dunatov and Neva Dominis demonstrating the art of making palacinke and passing out samples to an appreciative standing-room-only crowd. In addition, the CroatiaFest wine tasting was a wonderful experience, with opportunity to taste five unique Croatian wines (all new to the Pacific Northwest). Tasters were also treated to a guest appearance by Croatian-American vintner Frane Franicevic of Sunce Winery in Santa Rosa, California. The merchant vendors were busy all day providing thousands of attendees the opportunity to purchase a variety of Croatian gifts, imported food, olive oil, and hand-made wood and porcelain products.

Finally, however, the true heart of our festival is each and every one of you who make it all possible. You are indeed part of CroatiaFest! The energy you bring and your generous donations, coupled with the countless volunteer hours from the most dedicated bunch of people we could ever be fortunate enough to work with, allows us to make CroatiaFest the largest Croatian festival in North America!

We are gratified that this festival embraces so many aspects of our Croatian heritage, and we are extremely pleased that this community is so supportive and enthusiastic! We thank you for 2017, and we are excited about CroatiaFest 2018!
CROATIAFEST COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR

April 28  ASWC Annual Mother’s Day Luncheon  Double Tree Suites, South Center
April 28  American Croatian Club Spring Fešta  American Croatian Club, Anacortes
May 19  Seattle Jr Tamburitzan Annual Kavana  St. Bernadette Church Hall, Burien
May 25-27  Northwest Folklife Festival  Seattle Center
May 26  Croatian Celebration  Ronald Gym, Ronald, WA
June 3  The Tamburitzans of Duquesne University  Carco Theater, Renton, WA
July 21  Roslyn Croatian Picnic  Roslyn City Park, Roslyn, WA
June 16  Croatian Days  Croatian Cultural Center, Anacortes
June 29-July 1  CFU Junior Tamburitza Festival  Croatian Cultural Center, Vancouver, BC
Aug 4 -6  Anacortes Arts Festival  Lisinski Concert Hall in Zagreb, Croatia.
August 11  CFU Seattle Lodge 439 Annual Picnic  Croatian Cultural Center, Anacortes
Aug 19  Konoba  Vasa Park, Lake Sammamish
Sept. 8  Bellingham Croatian Picnic  Slavonian Hall, Tacoma
Sept 20-23  TAA Annual Extravaganza  Bellingham, WA
Nov 2-4  CFU Adult TamFEST  Burbank Marriott, Burbank, CA
Oct 6  Croatian Vigil Mass  Pittsburgh, PA
Oct 6  CroatiaFest Kick-Off Dance & Sing-Along  St. Joseph Catholic Church, Seattle
Oct 7  CroatiaFest  Russian Community Center, Seattle
Oct 18-21  Association of Croatian American Professionals National Conference  Armory at the Seattle Center
Jan 6, 2019  Fešta Tri Kralja  Silicon Valley, CA  Location TBA

DONORS, YOU DID IT!

Simply put, if it wasn’t for faithful supporters like you, we wouldn’t exist. So, thank you for supplying the funds that we need to promote Croatian culture through performances of Croatian music and dance, exhibitions of historical, genealogical and educational displays, the showing of art and traditional costumes, and of course the wonderful taste of authentic Croatian food.

Over 170 donations were made to CroatiaFest in 2017 through checks from individuals, couples, families, corporate match and GiveBig.

As a volunteer powered organization and with your donations, Croatian Americans and other nationalities witnessed a spectacular event at the Seattle Center in 2017. That event continues to grow with your ongoing support and encourages our continued commitment to putting on another extraordinary CroatiaFest on Oct. 7.

Donors who contributed $100 or more to CroatiaFest will be invited to attend our exclusive annual Sunday morning brunch at the Seattle Center Amory next to our Art Gallery from 10 a.m. to noon on Oct. 7 and visit with the Croatian Ambassador to the U.S. Pjer Šimunović and Croatian Consul General of Los Angeles Siniša Grgić.

Pacific Food Importers (“Big John’s PFI”) will provide our favorite Croatian charcuterie, cheeses, tapenade, ajar and dried figs with delicious Croatian pastries, while our handsome Croatian men serve you refreshments and our talented Andy Mirkovich entertains you by playing your favorite songs.
THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING CROATIAFEST

CroatiaFest 2017 was brought to you through the generosity of these individual donors as well as grants & sponsors.*

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Mary Sudar - In memory of our parents,  
Eva & George Sudar, Sr.

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$225  
George Sudar Jr. - In memory of our loving grandparents, Mary & Frank Persha

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American Croatian Club of Anacortes  
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Florence Lovric - In memory of Anton M. Lovric  
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$120  
Walt & Guy Bernovich - In memory of Jim Julio Bernovich  
Charles & Jean Culjak Shaffer - In memory of Tony & Shirley Culjak

$115  
Gloria & Nick Barbarotto - In memory of our mother Ruza Zuvich Mosunic
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*Donations recorded as of Dec. 31, 2017. Please let us know if we made an error. Corrections will be printed in future CroatiaFest publications.
Support CroatiaFest 2018! Your ongoing support is essential for the future of CroatiaFest.

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