

Orchestra LIKA Celebrates 50 Years!

On Friday, July 7, 2017 Orchestra LIKA formally celebrated 50 years of music with a party at the Winona Vine Estates (a.k.a. the Draža Mihailović Četnik Grounds) in Winona, Ontario. The celebration was the culmination of a year of planning but, of course, the story began a half century ago.

Orchestra LIKA was formed in 1967 with founding members Milan Sanader and John and Michael Lukich. The three selected the name LIKA because their late fathers were Serbs from Lika. The new band started rehearsing and entertaining their families at respective Slavias, a tradition that continues to this day. To complete the trio, a bass player joined them - childhood friend Miles Obradovich whose father also came from Lika.

LIKA began performing at choir and church functions in Toronto. The band was blessed to have mentors who guided them on their musical journey - Drina Orchestra members Danny Joksimović, Bača Kiurski and Braca Mikalački. Drina Orchestra influenced the songs LIKA learned in its early days and its musical style. Together, the two groups shared a musical bond and friendship for over 40 years.

During the 1970s LIKA continued to perform in the Toronto area playing for weddings and picnics as well as Saint Sava Church functions. At the beginning of 1980 Miles retired from the band and shortly thereafter Mark Dončić joined to provide bass, vocals and second accordion. After more than 10 years with the band, Mark left the Greater Toronto Area to live in the US. From then on, LIKA continued mostly as a three-piece band with occasional drummers added as required.

The 1980s and 1990s were prolific for the band as they played regularly and extensively throughout Ontario and the Northeast US. During those decades LIKA played for two Serb National Federation (SNF) golf tournaments; the Serbian



Singing Federation Festival (SSF) in Cleveland; Merrillville, Indiana; Ontario Place in Toronto; Centre Island in Toronto; Caravan "Oplenac" Pavilion at the Saint Sava Church in Toronto (1974-1989); plus numerous weddings as far north as Sudbury, picnics, and church events from Windsor to Ottawa. Since the beginning of this century LIKA has continued to entertain at weddings, church and choir functions, picnics, tournaments and special events such as Slivofest and Carousel in Windsor. And not to forget the many enjoyable bus rides when the Orchestra LIKA, following in the footsteps of the Drina Orchestra, led the Saint Sava Choir sing-alongs en route to SSF festivals.

By 1997 the band decided to make a professional recording which would last 'za uvek'. With the help of virtuoso Boris Daich on percussion and a special guest appearance by Mark who came in from Pittsburgh to lend his vocals, the band recorded its first CD "LIKA ZA UVEK" at Velvet Sound Studios in Mississauga. This title was chosen to convey that the group would never forget the Serbs from Lika who lived there for centuries, who were targeted for a terrible fate during

World War II, and who were mercilessly expelled in 1995.

To help celebrate their 50th anniversary the boys in the band invited a large group of family, friends and supporters. After socializing during cocktail hour and dinner, guests were entertained with a slide show of photos, videos, commentary and stories of LIKA from its inception to the present. Then came a surprise for the band members - an iMovie of family and friends giving their perspectives of LIKA. Following the presentations, LIKA Orchestra proceeded to entertain with songs, kolos and finally, to end the evening, a sing-along around the bar. On this occasion, they also announced the release of their newest CD "LIKA 50 Years", which is now available.

The band's musical journey required love and support from many to make it to this milestone. The three members thanked

their parents, the late Nikola and Anka Sanader and the late Dušan and Helen Lukich for their never-ending love and support, especially during the formative years. The guys also thanked their wives, who married them knowing full well the commitment that came with being part of an orchestra; and they thanked their children who had no choice in the matter, but knew their "Tatas" were away sometimes for the weekend playing Serbian songs. Last, but not least, Orchestra LIKA thanked their supporters who have followed them - some from 1967 - plus numerous followers who joined them on this journey. The orchestra continues to play music because people enjoy listening, singing and dancing but, most of all, everyone loves the joy and camaraderie that music inspires.

LIKA's repertoire continues to grow and the band continues to rehearse and perform because they still enjoy it - even after 50 years - and look forward to sharing the next 50 years with you!

For more information on LIKA, or to purchase their latest CD, visit www.johnlukich.com or send an email to johnlukich@johnlukich.com.

Orchestra LIKA

Editor's note: Congratulations to Orchestra LIKA on 50 years of music and service to the Serbian community, mainly in the Toronto-Hamilton vicinity. This long musical journey is especially significant given that these musicians, the sons of immigrant parents, were born in Canada and through their music they maintained and promoted our Serbian language and culture for a half century. The Voice of Canadian Serbs is pleased to present their story for posterity and wishes them many years.

QUILT OF BELONGING



For Canada's 150th anniversary the unveiling of the Quilt of Belonging, the most comprehensive work of textile art ever made in Canada, was hosted June 22 by the Ambassador of Slovakia, the Mayor of Ottawa, MP Michelle Rempel and Canadian/Slovak artist Esther Bryan, author of the project. The Quilt, a 120 foot long collaborative textile project, is comprised of 263 embroidered blocks portraying the cultural legacies of all the First Nations of Canada and every national group living here. It was on exhibit at the Ottawa City Hall from

June 23 to July 5 and throughout the summer in Hamilton and Toronto.

In her speech Esther Bryan stressed that the Quilt was our collective gift to Canada, a tribute to all its peoples who together have woven the nation's fabric. Esther and her friends worked closely with the Assembly of First Nations, the Department of Indian Affairs and the Canadian Museum of Civilization to compile lists of all First Nations. It took six years to locate each of the 263 cultural groups living in Canada. The Canadian Ethnocultural Council, a project partner since its inception, provided ethnic contacts and wrote the forward to the 5th edition of the book about the Quilt.

The Serbian block, sponsored by the Serbian National Shield Society of Canada, was embroidered by Dragica Bogdanovic of Ottawa who incorporated the four letters 'C' with traditional needlework colours into a rich decorative floral design against a linen background combining a variety of embroidery stitches to create stylized peonies in the corners and along the border. She also did the Macedonian block. Dragica and her husband Miljko Bogdanovic; Stanko Vuleta, president of the Ottawa Serbian Heritage Society; and Slobodanka Borojevic, representing the sponsor Serbian National Shield Society of Canada, took part in this beautiful celebration of Canadian diversity and art.

Slobodanka Borojevic

Commemorating Expulsion of Serbs from Croatia August 5th, 1995

The Embassy of the Republic of Serbia and The Ottawa Serbian Heritage Society commemorated the 1995 expulsion of Serbs from Croatia during "Operation Storm" when Croatia expelled 250,000 of its own citizens of Serb origin, killed 2,313, including 522 women and 12 children, and torched 20,000 Serbian houses. The Operation was defined by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia as a war crime and a joint criminal enterprise of the Croatian state against the Serbs. In 1993 Canadian armed forces fought a large battle in the Medak Pocket trying to protect Serbs from a Croatian attack. In 1995 members of the Canadian military within the UN peacekeeping mission witnessed the atrocities and gave aid to Serbian civilians. The majority of Serbs expelled found shelter in the Republic of Serbia; some came to Canada where they were given a chance to live freely and to prosper. In his speech Stanko Vuleta, president of The Ottawa Serbian Heritage Society spoke of the campaign against the Serbs which began 72 years ago by the Croatian Ustashi and continues to this day when Croatian government officials exonerate the Ustashi and build monuments to those who slaughtered innocent civilians. Yet the West raises no opposition to the resurrection of the Ustasha movement.



The commemoration at the Human Rights Monument on Elgin Street in Ottawa Saturday, August 5, 2017 was followed by a memorial service at the St. Stefan Serbian Orthodox Church. Among the 23 attendees at the Monument were: Miodrag Sekulic and Mirjana Susum-Curcic, Counsellors in the Embassy of Serbia; Stanko Vuleta, Ottawa Serbian Heritage Society; and Slobodanka Borojevic, Serbian National Shield Society. No Canadian media or politicians were present. (Source: Press Release and speech)