



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA  
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

# NEWSLETTER

MAY 30, 2014, VOLUME 10, NUMBER 20

## Irena Preda and Nejc Lavrenčič Perform at the Kennedy Center

**As part of the European Month of Culture, soprano Irena Preda and pianist Nejc Lavrenčič, on Sunday, May 25, gave a performance on the Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage.**

Presented in cooperation with the Embassy of Slovenia, the concert featured works by acclaimed Slovenian composers from the 19th and 20th centuries, namely, Benjamin Ipavec, Josip Ipavec, Rado Simoniti, Anton Lajovic,



Irena Preda and Nejc Lavrenčič performed in front of several hundred people.

and Lucijan Marija Škerjanc, setting to music verses of great Slovenian poets such as Oton Župančič, Srečko Kosovel and Ivan Minatti. As the event also marked 10 years of Slovenia's membership in the E.U., both musicians also performed music by Giacomo Puccini, Jules Massenet, and Giuseppe Verdi. Over 250 listeners complimented the excellent and enchanting

performance with a standing ovation. The concert was broadcast live online. The video is available at: <http://www.kennedy-center.org/explorer/videos/?id=M5867>

Soprano Irena Preda comes from Ljubljana, Slovenia. She studied at Trinity College of Music in London, where she graduated with distinction. Only two days after graduating, she





The concert was broadcast live online.

made her operatic debut in the lead role of George Bizet's Carmen. She has given recitals in London and across England as well as Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, China, Croatia, England, Germany, France, India, Israel, Italy, Macedonia,

Scotland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka and Sweden, performing with renowned orchestras and soloists. She was invited by Montserrat Caballé to perform in her concert of arias by Giacomo Puccini in Zaragoza, Spain, which marked the 150th anniversary of the composer's



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birth. Her performance before Queen Elizabeth II was very warmly received both by Her Majesty the Queen and His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

Nejc Lavrenčič is a Slovenian pianist living between Ljubljana and Brussels, Belgium. Although he was interested in music at a very young age, he did not begin to play the piano until the age of fourteen. From 2007 he studied under Aleksandar Madžar at the Koninklijk Conservatorium in Brussels. In 2012, he completed his master's degree in the class of Jan Michiels. Currently, he is finishing his 2nd master's degree, in chamber music. From 2011 until 2013, he was a recipient of a scholarship of the Flemish Government. He has recorded for RTV Slovenia and played in concert halls like Palais des Beaux-Arts, Petit Palais in Paris, Union Hall in Maribor, Slovenia, Red Hall in Ljubljana, Slovenia, Belgrade Philharmony, Serbia, Mim – Music Instrument Museum in Brussels, Royal Conservatory in Brussels, Steinway & Sons Centre in Antwerp, Glazbeni zavod Zagreb, Croatia, Glazbena Matica Zagreb, National Gallery in Ljubljana and elsewhere. Nejc is active as a solo pianist, chamber musician and interpreter of songs for voice and piano.

Both musicians on Monday, May 26, conducted a vocal workshop for the members of Washington's Capitol Hill Chorale before traveling to Ottawa and Toronto to perform two more concerts on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of Slovenia's E.U. membership, organized by the Slovenian Embassy in Canada.

# Final Presentation of Janney Elementary School students at the Embassy

As a part of the Embassy Adoption Program, the Janney Elementary School students and their teacher, Ms. Laurie Hunter, visited the Slovenian Embassy on Wednesday, May 28, 2014, for their final presentation. The event was attended by Ambassador Dr. Božo Cerar and the embassy staff as well as the Embassy Adoption Program coordinators Ms. Njambi Wynn and Ms. Kate McNamee of the DC Public Schools, and representatives of the Washington Performing Arts Society.

This was the first year that the Slovenian embassy participated in the program, which matches embassies with classrooms in the nation's capital. Ms. Nuška Zakrajšek, Cultural, Press and Public Diplomacy Officer and Ms. Hunter worked



Children were greeted at the embassy by the Ambassador dr. Božo Cerar.

together with 5th grade students the entire school year, trying to introduce to them a unique, inside look at Slovenia, its history, geography, cuisine, traditions,

culture, and language. Among other activities, the children on November 15 enjoyed a traditional Slovenian breakfast, made winter ornaments for the Nova Gorica Library, learned how to dance the polka, listened to a visiting lecturer's presentation of the oldest instrument in the world, a Neanderthal flute found in the Divje babe cave in Slovenia, learned the Slovenian alphabet and, on the occasion of the Slovenian Cultural Day, read poetry by France Prešeren, and even played soccer with the ambassador and embassy staff on Friday, May 30.

The final presentation highlighted their knowledge about the country. They demonstrated how one introduces himself/herself in Slovene, sang the Slovenian national anthem, presented the tableau of the Slovenian



Children danced to the traditional tune of Ob bistrem potoku je mlin.

folk tale, The Golden Bird, and danced to the traditional tune of Ob bistrem potoku je mlin.

After an admirable performance, which impressed the listeners, the students tasted a well-deserved walnut roll-cake, the "potica", and chatted in a friendly atmosphere with the ambassador and other diplomats as well as took the opportunity to admire an exhibition of Albin Zaverl's paintings of Slovenian scenes.

Janney ES students played a soccer match with the ambassador and the embassy staff on Friday morning.



## EDUCATION

# Embassy at the Garfield Elementary School

The Embassy of Slovenia participated in a Multicultural Fair that took place on May 29 at Garfield Elementary School in Southeast Washington. The Event was organized and hosted by the Communities in Schools of the Nation's Capital, an organization whose fundamental mission is to surround students with a community of support, to empower them to stay in school and to help them to achieve in life. The Multicultural Fair created the opportunity for the children to learn about different nations, cultures, customs, and traditions, while they moved in small groups from one "station" to another. Each nation and organization decorated its own station, at which the mostly fifth-graders received a short lesson.

The Slovenian station, next to the Oman, Saudi Arabia and Israel booths, showcased



the country's culture, tradition, geographical features, and fun facts. The children were also able to meet staffs of other embassies and cultural organizations and, as expected, were full of questions about those countries. They were

particularly interested in lake Bled, the Lipizzaner horses, and the Slovenian folk costume. Representatives of the embassy also prepared interesting activities, such as a short quiz, coloring of the Slovenian flag, and locating Slovenia on a map.

## Taste of Slovenia with ICDC

In cooperation with the International Club of DC, the Embassy of Slovenia hosted on Friday, May 23, an evening event that featured cultural, business and culinary offerings of Slovenia. After hors d'oeuvres, which also featured Slovenian wine, over 80 guests were addressed by the Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy, Ms. Ondina Blokar Drobič, who acknowledged the dedication of ICDC and its president and founder, Mr. Sanjaya Hettihewa, to fostering cross-cultural connections and international understanding through cultural and other programs.

Ms. Blokar Drobič introduced the visitors to the history of the embassy building, and presented the therein exhibited art as well as outlined the most



Welcoming remarks by the Deputy Chief of Mission, Ms. Ondina Blokar Drobič.

interesting and distinguishing features of Slovenian culture, geography, history and language. Following her, Mr. Gorazd Renčelj, economic

counselor at the embassy, informed the guests about the diverse tourist offer, and trade and business opportunities in Slovenia as well as presented innovative and advanced Slovenian products.

After a musical performance, the guests were invited to feast on a buffet of traditional Slovenian delicacies such as roasted pork with sauerkraut, prekmurska gibanica cake, potica walnut-roll cake, Bled cream cake, dumplings, and Carniolian sausage, along with wine served at the open bar. The evening provided a guest also with the opportunity to meet diplomatic personnel at the embassy as well as the performing artists, and to enjoy a warm spring evening on the embassy terrace.



Around 80 people attended the event.

## Slovenian Team Wins International Computer Contest in Denver

Students from Škofijska klasična gimnazija (Diocesan Classical High School) and Gimnazija Vič (High School Vič) in Ljubljana, Slovenia, competed on May 23-25 at the American Computer Science League (ACSL) All-Star programming competition in Denver, CO. Both teams qualified to attend this international competition, among hundreds of top schools which included teams from China, Romania, Croatia, Canada, as well as the top programming teams from the U.S.

Students from Slovenia were competing in Intermediate3 division. Both schools qualified for the finals among the 55 schools in the category. Competing in the Intermediate3 finals were 16 schools. Škofijska klasična gimnazija finished in 1st



From left: Lojze Žust, Matevž Poljanc, Jure Slak, Matej Poljanc and ACSL mentor Helena Medvešek.

place and received the winning plaque while Gimnazija Vič took a very respectable 8th place.

There were, however 6 categories allover, and 76 schools were invited to Denver.

The students and their

teachers were guests at a dinner given by the honorary consul of Slovenia in Colorado, Mr. Lucky Vidmar, and several local Slovenians took great care of the group and showed it around Colorado.

VISIT

## Prof. Žiga Turk Lectures in Washington

This past Wednesday, former Slovenian Minister for Growth and Minister of Education and now a professor at the Ljubljana University, Dr. Žiga Turk, was a guest speaker at the SAIS's Center for Transatlantic Relations (CTR) and CATO Institute in Washington, DC. In his lecture at CTR, titled "Echoes of the Past in the Future of Europe," Dr. Turk, through the history of Europe and especially the European East, including



Prof. Žiga Turk.

Russia, reflected on the possible future of the continent and the similarities and differences between Europe and the U.S.

For Europe, more narrowly, the European Union, which is grounded on the principles of peace, prosperity and democracy, it turned out that it has had to manage and safeguard these same principles even in the ever-changing realities of history and international relations. The end of cold war has brought

significant changes, which are now being threatened; economic crisis and its consequences are still present; and when it comes to democracy – the latest elections to the European Parliament might be seen as a wakeup call for all those who are too complacent. The continent that has been enjoying peace, prosperity and democracy for over six decades and whose economic and political model has been and ideal for everyone aspiring to live in a democratic

society will have to think through some real and difficult dilemmas, including moral ones, of where it wants to be and where it wants to go.

At the CATO Institute, Professor Turk spoke about the effects that telecommunications and information technologies are having on governance and on the future of the classical liberal project.

## JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

# The Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia in Washington, DC, is looking for a locally employed administration staff member in the Consular section of the Embassy

### **Duties include, but are not limited to:**

- Communication/work with consular clients
- Official communication/administrative work with Slovenian and U.S. authorities
- Communication/administrative work with foreign diplomatic missions and foreign governments
- Records keeping for consular section, and other administrative work
- Preparation of publishable written material, including press releases, official business letters
- Assistance to diplomatic staff

### **Requirements:**

- Bachelor's degree
- Excellent communication skills
- Fluency in English language and good knowledge of Slovene

- (both oral and written)
  - Basic knowledge of Slovenia, Slovenian Government, Administration
  - Basic knowledge of the European Union
  - Technology/computer skills (PC) -- software (Power Point, Word, Excel) skills
  - Discretion in managing sensitive informational and personal data
  - Committed sense of customer service
  - Excellent interpersonal, team and organizational skills
  - Self-motivation and eagerness to independently research/acquire new skills as needed
  - Ability to prioritize, and ability to handle multiple tasks
  - Readiness to work overtime
  - U.S. citizenship or permanent residency in the U.S. (green card). Please note that the embassy does not sponsor visas.
- Application should consist

of a cover letter, evidence of education, CV, and a recommendation letter in case you already have relevant experience.

All those interested in working in an international environment and obtaining experience in diplomacy and administration are welcome to send the application online to vwa@gov.si with "Job Application" as the subject.

### **Deadline for applications is Tuesday, June 10, 2014**

Location of work: Embassy of Slovenia, Washington, D.C.  
Beginning of work: July 2014  
Contract type: annual contract with possibility of extension

# Plaque Unveiled in Honor of Slovenian-U.S. Military Cooperation

A plaque was unveiled in the Military History Park in Pivka, Slovenia, on Tuesday, May 27 to honor military cooperation between Slovenia and the United States. The keynote speakers assessed that historic ties between the two countries ran deep despite the geographic distance between them.

U.S. Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa, whose mother comes from Škofja Loka, Slovenia, and Commander of the U.S. Air Forces in Europe, General Frank Gorenc, born in Ljubljana, both highlighted their Slovenian roots as they addressed the event, while the U.S. Ambassador to Slovenia, Joseph Mussomeli, stated he had great respect for the Slovenian military. The ambassador added that the U.S. appreciated Slovenia's involvement in international peace-keeping missions, which



From left: Chief of the General Staff (Slovenian Armed Forces) Major General Dobran Božič, U.S. Senator Tom Harkin, U.S. Ambassador Mussomeli, Slovenian Minister of Defense Roman Jakič and Commander of the U.S. Air Forces in Europe General Frank Gorenc in front of the plaque.

he views as confirmation of the country's dedication to NATO.

As part of the ceremony, the Military History Park head, Janko Boštjančič, provided an overview of Slovenia's military

ties with the U.S., which included U.S. assistance to Yugoslavian partisans during World War II and the help the partisans provided to U.S. pilots who crash-landed during WWII in Slovenia.

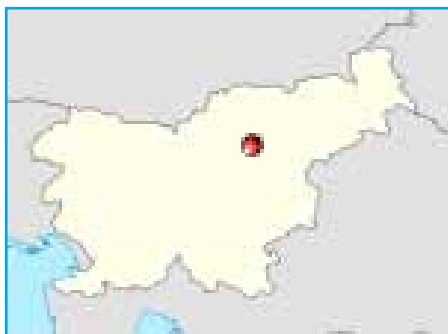
Special ties between the two countries developed after Stalin expelled Yugoslavia from the Cominform in 1948 and the country received U.S. military aid. Historians believe the aid, which provided over 1,000 tanks, 400 airplanes, ships, as well as 10,000 trucks, prevented the Soviet leader from intervening militarily in Yugoslavia. Military cooperation between the countries expanded after Slovenia gained independence from Yugoslavia in 1991 and again in 2004, when the country joined NATO. (Source: STA)



Both photos are courtesy of the Pivka Military History Park. (<http://www.parkvojaskezgodovine.si/>)



# Dobrna



In the heart of green forests, some 15 miles north of Celje, lies the town of Dobrna, distinguished by its healing thermal water that was known even to the ancient Celts and Romans. The gravestones of an ancient necropolis offer plenty of evidence of these ancient cultures in the area. The Slovenian name Dobrna was first mentioned in a document in 1155, whereas its German name, Neuhaus, first appeared in 1275 and was initially used only for the local castle. The latter was owned by the knights of Dobrna



A dominant feature of Dobrna, the spa park, is a precious gem of irreplaceable natural heritage.



Terme Dobrna is nowadays a modern, dynamic health and tourist resort. (Photo courtesy: [www.ztsk-dobrna.si](http://www.ztsk-dobrna.si))

until 1613, when the estate was taken over by the Gačnik family. In 1666, Emperor Leopold I elevated the then-owner of Dobrna to the aristocracy, conferring on him the name von und zu Schlangenbergauf Schlangenbergauf; this is where the folk name of the castle comes from: Kačji grad (Snake Castle). The ruins of the castle can still be easily seen on the hill of Lokovina.

The first mention of the Dobrna spa dates back to 1403, which makes it the oldest still existing thermal spa in Slovenia. If it weren't for the spa, Dobrna would not be on the map of modern and attractive tourist destinations today. Away from industry, noise and traffic, and with a mild climate, Dobrna has always been considered a renowned health resort for the treatment of gynecological disorders and

infertility. Today, its program has been expanded to include highly effective treatments for injuries, rheumatic and neurological disorders, and sports medicine.

Terme Dobrna is nowadays a modern, dynamic health and tourist resort with accommodation at the Hotel Vita, where the majority of therapeutic services are located, Villa Higiea with a wedding hall and the Hotel Park, suitable for visitors who want to follow their own daily rhythm. The oldest building, the Spa House, dates back to 1624, as evidenced by an inscription plaque, and is home to the heart of the spa – the thermal spring. Next to it, lies a circle of marble thermal baths.

Dobrna is also attractive for those who do not require medical therapeutic programs and just want to spend their leisure time actively. They can

enjoy a pool, a wellness center, the Kneipp program, a massage and beauty center, etc. The natural environment also offers many possibilities. Dobrna was one of the first spa towns to have a park of its own.

A dominant feature of Dobrna, the spa park, is a precious gem of irreplaceable natural heritage. Carefully marked trees offer a wealth of botanical knowledge. The chestnut alley between the Spa House and Dobrna, dominated by the Baroque Church of the Assumption, was planted around 1820.

Dobrna is a municipal center of ten hamlets, through which run the Dobrna walking trails (the Walking Trail along the Dobrnica, Educational Forest Trail, Ana's Trail, Loka Trail with the operating Vovk watermill, Wine and Tourist Trail, etc.) and where local enthusiasts take care of the cultural heritage (the Polenek Collection, the Chapel Gallery and the Blažič homestead). The more than 300-year-old Šumej homestead



Ledenica cave.

in Brdce above Dobrna, situated along Ana's Trail, boasts a beautifully preserved open-fire or "black" kitchen, which is filled with the smell of smoke and covered with a spider web of the transience of time.

The Devil's ditch (Hudičev graben) lies at the foot of Paški Kozjak; at its beginning, is located the Ledenica cave, which

used to serve as an ice storage for the Gutenek brewery. Today, it is a venue for vocal group concerts, live nativity scenes, etc.

Dobrna boasts five cycling trails of varying lengths and levels of difficulty. The most demanding ones take you through the plains of Paški Kozjak, while one of the most beautiful trails, the Daje Valley, is balm for one's eyes and soul thanks to its diverse flora and medicinal herbs.

A visitor can also enjoy the culinary offer of Terme Dobrna and the various local delicacies offered by the tourist association under the symbol of Delicious Dobrna (Dobra Dobrna). A guest can also taste many of them nearby at The Minka, Marovšek, Šumečnik, and Lamprček tourist farms.

More information: [www.ztsk-dobrna.si](http://www.ztsk-dobrna.si)



Traditional house from centuries ago.

### **REFERENDUM ON ARCHIVES ACT**

The referendum on the Act amending the Protection of Documents and Archives and the Archival Institution Act will be held on June 8, 2014. The polling stations will also be established in the United States at the Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia in Washington, DC and the Consulate General of the Republic of Slovenia in Cleveland, Ohio, and are to be open on June 8, 2014, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

More information on the referendum can be found at: [http://washington.embassy.si/index.php?id=814&tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=20977&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=51&cHash=6051f290b6525ce9672d3fd3c03be4c4](http://washington.embassy.si/index.php?id=814&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=20977&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=51&cHash=6051f290b6525ce9672d3fd3c03be4c4). Please note that the information is in Slovene.

### **N'TOKO AT THE NEW MUSIC SEMINAR IN NEW YORK**

N'toko is an experimental hiphop artist from Slovenia. He became well known for his passionate performances and technical skills, winning 3 national freestyle championships. He has spent the last 10 years on the road, and released 2 albums in Japan. In Slovenia, his socially conscious lyrics have made him a spokesperson for a generation. N'toko will be featured at the New Music Seminar in New York City's annual music, music business, and music technology conference for international collaboration and high-level discussions [on June 8-10, 2014](#).

For the program and tickets see: <http://www.dromnyc.com/events/3280/new-music-seminar-nights#.U3zL5IF5P1v>

For more information on N'toko see: <https://www.facebook.com/freentoko>  
<http://www.ntoko.si/>; <https://soundcloud.com/ntoko>

### **DOBRODOŠLI DOMA – WELCOME HOME 2014**

For the fourth successive year, the Government's Office for Slovenians Abroad, together with the Minister for Slovenians abroad, Mr. Gorazd Zmavc, will sponsor the annual meeting of all Slovenes under the slogan "Welcome home." The meeting will feature various cultural events and workshops.

When: Saturday, July 5, 2014

Where: Skofja Loka, Slovenia (The town is located cca. 20 miles from the capital Ljubljana and is easily accessible by public transport.)

More information and the program can be found at: <http://www.dobrodoslidoma.si/>

E-mail your questions to: [pr.urad.slovinci@gov.si](mailto:pr.urad.slovinci@gov.si)

### **SLOVENIAN-AMERICAN SINGING STARS ON TWO NEW CDS**

Two new CDs pay tribute to Eddie Kenik, June Price, Anton Schubel, and other American Slovenian singers who made their mark on the Cleveland music scene. Cecilia Dolgan returns to Cleveland to premiere "The Golden Voices of Glasbena Matica," a two-CD set of vocal concerts from 1961 and 1962, at the Polka Hall of Fame, on [Thursday, June 12, at 7:00 p.m.](#)

Cecilia will share behind-the-scenes stories on the staging of the two benefit concerts and the glory days of Glasbena Matica, when the ensemble staged full-scale operas in Slovenian.

The Polka Hall of Fame is located in the historic old [Euclid City Hall at 605 East 222nd Street in Euclid, Ohio](#). For more information about the CD premiere, call the Polka Hall of Fame at (216) 261-3263 or e-mail [PolkaShop@aol.com](mailto:PolkaShop@aol.com).

## **SUMMER EVENTS TO HIGHLIGHT SNPJ FARM'S 75TH**

Celebrate [75 years of SNPJ Farm in Kirtland, OH](#) with a summer-long series of Sunday polka dances, dinners and special events. Dancers and music lovers have enjoyed the finest in Cleveland Slovenian-style polkas and waltzes under the tall trees of SNPJ Farm ever since America's Polka King, Frank Yankovic, played for the first picnic in 1939. Every Sunday, the SNPJ Farm features one of the best-known names in polka music, plus the finest in down-home dining.

This year, in addition to dances and dinners, you can check out a variety of summer Sunday events in honor of SNPJ Farm's anniversary, from the 75th season opening dance on June 1 to the Slovenian Grape Festival on September 21,; Craft Fair (June 8); Polka Mass and Collinwood Reunion (June 22); Jeff Pecon and Joey Miskulin (July 6); Casual Polka Party (July 13); Balina Tournament (July 27); and Button Box Contest (August 3).

On Saturday evening, September 20, a gala dinner dance is to take place to salute the SNPJ Farm. The festivities close on Sunday, October 26, with a Polka Brunch. [SNPJ Farm is located on Heath Road, off Chardon Road \(Route 6\) in Kirtland, Ohio](#), three miles east of State Route 306. You can also rent SNPJ Farm for picnics, anniversaries and special events. For details, call (440) 256-3423 or (440) 943-1191.

For the full program see: <http://clevelandslovenian.com/CLESLO/index.php/events/60-newsflash-catgory/118-upcoming-events?format=pdf>

For more information contact: Joe Valencic, President of Cleveland Federation of SNPJ Lodges at [jvalencic@yahoo.com](mailto:jvalencic@yahoo.com)

## **SLOVENIA VODKA DECLARES INDEPENDENCE FOR FATHER'S DAY**

Chef Peter X. Kelly, the creator and "father" of Slovenia Vodka, is to be awarded another honor, this time not culinary. Chef Kelly is to be awarded Father-of-the-Year honors by the American Diabetes association – Westchester Chapter, at a dinner to be held [June 12, 2014, at the prestigious Trump National Golf Club](#). To recognize this wonderful honor, SLOVENIA Vodka has created an ad featuring Chef Kelly announcing this award and suggesting that each of us may know a "dad-of-the-year" deserving of a bottle of Slovenia Vodka for Father's Day.

[Also in June, on the 25th](#), is taking place another celebration: the anniversary of the declaration of independence of Slovenia. To celebrate this event, SLOVENIA Vodka has created a special Independence Day ad commemorating June 25, 1991, featuring a group celebrating the independence on a mountaintop with the Slovenian flag.

Father's Day and Independence Day, both perfect days to toast independence, the ones we love, and to toast Na zdravje!

For more information contact Mr. Emil Gaspari: [emil@sloveniavodka.com](mailto:emil@sloveniavodka.com)

## **3rd AVSENIK MUSIC WORKSHOP**

The 3rd annual Avsenik music workshop for Slovenians abroad will take place in Slovenia [July 2 - 4, 2014](#). Airfare for people living overseas is covered. That's a pretty good deal! Be quick to sign up for limited spaces. You need to be able to sing or play one of the following instruments: accordion (keyboard, diatonic or chromatic), clarinet, trumpet, guitar, tuba, double bass, bass guitar. This workshop is not for beginners as you will be performing at the famous Avsenik restaurant with other musicians.

More information can be found at: <http://shop.avsenik.com/sl/glasbena-sola/258-glasbena-delavnica-za-glasbenike-iz-izseljenstva>