



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

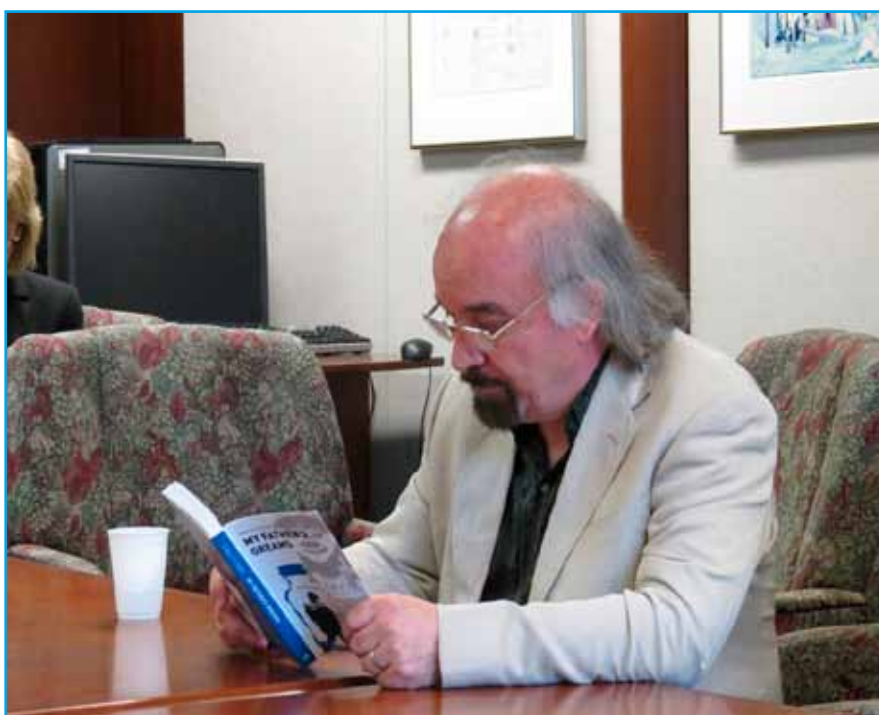
NEWSLETTER

JULY 10, 2015, VOLUME 11, NUMBER 17

Writer Evald Flisar in Washington

Evald Flisar, the most widely translated Slovenian author, visited Washington on June 23 – 24. At a noon event organized at the Library of Congress, the novelist and playwright discussed the disadvantages of writing in a language spoken by only 2 million people, the ways of overcoming this, and conquering the literary world against the odds.

The event was joined by editor Susan Smith Nash, PhD, of the Texture Press, who led the conversation with the author and donated to the library American editions of his eight books, namely *The Sorcerer's*



Evald Flisar.

Apprentice, My Father's Dreams: A Tale of Innocence Abused, If I Only Had Time, Comedy About the End of the World, Tales of Wandering, Tea with the Queen and *The Collected Plays of Evald Flisar, Vol. 1*, and *Collected Plays of Evald Flisar, Volume 2*.

The next day, a reading of Flisar's play "Antigone Now"

about the devastating effects of capitalism on personal values was staged at the Atlas Performing Arts Center. The workshop performance, directed by Robert McNamara, the artistic director of Scena Theatre, and attended by some 70 guests, was followed by a wine-and-cheese reception.





Dr. Susan Smith Nash



European Division conference room at the Library of Congress,

Novelist, short-story writer, playwright, essayist and editor, Evald Flisar studied comparative literature in Ljubljana, English literature in London, and psychology in Australia. A globe-trotter (travelled in more than 80 countries), Flisar is the author of numerous short stories and radio plays for the BBC, he was the president of the Slovene Writers' Association (1995 – 2002), and has been since 1998 the editor of the oldest Slovenian literary journal, *Sodobnost* (Contemporary Review).

He is the author of twelve novels (eight nominated for "Kresnik" (the Slovenian "Booker" award), two collections of short stories, three travelogues (regarded as the best in Slovenian travel writing), two books for children (both nominated for awards) and fifteen stage plays (seven nominated for Best Play of the Year Award -- won three times). He is the winner of the Prešeren Foundation Prize, the highest state award for prose and drama, the prestigious Župančič Award for lifetime achievement,

and three awards for Best Radio Play.

Evald Flisar's various works have been translated into 34 languages, among them Bengali, Malay, Nepalese, Indonesian, Turkish, Greek, Japanese, Chinese, Arabic, Czech, Albanian, Lithuanian, Icelandic, Russian, English, German, Italian, and Spanish. His stage plays are regularly performed all over the world, most recently in Austria, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Japan, Taiwan, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Belarus.



"Antigone Now" workshop performance.



Atlas Performing Arts Center.

Slovenian Union of America's National Convention



Banquet dinner on Saturday, June 20.



From left: Writer Evald Flisar, newly elected SUA President Mary Lou Deyak Voelk and Ambassador Dr. Cerar.

The Slovenian Union of America held its 2015 National Convention at the Chicago Naperville Marriott and The Slovenian Catholic Center in Lemont on June 19 to 21. During the four day event, the SUA members, guests and other participants could immerse into numerous activities, which featured Slovenian language, music, cuisine and crafts. They could also enjoy a show of traditional Slovenian costumes from different regions of the

country, learn about beekeeping, join a contest of potica walnut-roll making, purchase Slovenian novelties, attend a performance of the Lippizzaner horses, take polka dance lessons and attend Slovenian mass at the grotto in Lemont.

For early arrivals, a reception was held already on Thursday evening at the Marriott with music by an accordionist, joined by Stephanie Turk Polutnik, Branch 40, who sang a few Slovenian tunes and on Friday

opened the convention with a rousing God Bless America.

The highlight of the convention was a banquet on Saturday evening. The guest speaker was Ambassador Dr. Božo Cerar. The entertainment provided was a theater play written by Slovenian playwright, Evald Flisar, also present at the occasion, with roles played by members of the SUA: Barbi Pohar, Norm Setnikar, Sara Hlade, Tanya Vajk, Bill Zerial, Bob Ficek and Mary Lou Deyak Voelk.



The ambassador was a guest speaker at the event.



The new book published by SUA.

World Bee Day Initiative Presented in the U.S.



On June 25, Janko Božič, a professor of animal behavior at the Ljubljana University and an expert in honeybee physiology and behavior, visited the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. At the lecture, hosted by the Center for Agriculture, Food and the Environment, he talked about Slovenia's efforts to establish a "World Bee Day" in recognition of the importance of these insects, pollinators of food crops and agriculture around the globe. On June 17, Prof. Božič presented the initiative at the Department for Biological Sciences of George Washington University in Washington, and in the following days spoke to beekeepers across the Eastern Seaboard in an effort to establish a World Bee Day.

Bees and other pollinators are very important for human survival. One third of the food produced in the world depends on pollination, and bees play the most important role among

the pollinators. With pollination, bees contribute to successful agricultural production, providing food security, and they also assure the nutritional security of the population with their highly nutritious products (honey, royal jelly, pollen...). With their activity, bees have positive effects on the whole ecosystem and on the conservation of biodiversity in nature. In the recent period, especially in areas with intensive agriculture, bees are increasingly endangered due to environmental threats. In the 1950s, there were about six million colonies of bees; a number that is now down to about two million.

With such an important role to play, the Republic of Slovenia, on the initiative of the Slovenian Beekeepers' Association, proposed to the United Nations (UN) to declare May 20 the World Bee Day.

In the northern hemisphere, the month of

May is the month with the greatest activity in the growth of bees when the number of bee colonies increases to such an extent that the colonies swarm, which is their natural way of reproduction. During this period, bees are most numerous and the need for pollination is at its maximum. In the southern hemisphere on the other hand, it is autumn time, the time for harvesting products, and thus the days and weeks of honey.

May 20 is also the day when a Carniolan apiarist, Anton Janša (1734-1773), was born in Žirovnica, nowadays in Slovenia. He is known as a pioneer of modern beekeeping and one of the greatest experts on bees of the time. He was the first modern beekeeping teacher in the world, and Holy Roman Empress Maria Theresa of Austria named him a permanent teacher of beekeeping at the then new Beekeeping School in Vienna.

Slovenia Participates in the EducationUSA Showcase



On July 1, at the Washington Hilton Hotel, the Embassy of Slovenia presented study programs of Slovenian universities at the EducationUSA Global Showcase. The event was attended by 575 participants from U.S. colleges and universities and EducationUSA advisers. The showcase was organized within the framework of the annual EducationUSA forum, which took place June 30 – July 2 and the main purpose of which was to discover the prospects for student exchanges.

The main goal of the Slovenian showcase was to present the four Slovenian universities, namely, University of Ljubljana, University of Primorska, University of Nova Gorica, and University of Maribor as well as different university departments. Many participants were interested in the Slovenian educational system and in discussing the possibilities for organizing student exchange programs in order to make it possible for Slovenian students to study in the United States and vice versa.

The EducationUSA program, supported by the U.S. Department of State, is composed of hundreds of advisory centers around the world, which provide to international students information on and assistance for applying to colleges and universities in the United States. The Slovenian EducationUSA center, led by Ms. Darinka Trček, is located at Dunajska 22, 1000 Ljubljana and operates within the Slovenian human resources development and scholarship fund.



Ambassador Attends OAS General Assembly



Ambassador Dr. Cerar.



45th regular session of the OAS General Assembly.

From June 14 to 16, the Ambassador, Dr. Božo Cerar, together with political counselor, Mr. Borut Blaj, attended the 45th regular session of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS), held at the OAS headquarters in Washington, DC. The topic of this year's session was "Present and Future of the Organization

of American States". The OAS, as the largest international organization in the western hemisphere, is trying to adapt to the ever changing world we are living in.

In his address, delivered at the Dialogue of the Heads of Delegation, the Secretary General, and the Assistant Secretary General with the Heads

of Delegation of the Permanent Observers, Ambassador Dr. Cerar stressed that Slovenia supports the new framework of the strategic vision of the OAS and that Slovenia sees the OAS as the primary multilateral regional forum for addressing not only American but also wider, transnational challenges.

ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

Singing Beloved Rhythms: Diversity, Sincerity, Ethnic Music ... and Food

Marjan Stanić, the Slovene artist-in-residence in Brooklyn this June, is a versatile drummer and percussionist with deep sensitivity to the sound's colors and rhythms. Born in Bitola, Macedonia, he has lived his whole life in Ljubljana, Slovenia. He's been playing in various ethnic and jazz bands: Šukar, Jessica Lurie Ensemble, Vasko Atanasovski Trio. He creates

music for movement classes and performances; and teaches percussion workshops.

Marta Stemberger: Why did you choose New York?

Marjan Stanić: Because of food, of course. I'm joking a little, even though New York is truly great from the culinary perspective, a gourmet's heaven. I went for New

York because I have the most music connections here. I did two tours with the saxophonist Jessica Lurie. Then there's Marko Djordjevic who teaches at the Drummers Collective School of Music, NYC. We've been talking about doing something together. I'll play with him as a guest percussionist for his band Sveti on June 19 at the Whynot Jazz Room in West Village. I'm



Slovene drummer and percussionist Marjan Stanić: The collage of photos by various photographers, including Saša Huzjak, Petra Cvelbar, Urška Lukovnjak "Knofla". (Photos courtesy of the artist. All rights reserved.) Collage by Marta Stemberger.

also in contact with the Slovene saxophonist Jure Pukl. And I'm getting together with various musicians for jam sessions. There's so much happening all the time. Food, music, museums... There comes a point when you can't absorb anything any more. It's wonderful, the best, and I'd definitely come back.

Marta: You've performed in the U.S. before. What was the response among the American audience?

Marjan: Always very good. But we must keep in mind that we're talking about nicely packaged Balkan-influenced music. Not the raw ethnic Balkan sound, but jazz with Balkan undertones, a crossover. Even though I'd prefer to play pure ethnic music. People here like beautifully served stuff, nothing too disturbing or forceful or shocking, just a touch of melancholy wrapped in jazz. That's what feels more comfortable to them.

Marta: How and why did you start playing?

Marjan: It was sometime between the middle and high school. I used knitting needles and cushions. I was listening to music and played along. This was in the early 1990s. Why? I can't really answer because I've never thought about it in this way. It's simply about the colors of the sounds.

Marta: How did you learn to play different drums and percussions, different styles?

Marjan: On my own. I was listening a lot; I still do. It takes time. I applied myself to studying music, musicology, collected materials, mainly Balkan, Oriental, Mediterranean music. I listen, let it go, and then play it as a sketch. And then I return. And return again. It's a process. That's how I learn. Not only from the head, not only from the heart, but a combination of both. My specialty is ethnic percussions. Each ethnic sound comes from its own culture, it belongs to that culture. The uneven Macedonian rhythms

stem out of the language. Macedonian language has many two- and three-part words. The rhythm of the language is uneven. Two and three is five, two and two and three is seven. They didn't say: "Let's create a tough 7/8 rhythm to be a little different." No, it comes out of the speech, the nation, their culture, mentality, history. That's what I'm interested in, the soul, the spirit.

Marta: What are you plans for the future? What's the path ahead?

Marjan: Everything is open. I'm interested in a gazillion things, different collaborations, different musicians. I don't have a big philosophy. I like to play what I play. Honest, sincere presence in the moment.

Visit www.arinnainc.net/en/blog **to read the full article.**

Marta Stemberger, MA, is a native Slovene who's been living and translating in New York City since 1992.

Bled Strategic Forum (BSF)



On August 31 and September 1, the Foreign Ministry, in partnership with the Centre for European Perspective, will be hosting the tenth annual Bled Strategic Forum, under the title 'Visions of New Partnerships'.

The Bled Strategic Forum has evolved into a leading high-level international conference in the region. It provides a platform for in-depth strategic discussion among leaders and decision-makers from the private and public sectors on the pressing challenges facing Europe and the world in the 21st century.

Focusing on topical issues and providing opportunities for bilateral meetings and high-level debates in a pleasant environment, the event has been attracting an increasing number of world leaders, entrepreneurs, representatives of the academic sphere, think-tanks and the media, and young professionals.

The tenth Bled Strategic Forum is taking place in a year marked by major anniversaries such as seventy years since the end of the Second World War and the creation of the United Nations, forty years since the Helsinki Final

Act and twenty years since the Srebrenica atrocities.

In the light of these anniversaries, this year's forum will focus on the significance and role of partnerships as a tool for attaining common goals. It will address the most pressing issues concerning peace, security, economic cooperation, development and human rights.

Once again, the central event will be accompanied by Business BSF and Young BSF.

The latest and detailed information is available at www.bledstrategicforum.org



CONCERT by DUO DRUMARTICA on August 8 in Bowie, MD

Drumartica is one of the most active percussion ensembles in Europe today. After great successes at prestigious competitions in Luxembourg (IPCL) and Bulgaria (PENDIM), the Simon Klavžar and Jože Bogolin duo played in the U.S., Russia and around Europe, in the most well-known venues, such as Hermitage Theater in St. Petersburg, Carnegie Hall in New York, Auditorio de Tenerife, and Berlin Philharmonie. Presented in cooperation with World Artists Experiences. [Admission free.](#)

When: [Saturday, August 8 at 7 p.m.](#)

Where: [Bowie Center for the Performing Arts, 15200 Annapolis Rd, Bowie, MD 20715](#)

More information: http://washington.embassy.si/fileadmin/user_upload/dkp_51_vwa/pics/2015/Drumartica_Flyer__black-white_6-19-2015.jpg

The duo will also perform a free concert at the [Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage](#) on Friday, August 14 at 6 p.m.



Lana Trotovshek.



Anna Shelest.



Duo Drumartica.

EMBASSY SERIES CONCERT: LANA TROTOVŠEK, VIOLIN; ANNA SHELEST, PIANO

The winner of international competitions and prizes, Slovenian violinist Lana Trotovshek played at Wigmore Hall in London to great success. And last year's concert brought this review in the Washington Post: "Trotovshek gives radiant performance at The Embassy Series ... Trotovshek used it to showcase her clean and refined tone and musical sense of phrasing, especially in the slow movement, marked by a radiant pianissimo sound and impeccable intonation." Program: Tchaikovsky, Brahms, Granados, Kreisler and Bartók. Presented in cooperation with the Embassy Series.

When: [Friday, September 11, 2015 at 7:30 p.m.](#)

Where: [Embassy of Slovenia, 2410 California Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20008](#)

More information and tickets: <http://www.embassyseries.org/performances/lana-trotovshek-violin-anna-shelest-piano-embassy-of-slovenia/>