Ressort: Entertaiment

63rd Guca Trumpet Festival in Serbia.

Guca Trumpet Festival

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GDN - “I didn’t know you could play trumpet that way”
Miles Davis, a Guca Festival visitor.
The Guca Trumpet Festival Serbia’s Incredible Brass Bands and Trumpet Players from all over the World The Guca Trumpet Festival is a celebration of trumpet culture in Serbian folk music, an instrument that has deep historical and political ties to the country.

The event has been around since 1961, and today it is considered by many to be among the world’s best folk and music festivals. Upon first glance, the festival may not seem that much different from other music festivals. There are tented pop-up bars and stalls selling food, but it’s injected with a whole lot of authentic Serbian elements: whole roasted animals are on display, inviting carnivores to eat to their heart’s content. Get drunk on the music and rakija as you revel in the folk dances where performers are decked out in bright costumes entertaining an energetic audience.

Your experience at the Guca Trumpet Festival
Everything trumpet is celebrated here; this is the only country in the world where trumpets accompany all major events in the rural communities including baptisms, reaping, harvesting, and weddings. For the Serbians, both joy and sadness are expressed with the trumpet; it’s much more than an instrument, it’s a symbol of their past, present, and future. The highlight of the Guca Trumpet Festival is, of course, the competition where qualified hand-picked brass belt out tunes and the entire venue comes alive with dancing and contagious delight. The festival parade as well as the cultural and artistic programs are an experience in itself; precursors to the highly-anticipated announcement of concert champions toward the end of the festival.

History of most famous Folk Festival in Serbia
The village of Gu?a (pronounced Gucha) in the Draga?evo district is a peaceful, scenic and colorful part of western Serbia. It has gained world fame owing to its Assembly of Trumpet Players, the largest trumpet and brass band event on the planet.
The love of the people of Dragacevo for music, especially for the trumpet, began in the rule of Prince Miloš Obrenovi? who ordered the formation of the first military band in 1831. From then until now the trumpet has reigned here uninterrupted while woodwind instruments, in keeping with the customs, warm the soul of its population.

A group of young enthusiasts had an idea to organize a show of the local folk crafts and customs in the yard of the Church of the Saints Archangel Gabriel, including a competition of trumpet bands from Dragacevo. The Feast of the Intercession on 14th October 1961 had an enormous effect on the development of the Serbian trumpet-playing tradition.Desimir Periši? from Gora?i?i became the part of the Festival’s history as the first winner, the best trumpeter, whereas the orchestra of Dragan Jovanovi? from Dljin was proclaimed as the best orchestra. This first festival represents the beginnings of the Serbian tradition: An invaluable cultural treasur? given as a present, to be kept and enriched.

Filled with the dancing and cheering crowd, the churchyard soon became too small for all the trumpet lovers.From year to year, the festival has defied challenges, gaining quality and becoming bigger, at the same time preserving the original spirit. From the initial 20 contestants, the program has grown to include over 1,200 participants. It is hard to imagine how it’s possible that a small town with barely 2,500 inhabitants, in these early August days, receives around 600,000 visitors of different cultures and languages nationalities. The sound of the trumpet traditionally accompanies every major event in Serbia’s rural and small-town life: births, baptisms, weddings, Slava (family patron saint day), farewell parties for those joining military service, state and church festivals, harvesting, reaping, and also departing this world. Appropriate music is played on these occasions, thus preserving the spirit of the existing tradition.

The music is very diverse: from indigenous melodies via the kolo (a fast-rhythm chain dance), marches and characteristic southern Serbia ?o?ek (pron. chochek) dances, all the way to tunes that have emerged more recently, always taking care to honour the traditional harmony.

This music has won over the hearts of not only the local population, but has also warmed the hearts of outsiders and foreigners. In the several days of the Gucha festival, hardly anyone can resist giving themselves to the adrenalin-rushing rhythms and melodies that simply force one to jump to ones feet and dance."
The traditional Draga?evo trumpet – its cult kept alive for nearly two centuries regardless of political and social considerations – has with time become world-renowned.

It is largely owing to the trumpet that the name of Serbia has resounded worldwide, on all the continents.
Some orchestras, when they appear on stage for official competition, wear the national dress and authentic indigenous dances with other folk inspired elements and musical accompaniment, have become an integral part of the national gathering.
The virtuoso musicians are for the most part fully self-taught and lend an air of authenticity unmatched by academic musicians. They play by ear and quite spontaneously, relying on their imagination and musical memory.
They play from their heart and soul, and their music reaches out to listeners precisely for these qualities.
The Gucha Assembly of Trumpet Players continues to grow year after year: today, this musical feast of recognizable national skills is more popular, more diverse and bigger than ever before.

The first Draga?evo Assembly of Trumpet Players was held on October 16, 1961 in the yard of the Church of Sts. Michael and Gabriel in Gu?a (pronounced Gucha). Initially, it was a very modest Assembly – almost subversive for the prevailing political circumstances of the time. However, the Assembly gradually grew and expanded its magical influence.
Over the past thirty or so years it has become a key folk symbol and is no longer held solely for the trumpet players.
It grew into an Assembly of toastmasters and painters, attracting diversity in local and regional arts and crafts and including competitions in non-musical spheres.

The song "Sa Ov?ara I Kablara" marks the beginning of the festival each year. Some church music festivals notwithstanding, the Assembly of Trumpet Players is the best known event of this kind, extending uninterruptedly for 63 years and attracting guests and musicians alike from every continent.
Trumpet players and folk song and dance groups from around the world deem it a great honour to be invited to the Assembly, and the number of visitors increases with each coming year. The record was set in 2010, when Gucha hosted in excess of 700.000 visitors over 10 days of festivities.

With considerable experience in organizing Assemblies, today the traditionally hospitable Gucha has earned its place on the map of world music festivals, inviting high interest from ethno music lovers, and deservedly so. As an internationally recognized trumpet capital, and a singular corner of positive energy, a place with accumulated joy, gaiety and spontaneity, coupled with the piercing yet gentle sound of the trumpet, Gucha is a place of catharsis of the heart and soul while the festival lasts. All this is more than enough to attract visitors to Gucha each Mexico , Spain , Greece , Denmark , China and many other close or distant countries. The names of Boban Markovic, Milan Mladenovic, Ekrem Sajdic, Elvis Ajdinovic, Fejat and Zoran Sejdic have carried the glory of the Serbian trumpet across the world.

Roberto Magni and Daniela Comi By Foto ReD Photographic Agency Italy created this photographic reportage of the Guca trumpet festival in Serbia with the collaboration of Sony Italia Pro Support which provided us with the photographic equipment to test the new Sony Alpha 7 R V camera and lenses from 12mm to 600mm.

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