

# Festival Maribor

## ACTIVITY REPORT 2010 - 2011

*This report will focus on general activities of the Maribor Festival over the last two years. No specific actions undertaken for the 2010 and 2011 festival editions are included.*



The main goal of the Maribor Festival is to build on the long-term influences, long-lasting growth and multiplacative effects in the spirit of encouraging cultural tourism.

These objectives were pursued through a series of concerts, number of educational activities and complementary events. The Maribor Festival audiences had the chance not only to discover new works and rediscover familiar compositions in fresh programme contexts, but could also follow the creative process of rehearsals and pre-concert preparation, thanks to the festival's determination to connect the public with performers and intensify the musical experience for all.



## **OPERATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF THE MARIBOR FESTIVAL**

The Maribor Festival 2011 was carried out by regular and temporary co-workers:

- 6 regular contract employees (artistic director, director, coordinator, accountant, executive management, marketing and public relations). The regular employees completed the work and tasks in the field of programme selection, contents selection and the performing artists, directing, coordinating programmes with the artistic director and the participating musicians, management (cost evaluation, notification of programmes according to current tenders (EU, ECOC, municipality of Maribor, ŠOUM – Student organisation of Maribor), organizing and coordinating music material, booking flights, car services, accommodation, preparing contracts for the performers, arranging copyrights, et cetera), logistics, cultural tourism, marketing, public relations (writing and translating professional texts for print and internet in Slovenian, English and German languages), accounting, bookkeeping, administration and editing the internet contents.
- through the whole year the Festival hired occasional additional workers, such as translators, professional writers of promotional texts, designers, graphic designers, authors and website maintainers, proofreaders for all three language versions of the Festival Maribor publishing (website, booklets, et cetera).
- from the beginning of rehearsals in August until the end of the festival in September, the Festival also hired and paid for the technical crew (11 workers), hostess service (22 people + 5 cashiers) and 7 drivers (car service).

Due to its nature of work, the Maribor Festival is an exceptionally demanding organizational project. Namely, the programmes and ensembles are assembled uniquely and especially for the festival, which features numerous top-quality internationally renowned artists.

## **THE MARIBOR FESTIVAL PROGRAMME, PERFORMERS AND VENUES**

With Richard Tognetti as the artistic director, the Maribor Festival has taken a giant leap concerning international recognition. The Australian violinist, conductor and composer is set to work with Slovenian and International musicians in a series of up to 20 concerts designed to show the striking breadth of Maribor's cultural influences and reinforce the foundations for its year as the European Capital of Culture in 2012.

A ten-day event with a solid framework of chamber and symphonic music, the Festival's rich programme also features vocal and choral music, multimedia projects and original ethnic music. The Festival's range of venues, spanning from Maribor's elegant Union

Hall and National Theatre, to the imposing Ptuj Castle, offer further points of artistic interest and local atmosphere.

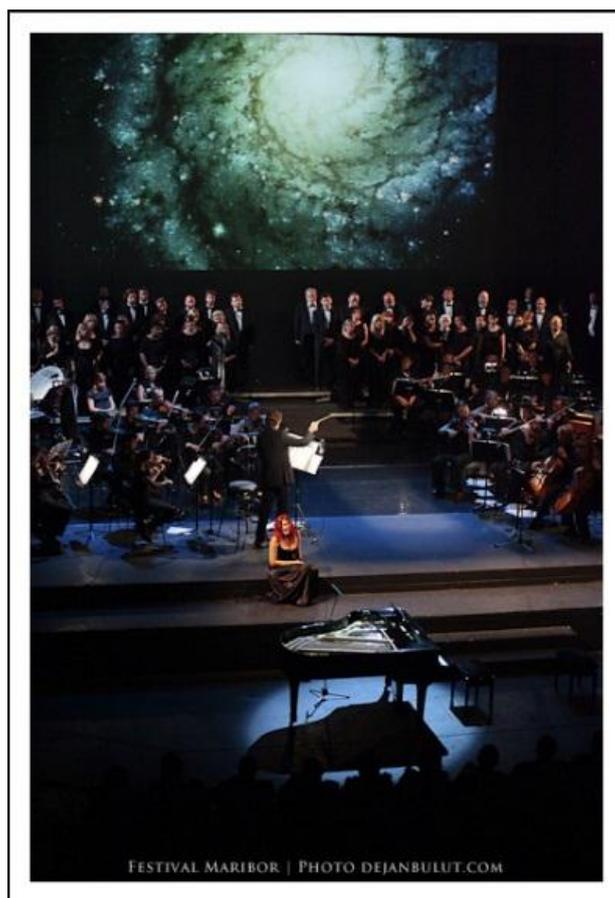


*Union Hall, Festival Maribor 2011*

The core of the festival is the Maribor Festival Orchestra with approximately 65 renowned musicians, otherwise members of numerous European and worldwide orchestras. One of the regular ensembles collaborating with the festival to mention is The Slovene Philharmonic String Chamber Orchestra. Among the more recognisable soloists who have performed at the festival in the past few years are the following: the pianists Boris Berezovsky, Melvin Tan, John Reid and Alexei Petrov, violinists Richard Tognetti, Satu Vänskä, Arvid Engegard, Anthony Marwood, cellists Giovanni Sollima, Monika Leskovar, Jan Erik Gustafsson, Alexander Rudin and Timo-Veikko Valve, violists Christopher Moore and Diemut Poppen, flutist Emmanuel Pahud, vocalists Fiona Campbell, Kirsty Hopkins, Sabina Cvilak, Charmian Bedford, James Gilchrist, Nicholas Mulroy, Matthew Brooks, Andrew Staples and the accordionist Richard Galliano.



One of the emphasized programme elements is that every year the festival features a premiere of a multimedia project. In 2010, the multimedia project titled *The Crowd* dealt with the psychology of the crowds, while the two multimedia projects in 2011 *Nothing* – examining the idea of Nothingness in music and *Timeline* – introducing the evolution of music from its first traces to the present day.



*Multimedia project Nothing*

A detailed concert programming begins every year in October under the leadership of the artistic director Richard Tognetti. This is done after setting forth a general programme and after defining the repertoire of the music requiring the largest ensembles. The programme is further developed through coordinating the available musicians for individual programmes and compositions, which fit into central themes of individual programmes.

The chamber and orchestral ensembles are structured according to high performing standards and suitable styles of all collaborating musicians. Soloists are chosen according to the prospective concert programmes. Hence, we are looking for the most suitable and at the same time available soloists for the compositions that we want to feature in our programme. With this kind of programming we occupy all the hired musicians to the full and as rationally as possible make use of their availability during the festival.



*Festival Maribor Orchestra, 2011*

Until July, we provide the musicians with the necessary music material for a study of the compositions, which require a larger number of rehearsals. For the last three years, the pre-production of the Festival took place in Ljubljana, the domicile of most of the Slovenian orchestra musicians. In 2011 the Maribor Festival, in addition to the preparations and rehearsals, also organized a concert in Ljubljana, as part of the Ljubljana Festival.

## **THE MARIBOR FESTIVAL PROMOTION**

As explained above a festival like the Maribor Festival, due to its programme that does not follow the main-stream music currents, is very much depending on good promotion through all available channels.

In the first few months of the year, we contact the **European tourist agencies** specializing in cultural tourism and send them the festival programme and the offers of the festival packages.

### **On-line**

At the same time, we put up the current **website** in Slovenian, English and German languages, filling it with descriptions of the concerts, exhibitions, workshops and book-presentations to come, with biographies of the artists, with photographs, videos and many useful information for visitors with regular updates. We reach our audience through regular **newsletters, bulletins**, prize games on **social networks** such as Facebook, MySpace, Moj Video and Twitter, while we also insert our **banners** and internet **links** to our official Maribor Festival website on the websites of various partner organisations.

## Print and CD

In April, we publish the first festival **programme calendar**, following **promotional booklets** in Slovenian, English and German languages. The promotional material is voluntarily distributed once a month around Maribor and other towns in Slovenia, Austria and Croatia.



*Our mesh poster and volunteers in the Festival T-Shirts, Festival Maribor 2011*

A larger number of booklets is sent to target audiences of our partner organizations, all Slovenian Tourist Information Centres and all selling points of our internet ticket sale. In the first half of each year, we also publish a promotional (not-for-sale) compilation **CD** featuring the previous festival recordings.



*Poster, Festival Maribor 2011*

In July, the Festival is promoted with **City Light posters** all over Maribor and Ljubljana, which is repeated in the last days of August and all through the Festival with a

slight target modification of the first promotion. **Classical and mesh posters** can be found all over Maribor from July onwards.

The more classical kind of promotion (**bill posting**) is carried out in July, August and September all around Maribor, Ljubljana and Graz in accordance with the partner institutions in Ljubljana and as agreed with the University of Graz in Austria.

In August, the more extensive and detailed **festival booklet** is published in Slovenian and English consisting of professional texts about the compositions performed and the artists.

All these materials were also distributed at the ITB Berlin, in Vienna and at the Dubrovnik Summer Festival.

### **Guerrilla campaigns**

Due to the economic crisis and the consequent cuts in our budget we make use of guerrilla campaigns.

We organise small concerts in the city centre of Maribor where seemingly random passers-by form a group, taking off their overcoats to reveal the festival T-shirts and perform together. After the concert each one of them grabs his/her instrument and they separate as if nothing had happened.

We also collaborate with other local artists – tape-art artists that tape the town walls and squares creating large classical instruments with our logo on them.

An interesting idea was also a classical jukebox that travels around Slovenian squares playing only classical music from our concerts, entertaining people where they do not expect it.

All these approaches help us connect the new, fresh and fun festival image to the never-outdated classical music that people often forget about - especially the younger generations.

### **Extras**

For promotional purposes, we also organize **photographic exhibitions** of the previous Maribor Festival editions in the display-windows around the city's department stores and display the festival **flags** and **footprints** with the Festival logo all over the city.



*Festival flags, Festival Maribor 2011*

### **Media sponsors**

In August, the Maribor Festival is advertised by its media sponsors that donate or compensate advertising with the festival concert recordings broadcast at **RTV Slovenija** (TVSLO and Val 202), **Radio Maribor**, **Radio SI**, **RTS**, **Radio City** and **POP TV**. Advertising in printed and internet media has also been part of the media sponsorship during the last 3 years.

### **Media feedback**

The first press conference takes place in the beginning of July.

The festival receives very good reviews in Slovenia. The Slovenian national radio, Art Programme, Radio Maribor and the European Broadcasting Union all broadcast festival recordings in a weekly series after the festival. Reviews, commentaries, interviews and articles concerning our festival can be found in all of the bigger newspapers, magazines (Delo, Večer, Dnevnik, Mladina ...) and websites.

Concerning the international festival promotion, we should mention an extensive coverage of individual concerts as well as the festival as a whole in Huffington Post, Art-to-Art-Palette-Journal, Seen and Heard International, and t.portal.hr, and on the TV programme Arte. Very important for our recognisability was also an extensive interview with the artistic director Richard Tognetti published in the prestigious British Classical Music Magazine and a visit by renowned British, American, Australian, Croatian and Maltese critics. The Maribor Festival has also received excellent reviews in the British Sunday Telegraph, Classic FM Magazine, Music & Vision, and the Croatian Novi List.

A few excerpts from this year's reviews:

*"... the artistic director Richard Tognetti exerted his style: the unrestrained drive, virtuosity, creative imagination, feeling for the right moment, stage talent, charisma... Add the richness of the orchestral sound – what more could a person ask for?" Janko Šetinc, Večer (SI) 2011*

*"One of the most interesting music events in this part of Europe – the Maribor Festival."*  
Joško Tomasović, tportal.hr (CRO) 2011

*“The performance of Stravinsky was so fantastically mastered that we were overwhelmed by a chilling breeze of perfection.”* Janko Šetinc, Večer (SI) 2011

*“The first glance at it [the Festival Maribor] already discloses the diversity so typical of Tognetti and, even more noticeable than in the recent years, the wish for a meaningful combination of compositions - really the unorthodox program courage... The so-called main Slovene orchestras (the Radio Orchestra and the Slovene Philharmonics) - in contrast to the Festival Maribor Orchestra permanent - can only dream about a comparable intensity or zeal.”* Jure Dobovišek, Delo (SI) 2011

*“In the most sensational concert of the sensational Maribor Music Festival week, Giovanni Sollima issued a challenge to all who think the cello is for the faint of heart... this was music that lifted the cello into the realms of the musical gods. It didn't hurt that the cello people were partnered to breathtaking precision and intensity by the Festival Maribor strings and its miracle-working conductor, Marko Letonja.»* Laurence Vittes, Seen and Heard International, 2011

*“The Maribor Festival is one of Europe's finest summer festivals.”*

John Allison, The Sunday Telegraph (UK), 2010

*“Maribor is not a city with which you would normally associate classical music of the highest quality – that accolade is normally reserved for illustrious places such as Berlin, Vienna, London or New York. But for a few days in early September, Maribor was indeed a city of excellence in all ways imaginable.”*

Gerald Fenech, Music & Vision, 2010

*“Thanks to the increasing international reputation of the artistic director Richard Tognetti, the Maribor Festival is becoming an increasingly recognizable cultural event in this part of Europe.”*

Bosiljka Perić Kempf, Novi List (CRO), 2010

## **FOREIGN VISITORS OF THE MARIBOR FESTIVAL – CULTURAL TOURISM**

In 2010, we contacted approximately 200 European tourist agencies which specialize in cultural tourism and informed them about the Maribor Festival, accommodation capacities, excursion suggestions, and various ticket discounts. By sending bulletins, we regularly informed them about the relevant festival activities. Compared to 2009, the number of Australian visitors doubled in 2010 to 102. The individual foreign visitors who booked their accommodation in Maribor were mainly guests from United Kingdom, The Netherlands, Switzerland, and Germany. Visitors from neighbouring countries, mostly Austria and Croatia, were mostly one-time concert visitors.



## MARKETING AND FINANCING

The Maribor Festival's upgrading and extending conceptually in the last few years led to the festival operating as a non-governmental organization. We are dealing with an ambitious project, which is possible to realize only with a huge degree of knowledge, abilities and work on the one side and enthusiasm on the other. Operating under the Association of the Slovene Philharmonic String Chamber Orchestra is, as far as the form of organization of the festival goes, ideal, although the festival is facing a higher degree of struggle in financial sense since the forms of funding are much more uncertain than they are for events organized by public institutions. However, the Maribor Festival has proved that with its growth in quality, exceeding national frames, and with its material and non-material impact, it is worth all the support. Of all co-funding that the festival receives, it obtains approximately 50% out of the co-production with the Public Institution Maribor 2012 and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia share. According to the large amount of expenses that the festival is facing, the assurance to get the remaining share of the funding for its organisation represents a large amount. The festival is proud to say that it gained some loyal Australian fans, who eventually became its donators; however, the serious economic crisis and the non-commercial disposition of the festival are not the best motivation for gaining sponsors. The Maribor Festival is a project still in its developing phase. It is breaking through onto the international European and worldwide music scene and it is vital that its quality and building up recognisability do not recede because of inadequate funding.

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**Summarising the impact of the activities run, the organisers can draw the following conclusions: the Maribor Festival has involved musicians and audiences from all over**

**Europe, South America, Asia as well as Australia. A great number of people were directly approached and many others were reached via international promotion activities, networking, our partner festivals and organizations or by media reports (press, TV, radio, Internet).**

**That resulted in an intense exchange of information on artistic, organisational and audience level, and a strong motivational impact, which both will constitute a precious capital for the years to come.**

**All that proves that the aims of the Maribor Festival in the past three years can be considered as achieved and in some cases, they also overcame our expectations. The success of past years will help in strengthening this tradition and extending it in the years ahead.**

Festival Maribor  
Brigita Pavlič  
director