

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 Guča festival, hardly anyone can resist giving themselves to the adrenalin-rushing rhythms and melodies that simply force one to jump to one's feet and dance."

The traditional Dragagevo 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 Guča 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 Dragagevo Assembly of Trumpet Players was held on October 16, 1961 in the yard of the Church of Sts. Michael and Gabriel in Guča (pronounced Guča). 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 Ovčara 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 uninterrupted 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 Guča hosted in excess of 700.000 visitors over 10 days of festivities.

With considerable experience in organizing Assemblies, today the traditionally hospitable Guča 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, Guča is a place of catharsis of the heart and soul while the festival lasts. All this is more than enough to attract visitors to Guča from Mexico, Spain, Greece, Denmark, China and many other close or distant countries. The names of Boban Marković, Milan Mladenović, Ekrem Sajdić, Elvis Ajdinović, Fejat and Zoran Sejdović 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 Guča 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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