

Movie Festival Unites and Delights



- Pictures clockwise from top left:
- *Professor Kosta Vujic's Hat*
 - *Milunka Savic, Heroine of World War I*
 - *Milos Bikovic, Montevideo, Taste of a Dream*
 - *The Second Meeting, Optimistic Film*

by Milos Rastovic

PITTSBURGH, PA – In March, local film fans were delighted by a one-of-a-kind treat. The Serb National Federation, the Center for Russian and East European Studies at the University of Pittsburgh, and the Embassy of the Republic of Serbia, Washington, D.C. co-sponsored a Serbian Movie Festival at the University of Pittsburgh. The festival's main goal was to preserve and promote Serbian cultural heritage in addition to furthering

greater Pittsburgh's cultural diversity in general.

The festival's three-day run included screenings of seven Serbian movies. Audiences were able to experience Serbian culture, heritage, and history in a positive and entertaining atmosphere.

John Martich, President of the Serb National Federation, presided over the opening of the giving some brief remarks about the SNF and its main purpose. President

Martich also stressed the importance of preserving the Serbian culture for those who may be losing touch and also for future generations. Milos Rastovic gave an introductory speech about the program of the Serbian Movie Festival. On behalf of the Center for Russian and East European Studies (CREES) at the University of Pittsburgh, Dr. Ljiljana Djuraskovic talked about their mission.

The movie "Michael I. Pupin – Path Toward the Light" by Sava Sajko and Lav

Jerzabek opened the festival. This is an enjoyable animated-documentary about the life and works of Michael I. Pupin, Serbian-American scientist and inventor. Pupin was known as a prolific electric inventor who holds 34 patents. He was also a diplomat, professor, writer, and humanist.

"The Second Meeting" by Zeljko Mirkovic was an extraordinary documentary about

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At the event



John Martich, President of the Serb National Federation



From left are Milos Rastovic, Cultural Outreach Coordinator of the SNF, Dr. Ljiljana Djuraskovic, University of Pittsburgh, and John Martich, President of the SNF



Dr. Ljiljana Djuraskovic, CREES at the University of Pittsburgh



Milos Rastovic, Cultural Outreach Coordinator



Some of the attendees

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two men, Dale Zelko, American stealth bomber pilot, and Zoltan Dani, Serbian missile officer, who initially met while on opposing sides during the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999 and decided to meet again 12 years later to find peace as friends. It is a deep and emotional story about two fighters and their families. The documentary conveys strong messages about shared human values, tolerance, and rebuilding our world.

"Radiovision" by Gregor Zupanc, Igor Simic, Vladimir Slavica, Jelena Milunovic, and Milos Tomic brings together the life stories of some of the most prominent people in Serbian history. The movie shows audio interviews in the archives of Radio Belgrade recorded between 1950 – 1990 by Ivo Andric, Nobel Prize laureate for Literature, famous novelists Milos Crnjanski and Branislav Pekic, actress Rahela Ferari, and other prominent figures.

The second day of the festival included: "Montevideo, Taste of a Dream" by Dragan Bjelogrić and "Professor Kosta Vujic's Hat" by Zdravko Sotra. Both movies evoked tears and laughter from the audience. "Montevideo, Taste of a Dream" is an enjoyable and true story about how the Yugoslav National Soccer Team struggled to realize its dream of competing in the First Soccer Championship in Montevideo, Uruguay in 1930. The story of Professor Kosta Vujic, who taught an extraordinarily talented generation of high school students in the mid-19th century, is a biopic of future prominent members of Serbian society. Among them are Mihailo Petrovic Alas, mathematician, Jovan Cvijic, geographer, and Jasa Prodanovic, politician.

The third day of the festival was dedicated to Serbia's heroic contributions to the Allied cause in World War I. Both documentaries "Serbia in the Great War" and "Milunka Savic, Heroine of World War I" by Radio Television Serbia described the suffering and triumphs of Serbians.

Milunka Savic, who is unfortunately relatively unknown, has been aptly described as "the single most-decorated female soldier in world military history, a grizzled seven-year veteran of three wars fought across two continents, a two-time recipient of her country's highest award for military bravery, and a poor farm girl who single-handedly captured at least fifty enemy combatants and two enemy trenches during her career." Milunka was wounded in battle nine times. She was awarded the French Légion d'Honneur twice, the Russian Cross of St. George, the British medal of the Most Distinguished Order of St Michael, the Serbian Milos Obic medal, and remains the only woman ever to be awarded the French Croix de Guerre. Yet the film doesn't stop there, it also shows Milunka's great sacrifices to care for many children left orphaned by the war and her imprisonment in a concentration camp during World War II.

The festival was a great success with the audience. The SNF staff met many audience members who were drawn to the

festival to reconnect with their Serbian heritage with some families represented by three generations. Some participants had an opportunity to practice beginner level or long-forgotten Serbian language skills, while others made new friends and, perhaps, learned something new about Serbia.

The story about the festival was successfully featured on National Public Radio under the title "Film Fest Reflects Pittsburgh's Serbian Heritage." We thank all the generous supporters of the festival, especially the Embassy of the Republic of Serbia, Washington, D.C. and Ivana Mangov, Second Secretary, Political Affairs and Press, the University of Pittsburgh Center for Russian and East European Studies and Dr. Andrew Konitzer, Director of CREES, Dr. Ljiljana Djuraskovic, and particularly Thomas Elvins.

"See you all again next year! Viva Serbian movies!"



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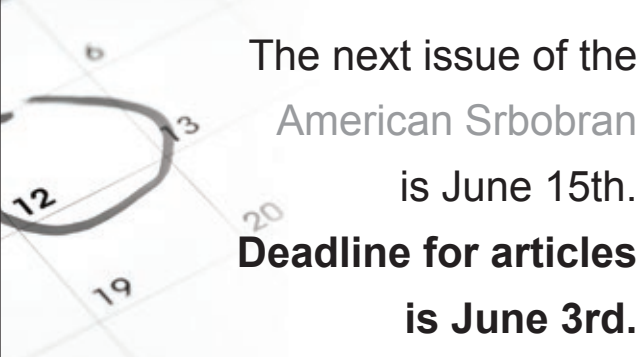
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