

by Milos Rastovic

On March 1st, 2016, the Embassy of Republic of Serbia in Washington, D.C. sponsored the celebration of Statehood Day and Armed Forces Day of the Republic of Serbia at the Library of Congress. The Republic of Serbia celebrates February 15 as an official Statehood Day when both the beginning of the First Serbian Uprising against the Ottoman Empire in Orasac in 1804 and founding of the Candelmas ("Sretenje") Constitution in Kragujevac in 1835 took place.

After five centuries of Ottoman rule, the First Serbian Uprising against the Ottoman Empire was led by Karadjordje Petrovic. They were successful in fighting against the Ottoman Empire in Ivankovci in 1804 as well as in Misar and Deligrad in 1805. However in 1812, Russians had to pull out from fight against the Ottoman Empire because Napoleon's army attacked Russia. Serbs did not want to accept the Bucharest Peace which allowed the Ottomans to come back to Serbian free territory and so they fought on until October 7, 1813 when the Karadjordje Uprising was broken.

Although the First Serbian Uprising was broken, it gave Serbs courage to continue their fight against the Ottoman Empire. In 1815, Milos Obrenovic, along with Serbian fighters, continued to fight, so called the "Second Serbian Uprising," which was resulted by the recognition of Serbia at the Berlin Congress in 1878.

On February 15, 1835, Duke Milos Obrenovic announced the first Serbian Constitution in Kragujevac, which was one of the first modern democratic constitutions in Europe. The Serbian Constitution expressed freedom of people and the end of feudal rules and autocracy. This Constitution served as the beginning in the development of the modern Serbian state.

At the opening of the ceremony, guests received a warm welcome from H.E. Mr. Derdj Matkovic, Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia, at the Library of Congress--complete with traditional Serbian costumes, food, and music. On behalf of the Serb National Federation, Mr. John Martich, President of the SNF, and I were present at this event. The Mistress of Ceremonies was Ms. Ivana Mangov, Second Secretary, Political Affairs and Press of the Embassy of the Republic of Serbia. Mr. Derdj Matkovic formally welcomed everyone and gave some opening remarks about the relationship between Serbia and United States. The Honorable Ted Poe, Co-chair of the Serbian Congressional Caucus, stressed his impression about Serbian people and similarities with the American nation. After opening remarks, a group danced Serbian kolo in traditional Serbian costumes and happy welcomed attendees. All guests at this wonderful reception had a chance to socialize while enjoying Serbian music and food. The food was served by Milka and Zarko Zukic. We wish Happy Holiday to Republic of Serbia!



National Day of Serbia Flag



Statehood Day of the Republic of Serbia



H.E. Mr. Derdj Matkovic, Ambassador of Republic of Serbia, Washington, D.C.



Ms. Ivana Mangov, Master of the Ceremony, H.E. Mr. Derdj Matkovic, Ambassador of Republic of Serbia, Mr. Milos Rastovic, Cultural Outreach Coordinator - SNF



Ms. Drina Rajic, in the middle, Representative of the Office of Republic of Srpska, Washington, D.C.

YOUNG SERB PIANIST WOWS CROWD

CLEARWATER, FL – A Tampa Bay Symphony concert took place on Sunday April 24, 2016 at the St. Petersburg College Arts Auditorium in Clearwater, Florida. After Palm Sunday Divine Liturgy, Judy Vezmar organized a group of 12 to attend an afternoon concert called "Dances, Dreams and the Danube."

Performing on the piano was a young talented Serbian pianist Mina Mijovic. Mina is so remarkable it appeared as if her fingers were on fire as they danced across the ebony and ivory keys during her performance. "She totally blew me away and gave me goose bumps because she did not have any sheet music during her performance," said Jelena Mulin.

Mina was the winner of the "Young Artists Competition" in Tampa. The orchestra is made up of all volunteer players with their conductor and director Mark Sforzini. Mina started playing the piano at the young age of 4, winning her first competition at the age of 5 in Nis. She won several competitions throughout Serbia, Germany, Holland and Tampa, Florida.

"We were lucky enough to witness her first ever concert in the USA. She finished her masters at the age of 19 and is working on her second masters at the USF School of music in Tampa," added Jelena. "One amazing young lady whom we had the pleasure of meeting during a meet and greet where she signed autographs."

Protonica Mirijana Todorovich presented Mina with a bouquet of roses that had a blessed palm/pussy willow branch from Divine Liturgy. Mina's brother Nikola was also present for the concert. "It was a wonderful afternoon of great music."

Photos by Judy Vezmar

