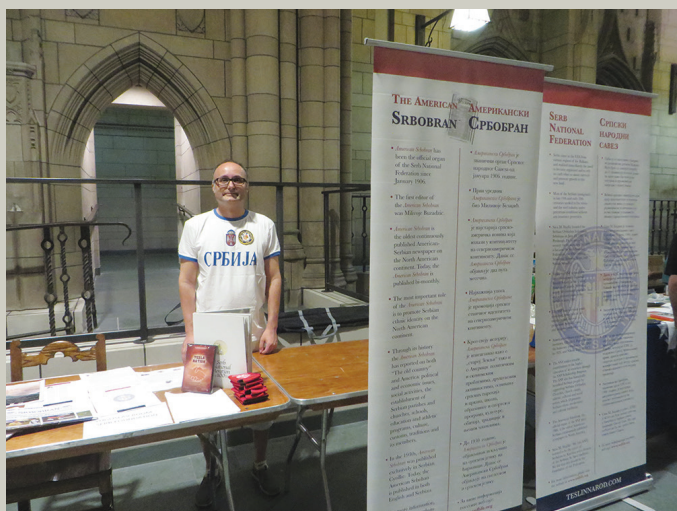


East European Festival at University of Pittsburgh



Milos Rastovic, Cultural Outreach Coordinator of the SNF



Constellation of Talent Children's Choir



From left, Deborah Studen-Pavlovich, SNF Lodge 072, Chair of the Yugoslav Nationality Room Committee; Milos Rastovic, Desanka Mrvos, SNF Lodge 006, and Ken Kornick, Yugoslav Nationality Room



Maria Smereka, Ukrainian Vocalist



Gypsy Stringz



Russian Balalaika Orchestra



Balkan Babes

by Milos Rastovic

On September 29, 2019, the Yugoslav Nationality Room Committee, Hungarian Nationality Room, University Center for International Studies, and the Center for Russian and East European Studies at University of Pittsburgh sponsored the East European Festival at the Cathedral of Learning. On behalf of the Serb National Federation, I participated at this event along with many other ethnic groups from the Balkan region and Eastern Europe, gathering people from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, Poland, Ukraine, Russia, Slovakia, Czech Republic, and Serbia among other places.

The festival beautifully demonstrated the richness and diversity of Eastern European and European culture in general, a lineage claimed by many in the Greater Pittsburgh area. I spoke with many visitors about Serbian-American history and the mission of the Serb National Federation. Visitors showed their interest in Serbian culture and history. Guests enjoyed different ethnic food, music, dances, and cultures. The program was opened by a children performance of the Constellation of Talent Children's Choir (Teap Kapabaca Barabaca). Children, parents, and other guests were inspired by the cheerful performance in the Russian language. Maria Smereka, the Vocalist, performed traditional Ukrainian songs, enchanting the audience. She is a first-year neurobiology student at Penn State University. "My plans are to attend medical school and become a neurosurgeon, but I have a passion for music, singing, and the arts in general," she said.

Katie Manukyan with accompanist Agnieszka Sornek and the Russian Balalaika Orchestra expressed a deep sentiment of Russian and other Slavic music. The orchestras Balkan Babes and Gypsy Strings played Serbian, Hungarian, and other ethnic music in the Commons Room of the Cathedral of Learning. The event was closed with Serbian Kolo dance and music.

We join all participants in the festival in thanking the sponsors making this event possible, and hope that they will continue this effort for many years to come.