

Detailed description of the project Festival Maribor

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The **Maribor Festival** is the city's annual festival of classical music, taking place every September and offering outstanding musical performances in some of the most attractive venues in Maribor and its surroundings. It's the second oldest Festival in Slovenia, which will celebrate its **50th anniversary in 2012**.



Festival Maribor logo



Festival Maribor slogan

History of Maribor Festival

The Maribor Festival has developed from a Festival of baroque music, organised for the first time in 1963 by the Concert Management Maribor. Under the artistic directorship of the pianist and professor **Janko Šetinc** the festival was held in 1994 changing its concept and name to Music September. At that time it expanded its venues to other places around Maribor (Ptuj, Slovenj Gradec, Dornava) and gradually became one of the major classical music festivals in Slovenia.



The world-renowned Croatian horn player **Radovan Vlatković** succeeded Janko Šetinc as the Maribor Festival's Art Director in 2000, shaping its program over the next years and bringing outstanding international musicians to Maribor. Vlatković worked closely with the Festival's management team to create conditions in which leading artists could collaborate, build ensembles and prepare concerts unique to Maribor.

Among the festival audience, Music September was also known as the Maribor Festival, the event's official renaming in 2008 coincided with **Richard Tognetti's** appointment as Art Director.

Over the years the festival grew and spread to additional venues, such as the 'Fin de siècle' Union concert hall. In 2008 the hall became the festival's main venue.

Festival Today

Since 2009 the festival is organisationally incorporated into the **Association of the Slovene Philharmonic String Chamber Orchestra**, which also runs the seasonal concert series at the National Art Gallery in Ljubljana.

The Maribor Festival builds on the long-term influence, sustainable development and multiplicative effect in the sense of encouraging cultural tourism. The artistic concept of the festival is intercultural dialogue, co-operation of EU member countries, third countries and the transnational mobility of artists.

With the slogan - **Festival of SERIOUSly fantastic music** – the Festival Maribor emphasizes the importance of its carefully chosen repertoire.

With high-quality performances of orchestral, vocal and chamber music the Festival achieves added value to the chosen repertoire and at the same time establishes an emotional bond with the audience, especially the younger generations.

The Maribor Festival retains its unique character, mostly due to fashioning its own productions and creating international ensembles and programs specific to Maribor.

During preproduction the festival namely functions as a music laboratory, where musicians work closely together and present the results of their collaboration by staging concerts as part of different ensembles.

The number of concerts has significantly increased over the years; the core program of chamber music events has been expanded to include symphonic and choral works following the Festival's introduction of the **Maribor Festival Orchestra**.



Encompassed into a two-week long event of 20 program parts (main and complimentary events) the festival also presents educational, 'cross-fertilization' programs, multimedia projects, exhibitions, open-air events and workshops. All of them represent an added value to the Festival.

The festival continues to emphasise the presentation of new music, new interpretations and rediscovering forgotten music. It has seen the premières of several works by different composers from Slovenia and all over the world.

Each year the list of festival attendees encompasses internationally respected and acclaimed artists. Next to foreign "celebrity" names the core of musical creativeness at the Maribor Festival comes from renowned Slovenian artists. The Festival not only offers its ca. 200 performers the opportunity of collective musical creativity with recognisable names of the global classical music scene and opportunities to develop their individual creativity, but due to intensive collaboration over a longer period of time new chances for further co-operation arise: **guest performances of our artists and reciprocal exchanges of artists** through partner organisations and/or festivals.

A regular feature in the program concept of the Maribor Festival is also the **introduction and promotion of young artists**, aspiring Slovenian and foreign artists for which holding a concert – often connected with additional rehearsal hours with the greatest names of classical music – represents an excellent reference.



Festival Maribor, Nina-Eva Kozmus, the 1st prize winner of the Eurovision Competition for young musicians 2010 in Vienna

An important aspect of the program guidelines of the Maribor Festival is also the dispersion of concerts that not only take place at various halls in Maribor, but also at venues (mostly castles and old mansions waiting for restoration) in the surrounding towns as well as the indirect **aspiration of the Festival for the revitalisation of cultural heritage monuments** through music. We are doing this by producing and staging high quality concerts, including scene elements to set the mood, sophisticated light design and more. In addition, we attract the public with innovative promotion, exposing the key problem of restoring mansions and subsequently of preserving important cultural heritage sites by searching for a new purpose and solutions for important culture heritage monuments after their restoration.

A growing number of music lovers, enthusiasts and experts recognize this and take the opportunity to visit the town, which **in 2012 will get the opportunity to call itself the European Capital of Culture.**

The Festival's current Artistic Director (from 2008) is the Australian violinist, conductor and composer **Richard Tognetti**. The virtuoso violinist and leader of the acclaimed Australian Chamber Orchestra gives the Slovenian festival sphere a fresh élan. Tognetti is celebrated for his tireless and fearless research of musical creativity – be it traditional or contemporary music streams, West or East, North or South. His innovative and carefully thought-out concert programs are woven with distinguished, unconventional inspiration, while they are overwhelmed by the sense of the global musical society, where there is no room for boundaries and prejudices.

The Artistic Director

Richard Tognetti is one of the most characterful, incisive and impassioned violinists to be heard today."

The Daily Telegraph (UK), 2006

The Australian violinist, conductor and composer, Richard Tognetti, has gained international reputation for his compelling performances and artistic individualism. He studied at the Sydney Conservatorium with Alice Waten, in his home town of Wollongong with William Primrose, and at the Berne Conservatory (Switzerland) with Igor Ozim, where he was awarded the Tschumi Prize as the top graduate soloist in 1989. Later that year he was appointed Leader of the Australian Chamber Orchestra and subsequently became its Artistic Director. He is also the Artistic Director of the Maribor Festival in Slovenia.

Tognetti performs on period, modern and electric instruments. His numerous arrangements, compositions and transcriptions have expanded the chamber orchestra repertoire and been performed throughout the world.



As director or soloist, Tognetti has appeared with the Handel & Haydn Society (Boston), Hong Kong Philharmonic, Camerata Salzburg, Tapiola Sinfonietta, Irish Chamber Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg, Nordic Chamber Orchestra and the Australian symphonic orchestras. He conducted Mozart's *Mitridate* for the Sydney Festival and gave the Australian premiere of Ligeti's Violin Concerto with the Sydney Symphony.

Tognetti has collaborated with colleagues from across various art forms and artistic styles, including Joseph Tawadros, Dawn Upshaw, James Crabb, Emmanuel Pahud, Jack Thompson, Katie Noonan, Neil Finn, Tim Freedman, Paul Capsis, Bill Henson and Michael Leunig.

In 2003, Tognetti was co-composer of the score for Peter Weir's *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World*; violin tutor for its star, Russell Crowe; and can also be heard performing on the award-winning soundtrack. In 2005, he co-composed the soundtrack to Tom Carroll's surf film *Horrorscopes* and, in 2008, created *The Red Tree*, inspired by illustrator Shaun Tan's book. He co-created and starred in the 2008 documentary film *Musica Surfica*, which has won best film awards at surf film festivals in the USA, Brazil, France and South Africa.

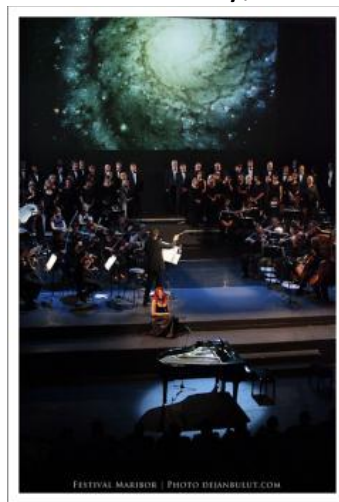
As well as directing numerous recordings by the ACO, Tognetti has recorded Bach's solo violin works for ABC Classics, winning three consecutive ARIA awards, and the Dvořák and Mozart Violin Concertos for BIS. A passionate advocate for music education, Tognetti established the ACO's Education and Emerging Artists programs in 2005.

Richard Tognetti was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia in 2010. He holds honorary doctorates from three Australian universities and was named the National Living Treasure in 1999. He performs on the 1743 Guarneri del Gesù violin, lent to him by an anonymous Australian private benefactor.

Program Concept

The key program principles of the Maribor Festival are:

- Unique, recognisable and innovative program,
- High quality and representative performances,
- Developing the festival's own identity, atmosphere and uniqueness.



The program concept of the Maribor Festival differs from the majority of festivals in that it does not invite the audience to the sheer consumption of one kind of artwork or another, but rather follows its mission, which is to encourage thought and reflection on art. Therefore, the Maribor Festival does not present glamorous concerts of popular classics, it rather distinguishes itself above all by the number of premiere performances.

The festival does not offer “ready-made” concerts, the producers do not shop in the network of European tours and the festival does not import foreign productions.

The selection of works performed at the Maribor Festival to a large extent exceeds the stereotypes of the classical music festivals. What sets it apart from the majority of festival programs is the well-recognisable physiognomy of postmodernism and the combination of the so-called elite western music tradition and contemporary music in the broadest sense. If on conservative stages works of the iconic composers like John Cage, Arvo Pärt, Morton

Feldman and Giacinto Scelsi are considered exotic, for the Maribor Festival they represent the only possible step into the 21st century.



Festival Maribor oversteps the boundaries between classical and contemporary music, creating interesting hybrids that are now one of the festival trademarks. On the other hand the Maribor Festival does not mandate a rigid program 'theme'; it rather reflects a stimulating mix of pieces, styles, artists and composers that engage the listener in an absorbing adventure. Our focus is to create a remarkable program with a sense of the unpredictable, with different groups of musicians moving apart and coming together, making music in always interesting, different and unexpected combinations, while building musical communities with each other and with the audience.

The artistic director of the festival Richard Tognetti is set to work with renowned musicians from many different European Countries and Australia in programs that embody their individual artistic principles and showcase their diverse talents.

Maribor Festival 2012

ECOC 2012 will definitely represent a major challenge and a great opportunity for Maribor and wider region. The 2012 edition of the festival will take place from **5th to 15th September** with about 20 events being held over a period of ten days, featuring roughly 200 Slovenian and international artists. The 50th anniversary of the festival will offer the audiences even more unique and special premium experiences, including a number of "firsts" and world-premieres.

The Festival's range of venues will spread to the ECOC partner cities in the so called Eastern Cohesion region. The venues will include the Cities of Ptuj, Prevalje, Dornava and Velenje.



All in all the Maribor Festival 2012 will feature **17 core program and 3 complimentary concerts, a number of educational activities and some other complementary events, like exhibitions, book presentations and workshops.** The concert venues will include: the castles of Maribor, Ptuj and Dornava, the Union Hall, the Kazina Hall and the Old Hall at the Maribor National Theatre. There will be open air performances on the Squares and in the Yards of the Old City of Maribor.

All concerts are planned to be available via radio broadcast (European Broadcasting Union) so as to insure the widest possible national and international audience.

Workshops

2011 was the first year for the international workshops on creative writing of music reviews for students of musicology and journalism – led by the acknowledged musicologists, publicists and reviewers, Dr. Gregor Pompe (SI) and Bosiljka Perič-Kempf (CRO), as well as Laurence Vittes (USA). For logistic reasons, the choice of 20 participants was limited to Slovenia and Croatia, while the workshops were also open to the general public. Food and accommodation for the participants was organized in partnership with the Student Organization of University of Maribor (ŠOUM). Our festival's goal is to help students develop their creative and critical abilities with language - to become productive review writers and insightful thinkers. The workshop among others develops writing skills by introducing the practice of hearing students' work read by others and responding critically to their own writing and that of others. They are introduced to tools used in writing a concert review. The workshop stresses the importance of documenting, developing and communicating ideas through writing.

In 2012, more workshops will be organized for students of music and musicology in collaboration with some other acclaimed European festivals. We

will create a blog for all participants, where they can exchange their experiences, reviews, thoughts, ideas, rate the concerts and lecturers, as well as publish photos and videos. The best rated lecturers will travel to other participating festivals to present their lectures to students there. This kind of workshops will not only help reduce the lack of good concert reviewers, but also give culture in general more room in European media. A selection of workshop reviews will be posted on the official Festival website and published in print and internet media.



Festival Maribor - part of corporate identity designed to help attract younger audiences

Local Community Engagement

Maribor is one of the cities the economic crisis has wounded especially deep. Once an important industrial centre has not yet recovered from the collapse of the industry that a short time ago was shaping the city. For this reason the festival's activities benefiting the local community are one of our priorities. A line of events in this context under the name ***Festival for Maribor*** include:

- A quota of **free-of-charge tickets for the unemployed**
- **Organised concert visits for school children and students**
- **Pre-concert discussions in retiring homes and a quota of free-of-charge tickets for the residents of these homes** (this initiative corresponds with the goals of the European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012)
- **Free-of-charge complimentary events of the Maribor Festival**

Last but not least, the **collaboration with Maribor's prisons and a repetition of one concert event in their facilities**. The event will take place on the initiative

of the Maribor Festival and is founded on Maribor's motto – Capital of Culture for everyone.

The Festival's connection with the local community is also presented in the project **Voluntary Arts Ambassador Program**.

The Festival's voluntary ambassadors are music lovers and part of the target community. Their job is to stimulate positive word of mouth, including 'word of mouse' and text messaging. The festival benefits from the ambassadors also regarding the distribution of our promotional material. The local community profits from the introduction of the Festival Ambassador initiative for this is one of the ways we contribute to the goals of the European Year of Active Ageing (most of the Festival Ambassadors are retired music lovers) and we offer opportunities for active ageing.

Organisation of Maribor Festival

Some of the Maribor Festival employees have been working for the festival for years (starting with the organization of the former Music September) and are highly experienced in the field. As the festival developed, the scope of work broadened and as a consequence, the legal form changed as well. After the Maribor Festival 2008 edition, the festival team became independent, but still collaborated with the Public Institution Multicultural Events Centre, Narodni dom Maribor as external contractor. The Non-Governmental Organization, the Association of the Slovene Philharmonic String Chamber Orchestra, was at that time the co-producer of the festival. Finally, after the 2009 festival, the Association of the Slovene Philharmonic String Chamber Orchestra became the festival's legal entity. The co-producer of the festival from 2010 until 2013 is the Public Institution Maribor ECOC 2012. The institution provides the main financial support for the festival.

6 regular contract employees (artistic director, director, coordinator, accountant, executive management, marketing and public relations) are working in the production of the festival.

Through the whole year the Festival hires occasional additional workers, such as translators, professional writers of promotional texts, designers, graphic designers, authors and website maintainers, proof-readers for all three language versions of the Festival Maribor publishing (website, booklets, et cetera).

From the beginning of the preproduction - rehearsals in August until the end of the festival in September - the Festival also hires a technical crew, hostess service and car service.

Long-lasting effect of Maribor Festival on Cultural Tourism

Festivals priding themselves on their own program and performance production are, due to the nature of such work, usually based in smaller cities.

Arranging such a festival entails the artists staying in one place for a longer period of time, a large number of rehearsals and subsequently a high occupancy of halls for the preparation of projects, all of this is a lot more difficult in larger cities, because of the intensive schedule of various events.



The specific character and appeal of these sorts of festivals, as well as the specific character and appeal of smaller cities represent an **excellent starting point for the development of stationary cultural tourism**.

The drawback of small cities or countries like Slovenia with a total of merely 2 million inhabitants is of course the lack of the national audience. Consequently the focus of the Maribor Festival is on international promotion and attracting foreign audiences.

The Maribor Festival itself directly addresses the target group of foreign cultural guests that come to spend a few days in Maribor and are experiencing the special festival flair that goes hand in hand with the creative process of the musicians. These guests are mostly universally conscious “culture consumers” and next to the festival events also interested in cultural heritage and visual arts. The most numerous visitors arrive from Australia thanks to the well-deserved reputation of the Festival’s artistic director Richard Tognetti.



A planned sustainable development of cultural tourism and audience development (outreaching to build additional audience) were of key importance in the newly designed concept of the festival. From 2008 onwards, we've been working on a 5-year strategy, which includes the following areas:

- **the focus strategy** – specialized tourist agencies – event tourism
- **the differentiation strategy** – servicing the uniqueness of the programme and the innovative, adventurous, offbeat programming decisions, and
- **the penetrating strategy** concentrating on attracting more people from the already existing target market.

The Festival has been working on achieving the above mentioned strategic plan, which, in the sense of sustainable development and audience evolution, is already bringing expected results (85% average hall occupancy in 2011).

Development and Presentation Dynamics of Maribor Festival Project until 2013

In regard to its range, content and the anticipated financial expenses the Maribor Festival 2012 is comparable to previous festival editions. This amounts to approximately 650,000€ per year, which despite the high quality program and world-acclaimed performers defines the Festival as a low-budget project.

In the developing sense we will above all focus on increasing the international Festival recognisability, expanding the partner festivals network and subsequently more efficient Festival promotion. In recent years we have significantly upgraded our web-promotion and plan to expand it further in the coming years.



In addition, we are developing more effective festival marketing strategies in the sense of attracting new sponsors and donators.

The city of Maribor has included the Maribor Festival in the collection of culture programs and events that have been specifically presented to the international assessment committee of the European Commission during the candidacy for the title of the ECOC 2012. The committee approved the Maribor Festival as one of the most important ECOC projects that uses the public attention and opportunities of the ECOC 2012 for its growth. The Festival does not only have the status of an event of the ECOC 2012, but in the broader sense of a sustainable contribution to the city, the region and the country.

Considering the experiences up to this point we can stress some facts connected to the long-term effect of the Maribor Festival in a non-material and material sense:

Non-material effect of the Maribor Festival:

- Image; increasing the city's recognisability
- Effect on national and international musical creativity (collaboration with acclaimed foreign artists, swapping experiences, raising the level of national musical creativity)
- Assured filing and media coverage of music events, works presented and indirectly better access to cultural programs
- Educational effect in the sense of educating generations of future visitors
- Networking and co-operating with partner festivals and organisations in Europe and globally
- Working in the interest of the local community
- Developing competences of the organisational staff (acquiring new experiences and knowledge, developing skills, examples...)
- The increasing recognisability of the Festival can consequently have an effect on the city's infrastructure

Material effect of the Maribor Festival:

- Income effect (cultural tourism for longer or shorter periods, local audiences, festival expenses)
- Added value effect (print offices, purchases of sheet music, renting of equipment, advertising, announcements...)
- Effect of employment (co-workers at the Festival)
- Fiscal

Marketing objectives and expected results for 2012 are the following:

- increasing box office receipts (30%)
- increasing sponsorship and donations (20%)
- increasing publicity generated in print and electronic media (20%)