

# Serbian Month in Great Britain

## Theatre and visual arts British Serbs part six

This catalogue has been produced by the Serbian Council of Great Britain,  
on behalf of the Round Table of Serbian community organisations in Britain.

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## About the Serbian Month Catalogue

The first Serbian Month Catalogue was created in 2018 to mark the tenth anniversary of Serbian Month in Great Britain. Modest in size and ambition, it featured the festival programme, an overview of Serbian community organisations active in Britain, and short biographies of prominent Serbian artists, academics, and sports figures. Its success encouraged the organisers to establish it as a regular part of Serbian Month.

In 2021, the Round Table agreed to broaden the scope of the Catalogue and introduce annual themes that would engage both the Serbian community and the wider British public. The overarching concept became "British Serbs" - a theme that allows for the exploration of the history of Serbian communities in Britain and Ireland, reflections on the meaning of British Serb identity, and the celebration of notable Serbs who lived or studied in Britain, as well as British individuals who have supported Serbia and the Serbian community. It also provides a framework for presenting Serbian culture and the way it is preserved and expressed within the Serbian community in the UK.

Recent thematic focuses have included Serbian food and customs (2023), Serbian music and folklore (2024), and Serbian film and literature (2025).

## This Year's Catalogue

This year, we continue our exploration of Serbian culture by highlighting Serbian theatre and visual arts. The articles examine their long and rich history, their role in shaping Serbian identity, and the ways in which they influence perceptions of Serbia and its people. They also reflect on the importance of these art forms for British Serbs - as a means of celebrating their heritage, nurturing ties with Serbia, and strengthening connections across the global Serbian diaspora.

The catalogue further illustrates how theatre and visual arts have contributed to cultural exchange between Britain and Serbia. A particularly striking example is presented in the article on the history of the Belgrade Theatre in Coventry - a symbol of shared cultural heritage and cooperation.

We hope that you will not only enjoy reading the catalogue but also discover something new within its pages.

## Acknowledgements

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Artem Magazine, Aleksandar Dundjerović, Ella Dorman Gajić, Antonella Hamilton, Nataša Kočić, Svetlana Mejehofer, David Norris, Tanja Novaković, Ana Omaljev, Ljiljana Petrović, Father Nenad Popović, Duška Radosavljević, Saša M. Savić, Ján Špringel, Jelica Stevanović, and Slavica Stojasavljević.

## Serbian Month

Now in its eighteenth year, Serbian Month in Great Britain is recognised as one of the most significant festivals of Serbian arts and culture in the Serbian diaspora. It showcases artists from Serbia as well as British Serbian artists, and stands as one of the finest examples of what the Serbian community in Britain can achieve through collaboration and shared purpose. The festival has played a vital role in raising the profile of the Serbian community both in Britain and in Serbia, and in strengthening ties with Serbian diaspora communities around the world.

## With Special Thanks

Our heartfelt thanks go to all sponsors and advertisers, and to every Serbian organisation and individual who has contributed to this catalogue and to the ongoing success of Serbian Month in Great Britain.

## How You Can Help

If you have enjoyed this catalogue and the Serbian Month events, please consider showing your support with a financial donation—no matter how small. Your contribution is essential in helping us secure the future of these initiatives, which bring so much value to the Serbian community in Britain.

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# THEATRE IN SERBIA

By Dr Jelica Stevanović

For centuries, the territory of present-day Serbia was divided: the area north of the Danube and Sava rivers was ruled by the Austrian Empire (later the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy), while the southern part remained under Ottoman control. The Serbian National Theatre, based in Novi Sad, the largest city in the northern region (now Vojvodina), was founded in 1861 and is considered the oldest active theatre in Serbia. Initially, it functioned as a permanent touring troupe managed by an association of prominent Serbian citizens. They would spend a few weeks each year in Novi Sad and tour the rest of the season, visiting towns and cities which could provide suitable facilities and an audience for theatrical performances. Even after acquiring a permanent building in Novi Sad, the ensemble was often on tour until the end of the First World War. Their repertoire focused on dramatic plays, and they also made efforts to stage operettas—a popular genre with audiences, though the theatre lacked the resources necessary for such productions.

In the early 1830s, Serbia south of the Danube and Sava rivers gained its autonomy from the Ottoman Empire, along with the right to establish cultural and educational institutions, including theatres. These new opportunities were supported by their fellow Serbs from the north, many of whom had studied in Vienna and Pest where they became familiar with the performing arts. The attempts made to establish a permanent theatre after 1835 were slow and challenging, but the Serbian public embraced the idea and remained committed to it. Eventually, in 1868, the National Theatre in Belgrade was founded, which moved the following year into a new, purpose-built venue. From the beginning, the theatre encouraged music as part of its dramatic productions, particularly in its popular plays on village themes with singing, and as ambient music, when the orchestra would play as the audience arrived and during intermissions. This allowed Belgrade audiences to hear overtures from famous operas. Thanks to a dedicated conductor, a Slovenian educated in Vienna who worked closely with actors who had some musical talent, the repertoire gradually expanded to include more musically demanding works, including short operas. By the early 20th century, Serbian composers began creating operatic works. The first full-length opera, Verdi's *Il trovatore*, was performed in 1913, but the outbreak of the First World War brought a halt to the development of a regular operatic repertoire.

Theatrical life came to a standstill in Serbia for the duration of the war. Along with the army and displaced population, the theatre moved outside the country's borders, to Corfu, Corsica, the Salonika Front, Bulgaria, Hungary, Austria, France and Tunisia. Actors who were soldiers, prisoners of war, wounded or refugees created makeshift theatres wherever they found themselves: on the frontlines, in camps, at assembly points, in hospitals and convalescent centres. The greatest number of theatres were located in prisoner-of-war camps, with 68 in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy alone.

In the period, within the newly formed state of South Slavs, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, later Yugoslavia, the theatre in Novi Sad underwent significant and frequent changes: name changes, shifts in leadership, the formation and disbanding of opera ensembles and mergers with other troupes. Meanwhile, the National Theatre in Belgrade benefited from the influx of Russian artists fleeing the October Revolution. It established an Opera ensemble which began to perform regularly in 1920, followed by a Ballet ensemble, which was initially seen in opera productions and staged its first independent performance in 1923. The theatre also acquired a smaller building in the former military riding school which considerably eased the work of the three artistic ensembles. However, during the first bombing of Belgrade in the Second World War on 6 April 1941, both buildings were significantly damaged. Nevertheless, the smaller venue was quickly repaired and extensive renovations of the main building were completed the following year, allowing the theatre to resume its regular programme for all three ensembles under extremely difficult conditions.

After the war, under the new socialist regime, state-run theatres were soon founded in many cities, while amateur institutions were opened in smaller towns. National minorities were provided with theatres, either professional or amateur, depending on their numbers in the local district. As Serbian theatre evolved and expanded, numerous theatre festivals appeared on both national and international levels. The most significant national event is *Sterijino Pozorje*, held annually in Novi Sad since 1956, to showcase the most successful plays by Serbian playwrights, and to which the selectors later admitted productions by foreign authors. The Belgrade International Theatre Festival (BITEF) has been held annually in the capital since 1967, bringing avant-garde and experimental theatre from around the world to Serbian audiences.

Today, Serbian theatres founded by the state or local governments operate as repertory companies, putting on a different production every evening, with successful shows often remaining on stage for many years, and in some cases for decades. Major theatres may have dozens of productions rotating at the same time. They typically employ permanent ensembles, with frequent guest appearances by artists from other companies or independent productions. The repertoires include both Serbian and international works, spanning from the classics to contemporary drama. In some cities, there are special children's or youth theatres, which feature live performances or puppets or a combination of the two. Where such theatres do not exist, the resident companies include programmes for younger audiences.

Serbia has two national theatre institutions containing drama, opera and ballet sections, the National Theatre in Belgrade and Serbian National Theatre in Novi Sad. Their Opera ensembles often perform works from the standard repertoire, particularly Verdi, Puccini, the verismo composers and Bizet, while Wagner is less popular. Operas by Serbian composers are also supported, though they are less likely to enjoy a broad public appeal. Classical and neoclassical works dominate the Ballet ensembles, especially the traditional 'ballet blanc'. However, earlier Serbian ballets containing folkloric elements, as well as select modern ballets by local and international choreographers, have also achieved notable success. Belgrade is also host to a city theatre which primarily stages musicals. Beyond the major institutions, Serbia is home to many smaller professional, semi-professional and private theatres, often specializing in specific genres or formats, such as children's theatre, dance or comedy, which may employ permanent troupes or are just organized on a project-by-project basis.

## The National Theatre in Belgrade

Witness of the Cultural and National History of the Serbs

By Srećko Milovanović, from ARTEM magazine

If we were seeking a cultural institution that has shared the destiny of its country and people for over one and a half centuries, we would find no better example than the National Theatre in Belgrade, which this year celebrates the 158th anniversary of its founding. The desire and determination to establish a permanent professional theatre in Belgrade had existed since 1842. Although the first attempts failed, the National Theatre in Belgrade was nevertheless founded in 1868, initially at a temporary location at 51 Kosmajska Street, within the tavern *The English Queen's Place (Kod engleske kraljice)*. The adaptation of this space was entrusted to the architect Aleksandar Bugarski, and it was here, on 22 November 1868 (Gregorian calendar), that the National Theatre held its first performance—Karl Obernijk's play *Durađ Branković*. This date is still celebrated today as Theatre Day.



The National Theatre remained at this site for a year, while plays were also staged in the warehouse of the Customs House (the Đumrukana Theatre), in hotel halls (the Deer's Place Theatre), in the Duke's brewery, in the Serbian Crown Hotel, and in the English Queen's Place. Thanks to the efforts of the Committee of the Lovers of Folk Education and the Theatre Committee, a fundraising campaign was organised: Prince Alexander Karađorđević donated 1,000 ducats, Captain Miša Anastasijević contributed 500, while the Government of the Principality of Serbia granted a plot of land in the city's Green Wreath (*Zeleni venac*) area as well as funds amounting to 2,000 ducats.

Although construction of a theatre building in the Green Wreath area began in 1852, based on plans by the Italian architect Joseph Cassano, the project was abandoned due to groundwater issues on the site. This failure delayed the establishment of the first Serbian theatre by nearly two decades. Josimović's improvements in urban planning in 1867, and the later construction of the National Theatre at the corner of Vasina and Francuska streets, led to the creation of what is today Belgrade's principal central space—Republic Square.

In 1868, the Serbian National Theatre from Novi Sad gave its second guest performance in Belgrade. Inspired by the Novi Sad actors, Prince Mihailo Obrenović made the historic decision to build a new, permanent theatre building in Belgrade. With the approval of the State Council, he decided on 12 March 1868 to construct the theatre on state-owned land that had once served as an Ottoman construction plot near the Stambol Gate, where the demolition of Turkish houses had begun that very day. The symbolism of this choice was further underscored by embedding fragments of the demolished Stambol Gate into the theatre's foundations. The rapid pace of these actions testifies to the determination that Belgrade should finally have its own permanent theatrical institution. The prince demanded that the building be completed by 15 October of that same year.

Following the assassination of Prince Mihailo on 29 May / 10 June, preparations were temporarily suspended. The Governors wished to complete the project as a testament to the late prince's intentions. A Theatre Committee was established, and tasked with coordinating construction and with the establishment of a theatre troupe. According to an Act submitted on 17 June 1868, the prince's legitimate heirs—his sister Petrija Bajić and his nephews Teodor and Mihailo Nikolić—allocated 6,500 ducats to the National Theatre "in accordance with the promise of the blissfully departed prince." The foundation stones were laid on 18 August in the presence of the young Prince Milan and the Regents.

That same year, the Theatre Committee leased the private house of cleric Sušić, where the newly formed troupe could perform until the theatre building was completed. It was in this same house that the first play—Karl Obernijk's *Đurađ Branković*—was performed on 10 November (Julian calendar).

Construction of the new theatre, carried out according to Aleksandar Bugarski's design, was completed in 1869. The inaugural performance took place on 30 October: *The Posthumous Glory of Prince Mihailo*, written for the occasion by Đorđe Maletić. The first director of the National Theatre was Jovan Đorđević. Many distinguished figures have led the institution since then, including Milorad Popović-Šapčanin, Branislav Nušić, Milan Grol, Vida Ognjenović, Aleksandar Berček, Predrag Ejdus, Ljubivoje Tadić, Božidar Đurović, Dejan Savić, Ivana Vujić Kominac, Svetislav Bule Goncić.

There is no doubt that in the years and decades ahead, the National Theatre will continue to fulfil its role as a torchbearer of Serbian culture.



# THEATRE SHINES BRIGHT LIGHT AT THE END OF BELGRADE CULTURAL AND POLITICAL TUNNEL

By Prof. Dr. Aleksandar Dundjerović

Belgrade's theatrical life in 2024–25 presents a paradoxically vigorous and contested cultural ecology: A long-standing repertory tradition, grounded in institutions such as the Yugoslav Drama Theatre, the National Theatre, Belgrade Drama Theatre and Atelje 212, coexists with a restless, alternative theatre, festival-driven avant-garde and an increasingly politicised public sphere. The repertory houses continue to sustain a high volume of classical and contemporary work while festivals and independent producers push aesthetic boundaries with multimedia, documentary and politically urgent pieces.

Artistically, the past year has been marked by the National Theatre's strong run of domestic dramaturgy: Veljko Mićunović's production *Fathers and Forefathers*, dramatised by Kata Cyarmati from Slobodan Selenić, was staged at the National Theatre in Belgrade. It swept up several Sterija awards and captured both professional and audience acclaim, signalling that large institutions still nurture prize-winning new interpretations of canonical writing. This critical success is an important indicator of how mainstream companies are renewing the national repertoire while retaining festival visibility.

Alongside repertory renewal, Belgrade's festival circuit, above all BITEF (Belgrade International Theatre Festival), remains the city's most visible interface with European and global theatre. BITEF's programme historically foregrounds experimental choreography, political performance and international co-productions, making it the principal stage for artists and companies who refuse easy categorisation. In 2025 the festival once again became a flashpoint for debates about cultural governance and curatorial independence, drawing international attention to the relationship between artistic programming and institutional oversight.

Two interlocking trends deserve emphasising. First, politically engaged theatre is prominent: companies and festivals are staging documentary forms and verbatim pieces that interrogate recent public crises, memory, and responsibility. Second, interdisciplinarity is now normative; directors and companies regularly integrate filmic projection, live music and immersive stagecraft to respond to audiences conditioned by streaming and multimedia culture. These tendencies reflect both global currents and local urgencies. Belgrade artists are negotiating how to speak to civic anxieties while maintaining theatrical craft.

Key figures populate both worlds. In 2025, there were a few critically acclaimed productions, a mixture of mainstream and alternative theatre productions. They included 'Illumination' by Dušan Kovačević, directed by Nebojša Bradić in the established regional National Theatre of Niš; 'Hipnos and Tanatos' with text written and directed by Branislava Ilić from the alternative theatre scene; and 'Treasure Island', adapted from Robert Louis Stevenson by Kokan Mladenović, who also directed the production. Another cultural important alternative production was by Andraš Urban, 'Peasant Hamlet' dramatised from text by Ivo Brešan in the Farmers Theatre in Kovilovo.

Some productions feature established ensemble actors, whose careers span the city's theatres, and whose names continue to draw audiences. Performers like Vanja Ejodus have been publicly recognised for bravura roles in recent seasons. At the same time, a new generation of directors is gaining prominence by working across institutional and festival platforms, bringing contemporary dramatic compositions into the repertory.

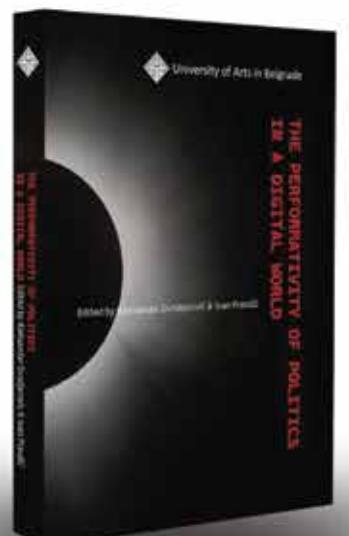
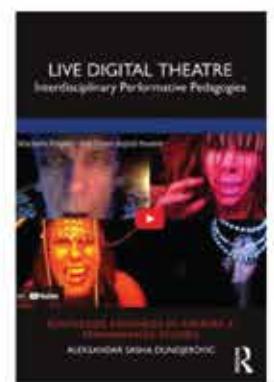
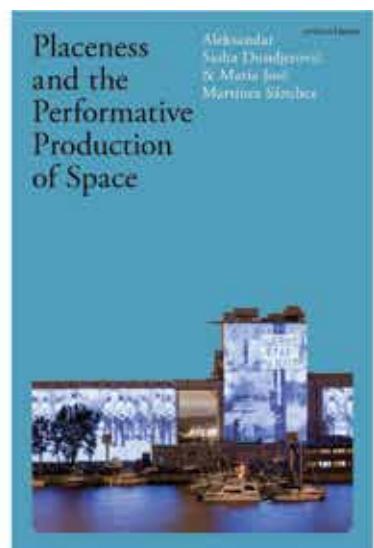
Finally, the theatre scene's promotional story is twofold and compelling for visitors or presenters: Belgrade offers the gravity of historic repertory houses (with polished stagings of classical and national texts) and the electricity of an edgy festival calendar where provocations and international collaboration meet. That said, the sector is also in a moment of civic scrutiny. This is due to the appointment of powerful non-artistic actors to boards, and to contested programme decisions. These have provoked public debate about artistic autonomy and funding, a factor that potential partners and audiences should view as part of the city's living cultural narrative.

For anyone wishing to promote Belgrade right now, the emphasis should be on this productive tension: a city where institutional excellence and festival experimentation coexist, where award-winning productions and politically urgent pieces are both on offer, and where the theatre remains an indispensable forum for public reflection.

*Performativity of Politics in Digital World*, coedited with I. Pravdic, (The University of Arts in Belgrade, 2025)  
<https://www.arts.bg.ac.rs/en/dpa-conference/the-performativity-of-politics-in-digital-media-arts-and-culture-october-16-19-2024>

*Placeness and the Performative Production of Space*, coauthored with M J Sanchez (Bloomsbury, 2024)  
<https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/placeness-and-the-performative-production-of-space-9781350349810/>

*Live Digital Theatre-Interdisciplinary Performative Pedagogies*, monograph (Routledge, 2023)  
<https://www.routledge.com/Live-Digital-Theatre-Interdisciplinary-Performative-Pedagogies/Dundjerovic/p/book/9781032231310>





# SERBIA'S THEATRE LEGENDS: FROM STAGE PIONEERS TO MODERN ICONS

When you think of Serbian theatre, you picture a stage alive with passion, humour, and creativity. From medieval rituals to contemporary festivals, the country has cultivated a rich theatrical tradition, shaped by actors, directors, playwrights and designers whose work still resonates today.

## The Trailblazers

Long before Belgrade and Novi Sad had their thriving theatres, **Joakim Vujić**, the “Father of Serbian Theatre,” was laying the groundwork. In the early 19th century, he staged the first Serbian-language performances and founded the **Knjaževsko-srpski teatar** in Kragujevac—the country’s first professional theatre. Around the same time, playwrights **Jovan Sterija Popović** (*Kir Janja*) and **Kosta Trifković** (*The Chooser*) were shaping the humour and social critique that would define Serbian drama.



## Masters of Laughter and Drama

No Serbian stage is complete without **Branislav Nušić**, the comic genius whose witty plays like *The Cabinet*, *Minister's Wife* and *A Member of Parliament* still delight audiences. Alongside him, **Aleksandar Popović** reshaped post-war Serbian drama with his provocative, ironic takes on society in works like *Mrešćenje šarana* and *Razvojni put Bore Šnajdera*. Later, **Dušan Kovačević** brought a new twist with his tragicomedies, blending satire, absurdity, and human insight in works like *Balkan Spy* and *The Marathon Family*. Contemporary playwrights such as **Biljana Srbljanović** and **Milena Marković** continue the tradition, exploring social issues and universal themes that speak far beyond Serbia’s borders.



## Icons of the Stage

Actors are the heartbeat of theatre, and Serbia has produced more than its fair share of legends. **Mira Stupica** was a commanding presence in both classical and modern roles; **Ljuba Tadić** brought gravitas and unforgettable intensity; **Zoran Radmilović**’s improvisational genius and humour made him a household name; and **Danilo “Bata” Stojković** mastered comic timing, particularly in the plays of Nušić and Kovačević.



They are joined by artists of exceptional range and influence, including **Milena Dravić**, celebrated for her emotional depth and long career at Atelje 212 and the Yugoslav Drama Theatre; **Rade Šerbedžija**, internationally renowned for his powerful Shakespearean and classical stage presence; and **Svetozar Cvetković**, admired for his intellectual precision and intensity in both classical and contemporary roles.

A remarkable ensemble of performers whose names are synonymous with Serbian theatre history further shaped its identity: **Svetlana Ceca Bojković**, **Olivera Marković** and **Rade Marković**, **Miroslav Mija Aleksić**, **Vlastimir Đuza Stojiljković**, **Jelisaveta Seka Sablić**, **Branko Pleša**, **Marija Crnobori Fotez**, **Petar Kralj**, **Mira Banjac**, **Tihomir Stanić**, **Voja Brajović**, **Stevo Žigon**, **Ljiljana Krstić**, **Bogdan Diklić**, **Ksenija Jovanović**, **Mihailo Miša Janketić**, **Bora Todorović**, **Petar Banićević**, **Ružica Sokić**, and **Petar Božović**.

Masters of distinctive theatrical expression such as **Milan Lane Gutović**, celebrated especially for his cabaret work, and **Rahela Ferari**, unforgettable for her character roles, expanded the expressive range of the Serbian stage. More recent generations have carried this legacy forward through powerful performances by **Mirjana Mira Karanović**, **Jasna Đuričić**, **Anita Mančić**, **Boris Isaković**, **Predrag Ejdus**, and **Nebojša Glogovac**—artists whose work across theatre, film, and television left a lasting mark on the contemporary Serbian stage.

## Directors Who Changed the Game

Behind every great performance is a visionary director. **Bojan Stupica** brought a modernist touch and visually daring productions, while **Mira Trailović** turned Belgrade into an avant-garde hub through **Atelje 212** and **BITEF**. **Jovan Ćirilov** championed experimental theatre, introducing international works that challenged and inspired Serbian audiences.

Today, directors like **Kokan Mladenović** continue to push boundaries, blending tradition with modern storytelling techniques.

## The Architects of Stage Magic

Scenographers and costume designers transform words into visual wonder. **Mira Brtka's** bold, painterly stages and **Tatjana Radisic's** inventive costume designs have helped define the look of modern Serbian theatre. Emerging talents continue to explore new aesthetics, making every production a feast for the eyes.

## Festivals and the Future

The Belgrade International Theatre Festival (**BITEF**) and **Sterijino pozorje** in Novi Sad are more than events—they are platforms where new ideas meet tradition. They nurture the next generation of actors, playwrights, and directors, ensuring Serbia's stage remains vibrant and forward-looking.

Serbian theatre is a living story of visionaries and innovators, a blend of humour, drama, and visual poetry. Its actors, writers, and directors have built a legacy that continues to inspire, reminding the world that this small country punches well above its weight in the performing arts.



# The Belgrade Theatre in Coventry

By Slavica Stojavljević

Every city can proudly tell its story through its theatres, but few in the world can speak for two cities at once — separated by some 2,500 kilometres yet united in spirit. The Belgrade Theatre in Coventry does exactly that. It embodies not only the resilience of a city rebuilt from the ashes of war, but also the generosity and solidarity of Belgrade, whose gift of timber laid its foundations.

## Heart of the City

Located in the heart of Coventry at the distinguished Belgrade Square, the Belgrade Theatre occupies a unique place in British theatrical history. It stands not only as a vibrant cultural hub for the West Midlands but also as a testament to its remarkable and often overlooked international namesake — Belgrade, the capital of Serbia. Born from post-war solidarity, hope, peace, and reconciliation, this connection embodies a shared vision of cultural exchange that continues to resonate today, reminding us of art's enduring power to transcend borders.

The Belgrade Theatre is a modern venue featuring two auditoriums, B1 and B2. The original B1 auditorium seats 858, while the flexible B2 space accommodates up to 245 and was introduced following a major refurbishment and extension between 2005 and 2007. More recently, the theatre unveiled The Jag, a creative workshop and performance space that hosts an array of talks and workshops for artists and creatives.

Offering a diverse programme that spans from Shakespearean classics to contemporary works and family-focused productions, the Belgrade Theatre has earned both national and international acclaim for the quality and diversity of its performances. Central to this reputation is its pioneering Theatre in Education (TiE) Company, established in the mid-1960s. Remaining at the forefront of global TiE development, the Belgrade continues to inspire young people worldwide, proving that theatre can be both a cultural force and an educational catalyst.

Beloved by theatre-goers and cherished as a central meeting place for the local community, the Belgrade Theatre offers more than performances alone. Its welcoming foyer provides a comfortable setting for business meetings, exhibitions, and social gatherings, complemented by refreshments at the Belgrade Café and dining at the Nineteen 58 Restaurant. Open throughout the day, the theatre remains a vibrant hub where culture, conversation, and community converge.

## A Gift of Friendship

When it opened in March 1958, the Belgrade Theatre became Britain's first professional civic theatre built after the war. Its name was chosen as a tribute to Belgrade, a city that had endured immense suffering during the Second World War yet offered Coventry a profound gesture of friendship. This act of solidarity forged a bond between the two cities that transcended mere symbolism, embodying a shared conviction in the power of culture to heal, unite, and inspire hope for generations to come.

The story begins in 1952, in the shadow of the Second World War. Coventry, a city scarred by devastating bombing, was engaged in a monumental effort of reconstruction. As a gesture of renewed hope and international cooperation, the people of Belgrade — then part of Yugoslavia — extended a remarkable gift through their Ambassador in London, Mr. Vladimir Velebit: a substantial supply of timber. This offering was more than a practical contribution; it was a symbol of solidarity, friendship, and the belief that culture and community could rise from the ruins of conflict.

Soon after Coventry City Council accepted the offer, a delegation of five representatives flew to Belgrade, in April 1952, to discuss the standards required. Led by Coventry's Lord Mayor, Councillor H. Weston, the group was warmly received upon arrival by Belgrade's Mayor, Mr. Djurica Jojkić, alongside senior Yugoslav officials. Mr. Moss of the British Embassy, together with members of the Yugoslav and international press, also attended, underscoring the significance of the occasion.

This stone commemorates the generous gift of timber by the people of Belgrade to the citizens of Coventry for a Civic Theatre and was laid on the occasion of the visit to the city of representatives of Belgrade & Sarajevo 19 May 1953



Over the course of the eight-day visit, the Coventry delegation met with prominent figures, including Marshal Tito, and toured Belgrade as well as other parts of Yugoslavia. The trip was marked by the exchange of many gifts — among them, Coventry's presentation to Belgrade of a Humber Pullman car. Yet the central purpose remained clear: the timber offered by Belgrade was no ordinary gift. It was destined for the construction of a new theatre, a space where Coventry could restore its spirit, nurture artistic expression, and embody the resilience of a city rising from the ashes of war.

In June 1953, the awaited timber arrived in Coventry, and construction of the new civic theatre began. Rising from the city's post-war reconstruction, the building quickly became a symbol of resilience and international friendship. Two years later, in 1955, the decision was made to name it The Belgrade Theatre — a lasting tribute to the generosity of Belgrade and a powerful reminder of how solidarity and culture can unite communities across borders.

It was agreed that the gift of timber would be used primarily in the auditorium, particularly for the ceilings, to enhance the theatre's acoustic qualities. When construction was completed, the City Architect, Arthur Ling, devised an unusual test for the first trial performance: he fired a gun on stage to demonstrate the building's remarkable acoustic properties. The resounding clarity of the sound confirmed that the Belgrade Theatre had achieved not only architectural distinction but also technical excellence, ensuring it would serve as a world-class venue for performance and community life.

In 1957, Yugoslav Ambassador Mr. Ivo Vejvoda visited Coventry to open the Modern Yugoslav Paintings Exhibition at the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum. That same year, a formal twinning agreement was signed between Coventry and Belgrade, making Belgrade one of the first cities to be twinned with Coventry. During his visit, the Ambassador also toured the construction site of the nearly completed new theatre, a powerful symbol of the friendship and cultural bond that had grown between the two cities.

Before the Belgrade Theatre opened, Coventry sought to adorn the exterior of the building with a distinctive artwork. The city approached the Yugoslav Embassy in London for assistance, and the Embassy warmly embraced the idea, providing a Giacomo de Rossi engraving as inspiration. From this, artist James Brown developed his design. The relief was first modelled in brick clay before being cast in cement fondu, using Penmaenmawr granite chippings as aggregate. The result was a striking piece of public art that not only enhanced the theatre's facade but also symbolised the creative collaboration between Coventry and Belgrade.

The description below is taken from the Public Monuments & Sculptures Association's website: "Sculptured concrete panel over the main entrance to the Belgrade Theatre symbolising the city of Belgrade and is based on a 1684 engraving by Giacomo de Rossi. The relief shows a fortress on a hill above a walled city, surrounded by the river Danube. The city arms and its name in Cyrillic script on a banner are at the top of the relief. The dark colour of the textured panel provides a visual interruption from the smoothness of the surrounding windows."

## "Love and Nonsense"

Extensive discussions were held about staging a play from Belgrade for the theatre's grand opening, but the complexities of such an ambitious plan proved difficult to overcome. Ultimately, the Belgrade Theatre was officially opened on Thursday, 27 March 1958, by Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent, Princess Marina. The inaugural performance was *Half in Earnest*, a musical adaptation of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, written by Vivian Ellis.

Nevertheless, it was agreed that later in the year a Yugoslav production, adapted into English and performed by the resident Belgrade Theatre Company, would take place — a more practical yet still meaningful way to honour the international connection at the heart of the theatre's identity.

Just a few months later, *Uncle Dundo (Dundo Maroje)* was brought to Coventry audiences, running for two weeks from 20 October 1958. This classic Yugoslav comedy by Marin Držić was adapted into English and staged at the Belgrade Theatre under the direction of the renowned Yugoslav theatre director and producer Dr. Marko Fotez. At the time, Fotez was based in Belgrade, where he worked closely with institutions such as the Belgrade Drama Theatre (Beogradsko Dramsko Pozorište) and the Belgrade Opera, among others.

The production's single-set stage design was created by Vladimir Jadrinsky, an internationally acclaimed stage designer commissioned by the Belgrade Theatre. Jadrinsky had collaborated with Fotez on numerous occasions, including the original Belgrade production of *Uncle Dundo* in 1940, making this Coventry staging a continuation of a long and distinguished creative partnership.

*Uncle Dundo* was warmly received by the Coventry public and, despite initial scepticism, won over national critics. The production attracted attention across the country, with reviews describing it variously as "Love and Nonsense" and "Go as you please." Beyond its artistic merit, the play was celebrated as a symbol of international collaboration, embodying the spirit of cultural exchange that lay at the heart of the Belgrade Theatre's founding vision.



## Theatre for the future

As a beacon of hope and resilience, the Belgrade Theatre was supported by Coventry City Council, an innovative decision at the time, with every citizen contributing through their rates to its construction. Designed by the City Architect, the theatre embraced a modern vision, offering open spaces for both the public and performers, and incorporating shops and actors' flats adjoining the main building. Its contemporary architecture stood in striking contrast to the ornate traditions of older theatres, a difference noted by critics. As Kenneth Tynan observed: "Enter most theatres and you enter the gilded cupidaceous past; enter this one and you enter the future."

Under the leadership of its first director, Bryan Bailey, the Belgrade Theatre established its inaugural resident company, featuring young actors who would go on to achieve national recognition, including Frank Finlay, Richard Briers, and Patsy Byrne. Bailey also introduced an ambitious programme that premiered works such as *Chicken with Barley*, *Roots*, and *I'm Talking About Jerusalem* — the trilogy by rising playwright Arnold Wesker, whose voice helped define a new era of British theatre.

As a cornerstone of Coventry's cultural life, the Belgrade Theatre soon became a pioneer in Theatre in Education (TiE). In 1965, it founded the world's first dedicated TiE company, revolutionising how theatre could engage young audiences with pressing cultural and social themes. This groundbreaking initiative not only transformed educational practice in Britain but also inspired a global movement. Today, TiE continues to thrive, bringing theatre into schools and inviting young people into theatres, ensuring that the power of performance remains a vital force in shaping future generations.

## More Than a Name

The theatre's name was first secured through the symbolic gift of timber, yet its bond with Belgrade, Serbia, has deepened over the decades into a philosophy of cultural exchange and mutual understanding. The Belgrade Theatre in Coventry has often celebrated this connection through its programming and community engagement, but the true exchange of plays between Belgrade and Coventry remains a story still waiting to be told.

As the Belgrade Theatre continues its vital work in Coventry, it carries with it a name that whispers tales of post-war resilience, international friendship, and the enduring power of art. It's a name that invites us to look beyond local confines and appreciate the global connections that enrich our cultural landscape, prompting us to consider what other stories and collaborations might yet emerge from this unique Anglo-Serbian bond.

Together, these two cities created more than a building: they forged a living testament to friendship, culture, and the enduring belief that art can bridge distances and bring people closer.

**Serbian  
Month**  
in Great Britain



credit Dave Worrall

# Serbian Theatre in the UK: Breaking Through the Silence



By Duška Radosavljević

This Serbian Month in London offers a rare opportunity to engage with an art form that has remained remarkably invisible in Britain despite its rich traditions and political engagement at home. Serbian theatre deserves to be better known—not only for its playwrights' and actors' popular appeal, but for the unique perspectives it brings to universal human experiences through the lens of a complex, often misunderstood corner of Europe.

Search for 'Serbian theatre' in British library catalogues and newspaper archives, and for most of the 20th century you'll find yourself reading about warfronts rather than stages. I recently repeated this exercise for the first time since completing my PhD on Yugoslav theatre 23 years ago, only to discover that precious little has changed.

The theatrical record is sparse: a radio version of Branislav Nušić's *The Minister's Wife* on the Third Programme in 1952; Dušan Kovačević's *The Professional* at the Offstage Theatre in London in 1992; a guest performance from Brno of *The Near & Dear* (presumably *Ožalošćena porodica*) at Questors Theatre in Ealing in 1969. Even the Hull Daily Mail's 1963 report of the Bridlington Esperanto club reading a Nušić one-act play seems noteworthy only for its obscurity.

## Why this absence?

Author Vesna Goldsworthy has pointed to a British 'colonialism of the imagination'—a tendency to view the region through continued modes of othering and inherited stereotypes which other scholars have named 'Balkanism'. From Shakespeare's 'Illyria' to Anthony Hope's 'Ruritania', the Balkans have been imagined as wild, uncivilized, and mysterious. The wars of the 1990s only reinforced these damaging tropes, creating yet another barrier between British audiences and Serbian culture.

In the late 1990s, determined to turn a new page, as an undergraduate student of theatre studies in the UK, I began translating contemporary Serbian plays. This led to an unlikely success story: *Huddersfield* by Uglješa Šajtinac became the first Serbian play to have its world premiere in the UK.

The journey began with my translation of Šajtinac's graduation play *The Propsmaster*—a story about changing times in Serbia told through relationships between different generations of theatre-makers backstage. Staged as part of a festival of European plays at my alma mater, the University of Huddersfield in 2000, it led to hosting the playwright himself in Yorkshire. The result was a new play, *Huddersfield*, which I also translated and which—after workshopping at the National Theatre Studio during the more generous days of New Labour arts funding—premiered at West Yorkshire Playhouse in Leeds in 2004 under director Alex Chisholm.

The play crossed borders in both directions: Chisholm went on to direct the Serbian premiere at the Yugoslav Drama Theatre, and the work eventually became a cult Serbian film. Yet despite this success and subsequent translations of Šajtinac's work, the spark didn't ignite a broader movement.

What made *Huddersfield* work was a perfect convergence: the right people in the right places at the right time, with adequate resources. It took a network of passionate intermediaries—incidental contacts, enthusiasts, loyal friends—as well as institutional support, to bridge the cultural gap. The challenge remains replicating these conditions more consistently, especially now when general arts subsidy and the survival of British university drama departments are starkly diminished.

One key insight emerged as part of the above mentioned PhD: Serbian plays that work best in translation often use theatre itself as a metaphor, combining local specificity with universal themes. Plays like Ljubomir Simović's *Travelling Theatre Šopalović* or Kovačević's *The Professional* transcend their immediate cultural context by being about the art form itself—making them accessible entry points for international audiences, despite the unpronounceable names of their protagonists.

Another insight can be made about the way in which Šajtinac's work was already in conversation with the British culture: even though *The Propsmaster* relied on the anecdotes of the playwright's own grandfather who had worked as a propsmaster in a provincial theatre, it was also an original response to the 1990s excitement in Serbia about Ronald Harwood's play *The Dresser*. Huddersfield in turn, was written very much in an explosively gritty style that evoked *Trainspotting* or the Royal Court's 'in-yer-face' theatre.

Finally, it is also worth noting that in more recent years the trope of so-called Balkanism has also received some pushback particularly from female theatre, screen, and performing artists within the region, whose work is yet to be made more available in English. Here I am thinking of playwrights such as Tanja Šljivar or Olga Dimitrijević, for example, or in a more emblematic way, the work of the artist Konstrakta, all of whose poetic expression seeks to connect to audiences by less conventional means.

## Beyond plays and playwrights, what of Serbian actors and directors in the UK?

Before 1991, those who achieved prominence in the British public sphere included Serbian actors Ivan Petrović (1894–1962) and Nadja Regin (1931–2019), mostly because of their screen fame. After 1991, Rade Šerbedžija and Branka Katić gained recognition—though also primarily as screen actors, while in 2000 Dragan Mićanović made a notable appearance in a production of *Hamlet* at the Globe. Stage-focused artists like actress Vesna Stanojević and directors Maja Milatović-Ovadia and Aleksandar Dundjerović have increasingly combined creative practice with teaching and academic careers, perhaps indicating the access barriers faced by those not trained within UK systems. Some of the others, including directors Svetlana Dimčović and Sasha Milavić-Davis, who followed UK undergraduate training routes have successfully worked across both Serbian and British contexts. This history of absence and occasional breakthrough raises an important question: what makes Serbian theatre worth seeking out? Serbian drama brings a distinctive voice to contemporary theatre—one forged through historical upheaval, cultural complexity, and a tradition of using dark humour, cross-cultural dialogue, and theatrical metaphor to address difficult truths. At its best, it combines sharp political awareness and technical prowess with deeply human storytelling, offering perspectives that challenge and expand British theatrical conventions.

Serbian Month in London represents an opportunity to change this narrative of invisibility. As new generations of theatre-makers forge connections and as British audiences become more curious about voices beyond the usual centres of cultural production, the conditions may be improving for Serbian theatre to claim more space on UK stages. Keep your eyes open—this story is far from over.

# In memory of Gordana Miller

By Natasha Kocsis

"A force of nature" is probably the best description for Gordana Miller, who sadly passed away in 2014. For people who lived in the UK during the late eighties and nineties she was the cultural lifeline, especially when it came to the theatre plays and actors she managed to bring across.

It is hard to imagine today how isolated the Serbian community was during the nineties and the challenges we faced. Nowadays, thanks to modern technology, everything is at your fingertips. In the early nineties, without internet and social media, at times it felt like a mission impossible to get hold of any books, music, or anything else in Serbian.

The shining light was Gordana's company, Gara Entertainment, which used to bring actors for plays to the UK, from solo performers to whole theatrical troupes. Gordana was old fashioned – she would make a small printout of the key information about the play and then she would take out her 'not so little black book' and start calling people about the latest offering. She was a great salesperson – unless you had an extremely good reason you could not resist buying a ticket from her. She was passionate about the work she did, the plays and actors she chose to bring across. And she was usually right about every single one of them.

The Serbian Church or the Polish Centre, where she hosted most of the productions, were always packed. The plays brought laughter, tears, joy... but they were not just cultural highlights – they helped us reconnect with our roots, celebrate and appreciate our cultural richness in time of isolation.

The plays she brought and promoted are too many to mention, but it is worth noting a few of the great doyens of the stage and screen that she managed to persuade to come to the UK: Ljiljana Lašić, Rada Đurićin, Momo Kapor, Svetlana Ceca Bojković, Ivan Bekjarev, Petar Kralj, Katarina Kaja Žutić, Petar Božović, Suzana Petričević, Jelisaveta Seka Sablić, Zijah Sokolović, Ivan Bosiljić, Ivan Tomić, Miša Janketić, Milutin Mima Karadžić...the list goes on!

Gordana was not a typical events organiser – she would usually personally host all guests and take a lot of her time to show them the wonders of London. She gave herself fully to making sure they felt comfortable and at ease, so it is not surprising that over the course of time many of them became friends who would agree to come back time and time again – which we, as a community, massively appreciated.

But Gordana did not just bring theatre plays. She was a great humanitarian, somebody who organised many fundraising events to help children in Serbia. These included: raising money to secure necessary medication for children with epilepsy, sourcing necessary supplies for the orphanage in Aleksinac, and even organising a literary competition for Romani children from Branko Pešić elementary school in Zemun, with the main prize – two weeks in London being hosted by her! I was privileged enough to visit the school with her on one occasion to deliver some additional school material she managed to get for them, and I witnessed her being received like the queen! Kids were screaming her name, searching to give her a hug. A few days before her arrival, she had secretly organised a concert by Bajaga, who always gladly cooperated with her, and the kids were overwhelmed by the care and attention she gave them. On the spot she asked if I wouldn't mind taking them all (about 60 at the time) to the cinema, which I gladly accepted. It was humbling to realise that for almost all of them this was their first visit to the cinema. I realised there and then why they and many others had so much respect for Gordana – she had a heart the size of the Universe!

Whenever I think of Gordana, apart from the theatre, I think of music. She loved to sing and dance, and because of that she regularly organised "Belgrade parties" (Beogradske žurke) where you could hear many different kinds of music – anything from Russian and Serbian songs, to Gypsy classics. One thing was always guaranteed – you would have a great time, which is why I am always transported to that period when I hear Katyusha, Ochi Chernuye, or anything by Šaban Bajramović. Gordana loved his music so much that she helped organise his concert in the London Astoria in 2008, which was an incredible experience. That concert was one to remember for the rest of your life!

Gordana additionally left a lasting impact on the Serbian community – she was one of the first members of the Serbian Society and a signatory to its founding articles. Over the years, she organised many events with them, which included trips to Devon and Bruges. She supported the establishment of the Serbian library and fought hard to create and maintain a Serbian language school within the Serbian Society and later continued to oversee its Kilburn branch.

Gordana was not just an accomplished events organiser and a host, but a dear friend to everyone around her. Her legacy within the Serbian community in the United Kingdom will prevail for many years.

Her daughter, Danica, was kind enough to share a few photos from her private archive that only touch on the excellence of Gordana's organisational skills but showcase her infectious smile and warm personality. The photos do not do full justice to what Gordana represented for the Serbian community, but are a moment in history that had a profound impact on everyone around her. She remains greatly missed, but her legacy lives on.



# Naše pozorište u Londonu

## Our Theatre in London

By Antonella Hamilton

My childhood was deeply connected to the theatre. As a little girl, I regularly went to the puppet theatre in Podgorica, and it was there — among the puppets and the glow of the stage lights — that I fell in love with the red curtains. For me, they symbolized magic: the moment when the world goes silent, and the story begins.

In the late eighties, I arrived in London. The city was big and exciting, but soon I began to miss something — our music, our language, our theatre. A strong desire awoke in me to create a space where people from our part of the world could reconnect through culture.

That's how I organized the first concert of *Bajaga i Instruktori* in Ealing, a part of London where many of our people lived at the time. The response was incredible, and the energy unforgettable. Shortly after that came my first theatre production with actors from Belgrade, staged at Charing Cross Theatre. The show sold out in record time — and this was long before the era of social media. Back then, people would call each other to say, "There's a play on!"

After that, the performances followed one after another, always with full audiences. At one point in my life, I dedicated myself to motherhood and briefly stepped away from the theatre world, but I returned in 2016 with the play *Indigo* at Ealing Broadway.

Today, audiences still come with the same enthusiasm and curiosity. They often tell me which actors they'd love to see again, and I'm happy to travel to Belgrade to watch plays myself and decide which ones would be perfect for London audiences.

London audiences tend to prefer comedies over dramas, which is why I always bring a good dose of humour to the stage. Some of the most memorable performances we've presented include *Hipertenzija*, *Art*, *Kakva ti je žena, takav tije život*, *Klikeri*, *Lijevo, desno glumac*, *Indigo*, and *Sex i glad*, among others.

Of course, it's not just about comedy. One of the most remarkable dramas we've staged was *Voz*, featuring the legendary Voja Brajović and Sergej Trifunović. It was a powerful psychological drama that completely captivated the audience — truly an outstanding performance.

Over the years, our theatre in London has hosted some of the most beloved and popular actors from the region, including Lane Gutović, Danica Maksimović, Branislav Lečić, Marija Vicković, Svetlana Bojković, Gorica Popović, Mima Karadžić, Predrag Ejodus, Zijah Sokolović, Seka Sablić, Andrija Milošević, Branko Đurić and many more.

"Our Theatre in London" has organized several children's plays at the Irish Cultural Centre, bringing joy to our little ones, and new performances are planned for 2026.

Over time, my theatre work expanded to other European cities where our community lives. Today, I organize performances in Dublin, Stockholm, and Paris as well — where audiences react to every word and emotion on stage with the same passion.

I love what I do, and I will keep doing it for as long as I can, with the same dedication and excitement as on the very first day. There will always be great actors, great plays, and — most importantly — a loyal audience that believes in the magic of theatre.



# How my heritage has informed my artistic practice

By Ella Dorman Gajic

From a young age, I've had a strong desire to tell stories – but this snowballed when I first attended the theatre; I was in awe of how characters came to life on stage – this heightened my connection to the relationships and social issues explored. Theatre made me connect with lives outside of my own, thus deepening my understanding of the world and my place within it. This is what drew me to start writing for live performance myself. I do this in a variety of ways – writing plays for stage, writing poems for live performance, more recently, true stories told live.

As a third-generation Serb, my connection with my heritage and culture has ebbed and flowed throughout my life. When I first started to write, I was coming out of my angst teen phase, wherein a lot of my writing explored my internal world, or my lived experience of growing up female. Despite this being a keen interest of mine, a few years ago, I got to a point where I strongly wanted to explore new terrain as a writer. Through reflection and free writing, I've discovered my pull back to my Serbian roots.

As a kid, I showed very little interest in my Serbian heritage; although Serbian traditions, such as Slava, were strongly upheld in our family, for many years, I assumed the role of the complacent British teen, more interested in assimilating with my mates. Visiting Serbia as a kid, I lugged myself around Belgrade as if I had rocks attached to my ankles; I forced myself to eat bucket-loads of cabbage and salty meats, while my mum spoke with her cousins in a language I didn't even attempt to understand.

However, in my adulthood, I have had a surprising burst of character development: I have become fascinated, some would say obsessed, with my Serbian heritage. So much so that it is now imbuing the majority of what I am currently writing. More specifically, my experience growing up amongst a Serbian diaspora in London, and the history of my Deda (Živan Gajić). The story of how Deda came to this country and formed a community is a long one, so I'll give you a potted history: at the age of 18, he was conscripted to fight in WW2 for the Yugoslav Royals, against Germany. He never wanted to leave his homeland, and his family – he had no choice. But during the war, he was detained in an Italian prisoner of war camp for over two years. Due to the Yugoslav monarchy being exiled after the war, returning home put his life at risk, so he was sent here as a refugee.

But even when Deda came to England, he never let go of his country – once connecting with other Serbs in London, he helped form the Sveti Sava Church, the first Serbian Orthodox church in the UK, in Portobello – where he would someday come to christen me.

There, he was a part-time priest (okay, so technically he was a part-time subdeacon, but that doesn't quite have the same ring as *Part-Time Priest*). It was through the church that this city's Serbian diaspora was formed – a sacred place for Deda and his friends, not only because of their religion, but because this was the closest place they could get to home.

There is something inherently theatrical about a church, particularly a Serbian Orthodox one: the priest's dramatic liturgy from the altar could easily pass for a Shakespearean speech; the choir, as mellifluous as any I've seen in the West End; the incense burning, far more deeply stirring than the smoke machines pumping onto stages. Since I was a baby, I have attended Sveti Sava Church. So perhaps my regular exposure to this theatricality contributed to my affinity with the world of theatre, and my love for it.

**Serbian Month**  
in Great Britain

This year, I've been writing a script inspired by my true-life experience of Slava as a teen. I'm sure most people reading this are familiar with Slava, but for those less aware, I'll quickly fill you in – it's a tradition dating back to the 11th Century, in which each family is given a day to celebrate their respective patron saint. Ours is Sveti Nikola. To our family, Slava is the most important day of the year – it's when we host friends from the church, serving up a three-course Serbian meal and unholy amounts of rakija. By the end, our clothes are infused with the unique blend of boiled cabbage and fried fish. There was a time when I would come along to Slava begrudgingly, and was put on cabbage duty (which meant grating buckets of the stuff while secretly texting my mates under the table). But now, Slava is a tradition I cherish.

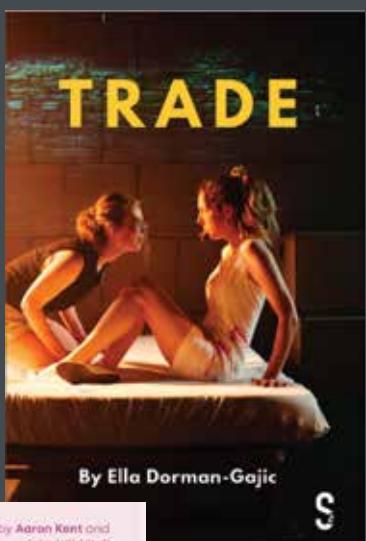
The script I am writing is a comedy-drama inspired by my experiences of Slava – it explores a teen's chaotic escape from Slava to attend her friend's birthday party – but this leads her to discover the true importance of this day. Perhaps it is because the experience is so close to my heart, but this is the script I've enjoyed writing the most.

My only memories of Deda are of him speaking to me in Serbian (I'm sure there was a time I thought my name was 'sedi' – meaning 'sit down'); due to his Alzheimer's, he had forgotten all his English. Over the last couple of years, I've restarted learning the language; I thought it would flood back to me, but my Serbian catch phrase remains 'ja sam zbijena' ('I am confused' – this language is hard!). I've written poems exploring my Serbian heritage, which include the language; a couple have been published (including a poem in Off The Chest's anthology, *Spaces of Significance*).

In November 2025, I wrote a short autobiographical story about my relationship with Serbian culture and the story of my Deda; I performed this at Storytime London, a storytelling night, along with poems exploring the duality of being a third-generation immigrant. Afterwards, I had many people come up to me, of diverse ethnic origins, saying that they related to the story and my experience; despite Serbian culture being very specific, there is an unmistakable universality to the immigrant experience.

Wanting to include my culture in my work dates back further – the second play I ever wrote, *Trade*, explored the journey of a Bosnian woman who comes to the UK, and is pulled into the underground world of trafficking (this was translated to Serbian by a dear friend from the diaspora, Zorica Agbaba). This came to be my debut theatre production, which went on an Arts Council-funded UK Tour, achieving 5-star reviews and sell-out shows. More recently, I wrote and produced a short film, *Back of the Net*, which explores the experience of someone caring for a grandparent with Alzheimer's – although the story doesn't explore Serbian culture, it was informed by stories of Deda. For both of these projects, the former British-Serbian publication *Britic* published articles; they were an incredible champion of my work. I'm deeply grateful for the support I've had from the Serbian community.

However, I'll level with you: despite several projects taking off, sustaining a career in writing and performing hasn't been the smoothest road. Despite my passion for what I do, with a lack of funding for the arts in this country, it's a career that comes with a heap of challenges and setbacks.



It's very easy to get caught up in the concept of 'success', particularly working in such an outward-facing industry. However, in the past year, I've been reflecting a lot on my creative practice, and tapping back into my love for storytelling – which is where this all started. Right now, I'm eager to tell the untold stories of the Serbian diaspora with truth and authenticity; so often in popular culture, Slavic people are reduced to conflict or caricature. I want to challenge those stereotypes and show the rich traditions and generosity of Serbian people, exhibited through the tradition of Slava – something unique to Serbia – and also something very few people outside of Serbian circles are aware of.

As a third-generation immigrant, I'm drawn to looking at how the past (the roots of my family) has informed my present, and thus, my future. I've found a deep joy in writing about my Serbian culture, which is already a win. But sharing these stories with wider audiences is the next step. So, if there is anyone out there who shares a similar vision, please do get in touch!

Find out more about me via my website:  
<https://www.elladorman-gajic.co.uk/>

Watch my film, *Back of the Net*:  
[https://www.minuteshorts.co.uk/film\\_player/back-of-the-net](https://www.minuteshorts.co.uk/film_player/back-of-the-net)

Buy my play text of *Trade*:  
<https://www.elladorman-gajic.co.uk/published-books/p/country-feast-set-3nybt-69ctn>

I'm the co-founder of the poetry organisation Off The Chest. You can buy our poetry anthology, which features a poem about my Serbian heritage:  
<https://www.elladorman-gajic.co.uk/published-books/p/sosoffthechest>

# FROM THE DANUBE TO THE THAMES: SERBIAN ARTISTIC AND ACADEMIC INVOLVEMENT IN THE THEATRE & THEATRE STUDIES IN BRITAIN



**Maya Barcot** is a bi-lingual (Serbian-British) actress based in London. Maya trained at LAMDA (London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts) and throughout her acting career, Maya has performed on Stage, TV and Radio in the UK and in Serbia with internationally recognised and award-winning artists (Greg Doran, Nancy Meckler, Lucy Bailey, April de Angelis, Anthony Neilson, Jon East). Her performing of classical Shakespearean theatre has been strongly influenced by the training she received from Cicely Berry in classical voice techniques at the Royal Shakespeare Company. Theatre credits include: *The Royal Shakespeare Company, The Globe, Arcola Theatre, Southwark Playhouse, The Print Room, Battersea Arts Centre, Wilton's Music Hall, Hull Truck, Nuffield Theatre Southampton* and *Vuk Karadžić Theatre* in Belgrade. Television credits include: BBC TV (*Happy Valley, Doctors, Eastenders*), Sky TV (*COBRA, Critical, Fortitude*), ITV (*Grantchester, The Widow, Emmerdale*). Film credits include: *In The Cloud*. Radio credits include: BBC Radio 4 (*The Archers, Wives and Daughters*).

## Info on 'Dear Mr Branson':

During lockdown Maya decided to get creative and developed a character called Debbie who has the goal of going to space. An Essex housewife with no astronaut skills and no real interest in acquiring them, she sees Virgin Galactic and Sir Richard Branson as her only option. She uses charm and social media to open doors, leading her into ever more bizarre comedic situations. Initially filmed as a few YouTube sketches, the project evolved into a written 6-part comedy series called '*Dear Mr Branson*', which Maya is currently looking to develop.

Link to 'Dear Mr Branson' trailer: <https://vimeo.com/776657183>



**Ella Dorman-Gajic** is an award-winning writer, performer and educator working across theatre, screen and poetry. A British artist of Serbian and Austrian heritage, Ella's work is grounded in the female experience, with an interest in sexual politics, coming-of-age and immigration. Her 5-star stage play, *Trade*, went on an Arts Council Funded UK tour to sell-out audiences. The playtext is published by Salamander Street.

Her debut short film as a screenwriter, *BACK OF THE NET*, has screened at several BIFA, BAFTA and Oscar-qualifying festivals and picked up 7 awards. For it, she won Best Screenplay at the Healdsburg International Film Awards (judged by Tom Waits). The film is executive-produced by Declan Lowney (Ted Lasso). She's performed her poetry sets around the country, written numerous poetry commissions, and her poetry has been published in several publications, including Poetry Wales. She co-hosts and produces Off The Chest, a sell-out poetry night.

Ella works as a creative facilitator, dramaturg and tutor. She was a professional mentor for the University of Westminster's SoH New Writing Festival and is currently a lead workshop facilitator for Broken Silence Theatre's Playwright's Hive and her writing group, Just Write It!, held at the Albany's Deptford Lounge.

"Bold and brilliantly written... fierce, unapologetic and gripping." - West End Best Friend on '*TRADE*'.

More – <https://www.elladorman-gajic.co.uk/>

Professor **Aleksandar Sasha Dundjerović**, born in Stari Grad, Belgrade, is an internationally recognised scholar, theatre director, and author, currently serving as Full Professor of Performing Arts at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Birmingham City University. As the founder and Executive Director of the Centre for Interdisciplinary Performative Arts and Associate Director of Research in Performing Arts, Professor Dundjerović has made significant contributions to the advancement of international interdisciplinary and collaborative performance studies. He holds a PhD from Royal Holloway, University of London, an MA from the University of Oklahoma, and a BA in Theatre Directing from the Faculty of Dramatic Arts, Belgrade.



Professor Dundjerović is a multiple award-winning theatre director and performance deviser with an extensive international portfolio, having worked in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, Serbia, Romania, Iran, Russia, Colombia, and Brazil. He has held prestigious visiting professorships at the University of São Paulo (Brazil) and the University of Arts, Belgrade (Serbia), where he contributed to doctoral-level research and teaching in interdisciplinary arts. Renowned for his research in contemporary theatre directing, creative practice, and the performing arts, Professor Dundjerović has authored and edited numerous influential books and articles, including seminal works on Robert Lepage, Brazilian collaborative and performative arts, and creative practices in Canadian theatre and film.

His recent publications include "Brazilian Collaborative Theater" (2017), "Brazilian Performing Arts" (2019), the second edition of "Robert Lepage – Routledge Performance Practitioners" (2019), a chapter in "Terrorism and the Arts" (Routledge, 2021) titled "Harold Pinter and State Terrorism," as well as "Live Digital Theatre" (Routledge, 2023), "Placeness" (Bloomsbury, 2024), and "Performativity of Politics" (University of Arts Belgrade, 2025).

Since 2019, Professor Dundjerović has been recognized as a Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Arts, distinctions that reflect his leadership and excellence in both education and the arts. He resides in Birmingham, United Kingdom, and spends his personal time at his cottage in the scenic Goč Mountain region of Serbia.

Serbian-born **Jovana Gospavić** is a two-time Emmy-nominated visual designer renowned for her ability to seamlessly blend creativity and precision. Specializing in costume design, styling, and product development & design, she has played an instrumental role in bringing numerous characters and stories to life on both screen and stage.

Her Emmy nominations for *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story* and *Mary and George* reflect her outstanding contributions as Assistant Costume Designer in visually stunning period dramas. Beyond these projects, Jovana has worked on a diverse range of productions, from independent short films and styling for brands and fashion commercials to major studio productions, all in the role of Costume Designer.



Jovana has collaborated with renowned theatres, film production companies, advertising agencies, fashion magazines, and private clients across the UK, USA, Czech Republic, and Serbia.

She attributes much of her growth and inspiration to the mentorship and influence of esteemed designers such as Annie Symons, Annie Hardinge, Lyn Paulo, Laura Frecon, and Alexandra Byrne, whose guidance has profoundly shaped her career.

Jovana is a proud member of BAFTA and the Television Academy and holds:

- MA in Costume Design for Performance – London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London
- BA in Scenography – Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (DAMU)
- Erasmus in Costume Design and In Situ – Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp

More info at <https://www.jovanagospavic.com/>



**Maja Milatović-Ovadia** is a theatre director, facilitator and lecturer. Originally from Belgrade and currently based in London, she has directed numerous projects across a variety of contexts, including devised work, classical and contemporary text-based theatre, music theatre, experimental opera, multimedia performances and socially engaged theatre practices. She studied Directing at the University of Belgrade (BA), obtained MA in Advanced Theatre Practice from Royal School of Speech and Drama, and further trained at the National Theatre Studio in London and the Directors Lab West in Los Angeles.

Recent public productions include *Oh! What a Lovely War* (Lawrence Hall, UWL 2025), *The Media House* (Lawrence Hall, UWL 2024) an adaptation of *Molière's Misanthrope*, and devised musical *Gift* (Web Douglas Studio, CSSD 2022) exploring the political and ideological implications of Prometheus' act.

In 2019, as part of the Open University's AHRC-funded project 'Picturing Climate', she developed a multimedia community art project and ran workshops on creative methodology, *Transgressive Methodologies: Skills and Tools for Critical Learning* at Tate Exchange event, Tate Modern. Her photo essay *Vanishing Line*, which documents this work, is included in *Artistic Perspectives on Climate Change / PI2025*.

Her socially engaged art projects focus on the use of comedy and humour within collaborative theatre practice. She has created a theatre with ethnically segregated communities in post-war Bosnia, migrants and refugees in London, as well as survivors of the Rwandan genocide.

Together with her artistic practice, she teaches across various BA and MA levels. In 2014, she started working as an Assistant Lecturer at Kent University, and since 2016, she has been a Lecturer at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and the University of West London. Her main areas of expertise are directing, devising, collaborative theatre-making, improvisation, comedy, applied and socially engaged theatre, European theatre/performance, dramaturgy and immersive theatre projects.

Additionally, her articles on theatre-making have been published in several theatre journals, including an entry on Serbian theatre in the *Routledge Companion to European Theatre and Performance* (2023). Details of her work can be found at <https://www.cssd.ac.uk/staff-profiles/maja-milatovic-ovadia>



**Sasha Milavic Davies** works as a director, choreographer, and dramaturg. She was a founding member and inaugural Artistic Associate of the Yard Theatre. She was awarded the Muci Draškić award for best director in Serbia in 2018. Her dance show for 200 women *Everything that rises must dance* is touring international festivals. She is an Associate at Complicite. Recent work as a choreographer includes *The Murder of Halit Yozgat* (Hannover, Germany), *Shoelady* (Royal Court), *The Antipodes* (National Theatre), *Touching the Void* (Duke of York, West End). As choreographer/movement director, theatre includes: *Murder of Halit Yozgat* (Hannover Staatsoper), *Shoelady* (Royal Court), *The Antipodes* (National Theatre), *Touching the Void* (Bristol Old Vic/ Duke of York), *Our Town* (Regents Park OAT), *Merry Wives of Windsor* (Shakespeare's Globe), *Berberian Sound Studio* (Donmar Warehouse), *Pity* (Royal Court); *The Writer* (Almeida), *Jubilee* (Royal Exchange, Manchester/Lyric, Hammersmith), *The Suppliant Women* (Royal Lyceum, Edinburgh/Actors Touring Company/Young Vic). As director, theatre includes: *Language of Kindness* (Wayward Productions), *She Ventures and He Wins* (Young Vic), *Pet Života Pretužnog Milutina, Moja Ti, Constellations* (Atelje 212, Serbia) *One Side to the Other* [installation] (Akram Khan Company/The Lowry). As choreographer and associate director, dramaturg - dance & opera includes: upcoming *Wozzeck* (Aix-en-Provence), upcoming *Overflow* (Sadler's Wells), *Weimar Nightfall* (LA Philharmonia), *Everything That Rises Must Dance* (Dance Umbrella/Complicité), *La Bianca Notte* (Hamburg Opera), *Von Heute Auf Morgen*, *Sancta Susana* (Opera de Lyon).



**Duška Radosavljević** is a writer, dramaturg and Professorial Research Fellow at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London. As a dramaturg Duška has worked for Northern Stage, New Writing North, Dancecity, NSDF, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Circomedia, Accidental Collective and with Robert Icke on his Oliver Award-winning production of Oresteia at the Almeida / West End. She has also worked in the education department of the RSC and, for thirteen years, as a member of the Stage Newspaper's Edinburgh reviewing team and panel of judges for the Stage Awards in Acting Excellence. She is the author of *Aural/Oral Dramaturgies: Theatre in the Digital Age* (Routledge 2023) and *Theatre-Making: Text and Performance in the 21st Century* (Palgrave, 2013). Her edited collections include *The Contemporary Ensemble* (Routledge, 2013) and *Theatre Criticism: Changing Landscapes* (Bloomsbury Methuen, 2016). Her research was funded four times by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and she has received significant recognition for her writing and research, including most recently two awards in the United States for her website [www.auralia.space](http://www.auralia.space): the Elliot Hayes Award for Outstanding Contribution to Dramaturgy and the ASTR-ATHE Award for Excellence in Digital Scholarship.



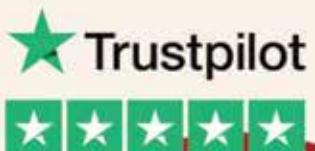
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# Visual Arts

# A History of Serbian Painting

By Tatjana Novaković Ostojić / Academic Painter and Professor

The development of Serbian painting is a complex and richly layered process, spanning centuries of cultural, spiritual, and historical transformation. From the monumental frescoes of medieval monasteries to the diverse forms of contemporary artistic expression, Serbian painting reflects an ongoing dialogue between tradition and modernity, as well as a lasting need of the Serbian people to express their spirituality, identity, and world-view through art.

The brief overview before you presents only the essential stages in the evolution of the Serbian painting tradition. The true breadth and depth of this process is far more extensive. A full understanding of Serbian painting requires familiarity with numerous works and scholarly studies covering different periods and artistic movements. Much of what could not fit into this article has found its place in the works of Serbian art historians listed in the footnotes – scholars who, with great dedication, researched, gathered, and published invaluable information about artists, their works, and the broader cultural and historical context. Thanks to their efforts, Serbian art has become a rich source of knowledge and inspiration for generations to come.

## Serbian Painting in the Middle Ages

The roots of Serbian painting lie in the spiritual sphere of Orthodoxy and the Byzantine artistic tradition. The earliest and most important works emerged within the medieval Serbian state, especially during the reign of the Nemanjić dynasty. At that time, painting was primarily fresco painting with liturgical and symbolic functions. Frescoes were not merely decorative – they served as tools of teaching and spiritual inspiration for the faithful.

While Serbian medieval artists followed Byzantine models, they also introduced a distinctive emotional and folk quality, achieving a unique warmth and humanity in their depictions of saints. The most significant examples can be found in the monasteries of Studenica, Žiča, Mileševa, Sopoćani, Gračanica, and Dečani.

The frescoes of Studenica (late 12th century) are marked by harmonious colours and serene spirituality. In Žiča and Mileševa, especially in the famous fresco "The White Angel", one senses clarity and calm that transcend strict Byzantine norms. The artists of Sopoćani reached the height of expressiveness through the soft modelling of faces and delicate colour transitions, while the monumental frescoes of Dečani testify to the artistic skill and technical maturity of the era's masters. Most painters were anonymous monks, though the names Mihailo and Eutihije stand out – evidence of the growing awareness of artistic identity within the Church framework.

## Serbian Baroque Painting and the 18th Century

After the fall of the medieval Serbian state and nearly six centuries of Ottoman rule, artistic life stagnated. Yet in the territory of Serbian Vojvodina, under Habsburg rule, a new artistic flourishing emerged. Serbian painters came into contact with the Baroque style, which brought more dynamism, brightness, and emotionality compared to earlier iconographic traditions.

During the 18th century, painting workshops developed, and icon painters began to use Western techniques and perspective. Figures became more pronounced, gestures more natural, and the colour palette richer. The most prominent artists of this period include Teodor Kračun, the pinnacle of Serbian Baroque painting; Dimitrije Bačević, Arsa Teodorović, and Pavle Simić. Their work encompassed both religious and secular painting. In addition to icons and iconostases, they produced portraits of lay figures – an important step toward a more modern understanding of art and personal expression.

## Serbian Painting in the 19th Century

With Serbia's liberation from Ottoman rule and the creation of a modern state, art took on a new mission: to express national pride and historical memory. Serbian painting adopted the academic principles taught in Vienna and Munich, infused with a strong patriotic dimension.

Artists depicted historical themes, national heroes, portraits, and everyday life, seeking through their work to shape the cultural identity of the nation.

Key artists of this era include Uroš Knežević, known for his portraits of Serbian rulers and the bourgeoisie; Đura Jakšić, who united painting and poetry in a romantic and emotional style; Paja Jovanović, author of monumental historical compositions such as "The Migration of the Serbs" and "The Takovo Uprising", as well as numerous portraits and genre scenes; Uroš Predić, who combined realism and humanism in works such as "The Kosovo Maiden" and "The Orphan at His Mother's Grave"; Stevan Aleksić, known for his religious and allegorical themes.

In the second half of the century, the first art schools and societies were founded, laying the foundations of a professional artistic scene in Serbia.

# Serbian Painting in the Early 20th Century

Around the turn of the century, Serbian painters embraced new European movements – Impressionism, Symbolism, and Expressionism. Art became freer, more individual, and emotionally deeper.

The most significant figure of this period is Nadežda Petrović, who brought new energy to Serbian art. Her work is characterised by bold tones, free brushwork, and dynamic colour. As a wartime nurse and socially engaged figure, she infused her art with themes of spiritual strength and sacrifice. Other important artists include Milan Milovanović, Kosta Miličević, Miloš Golubović, and Borivoje Stevanović, who contributed to the development of modern Serbian landscape and portrait painting.

The interwar period saw the rise of an avant-garde scene. Artists explored Expressionism, Cubism, Surrealism, and other modernist directions. Among the key figures (though many cannot be listed here) are: Sava Šumanović, who blended modernist form with folk sensibility (*Girls in Blue*, *Breakfast on the Grass*); Petar Dobrović and Milan Konjović, known for their powerful colour and energetic brushstrokes; Zora Petrović, celebrated for her depictions of women's labour and everyday life; Marko Čelebonović and Milo Milunović, who merged French modernism with Mediterranean sensibility.

## Serbian Painting in the Post-War Period

After the Second World War, art in Yugoslavia underwent turbulent changes. In the early years, Socialist Realism dominated – art in the service of ideology, focused on heroism, labour, and rebuilding the country. But by the mid-1950s, artists began to break free from strict doctrines and turned toward abstraction and modernist expression.

In Belgrade, artist groups such as "Mediala" and the "December Group" emerged, exploring existential, philosophical, and metaphysical themes.

Important figures include: Miloš Bajić, a Mauthausen survivor who expressed the horrors of the camp through abstract symbolism; Petar Omčikus and Ljubica Cuca Sokić, leading representatives of the Belgrade Modern; Mića Popović, painter and filmmaker, known for realistic depictions of Belgrade and sharp social criticism; Ljuba Popović, founder of Mediala, whose works combine the fantastic, the erotic, and the spiritual; Vladimir Veličković,

internationally recognised for his dramatic, tension-filled figures; Petar Lubarda, a key figure in introducing expressive abstraction to post-war Serbian art, linking epic history with contemporary form; Olja Ivanjicki, a visionary who fused myth, technology, and futurism.

This period is marked by a diversity of styles and an artistic freedom rare in Europe at the time, giving Yugoslav and Serbian art an important place on the international scene.

## Contemporary Serbian Painting

The late 20th and early 21st centuries brought even greater diversity. Artists now work with new technologies, installations, video, performance, and digital media. Alongside traditional painting, many explore the boundaries between the image, space, and the human body.

The most internationally renowned Serbian-born artist is Marina Abramović, a pioneer of performance and conceptual art. Her work examines the limits of endurance, consciousness, and presence, and her project "The Artist Is Present" has become iconic in contemporary art.

The current Serbian art scene includes countless younger artists working in a wide range of styles – from abstract and expressive painting to multimedia projects. Themes explored include personal identity, social injustice, ecology, memory, and the relationship between tradition and modernity.

The history of Serbian painting shows how art can survive and flourish despite upheaval and hardship. Serbian art holds a significant place in European cultural history, a living example of diversity, exploration and inspiration. From the Byzantine frescoes of Studenica and Mileševa, through the realism of Paja Jovanović and Uroš Predić, to the modernism of Nadežda Petrović and Sava Šumanović and the contemporary visions of Marina Abramović and Vladimir Veličković – Serbian painting demonstrates a continuous striving for spiritual freedom and the beauty of creation.

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# First Prominent Serbian Female Painters

By Svetlana Meiehofer

This is my small tribute to brave and bold women who entered the conservative art world. They were the embodiment of artistic freedom and feminine strength and painted the world with the colours of their souls. Their work is interwoven with heritage, history, and socio-political circumstances.

Using new forms of brush strokes, innovative and brave, they left a gallery of portraits and landscapes which, besides artistic value, also have precious documentary value.

## **Katarina Ivanović** (1811–1882)

Katarina Ivanović is widely regarded as the first female painter in modern art history. She was also the first female academic and Serbian patriot who donated 15 paintings to the National Museum in Belgrade.

She received formal art education in Budapest, Vienna, and Munich. She introduced new genres into Serbian painting such as still life and genre scenes, but she was best known for her portraiture (including self-portraits).

## **Mina Karadžić** (1828–1894)

Wilhelmine "Mina" Karadžić Vukomanović was the daughter of famed Serbian language reformer Vuk Karadžić. Born and raised in Vienna, she studied art. Her artwork evolved in two stylistic phases: Neoclassical and Romanticism.

She is one of the very few 19th-century Serbian female painters to gain recognition for her work. She is best known for her portraits (family and folk figures) and scenes inspired by Serbian epic legends.

## **Poleksija Todorović** (1848–1939)

Poleksija Todorović was one of only three female painters active in 19th-century Serbia. She was married to painter Stevan Todorović, from whom she also received her artistic training. She became an art teacher at the Women's High School in Belgrade and, in 1880, the first woman in Serbia to paint an entire church iconostasis, decorating the chapel of Saint Natalija in Belgrade. Her legacy is that of a pioneer for women artists in Serbian art.

## **Nadežda Petrović** (1873–1915)

Trained in Munich and active in Europe and Serbia, Nadežda Petrović introduced modern European art trends into Serbian painting. She introduced and embraced Impressionism, Fauvism, and Expressionism.

Her paintings were characterized by vigorous, impasto brush strokes with her favourite fiery reds and complementary greens — very vibrant. The Serbian landscapes, folk life, and historical themes on canvases broke ground for Serbian Expressionist art. She was also a war nurse and pioneer of wartime photography.

## **Danica Jovanović** (1886–1914)

Danica Jovanović studied art in Belgrade and Munich. Her work included realistic and Post-Impressionist style portraits and landscapes, and she produced hundreds of artworks.

During her brief career, she was accused of Serbian patriotism by Austro-Hungarian authorities and executed in 1914.

## **Zora Petrović** (1894–1962)

Zora Petrović studied art in Belgrade, Budapest, and Paris. She is considered one of the most important representatives of Expressionism in Serbian art between the two World Wars.

She became a respected professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Belgrade. She painted with energetic, fast, and broad brush strokes but eschewed fine detail. Figures in her paintings appear deliberately distorted and powerful, but their vivid colour conveyed inner strength and emotional intensity.

## **Milena Pavlović-Barili** (1909–1945)

Milena Pavlović-Barili was a cosmopolitan artist who worked in Belgrade, Paris, and New York. Her art fused diverse influences. She created dreamlike compositions with mystical and symbolic images.

Sometimes she drew upon Renaissance art motifs, and in many works she portrayed elegant, otherworldly female figures with poetic, introspective quality. Her innovative blend of Surrealism and Classicism made her one of the pioneers of modern Serbian art on the international stage.

## **Ljubica "Cuca" Sokić** (1914–2009)

Ljubica "Cuca" Sokić is known for her role in the interwar and post-war art scene. She studied in Belgrade and Paris, co-founded the "Group of Ten" artists in Belgrade, and taught for decades at the Academy of Fine Arts.

Throughout her work she blended French Cubism and modern trends, simplified forms with moderate geometric abstraction, experimenting with collage and novel techniques.

She is remembered not only for her evocative modern paintings but as a mentor and cultural figure who greatly contributed to Serbian fine art heritage in the 20th century.

# THE DEVELOPMENT OF APPLIED ARTS IN SERBIA: A MEASURE OF TIME

By Ljiljana Petrović MA

*Costume Designer and Full Professor at the Faculty of Applied Arts (University of Arts in Belgrade)*

Since its emergence in the 19th century, the term applied arts has referred to a specific field of aesthetic creation, focusing on designing and making objects. These objects employ nearly all expressive tools and possibilities of the visual arts, combining interpretation of form and object with attention to appearance, structural qualities, and pictorial values. The aim is to create a unified, broad domain of artistic recognition, grounded in principles of perception and in understanding the purpose or function of the object.

In Serbia between the World Wars, applied arts were examined through both historical and individual contributions, within the broader context of national and European cultural discourse.

The first painting and drawing school in Serbia was founded in 1895 by Kiril Kutlik (1869–1900), a Slovak painter and illustrator. After his death, and with the approval of the Ministry of Education in 1899, the school was taken over by the married artists Beta (Babette) Bachmayer (1872–1972) and Rista Vukanović (1873–1918), who continued its pedagogical work. Both artists had studied painting at the renowned private art schools of Karl Marr and Anton Ažbe in Munich.

As advocates of Impressionism, the Vukanovićs were also among the founders of several fields of applied art in Serbia. They were pioneers in the creation and design of unique and functional objects, they contributed to modern understandings of illustration, graphic art, graphic design, and caricature, and they played a significant role in the development of modernist expression in Serbian art of the 20th century.

From 1902 to 1905 the Vukanovićs ran the painting school from their own home, which was an unusually conceived architectural and artistic structure in itself. Students were trained in various drawing and painting techniques, including watercolour, oil painting, and working both en plein air and in the studio. This school produced some of the most important figures in Serbian painting, such as Kosta Miličević, Borivoje Stevanović, Dragomir Glišić, Nadežda Petrović, and others.

The Royal Art School was founded in 1905, and after 1918 it continued as the Royal Art School in Belgrade, where Beta Vukanović also taught. Between 1919 and 1937, the school trained painters, sculptors, and teachers for secondary schools across Serbia, Vojvodina, Macedonia, Montenegro, and partially in Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>1</sup>.

In 1938, the School of Applied Arts was established, but it closed three years after World War II. Later in 1948, the Academy of Applied Arts was founded, providing a clear framework for the role of applied arts and introducing Bauhaus-inspired methodologies. The first initiators and founders of applied arts education in Serbia were the school's teachers. They included architects Đorđe Krekić, Momčilo Belobrk, and Aleksandar Sekulić from the architecture department; sculptor Radeta Stanković in decorative sculpture; painter Ivan Tabaković; ceramicist Sergije Lebedev; painters Vasa Pomorišac, Vinko Grdan, and Anton Huter in decorative painting; painters Mihailo Petrov and Matija Zlamalik in applied graphics; painter Milenko Šerban in scenography; costume designer Milica Babić in costume design; and Iva Vrinjanin in textile design. Other notable faculty members included painter Ivan Lučev (anatomy), painter Branko Šotra (ornament), painter Jevto Perić (evening nude), painter Vladimir Predojević (painting techniques), and painter Bruno Kriščinski (wall painting techniques)<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> 30 Years of the Faculty of Applied Arts, Academy–Faculty of Applied Arts in Belgrade 1948–1978, Belgrade 1979, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> 30 Years of the Faculty of Applied Arts, Academy–Faculty of Applied Arts in Belgrade 1948–1978, Belgrade 1979, p. 25.

Professional associations, such as the Association of Applied Arts and Design Artists of Serbia (ULUPUDS), were founded in 1953. The first applied arts exhibition in Serbia was held in 1965, followed by the Salon of Applied Arts in 1966.

The growth of applied arts in Serbia was supported by applied arts schools, industrial design schools, the Faculty of Applied Arts in Belgrade, the Museum of Applied Arts, and various design, project, and advertising institutions. These institutions combined artistic traditions with avant-garde innovation, linking general and local perspectives, utility and beauty, function and communication, and education with advertising. Applied artists also considered non-artistic dimensions such as technology, economy, psychology, social impact, and new forms of social engagement. Through their expertise and creativity, they responded to the demands and needs of contemporary society.

The Academy of Applied Arts, today the Faculty of Applied Arts in Belgrade has consistently examined and refined existing practices, discovering new solutions that incorporate innovative materials, highlight the value of applied art, design, and visual communication, and promote the appreciation of artistic works.

At the beginning of the 19th century, generations of the Serbian intellectual elite were educated at European universities. Serbian artists trained and specialized at institutions in Prague, Rome, Vienna, Munich, Paris, and London. In these European centres at this time, there was a growing interest in integrating both the spatial and visual arts—architecture, sculpture, and painting. This contributed to the emergence of artists who incorporated applied disciplines into their practice.

The professional achievements of women were historically marginalized, constrained by societal norms and the limitations imposed on them because of their gender. Throughout the late 19th century, women gradually fought for equality in education and employment in certain fields. Every advancement required resistance against restrictive systems, and often significant personal sacrifice.

For women, independence meant freedom. Female artists remained exceptional and often isolated, under-recognized by colleagues and overlooked by theorists, critics, and institutions. A new generation of women artists in Serbia, educated in European cultural centres, sought to contribute through their creativity and practice, engaging both in fine and applied arts. Among these were the exceptionally successful Milena Pavlović Barilli (1909–1945), a painter and applied artist, and Milica Babić (1909–1968), Serbia's first professionally trained costume designer.

## Milena Pavlović Barilli

Milena Pavlović Barilli left a rich legacy, revealing a young woman who was one of the first modern female artists in a country caught between European ambitions and national aspirations. She was born into a prosperous family in Požarevac: her mother, Danica Pavlović, was Serbian, and her father, Bruno Barilli, came from a prominent Italian artistic family that produced many notable figures. Milena's artistic sensitivity was shaped by the social environment, atmosphere, and values of her mother's urban family, combined with the Italian cultural milieu of her father, a composer, journalist, poet, and bohemian.

Milena's education began at the Royal Art School in Belgrade, in the class of painter and professor Beta Vukanović, and continued intermittently in Bergamo, Rome, Linz, Graz, and the Munich Academy. As a young artist, she travelled widely to artistic centres across Italy, Austria, Germany, France, Spain, and the UK. Her life and work were closely integrated with European artistic currents, distinguishing her as an artist working within these broad frameworks rather than being limited to local contexts.

*"The need to follow paths beyond national horizons confirms that art can only point to what is missing in the time in which it is created."* Giovanni Matteucci (*Milena Pavlović Barilli – Moda u sobi umetnice*, Pendragon, Bologna, 2010, p. 13)

Considering the brevity of Milena Pavlović Barilli's life, and analysing a large number of her works, it is clear that she was a multi-talented artist who successfully moved between fine and applied arts. Her works reflect her as a complex artistic personality who skilfully created her own iconography based on free associations and visionary symbols, suggesting a search for self-realization across different fields—painting, fashion and graphic design, and poetry.

In the hundreds of preserved childhood drawings, it is clear that from an early age she displays curiosity about everything happening around her, a distinctive creativity, and an interest in space, décor, and costume, inspired by contemporary magazines.

Her first fashion illustrations were created when she attended the Royal Art School in Belgrade, where she studied painting. Her formal study of fashion illustration and magazine cover design, inspired by decorative aspects of Art Nouveau and academic painting, continued at the Munich Academy under Franz von Stuck (1927–1928).

Her watercolours from this period are characterized by theatricality and enigmatic feminine sensuality featuring transparent fabrics and exotic, Eastern, and geometric motifs.

After studying in Munich, her painting became eclectic, with surrealist elements. Her works form enigmatic systems, rich in dreamlike symbolism and metaphor. For her, décor represents a play with metaphysical space and time, reminiscent of ancient and Renaissance architecture and sculpture. She uses plaster casts, and other surrounding forms as both a framework and a challenge, creating hints of a stage-like environment that encourages reflection and free association.

Her works often reveal surrealist and metaphysical elements emphasizing inner states, dreams, and changing emotions.

Costume is both character and destiny—aristocratic, decadent, and belonging to another time—expressed through texture, colour, and design.

From Renaissance-inspired clothing in paintings to minimalist dress models in magazine illustrations, her work balances aesthetic expression with functional communication, adapting to commercial contexts while reflecting her artistic vision.

Milena's creative drive and the need for continuous artistic adventure highlight the duality in her career: balancing high art with applied art—fashion and commercial design. In the 1930s, seeking refuge from the European war, she moved to the United States.

The period she spent in New York from 1939 to 1945 is the most significant for her work in the field of applied arts—fashion illustration, drawing, and graphic design. This was when she combined her fine art skills with commercial imagery, creating an unusual fusion of art and fashion in magazines such as "Glamour", "Vogue", and "Harper's Bazaar". She produced advertising illustrations for textile companies like Textron Inc. and Hanes Hosiery, stage-like compositions for fashion items for department stores Bonwit Teller and Saks Fifth Avenue, designs for perfumes and colognes for Mary Dunhill, cosmetic products for Revlon, shoe illustrations, and models for Palter De Liso.

At the same time, she created refined and sophisticated portraits of aristocratic figures and friends.

In 1944, at the invitation of Gian Carlo Menotti, she designed costumes for the ballet "Sebastian" at the International Theatre, receiving excellent reviews. The costume sketches are marked by her imagination, inventiveness, stylisation, refinement, subtle colouration, and well-conceived characterisation of figures in costumes that evoke a surrealist style. "Sebastian" was performed at the International Theatre, in New York's Columbus Circle. This success led to another invitation—to design costumes for Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" for the Guild ballet company, which she was unable to complete due to her sudden death.

Milena's work was recognized in professional circles, published in the *20th Annual of Advertising Art (1941)*, and exhibited in New York, Washington, Paris—where she joined the surrealist movement – Rome, Tirana, London, and Belgrade. She was also a remarkable poet, writing in French, Italian, and Spanish. Her refined, worldly taste, talent, and knowledge—used with measure—together with her poetry, complete the image of a sophisticated artist.

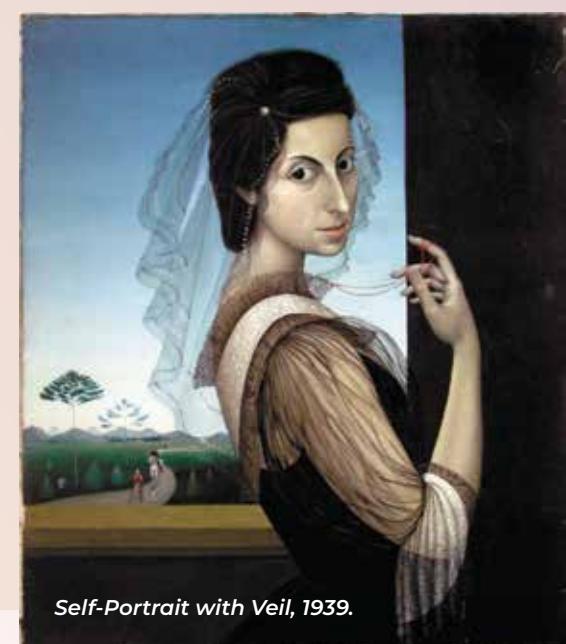
Milena P. Barilli created her work during a period when fashion designers such as Coco Chanel, Jeanne Lanvin, Jane Renouardt, Lucien Lelong, and Elsa Schiaparelli were also achieving professional success. Schiaparelli, closely connected to Surrealism, collaborated at that time with Salvador Dalí, Jean Cocteau, Christian Bérard, and others.



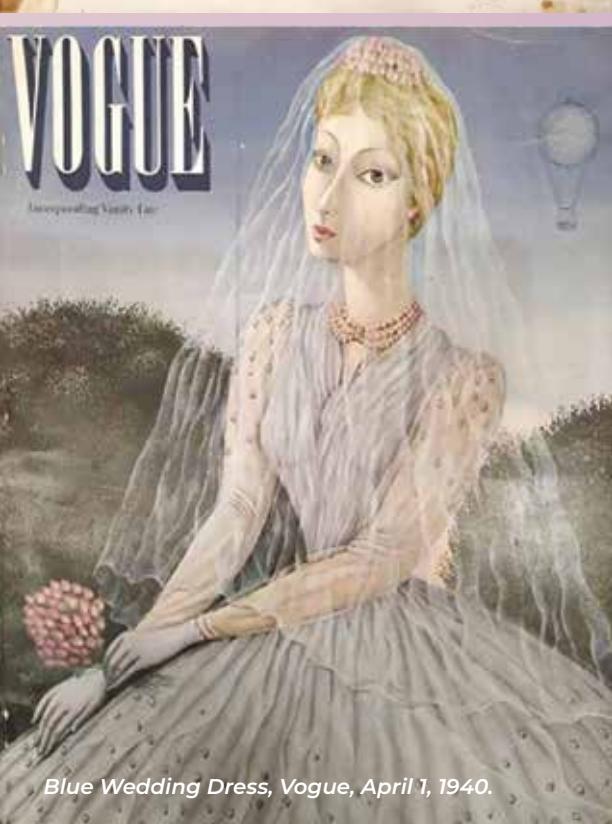
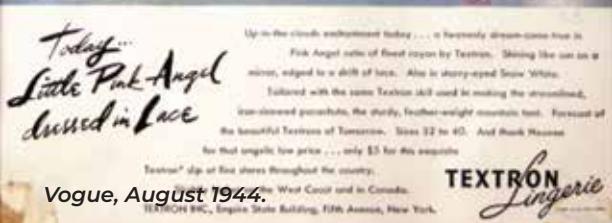
PHOTOGRAPH BY  
Milena Pavlović Barilli,  
photo by Carl Van Vechten, 1940.



Composition, 1938



Self-Portrait with Veil, 1939.



Blue Wedding Dress, Vogue, April 1, 1940.

Her authentic artistic development reveals an unconventional and compelling personality, whose works remain relevant and intriguing.

In April 2023, her works were featured at an open exhibition "...I saw the other side of the sun with you..." **in the Pavilion Gallery, Cromwell Place, London**, organized by the European Arteast Foundation, curated by Anke Kempkes. Artworks created during the rise of surrealism in the 1930s included 16 leading female surrealist artists from Poland, former Czechoslovakia, and former Yugoslavia. Milena's works included "Doll" (1936), "Fantastic Composition with a Female Nude and Dragon" (1936), and two magazine illustrations from "Vogue" (Hot Pink with Cool Grey, 15 January 1940, and Evening Dress Model, 1 December 1939)<sup>3</sup>.

Milena held her first solo exhibition in London at the prestigious Bloomsbury Gallery on 27 February 1931. She received excellent reviews in the Daily Telegraph, Daily Express, and Evening Standard, and the exhibition was also covered in the Belgrade press. Another surrealist work, L'ISPIRAZIONE (1932), appeared on the catalogue cover, though was not part of the exhibition<sup>4</sup>.

In November 2025, the 18th Rome Quadriennale of Art, titled Fantastica, commemorated 90 years since the most significant Quadriennale in Rome. Milena exhibited at this retrospective of the 1935 exhibition, alongside 650 artists, including De Chirico, Leonor Fini, Carlo Levi, and Severini, with her painting "Girl with a Fan" featured in the room Italians in Paris.

A retrospective of Milena Pavlović Barilli's work, "Duality of Milena Pavlović Barilli", was held at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade (7 November 2024 – 17 March 2025). The exhibition presented 150 works, including paintings, drawings, fashion illustrations, poetry, and archival material from the Milena's House Foundation in Požarevac, the Museum of Contemporary Art, the National Museum of Serbia, Avala Film Way, the Yugoslav Film Archive, and the Film Centre of Serbia. Her works are also currently exhibited in Düsseldorf (North Rhine-Westphalia Museum) and featured in travelling exhibitions in Trebinje and Slovenia in 2024<sup>5</sup>.

Parts of this text are from the author Ljiljana Petrović's own writings in M. P. Barilli, *Pro futuro*, HESPERIAedu, 2010, and the Monographs of the Faculty of Applied Arts in Belgrade.

Photographs of works:

Foundation "Milenin dom" – Milena Pavlović Barilli Gallery, Požarevac.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.euronews.com/culture/2023/04/19/overlooked-eastern-european-female-surrealist-artists-take-centre-stage-in-london-exhibit>

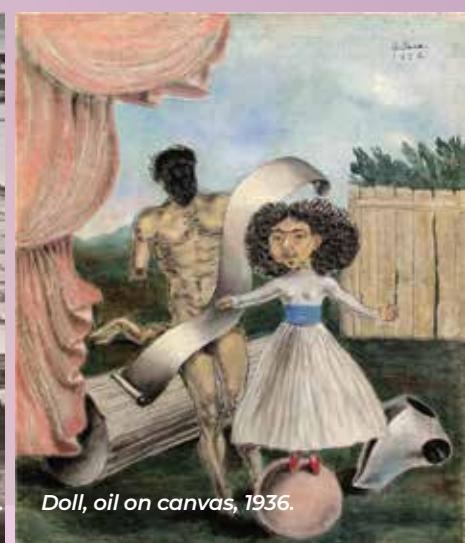
<sup>4</sup> <https://www.rts.rs/lat/magazin/kultura/vesti/5832790/milena-pavlovic-barilli-pozarevac-rim-kvadrijenale.html>



Sketch for the ballet Sebastian, 1944.



Scene from the ballet Sebastian, 1944.



Doll, oil on canvas, 1936.

# Milica Babić Jovanović

Milica Babić Jovanović was Serbia's first professionally trained costume designer and a pioneer of film costume design. She was the first professor of costume design at the Academy of Applied Arts in Belgrade, the first recipient of the Sterija Award for costume design, and, as a member of the Governing Board, participated in shaping the inaugural Dubrovnik Summer Festival.

She was born in 1909 in Bosanski Šamac into a prosperous merchant family. After completing secondary school in 1925, she enrolled in the School of Applied Arts of the Austrian Museum of Art and Industry, where she completed her studies and later specialized in theatrical and film costume design.

Between 1930 and 1931, she taught at the Higher Crafts School in Belgrade. From 1934 onward, she lectured on the History of Costume and Wigs at the acting school of the National Theatre in Belgrade. After World War II, she became a professor of costume design in the Costume Department of the Academy of Applied Arts, and from 1950 also taught at the Theatre Academy in Belgrade.

Driven by a constant pursuit of innovation and contemporary expression, she continued her professional training in Paris in 1931 and later in Berlin from 1939 to 1941, where she also worked as a fashion correspondent for the newspaper *Politika*.

As the first formally educated costume designer in Serbia, she was engaged in 1931 as a costume painter at the National Theatre in Belgrade, where she worked intermittently until 1964. Milica Babić created costumes with authority and stylistic confidence, spanning diverse historical epochs and aesthetic frameworks, for more than three hundred productions. These included drama (*Pokondirena tikva/The Puffed-Up Gourd*, *Atalija, Twelfth Night*), opera (*Boris Godunov, Prince Igor, The Prince of Zeta, Gianni Schicchi, Ero the Joker, Koštana, The Marriage of Figaro, Harvest, Don Giovanni, The Elixir of Love*), and ballet (*Daphnis and Chloe, The Doll Fairy, The Secret of the Pyramid, Flowers for Little Ida, Aida, Faust, The Ohrid Legend*). Her work was presented across the former Yugoslavia, in theatres in Belgrade, Novi Sad, Banja Luka, Skopje, Zagreb, Dubrovnik, Sarajevo, and Ljubljana. She collaborated with prominent directors such as Branko Gavella, Hugo Klajn, Raša Plaović, and Josip Kulundžić, as well as artists and scenographers including Jovan Bijelić, Vladimir Zagorodnjuk, Vladimir Žedrinski, Stanislav Beložanski, and Miomir Denić.

Milica Babić also left a significant mark on Yugoslav cinema, designing costumes for feature films such as *This People Will Live* (1947), *Everyone to the Sea* (1952), *The Two of Them* (1955), *Madame Minister* (1958), and *Miss Stone* (1958), collaborating with directors Nikola Popović, Sava Popović, Žorž Skrigin, and Žika Mitrović.

Her costume drawings and sketches for seventeen stage and musical productions were exhibited at the first exhibition of theatrical scenography in 1938 at the Cvijeta Zuzorić Pavilion in Belgrade.

Her costumes are characterized by sophistication and a strong sense of both internal and external dramaturgy, marked by opulence, imagination, and inventive visual treatment. This understanding of costume design as a continuous creative challenge enabled numerous transformations, expressive richness, and layered meaning.

She was married to diplomat, translator, and journalist Nenad Jovanović. After his death, she became widely known as the wife of the writer and Nobel laureate Ivo Andrić. Milica Babić died in 1968 in Herceg Novi and was buried, as a respected and esteemed artist, in the Alley of Distinguished Citizens at the New Cemetery in Belgrade.

Outstanding examples of her costume designs are preserved and permanently displayed at the Museum of the National Theatre in Belgrade, while her valuable and extensive collection of costume sketches, along with related artefacts such as theatre posters, are housed in the Theatre Museum in Belgrade.

The launch of the "Milica" Festival in 2022 and the establishment of her memorial house in her birthplace of Bosanski Šamac have significantly contributed to renewed recognition of her life and work. An award for the best student graduation project in stage costume design now bears her name, through which the Faculty of Applied Arts annually honours its distinguished professor.

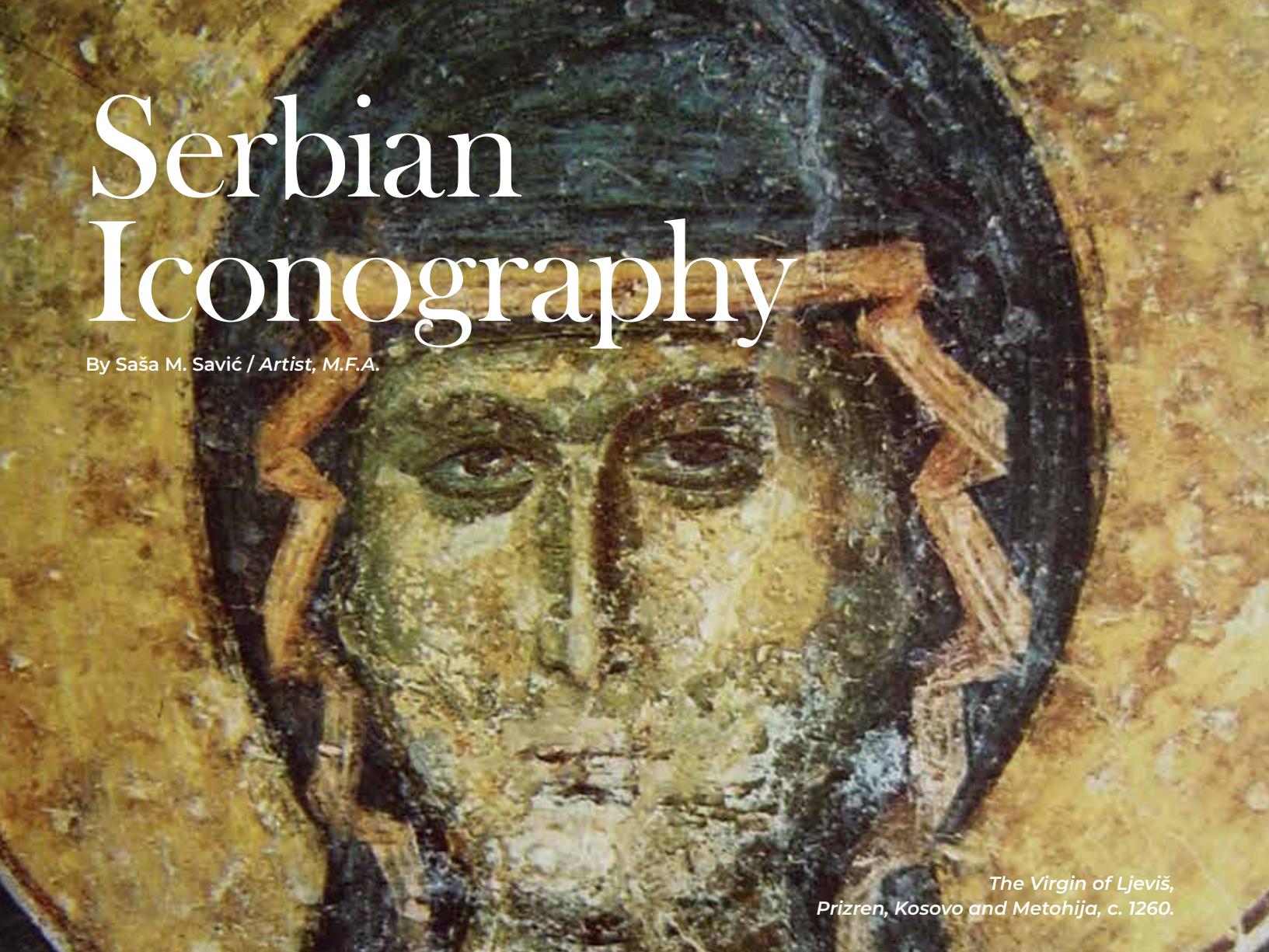
Over the course of her three-decade career as a dedicated theatre and film costume designer, Milica Babić made a decisive contribution to the professionalisation of costume design in Serbia and aligned it with contemporary European artistic currents.

**Ljiljana Petrović MA**

*Costume Designer and Full Professor at the Faculty of Applied Arts (University of Arts in Belgrade)*

# Serbian Iconography

By Saša M. Savić / Artist, M.F.A.



*The Virgin of Ljeviš,  
Prizren, Kosovo and Metohija, c. 1260.*

Among the Serbian people, the development of consciousness, spirituality and refined taste has always been rooted in the cultivation of memory and discernment grounded in the teachings of Christ. Thus, within the folk tradition, sacred art—that is, Orthodox iconography—has held an equally significant place. Added to this are the harmonious forms of medieval churches and liturgical life, the family and tribal community, the unique monastic school system, as well as village gatherings with folklore dance, storytelling and reciting epics and poetry accompanied by the gusle. The people and their descendants preserved the cultural heritage of their ancestors. In such an environment, a visual art was nurtured—one which, through icons and frescoes, reached the hearts and minds of the entire nation. The people were educated in churches adorned with frescoes, interpreting and remembering biblical scenes, and by holding holy icons in their hands, they praised Christ and the saints from close by.

In Eastern Orthodoxy, the **icon** has from its very origin been woven from the molecules of egg and vinegar—organic compounds of life and preservative—natural pigments, and the Holy Spirit. It is painted on a panel of soft wood, most often linden or cedar, impregnated with linen cloth and primed with chalk or plaster of Paris, bound with rabbit-skin glue. A carefully executed drawing is transferred onto the highly polished surface of the icon, which is then gilded on bole, after which the drawing is painted in egg tempera, Mt. Athos tempera, or—more recently—polymer paints.

A **fresco** is painted in essentially the same manner as an icon, but more freely and with fewer details, since it is viewed from a greater distance. There are two methods of painting—*al fresco* and *fresco secco*, on wet plaster or on dry. The base is a wall of stone or brick, with three or four layers of plaster totalling about 4 cm in thickness, the final layer being the thinnest and finest, applied immediately before painting. The plaster consists of slaked lime and river sand, sometimes mixed with straw, hemp fibres, or eggshells. Unlike the icon, where binding medium is an egg, in fresco the binder lies within the lime, whose crystals, as they dry, bind the moistened pigments. Larger compositions are executed in sections, depending on the speed at which the lime mortar sets—several hours only. The fresco is painted quickly and decisively, and possible mistakes are corrected in two ways: by removing the last layer of plaster and applying a new one, or by painting over it with casein, when the wall is already dry. And that is *fresco secco* technique, where the binder is casein or, in modern practice, polymer paints. Casein is obtained by mixing lime with low-fat cheese, producing a binder of exceptional quality.

**Mosaic** is the most enduring painting technique, created from stone tesserae cut into geometric shapes, most often rectangular. The artist arranges them harmoniously on the surface according to an inverted drawing, and once the entire surface is filled, frames it and pours in liquid cement mortar, which encases and permanently fixes the tesserae. This is the so-called portable mosaic; the kind done on walls is made by pressing the tesserae directly into freshly applied cement mortar.

**Illuminations** are executed on paper or parchment using one of the icon-painting techniques, while gilding is done with garlic juice or egg white.

Now, no artwork could exist were it not imbued with the spirit of the artist—and in the field of iconography, with the Holy Spirit as well—based on the principle of the golden ratio. These are the ideal proportions and the supreme aesthetics of expression. That's universal charm.

The harmony of drawing and chromatic relations is above all a matter of the iconographer's talent, his spirituality, moral purity, artistic education, cultural level and dedication. Prayer is though the essential for initiation into the domain of the Holy Spirit, that guides the artist throughout the process of creating icons.

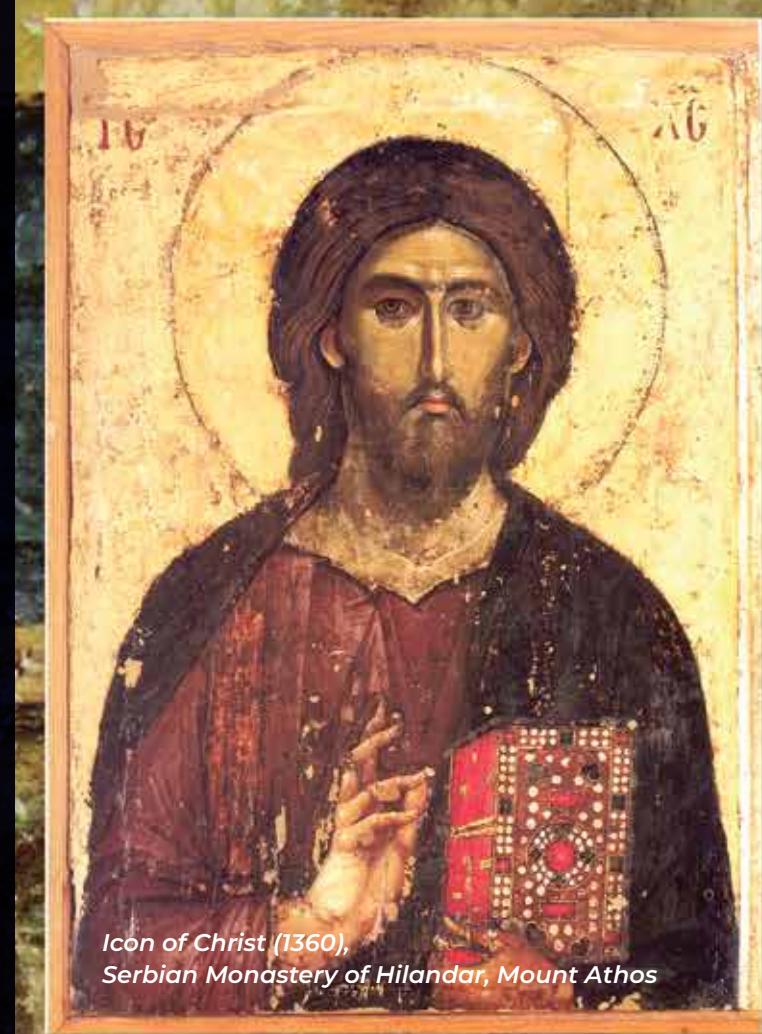
Icons and frescoes are painted in a restrained, stylized manner, moving toward the symbol of the holy visage. They must not be painted realistically, for the saints' images are not idols.

## The History of Serbian Iconography

Let us begin with the words of Dr. *Milan Kašanin* (1895–1981), art historian, former director of the Museum of Prince Paul (today the National Museum) and later founder and first director of the Gallery of Frescoes in Belgrade:

"In the history of Serbian art, painting has always occupied first place. There are exceptional achievements in other arts as well, but it is painting that has produced the greatest number of authentic masterpieces. Among these, of course, the medieval Serbian frescoes stand out, especially those from the 13th century.

Serbian artists, in the judgment of foreign art historians, rise 'to such originality, to such power and mastery of execution, that they may rightly be counted among the greatest masters of world art.' (M. Reimschneider-Hoerner, *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik*, vol. 37, issue 3.)



Icon of Christ (1360),  
Serbian Monastery of Hilandar, Mount Athos



Icon of Archangel Gabriel (1360),  
Serbian Monastery of Hilandar, Mount Athos

"The most significant frescoes are, naturally, those of the monasteries of Mileševa and Sopoćani, but also those of Gračanica, Žiča, Studenica, Manasija, Ravanica, the Patriarchate of Peć, Nerezi, Marko's Monastery, Staro Nagoričane, Morača, Đurđevi Stupovi, Kalenić, Visoki Dečani... One may say that Serbian medieval fresco painting surpasses its entire Italian counterpart from the same era, and that in plastic quality and the boldness of its distinct realism it is equal to works of Greek art that preceded Phidias. They are equal—and perhaps superior—to the highest inspirations of Duccio and Giotto." (M. Kašanin, Two Centuries of Serbian Painting, Belgrade, 1942.)

The Turkish invasion in the mid-15th century halted this great ascent of Serbian painting. Artistic activity continued thereafter, but Serbian painting of the 16th and 17th centuries did not keep pace with the art of that era in Western Europe. The high style had disappeared, and many frescoes from that time may even evoke pity.

Georgije Mitrofanović (1550-1630) as a monk-artist, working in the monastery of Chilandar, was almost the only one who rose like an isolated island. His best works were in Morača and Krupa monasteries.

Renewal came in the 18th century. Only then did Serbian artists come into contact with advanced European culture and Serbian art underwent a fundamental transformation.

Thus artist Hristofor Žefarović (1690-1753), in 1737, painted in the monastery of Bodani in a manner entirely new to Serbian painting. Byzantine formulas were lost, and artists of the period were depicting movements in space, national themes and a love for nature. Another painter of this period was Joakim Marković (1685-1757).

From the mid-18th century Serbian art becomes **Baroque** and even **Renaissance**-inspired. A large group of painters gathered around the Monastery of Krušedol no longer even knew the Byzantine style; the beauty in their work could be found only partially. They worked freely, but often outside religious canons. Among them were Nikola Nešković (1740-1789), Vasa Ostojić (1730-1791), Janko Halkozović (d. 1794), Amvrosije Janković (1731-?) and Dimitrije Bačević (d. 1762).

In the early 19th century, **Classicism** dominated. Arsenije Teodorović (1767-1826) was a prolific artist (he painted 26 iconostases) with great culture and refinement. Also present was the exceptionally gifted Konstantin Danil (1798-1873), whose iconostases were painted for churches in Pančevo, Uzdin, Timišoara, Dobrica, and Jarkovac. As a portraitist, Danil was unsurpassed. His prolific contemporary Nikola Aleksić (1808-1873), who produced over a thousand church paintings, must likewise be mentioned. One of the few notable female painters was the distinguished artist Katarina Ivanović (1817-1882).

**Romanticism** led painters to work differently from their predecessors. Church paintings now became narrative and decorative, the figures almost bodiless, the drawing abstract, and the colours intensely bright. Notable artists include Pavle Simić (1818-1876), Jovan Klajić (1815-1883), Novak Radonić (1826-1890), and Đura Jakšić (1832-1878) - the most gifted of his generation, though at times brilliant and at others unfinished. Stevan Todorović (1832-1925) overshadowed all with the sheer quantity of his diverse works, though his church paintings were not always his best.

**Realism** among the Serbs begins in the second half of the 19th century with remarkable artists.

For Đorđe Krstić (1851-1907), the Munich period of ten years (1873-1883) was most significant; among his notable works is the iconostasis in Čurug (1894). He worked with great enthusiasm, at the level of European masters. Uroš Predić (1857-1953) painted with exceptional care, discretion, and inventiveness. He painted icons and portraits passionately and in great number - over a thousand. The iconostasis in Pančevo is undoubtedly his finest work in this field.

Paja Jovanović (1859-1957), together with Predić, was the most popular Serbian painter. His greatest contribution lies in monumental national historical compositions with an orientalist bent, though he was an incomparable portraitist as well. He also painted icons and entire iconostases. He was one of the most esteemed painters of his time in all of Europe.

Marko Murat (1864-1944), a native of Dubrovnik living and working in Belgrade, introduced new sensibilities. Besides excellent portraits and landscapes, he painted historical compositions and masterfully applied plein-air experience to capture the coastal play of light and shadow.

Stevan Aleksić (1876-1923) painted highly inspired historical compositions on the walls of the Church of the Dormition in Pančevo.

**Serbian  
Month**  
in Great Britain

*The Annunciation, Mileševa Monastery (1234)*

# Contemporary Serbian Iconography

The beginnings of contemporary Serbian iconography could be traced back to 1921, when Dr. *Radoslav Grujić* (1878-1955) initiated the foundation of the **Museum of Southern Serbia** in Skopje, where there were on display both the originals and first copies of frescoes. From 1922 until 1927 many artists were engaged in the project of decorating the Mausoleum church in Oplenac, dedicated to the Karadjordjević dynasty. For this purpose Serbian as well as German artists, led by the two Russian artists, who had emigrated to Serbia after the October Revolution, started copying medieval Serbian frescoes: *Ananie Verbitsky* (1895-1974) and *Vladimir Predeovich* (1890-1971).

Their admiration led them to various monasteries where they copied those precious wall paintings. In 1927, they exhibited selected works at the University of Belgrade, bringing ancient Serbian frescoes back to public view and inspiring future generations to return to the treasures of old Serbian art and true Byzantine style.

In that same year, the **World Byzantine Congress** was held in the Guard House in Belgrade, where yet another exhibition of fresco copies was organized.

Artists *Jaroslav Kratina* (1893-1973) and *Svetislav Strala* (1891-1957) continued the practice of copying frescoes in between the world wars.

In 1947, on the initiative of Dr. *Milan Kašanin*, the renowned Gallery of Frescoes was established in Belgrade. Built on the foundations of the Sephardic synagogue destroyed during the war, it opened to visitors in 1953. It displayed numerous copies of frescoes, done by earlier generations of artists. The Gallery of Frescoes, under the direction of Dr. *Bojan Popović* (b. 1968), continues to this day to cultivate the tradition of copying as an essential component in training artists for painting new original frescoes or restoring old ones.

1948-1950, a team of French specialist copyists led by Paul Vincent came to Serbia bringing with them a new approach and technology of painting copies on canvas as secco frescoes, on a preparation similar to a wall. They rapidly trained several Serbian painters (led by *Zdenka and Branislav Živković*), and together produced monumental full-scale copies of frescoes.

In 1950, Dr. *Milan Kašanin* and fellow curators organized the exhibition "**Medieval Art of the Peoples of Yugoslavia**" at the Palais Chaillot on Trocadero in Paris.

England likewise admired Serbian frescoes - their copies were exhibited in 1953 in the Tate Gallery in London and in The Royal Scottish Museum in Edinburgh, as well as in many cities across Europe and South America.

In 1954, the work of the **Museum of the Serbian Orthodox Church**, founded in 1937 in Belgrade by dr. *Radoslav Grujić*, was renewed and transferred from Princess Ljubica's Konak to the Building of the Serbian Patriarchate. There, hundreds of the most valuable icons and fresco fragments from all epochs of Serbian art could be viewed and studied.

In 1958, the Great Exhibition of Frescoes curated by Mrs. *Nada Komnenović*, was held at the Belgrade Fair, presenting over a thousand frescoes and their copies.

Artists such as *Naum (Lazar) Andrić* (1907-1972), *Zdenka Kortusova Živković* (1921-2011), *Branislav Živković* (1921-1994), *Ljuba Marinković* (b. 1923), *Šime Perić* (1920-2019) from Croatia, *Sveta Mandić* (1921-2003), *Aleksandar Aca Tomašević* (1921-1968), *Dušan Mihajlović* (1922-2021), *Verica Beba Marković* (1933-2023), *Ivana Živković* (1936-2022), *Dragomir Jašović* (1937-2022), *Emir Dragulj* (1939-2002), *Časlav Colić* (b. 1944) and many others, conserved and restored old frescoes and also created faithful copies. Most of these artists educated generations of painters in the **Serbian-Byzantine style**, preparing them for the decades to come.

Those decades arrived in the 1980s. Serbian artists, freed from communist restrictions and censorship, returned to their rich medieval tradition, Orthodox faith, and glorious past. New schools dedicated exclusively to iconography were founded, while existing art schools introduced specialized departments—devoted to fresco, mosaic and icon painting in the **Serbian-Byzantine style**.

*Chapel of Saint Petka at Kalemegdan*

1974–1982 The Chapel of St. Petka, decorated by *Djuro Radlović* (b.1941,) in mosaic and The Voždovac Church painted by *Milić of Mačva* (1934–2000) and the icons done by *Milosav Miša Mladenović* (b.1936) initiated the new era. Artist *Dragomir Jašović* was among the pioneers of this revival of original fresco painting in Serbian Byzantine style. Then came the younger generation of academy-trained artists—*Lazar Lečić* (1956–2010, Čurug), *Goran Desančić* (b. 1957, Obrenovac) and *Saša M. Savić* (b.1956, Zemun), the author of this text—who, in the late 1980s, started painting the church in Grabovac monastery, while refining their technique and theoretical knowledge. They worked successfully with the art historian Prof. *Branislav Todić* (b. 1952), a leading expert on Byzantine art, alongside Prof. *Svetozar Radojičić* (1909–1978), Prof. *Vojislav J. Djurić* (1925–1996), Prof. *Milka Čanak Medić* (1929–2022), Prof. *Sreten Petković* (1930–2015), Prof. *Gordana Babić* (1932–1993) and Prof. *Dragan Vojvodić* (b. 1959).

A significant role in the revival of iconographic writing was played by monastic workshops with uninterrupted liturgical life—above all those in the monasteries of Ćelije and Sokolica in the 1970s, Žiča in the 1980s, and Mesić in the 1990s. Enormous inspiration and momentum were given to iconographers and monastic workshops by Father *Justin Popović* (1894–1979), the *Patriarch of Serbia German* (1899–1991) and the *Bishop Amfilohije Radović* (1938–2020).

In 1993, the Serbian Orthodox Church founded the Academy for Art and Conservation. Its first professors—*Zdravko Vajagić* (b.1938), who taught mural painting, architect *Predrag Peđa Ristić* (1931–2019), and *Dragomir Jašović* designed the curriculum to teach young artists how to approach the architecture of a church, conceive and execute their own icon, fresco, mosaic, or illumination on the basis of pictorial and theological canons and technological methods, while also gaining knowledge in conservation and restoration.

In the last half a century, hundreds of new churches have been erected and decorated in Serbian-Byzantine style throughout the jurisdiction of the Serbian Orthodox Church. The most significant were the projects in several beautiful new temples: The Temple of Transfiguration of Christ and the New Gračanica in Trebinje, The Temple of Christ the Saviour in Banja Luka, The Temple of Ascention of Christ in Podgorica, The Temple of St. Jovan Vladimir in Bar, The Temple of St. Sava in Belgrade. The new generations of trained artists ordaned them with frescoes, mosaics and icons, becoming true masters of their craft:

*Petar Bilić* (b. 1951, Lika), *Prof. Zoran Mihajlović* (1955–2019), *Prof. Miroslav Lazović* (b. 1960), *Miloš Janićijević Raški* (b. 1961, Novi Pazar), *Radan Radojlović* (b. 1963, Crna Trava), *Prof. Goran Janićijević* (b. 1963, Zaječar), *Prof. Zoran Graovac* (b.1965, Belgrade), *Father Stevan Kovačević* (b. 1965, Dubrovnik), *Prof. Mirjana Milić* (b. 1965, Belgrade), *Prof. Snežana Jovčić Olda* (b. 1967, Jabuka), *Rade Sarić* (b. 1969), *Anastasije Radović Morački* (b. 1970) and *Vuk Dabetić* (b. 1975, Belgrade), *Boris Markuš* (b. 1970, Nikšić), *Uglješa Miletin* (b. 1970, Belgrade), *Nataša Atanasković* (b. 1972, Belgrade) and *Jovan Atanasković* (b. 1974, Kraljevo), *Prof. Vladan Karanović* (b. 1972, Lazarevac) and *Veronika Đukanović* (b. 1962, Belgrade), *Prof. Jelena Hinić* (b. 1972, Belgrade), *Aleksandar Živadinović* (b. 1973, Belgrade) and *Pero Vujović* (b. 1975, Belgrade), *Ekaterina Kudrjavtseva Miletić* (b. 1978, St. Petersburg) and *Miljan Miletić* (b. 1973, Niš), *Prof. Bisenija Tereščenko* (b. Belgrade), *Jelica Durković* (b. Niš), *Tatjana Benderać Vučićević* (b. Belgrade), *Prof. Goran Jović* (b. 1976, Užice), *Bojan Jurišić* (b. 1982), *Prof. Miodrag Miša Milutinović* (b. 1989, Belgrade), *Filip Popović* (b. 1991, Novi Sad).

A tremendous contribution to Serbian and iconography in general has been made by the **Serbian foundation BLAGO**, which over recent decades has carried out a project of photographing and archiving nearly all masterpieces of medieval Serbian sacred art. Their dedicated work in documenting and systematizing these works will remain forever preserved on their website. ([www.blagofund.org](http://www.blagofund.org))

In 2017, the 23rd International Congress of Byzantine Studies was held in Belgrade, where over 1,200 researchers from 49 countries presented their works. The central theme was “Byzantium—A World of Change,” and the adopted motto was “Everything changes, yet nothing perishes.”

The same is true for Serbian iconography.



# Naïve Art in Serbia

By Ján Špringel

Naïve painting (also *insitné* painting) has been described as the work of untrained painters – amateurs – that nonetheless contains the basic principles of art. The themes often draw from everyday life, but also from dreams, memories, and imagination. They paint without regard for certain artistic rules, such as composition or perspective. The first discovered naïve painter was the French artist Henri Rousseau. Among the most famous representatives are the painters from the Yugoslav village of Kovačica.

## Kovačica – Naïve Art as a Springboard for Escaping Reality

"If humanity were to send a message about the life and work of Earth's inhabitants to other civilizations, then this message to distant galaxies should not lack a picture by Martin Jonáš." These words were spoken at the opening of an exhibition of the dominant figure of world naïve art at the Ethnic Museum in 1992. They most aptly characterised today's artists from the Slovak enclave in Vojvodina, Serbia – Kovačica. But their path to fame and today's admiration by lovers of naïve art and numerous visitors was a thorny one.

After the departure of the Ottomans, Slovaks took up the wandering staff and headed for Lower Hungary – in search of a bigger piece of bread, better farming conditions for Evangelicals, and religious freedoms – especially from the mid-18th century onward.

The ruling Habsburg family expanded its power through marriages and diplomacy. It encouraged the settlement of the almost uninhabited, devastated, but hopeful and promised region of Vojvodina:  
"Let others wage war in Europe – you, happy Austria, marry."

Austria-Hungary settled the Lower Lands not only with Slovaks, but also with Serbs, Danube Swabians, Hungarians, Romanians, and Ruthenians. Together they cultivated, developed, farmed, treated, and refined the fertile black soil. They also defended and guarded the Military Frontier. In Banat, the new settlers protected the land from further Turkish attacks.

Slovaks often came to today's Vojvodina with their own pastor and cantor, on foot or by wagon, and – almost without exception – besides their personal belongings and supplies, they brought the Kralice Bible and Tranoscíus (Evangelical hymnbook). The influential and capable pastor Matej Barány brought settlers from Novohrad to Bardán. The learned, eloquent, and pious pastor Martin Hamaliar significantly influenced not only the spiritual but also the cultural life of Padina and later the older settlement of Kovačica. National revivalists Barány and Hamaliar left a deep mark on Slovak history in the Serbian part of Banat. Cantors often served as teachers: they educated children and preserved cultural traditions – even before churches and schools were built.

During the long months of travel toward their new "Canaan," often under harsh conditions, the settlers found solace in songs from their native villages – songs about work, love, and nature that captured everyday life and formed part of their social events. The elders taught these songs and melodies to the younger generations, and they are preserved even today – no longer only orally.

Painting was a different matter. In the 19th century, the early Slovak families of Kovačica retained only outlines of their birthplaces, regions, and villages. Drawing was limited to school settings using reusable chalkboards. But since 1845, villagers have been able to admire a representative oil painting in their church.

The oil painting by Konštantín Danil, then the most prominent Serbian painter in Banat, living in Veliki Bečkerek (today's Zrenjanin), cost a thousand gold coins at the time. Today, this renovated and renowned work is priceless and protected as a cultural monument of exceptional value.

This painting – "Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane" – inspired many Kovačica painters in their artistic journey. Even Martin Jonáš acknowledged this at a symposium marking the 40th anniversary of the Naïve Art Gallery. The grand painting was admired by generations of believers. Then came the turning point – the fateful year 1937, and two years later, in 1939.

One autumn afternoon in 1939, at the "Progress" Cultural and Reading Society, an event took place that would permanently shape the future of Kovačica. Martin Paluška, a machine locksmith, and Ján Sokol, a farmer, discovered over a game of chess that they had been painting since 1937 – purely for personal pleasure and without formal artistic training. Inspired by this duo, farmer Michal Bíreš joined in 1942. By early 1951, their individual efforts formed the Art Section of the Progress Society. A few months later, two future legends joined: Martin Jonáš and Ján Kňazovic, bringing humour, sincerity, a unique worldview, and authenticity.

In 1952, the local administration decided to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Kovačica's founding in grand style. During the three-day festivities, twelve painters and two wood inlay artists publicly exhibited their works for the first time. The exhibition attracted attention beyond the village and received positive feedback from visitors.

In early 1953, academic painter Stojan Trumić from nearby Pančevo advised the group to stop copying exotic motifs from postcards (a common practice at the time) and instead to paint scenes from their own Banat environment and daily lives. This marked the beginning of the authentic Kovačica naïve art school. The October exhibition, organized to commemorate the liberation of the village, became a tradition.

The significance of this art movement is reflected in the fact that many major art events in Yugoslavia and Serbia came later than "Kovačica October" – the local art festival. Word spread, and Kovačica began to attract visitors from across Yugoslavia, including foreign journalists and diplomats based in Belgrade. The former multi-million-strong state of Yugoslavia, democratic and later socialist, promoted folk art, especially in villages. The government showcased it as proof of national and religious freedoms to both Western and Eastern diplomats.

However, during the early years after 1952, visitors often found locked doors, as the farmer-painters were still working the fields. Thus arose the idea to gather all the paintings in one place. A few artists and activists soon realised that goal.

On May 15, 1955, in the premises of the local agricultural cooperative, the first Gallery of Farmer-Painters in Yugoslavia was opened. Art historian Oto Bihalji-Merin came to Kovačica to select works for the 1957 exhibition "Naïve Painters of Yugoslavia," officially ranking Kovačica alongside the famous Hlebine School of Naïve Art in Croatia.

Among the early artists were Vladimír Boboš, Vilma Ďurišová, Zuzana Zlochová, Martin Toman, Alžbeta Čížiková, Ján Veňarský, Adam Marček, Pavel Hrk, and Ján Strakúšek. The local, national, and international media began to take notice. Radio reporters and later TV documentarians followed.

Furthermore, in 2012, the National Committee for Intangible Cultural Heritage of Serbia received 36 proposals for inclusion. From these, the National Committee of Serbia proposed eight for inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO. Among them was the naïve art of Slovaks in Serbia. On December 3, 2024, this art was inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO at the meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of UNESCO in Paraguay, with the support of both Serbia and Slovakia.

Art historian Štefan Tkáč (1931–1989) is considered by many as the "father" of Slovak naïve art. The creator of the International Triennale of Naïve Art in Bratislava wrote that Slovak naïve artists in then-Yugoslavia created a unique artistic style characterised by bright colours and depictions of everyday life. Over nearly nine decades of activity, there certainly were risks of commercialisation, some false interpretations, commercial speculation, and a tendency towards professionalization. Nevertheless, the undeniable artistic value of Kovačica painters arouses great interest.

In recent years, the town of naïve art has been visited by, or owns paintings by, many rulers, cultural figures, writers, athletes, musicians, filmmakers, actors, and other well-known celebrities. The Gallery of Naïve Art received new premises in 1989, and in recent years and decades, private galleries have also emerged in Kovačica, focusing on presenting and selling artworks. The residents of Kovačica, now a town of six thousand inhabitants, have also shown an increased interest in protecting paintings and drawings, and in archiving photographs and other documents from the area, which made their town famous.

The painters in turn repay this by representing the settlement, Slovaks, and the country where they live (Serbia) in nearly every artistic metropolis worldwide.

"No day without a brushstroke" – is the painting credo of a village almost 225 years old.

## Naïve Art Elsewhere in Serbia and the Former Yugoslavia

According to the Slovak art historian Štefan Tkáč, organizer of three Triennials of World Naïve Art in Bratislava (during a period of political and cultural liberalization), Yugoslavia was a country with a strong folk artistic tradition.

The Serbian writer Kosta Dimitrijević, in his book Naïve Art in Yugoslavia (Naiva u Jugoslaviji, BIGZ, Belgrade, 1979), mentions Krsto Hegedušić, a leading member of the progressive academic association Zemlja (1929–1935), as the founder of Yugoslav naïve art. The author states that contemporary Yugoslav naïve art emerged in the 1930s, almost simultaneously in several places: the Podravina village Hlebine (the best-known representatives being Ivan Generalić, Josip Generalić, Mijo Kovačić, and others), the sunny Dalmatia (with sculptor Petar Smajić), and in Oparić near the Morava River (Janko Brašić 1906–1994), founder of Serbian naïve art, a self-taught artist who painted scenes from village life simply, sincerely, and expressively.

The position of naïve art was also significantly influenced by art historian Oto Bihalji Merin and Nebojša Bato Tomašević, co-authors of the Encyclopedia of World Naïve Art (Jugoslovenska revija, Belgrade, 1984).

After World War II, insitné art arose in all corners of our country, encompassing thousands of creators, several dozen of whom are regarded as world-class. The Museum of Naïve and Marginal Art in Jagodina was founded in 1960. Its collection includes works by Janko Brašić, Ilija Bašićević Bosilj, and Sava Sekulić. In Jagodina, the museum organised the Salon of Self-Taught Artists, which, starting in 1981, evolved into the Biennale of Naïve Art, and since 2016, the tradition continues in the form of the Triennial of Self-Taught Visionary Creativity.



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# Visual Arts in the UK

## *The Iconography of the Church of Lazarica in Birmingham: An Analysis of the Fresco "The Last Supper"*

By Proto-Stavrophor Nenad Popović

Art Historian

Parish Priest of Birmingham

The Church of Saint Prince Lazar in Birmingham constitutes a paramount spiritual and cultural locus for the Serbian diaspora in the United Kingdom. It was established as a philanthropic endowment by exiles who, in the aftermath of World War II (1947–1948), were resettled in Britain from various displaced persons camps across Germany and Italy, including the notable facilities at Eboli and Munich. These individuals coalesced into a cohesive community, promptly recognizing the exigency for a dedicated ecclesiastical space to serve as a nucleus of spiritual life and the preservation of national identity.

The edifice of Saint Lazar exemplifies contemporary Orthodox sacred architecture and mural painting within the diaspora, while remaining profoundly rooted in the aesthetic and iconographic canons of Serbian Byzantine tradition. From its inception in the late twentieth century, the church was conceived to safeguard both the spiritual and cultural patrimony of the Serbian expatriate community.

### *Historical and Artistic Context*

The comprehensive program of fresco decoration was architectonically and iconographically conceived by Professor Dr. Svetozar Radojičić, a pre-eminent scholar in Serbian medieval art. His curatorial schema adheres to the canonical principles of Byzantine iconography, judiciously adapted to accommodate contemporary liturgical praxis. The spatial and thematic arrangement fosters coherent visual and theological integration, thereby enabling a dialogical interplay between pictorial narrative and liturgical function.

The execution of the frescoes was undertaken by the eminent iconographer Dušan Mihajlović over a protracted period of nearly eight years, segmented into successive phases. This extended chronology facilitated meticulous compositional planning, precision in the rendering of iconographic details, and rigorous attention to the conservation of pigments and plaster. Throughout this process, the interior of the church was maintained in aesthetic and chromatic cohesion, with a dominant royal blue background pervading all frescoes, thereby engendering an atmosphere of contemplative serenity and transcendent elevation.

# *The Fresco “The Last Supper”: A 13th-Century Studenica Model*

Among the most salient elements of the Lazarica iconographic program is the fresco “The Last Supper”, a faithful replication of the celebrated 13th-century fresco from Studenica Monastery, a work of paramount significance in the corpus of medieval Serbian art. The selection of this motif is deliberate, as the scene occupies a central position within Orthodox iconography, depicting the institution of the Eucharist—the ontological and liturgical fulcrum of Christian praxis.

The Lazarica rendition meticulously preserves the stylistic and compositional attributes of the original. The figures of Christ’s apostles are arrayed horizontally around the table, each rendered with individualized physiognomy and expressive gestural language. Christ occupies the central locus, His solemn yet commanding presence underscoring the theological gravitas of the scene. Particular attention is afforded to the detailed depiction of drapery, hand gestures, and facial expression, reflecting Mihajilović’s technical virtuosity and profound grasp of iconographic convention.

The fresco employs traditional buon fresco techniques with natural pigments, complemented by contemporary conservation practices to ensure chromatic longevity and structural integrity. The overarching royal blue background accentuates the sacred atmosphere, unifying the visual field and reinforcing the hierarchical and spiritual narrative.

Iconographically, the fresco “The Last Supper” in Lazarica conveys the same theological significance as its 13th century antecedent in Studenica: the table signifies communal participation, while the bread and wine symbolize the body and blood of Christ. The arrangement of the apostles and Christ, according to Radojičić’s programmatic vision, embodies principles of cosmic order, liturgical harmony, and divine providence.

## *Stylistic and Compositional Considerations*

The visual idiom of the Lazarica frescoes manifests an erudite assimilation of medieval Serbian stylistic conventions. Decorative articulation, linear definition, and chromatic balance are rigorously employed to facilitate contemplative engagement with the sacred narrative. Vivid hues—predominantly red, blue, and gold—are harmoniously orchestrated, while the treatment of spatial perspective, though conventionally flattened, ensures legibility and theological clarity.

The apostles are depicted with psychological differentiation and affective nuance, contributing to a compositional whole that emphasizes spiritual symmetry and hieratic coherence. This programmatic rigour evidences a deep understanding of canonical orthodoxy, the perpetuation of medieval artistic heritage, and exceptional painterly mastery.

## *Conclusion*

The mural program of the Church of Lazarica in Birmingham constitutes an exemplary model of the continuity of Orthodox visual culture within the diaspora. The canonical arrangement conceived by Professor Radojičić, together with the protracted and meticulous execution by Dušan Mihajilović over nearly eight years, ensures that each element of the church’s visual corpus embodies profound spiritual and theological significance. The pervasive royal blue background amplifies the contemplative and transcendent experience of the sacred interior. The fresco “The Last Supper”, as a faithful replication of the 13th-century Studenica exemplar, functions as a spiritual conduit connecting medieval Serbian cultural heritage with contemporary expatriate congregants. In this manner, Lazarica emerges as a locus where tradition and modernity coexist, and each pictorial element—including “The Last Supper”—serves as an instrument of spiritual edification and ecclesiastical instruction.

**Serbian  
Month**

in Great Britain

# Contemporary Balkan Art (CoBA)

By Ana Russell-Omaljev, PhD

Contemporary Balkan Art (CoBA) was a cultural platform that, from 2016 to 2020, organized six major exhibitions and founded the Southeast Europe Future Festival (SEFF) in London. We recognized that the identity, community, culture and connectivity of the Southeast European art scene had been sidelined for too long, and we wanted to showcase the strength and potential the region has to offer. Our idea was to make SEFF and CoBA windows into the culture of the SEE region for people in London.

We worked to create a space that offered modern and urban cultural production to a broad community of academics, writers, filmmakers, artists and the wider Balkan diaspora. Before SEFF, nothing similar existed in London, and we still believe the city needs a festival like this. Our pioneering team included MD Branislav Radeljić, creative director Ana Russell Omaljev and curator Ivan Šuković.

Contemporary Balkan Art presented its first exhibition at the hotspot The Library on St. Martin's Lane. Bringing together film, design, comic art, photography and other media, "Point of View" offered a sharp look at contemporary rituals, fragments of everyday life and shifting identities through the work of Roman Djuranović, Tadija Janićić and Zolt Kovac. CoBA hosted a major launch event attended by more than 300 people. Our second exhibition, a collaboration with Gallery 106 in Fulham in January 2017, featured six artists and included several public panels.

Our largest exhibition, INTERRUPTION, took place in May 2017. It featured more than 40 works — paintings, sculptures, photographs, prints and graphics — never before shown in London, created by 16 artists whose work brought the depth of Balkan artistic thought to the UK. The exhibition explored the effects of interruption on self-perception, as well as more personal questions ranging from the impersonality of social media and the challenges of complex national identities, to male feminism, pagan traditions, superstition and brutalist architecture.

International art magazines wrote about our work, and regional media widely covered our exhibitions, from *Vreme* and *Buro to Air* to *Serbia Elevate*, as well as *London Time Out*. In July that year, we hosted "Heterotopia: The Spaces of Otherness" at Serbian House in Mayfair, where artist Selma Selman joined the project. A shared theme among our artists was the desire to enter the global art scene, and the exhibition at Serbian House became an important step in connecting creators whose work engages with current social issues and opens new possibilities.

In 2018, our focus shifted to heritage and architecture. Among other events, we hosted the panel "Cultural Diplomacy and National Branding: The Role of Arts, Literature and Creative Industries" at the Serbian Embassy and screened the documentary *Unwanted Heritage* at Rich Mix in Shoreditch.

In 2019, we turned to women's lives — their art, photography, films and personal stories about Yugoslavia. From August 29 to September 15, we welcomed artists from the region, giving them a platform to present their work in London and talk about feminism, communism, art and, inevitably, Yugoslavia and what remains of it.



The films and photographs presented that year carried a strong sense of intimacy, often tied to family histories or gender identity, reflecting how central family storytelling remains in the post-Yugoslav space. Croatian filmmaker Marija Ratković Vidaković's documentary *IKEA for YU* follows her journey from growing up in a strongly pro-Yugoslav family to becoming a mother in Sweden, free from the weight of that past. The film sparked a panel discussion titled "What Is Yugoslavia to You?" featuring writer and academic Vesna Goldsworthy, Svetlana Rakočević from Westminster University, filmmaker Ratković Vidaković, academic Vladimir Unkovski-Korica from Glasgow University and UK fiction writer Olivia Sudjic. The question was approached not through grand historical narratives but through personal memory and family experience, recognizing that one's idea of Yugoslavia is often inherited.

The main exhibition of the festival, "Perspectives: Photography Storytelling", featured the work of 15 female photographers from six Balkan countries. It presented a wide range of stories touching on gender, feminism and sexuality, but also communist grandmothers, rural life and marginalized communities, including refugees and the LGBT community.

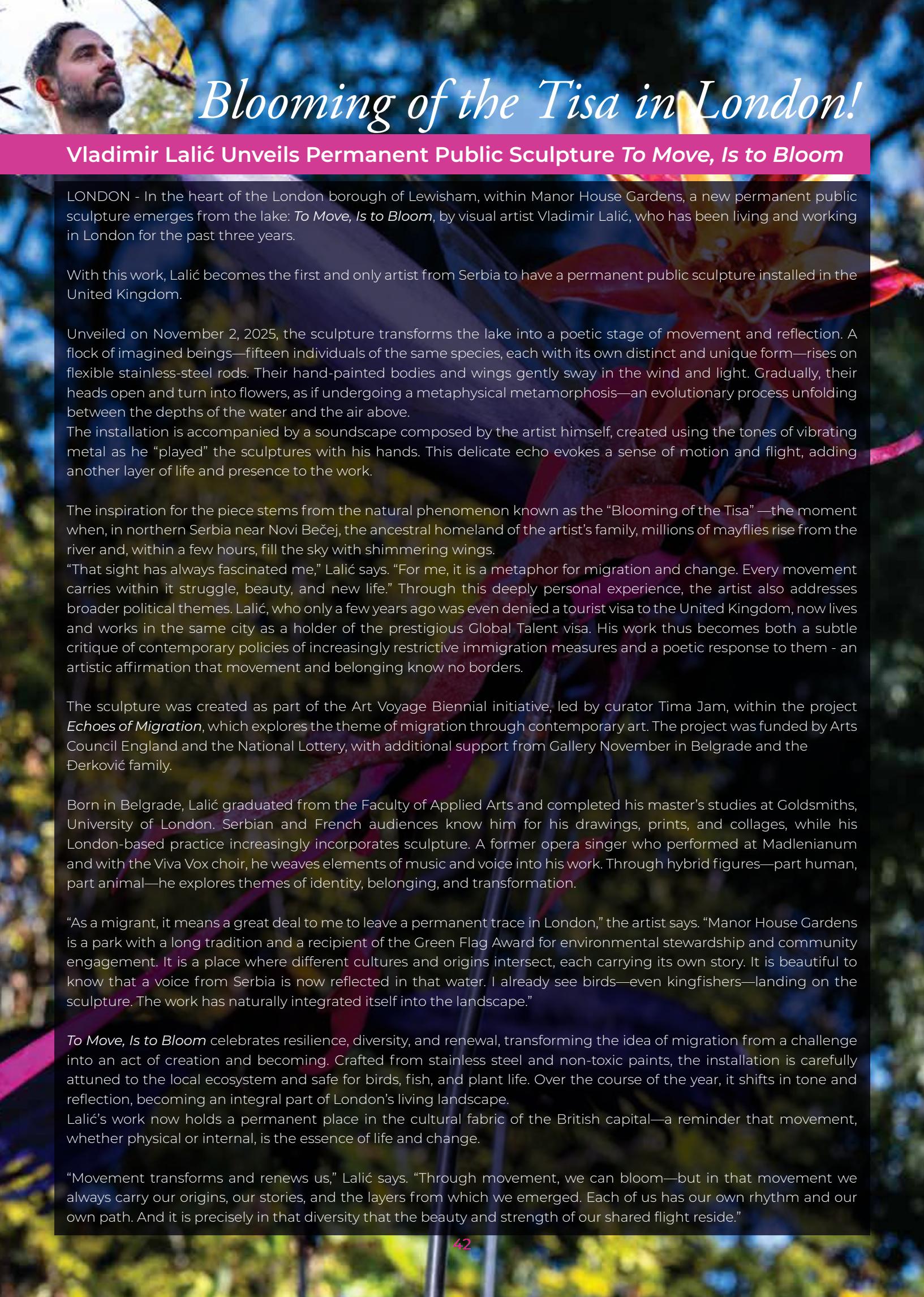
The pandemic temporarily halted certain CoBA projects in 2020, yet we remain open to new collaborations and new opportunities for growth.

London Time Out

*Art, parties and kajmak: it's the best of Serbian London*

<https://www.timeout.com/london/blog/art-parties-and-kajmak-its-the-best-of-serbian-london-051017>





# Blooming of the Tisa in London!

## Vladimir Lalić Unveils Permanent Public Sculpture *To Move, Is to Bloom*

LONDON - In the heart of the London borough of Lewisham, within Manor House Gardens, a new permanent public sculpture emerges from the lake: *To Move, Is to Bloom*, by visual artist Vladimir Lalić, who has been living and working in London for the past three years.

With this work, Lalić becomes the first and only artist from Serbia to have a permanent public sculpture installed in the United Kingdom.

Unveiled on November 2, 2025, the sculpture transforms the lake into a poetic stage of movement and reflection. A flock of imagined beings—fifteen individuals of the same species, each with its own distinct and unique form—rises on flexible stainless-steel rods. Their hand-painted bodies and wings gently sway in the wind and light. Gradually, their heads open and turn into flowers, as if undergoing a metaphysical metamorphosis—an evolutionary process unfolding between the depths of the water and the air above.

The installation is accompanied by a soundscape composed by the artist himself, created using the tones of vibrating metal as he “played” the sculptures with his hands. This delicate echo evokes a sense of motion and flight, adding another layer of life and presence to the work.

The inspiration for the piece stems from the natural phenomenon known as the “Blooming of the Tisa”—the moment when, in northern Serbia near Novi Bečeј, the ancestral homeland of the artist’s family, millions of mayflies rise from the river and, within a few hours, fill the sky with shimmering wings.

“That sight has always fascinated me,” Lalić says. “For me, it is a metaphor for migration and change. Every movement carries within it struggle, beauty, and new life.” Through this deeply personal experience, the artist also addresses broader political themes. Lalić, who only a few years ago was even denied a tourist visa to the United Kingdom, now lives and works in the same city as a holder of the prestigious Global Talent visa. His work thus becomes both a subtle critique of contemporary policies of increasingly restrictive immigration measures and a poetic response to them - an artistic affirmation that movement and belonging know no borders.

The sculpture was created as part of the Art Voyage Biennial initiative, led by curator Tima Jam, within the project *Echoes of Migration*, which explores the theme of migration through contemporary art. The project was funded by Arts Council England and the National Lottery, with additional support from Gallery November in Belgrade and the Derković family.

Born in Belgrade, Lalić graduated from the Faculty of Applied Arts and completed his master’s studies at Goldsmiths, University of London. Serbian and French audiences know him for his drawings, prints, and collages, while his London-based practice increasingly incorporates sculpture. A former opera singer who performed at Madlenianum and with the Viva Vox choir, he weaves elements of music and voice into his work. Through hybrid figures—part human, part animal—he explores themes of identity, belonging, and transformation.

“As a migrant, it means a great deal to me to leave a permanent trace in London,” the artist says. “Manor House Gardens is a park with a long tradition and a recipient of the Green Flag Award for environmental stewardship and community engagement. It is a place where different cultures and origins intersect, each carrying its own story. It is beautiful to know that a voice from Serbia is now reflected in that water. I already see birds—even kingfishers—landing on the sculpture. The work has naturally integrated itself into the landscape.”

*To Move, Is to Bloom* celebrates resilience, diversity, and renewal, transforming the idea of migration from a challenge into an act of creation and becoming. Crafted from stainless steel and non-toxic paints, the installation is carefully attuned to the local ecosystem and safe for birds, fish, and plant life. Over the course of the year, it shifts in tone and reflection, becoming an integral part of London’s living landscape.

Lalić’s work now holds a permanent place in the cultural fabric of the British capital—a reminder that movement, whether physical or internal, is the essence of life and change.

“Movement transforms and renews us,” Lalić says. “Through movement, we can bloom—but in that movement we always carry our origins, our stories, and the layers from which we emerged. Each of us has our own rhythm and our own path. And it is precisely in that diversity that the beauty and strength of our shared flight reside.”

# Photographer

## Brian Branislav Rašić

Born in Yugoslavia, Beograd, the same year as Rock'n'Roll was born in Memphis, Tennessee, Brian Branislav Rašić began his career in the early seventies, photographing local acts, and touring bands from abroad, in his home town of Belgrade. He moved to London in 1979 and over the years he has trained his lens on artists from every genre of popular music, including rock, pop, jazz, country and blues. The list reads like a virtual Who's Who of the biggest names in contemporary music. From Muddy Waters to Robbie Williams, Sinatra to Paul McCartney, and from Chuck Berry to Coldplay, Brian has worked with them all.

One of the most in-demand live music photographers in the business, Brian is well known for his work off-stage, too ... In the studio or on location, Brian has worked with everyone from legends such as Kate Bush right up to modern pop queens like Beyoncé, and his images have appeared in all kinds of media to promote the artists. A dedicated fan of The Rolling Stones, Brian has covered their shows since the early 80's, capturing some exceptional moments along the way. In February 2006 he was the Stones' official photographer at their biggest-ever gig, in front of 2 million people on Copacabana Beach in Rio de Janeiro. Since then Brian has covered many of their gigs for them around the world and became their official snapper. Many of his images are used in Stones' touring programs, DVDs and official merchandising like T-Shirts.

He's also proud of his work with Keith Richards alone, for promoting his autobiography *Life* and his kids' book *Gus and Me* where his images of Keith and Theodora, Keith's daughter, which illustrated the book, were used around the world as promo images. Brian is also very proud of his work with personal heroes David Bowie and David Gilmour, who have also entrusted Brian with being their official photographer. Brian is a freelance photographer and his pictures are syndicated to the media exclusively by Getty Images, the World's leading photographic agency. His images have appeared in newspapers, magazines and books around the world. He is the proud father of daughters Lola (28) Milena (34) and granddaughter Kenzi (4).



<https://www.davidbowienews.com/2020/02/an-exclusive-interview-with-photographer-brian-rasic/>  
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# FROM THE DANUBE TO THE THAMES: SERBIAN ACADEMICS AND ARTISTS IN THE UK INVOLVED IN THE VISUAL ARTS AND VISUAL ARTS STUDIES

**Dr Aleksandar Brkić** is a Senior Lecturer and Director of the MA in Arts Administration and Cultural Policy at Goldsmiths, University of London. He is a scholar in the field of cultural/arts management and cultural policy, with significant experience as a creative producer and arts manager, working at the intersections of performing arts, visual arts, and design. Prior to joining Goldsmiths in 2016, he was teaching at LASALLE College of the Arts in Singapore and the University of Arts in Belgrade. He is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA) and a guest lecturer at the University of Arts in Belgrade, Ben M'Sik, Hassan II University, Casablanca and Sibelius Academy, University of Arts, Helsinki. Dr Brkić is a series editor of 'Routledge Focus on Global Creative Economy' published by Taylor&Francis, Associate Editor of The European Journal of Cultural Management and Policy.



**Dr Lina Džuverović** is Lecturer in Arts Policy and Management at the Department for Film, Media and Cultural Studies, an independent curator and founding director of Electra, a London-based contemporary arts organisation. Her research focuses on feminist art histories and contemporary art as a site of solidarity and community-building. Lina founded the Decolonial Feminist Forum at Birkbeck in 2019. Previously Lina was Artistic Director of Calvert 22 Foundation, Media Arts Curator at ICA, London, Education Curator at Lux Centre and has taught fine art at University of Reading and Institute for Contemporary Art, TU Graz, Austria. Selected exhibitions include: "Monuments Should Not Be Trusted" (Nottingham Contemporary, 2016), "Sanja Iveković – Unknown Heroine" (South London Gallery and Calvert 22 Foundation, 2012), "27 Senses" (Chisenhale Gallery, London; Kunstmuseet KUBE, Norway, 2009/10), "Favoured Nations" (5th Nordic Biennial of Contemporary Art, 2009), "Her Noise" (South London Gallery, 2005). Prior to completing her PhD at the Critical Writing in Art & Design Department, Royal College of Art and Tate (CDA AHRC), Lina studied at The London Consortium (Birkbeck College), Central Saint Martin's College of Art and Design and Chelsea College of Art and Design.



Originally from Serbia, **Roksanda Ilinčić** studied Architecture and Applied Arts at the University of Belgrade before moving to London to complete an MA in Womenswear at Central Saint Martins.

In over a decade since founding her label, Roksanda has evolved an unmistakable design aesthetic as a woman consciously designing for women. Roksanda's daring use of colour, unabashed femininity, sculptural shapes, modern distinctive cuts, innovative use of fabrics and unerring attention to detail make up what are now pillars of the ROKSANDA DNA. Synonymous with modern and contemporary art influences, Roksanda regularly collaborates with like-minded female artists and arts institutions internationally.

Roksanda has received multiple awards and nominations for her work including Red Carpet Designer of the Year at the Fashion Awards. She is listed in the Business of Fashion 500, a global index of the most important people shaping the fashion industry today.

ROKSANDA was founded with a view to creating a new perception of femininity, while also being a platform that champions, celebrates and highlights other female voices.



credit Quentin Jones



**Vladimir Lalić** was born in 1983 in Belgrade, where he graduated at the Faculty of Applied Arts (FPU), University of Belgrade in 2008. From 2008 to 2012, he worked as an expert-assistant at the same university in the printmaking department. He enrolled MFA Fine arts in 2022 at Goldsmiths University of London. He currently lives and works in London, UK.

Lalić had 32 solo exhibitions and participated in over 80 group exhibitions, domestic and international (New York, Singapore, Paris, London, Trieste, Bristol...). He was the youngest artist to exhibit solo at Museum of Belgrade, Serbia in 2020. He has also realized a permanent public sculpture in London in 2025, making him the only Serbian artist to have a permanent public sculpture in the UK. He has won six awards for his visual works, including the Paul Louis Weller Prize, awarded by the Académie des Beaux-Arts in Paris, France. He was also one of the finalists for the Antoine Marin award for painting in Paris, France, as well as a special award at LYNX ART in Trieste, Italy, all in 2017. Lalić's works are in private and public collections around the world.

Vladimir Lalić also has a career as a vocal performer and a musician. He played the main role of Nemorino in the opera L'elisir d'amore, the role of Giles in the musical Rebecca, and as a member of ensemble in the musical Les Misérables, all from 2013. He was a member and a soloist of a choir Viva Vox where he performed on more than 150 concerts world-wide including the stage of United Nations in New York, USA and The Great Hall of people in Beijing, China. He has 2 LP releases that he composed, 3 LP releases featuring his appearance, 2 live albums and as a guest appearance on 25 full length albums.



"With all projects by Ana Maria Lima Dimitrijevic, there is a sense of excitement about the potential ways we can connect with our surroundings and each other even in the most commonplace situations. Storytelling is central to her process as she draws from memories, live recordings and found material. Working intuitively across a dynamic range of mediums from drawing and sculpture to photography and audiovisual projections, her work blends reflection with playful interaction, creating poetic multimedia works that evoke lingering memories.

**Ana Maria Lima Dimitrijevic** (b. 1992, London) is of Serbian/Brazilian descent and currently lives and works in London. She graduated with a BA in Fine Art at Chelsea College of Arts (2011-2014) including an Erasmus exchange at Iceland Academy of the Arts (2013) and has since exhibited in Denmark, Finland, Serbia, the UK and online. She is a resident artist at ASC Art House studio community in Croydon, South London. Alongside her art practice, she is an Art tutor and works within the museums sector."

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**Dr. Nela Milić** is an artist and an academic working in media and arts. She is a Senior Lecturer at London College of Communication, UAL. Nela has delivered creative projects for the Royal Opera House, Barbican, Arts Council England, John Lewis, Al Jazeera, Oxo Tower, LIFT... She created many multi-media projects where she's dealt with memory, narrative, mapping, archives and participation. She is a recipient of the ECF Artistic grant for the project Wedding Bellas after years of engagement with refugees and asylum seekers and Southwark community arts award for her project Here Comes Everybody. Her PhD 'Balkanising Taxonomy' dealt with the city as a site of spectacle and the culture of protest. She continues working in Belgrade through Kulturklammer, centre for cultural interactions. Nela evaluates EU COST network applications in humanities and is a consultant for the Science Fund of Republic of Serbia. She is a Senior Fellow of Higher Education Academy and a member of Space and Place and Design Activism research hubs at LCC.

Nela is on the editorial board of the Journal of Arts and Communities. She is Co-Investigator of the AHRC's Peace and Conflict Cultural Network and part of Arts and Reconciliation research project. She heads post-socialist arts platform at University of the Arts, London, funded by the BSA. Nela is writing a book about Serbian sculptor Olga Jevrić with the support of UK Association for Arts Historians.

Serbian-born photographer **Nenad Obradović** is based in Notting Hill, London. His passion for photography began in secondary school when he received his first digital camera, quickly discovering a natural talent for portraiture and storytelling through images. In 2001 he opened his first photographic studio in Serbia, building a strong reputation for portrait and event photography before relocating to the UK in 2007.

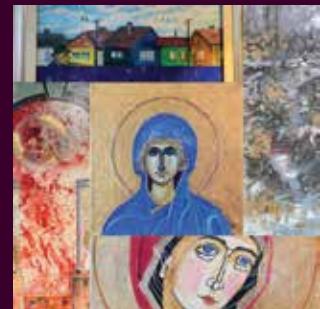
Since then, Nenad has worked as a freelance photographer covering prestigious events including presidential and royal visits, diplomatic and religious ceremonies, gala dinners, concerts, theatre productions, and major cultural festivals. He regularly works with the Serbian Royal Family, photographed the Serbian Olympic team during the London 2012 Olympics, and collaborates with designers, models, and creatives from London Fashion Week.

Nenad also worked closely with Cerys Matthews on promotional material for The Good Life Experience Festival in Wales, serving as its official photographer for six years. His work has been featured by BBC, Songlines, Metro, Wales Online, Radio Television Serbia, Blic, Tanjug, Novosti, the Serbian Royal Family, the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra and many others.

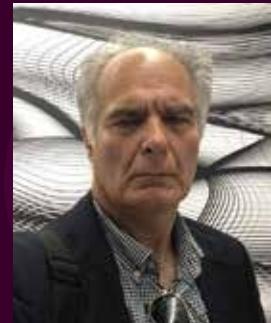
Alongside photography, Nenad runs a successful property renovation business, bringing the same precision and attention to detail to every project.

[www.obradovic.co.uk](http://www.obradovic.co.uk) | Instagram - @obradovicskills and @wlpr25

**Miodrag Panić-Paya**, Paja, Pajsije or SerPanić was born in Serbia. Paya has travelled throughout the whole world, 22 countries, finally settling in the UK over 25 years ago. A publican by trade, with a memorable appearance, with a sketchbook and stretched canvases at his reach, he shares his art and life experience with his guests. His inspiration is drawn from his life, memories, places that he has visited and people who touched his life. His love of religious symbols, as well as horses and water can be seen in many of his paintings, regardless of the technique he uses. With his imagination he finds inspiration in the depths of the subconscious and dream worlds. Paya's favourite technique is acrylic on canvas and paper, with a twist; he uses also nail polish, oils, pigments, gold gilding, etc. Plaster painting is one of his signature techniques. His paintings can be seen at Paya and Horse Pub, 181 Battersea Park Road, LONDON, SW11 4LB



**Dr Đorđe Perendia:** Starting in the 70s as a conceptual artist with exhibitions of graphic works such as those based on the 1976 music performance "Einstein on the Beach" by Philip Glass, Đorđe gained a Fine Art degree in 1984. His metaphysical sculptural work has been greatly inspired by the contrast between contemporary technology and the arts of ancient Mediterranean cultures and memorial sculptural art, steles. His recent works include memorials dedicated to victims of recent wars and graphic works based on contemporary music (Sono-logies). Đorđe also gained a Masters in Computer Graphics modelling of Cubist art, studied Sociology and Linguistics, and its applications in art and design. Inspired by his own art work of 1980s and 1990s based on the chaos of natural phenomena and the unpredictable behaviour of humans, he recently gained a Masters of Science as well as a Doctorate in stochastic modelling and human behaviour in economics. He also writes essays on culture, language, philosophy of science, sustainability and design. Recent Exhibitions: Le Salon des Arts, Paris (Dec. 2015); Exeter Phoenix, 1st – 27th December 2005; London Foundry, March 2005; Avivson, (London Highgate) February 2022.



Texts: <https://www.meer.com/en/authors/475-george-perendia>

Art: <http://www.perendia.co.uk>

**Dragana Perišić** is a self-declared creative, who by chance, happened to express herself through fashion design. While studying economics at Belgrade University, she had made a short trip to London to find a part for her motorbike. Upon arrival, she quickly fell in love with the city and made it her permanent home. After graduating from London College of Fashion, Dragana was noticed by buyers and sold her college collection to a few shops in the UK and abroad. With this, she immediately launched her own, self-funded brand, and she has remained independent ever since. In 2006, she opened her first shop in East London, where she still lives, works, teaches, collaborates and learns. Dragana is an occasional visiting lecturer and has trained many students. Her brand's distinctive style has evolved over the years, but it has always been an unmistakable blend of her two homes - Serbia and Britain. [www.draganaperisic.com](http://www.draganaperisic.com)



**Slavica Plemić** is a London based artist, focused on crucial aspects of human existence and survival in a world where a human being is SIMULTANEOUSLY an individual and an inseparable part of the society, of nature, of the universe. Conceptualist and anti-globalist. Her main interests remain religion, history and philosophy, while her means of artistic expression are essays, painting, sculpture. As a graduate economist (Sarajevo, ex-Yugoslavia), she attended the London School of Technology and Artistic Glass Processing. A longtime member of the Brent Artist Register (BAR), she has had many solo and group exhibitions in London. Also exhibited in New York, San Francisco and Miami (USA), as well as in Monaco.



Blog: [www.artglassphilosophy.blogspot.com](http://www.artglassphilosophy.blogspot.com)  
Instagram: @s.plemic.art

**Dr Ana Russell-Omaljev** (1980) graduated in General Literature and Literary Theory from the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade. After her studies, she went to the United Kingdom for postgraduate studies in International Relations at the University of Reading, where she received a scholarship. She completed her doctoral studies at the same university, during which she taught at the faculty and published the monograph *Divided We Stand: Discourses on Identity in 'First' and 'Other' Serbia*. Over the years, she has written for numerous media outlets, including *Danas*, *Politika*, *Bloomberg Adria*, *Elevate*, *Kosovo 2.0*, *Plezir Magazine*, and others.



Today, she is a multidisciplinary researcher, producer, and curator with extensive experience in creating and managing festivals, exhibitions, academic conferences, and public panels across the cultural, academic, and political sectors. She is the founder of cultural initiatives such as the SouthEast European Future Festival (SEFF) and Contemporary Balkan Art (COBA). She later launched the Cayman Documentary Festival, where she lived for five years, successfully connecting diverse knowledge communities and securing significant support for local humanitarian organizations. She is currently working as a public opinion researcher at the National Centre for Social Research in London.



**Svetislav Savić**, residing in London, would describe himself as an amateur photographer and a professional dreamer. Led by a natural curiosity, he moves through the city exploring the world around him, attentive to fleeting gestures, pauses, and moments that appear only once. His photography captures what surfaces briefly; his poetry gives voice to what continues beneath. When the camera is no longer enough, he turns to digital tools to shape photographs into art-like expressions — and this is how artography was born. When an image can no longer hold what he sees — or feels — he works beyond it, shaping photographs into something closer to memory, emotion, and inner vision. Photography expands into something more internal: a way of showing what cannot be captured, only felt. He published several books of poetry, and his work have been included in numerous anthologies and literary periodicals.

Alongside his artistic work, Svetislav is also a coach. His coaching grows from the same place as his photography and poetry — deep listening, observation, and a belief that clarity often emerges when we slow down and truly see. More about this part of his work can be found at [www.svetsavic.com](http://www.svetsavic.com)



**Dr Tijana Stevanović** is an architect, educator, and artist, working as a Lecturer in Architectural History and Theory at the University College London. She was previously a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Architecture at the Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm. In the past decade Tijana taught architectural design and architectural history and theory at Newcastle University, University for the Creative Arts, and the University of East London. Her work has been published and presented internationally. As a part of her interdisciplinary practice, Tijana regularly initiates, and collaborates in art and curatorial projects in GB, Serbia, and Sweden; she exhibited her work at international exhibitions such as the Venice Architecture Biennale and in art galleries across Europe: Baltic (Newcastle), Grad (Belgrade), Tenderpixel (London), District (Berlin), KTH (Stockholm), etc. Tijana started her academic career at the University of Belgrade, Faculty of Architecture, while still studying for her degree. She then worked in architectural practice in Austria, and was awarded an OSI/FCO Chevening Scholarship for MA cultural studies at the University College London, School of Slavonic and East European Studies. She received her PhD from Newcastle University, with the thesis titled: 'Incorporating Self-management: Architectural Production in New Belgrade'.



**Branco Stoysin**, acclaimed guitarist, composer and tutor, much in love with photography, depicting "the beautiful nature right on our doorstep." Where his Sunny-side-of-guitar and natural side of lens meet in a harmonious synergy. Words would be pointless here, instead, check the website page Natural World-Photo/Video/Music:

<https://www.brancostoysin.co.uk/natural-world-photovideomusic>



**IVA - Ivana Švabić Cannon** is Serbian born artist from Belgrade, where she studied printmaking and illustration at The University of Applied Arts.

Iva started her career as a children's book illustrator in London in '92. She has illustrated fifteen children's books, published by major international publishers and has exhibited widely. Iva had ten solo shows at over two hundred group exhibitions. As a qualified Art and Design teacher, she runs workshops in drawing and printmaking. She moved to Bristol in '99, and this is when she joined Spike Print Studios, where she creates her printmaking work. Iva is also a member of ULUPUDS – Serbian Association of Applied Artists and Designers – since '90.

A series of linocut and woodcut prints Iva has been creating comes through an insatiable drive for experimentation. Her images are inspired by nature, especially the movements of light and water. Linocut technique, as her main medium in printmaking, allows her to use lines in an expressive and energetic way. Most of Iva's images are abstract, which she creates through the dynamic interplay of lines and patterns. Her prints are disarming in their visual simplicity, and yet they contain a complexity arrived at through decades of searching for essence. At once ascetic and opulent, these works clearly reflect their medium, where the simplest scene can become an experience. Iva loves working in mixed medium, as she also incorporates other techniques and materials in her printmaking work, such as making paper casts and printing from found objects! She also expresses herself in ceramics.

Iva prints her images in small editions up to thirty prints on white Somerset paper. Under a great pressure, her prints are embossed as well as printed, which gives a special three-dimensional effect. All plates are inked by hand with oil-based inks, and there may be a slight but beautiful variation in tone or colour across the whole edition.

ivana.svabic@gmail.com

<https://www.instagram.com/svabiccannon>



**Vlastimir Zeric** from Kruševac is a Serbian jeweller, designer and sculptor based in London. He works with precious metals, silver and gold, joining past and present time, people, customs and different cultures. Vlastimir's work is inspired by women and their beauty. His work Sterling silver dress was selected by invited artist Chris Orr, The Royal Society of British Artists to be exhibited at their Annual Exhibition 2020 at Mall Galleries, St. James's. Apart from his love for art, Vlastimir is also a passionate dancer of tango, salsa and waltz. More details: [www.facebook.com/vlado.batica](http://www.facebook.com/vlado.batica)

# Britain and Serbia

## The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Serbia

The group's aim is to foster the good relationship between Serbia and the UK and promote the Serbian contribution to the UK.

### **Wendy Morton (Co-chair)**

is the Conservative Member of Parliament for Aldridge-Brownhills since 2015 and currently the Shadow Minister for Development. Her previous roles include Government Chief Whip, 2022; Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice; and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport. She was promoted to Minister of State in February 2022.

Her career began as an executive officer in HM Diplomatic Service at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office between 1987 and 1989. She then worked in business, sales, and marketing. She set up an electronics company, with her husband, designing and manufacturing electronic goods for the agricultural industry.



### **Lee Barron (Co-Chair)**

is the Labour Member of Parliament for Corby and East Northamptonshire since 2024. Lee left school at 16 to take up an apprenticeship at Royal Mail as a postal worker. He has also been a Northampton magistrate for over 20 years. He is a former Northampton borough councillor and, during this time, was leader of the local Labour group.



### **Lord Randall of Uxbridge (John Randall) (Deputy Chair)**

is a Conservative member of the House of Lords, having previously served as Member of Parliament for Uxbridge for 18 years.

John was Government Deputy Chief Whip in the Coalition Government, having been a Whip for 12 years in both Opposition and Government.

John was the Director of his family retail business in Uxbridge. He has a BA degree in Serbo-Croat from the University of London (SSEES) and spent 3 months at Belgrade University in 1976.



### **Richard John Foord (Deputy Chair)**

is the Liberal Democrat MP for Honiton and Sidmouth, since 2022. A Major in the British Army, he served in both the Balkans and Iraq, receiving three campaign medals.

Before his election to Parliament, Foord was International Collaboration and Export Control Manager at the University of Oxford.



**Serbian  
Month**  
in Great Britain

# Organisations, schools, networks and associations

**Serbian  
Month**

in Great Britain

# THE ROUND TABLE

The Round Table network was established to encourage cooperation and collaboration between Serbian community groups and organisations across the UK and Ireland (UK&I) and to provide a forum to discuss issues of interests and importance to the Serbian community in UK&I. It meets at least twice a year, with one meeting online to enable people from outside of London attend and it is managed by a Round Table Steering Group.

Over the years the main priorities of the Round Table have been Serbian Month, now in its eighteenth year and recognised as one of the most significant festivals of Serbian arts and culture in the Serbian Diaspora and the promotion of the teaching and learning of the Serbian language, with a focus on young people in the 12 to 17 year-old age group for whom there is no other provision in Britain. Other issues the Round Table has addressed include commemorations of NATO's war on Yugoslavia, using the census to help identify the number of Serbs living in the UK, submitting proposals to the Serbian Government for the use of the proposed Creative Embassy in London, protesting against the disenfranchisement of Serbian voters in Britain in elections in Serbia and hosting a visit in 2022 by representatives of the Serbian Office for Cooperation with the Diaspora and Serbs in the Region.

The current priorities of the Round Table are how: to increase the number of organisations represented on the Round Table, particularly those from outside of London and in pursuance of this a Round Table meeting was held in Birmingham in November 2025; to engage with young people; and develop effective channels of communication with government departments in Serbia responsible for relations with the Serbian Diaspora.

The Round Table organised the election of two people to represent the UK&I Serbian community at the Diaspora Assembly, when it was in operation, and was one of the few communities to establish a democratic process for the choice of representatives. It has continued this practice so that the Serbian community in Britain has elected representatives to speak on its behalf to British and Serbian institutions and organisations. The two current representatives are Dragana Tomašević and Lazar Vuković.

The Round Table set up a website several years ago to promote its work and a You Tube Channel for Serbian Month events.

**For more information:**

Email: rtsteering-group@gmail.com  
Website: [www.serbianrt.com](http://www.serbianrt.com)  
Instagram: Serbian Round Table  
Facebook: Serbian Round Table





## St Sava Church School Founded in 1962

Located at the parish of the Serbian Orthodox Church in London, St Sava Church School is a vibrant, friendly school which has been teaching Serbian language, culture and fundamentals of Orthodox Christianity for 64 years. It offers classroom and online Serbian lessons to 100 children between three and thirteen years old, spread across age and ability categories, on Sundays with a midweek catch-up to make sure new learning isn't forgotten!

All class-based lessons take place in purpose-built and well-equipped classrooms at 89 Lancaster Road, London, W11 1QQ, with up-to-date IT resources and appropriate furniture, creating an environment that encourages effective and independent learning. Parents bringing their children can relax in the parish or enjoy a coffee nearby in the popular Portobello Road area whilst their children are taught to master Cyrillic and other key aspects of Serbian culture and history.

St Sava Church School's curriculum is rich and broad. It builds on programmes developed in Serbia and accredited by the Serbian Ministry of Education. The programs are interactive and also provide a platform for children to independently practice their Serbian at home. In addition, the School is fortunate to have teachers who have qualified in both the UK and Serbia. With their collective experience, knowledge, and understanding of child development and language acquisition, the teaching staff supports the diverse needs of pupils from three years onwards, whatever their level of Serbian. All pupils are taught the Cyrillic script, in a style adapted to meet their individual needs. The School also offers lessons for adults.

Central to the St Sava School ethos is the continued building and development of our Serbian and extended community in the UK. Friendships are broadened and solidified by school outings as well as by performances which happen on special days such as St Sava and Vidovdan in the lovely new church hall. Furthermore, the school is supported by an active and motivated Parents Association whose great work in organising hugely successful cake sales and Christmas and Easter markets is contributing to the development of already good classroom facilities. The School also organises workshops, book promotions and lectures for parents.

The school's goal is to expand teaching and learning of the Serbian language, religion and culture in all parishes across Britain and Ireland and to work with other related initiatives to offer the best possible educational experience to pupils and their parents.

Parents can enrol their children and get more information about the School by emailing [info@spclondon.org.uk](mailto:info@spclondon.org.uk) or by calling the church office at **020 7727 8367**.

School web page: <https://spclondon.org.uk/en/school/news>.

# THE ROUND TABLE WORKING GROUP ON THE SERBIAN LANGUAGE

The Round Table Working Group was set up to promote the teaching and learning of the Serbian language in Britain in the most appropriate way for our young people, for many of whom Serbian is an additional language.

## **Serbian Language courses delivered in partnership with the Azbukum Centre for Serbian Language and Culture**

The Working Group has focused on the provision of courses for the 12- to 17-year-old age group for whom there was no provision after the Serbo-Croatian O and A Level had been withdrawn in the early 1990s. In 2019 The Round Table Working Group entered into a partnership with the Azbukum Centre for Serbian Language and Culture in Serbia to deliver their Serbian language courses at beginner, GCSE and A Level. The courses offer qualifications, equivalent to British qualifications, which are accredited by the Serbian Ministry of Education and are recognised across Europe and beyond. Students on the courses receive a Certificate of Knowledge of the Serbian Language and Confirmation of Attendance, official documents, which can be used for registration at universities in Serbia, or used to show knowledge of Serbian when applying for British universities or employment. The approach is that of learning Serbian as a non-native or second language and is designed for students of Serbian heritage aged between 12 and 17 living in the Diaspora.

Courses are delivered online and so can accept students from across the UK and Ireland. Since 2024 courses are delivered over two academic years to give students sufficient time to build up their knowledge and skills in the Serbian language and to fit in with the considerable demands of school and out of school activities.

Our partnership with the Azbukum Centre has enabled them to develop a model of teaching and a curriculum appropriate for this age group and young people in the Serbian Diaspora and it has been delivered in other communities across the world, including in the USA, South Africa, South Korea and various cities across China. In recognition of our role, we received a certificate of thanks at the event organised to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Azbukum Centre held on 24th October 2025.

The landscape for the teaching and learning of Serbian in Britain has changed significantly since the Working Group was set up and it has halted recruitment onto its courses until it has had time to review its strategy to take into account these changes.

For further information contact [olga.stanojlovic@btinternet.com](mailto:olga.stanojlovic@btinternet.com)



# Dopunska Škola

The Supplementary School of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia

By joining Serbian organizations, Serbs in Britain maintain ties with their home country, language, culture and traditions. Many people also try to teach their children the Serbian language and its culture and customs. Since October 2019, after a 20-year hiatus, the Supplementary School has resumed its work and makes a significant contribution to the learning of the Serbian language in Britain. This has been made possible thanks to the support of the Ministries of Education and Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, as well as the Embassy of Republic of Serbia in Britain.

The primary education programme of the Supplementary School in the Serbian language began in the first year with thirty students of Serbian origin with temporary or permanent residence in Britain, whose parents expressed interest in this form of teaching. The programme is implemented through three subjects: Serbian Language, My Homeland Serbia and the Basics of the Culture of the Serbian People. This school year the school had 380 students in the following cities: Corby, Leicester, Bedford, London, Birmingham, Oxford, Reading and Redhill. Classes are held online and in-person and are free of charge. Since the last school year, a pilot distance learning programme for the diaspora has been established. Its goal is to include students for whom it is not possible to form a viable group because of small numbers or because students live too far away to attend classes in- person. Classes are taught by: Vida Milojković, Biljana Dinić Spencer, Slađana Stevanović, Jelena Đorđijevski, Dobrila Kostić, Svetlana Pilja, Aleksandra Buzas and Tamara Vojvodić.

The school has very good relations with the Embassy of the Republic of Serbia, the Serbian Society, the Circle of Serbian Sisters, the Serbian Centre in Corby and folklore societies.

Among the many organized extracurricular activities, those which attracted the greatest interest and response and stood out were - painting and making objects for a sales exhibition, an organized visit to Serbia, participation in literary and art competitions, celebrations of state and religious holidays, a free stay in Tršić under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, joint zoom classes for all groups in the UK with celebrity guests, dramatization of well-known texts and a number of guest performances by theatre groups from Serbia, Sports day, performances and social gatherings. A working atmosphere, teamwork and competitive spirit is present at all times.

Cooperation with schools and organizations in Serbia continued, which contributes to the integration of students into the Serbian national milieu. The school collaborates with the charity Raymond Nicolet Trust to raise funds for children in Serbia who need help.

We are proud of our students who, in addition to their usual obligations, are happy to learn the Serbian language and are interested in Serbian history, culture and tradition.



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# Srpskaonica

## School in Reading



**"Srpskaonica"** is a Serbian language school for children from Berkshire or nearby areas. The school was established in 2013 and classes are held in Reading. It was founded, first and foremost, to meet the growing need for children of the Serbian community in Berkshire to learn as much as possible about the language, culture and tradition of their native country. This goes hand in hand with the wish to work together to contribute to the preservation of our national identity in the UK. Children attending the school are usually between the ages of 5-16. Classes are held free of charge within the Dopunska škola and are mainly based on the age of the children. Lessons were taught online during the pandemic and this continues to be the case for some groups but others are now being taught face to face.

For more information about the school and its day-to-day activities, please follow us on Facebook at:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/srpskaonica>



# Azbooka Education Centre, Redhill Surrey

At Azbooka Education Centre, we offer Serbian and English lessons and exam preparation for children and adults at all levels. Lessons are delivered online (Zoom or Microsoft Teams) or in person at our classroom in Redhill, Surrey.

We also work for Dopunska škola, providing free lessons in Serbian Language, Culture and Traditions to students aged 5-18 of Serbian descent who live in the UK.

Biljana Dinić Spencer is a Professor of Serbian Language and World Literature with both Serbian and British teaching qualifications. Biljana is also a qualified SpLD (Dyslexia) teacher and has many years of teaching experience in both Serbia and the UK.

All teaching materials and lessons are tailored and differentiated to meet each student's individual needs and are adapted to their age and learning pace.

We welcome all language learners, especially beginners and those learning Serbian or English as a foreign language, students with Dyslexic tendencies and those preparing for the language and school exams.

Our students' work and success stories are available to see on our FB page.

### Contact us:

FB Page: Azbooka Education Centre | Redhill | Facebook

Email: [biljanadinic@hotmail.com](mailto:biljanadinic@hotmail.com)

Phone number: 07815901156

# NEW ONLINE COURSES



## LET'S LEARN **SERBIAN!**

*Beginners and intermediate  
courses for adults*

Our online group courses are for everyone who wants to learn everyday spoken Serbian independently and without losing

the feeling of being part of the group. The courses take place in virtual classrooms on Zoom, once a week in the evening.

Our experienced, qualified teachers are all native Serbian speakers.

They will take you on the journey through Serbia where you will learn the skills needed for understanding and using the Serbian language in everyday situations and while travelling. You will develop your reading and listening skills and learn to speak and write in Serbian.

- everyday spoken Serbian
- Serbian grammar
- Ћирилица

For more info, e-mail us

• [office@seriansociety.org.uk](mailto:office@seriansociety.org.uk)

# HOLY PRINCE LAZAR CHOIR LAZARICA CHURCH IN BIRMINGHAM



## *Tradition. Spirituality. Beauty. Power. Connection. Fun.*

The Holy Prince Lazar Choir is a small mixed acapella choir consisting of sopranos, altos, tenors and bass. The choir, is a friendly group of singers who rehearse every Tuesday in the church from 7 pm to 9.30 pm. The singers are between 18 and 70 years old and have different levels of experience.

The current music director is Dragana Zebić. She graduated from Belgrade Faculty of Music with a BA degree in Vocal and Operatic performance (studying as a soprano). Dragana has performed across the Balkans and in several Belgrade churches.

The choir performs in a variety of venues but their primary purpose is to sing the Holy Liturgy in Lazarica once a month and on major Orthodox Church days such as Easter and Christmas. The choir mainly sings spiritual music and performs sacred vocal music from other religions as well as different kinds of secular music.

The choir were honoured to sing at the Kidderminster Golden Concert along with the Kidderminster Male Choir in October 2019. The concert was held at St George's Church and celebrated the 50th anniversary of KEMP Hospice. They were also delighted to perform in the 6th International Music Edict Festival which took place in Niš, Serbia. This momentous occasion featured choirs from eight countries across the globe during a 4 day event.

The choir welcomes new members. If interested contact Dragana by email on [dragana.zebic@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:dragana.zebic@yahoo.co.uk) or mobile **0792 828 040** or turn up at a rehearsal.



## THE SAINT SAVA CHURCH CHOIR IN LONDON

Since its inception in 1952, the Saint Sava Church Choir has played a vital role in the Serbian religious community. Its primary role has always been to sing the Sunday liturgies, alongside occasional weekday liturgies on significant feast days like Christmas and St Sava's Day. The choir also actively and regularly participates in various events within the parish including weddings, christenings and funerals, lending its voices whenever called upon.

Beyond its parochial responsibilities, the church choir has been involved in a great variety of celebrations within the Serbian church community and beyond. Notably, the choir had the privilege of performing at the commemoration of the 800th anniversary of the Hilandar Monastery on Mount Athos, celebrated in London in 1998. Additionally, the choir was invited on numerous occasions to sing for the Patron Saint Day (or Slava) of HRH Crown Prince Aleksandar, St Andrew (the first Apostle whom Jesus called to join His mission). The choir was regularly involved in special events pertaining to the Serbian Royal Family until the latter relocated to Serbia in 2001.

On a number of notable occasions, the choir was invited to participate in events outside its immediate community, including: 'The Millennium Songs of Praise' held on the 2nd January 2000 at St George's Church in Enfield. The choir joined prayers led by several Christian denominations residing in the North London area. Similarly, the choir took part in the 'Week of Prayers for World Peace', contributing to a solemn ceremony at St Ethelburga Church in Bishopsgate, London, on the 17th of October 2004. During this event, the Orthodox icon 'Christ our Peacemaker' was brought into St Ethelburga as a symbol of peace.

The Saint Sava Church Choir participated in the annual celebrations of the Pan-Orthodox Vespers, traditionally hosted at a different orthodox church each year in London, including the Russian, Greek, Antiochian, Georgian, and, of course, the Serbian church. This annual event took place every year on the Sunday of Orthodoxy (first Sunday of Great Lent).

The choir has also lent its voices to a large number of public concerts and other events further afield, too numerous to list.

It is fitting to acknowledge that choral singing helps both the congregation and the singers themselves. The former find it easier to offer their prayers while listening to the beautiful sacred chants and compositions of the orthodox tradition, whereas the latter enjoy the experience of collective singing, and feel the profound blessings bestowed upon them from above, as they present their talents, in gratitude, as an offering to the divine Creator.

For all additional information, please contact the choir leader Zorka Maksimović after the Liturgy or by sending an email to [crkva@spclondon.org.uk](mailto:crkva@spclondon.org.uk).



**Serbian Month**  
in Great Britain

## HOR 'DJETINJSTVO' *Good news for choir and singing enthusiasts!*

A new choir has launched in Ealing, West London. The conductor is a young pianist from Belgrade, Ana Torbica. Rehearsals take place every Saturday from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. The aim of the choir is socialising and singing, spreading positive energy, meeting new people, and performing popular songs in the Serbian language by well-known Balkan singers that everyone knows and loves. The studio is located at Questors Theatre in Ealing.

For more information, please call 07704 714660.



# FOLKLORE GROUP OPLENAC

The folklore Group Oplenac was formed in 1954 at the first regular general assembly in London of The Royal Yugoslav Army Combatant's Association 'Draža Mihailović' (*Udruženje Boraca KJV 'Draža Mihailović'*). After the hardship of WWII and being displaced in a foreign country the members of the association were aware that in exile the national spirit could only be maintained by traditional, cultural, and religious events and experiences. Hence folklore, theatre and choir groups were created, and this was replicated in every country where *Udruženje* was present, this included the: USA, Canada, Germany, France, Australia, Switzerland & Italy.

In that same year during a visit by the SFRJ 'Kolo' Ensemble, married couple Nikola and Vikica Pužić, part of Kolo ensemble defected and chose to remain in the UK. This professional input gave Oplenac a strong boost. The first folklore leader was K. Kužović, who was followed by Moma Radovanović, who was part of the theatre section, and who continued to teach the group for 45 years.

Under the guidance of Čika Moma Radovanović, Oplenac performed the length and breadth of the UK, from London to Stoke-on-Trent, Peterborough to Halifax and Leeds at all the major saint's days, Sveti Sava, Vidovdan and in particular for the *Udruženje* celebration of 'Dan Ravne Gore' in May in London.

Many generations have passed through Oplenac over the years, and it has a rich history as one of the longest running groups, performing continuously for nearly 70 years. Oplenac was first established in Halifax, with practices taking place at Pavle's club, just a few hundred yards away from the church. One of the first groups to start outside of the Halifax/Bradford area was in Bedford in 1968, which consisted of 10 girls who combined with 6 boys from Halifax to perform in Peterborough for Sveti Sava in 1972. This was the start of the Peterborough branch of Oplenac with children joining from Letchworth and in 1982 from Leicester.

The rich Oplenac repertoire is as diverse as the country with dances from Šumadija, Vojvodina, Vlaška and Macedonia, Oplenac became famous for its 'tour de force' performance of the Šopsko Kolo. The Oplenac generation 2000 – the sons and daughters of the 1960's generation of dancers added many new splets (dances), including the Pirot and Pčinje splets, the choreography and intricate steps reaching a new level.

Oplenac has been able to continue with the support of all the parents and grandparents, of the dancers, the church together with the sponsorship of The Royal Yugoslav Army Combatant's Association 'Draža Mihailović', thus succeeding in preserving Serbian traditions and culture for new generations. In 2023 we started a new 'youth' group of Oplenac, based in Peterborough, aged between 8 -16, their first show was at Smotra in Corby, and the next will be for Sveti Sava on Saturday 7th February in Peterborough, more details on Facebook & Instagram>

[https://www.facebook.com/FolklornaGrupaOplenacUK/?locale=en\\_GB](https://www.facebook.com/FolklornaGrupaOplenacUK/?locale=en_GB)  
[https://www.instagram.com/oplenac\\_uk/?hl=en](https://www.instagram.com/oplenac_uk/?hl=en)





## FOLKLORE ENSEMBLE RASTKO

The folklore ensemble Rastko was founded in 1983 and based at St Sava's church in London, with the aim of bringing our young people together in a structured way to nurture and preserve our folklore, our traditions and our rich national treasures.

Since its beginnings, Rastko has achieved great success in Britain as well as in Europe, Canada, America and Australia, performing at various celebrations and festivals.

It is important that young people outside the homeland come together through dancing and singing, because in this way they develop a love and feeling for their national heritage, and get closer to their roots, homeland and own people.

It is important not to lose sight of the meaning of traditional folk songs and dances, which have their deep roots in the nation's past. They come from the nation's soul and need to be nurtured.

Traditional folk songs and dances bear witness to our daily life, through which people can capture its most beautiful and important moments.

The folklore ensemble Rastko has been active for over 40 years and many young boys and girls have passed through its ranks. Over 30 years ago, the Ensemble 'Nemanja' was established, for 'veteran' dancers to allow both older and younger people to work together to preserve and nurture Serbian folklore. Rastko has had great success both in Britain and abroad, participating in all the major religious and national celebrations in all our Serbian centres.

The ensemble often hosts and works with many other cultural organisations. Rastko has hosted and participated in festivals in Germany, Switzerland, America, Sweden, Australia, and most importantly, Serbia and Republika Srpska.

The ensemble has a rich and diverse artistic programme and over the past 40 years it has accumulated many national costumes for its performances. The ensemble has received a lot of support from St Sava's, from its priests and the Church Council, the Circle of Serbian Sisters 'Kosovo Devojka' and parents. However, above all, Rastko owes its success to its choreographer and director Mrs Nada Grkinić who has led the ensemble for the 40 years of its existence. Wherever it performs, Rastko is warmly welcomed and greeted enthusiastically by all audiences.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjITr1FYc0LOuOVKVxyAzTw>

# FOLKLORE ENSEMBLE NEMANJA

The Folklore Ensemble "Nemanja" was founded over thirty years ago at the Church of Saint Sava in London, with the aim of bringing together all adults who wish to dance. They hold regular rehearsals and, in this way, nurture and preserve our traditional folk dances, which have deep roots in the nation's past.

If you enjoy dancing and socialising, you are very welcome to join us.

For further information, please contact **Nada Grkinić / 07984 247 963.**

Thank you!

## Serbian Month

in Great Britain



## CRKVENA FOLKLORNA GRUPA SV. ANDREJA

Crkvena Folklorna Grupa Sv. Andreja, in Bedford is an organisation formed by the Serbian Orthodox Church parish of Sv. Andreja, to teach children and young adults to dance traditional Serbian dances pertaining to various regions of the former Yugoslavia. The group seeks to retain this aspect of the Serbian heritage in this country as an important aspect of the Serbian identity.

The group was formed in early 2014 and has been active continuously since then except for a prolonged break during the Covid Pandemic. The group functions annually from September through to June and holds 'probe' sessions on Sunday at the Church House in Bedford, 62 Kimbolton Road. The group is divided into two sub groups with the ages ranging roughly from 6 - 12 years old in the younger group and 13 plus in the older group. The group seeks to perform their prepared dances both locally and when invited further afield as and when they learn a dance and group numbers are such that they can perform.

Since 2015 Marina Ivanović from London has been the groups teacher / choreographer. Marina has been dancing Serbian folklore for more than 20 years and has also taught other groups. She brings a wealth of experience to every session along with a spirit of fun helping the children and young adults derive a sense of achievement with their newly learned skills.

Over the years the group has performed on many occasions the length and breadth of the country and one of the highlights was when the group travelled and performed in Belgrade, Serbia in 2018. If you are local and would like to come along and see if you may be interested in joining in, please initially email us on [alekssimic@aol.com](mailto:alekssimic@aol.com)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/SvAndrejaFolklor>



# FOLKLORNA GRUPA AVALA

The folklore group Avala in Corby was formed in September 2015 and recruits members from as young as five. Avala's first debut performance in June 2016 was a success and resulted in more sign ups in the months that followed. Initially taught by Angelina Radjenović, Lulu Radjenović, her sister took over in 2016, supported by their mother Angela Radjenović and leader of the group, Elizabeth Tulum. Avala is funded by the Pokret srpskih četnika Ravne Gore in the UK and is grateful for their continued support.



Avala has continued to grow and this has led to the group being split into three, to accommodate the 50 strong members. Members commit to attending weekly rehearsals and have performed at a number of slavas and events around the UK. Being part of Avala, the members learn the Serbian traditions and culture of folklore and most importantly form friendships for life. Avala has attracted members from outside the Serbian community too (Russian, Lithuanian and English) and some have even returned after university in their mid-20s. Avala will always welcome anyone who would like to join.

Avala are excited to continue their journey performing for the Serbian community around the UK and abroad and was celebrating their tenth anniversary in 2025!

Facebook page: Folklorna Grupa Avala

# FOLKLORE ENSEMBLE ST. ELIAH CORBY

The folklore ensemble St. Eliah Corby gathers all those who are interested in nurturing Serbian customs and traditions, therefore enabling the development of creativity in the field of art and culture. Over the years we have performed in many towns here in England, including Serbian events as well as taking part in charity and competition events here in Corby. Also our groups have performed in Disneyland Paris and in Thessaloniki Greece where they had a great and unforgettable experience.

On November 4th, 2023, the ensemble celebrated its 10th anniversary.

Anyone interested, of any age is welcome to join us.

We also opened a web page with Local Giving for gift aid donations to our organisation  
<http://www.localgiving.com/serbiandance>



# HILANDAR FOLK GROUP

Our group has existed for more than 30 years and is the only Serbian dance group in the north of England. We enjoy travelling around England and meeting new people. It is a great opportunity for children to learn more about their heritage and make new friends. Children love to dress up in national costumes and travel from all over to join in, including Manchester and Wakefield. This year we had many performances and we all enjoy connecting with Serbian music and socialising together.



## *The Circle of Serbian Sisters Kosovo Maiden – London*



The Circle of Serbian Sisters, in London, works with dedication and selfless nobility to fulfill its mission, inspired by benevolence and selfless giving. We work relentlessly and diligently to encourage the good in people. Through our charitable work, over the last fifty years, we have raised significant funds for various worthwhile causes – our people in Serbia, the Republika Srpska, Kosovo and Metohija, our children, the old and helpless, also our Church, Church school, folklore group Rastko as well as the people of our Diocese.

Guided by respect for our national traditions, language, customs, and national identity, we have spread our orthodox faith and spirit among the population through support for other churches and monasteries, especially the Saint Sava Cathedral, Vračar, where the name of our Circle is carved on the endowment plaque. The Circle now has around fifty members, most of whom are elderly retired ladies. We would like to encourage younger ladies to join and continue with this worthwhile charitable work.

The Circle of Serbian Sisters is keen to build 'bridges' with other Serbian organisations and societies to work together on shared initiatives for the benefit of the Serbian people. This will enable us to attract new and younger members. This joint cooperation would do much to promote all our organisations and societies through sharing experiences. This would do much to safeguard our traditions and address the strategic issues facing our community in the UK.

# The Serbian Library in London

On 13 January 2015, The Serbian Library in London was officially registered as a not-for-profit organisation in the UK. It immerses itself with charitable goals such as promoting education, culture, literature and art. It concerns itself with the historical heritage and the traditional ethnic legacy of the Serbian people. It practises speaking and writing in the Serbian language through various activities, with the aim of inspiring the Serbian community and Diaspora to participate in its activities and keep the Serbian language alive in the UK. It aims to achieve this through direct involvement, suggestions or sharing information and knowledge about the Serbian people in the Diaspora.

The founders Vesna Petković and the late Olga Gaković reached an agreement with the Serbian National Library in Belgrade to send books to the Serbian Library on a regular basis, mainly contemporary or up-and-coming authors and newly published books by well-known authors. The Serbian collection includes books in a variety of areas including history, fiction, literary criticism, poetry, prose and children's books. The Library also received three complete collections of the Harry Potter books in Serbian, a special gift from J. K. Rowling's office. One collection was donated to the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children in London for Serbian children awaiting serious operations or long-term treatments.

The Serbian Library in London holds regular Mini Book Fairs during Serbian Month, mainly focusing on the promotion of Serbian authors, translations and publishers interested in Serbian literature. The programme includes presentations of new books and talks with the authors and publishers. Since 2021 the Serbian Library has hosted regular Zoom events which have included authors from abroad. These events provide a chance for the audience to ask questions, and they have proved to be very popular not only in the UK but also in other countries in Europe, America and Australia.

The Serbian Library also encourages people to get involved in its activities by organising events to promote speaking and writing in the Serbian language. In 2013 the first International Poetry and Prose competition was established for Serbs throughout the Diaspora. A significant number of talented writers from the Balkans, Europe and USA, who write in both Serbian and English, have participated over the years, enriching the Serbian Diaspora's literature and culture. The winning works are published in several books including Duvanske Priče (Tobacco Tales), Poetry and Prose Private Collection. Also, a series of talks were organised about the literary Diaspora in the UK which is also evidence of the Serbian presence and cultural activities in the UK over the last century.

**The Serbian Library in London depends on donations, cultural activities and funding applications. The Library's future depends on how much it is used and supported. Serbian books can be ordered free of charge through local libraries across Great Britain. By borrowing books, attending events and spreading the word, the community helps ensure its continued existence. Any support is gratefully received.**

If you feel you could spare some time to help keep this valuable library working, please get in touch.

## Serbian Library in London

Fulham Library, 598 Fulham Road, London SW6 5NX

Contact: 07801 130806

Email: [serbianlibrary@gmail.com](mailto:serbianlibrary@gmail.com)

## Poetry Evening with Desanka Maksimovic

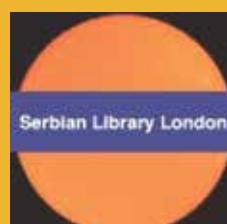


Fulham Library

Thursday 5th March 2026  
5-7pm

GO  
ALL  
IN.

National  
Year of  
Reading  
2026



# 'Serbian virtual book club'

by the Serbian Society

*'You love to read, so why don't you join a book club? It will boost your happiness in so many ways!'*

This is definitely true for me; the only thing I enjoy as much as reading is talking about reading. I was thinking about joining a book club for quite some time, but the typical 'go to somebody's house and drink buckets of wine' club was not for me. I knew what type of book club I wanted to join, but finding what I was looking for seemed like looking for a needle in a haystack!

So, I decided to start my own. I presented the idea of 'Srpski onlajn book-club' to the Serbian Society more than four years ago, and the members of the Committee gave me their support. And as they say, the rest is history...

Many Serbs in the UK want to cultivate the habit of reading in Serbian. Belonging to a Serbian book club means they don't neglect that aim. Our book club creates a feeling of community and togetherness and exposes us to new perspectives and ideas. Meeting on a regular basis ensures we are connecting consistently and have something on the calendar to look forward to with pleasure.

The variety of books makes reading and discussion very rich, and that is what attendees are drawn to. Joining a book club comes with many benefits:

1. You read books you wouldn't normally pick up. When everyone is suggesting books, you end up reading books you wouldn't have read if the choice was yours. You might not like some of them but you might love others. And when a book surprises you like that, it can quickly earn a place among your favourites on the shelf.
2. You learn how other readers think, which makes your own reading better. The more this happens, the richer the story gets.
3. You may find yourself starting sentences with no idea where they go; often by the end of the discussion you will be surprised by how differently you think when there are other people to pick up your ideas and interpret them in their own way.
4. Sometimes we discuss the book only for the first 15 minutes, then from there we start discussing life updates, recent work developments and our next travel plans. In those instances, even when the book itself is not the centrepiece of discussion, it can still be a force that brings us together, which in turn opens us up to new ways of reading and being with each other.

## Ground Rules

**The book-club by the Serbian Society celebrates the best in new (and sometimes old) Serbian fiction. We can read a Serbian or English edition, in Cyrillic or Latin script, but the conversation about the book is always in Serbian.**

**It is very important that the books we read are written by Serbian writers or writers from the minority communities living in Serbia.**

**Can people attend even if they haven't read the book? Of course! The motto of our book club is 'No guilt'. The conversation is somewhat structured, but it is okay for people to talk about other topics too.**

**Talking points are useful to help get the conversation going, but you have to be willing to go with the flow. We meet online once a month, and chat regularly in our WhatsApp group.**

**We organise occasional trips to the theatre, dinner parties and book promotions when we want to meet in person.**

**If you're reading this (and still reading), you were probably thinking about a book club already. Right? Take it from someone who knows. Come and join us! Book clubs work wonders and it can boost your happiness in so many ways!**

Nada Hinić, The Serbian Society

# Библиотека

„Бирајте речи!“ — књига која враћа достојанство новим српским речима

Књига „Бирајте речи!“ настала је из једне једноставне, али важне идеје: свака појединачна реч је уметничко дело. Зато сваку реч требамо ценити и неговати. Ова књига представља посебан лексички и културни документ — збирку одабраних речи и кованица насталих у оквиру такмичења „Најбоља нова српска реч“, које је у 2023. години покренула и од тада води Мала библиотека, сајт из Велике Британије.

На такмичењу сваке године може победити само једна реч. Али књига „Бирајте речи!“ настала је да исправи ту, како приређивачи кажу, „малу неправду“: да многе изузетно добре, духовите, корисне и лепе предложене речи не остану заборављене, већ да наставе свој живот у читању, разговору и јавном простору. Њена вредност је управо у томе што не уздиже један предлог, већ показује ширину стваралачке енергије једне заједнице која мисли, осећа и говори српски језик.

Ова књига није речник, већ својеврсна лексичка читанка, изборник и дневник једног друштвеног догађаја. Она сведочи о томе како се језик ствара у живом контексту: као реакција на нове појаве, на непотребне түђице (посебно англицизме), али и као игра духа — као потреба да се речима именује оно што осећамо и видимо. Појединачне предложене речи су „мудра решења“, неке су „уметничка дела“, а неке су једноставно практичне — али све су знак да је српски језик способан да се обнавља и расте.

Посебан значај књиге је и у томе што приказује друштвени одјек такмичења. Према наводима са странице Мале библиотеке, такмичење је оживело разговор о језику у јавности и на интернету, често уз расправе, али и уз осећај ослобођења и радости да се језику може прићи без страха и крутости.

„Бирајте речи!“ је и визуелно осмишљена да буде пријемчива: књига је, како стоји у опису, намерно прављена да буде весела и радосна, уз цртеже и нове ћириличне фонтове, како би је подједнако волели и деца и одрасли. Она је названа и „заједничким делом“ — врстом дигиталне народне радиности, настале из колективне креативности људи који су слали речи и објашњења.

На крају, књига има и симболичку поруку: речи нису само средство комуникације, већ начин да се разуме стварност. „Бирајте речи!“ нас подсећа да језик није затворен систем, већ живи простор у коме се ствара, предлаже, испробава и бира — са пажњом, одговорношћу и радошћу.

Мала библиотека је мали образовни сајт покренут из Лондона, Велика Британија. Мала библиотека ствара, припрема, обрађује и представља садржаје на српском језику. Кроз савремене облике садржаја као што су игрице и дигиталне књиге Мала библиотека помаже развоју и преношењу језика са општим циљем да се учење догађа с радошћу и са љубављу.

[www.malabiblioteka.net](http://www.malabiblioteka.net)

Сербијан  
Монх  
ин Грејт Бритајн

БИРАЈТЕ  
РЕЧИ!

ОДАБРАНИ ПРЕДЛОЗИ И  
ДНЕВНИК ТАКМИЧЕЊА  
„НАЈБОЉА НОВА СРПСКА РЕЧ“

ПОВЕДНИЧКА РЕЧ 2023. ГОДИНЕ

ДУХОКЛОНУЋЕ

Замена за реч „ДИПРИСИЦА“ која је латинског порекла. Реч је извршила две српске речи: џук + клонфре (клонгус) и донесла је инспирисана руском речју узарк која се преводи као: онадаше, сладаше, препадаше.

С обзиром на то да се у психолошкој суштини депресије објашњава, између осталих, као губитак воле и енергије, а слично тужење има и старословенска реч учијија, кеф Свети Љиљ противсвлађује реч депресија, у значењу чамбана, клонција, врлојом гру... сматрам да је реч ДУХОКЛОНУЋЕ, у смислу опадања духом (као животном енергијом), конкретније духом, добри замена.

Циљ јој је да понуди замену за түђину депресија, а да притом објашњи у себи суштину неког значења.

— Драгана Абђанин, Суботица

# Развој речника српског језика

пројекат који чува језик, памћење и културу

Српски језик је једна од најважнијих културних вредности које имамо. У њему су сачувани трагови историје, народног памћења, књижевности, науке и свакодневног живота. Међутим, језик није нешто што једном настане и заувек остане исто: он се непрестано мења, развија, обогаћује и прилагођава времену. Зато је систематски рад на речнику српског језика кључан — да бисмо разумели сопствену језичку баштину и да бисмо је очували за будућност.

Управо том циљу посвећен је пројекат развоја речника српског језика, који воде две истакнуте научнице и професорке: проф. др Рада Стијовић и проф. др Ранка Станковић. Њихов рад представља велики корак напред ка савременим, дигиталним и доступним језичким ресурсима на српском језику.

Зашто је овај пројекат важан? Зато што речник није само списак речи. Он је доказ како живимо, како мислимо и како се мењају друштво и култура. Свако ново значење, свака забележена реч и свака јасно описана језичка појава помажу да се српски језик правилно разуме и користи — у школи, на универзитету, у медијима, у књижевности и у свакодневној комуникацији.

Дигитални речник који се уједно развоја је важан јер омогућава да српски језик буде лако доступан свима — ученицима, студентима, наставницима, истраживачима и широј јавности — у било ком тренутку и са било ког уређаја. Дигитални речник се може брзо допуњавати новим речима и значењима, што је кључно јер се језик стално мења. Он омогућава претрагу по речима, облицима и значењима, лакше повезивање сродних појмова, као и прецизније разумевање употребе речи у контексту.

Поред културне и образовне улоге, дигитални речник је један од темеља дигиталне економије и савремених технологија: без квалитетних језичких ресурса тешко је развијати алате за машинско превођење, језичко уређивање, препознавање говора и аутоматско титровање. То директно утиче на низ дигиталних услуга, рецимо на Нетфликс и ЈуТјуб који се ослањају на тачне и природне преводе. Исто важи и за вештачку интелигенцију и повезане моделе: да би дигитални асистенти, претрага и вештачка интелигенција правилно разумели српски језик и давали квалитетне одговоре, потребни су им поузданни речници, граматичке базе и језички подаци. Зато дигитални речник није само културни пројекат — он је инфраструктура за језик у дигиталном добу.

Овај пројекат се ослања на знање, искуство и научну одговорност, али му је потребна и подршка шире заједнице. Зато је покренута ГоФандМи кампања — како би грађани, љубитељи језика, наставници, студенти и сви којима је стало до културе могли да помогну у спровођењу овог значајног подухвата. Подухват води добротворно удружење које су покренули наши суграђани из Лондона и Велике Британије, а данас окупља више десетина угледних појединача из целог света.

Свака донација, без обзира на износ, представља подршку конкретном циљу: да речник српског језика настави да се развија, допуњује и буде доступан онима којима је потребан. То је улагање у знање и образовање, али и у језик као темељ нашег постојања.

**Позивамо вас да подржите пројекат путем ГоФандМи странице:**  
<https://gofund.me/a776c461b>

Више података и радна страница пројекта налазе се овде:  
[www.sljubavlju.com](http://www.sljubavlju.com)

Помозимо да српски језик остане жив, богат и негован са љубављу, знањем и одговорношћу.



# *Twelfth Annual Memorial Service for Women in Foreign Medical Missions in Serbia during the Great War*

Since 2014, with the support of Serbian Council of Great Britain and Serbian Orthodox Church St Sava, I have been organising annual commemorations in honour of these brave women.

I will mention only a few guest-speakers who supported these unique events in Britain. Louise Miller spoke about Flora Sandes and Alan Cumming about Scottish Women's Hospitals in Serbia. Ailsa Clarke, dressed in a replica of Dr Elsie Inglis' uniform and talked about Scottish women who risked and sacrificed their lives in Serbia and other fronts during the Great War. Natasha Stojasavljević spoke about Jo Whitehead, Milunka Savić and other Serbian women soldiers. Nick Ilić gave a talk about WWI and the various foreign medical missions in Serbia and the important contribution they made. In 2022, the Serbian Society London, in collaboration with the Serbian Council of Great Britain, organised a monodrama 'Milunka', performed by Vera Stanković, about Milunka Savić, the Serbian war hero who fought in the Balkan Wars and in WWI and who is the most-decorated female combatant in the recorded history of warfare.

In 2015, an exhibition opened in Serbia House, honouring the life of Mabel Stobart, the Dorset war heroine who formed a medical corps to aid Serbia in the nation's darkest hour. The exhibition entitled 'Heroines of the Great War: Mabel Stobart & The Retreat from Serbia in 1915', was lent by Dorset County Museum and curated by Dušanka Marsenić.

Our work has enabled us to develop valuable partnerships with Serbian and British institutions, organisations and individuals with an interest in this area. These include the Imperial War Museum, the Women's Library and the Salonika Front Association. In 2023 this resulted in two British Serbs joining a group of women from Britain to visit the locations of the Scottish Women's Hospitals in Serbia in WWI, the graves of the women who died in Serbia, and to attend the annual commemoration of Dr Elsie Inglis and the Scottish Women's Hospitals, held in Mladenovac on 15 September 2023.

We remember those women who sacrificed their lives during the Great War, those buried in Kragujevac, Valjevo, Niš, Bajina Bašta... and those who continued to support the Serbs after the war ended, like Katherine MacPhail, Evelina Haverfield, Isabel Emslie Hutton and Lady Paget. We also think of the Serbian women who put themselves in harm's way for their country and to ease the suffering of its people. Soldiers, like Milunka Savić, Vasilija Vukotić or Sofija Jovanović, who fought together with Flora Sandes; doctors and nurses, like famous painter Nadežda Petrović, who died of typhus in Valjevo in 1915 or Draginja Babić, one of the first Serbian women doctors, who died in Valjevo in 1915, almost on the same day as Dr Elizabeth Ross and Madge Neil Fraser.

The histories of these brave, determined and altruistic women from Britain and Serbia are woven closely together. We will always remember them. Last year a very successful memorial event was held in the Embassy of Republic of Serbia. It was a particularly special event because ten relatives of Dr Elsie Inglis and a relative of the Honourable Mrs Evelina Haverfield attended the event and also because of the presentation of a portrait of Dr Elsie Inglis to the Embassy of the Republic of Serbia by Mrs Fiona Garwood, leader of the group of women who went to Serbia in 2023. The portrait was digitally produced by an art student from Kragujevac, Andreja Bogdanović. It is a copy of the portrait presented to the British Ambassador in Belgrade in 2024.

The programme for this year will be rich and interesting, uniting Lady Paget, Nadežda Petrović, Australian Olive King, Dr Elsie Inglis and much more. Traditionally, the Pomen will be held in our church after the service on Saturday, 28th February, and continuing with the programme in Bishop Nikolaj Community Centre.

Zvezdana Popović



# The Serbian Council of Great Britain

Connecting People. Celebrating Culture. Strengthening Community.

Founded in 2004, the Serbian Council of Great Britain (SCGB) is an independent, non-profit, non-political organisation dedicated to strengthening and celebrating the Serbian community across the UK. Our mission comes to life through:

- Building strong connections with Serbian diaspora organisations in Britain and around the world.
- Representing the Serbian community to governmental and non-governmental bodies in both the UK and Serbia.
- Supporting our community's cultural links with Serbia and regions of Serbian historical and cultural significance.
- Fostering positive relationships between the Serbian community and wider British society.
- Showcasing Serbian culture, history and heritage to both Serbian and British audiences.

## Our Work & Impact

### Strengthening Community Networks

We have played a key role in establishing the Serbian Round Table, a collaborative body that brings together Serbian organisations in the UK to work collectively for the benefit of the community.

### Promoting the Serbian Language

Leading the Round Table's Working Group on the Serbian Language we have developed a partnership with the Azbukum Centre for Serbian Language and Culture, we deliver accredited online Serbian language courses—beginner, GCSE and A level—to students across Britain.

### Celebrating Serbian Culture

In cooperation with the Serbian Society and Serbian City Club, we founded Serbian Month, now in its eighteenth year and the largest Serbian cultural festival in the diaspora.

This catalogue continues that mission: documenting our history, celebrating contributions of British Serbs, and deepening appreciation of Serbian culture in the UK.

## Our Future Priorities

- Expanding engagement programmes for young people
- Supporting new community initiatives through fundraising and strategic partnerships
- Strengthening communication channels within the Serbian community, especially following the closure of Britić

### Bring these goals to Life

- Become a member: <https://serbiantouncil.org.uk/membership/>
- Donate to our Just Giving Campaign <https://serbiantouncil.org.uk/>

### Stay Connected

Website: [www.serbiantouncil.org.uk](http://www.serbiantouncil.org.uk)

Email: [info@serbiantouncil.org.uk](mailto:info@serbiantouncil.org.uk)

Facebook: Serbian Council of Great Britain

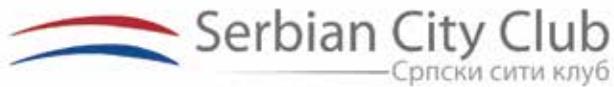
YouTube: Serbian Council of Great Britain | Serbian Month

**Serbian  
Month**  
in Great Britain





# Serbian City Club



**Team Ivan Milić, Miloš Stefanović, Jelena Krzanicki, Slavjana Ulph, Nataša Kočić**

The Serbian City Club is a not-for-profit apolitical organisation established to promote interests of Serbian professionals in the UK, Serbia and worldwide through networking and speaker events. The Serbian City Club was founded in the late 1990's by a handful of enthusiastic Serbs working in London's financial institutions. Their idea was to bring to life an informal club that would gather young Serbian professionals who live and work in the UK.

Our members are mainly London-based and work in all walks of professional life as scientists, doctors, bankers, engineers, lecturers, civil servants, etc. in renowned British and global institutions. A typical Club member is characterised by a high level of education and cultural awareness which, tied with their linguistic skills, ensures their seamless integration into British society. Whilst retaining strong links with their families and friends in Serbia, with a view of transferring their knowledge, skills and experience, they strengthen Serbia's European identity and its key role in the Balkans. With this in mind, our main project is one of 'circular migration' through which we are enabling Serbian professionals to return to Serbia.

We provide professional career guidance and we aim to match the needs of the employers in Serbia with the potential candidates in our database in the UK and around the world. Finally, we also offer specialised advocacy services on a variety of issues relating to our members. The Serbian City Club regularly organises networking events in London and in Belgrade thus enabling continued contact amongst the existing members and an opportunity to welcome new ones. Since 2020, Club has created a stream of live and recorded Zoom events in order to keep the membership base engaged.

# The Serbian Society



The Serbian Society came into existence in September 1995, as a response to the needs of a growing Serbian community in London.

We are a registered charity; non-political and non-party organisation that promotes Serbian culture, language and customs in the UK in order to achieve greater understanding among persons of Serbian and other nationalities.

Since the founding in 1995, we have organised numerous events: concerts of classical, traditional and pop music, theatrical performances for children and adults, literary events and book promotions, lectures and discussions on current and historical social topics, film screenings, art exhibitions, social gatherings, barbecues and parties, and sports events.

We organise Serbian language courses for adults and have an active book-club and a walking group. When needed, we organise collections of humanitarian aid for medical and other institutions, schools and homes in Serbia and region.

With these activities, we strive to maintain the spirit of community and the ethnic identity of Serbs in a multinational environment such as the British one.

We secure funds for our work through membership and donations and by organising cultural events. Members receive a discount and/or priority when purchasing tickets for various events organised by the Serbian Society.

We welcome any new ideas that you might have and would be very happy to make them happen. We also welcome any new members, volunteers and donations to help us with our future work.

For further information about the Serbian Society contact [office@serbiansociety.org.uk](mailto:office@serbiansociety.org.uk) or visit [www.serbiansociety.org.uk](http://www.serbiansociety.org.uk)



# The British Serbian Chamber of Commerce



The British Serbian Chamber of Commerce (BSCC) has promoted and facilitated trade and investment between the United Kingdom and Serbia and represented the views of the business communities in both countries for over a decade. While the past year has been a challenging one, it has also been a period of great productivity at the BSCC. It has been very encouraging to see the BSCC membership grow, as both Serbian and British businesses look to take advantage of future opportunities. We have welcomed several new members this year, British and Serbian, large and small, and we are now in our strongest position for many years. In 2026, we hope to see more new members, but equally ensure that all members recognise the benefits of being part of the Chamber.

Alongside membership growth, we have focussed on providing our members with all the information we can regarding Brexit and its impact on UK-Serbian trade. Through webinars and events, we have endeavoured to help businesses remain as productive, secure and efficient as possible. In addition, we have been involved in schemes such as the UK TechProsperity Bridge Competition in partnership with the UK Department for International Trade. The scheme helps start-up companies through providing seminars, events and (for the winners of the competition) assistance in entering the UK market.

We look forward to continuing this productivity in 2026, with further growth and revitalisation of economic activity.

If you are interested in learning more about our organisation go to: BSCC ([britserbcham.com](http://britserbcham.com)). For membership enquiries go to BSCC | Become a member ([britserbcham.com](http://britserbcham.com)), or for general enquiries go to BSCC | Contact Us ([britserbcham.com](http://britserbcham.com)). For regular updates on the BSCC go to our LinkedIn or our Twitter and subscribe to our fortnightly newsletter.

## Irish-Serbian Chamber of Commerce - Background

From history to business, Ireland and Serbia have a surprising amount tying them together, and the Irish-Serbian Chamber of Commerce seeks to expand on what unites these two proud nations.

The Irish-Serbian Chamber of Commerce was established by Chairman Frank Hannigan and launched on May 26, 2021, at an online event attended by nearly 100 participants who were addressed by keynote speakers H.E. Aleksandra Joksimović, Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia to Ireland, and Simon Coveney, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland.

The aim of the Irish-Serbian Chamber of Commerce is to promote and facilitate trade and investment between Ireland and Serbia, and to represent the views of the business communities in both countries. The objectives of the Irish-Serbian Chamber of Commerce are:

- To facilitate trade between The Republic of Ireland and The Republic of Serbia;
- To provide focussed networking opportunities for its members;
- To provide relevant and timely information about doing business in Ireland and Serbia;
- To notify its members about current and emerging business opportunities;
- To encourage and develop the next generation of entrepreneurs;
- To create a greater understanding of both cultures and heritage.

Since the launch the Irish – Serbian Chamber of Commerce has held several events to promote Irish-Serbian relations, the latest being a business development lunch held in Dublin, attended by Ambassador Joksimović, ISCC members and companies with a strategic interest in developing commercial ties with Serbia, including Kingspan, CRH, and Aer Rianta. For further information: <https://www.serbia.ie>



# British -Serbian Medical Association BSMA

Originally founded as the British-Yugoslav Medical Association, the first meeting was held on 16/12/2000. The Association was initiated by a group of Serbian doctors in the aftermath of the tragic civil war years in former Yugoslavia, and the subsequent sanctions and NATO military campaign against Serbia.

The Association goals were to help medical professionals in Serbia and Montenegro to re-establish their positions in the world medical community and to facilitate exchange of knowledge and experience between medical professionals in Serbia and the UK.

Achievements by the Association over the years include multiple exchange of doctors and nurses between Serbia and the UK, bursaries for young doctors and nurses for educational study in the UK, sponsoring renowned UK lecturers for participation in medical meetings in Serbia, sending medical journals and medical equipment to hospitals in Serbia, organising charity events and other similar projects.

The strength of the Association grew over many years and the number of active members rose to between 50 and 100. Its members were not only doctors and nurses but also allied medical professionals – psychologists, dentists, pharmacists, and biologists. We have a few distinguished members-Witness Experts in their respective fields (D. Lilić, M. Abinun), Professors (R. Djukanović, S. Savić) and young PhD Researchers (S. Stanković) The Association continues to be open to medical professionals from all over former Yugoslavia with no boundaries.

However, as the political climate changed, so did the name of the Association, becoming Medicus, and most recently the British-Serbian Medical Association in the last decade.

The BSMA, celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2025 is actively collaborating with other Serbian organisations in the UK and strives to be a valuable part of Serbian diaspora in this country.



# The Jasenovac & Holocaust Memorial Foundation

The Jasenovac & Holocaust Memorial Foundation is a UK registered charity which promotes the culture of remembrance of genocides committed in Independent State of Croatia during WW2 against Serbian, Jewish and Roma people. Our annual event, Holocaust Memorial Day is the opportunity for people from all walks of life to reflect & remember those people who lost their lives; as well as to challenge prejudice, discrimination and hatred in our communities today. We have successfully delivered lectures to various high schools and universities in the UK and abroad and held lectures in the UK Parliament and US Senate.

*If you would like to join us or support our work by sponsoring the Charity, please get in touch with us today.*

Email [info@jhmfc.org.uk](mailto:info@jhmfc.org.uk) Tel: 07912 170 866

<http://www.jhmfc.org.uk>



JASENOVAC AND HOLOCAUST  
MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

## Norfolk and Norwich Novi Sad Association

The link between Norwich and Novi Sad was set up almost 60 years ago. In 1960 Norwich was invited to the Yugoslavian Embassy to agree upon a City with which it could be twinned and Novi Sad was chosen. This was a Foreign Office initiative and done through Norwich City Council who were represented by the City Clerk and City Engineer. Student exchanges followed in the late 1960's. Further student visits followed again in the 1970's.

It was felt that twinning between the two countries would flourish more if an Association, based on friendship, was formed. The Norfolk and Norwich Novi Sad Association was then formed in 1985. The Association initially had some members who had been part of the former British Yugoslav Society.

The Honorary President of the Association is always the Lord Mayor of Norwich. Doug Underwood has been the Chairman of the Association since 2008. The Association has been very active in providing a programme of talks, outings, concerts, and other events. There have been several successful holidays based in Novi Sad. Our aim is to promote informal links between people and organisations in Norwich, Norfolk and in Novi Sad and Vojvodina.

Every January there is a concert organised in Norwich, the proceeds of which go to help the Milan Petrovic School for children and young adults with special needs in Novi Sad. The performers for the concert often come from Novi Sad and the surrounding area.

Like Novi Sad, Norwich has many important Churches; two Cathedrals; University of the Arts; the University of East Anglia; Medical School; Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital and many Museums and Art Galleries. Norwich also has many Theatres such as the Theatre Royal, the Maddermarket Theatre, the Norwich Playhouse and the Puppet Theatre.

In recognition of the friendship links between the two Cities a bridge was constructed over the River Wensum named the "Novi Sad Friendship Bridge".



*The Honorary President - The Lord Mayor of Norwich and Vice President - Chairman of the County Council, with Chaos Collective after their concert on 15th June, 2024.*

## **The Association of Serbian Writers and Artists Abroad Udruzenje Srpskih Pisaca i Umetnika u Inostranstvu**

**e-mail: ASWA1951@zen.co.uk**

**Formed by: Slobodan Jovanović, London 1951**

**First President: Miloš Crnjanski Current President: Sonja Besford**

During 74 years of ASWA's existence we have organised many seminars, lectures, literary evenings and interviews by/with invited Serbian writers. Among many others our guests were: David Albahari, Milan Danojlić, Matija Bećković, Slobodan Selenić, Ivan Lalić, Vida Ognjenović, Vladislav Bajac, Mihajlo Pantić, Predrag Marković...We honoured and commemorated Borislav Pekić's, Miloš Crnjanski and Dusan Puvačić's lives and work. Lately, we interviewed Predrag Slijepčević and Verica Vincent-Cole.

ASWA has published nine books in translation from Serbian into English and has assisted in promoting many works published by Serbian writers abroad. Three Serbian writers have blue plaques/memorial stones in London:

Dositej Obradovic, 27 Clemet's Lane, London EC3; Slobodan Jovanovic, junction of Queen's Gate and Cromwell Road, London SW7; Milos Crnjanski, 155 Queen's Court, W2.

We welcome new members, Serbian writers and artists. ASWA has no membership or subscription fees and it is entirely non-profit, private-donation based, organisation.

Pro Art is a non-profit organisation working in the fields of multidisciplinary education, innovation and the development of informal, non-formal and multicultural learning, e.g. about joint European heritage through the engagement of governments, institutions, museums, libraries, theatres and EU funded organisations. Our activities range from cultural to scientific projects, business-related inclusion in talks about e.g. the circular economy and environmental protection. We also work to increase the competence and proactive engagement in active citizenship, gender equality and social inclusion, through collaboration with partners from the UK and other countries. Pro Art is promoting Serbia through European projects with similar themes.

Pro Art & Co je neprofitna organizacija koja radi u oblasti multi-kulturnog obrazovanja, inovacije i razvoja neformalnog, formalnog i multidisciplinarnog učenja o zajedničkom evropskom kulturnom, naučnom i društvenom nasleđu kroz angažovanje vlada, institucija, muzeja, biblioteka, pozorišta i EU fondova. Takođe radimo na učešću inovativne tehnologije u svrhe zaštite životne sredine, uključujući ulogu umetnosti i na socio-kulturnim temama. Naš cilj je kooperacija između partnera i postavljanje protokola i programa koji će na novi način da uključe raznovrsne zajedničke projekte, događanja i programirane kurseve sa našim partnerima. Pro Art radi i na promovisanju Srbije kroz evropske projekte sa sličnim temama.

**Pro Art & Co Reg. No 5262487**  
**Plaza 213, 535 Kings Road, London SW10 0SZ**  
**proartandco@gmail.com**  
**+44 (0)7801 130806**



# Around the Globe Music & Arts

THE GLOBE  
MUSIC & ARTS  
ROUND

<https://www.agpianomusicfestival.co.uk/>

Around the Globe Music & Arts (AGMA) is a non-profit organisation based in the United Kingdom, dedicated to the promotion, development, and appreciation of piano and other keyboard music. AGMA's artistic focus encompasses contemporary classical music, jazz, and a diverse array of international musical traditions, with a particular emphasis on contemporary repertoire and cultural exchange. Founded in 2019 by classical pianists and music educators Marina Petrov and Maya Jordan, AGMA is the culmination of their extensive professional collaboration and over twenty years of combined experience in performance, education, and arts management. The founders have also served as co-organisers of the Around the Globe Piano Music Festival in London since 2014, thereby establishing a recognised platform for international artistic dialogue and high-quality musical education.

## About Us

AGMA contributes to the cultural life of the United Kingdom by organising and supporting a wide range of artistic and educational initiatives. Its activities include music festivals, concerts, competitions, masterclasses, workshops, seminars, exhibitions, and lectures. These events are open to amateur and professional musicians of all ages and levels and are delivered in both live and online formats, enabling national and international participation. Through digital platforms, social media, and printed publications, AGMA maintains ongoing engagement with a global audience.

## Our Objectives

A central objective of AGMA is to support emerging musicians by expanding their musical education and performance experience. The organisation is committed to introducing and promoting contemporary composers and performers from diverse cultural backgrounds, encouraging artistic innovation and cross-cultural exchange. Performance opportunities are offered to competition winners, in addition to concert appearances by both distinguished and emerging artists. The promotion of contemporary music is further enhanced through the professional production of 'Around the Globe Music Magazines', which includes articles on new repertoire, critical reviews, educational content, and health-related guidance for musicians.

## About Our Competitions

AGMA's competition programme was inaugurated in London in November 2014 and quickly established itself as an annual event of international interest. In response to the global pandemic in 2020, the competition successfully transitioned to an online format, significantly expanding its international reach. This development led to the establishment of the Around the Globe International Music Festival, which now comprises several independent competitions.

Since 2023, the festival has included competitions in Piano, Accordion, Piano Composition, and Young Musicologists, welcoming participants of all ages and levels, including professional musicians. Through its competitions and festival activities, AGMA provides a structured platform for artistic presentation, professional development, and international collaboration.

**Subscribe to AGMA Newsletters:** <https://www.agpianomusicfestival.co.uk/blog>

**Join us on Facebook:** AGMA – Around the Globe Music & Arts

**YouTube Channel:** <https://www.youtube.com/@aroundtheglobepianomusicfe2098/featured>



# Liberating Cinema

<http://www.liberatingcinema.org.uk/>

Liberating Cinema is a non-profit charitable organisation committed to the representation, restoration, and exhibition of world cinema heritage. Founded and directed by Dr. Mina Radović - Liberating Cinema organises a distinguished Masterclass and Restoration Lab Series and annual international programme of workshops, conferences, seminars, and symposia. The Liberating Cinema Film Series, present at British Universities since 2015, provides a platform for premiering films and bringing in dialogue filmmakers, industry and academia through a variety of discursive panels and interactive events. On 23 October 2021 Liberating Cinema hosted His Royal Highness Crown Prince Aleksandar of Serbia for Karađorđe: The 110th Anniversary of The First Serbian Feature Film. In 2024 Liberating Cinema hosted the UK-wide anniversary programme dedicated to 120 Years of Serbian Cinema and in 2025 launched The Serbian Film Festival UK with its inaugural edition in picturehouses across London. The organisation has hosted first-time retrospectives and special programmes on Serbian and Yugoslav cinema and is developing original restoration projects for preserving film heritage.

## **Our charitable purposes are:**

- 1) The advancement of the arts, heritage, culture or science through the representation, restoration and exhibition of world cinema heritage by 1) sustainably sourcing, selecting and obtaining films of world cinema for cultural representation in the UK and beyond; 2) initiating, organising and conducting film restoration projects for the purposes of repairing and preserving cinematic works of cultural importance for world heritage; 3) disseminating the films via programming in local, national and international film series, festivals, museums, national picture houses and theatres, and encouraging distribution through digital, and DVD/Blu-ray platforms.
- 2) The advancement of education by providing an educational platform for premiering films and bringing in dialogue filmmakers, industry and academia with the public through a variety of masterclasses, discursive panels, film festivals, and/or interactive events. The Liberating Cinema Film Series is designated the organisation's major and immediate platform for showcasing the films in Higher Education Institutions.
- 3) The advancement of environmental protection or improvement through the restoration and preservation of the films by appropriating proper environmental conditions for and storage of the films respectively. Liberating Cinema is a charitable body, registered in Scotland, with the charitable number SC049680. The organisation was founded by and is directed by Mina Radović.

**YouTube Channel:** <https://www.youtube.com/@liberatingcinemauk3696/videos>

**Facebook** - <https://www.facebook.com/liberatingcinemauk/>

**Instagram** - <https://www.instagram.com/liberatingcinema/>

**Twitter/X** - [https://twitter.com/Liberating\\_UK](https://twitter.com/Liberating_UK)



# The London Sports Society

The London Sports Society (LSS) was founded in 2010 and is a UK registered not-for-profit organisation with a charitable status.

Through sport, our objective is to create and support a variety of sport associations, clubs and a range of events taking place within the community. LSS also aims to be the focal point for up-to-date sports related information within the community.

We work to bring together as many people from the Western Balkans and other local communities as we can in order to encourage their physical activity in the UK, particularly in London. The plan is to offer an extensive sports programme.

For all information visit <https://www.facebook.com/LondonSportsSociety>



## EXER PARTY.

*For the past 20 years, EXER Party is considered to be the most popular party in London for people from the Balkans. It is a great opportunity for Balkan people (and people from all over the world) to have fun and enjoy some of the best sounds from the region. EXER Party is famous for playing very diverse music, and there is always something for everyone ranging from pop and rock, to dance, modern folk and trumpet music. The only requirement is that it is upbeat.*

*EXER Party has changed locations several times over the years and has been held at some of the most elite places in central London. At the moment, EXER Party takes place at Blag Club in Kensington. It always attracts a large number of people, and the parties are famous for their unique and uplifting atmosphere and a very friendly crowd. It is a real treat, Balkan style.*

*Apart from the famous parties, EXER Events also organises events related to the Serbian Diaspora. These include live concerts, art exhibitions, literary evenings and poetry readings. But most people remember EXER Events for the memorable concerts they have organised for famous Serbian bands - Ribića Čorba and Bajaga & Instruktori. So, while we wait for upcoming EXER parties, gigs and events, we would like to say to you are all WELCOME!*

**Serbian  
Month**

in Great Britain



# The Serbian Heritage Foundation

## Petar II Petrović Njegoš

Trustees:

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- Ms Slavica Popović Operational Director Recruitment Agency
- Mr Boris Gajić Telecommunication Consultant
- Mr Igor Sotrić Sommelier and director of China Tang restaurant at Dorchester Hotel
- Ms Nina Maraš Commercial Lawyer
- Mr Momčilo Novaković as our official accountant

The aim of the Foundation is the prevention and relief of poverty for public benefit in Serbia, Kosovo and Metohija, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia by providing grants, items and services to individuals in need and/or organisations working to prevent or relieve poverty.

Trustees aim to run two humanitarian events per year under the umbrella of our charity. As a traditional event we would like to run a Svetosavski Ball every year on the first Saturday of each February.

You are warmly invited to St Sava's Ball 2026...

As trustees of The Njegoš Foundation London, we organise the glittering St Sava's Ball in the heart of London. This unique tradition brings our community together in an exquisite setting. It's also an opportunity to raise funds to help those in need in Serbia, Kosovo and Metohija, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia.

With your help, last year we raised £20,000 for good causes in Serbia, Kosovo & Metohija and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We are hoping to repeat that success for the 2026 gala event and truly make a difference in supporting initiatives aimed at improving the lives of Serbian children facing challenging conditions.

We warmly extend an invitation to St Sava's Ball 2026 being held at the Copthorne Tara Hotel in Kensington on Saturday 7th February. Further information is available on our website.

The foundation is registered with the Charity Commission of England and Wales, number 1198147. Among our trustees are prominent British Serbian individuals, directors and consultants, in the spheres of business, medicine, governance, law, accounting and telecommunications.

Read more about our charity, buy tickets and donate:

**Web:** <https://njegosfoundation.org>

**Email:** admin@shfnjegos.org



**NJEGOS**  
**FOUNDATION**  
**L O N D O N**



# Lifeline Humanitarian Organization

Despite the fact that Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Alexander and Crown Princesses Katherine lived in exile for many years, Crown Princess Katherine always had her country in her heart. During these difficult years, Crown Princess Katherine provided a very large amount of humanitarian aid that was distributed throughout the former Yugoslavia. The Crown Princess believes that there are no borders in suffering, since race and ethnicity do not matter.

In 1993 Crown Princess Katherine founded the Lifeline Humanitarian Organization with offices in the United States (Chicago and New York), Canada (Toronto), United Kingdom (London) and Greece (Athens). When Their Royal Highnesses returned to Belgrade in July 2001 it was natural for the scope of their humanitarian activities to expand. At the beginning of August 2001, the Foundation of Her Royal Highness Crown Princess Katherine was established.

The Foundation of HRH Crown Princess Katherine's daily work includes contacts with the following ministries that have a crucial role in the development of projects: the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Economics and Regional Development; the Ministry of Privatisation, the Ministry of Labour and Employment; the Ministry of Education; the Ministry of Health and Environment; and the Ministry of Trade and Tourism.

Activities have been expanded to cultural institutions, schools and universities by including scholarships and improving communication between students and experts from foreign countries.

Other important activities include raising money for medical equipment that has been delivered to numerous hospitals. Thousands of children from orphanages throughout the country are guests at the Royal Palace every Christmas and Easter when they receive presents.

Help is also provided to many refugees in Serbia.

"We work for the benefit of all those in need, regardless of ethnicity or religion since we believe that there are no borders in suffering."

Lifeline Humanitarian Organization was founded in 1993 and HRH Crown Princess Katherine Humanitarian Foundation was founded in 2001 with the aim of helping:

Children / Sick / disadvantaged children / Refugees / IDP's / The Elderly

With the intense cooperation of all relevant ministries, we provide aid for medical institutions in the form of:

New equipment / The implementation of reconstruction projects and extension of capacities / Medicine and medical equipment / Beds and covers to those in need We also facilitate material and medical equipment for:

Mentally and physically disabled children / Children with special needs / Orphans / Children of internally displaced parents / Help for abused children We help people who are socially endangered and in a state of poverty. We supply refugee camps with:

Clothes / Food / Provide help to old and disabled people

We cooperate with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education, embassies, international organizations, international health care institutions/hospitals/universities as well as and many other entities.

[www.lifelineuk.co.uk](http://www.lifelineuk.co.uk)

[info@lifelineuk.co.uk](mailto:info@lifelineuk.co.uk)



**LIFELINE**  
Patron: HRH Crown Princess Katherine

**Serbian  
Month**  
in Great Britain



# The British Serbian Benevolent Trust

The British Serbian Benevolent Trust is a British charity, registered with the Charity Commission, established in January 1997. It is built on the legacy of the Serbian Red Cross Society in Great Britain, set-up in August 1914 which operated until its dissolution in 1924 to provide much needed aid to Serbia during the Great War.

The violent breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990s resulted in a significant crisis with refugees and displaced persons and The Serbian Benevolent Society was established in January 1997 to help alleviate this problem, mainly thanks to the efforts of Dr Rebecca Beaconsfield and Mrs Zora Payne. It was based on the principles of the Serbian Red Cross Society of Great Britain and utilised the residual funds from that organisation and was governed by the Charity Commission.

On the advice of the Charity Commission the name was changed to The British Serbian Benevolent Trust. The Trust gives financial support to projects from organisations involved with children who are resident in Serbia. In particular the Trust is pleased to support projects which:

- **bring relief to children who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress**
- **assist children who are sick, convalescent, disabled, handicapped or infirm**
- **promote the education (including social education and physical training) of children**

Typical funding levels approved by the Trust are usually in the region of £2,000 to £10,000. Larger sums are occasionally approved. The Trust is sympathetic to projects including building repairs and the provision of equipment. For further information or applications please go to the Trust's website:

<http://www.britishserbianbenevolenttrust.org>



## The Raymond Nicolet Trust Support Childhood in Serbia

The Raymond Nicolet Trust is a UK-registered charity dedicated to supporting education and childhood in Serbia. It operates with teams in the UK, Serbia, France, Greece, Bulgaria, and Canada. The Trust's website offers updates on its activities, including an E-shop, Podcast platform, E-learning, Living while Giving, a monthly newsletter, and current projects. Notable patrons include Serbian footballers Nemanja Matić and Aleksandar Mitrović, violinist Nemanja Radulović, basketball player Nikola Jokić, and Chemistry Nobel Prize winner Professor Sir John Ernest Walker.

In 2024, the Trust donated £2,500 to the Jovan Arandjelović primary school in Crvena Reka for a smart board and £3,750 to the Sveti Sava primary school in Bajina Bašta for two smart boards. It also organized two fundraising dinners in Cambridge and London, raising £2,205. The Trust collaborated with artists like Slavica Plemić, Nikola Savić, and Victoria McDonnell. Despite economic challenges in 2023, the Trust donated £2,570 to renovate the toilets at the Jovan Arandjelović primary school, replacing plumbing and installing new fixtures. It also funded classroom renovations at the Jovan Jovanović Zmaj primary school in Pančevo with £3,000. Additionally, the Trust shipped a child care simulator worth £1,200 to the College of Professional Studies for Preschool Teachers and Sports Coaches in Subotica, Serbia. Teachers from the college conducted seminars on smoking prevention and healthy eating in various schools.

Dr. Christine-Fort Hilcenko, the charity's chairman, has expanded its scope by involving Serbian academics like Prof. Dragan Savić, Dr. Ana Mijić, Prof. Bojan Aleksov, Dr. Predrag Slijepčević, Prof. Dejan Djokić, Dr. Aleksandra Vancevska, and Dr. Olivera Petrovich. Christine also visited Rotary clubs in the UK to discuss the charity's goals and achievements. In 2022, the Trust donated £2,500 to refurbish the library at the Jovan Arandjelović primary school, significantly improving students' lives. It also purchased £3,700 worth of sports equipment for the Sveti Sava school playground. In 2021, despite the pandemic, the charity raised £10,337, matched by the EBRD Community Initiative. The Trust financed a £10,000 van for the Vuk Karadžić Center, replacing an old, unreliable vehicle essential for transporting children and meals. It also donated £2,000 for IT equipment and shipped toys and clothes to the center.

The Trust refurbished the library at the Jovan Jovanović Zmaj School in Pančevo with £4,000, restoring the wooden floor, repairing walls, and buying new furniture. It also installed sports and play equipment worth £4,000 at the Children and Youth Centre Miroslav Mika-Antić in Sombor, providing slides, swings, carousels, and benches for the playground. The Trust welcomes donations and volunteers with practical skills like teaching, administration, translation, fundraising, event management, and data management. It also seeks partnerships with sponsoring companies willing to include donation links on their websites.

**info@raymondnicolettrust.com**

**<https://www.raymondnicolettrust.com/>**

**TWITTER: @NICOLETTRUST**

**FACEBOOK: @RAYMOND NICOLET TRUST**

**INSTAGRAM:@RN\_TRUST**

**LINKEDIN: @RAYMOND NICOLET TRUST**



From left to right: Ambassador Goran Aleksić, Dr. Christine Fort-Hilcenko, Mrs Katarina Milenković.

# Hospices of Hope in support of BELhospice



Hospices of Hope is the only UK charity dedicated to supporting the development of palliative and end of life care in South and East Europe. Their vision is for all patients suffering from terminal or life-limiting illnesses to have access to specialist hospice care services, free of charge – because everyone deserves to live and die with dignity and without pain.

BELhospice in Belgrade, Serbia became their hospice partner in 2006. Serbia has the highest cancer mortality rate in Europe but BELhospice is still the only NGO in Serbia offering free of charge specialist palliative care.

It is difficult for medical charities to receive state funding and authorisation in Serbia. In 2017 BELhospice's home care service was officially recognised by the Government and that service is now licensed. This is a major step and acknowledged the international standard of the services provided by the team.

BELhospice offers home-care services in Belgrade and in 2018 a hospice care centre was opened and a palliative day-care service was added – the first in the country.

Services in the day care centre include health check-ups, medication advice, psycho-social therapies, creative art workshops, and hair and beauty treatments. These services are very important for oncology patients as they bring them a better quality of life and they feel accepted and cared for by the community. It is also helpful for their families as they can take a break from everyday care of the patients.

Usually in Serbia, when a patient's treatment is completed, they are left to go home to their families who would then care for them until the end of their life, with no support from the health or social care system. BELhospice is working to change this.

From 2022, BELhospice began a children's project, making it the only organisation in Serbia to provide palliative care services at home for children.

To support their vital work, Hospices of Hope holds numerous exciting fundraising events throughout the year in the UK – more details can be found on their website [www.hospicesofhope.co.uk](http://www.hospicesofhope.co.uk)



**Serbian  
Month**  
in Great Britain

**Serbian  
Month**

in Great Britain

**Academics  
Artists  
Journalists  
Film  
Music**

in

# Academics



**Bojan Aleksov** is Professor of Balkan history at the University College London School of Slavonic and East European Studies, where he also regularly organises events on Serbian/Yugoslav/Balkan topics. In his research Aleksov explores historical factors, causality and agency that led to the identification of confessional affiliation and national identity among almost all Balkan nations in the wake of the demise of two Empires (Ottoman and Habsburg), which ruled the region over centuries. Among his many publications there are articles on Dositej Obradović, Jovan Jovanović Zmaj, British women in Serbia and St. Sava Cathedral on Vračar. His book Jewish Refugees in the Balkans, 1933-1945 came out in 2023 with Brill.



**Dr Predrag Bjelogrlić** is a Senior Lecturer and a Clinical skills lead at the University of St Andrews, School of Medicine. His MD qualification was awarded from the Faculty of Medicine, University of Belgrade (1992), and his MSc in Histopathology degree from the Royal Postgraduate Medical School University of London (1996).

His main area of expertise is the medical education and clinical assessment in the undergraduate curricula. During 25 years of experience working at the oldest Scottish - University of St Andrews, he educated over 3500 medical students.

Email: pb10@st-andrews.ac.uk



**Dr Tijana Blanuša** obtained her BSc and MSc degrees in Crop Science and Plant Physiology at the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Belgrade before moving to the UK to complete her PhD in Plant Physiology and Biochemistry between Lancaster University and East Malling Research. This led to a postdoc at the UK's largest horticultural charity, Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), where she now holds a position of a Principal Horticultural Scientist. Her post is based at the University of Reading (School of Agriculture, Policy and Development) where she conducts most of her research and also teaches and supervises undergraduate, masters and PhD students. Tijana leads and delivers RHS research on the environmental benefits of gardens and urban green infrastructure. She is particularly interested in the contribution of plants to urban cooling, rainfall mitigation and air quality improvement. She and her colleagues are working to understand what underlying plant traits are most successful at this so that these plants can be harnessed to deliver multiple benefits.



**Djuradj Budimir** received the Dipl. Ing. and M. Sc. degrees in electronic engineering from the University of Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia, and the Ph.D. degree in electronic and electrical engineering from the University of Leeds, Leeds, U.K. In March 1994, he joined the Department of Electronic and Electrical Engineering at Kings College London, University of London, UK. Since January 1997, he has been with the School of Computer Science and Engineering, University of Westminster, London, UK, where he is now a Reader of wireless communications and leads the Wireless Communications Research Group. He is also a Visiting Professor with the School of Electrical Engineering, University of Belgrade. He has published more than 374 papers in refereed journals and conference proceedings, five books/book chapters and software's, 22 Invited papers/lectures, and keynote presentations. He serves as an Associate Editor for IET Electronic Letters (Oct. 2015 - Jan. 2020), and an associate guest editor for IET\_MAP (Special Issue on: Applications of short-range waves in IoT applications, April 2022). He was a local co-chair of European Microwave Week Conference (EuMW2016)/European Antenna and Propagation Conference (EuCAP2018), will be a General TPC co-chair and a local arrangement chair of European Microwave Week Conference (EuMW2021)/ and member of the TPC of several conferences. He is a Member of the EPSRC Peer Review College, a senior Member of IEEE, a Member of IET and a Chartered Engineer. He has supervised 22 PhD/4 MRes/over 100 MSc theses through to completion and currently supervising 4 PhD theses as the main supervisor.

**Professor Dejan Djokić**'s research spans across, and brings together, three main strands: auto/collective biography/micro history of the Yugoslav war; global and cultural history of the Cold War; and history of Serbia and Yugoslavia in regional and transnational contexts. Dejan is a recipient of some of the most prestigious national and international grants and fellowships. His main current project, a pioneering study of the last generation of Yugoslav army conscripts (1990/91), is funded by the British Academy and The Leverhulme Trust. Prior to joining Goldsmiths in 2007, Dejan held lectureships at Birkbeck and Nottingham (a permanent post) and postdoctoral fellowships at Columbia University, New York and Woodrow Wilson Center, Washington, DC. He was a visiting professor at School of International & Public Affairs, Columbia University (Autumn semester 2010) and has been, since Oct 2020, a guest professor at Chair for South-East European History, Humboldt University of Berlin. Dejan regularly provides expertise to media on historical and current affairs and engages with non-academic audiences. He has contributed to the BBC, the Guardian, Independent, New Statesman, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, THE, TLS, & spoken at public events. In 2016/17 Dejan initiated and facilitated the donation of c.600 books, including some rare items, on the Balkans from Professor Stevan K. Pavlowitch's private library to the Goldsmiths Library special collections. Further info: <https://www.gold.ac.uk/history/staff/d-djokic/>



# Academics

**Dr Jasna Dragović-Soso** is Professor of International Politics and History and a former Head of Department of Politics and International Relations (2017-2020) at Goldsmiths, University of London. She is the author of 'Saviours of the Nation: Serbia's Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism' (Hurst and McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002/03) and the co-editor of 'State Collapse in South-Eastern Europe: New Perspectives on Yugoslavia's Dissolution' with Professor Lenard J. Cohen (Purdue University Press, 2008), as well as many articles and book chapters on Yugoslav history and politics. She is currently working on memory and transitional justice processes in relation to the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s. Her teaching at Goldsmiths includes an MA course on 'Memory and Justice in Post-Conflict Societies'.



**Dr Adela Kondić** (also published as Drozdibob) joined Sussex University Business School in January 2023 and is a Lecturer in Operations and Supply Chain Management. Dr Kondić has environmental engineering education from the University of Novi Sad (Serbia), Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT, MA, USA), and Skolkovo Institute of Science and Technology (SkolTech, Moscow, Russia), and a PhD in Management from Monash University Business School (VIC, Australia).



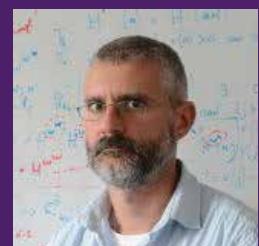
In addition to academic work in Australia, Asia, the USA, and the United Kingdom, Kondić has industry experience in Europe, the USA, and Australia. Her work on research and education builds on industry experience to focus on business operations, supply chain management, resilience building in the context of disasters, and the role of relationships in these business operations. In this research, Kondić closely cooperates with industry and NGOs to ensure the practicality and applicability of research findings. Her latest research also investigates academic career advancement on the global level. Kondić's research has been presented and published at global conferences and in highly-ranked academic journals. She holds several teaching excellence awards, and her research has been supported by multiple funds.

Dr Kondić has made significant contributions to Serbian society and businesses in Australia through her role as the Head of the Education Division at the Australian Serbian Commerce Chamber. Cooperation between higher education institutions and diplomatic offices in Australia and Serbia was initiated and advanced during her mandate at the chamber.

**Dr Željka Krpetić** is a Lecturer in Nanoscience and Bionanotechnology and Deputy Postgraduate Research Director – Training and Development in the School of Science, Engineering and Environment at the University of Salford, Manchester. She is also acting as Associate Editor of the Springer-Nature's Cancer Nanotechnology Journal, Principal Investigator and research group leader of Salford's NanoLAB ([www.zknanolab.com](http://www.zknanolab.com)). Dr Krpetić is an expert in nanomedicine research designing gold nanoparticles with multifunctional custom surface features and advancing the field of nanoparticle characterisation *in situ* in biological media enabling novel nanotechnology-based medicines for applications in cancer treatment and treatment against antimicrobial resistant pathogens. She is an author of over 30 peer reviewed articles, a book chapter, and lead editor for special collections of articles in Springer-Nature's 'Cancer Nanotechnology' and 'Frontiers: Research Topic' journals. She is a co-editor of the 'Biological and Environmental Nanotechnology' book currently in preparation for publishing in Taylor & Francis CRC Press in 2024. Awarded the Royal Society of Chemistry 'Missing Elements' EDI grant Dr Krpetić coordinates a consortium across 3 UK-based Universities (University of Salford, University of Kent and University of York) aiming to provide wider research opportunities to students from Black and BAME-background, and collaborates internationally advancing her research in the field of nanomedicine.



**Ranko Lazić** was born (1975) in Belgrade, Serbia, where he attended Matematička gimnazija and Petnica, and was a member of Arhimedes. From 1992, he spent 8 years at Oxford University, obtaining a BA in Mathematics and Computation (1994) and a DPhil in Computing (1999), and as a Junior Research Fellow. During that time, his colleges were University College, Merton College and Christ Church. At Warwick University, he has been a Lecturer (since 2001), Associate Professor (2006), Reader (2015), and Professor (2018).



**Jasna Martinović** is a Senior Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Edinburgh. Prior to taking up a position in Edinburgh, she spent 10 years at the University of Aberdeen. Dr Martinović received her first degree (Dipl. Psychol.) from the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Belgrade, Serbia in 2001, followed by an MSc in Neuroscience from the University of Liverpool, UK in 2003 and a PhD in Experimental Psychology from the University of Leipzig, Germany in 2007. Her main area of expertise is colour perception and cognition, but her research also concerns perceptual organisation and attention, as well as the ageing of the human visual system. She is the author of 34 peer-reviewed articles in international journals, 1 book and 2 entries in the Encyclopedia of Colour Science and Technology. Her work has been funded by the DAAD, British Academy, Leverhulme Trust, ESRC, EPSRC and BBSRC.



# Academics



**Goran Mashanovich** is a Professor of Photonics and a former Royal Society Research Fellow at the Optoelectronics Research Centre (ORC), Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences, University of Southampton. He received Dipl. Ing. and MSc in Optoelectronics from the Faculty of Electrical Engineering, University of Belgrade, Serbia, and PhD in Silicon Photonics and MSc in innovative teaching from the University of Surrey, UK. He is head of the ORC Mid-infrared silicon photonics group. His research interests include both passive and active devices in Si and Ge and their integration for communication and sensing applications. Prof. Mashanovich is the author of 500 publications in the field of Silicon Photonics, and he is currently an investigator on research grants totalling £25 million, awarded by EPSRC, EU and industry. He is a Fellow of Optica and a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy in the UK. Goran is also a visiting professor at the Faculty of Electrical Engineering, University of Belgrade, Serbia. He has won several teaching prizes. Email: g.mashanovich@soton.ac.uk



**Nina Milosavljević** is currently a Lecturer in Neuroscience at the University of Manchester. She was born in Belgrade where she finished a 5-year MSc programme in Molecular Biology and Physiology at the University of Belgrade in 2009. During her undergraduate studies, she was awarded a prestigious USAID (United States Agency for International Development) scholarship for a one-year exchange programme for upper-division courses in biology at Georgia State University, in Atlanta, USA. She was also awarded a DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) stipend for an internship at the University of Göttingen, Institute for Human Genetics, in Göttingen, Germany, and the Erasmus Tempus funding for an internship at the University of Nice Sophia Antipolis in Nice, France. In 2012, Nina received her PhD in Molecular and Cellular Interactions, with "highest honours" ("très honorable") from the University of Nice Sophia Antipolis, in Nice, France for which she was awarded a prestigious Erasmus Mundus PhD scholarship. For her postdoc, Nina moved to the University of Manchester in 2013, to work in visual neuroscience. In 2018, she successfully obtained an Early Career Fellowship Award funded by the biggest eye charity in the UK and USA, Fight for Sight and in November 2021 she was awarded a Lectureship in Neuroscience at the University of Manchester.



**Prof Zoran Milutinović** is Professor of South Slav Literature and Modern Literary Theory at University College London and Member of Academia Europaea. He taught at University of Belgrade and held visiting appointments at University of Nottingham, Wesleyan University, University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Graduiertenschule für Ost- und Südosteuropastudien of the University of Regensburg and Ludwig-Maximilians-University in München. His publications include When Criticism Goes to War: Njegoš, Andrić and their Detractors (2025) Phantom in the Library: Is there a Serbian Nationalist Discourse on Ivo Andrić? (2022), Bitka za prošlost. Ivo Andrić i bošnjački nacionalizam (2018), Getting Over Europe, The Construction of Europe in Serbian Culture (2011, Serbian and Chinese translations 2023), Susret na trećem mestu (2006), Metateatralnost, Imanentna poetika u drami dvadesetog veka (1994) and Negativna i pozitivna poetika (1992). Milutinović is a member of editorial boards of Slavonic and East European Review, New Are Studies and Balkanica, and co-editor of Brill's book series Balkan Studies Library.



**Dr Ivona Z. Mitrović** is a Reader in sustainable nanoenergy and the Head of BioMEMS, Organic & Silicon Electronics Group at the Department of Electrical Engineering and Electronics at the University of Liverpool. She received the B.Eng. degree in microelectronics from the University of Niš, Niš, Serbia, in 1997, the M.Sc. degree in materials science from the University of Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia, in 2002, and the Ph.D. degree in electronic engineering from the University of Liverpool, Liverpool, UK, in 2007. Her core research activity has largely been focused on fundamental understanding of materials on nanoscale, in particular oxides, relevant to CMOS applications and, more recently alternative energy technologies. She has been leading research activity through a number of projects, mainly funded by the EPSRC with a contribution of ~ £1.5 million. For her professional standing and significant achievements in the engineering profession Dr Mitrović received Senior Member of IEEE status in 2014. She is a member of European SINANO Network of Excellence and has recently been appointed to the Steering Committee of the eFutures2.0 EPSRC funded network that aims at strengthening the UK electronics research. Dr Mitrović has authored over 130 scientific papers in refereed journals and conference proceedings and has delivered over 20 talks at premier international conferences in Europe and the USA. As electronics engineer, she is passionate about a sustainable, more electric future and has recently chaired the forum on materials and nanodevices within the UKRI Series "Electronics for Sustainable Societies". E-mail: ivona@liverpool.ac.uk

# Academics

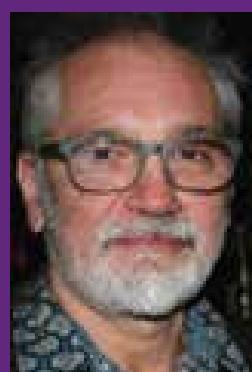
**Dubravka Pokrajac** is Professor of Engineering at the University of Aberdeen. She has received BSc, MSc and PhD from the Faculty of Civil Engineering, University of Belgrade, where she also initially worked. In 1998 she joined the School of Engineering, University of Aberdeen as a Lecturer. Dubravka does research in Fluid Mechanics with the focus on boundary layer flows over rough and permeable boundaries such as gravel beds of natural streams, and gravel beaches. She combines theoretical, experimental, and numerical methods to study small scale phenomena that occur at fluid-porous interface. Dubravka has published over seventy journal papers, co-edited a book ("Advanced simulation and modelling for urban groundwater management – UGROW", Urban Water Series, UNESCO), and supervised twenty PhD projects. She is an Associate Editor for two academic journals.



**Dr Jelena Ponoćko** is a Lecturer in the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering at The University of Manchester. She received her BSc and MSc degrees from the University of Belgrade, School of Electrical Engineering, and PhD from The University of Manchester. Her research focuses on demand-side management in power systems. Jelena has authored or co-authored over 40 research papers and technical reports and spoken at numerous conferences around the world. Jelena is the IEEE Power and Energy Society (PES) Women in Power representative for Region 8 (Europe, Middle East and Africa), supporting gender equality in the power and energy domain.



**Nebojša Radić** is Associate-Professor at the University of Cambridge Language Centre and Director of the university-wide world languages programme. He is member of the University Technology Enabled Learning, Teaching and Assessment (TELTA) group that advises the General Board and he also Chaired (2022 – 2022) the School of Arts and Humanities TELTA group. Dr Radić is also a Senior University Examination Officer. He is Member at Darwin where he participates in the work of the College Research and Education Committee and organises Humanities research seminars. Dr Radić is or has been visiting and/or honorary professor at the universities of Roma III, Cagliari and Pavia (Italy), Belgrade, Novi Sad and ECPD (Serbia) and RUDN in Moscow, Russia. His research interests range from methodology of language teaching in blended and online, remote environment, bilingualism, intercultural competence, to creative writing and literary self-translation. Dr Radić has a PhD in creative writing and literary translation (UEA, Norwich), an Honorary MA from Cambridge, and further MAs from the universities of British Columbia (Vancouver, Canada) and Auckland (New Zealand). He has published fiction in Serbian, English and Italian and is foreign correspondent of the Serbian current affairs weekly *Pečat*.



**Dr Predrag Slijepčević** is a geneticist and philosopher. Predrag's research interests include genetics of ageing and cancer, philosophy of evolution and philosophy of science. After completing a PhD in Radiation Biology at Sarajevo University in 1991, he was awarded three post-doctoral scholarships simultaneously: a Fulbright scholarship to study at the University of California, San Francisco, a British Council award to study at St Andrews University and an EU Tempus scholarship for Leiden University, Holland. He decided to remain in Europe. After completing studies at St Andrews and Leiden, Predrag moved to Cambridge University, to work with Sir Bruce Ponder, the world leading authority on cancer genetics. Since 1998 Predrag is employed by Brunel University London. His research is funded by various British and European research agencies. Predrag published over seventy research papers, edited a book *Telomeres & Telomerase* (Karger), and participated in several patents. He is the author of *The Saint and the Sinner* and *Re-Minding the Earth* (Akademksa knjiga) in Serbian. He writes philosophical essays for Serbian and British media. Predrag's biography was included in the Marquis edition *Who's Who in the World* for 1998.



**Endre Suli FRS** (also, Endre Šili) is a mathematician. He is a Professor of Numerical Analysis in the Mathematical Institute, University of Oxford, and Fellow and Tutor in Mathematics at Worcester College, Oxford. He was educated at the University of Belgrade and, as a British Council Visiting Student, at the University of Reading and St Catherine's College, Oxford. His research is concerned with the mathematical analysis of numerical algorithms for nonlinear partial differential equations. He is a Foreign Member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (2009), Fellow of the European Academy of Sciences (2010), Fellow of the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics (2016), a Member of the Academia Europaea (2020), and a Fellow of the Royal Society (2021). His other honours include: Fellow of the Institute of Mathematics and its Applications (2007), Charlemagne Distinguished Lecture (2011), IMA Service Award (2011), Professor Hospitus Universitatis Carolinae Pragensis, Charles University in Prague (2012–), Distinguished Visiting Chair Professor Shanghai Jiao Tong University (2013), President, SIAM United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland Section (2013–2015), London Mathematical Society/New Zealand Mathematical Society Forder Lectureship (2015), Aziz Lecture (2015), BIMOS Distinguished Lecture (2016), John von Neumann Lecture (2016), Sibe Mărdăreşti Lecture (2018), London Mathematical Society Naylor Prize and Lectureship (2021). Endre grew up in Subotica and is a recipient of the Pro Urbe Prize of the City of Subotica (2021). He is the father of Sterija Award-winning Serbian playwright and dramatist Fedor Šili.



# Academics



**Vladimir Unkovski-Korica** is Senior Lecturer in Central and East European Studies at the University of Glasgow. He is the author of 'The Economic Struggle for Power in Tito's Yugoslavia, From World War II to Non-Alignment' and co-editor with Saša Vejzagić of a forthcoming special issue of the journal Business History entitled 'Socialist entrepreneurs? The business histories of the GDR and Yugoslavia'. His current research focuses on the British left and Yugoslavia from the Second World War to the Kosovo War. Vladimir teaches courses on Yugoslav, Balkan, East European and Russian history. He engages with non-academic audiences through contributions to the media on historical and current affairs, as well as by co-editing a variety of online journals like LeftEast. Further info: <https://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/socialpolitical/staff/vladimirunkovski-korica/>



**Dr Sanja Vico** is a Lecturer (E&R) in Communications and Digital Media and the Director of the PhD programme in Media and Communications at the University of Exeter. She previously worked as an ERC-funded postdoctoral researcher in the European Institute at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) on "Justice Interactions and Peacebuilding" project (JUSTINT) and was a research associate of the LSE research unit on Southeast Europe (LSEE). She received a PhD in Media and Communications from Goldsmiths, University of London, an MSc from the LSE, and a BA from the Faculty of Political Sciences of the University of Belgrade. Sanja is the author of the book titled "Doing Nation" in a Digital Age: Banal Expressions of Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in Polymedia Environments" (Routledge, 2025), that is based on an extensive study of Serbs in London, their identities and communication practices, especially on social media. The book introduces a new theory and concept of national identities - 'doing nation.' She has published on issues of digital media in contexts of migration, identity, nationalism, and post-conflict justice and reconciliation for top journals, including International Journal of Communication, Television and New Media, Journal of Peace Research, and Journal of Interventions and Statebuilding. She received an honourable mention Best Senior Scholar Award from the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA) for her article "Globalised difference": identity politics on social media." She has provided expert advice to governmental, non-governmental and commercial stakeholders, including the BBC, the House of Lords, and the FCDO.



**Vladimir Zorić** (1977) was born and lived in Belgrade before moving with his family to Pančevo (1985) where he completed his primary and high school (gimnazija) education. In 1996 he returned to live in Belgrade and studied comparative literature and literary theory at the Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade. Upon obtaining his BA degree (2001), he moved to the United Kingdom to pursue postgraduate study at the University of Nottingham and graduated with MA (by Research) in 2003 and with PhD in 2006. He is now an Associate Professor in Russian and Slavonic Studies at the University of Nottingham and teaches South Slavonic literature, Balkan history, and Serbian/Croatian language. He wrote a monograph on Yugoslav writer Danilo Kiš (Kiš, legenda i priča, 2005), a study of literature in exile (The Rhetoric of Exile: Duress and the Imagining of Force, 2016), and is now working on a book about the representation of Central Europe and the Habsburg Monarchy in Yugoslav literature. He lives in Nottingham but also spends time in Belgrade and Berlin. In his free time, when not in one of these cities, he is likely to be found somewhere between Donaueschingen (Germany) and Sulina (Romania) exploring the riverscapes and human settlements of the Danube.

## Academics & Artists

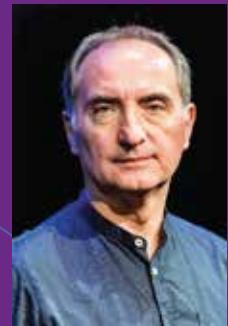


**Mina Radović** is a doctoral researcher and for the past year associate lecturer at Goldsmiths, University of London. He holds a Master of Arts in Film Studies and German Language, Literature and Linguistics from the University of St Andrews, with placements at the University of Vienna and University of Heidelberg. His areas of expertise include the study of language, film history and historiography, archiving and restoration, Serbian cinema and Yugoslav cinema, early cinema and culture, and the study of totalitarian ideologies through language and film (PhD Framing Totalitarianism: Language and Film in 1930s Nazi Germany). A FIAF-trained archivist, curator, historian, and filmmaker, Mina runs Liberating Cinema, a non-profit charitable organisation committed to the representation, restoration and exhibition of world cinema heritage. He runs masterclasses, workshops, symposia, and a regular Film Series. Mina has curated on all periods of film history and an expansive range of world cinema, including first time retrospectives of Serbian and Yugoslav cinema in the Anglophone world, programmes on cinemas from around the world, and special sections on film animation, silent cinema, avant-garde and experimental cinema as well as the work of influential directors. He regularly contributes to international peer-reviewed journals and has given lectures in St Andrews, Oxford, Venice, Amsterdam, and London. Mina also works on film festivals, curating the programme for the St Andrews Film Festival and the selection committee for the Austin Film Festival (Texas, USA). He serves on Film Juries, most recently as Member of the Ecumenical Jury at the 69th International Film Festival Mannheim-Heidelberg.

## Lazar Džamić

A Serbian-British academic and writer, Lazar is an ex-journalist, contributor to The Guardian, former agency strategist and a former Head of Brand Planning in Google's creative think tank ZOO in London. He is an Associate Professor in Business School Lausanne (BSL), Associate Lecturer at Goldsmiths University in London, visiting lecturer at King's College London, teaches at the MBA programme for the School of Business and Economics in Ljubljana, the PwC's Mini MBA Academy in CEE and at the Faculty for Media and Communications in Belgrade. Serbian audiences know him for his best-selling books 'The Flowerhop in the House of Flowers' (exploring the phenomena of the bizarre success of the 'Alan Ford' comic book in former Yugoslavia) and 'Damson Tea' (a comparative phenomenology of everyday life in London and the Balkans). His latest book of essays 'Paths Among the Signs' was published in 2020 by FMK Books. He lives in London.

The books could be purchased in all better Serbian bookshops.



## Writers

**Sonja Batinić-Besford** is a Serbian writer born in Belgrade. She has fifteen books published, the latest published in 2021 by KoV, To and Fro/Tamo-Amo. She is the author of many short stories, poems and reviews of contemporary literature published in various magazines in UK, USA, Serbia, France etc. Some of her work has been translated into various languages. Sonja is the president of the Association of Serbian Writers and Artists abroad. She is married to a dentist and lives in London.



**Vesna Goldsworthy** (Belgrade, 1961) is an internationally bestselling and prize-winning writer, academic and broadcaster. In 2021 she was elected Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, becoming the first Serbian member in this august Society's long history. She is Professor in Creative Writing and English Literature at the University of Exeter and Professor Emerita at the University of East Anglia. Goldsworthy writes in English, her third language. Her books include Chernobyl Strawberries (a memoir) and Gorsky (a novel) both of which have been serialised by the BBC; Inventing Ruritania: the Imperialism of the Imagination, a study of Balkan representations which remains a set text at universities worldwide, and a Crashaw-prize winning poetry collection, The Angel of Salonika, which was one of the Times' Best Poetry Books of the Year. Vesna Goldsworthy's new novel, Iron Curtain, was published in February 2022 by Chatto & Windus in the UK to great critical success. It was Book of the Year in the Times, the Financial Times, the Spectator and the Independent, and it was longlisted for the Dublin Prize and shortlisted for the UK's Society of Authors Volcano Prize. The Momo Kapor Prize winning Serbian edition with Geopoetika has been a bestseller since its publication, while the North American edition with WW Norton was published in February 2023 and subsequently selected by the New Yorker as its Book of the Year. In 2024 Vesna Goldsworthy was awarded Milovan Vidaković Prize for lifetime achievement by the city of Novi Sad. This is one of the most august international awards in Eastern Europe, given to Mario Vargas Llosa, Peter Handke, Orhan Pamuk, David Grossman, Alberto Manguel, Claudio Magris, and other renowned writers. Goldsworthy was its first woman laureate.



**Nikola Čobić** was born in Belgrade (Serbia), but for quite a long time he has been living and working in London (UK). He is a writer of poetry and short stories, and until recently the editor of UK based poetry magazine The Wolf. His work has been awarded a number of poetry prizes in Serbia, United Kingdom, France and Germany. Nikola writes in Serbian, but translates his work into English. His works are being published in numerous anthologies and periodicals.



**Dr. Jelena Nolan-Roll**, currently living in Bristol, grew up in the New Belgrade blocks in the nineties (Kakav brate Bruklin brate blok je brate zakon). She is a violence prevention expert, a creative writer, coach and amateur kickboxer. She is a psychologist by profession (University of Belgrade) with a doctorate in education (University of Bristol). She is interested in human and social stories, as well as the power they give us - or the power we give to them as the society or as individuals. In violence prevention domain, she has led expert teams and participated in global projects, with participants from Silicon Valley to India. Her story about a woman leaving an abusive relationship "Nesreća" won first place in the competition of the Association of Independent Writers of Serbia 2021 (<http://www.casopiskvaka.com.hr/2021/03/jelena-nolan-roll-nesreca.html>). Her novel "Blokovi se pricaju" is published in December 22. As a coach, she works with clients from various domains, from teachers to Olympians (drnolanroll.com). She is a Brazilian Jiu Jitsu white belt.



# Journalists



**Mary Novakovich** is an award-winning journalist, travel writer and author based in Hertfordshire. She has spent most of the past 25 years writing regularly for British publications including the Times, Guardian, Telegraph, Independent and CNN Travel, among many others, and also broadcasts reports for BBC Radio 4's From Our Own Correspondent. Her travelogue/memoir, *My Family and Other Enemies: Life and Travels in Croatia's Hinterland*, won the 2023 British Guild of Travel Writers Adele Evans Award for Best Travel Narrative Book of the Year, and it was also shortlisted for the 2023 Stanford Travel Book of the Year.

Born to Serbian parents from the Croatian region of Lika, Mary focuses much of her writing on the countries of the former Yugoslavia. As well as writing about Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Montenegro, she writes extensively about France, Italy and other European destinations. She has also written and contributed to numerous guidebooks on Croatia and France for publishers including Rough Guides, Insight Guides, Lonely Planet, DK and Frommer's.



**Jelena Sofronijevic** (@jelsofron) is a producer, writer, and researcher based in London. They make content at the intersections of cultural history, politics, and the arts. Published by the Political Studies Association, their undergraduate dissertation uses contemporary political satires to uniquely unpack Tito's socialist Yugoslavia. They have presented an episode of BBC Radio 4's *Four Thought* on modern Yugoslav diasporic identity, later selected for BBC Radio 4's *Pick of the Week* and featured on BBC Radio Shropshire. They were interviewed about *Yugonostalgia* and food for *Vittles*, and co-produced a podcast on third culture children in diasporas with *Remembering Yugoslavia*. They also report on contemporary politics in the Balkans, for the likes of *The Bunker* and *Media Storm*. Beyond their works in print, they produce podcasts and audio documentaries including *EMPIRE LINES*, *historicity*, *INDIAscussion*, and *Cross Examination*.

## Film



**Mili Čumić** is a Film Consultant and Executive Producer based in Cambridgeshire and has been involved in the UK film industry for over 30 years. Starting at the birth of the video industry with Guild Home Video, he has worked for key distributors including 20th Century Fox, eOne, Tartan, Pathé and distributed over 3,500 films including notable films such as – *Terminator 2*, *Independence Day* & *Shawshank Redemption*. He went on to set up the film consultancy in 2008 advising on all aspects of distribution and finance for film and TV series.

In 2020 he founded sales agency Locomotive Entertainment with industry colleagues and attends the major film markets: Berlin EFM, Cannes FF, Toronto IFF & AFM currently distributing the No.1 New Zealand film – *In The Fire Of War - Ka Whawhai Tonu* (\$6m) story of the last battle between the Māori and the British colonial forces, which was the official selection at the Toronto International Film Festival.

On the Executive Producer side, *The General* (2026) – biopic of resistance leader Draža Mihailović, and about to have a theatrical release in Serbia in January, *The Partisan* (2025) (\$10m –biopic on Polish SOE double agent Krystyna Skarbek), *Double Edge* (2025), *Hurricane* (2018), *Shanghai Story* (2024), and 18-part TV series *The Kingdom of Yugoslavia* in WWII.

Mili has released several Serbian films in the UK cinemas

*The Russian Consul* in 2025 and *Oluja*, *Nečista Krv*, *Toma*, *Južni Vetar* & *Man of God*.

Looking forward to releasing more Serbian films in 2026.



**Maria Djurković**, an Academy Award and BAFTA nominated British production designer, is renowned for her exceptional work in film and television. With a career spanning several decades, she has significantly influenced the visual storytelling of numerous acclaimed productions. Born and raised in England, Djurković pursued Fine Art at the University of Oxford, laying a strong foundation for her future career in production design.

Djurković began her career at the BBC, and has since been production designer on numerous notable projects, including *The Imitation Game*, *Billy Elliot*, *The Hours*, *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*, *Mamma Mia*, *Vanity Fair*, *The Dig* and the BBC's *The Little Drummer Girl* series.

Her work has garnered critical acclaim, including an Academy Award nomination for her production design on *The Imitation Game*, which also received a BAFTA nomination. Djurković also has three further BAFTA nominations for her work on *The Dig*, *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* and *The Little Drummer Girl*.

Djurković continues to contribute to the film industry with her exceptional design work. In addition to *The Amateur*, her recent projects include *Ferrari*, directed by Michael Mann.

**Djordje (George) Jovanović**, is a Serbian born actor, who grew up in London. He studied Drama (BA Hons) at the University of Exeter and continued his training at The Oxford School of Drama. Djordje's career has been focussed on film and television, with his most notable performances in Johnny Depp's directorial debut "MODI," Netflix's "Luther: The Fallen Sun" and "Kiss Me First." (Channel4 TV Series). Beyond his on-screen presence, Djordje's creative talents also extend to writing and is set to shoot his latest script in Zlatibor, Serbia in 2024.

<https://app.spotlight.com/4610-4504-1862>



**Branka Katić**, best known for her roles in *We Are Not Angels*, *Premeditated Murder* and *Black Cat, White Cat* and internationally for *Public Enemies* and *The King's Man*, is one of Serbia's most beloved actresses. To the Serbian community in Britain, she is also known for her UK presence and active participation in the film and television industry in London and Hollywood.

Katić studied at the Academy of Arts at the University of Novi Sad and received tutelage from Rade Šerbedžija, another great Serbian actor connected to the UK and Hollywood. At age 14, she made her debut in the comedy classic *It is Not Easy to Get Along with Men* (1985) opposite screen legends Milena Dravić and Ljubiša Samardžić. She worked in theatre productions in Belgrade, Subotica and Novi Sad and continued to make regular appearances in Yugoslav films.



*We Are Not Angels* by Srdan Dragojević is a landmark modern classic that mixes humour, rock and roll and surrealist existentialism and sees her alongside Milena Pavlović as she supports her best friend in a cult film that defined Belgrade. *Premeditated Murder* by Gorčin Stojanović brings her centre stage as a young woman who – in the midst of sanctions and war – takes in a man from the front while a family story from the Second World War is interwoven with her own. Arguably her finest performance, the film shows us an actress who uniquely blends humour and drama and is a force to be reckoned with. Dragojević's *Wounds* (1998) see her as a turbo folk singer while Emir Kusturica's *Black Cat, White Cat* (1998) throws her into the epicentre of a romance where her comedic talent shines.

Her move to the UK and Hollywood brought her to an international career and roles across mainstream British-American film and television in which she continues to star – while maintaining her presence in Serbian productions as well. Branka Katić's singular sense of humour, remarkable human depth and sincere acting range make her one of the most relatable and enduring personalities of our time.

**Ivan Lazić** is a TV Director, Producer and Edit Producer based in London, although his story doesn't start here. Ivan was born in Italy in 1986 and moved to Belgrade a year later, where his parents are from. Leaving Belgrade in 1989, he moved to the UK where he has spent most of his life, with stints living in Germany and Italy. As with many other who have had the luck and privilege of living in different places, such a nomadic lifestyle has given him a strong and vivid appreciation for different peoples and cultures and it's something that he has tried to capture in the films he has worked on, wherever possible.



Ivan's career has taken him to places as far as the Grand Canyon in the US, deep into the Arctic Circle in Norway, the Fargoesque plains of wintery Minnesota - and now Serbia.

'The Europe from Above' episode on Serbia is his first film on his country of origin and Ivan was not only ecstatic, but deeply honoured, to be given the opportunity to make it. Some might say it's impossible to capture the essence of a country in 45 minutes, but he hopes to have given a new perspective of our beautiful country not only to those who don't know it at all, but also to those who know it very well. 'If I have managed to succeed at least a little in that, then my job is done' Ivan says.

**Maria Pavlovich** (Allport) studied at Westminster University with a major in film production followed by acting at The Drama Studio London. She was involved in British film and TV productions behind and in front of the camera, including a support character in *The Bill*, the drama *Lady Audley's secret* and *James Bond*. As a member of the children's Drama Group Radio and TV Belgrade she was in a popular series *Bolji Život* (Better Life). Maria has been regularly invited to read poetry and prose in both Serbian and English at book promotions including events at the Serbian Embassy in London, Serbian Library as well as working closely with Vesna Petković (Pro Art & Co) and pianist Maya Jordan. Maria is also a voice over artist.





**Jovana Backović** is a Serbian - born composer and vocalist whose work primarily centres on exploration and reinterpretation of ethnic music traditions of the Balkans. With her project Arhai she has performed widely across Balkans and the U.K. She has 3 releases under name Arhai, with fourth due to be released autumn 2021. Jovana also composes music for theatre, feature and documentary movies and her current interest lies within the field of electro-acoustic music and live improvisational performance – exploring the process of the creation and development of individual music identity through improvisation and the use of technology. Jovana completed her PhD thesis at the University of East Anglia 2014, with the subject 'Between Two Words: Approaching Balkan oral tradition through the use of technology as compositional and performance medium'. Further info [www.jovanabackovic.com](http://www.jovanabackovic.com).



**Bratislava Barac Djukić** graduated from the Faculty of Music in Belgrade majoring in conducting in the class of Professor Darinka Matić Marović. She studied music pedagogy at Trinity College in London. She has been a successful leader and conductor of many Serbian and English choirs including "Holy Prophet Elijah", "All Saints" and "Saint Simeon the Outpourer of Myrrh" in Serbia and the choir "Saint Sava" in London. In 2003 Bratislava received the prestigious Best Conductor Award at the annual competition of Serbian choirs. With the blessing of his Grace Bishop Stefan of Zicha of blessed repose, Bratislava and her sister Olivera Sekulić Barac recorded "Eight Tones" (the Octoechoes) written down by the famous Serbian composer Stevan Mokranjac.



**Viktor Bijelović** is a Serbian born pianist and teacher, living and working in the UK. A graduate of The Purcell School of Music and later The Royal Academy of Music in London (for both the Under-graduate and Master's Degrees), he has travelled extensively, enjoying learning about different cultures whilst sharing his love of music with audiences and students. Both as a soloist and chamber musician, he has performed in many countries, including in front of HRH King Charles III twice. Viktor has a busy teaching practise in London. He has recorded several CDs and to find out more, please refer to his website: [www.viktorbijelovic.com](http://www.viktorbijelovic.com)



**Ivana Ćetković**, an exciting, expressive and inspiring British-Serbian violinist has maintained a wide and varied career as concerto soloist, recitalist, orchestral and chamber musician. Born in Belgrade, Serbia to a musical family she has received Bachelor's degree (HONS) in Violin Performance from Faculty of Music Arts in Belgrade. Shortly after Ivana moved to London, UK to study at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama with David Takeno and Rachel Podger. She frequently appears as a guest leader of orchestras in UK and Austria. As a soloist Ivana has performed with Manchester Camerata (UK), Slaithwaite Philharmonic (UK), Marcel Sinfonia (UK) Da Salo Soloists (US), Tirolean Chamber Orchestra Innstrumenti (Austria) to name a few. As a passionate chamber musician Ivana is a member of a violin-piano duo Elmbourne Ensemble as well as the up and coming ensemble Camerata Alma Viva with whom she has recorded for NoMadMusic label. In 2019 Ivana took on a role of the leader of an up coming London orchestra London Symphonic Rock Orchestra that takes her across the world performing music inspired by hard rock hits of the nineties as well as tribute bands of Abba from Sweden and Queen Machine from Denmark. Along side her busy freelance career in UK in 2021 Ivana started leading a theatre orchestra focused on performing west-end musicals in Serbia, her home town of Belgrade allowing her to split her time professionally between her two home cities London and Belgrade.



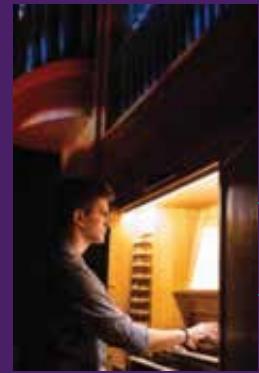
Recipient of numerous international awards, **Predrag Gosta** is enjoying a versatile career in the UK and overseas as a conductor, baritone, continuo keyboard player, and impresario. An alumnus of Trinity College of Music London (now Trinity Laban), he also earned three Master of Music degrees from Georgia State University, with further training in Russia, Bulgaria, and Germany. He has performed and recorded at major venues including the Kennedy Center and Abbey Road Studios, and has conducted leading orchestras such as the London Symphony Orchestra, the National Philharmonic in Washington DC, Russian National Orchestra, and numerous European and Balkan philharmonics.

In the operatic arena, Gosta has conducted opera companies in the UK, USA, Switzerland, Germany, Bulgaria, and Serbia. Gosta directs New Trinity Baroque, leads the Makris Symphony Orchestra, and serves as Artistic Director of several major music institutions in Serbia, including the Belgrade Early Music Festival, the Belgrade Baroque Academy and New Belgrade Opera. His work has earned multiple international awards, including the 2018 UMUS Artist of the Year. A junior member of Christ Church, Oxford, he is completing doctoral research on late-18th-century English opera and was inducted into the Royal Society of Musicians in 2023. His CD recordings include albums with the London Symphony Orchestra, the Makris Orchestra, and New Trinity Baroque. A junior member of Christ Church, Oxford, he is completing doctoral research on late-18th-century English opera and was inducted into the Royal Society of Musicians in 2023.

**Andrej Ivanović** studied Music at St Peter's College, Oxford (2018–2021) as an Organ Scholar, where he studied with Stephen Farr, and later completed a master's degree at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade. He has performed widely in the UK and Serbia, with recent highlights including a solo organ recital at the Early Music Festival in Belgrade, a collaborative recital of contemporary organ music and visual improvisations at the Belgrade international organ festival "Dies organorum" a performance of Mozart's Requiem at the Budva City Theatre festival in Montenegro, and two broadcasts for BBC radio 3 and 4.

As a continuo organist and harpsichordist, he's played with ensembles such as Mayfield Baroque, Instruments of Time and Truth, New Trinity Baroque, the Makris Symphony Orchestra, the Serbian National Radio (RTS) Symphony Orchestra, and was awarded for his continuo playing at the 20th Belgrade Baroque Academy. He was recently endorsed by Arts Council England as an individual of exceptional promise because of his work in England and Serbia.

He actively collaborates with the Belgrade Archdiocese at the Cathedral of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Belgrade. He is currently Organ Scholar at Royal Holloway, University of London, and is pursuing a master's degree in Music. In addition to playing the organ and harpsichord, Andrej occasionally composes.



Pianist **Maya Jordan** MA, has performed throughout the former Yugoslavia, Italy, Cyprus, France, Germany and England and recorded for various Radio and TV programmes. Her performing career has been extended through her interest in bringing music and artists of different countries together. Maya has been co-founder of the project 'Sounds of the Balkans' and Artistic Director of numerous events and projects, promoting Serbian culture and encouraging artists of different origins to work together. She was also a Secretary of the Beethoven Piano Society of Europe for many years. At present Maya is a Secretary of The Serbian Council of Great Britain and has been involved in numerous charity projects in aid of Serbian people and children. She is also a co-founder / Arts Director of the Around the Globe Music & Arts and Director of the Serbian Month in Great Britain.



**Mina Milić** Prize-winner of many awards, Mina Milić established her career regularly appearing in recital, as a chamber musician and concerto soloist in concert halls across Europe, Asia and the USA. She completed a PhD on 'Interpretation of Impressionistic Piano Music' and is regularly engaged as an adjudicator for festivals and competitions. Mina is passionate about education and learning and she currently teaches piano at Eton College and Harrow School. Further details may be found on her web-site: [www.minamiletic.co.uk](http://www.minamiletic.co.uk).



Serbian violinist **Anja Milivojević** obtained her BMus and Masters degree at the Music Academy in Belgrade and has been in demand as a soloist and chamber musician, performing across Europe and Asia. In Serbia, Anja has performed with renowned ensembles, including the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra, Serbian Radio Television Symphony Orchestra, Contemporary Ensemble Metamorphosis, and Makris Symphony Orchestra. In 2022, Anja appeared with the Radio Symphony Orchestra at the River Festival Belgrade, performing alongside Andrea Bocelli, Placido Domingo, Bryn Terfel, and Željko Lučić. In 2023, she moved to London and has performed since with the Tchaikovsky Camerata Orchestra, Hastings Philharmonic Orchestra, Gabrieli Consort & Players, Marcel Sinfonia, Longborough Festival Opera, highly energetic The Rock Orchestra (European and the UK 2024 tour) and Balkan group Paprika. Together with the violinist, David Juritz, she has appeared at the Dean and Chadlington Music Festival and Burton Bradstock Music Festival. Recently, Anja performed duo recitals for the Oxhey Sounds Series and at the St Mary's Perivale with the accordionist Milos Milivojević. Anja enjoyed teaching post in Belgrade and currently teaches the violin at the Raised by Music (music education for young children) in Streatham, London.



### **Miloš Milivojević**

*'Milivojević's artistry on the humble button accordion took the breath away'* The Independent  
Following his studies in Serbia, award-winning accordionist Miloš was awarded a full scholarship from the Royal Academy of Music where he became the first accordionist ever to win the RAM Club Prize open to all instrumentalists and was the winner of the prestigious Derek Butler London Prize at the Wigmore Hall. Miloš has premiered many works and appeared with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, BBC Concert Orchestra, London Mozart Players, London Sinfonietta. In 2021 he performed the Piazzolla Double Concerto with guitarist Craig Ogden and the Orchestra of the Swan in a virtual concert and in 2022 he performed the Jonathan Dove Accordion Concerto 'Northern Lights' with St Paul's Sinfonia, London. In 2022, Miloš performed in Graeae Theatre and the BBC Concert Orchestra's production of Errollyn Wallen's groundbreaking opera 'The Paradis Files' which was recorded for BBC Radio 3. Miloš has performed at many venues and festivals across the UK and around the world. He has appeared with orchestras and opera companies and is a member of the London Tango Quintet, Kosmos Ensemble, AccordDuo and the Balkan group Paprika. He regularly performs with guitarist Craig Ogden and violinists David Juritz and Lizzie Ball and his playing is featured on the award-winning Bollywood movie 'Barfi'. He has performed tango live in front of millions on the BBC's Strictly Come Dancing TV programme.





**Živorad Nikolić** is a London based accordionist and a graduate from Royal Academy of Music. He has performed all around the globe and is a member of Fugata Quintet, Balkan group Paprika, AccordDuo and the best Klezmer and award winning ensemble She'koyokh. Živorad has recorded on the albums of several artists including David Gomez, Aiden Love & Forty Thieves Orchestra, Marti Pellow and featured on Channel 4's How Music Works and in a live performance for the BBC Radio 2 programme, Friday Night Is Music Night. He has also recorded soundtracks for films and some of the most recent collaborations are with Anne Nikitin and Michael Chanyi- Wills. Živorad also works successfully with students of all ages. He was featured in a World Encyclopedia of Accordionist "Accordion and World's Best Contemporary Accordionist" published in New York in 2020. In the same year, Živorad was elected as an Associate of Royal Academy of Music (ARAM) for his contribution to Music.

<http://www.zivoradnikolic.com>



**Viktor Obsust** is a graduate of Bratislava Conservatoire in Slovakia. He accepted a scholarship for double bass masterclass at Dartington International Summer School in 1997 which led to an offer from Trinity College of Music, resulting in Postgraduate Diploma in Performance (PGD) as an Aurelius scholar, and subsequently became Licentiate Trinity College London (LTCL) in 2001 and was admitted Fellow of Trinity College London (FTCL) in 2002, funded by the Lutheran World Federation Regional Development Programme. Viktor's dream of starting jazz workshops in native city was delayed until 2001 by NATO aggression in 1999. Viktor's project proposal in 2007 to launch community music workshops in his homeland won the Inaugural Community Music Award from the International Society for Music Education (ISME) amongst competitions from 65 countries worldwide. He was also the inaugural double bass tutor at ELSO (2002) and their regular tutor at residential courses (2002-2019) and also NLMS Summer School symphony orchestra double bass coach where he also supported the percussion section (1999-2014). Viktor held a post an Associate Lecturer at University of Chichester (2006- 2009), and enrolled for his doctoral studies but gave that up to spend more time with his family and four daughters that he ensured spoke all the five languages which their family speaks. Viktor then taught locally at Blackheath Conservatoire and Addey and Stanhope School whilst continuing his residential courses at Benslow Music (2000-2015). Viktor got his Secondary Schools Music Specialist PGCE from University of Greenwich and Trinity College of Music. He was nominated and elected twice for Equalities and minorities, Live performance and Education committees at the Musicians Union. Viktor became a member of the Royal Society of Musicians of Great Britain (2012), where he now serves his second term as a member of the Courts of Assistants.

[www.marinapetrov.co.uk](http://www.marinapetrov.co.uk)



**Marina Petrov**, MAM, is an award-winning concert pianist, piano pedagogue, adjudicator, and author. Marina specialises in preventing occupational injuries in pianists and teaching various piano techniques to improve their performance. She has conducted seminars, masterclasses, and workshops on these subjects at universities, music colleges, and other educational institutions in London and Cork.

Marina was raised in Belgrade as a child prodigy and won many national piano competitions in former Yugoslavia. She went on tours and made media appearances, including TV and Radio Belgrade shows. In 1979, she was awarded a federal grant to study further at the famous Moscow Tchaikovsky State Conservatoire. Since settling in London in 1989, Marina has performed solo recitals and chamber music and played with notable opera singers and instrumentalists in major concert halls across the UK and London, including Regent Hall, St John's Smith Square, and other well-known music venues.

Apart from her performing and teaching career, Marina is also the Co-Founder and Managing Director of Around the Globe Music & Arts and Around the Globe International Music Festival. She is also the Executive Editor of the annual Around the Globe Music Magazine. Her contribution to EPTA and ISSTIP journals is prominent, and she regularly writes publications for AGMA. Marina's talents are renowned in the British press, including The Times, and is listed in the International Who's Who in Music and British and International Music Yearbook since 1994.

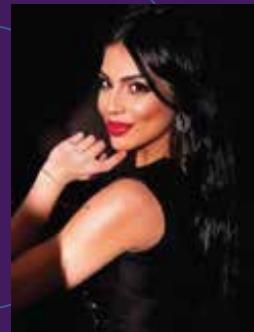
**Serbian  
Month**  
in Great Britain

**Rastko Rašić** is a Serbian born London based drummer and percussionist. He is a graduate of Berklee College of Music, USA. He has performed and recorded with groups, such as Balkanatics, Forty Thieves Orkestar, Round Coloured Note, Damian Draghici, Theodossii Spassov, Arun Ghosh and Polly Paulusma. Rastko is a founding member of the group Paprika. His live performances have included BBC Radio 3, Glastonbury Festival, The South Bank Centre, The Barbican, Ronnie Scotts and has appeared with The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra at Cadogan Hall. He maintains a busy schedule as an educator.



**Mina Krajnović Rusché** graduated from musical high school in the class of Professor Olga Jovanović, finished her undergraduate studies in the class of Nevena Popović and got her Master's degree in the class of Professor Vladimir Milošević at the Faculty of Music in Belgrade. She collaborated with many eminent musicians. Mina has won 57 awards at both national and international competitions.

Mina has performed in 5 solo concerts at the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Kolarac Gallery, ArtGet and Progres and performed at over 100 music festivals and concerts, as a soloist or as a member of chamber ensembles. Mina opened the 2022 Beerfest in Belgrade and Budva's opening season concert with a unique and awe-inspiring arrangements composing of pop and film music.



Equally at home as a violinist and violist, Serbian **Milena Simović** is enjoying an illustrious international career of concerto, recital and chamber music performances.

Acclaimed for her work in Europe, Asia and America, Milena appears as a soloist in Russia, China, Italy, United Kingdom, Norway, France, Portugal, and through the countries of former Yugoslavia, performing alongside some of the most established personalities of today's music scene. Milena's chamber music partners include Ivry Gitlis, Vadim Repin, Leonidas Kavakos, Antonio Meneses, Yuja Wang, Denis Kozhukhin, Vadim Kholodenko, Konstantin Lifschitz, Beatrice Rana, Boris Andrianov, Itamar Golan, Julian Rachlin, Roman Simović, Gordan Nikolitch, Tim Hugh and many others. Milena's concerts have been broadcasted live on BBC Radio 3, Medici TV, Rai Uno in Italy, Arte etc. and her performances praised as "...exceptionally delivered performance, charged with brilliant combination of operatic quality, which was jaw-dropping at times", "seductive and exciting...with rare artistic sensibility" in the press.



Milena holds a professorship at the Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance in London and is a resident viola and a chamber music coach at the Culture Festival in Sardinian town of Santulussurgiu, taking place in August every year, which enjoys versatility of students from all continents. Milena Simović received Bachelor and Masters of Music in violin from the Belgrade University of Arts and Music, and Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. After this Milena continued her further studies with viola and has completed another Masters degree at the Zurich University of Arts under Lawrence Power. Milena Simović plays a Giovanni Battista Rogeri violin ca. 1680, and Paolo Antonio Testore viola from 1740.

Born and raised Londoner, **Božidar Smiljanić**, has been a member of the solo ensemble at Oper Frankfurt since 2018, where he has performed a wide selection of roles including the title roles in 'Le nozze di Figaro' and 'Don Pasquale' as well as Garibaldo in 'Rodelinda', Ariodate in 'Xerxes', Eumée in 'Pénélope', Sprecher in 'Die Zauberflöte' and many more. Roles at Oper Frankfurt in the 2023-24 season will include Achilla in a new staging of Handel's 'Giulio Cesare in Egitto', among others. Božidar also performs as a guest internationally, most recently as Figaro for Opera Ballet Vlaanderen in Antwerp and Ghent, Belgium. Božidar studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London, on a full scholarship, where he received the Principal's Prize for exceptional all-round studentship. Upon graduating, Božidar debuted at several major UK companies including Scottish Opera, Glyndebourne, Garsington Opera and the Mozartists. As a Harewood Artist of English National Opera, Božidar performed the roles of The Marquis ('La Traviata') and Schaunard ('La Bohème') and sung the title role in the opening night of the 2020 production of 'The Marriage of Figaro' to critical acclaim, before the production had to close due to the Covid pandemic. Božidar has a particularly extensive concert repertoire and is a regular on the concert platform, having already developed relationships with a number of key conductors including Masaki Suzuki, Nathalie Stutzmann, John Wilson, Ed Gardner, Jakub Hruša, Hervé Niquet, Trevor Pinnock, Sakari Oramo and Thomas Søndegård.





**Ljubica Stojanović** started to play piano at the age of 6. She graduated with a Masters from Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, studying with Prof. Caroline Palmer, and subsequently studied on the fellowship programme, with Professor Ronan O'Hora. Her studies were generously funded by the Leverhulme Trust and Guildhall School of Music and Drama's scholarship fund. Ljubica is a 1st prize-winner of over 20 national and international competitions. She is a very active musician who performs regularly as a soloist as well as with European chamber ensembles. Ljubica has performed in the Royal Festival Hall, Barbican Hall, Wigmore Hall, St. James's Piccadilly, St. Martin in the Fields, Mozarteum University Hall in Salzburg, Philharmonia Hall in Ljubljana, Slovenia, Thonex hall in Geneva, and in Kolarac Hall in Serbia. She has collaborated with the Witold Lutosławski Philharmonia from Wroclaw, soloists from Philharmonia Orchestra in London, Serbian Radio Television Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, Belgrade, and with Nicholas Daniel and Andrew Marriner. In 2015 Ljubica became an artist for the KNS Classical record label in Spain. Ljubica would like to thank Ronan O'Hora, Henning Kraggerud and Christian Petersen for their guidance, inspiration and support.

**Branko Stoyzin**, guitarist/composer/arranger/tutor/photographer and the rest;

From his birth place of Novi Sad town to growing up place of Frogville (Zabalj) village, back to Novi Sad..., and via Greece to London, with one guitar and small rucksack, following his dream ...whispers from Sun flow into music... to forming his Sun Recordings label that self-produced and released 9 acclaimed CD albums, 1 live DVD and two music books, total of 103 tunes, of those 78 original. Branko, being a life long aficionado of Nikola Tesla, promoting the knowledge of the Man, dedicating the tunes, albums and books to Tesla, as well as promoting enthralling true trad folk music of Serbia/former Yugoslavia. During 2026 Branko will be performing his Recitals for Nikola Tesla, sole tribute events, with a special composition and video Aurora Tesla, marking 170 years since birth of Nikola Tesla and 130 years since birth of modern civilisation with implementation of Tesla's Polyphase Alternating Current System on Niagara Falls in 1896. Branko's latest album Whispers From The Sun has marked 25th anniversary of the label.

"One of the most lyrical acoustic guitarists around today. His ear for an affecting melody is faultless. His albums are an unalloyed treat throughout." Chris Parker

<https://www.brancostoyzin.co.uk>



**Aleksandra Timarov** graduated in piano performance (Bachelor and Masters degree) from the University of Arts in Belgrade, Serbia. Aleksandra also has a post-masters qualification 'dipломе de virtuosité' from Geneva. Aleksandra has won many top prizes in numerous piano competitions in Serbia, Italy and France. She has performed in Serbia, Germany, Italy, France, Switzerland and England as a soloist and with orchestras. Her concerts were transmitted live on the Radio Suisse Romande. Aleksandra has also a passion for teaching. She implements a broad foundation of music history and theory in her lessons. Her teaching methods are playful, energized, inventive and appealing to children of different ages.



**Ana Torbica** is a multi-talented musician with an impressive career. She received a Master of Arts degree in baroque viola and singing at the Historical Performance Department of the Royal Academy of Music in London, where she was awarded the Christopher Hogwood Scholarship, the RAM Scholarship, and an Award from the Johnathan Julian Fund. Her teachers included renowned artists such as Jane Rogers, Nicolette Moonen, and Michael Chance. In addition to her master's degree, she earned the LRAM teaching diploma. She is also an alumna of the University of Arts in Niš.

Ana's passion for early music began through her participation in the Belgrade and Austria Baroque Academies and the International Summer School in Dartington. She has performed in Serbia, the UK, USA, and across Europe with acclaimed musicians such as Trevor Pinnock, Philippe Herreweghe, John Butt, Florian Deuter, Ilia Korol, Rachel Podger, Bojan Čičić, Predrag Costa, and Sonia Prina, and with ensembles including New Trinity Baroque, Eboracum Baroque, Musica Poetica, Savaria Baroque Orchestra, Ensemble Orquesta, Musica Antiqua Neoplantensis, Charivari Agréable, and La Notte. A winner of several chamber music and vocal competitions, Ana received scholarships and grants from the Makris Music Society and the Macfarlane Walker Trust, which enabled her to acquire a baroque viola crafted by Jan Pawlikowski, one of Europe's finest instrument makers.

Ana is an active teacher and masterclass presenter. She teaches for the Guildhall Young Artists programme in London and the First Strings Experience at RAM. She also mentors at the Novi Sad Baroque Academy and serves as a jury member for the Olivera Djurdjevic International Chamber Music Competition and the Jan Sibelius Fest in Finland. In 2024, she obtained the NTC licentiate in Serbia. A recipient of the Best Young Artist Award in 2020 from the Association of the Musical Artists of Serbia (UMUS), Ana joined the British Viola Society and the Royal Society of Musicians in 2023, further establishing her reputation as a rising figure in the world of baroque music.

Soprano **Silva Vučković McQueen** has toured throughout Europe with Die Münchener Operabühne, and is a regular soloist with the Victorian and Edwardian group The Bold Balladiers, with whom she performs extensively throughout the UK. Other engagements have included solo soprano in Mozart's Requiem Mass, Mozart's Coronation Mass, Villa Lobos's Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5 and Haydn's Pauken Messe, as well as solo recitals at St. Martin in the Fields, St. James's Piccadilly, St. Paul's Church in London, SANU, Guarnerius in Belgrade, NIMUS Festival in Nis and the Serbian Cultural Centre in Paris. She also enjoys performing with Philharmonia Chorus - which she joined in 2011.



**Tamara Živadinović** is Serbian born and London based soprano, who has received Bachelor's degree (HONS) in vocal studies from Faculty of the Music Arts, Belgrade, and very shortly after, she has obtained Master degree at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London. Tamara is also alumni of Sir George Solti Academy, Italy. As a student she has performed operatic roles like Suor Genovieffa in the "Suor Angelica" (Faculty of Music Arts and Slavija Theatre, Belgrade), Pamina in The Magic Flute (British Youth Opera). In 2012 she has been offered a place for the Opera Works Course/Young Artist Programme at the English National Opera. She has performed several pieces written by BAFTA award winning composer James Hannigan at Royal Albert Hall, London. Tamara was a finalist of the Les Azuriales Opera Competition, Nice, Haverhill Sinfonia Soloists Competition and Susan Longfield prize, London. She is trying to maintain a busy schedule as a singing teacher in London.



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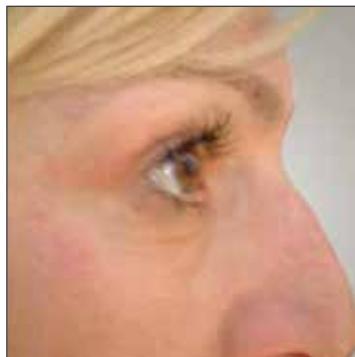
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KEEPING NATURE IN HEART  
& SCIENCE IN MIND

# 18th Serbian Month Programme

24th January - 9th March 2026

**London, Bedford, Birmingham, Corby, Halifax, Peterborough, Perivale, Reading, Warwick**

Full programme available at <https://serbiancouncil.org.uk> and <https://www.serbianrt.com>

## ST SAVA CELEBRATIONS

**Sun 25 & Sat 31 Jan**

St Sava Celebrations in London

**Sat 31 Jan** Reading & Oxford; Corby

**Sun 1 Feb** Birmingham; London; Halifax

**Sat 7 Feb** Peterborough

**Sun 8 Feb** Bedford

## MUSIC

**Sat 24 Jan** Gala Concert: Romantic Melodies  
Silva McQueen, Živorad Nikolić & Timothy End

**Sat 24 Jan** Party with Zlopi

**Sun 25 Jan** Orchestra of the Swan – Night Music  
Craig Ogden & Miloš Milivojević

**Tues 27 Jan** Folk and Roots

Jovana Backović, Polly Hunt, Yana Vlaeva & Alex Gibson

**Thurs 29 Jan** Piano recital by Mina Miletić

**Sun 8 Feb** Classical Concert

Anja Milivojević, Virginie Guiffrey, David Gordon & Miloš Milivojević

**Tues 10 Feb** BBC Symphony Orchestra

Miloš Milivojević

**Fri 13 Feb** Klezmer and Balkan Band

She'Koyokh

**Wed 4 March** Concert, Jovana Backović

**Fri 6 March** Recital for Nikola Tesla, London  
Premiere Branco Stoysin

## FILMS

**Sun 25 Jan** Hidden Figures: Mladomir Puriša Đorđević

Curated by Dr Mina Radović

Films: The Girl (Devojka), The Dream (San), The Morning (Jutro) and Noon (Podne)

## Second Serbian Film Festival UK

Curated by Dr Mina Radović

**Sat 7 March** Under the Yugoslav Sky  
(Miodrag Đorđević)

Big and Small (Vladimir Pogačić)

**Sun 8 March** It is Better to Know How

(Vojislav Nanović)

Man is Not a Bird (Dušan Makavejev)

**Mon 9 March**

Memorial Event for the author Filip David

Screening of When Day Breaks

by Goran Paskaljević

Part of SSEES Film Festival Vol 1 & sale of

David Filip's 'The House of Remembering'  
published by ISTROS Books

## THEATRE

**Sat 21 Feb** 'Trunčica'

Milica Bogdanović

**Sun 1 March** 'Na Drini ćuprija'

Tihomira Stanića

## ARTS

**Fri 27 Feb** Artography Exhibition Svetisav Savić

## TALKS

**Sun 1 Feb** Book Promotion

Redni broj smrti by Father Radomir Aćimović

**Wed 4 Feb** Book Promotion by Sanja Vico

Doing Nation in a Digital Age:

Banal Nationalism & Cosmopolitanism  
in Polymedia Environments

## ONLINE EVENTS

**Mon 9 Feb** The Serbian Golgotha

Zoom Lecture by Nick Ilić

**Sun 15 Feb** Round Table Meeting, by Zoom

## CHARITABLE AND FUNDRAISING EVENTS

**Sat 7 Feb** St Sava's Ball

## EVENTS

**Thurs 29 Jan** Visit to British Library

To view Serbian collection of 20th and  
21st century

Serbian theatre & visual arts materials

**Tues 3 Feb** Networking Event Serbian City Club

**Sun 8 Feb** Učimo čirilicu uz Vuka i Milicu

Workshop for Children, Milica Grahame

**Sat 28 Feb** 12th Annual Memorial Service  
for Women in Foreign Medical Missions in Serbia  
during the Great War

**Thurs 5 March** Poetry Event

Od uspomene do uspomene uz pesme  
Desanke Maksimović

**Sat 7 March** Storytelling Workshop

Ella Dorman Gajić

Serbian  
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2026