

POLICE BAND – PROTOCOL ORCHESTRA 1994–

After the international recognition of the new state came the first official visits of foreign statespersons. The young state still lacked a fully elaborated state protocol. The band prepared for the first official visit to independent Slovenia, by Italian President Francesco Cossiga, until the early morning on Prešernova ulica in Ljubljana and carried out its »first« protocol performance flawlessly.

In 1994, the Slovenian government adopted a decision by which the Police band officially became the Protocol Orchestra of the Republic of Slovenia.

The Police Orchestra performs at various state protocol occasions: on the arrival and departure of heads of state and government and other eminent guests who are on official visits to Slovenia and on state ceremonial events. It performs in cooperation with the office of state protocol and the guard of honour of the Slovenian army. Protocol takes precedence over any other activity and must be performed regardless of weather conditions.



Preparing for the protocol on the day of statehood, Ljubljana, 24 June 2005



British Queen Elizabeth II visiting Slovenia, Brdo pri Kranju, October 2008



First visit of Pope John Paul II in Slovenia, Brnik, May 1996

PERFORMANCES OF THE POLICE ORCHESTRA

Protocol obligations are followed by ceremonies of the Ministry of the Interior - Police, and then other concerts. The orchestra also performs at many independent, charity and promotional concerts in Slovenia and abroad, and frequently collaborates with other music institutions, renowned conductors and musicians. It takes part in events which are linked to preventive safety, humanitarian, noncommercial projects and thus with its performances connects Slovenian police and citizens. It presents its work to the public with video and audio recordings made by Slovenian and foreign record labels.

The orchestra's music programme is very diverse, from classical, film and pop music to jazz, sections from operas and ballets, including excellent cantatas, musicals and arrangements with vocal accompaniment. It performs more than 250 performances annually, since musicians often play in smaller chamber groups. The orchestra maintains the high level of its rich artistic programme by continuous musical education and strict professional requirements for taking up positions in the orchestra.



Recording of the show programme at the Postojna Cave, 1995



Celebration concert at the 70 th anniversary of the orchestra at Cankarjev dom in Ljubljana, conductor Nejc Bečan, 16 April 2018



Concert setting of the Police Orchestra, Roman Grabner (head of the Orchestra since 2018), Zoran Kobal (head of the Orchestra from 2012 to 2018), Nejc Bečan (conductor since 2015) and Tomaž Kmetič (assistant conductor since 2006), March 2018



The Slovenian Police Orchestra, officially known as the Police Orchestra, operates within the framework of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Slovenia – Police.

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70 YEARS
OF THE POLICE
ORCHESTRA



THE PEOPLE’S MILITIA BAND 1948–1972

After the end of the Second World War when Slovenia as one of the Yugoslav republics was establishing its state system anew, the need arose for Slovenia’s own representative wind orchestra, which would perform at protocol events, state ceremonies and other occasions. The efforts of the then Slovenian Government and numerous Slovenian musicians were realised in the summer of 1948, when the People’s Militia Brass Band was established based on the decision of the Ministry of the Interior.

The band started operating in Ljubljana at the homestead of Slovenian poet and linguist Valentin Vodnik, where 20 bandsmen – policemen gathered after a successful audition under the leadership of Vinko Štrul Senior. In October 1948, bandmaster Rudolf Starič, who was a wind master, was appointed the first conductor.

Police bandsmen did not differ from other musicians only by their uniforms, but also by their tasks since as a uniformed unit of the people’s militia they performed other police tasks if necessary, in addition to playing.

Many of the first militia bandsmen had no musical education, which is why the Ministry of the Interior founded a three-year internal music school, which was mandatory for all bandsmen. Classes took place each day from 7am to 12 am and from 2pm to 6pm.

The band enthused the crowd for the first time with its harmonious playing at the May Day parade in Ljubljana in 1949, which was followed by numerous concerts around Slovenia. The number of bandsmen increased by 56 members. They also formed a 13-member entertainment, chamber and small symphonic orchestra.

The internal music school closed down in 1964, while education continued to take place at the Academy of Music. New members were auditioned before they could join and priority was given to musicians with suitable formal education.

In 1964, conductor and bandmaster Rudolf Starič was succeeded by his assistant Jože Hriberšek. Under his leadership, the bandsmen tackled classical music for wind orchestras.

They performed in Križanke, in the Slovenian Philharmonic, at many Yugoslav venues and were guests at events abroad. What is more, they received numerous recognitions and awards.



The People’s Militia Band at the unveiling of the monument dedicated to Primož Trubar in Rašica, 1951

MILITIA BAND 1972–1992

In 1972, the People’s Militia Band was renamed the Militia Band. In the subsequent years, its quality grew exponentially. The repertoire expanded further. The band played at almost every large-scale event organised in Slovenia. The number of tours abroad also increased.

In addition to numerous performances, the bandsmen also found time to help other amateur wind orchestras. After 1970, their numbers increased significantly. They all lacked knowledge and experience, as well as trained musicians and conductors. The members of the Militia Band in co-operation with the Association of Cultural Organisations of Slovenia and Association of Wind Orchestras organised courses and lectures, at which they unselfishly passed on their knowledge and skills to their colleagues, lent musical scores etc. They also took over the leadership of certain amateur bands.

The band broke through among the best European wind orchestras in the 1960s and 1970s and was becoming more and more successful.

On the band’s 30th anniversary, the helm was taken by Vinko Štrul Jr., who had previously been assistant to the conductor, Jože Hriberšek. He took over a high quality wind orchestra, which enabled him to conduct as well as compose. His works included a number of pieces for wind orchestra, marches, and other genres of serious music. In addition to Bojan Adamič, he is recognized as one of the best composers for wind orchestras.

Under the leadership of Vinko Štrul Jr., the entire ensemble of the brass band participated in the production of Giuseppe Verdi’s opera, Don Carlos. The band also had the honour of being the first to test the new main auditorium of Cankarjev dom cultural centre in Ljubljana in 1982.

Between 1984 and 1991, the brass band performed under the baton of Franc Gornik, and the tasks of his deputy were undertaken by Milan Matičič from 1985. Under their leadership, more musicians joined the band, particularly those with higher education. At the time, the band also recorded several compositions for the then Radio-Television Slovenia.



The People’s Militia Band with the group of drummers from the Cadet School for Police Officers at the Police Day parade, Ljubljana, 13 May 1978

BANDSMEN DURING SLOVENIA’S INDEPENDENCE

Around 1991, the tasks of bandsmen changed for a while. During the war for an independent Slovenia, the bandsmen, like all other members of bodies within the Secretariat of Internal Affairs, contributed their share to the liberation process.

In June 1991, immediately after the proclamation of the independence of the Republic of Slovenia and not long before the first shot to defend the autonomy and independence of Slovenia, the band joined the Militia’s Protective Unit. Within the unit, militiamen-musicians co-operated in protecting important landmarks and buildings and in supplying arms to the Territorial Defence Forces in Ljubljana and its vicinity. During the Independence War, they also played at the funerals of six fallen militiamen. During their performance they carried automatic rifles strapped on their shoulders. The rifles were their constant companions in those days.



Celebration marking the declaration of the independence of the Republic of Slovenia, Trg republike in Ljubljana, 26 June 1991



With a gun on the shoulder, Ljubljana, June 1991

POLICE BAND – POLICE ORCHESTRA 1992–

With renaming of the militia into police, the Militia Brass Band became the Police Brass Band in 1992. Because their number and the types of instruments used exceeded that of a standard band formation, they informally presented themselves in public as the Police Orchestra. The Police Orchestra has always built on its image primarily through artistic creation. Mag. Milivoj Šurbek, conductor and artistic director of the orchestra between 1991 and 2000, is greatly responsible for the artistic positioning of the orchestra. After Šurbek’s arrival, a precondition for new members to join the orchestra was to have at least two years of training at a music academy and continuous part-time study.

Mag. Milivoj Šurbek elaborated the artistic programme for the Police Orchestra on an entirely artistic basis, and was, furthermore, able to produce a genuine symphonic sound, which remains to this day his speciality. The new musical project which the Police Orchestra added to its programme was a »show programme« that included three marches written by Slovenian composers: Židana marena, by Vinko Štrul Jr., Tra ta ta, by Bojan Adamič and Slovenian waltz, by Jože Privšek. The aforementioned programme was performed for the first time in Budapest in 1994 at the Festival of Police Orchestras of Europe. Mag. Šurbek was certain that musical education should start at an early age, and he thus initiated music projects for young people, which received a great response among the public. In cooperation with the opera and ballet ensemble, the orchestra put on stage the Emperor’s New Clothes, which was the first ballet performance accompanied by a wind orchestra, and Adamič’s Snow White, the first Slovenian youth opera.

The many conductors and artistic leaders who have led the orchestra over the years helped the orchestra grow and develop, as well as improved its professionalism and expanded its musical repertoire.



Show programme by Police Orchestra, Budapest, Hungary, June 1996



Christmas/New Year’s concert at Cankarjev dom in Ljubljana, conductor mag. Milivoj Šurbek, 22 December 2009