

BRASSLANDS DIALOG LIST

Text: Meerkat Media Collective Presents

It is said that time stops when the trumpet festival begins

So I'm winding all my clocks now.

Text: Guča, Serbia
Population 2,200

Text: Brasslands

Text: This summer, half a million people will fill this valley for the world's largest trumpet festival.

Text: For the 50th anniversary, bands from around the world will come to compete in the first international competition.

Text: Brooklyn, New York
4,524 miles from Guča

3'28"
Thank you

Thank you. Thank you very much.

We're Zlatne Uste. Thank you very much.

Nobody's Serbian though.

Nobody's Serbian, but you guys are so authentic.

Thank you, thank you.

You made my year, Michael.

Still good after all these years!

Lower Third: Michael Ginsburg
Middle School Gym Teacher

Hello, I'm Michael Ginsburg and I am the director of Zlatne Uste, and have been since its beginnings in 1983.

"Zlatne Uste," is that a Serbian...

It's kind of a pan... it's not correct Serbian...

It's grammatically incorrect Serbian.

What does it translate to roughly?

Well, umm... Golden Lips.

Ah, very good.

Okie doke. Time to go.

Next set.

6'50"

That was Demiran's Cocek. And it was named after Demiran Cerimovic the leader of the Pearls of Vranje.

This is one of the bands we studied with in Serbia.

We play as close to the Serbian style of playing as we can.

Lower Third: Emerson Hawley
Retired Biomedical Engineer

Not that we succeed, but we try as hard as we can to be really hard on attacks
and make some parts percussive.

I really think we're the band in the US at least that tries to emphasize that the most.

Our band was the first Americans to play at Guca.

This year there's going to be a competition of foreign bands.

What it is is it's going to be on the 20th of August

and each foreign band, and I have no idea who's coming or where from
is going to play one Serbian tune and one tune from their own country.

We tried to play *The Saints Go Marching In*, and it sounds like a high school band.

So I don't know what we know from America. We've never played anything like that.

The Balkan music, there's really an allure. It's really gutsy music.

It drew me in.

I don't know why.

You know you look for a release in something you don't normally get in life.

This is Soundcheck, I'm John Schaefer. The quirky, infectious rhythms of the Balkans have left their mark here, in New York.

But years before the hipster crowd discovered Balkan music, the band Zlatne Uste was playing this music around town.

Now you've made what, five trips to Serbia?

Six trips to Serbia now.

Six trips.

How is that not like bringing Coal to New Castle? A bunch of Americans bringing Balkan music to the Balkans?

Well, that's a wonderful question.

Text: Užice, West Serbia
29 Miles from Guca

Lower Third: Dejan Petrovic Orchestra
Reigning Guca Champions

Lower Third: Dejan Petrovic
4th Generation Trumpet Master

What a great song. Even better than the last.

I have no problem when I'm playing in here,
but when I'm about to perform, all I can see in my head is the stage.

Some force comes over my hand.

I cramp up and shit myself.

Just don't get stage fright.

No! It's not stage fright! I don't know what it is.

She's outside Daddy, come!

Watch your little head.

Happy birthday to...

I'm twenty-five.

I'm not fifty-two, I'm twenty-five. Look.

My daughter made it.

Just kidding. My wife made it.

This is my wife.

This photo is my wife and daughter from last year in Guca...

This is me with Johnny Depp when he visited...

This is my Master's letter from 2006.

Which you get after winning all aspects of the Guca competition.

And I'm a Master.

This is my late father.

He's an idol for me and our whole band.

Excuse me, do you know where the wedding is today?

Thank you.

I have all your CD's in my house.

Cheers. Congratulations.

Let's get back to work.

If the trumpeters are still here tonight I won't be able to sleep!

I made the balcony big just for this purpose.

The groom said he wanted to fire a gun, but he's not going to.

Because he doesn't want to look like a terrorist on film.

It's bad. All the wars have ruined the Serbian image.

Definitely.

Now we all just act like everything is okay.

Could you turn it up?

You know, we don't want to be in this town playing weddings for the rest of our lives.

We want to go further in the world.

So this year we're preparing for the international competition at Guca where we're representing Serbia

and we're not coming home without the golden trumpet

even if we must take it by force!

I'm kidding, but we are very serious in our preparation.

We're training not just musically but physically, too.

Brass bands in Serbia are divided between the West and South.

Our West Serbian trumpets, and the South Serbian trumpets from Vranje.

Those Roma "Gypsy" bands used to be better than ours.

But in this year's competition, we're going to wipe them from the face of the Earth.

We're going to destroy them.

15'51"

Text: Vranje, South Serbia

193 Miles from Guca

Our music, you know...

It's different than the Serbs from Užice (West Serbia).

It's Roma music, with Turkish influence.

What we play, they have no chance of playing.

No chance.

Lower third: Demiran Cerimovic
Three-time Guca champion

This settlement is all Roma.

On that side live Serbs

but from this house over is completely Roma populated.

This is from 2006, when we won best orchestra at Guca.

Guca brings work.

Through the media, people know who won awards

and they're looking to hire winners.

(business card text: Black Music)

But at Guca they speak in terms of "black" and "white."

That's how it's written.

We're "black" musicians and they're "white" musicians.

In Serbia right now,

even if you're the boss, you're still Roma.

A Gypsy.

Come on, hurry up.

People will be here soon.

I can't even breathe in this dress.

Why did you tighten it so much?

This will be a housewarming ceremony.

We'll take the sheep to the new house

where the whole family will be dancing.

And then they will kill the sheep,

and bury it down there.

You'll see.

List to me, my son...

...we should celebrate!

20'52"

Every year at our Balkan camps we observe the sort of tradition of celebrating in the Balkan countries of roasting whole lambs.

A lot of our campers kind of get grossed out by the heads anyway, so heads go in the trash.

We take... we take a knife somewhere.

Here's a knife.

If I recall correctly, Serbs don't put garlic in.

Macedonian's do put garlic in.

Greeks put rosemary in.

Croatians hate rosemary for some reason.

Lower third: Balkan Music and Dance Workshop, Rock Hill, New York

It's good to be back.

Emerson!

Good to see you.

Me first, me first, me first.

Get away from my Emerson.

Hi Soph!

Step back a little bit. Make the line again.

This is a Serbian dance called *Pinosavka*.

It's a form of the national dance of Serbia, the *kolo*.

Small...

One thing that we tend to do at this camp is to enjoy ourselves totally.

But we're also kind of cut off from real contemporary situations in the Balkans that are sometimes very complex.

Lower third: Carol Silverman
Roma Singing Teacher

This is a map that is basically called the plight of the refugees. But there's one minority group that is missing. Roma.

And Roma are certainly refugees in the 1990's after the wars and so on.

There's no Roma on this map at all.

This is Balkan Camp, the source of all of our troubles.

This is where it all started back in 1983, when we were first exposed to Balkan brass music.

Here I am still doing it at my tender age.

I'm not getting any younger and I try to wonder at what point in time am I not really going to be able to play any more, or play as well any more.

It will be a major deficit in my life.

The Balkan scene, I guess, is basically my extended family.

I've known about ZU for my whole life. It was my favorite shirt when I was like in kindergarten.

And I was blown away that these musicians that I've admired and respected for so long would ever think to want me in their band.

The band's been around as long as I've been alive.

I looked online for "Balkan brass bands North America", I Googled it, and the only thing that came up was the Zlatne Uste webpage which said, "last concert of the season". It was starting in like half an hour.

I was like 'oh my god!'

Lower third: Sarah Ferholt

Member of Zlatne Uste since 2003

I grabbed my trumpet and got on my rollerblades and I went down there and I was like, 'hi, I want to play music! What can you do for me, I want to play this music!'

They said borrow this horn and come to camp.

After high school I left the trumpet life out for 25 years until I went to the first Balkan camp.

That was the first time I really experienced total joy playing music.

Out of that experience Zlatne Uste came forth.

Then we went to Serbia the first time. That was an eye opener.

Text on VCR tape: Zlatne Uste at Guča

Text screen: Guča Trumpet Festival 1987

Ladies and gentlemen, we have for you "Zlatne Uste" (Golden Mouth).

Their name is supposed to mean "Golden Lips."

But they aren't native speakers and made this mistake.

What's most important is that they are natural born Americans.

None of them have Yugoslavian or even Slavic origins.

These are people who simply love the music.

Presneting, Zlatne Uste!

It's this little town in the middle of nowhere and all of the sudden people descend upon it.

Lower third: Laine Harris
Trumpet, Zlatne Uste

It transforms into the closest thing I think to relate to in the US is Woodstock.

It's sort of like the olympics of Gypsy brass music.

There can be ten ten-person brass bands in your hearing radius, and you're hearing all of it at the same time.

We were the first non-Serbian band to ever play there. From anywhere.

You said tell them we're not Serbians, we can't play like Serbians.

Lower third: Jerry Kisslinger
Drummer, Zlatne Uste

The guy answers, 'it's not easy to become a Serbian, but if you try you can. Come on!'

Well, it was a big deal at that time.

And that we did have a woman who played with us in a culture that did not have women play an instrument.

I mean people were following us with cameras.

We were on TV.

We were like rockstars.

The original reason to exist for the Guča festival was the competition to determine the best band in Serbia.

And the Golden Trumpet goes to:

Slobodon Salijevic!

When we were there in 1987 the organizers said they can envision just what's happening now, that there would be many bands from outside the borders coming.

And so we felt like if that happens we should be there.

27'44"

For the 50th anniversary they're going to have their first competition for non-Serbian bands.

We are accepted, they have given us the invitation.

That's on rails. We are going to Guča.

One, two, three, four. Da-dum-da-da-dum...

During the war we didn't go to Guča in part because some people were worried about being Americans and going there.

The music here has its own life, it's own community. But when we travel it becomes a way to make a connection with people who we're not connected to in any other way.

There's nothing in our heritage that connects us, we don't have language connecting us. It's just because we share the music with them.

It's also like a 750,000 person frat party.

A lot of drinking, a lot of amplified music, thousands of people from all over the world.

A lot of politics kind of under the surface.

The music that's being celebrated has huge national undertones.

When the liquor gets going it makes you realize what's simmering under the surface all day.

This music is very close to the hearts of most Serbian people, so whatever's there comes up.

People there don't necessarily love Americans to start with, much less lefty hippy weird Americans who have appropriated all of their national music to provide this sort of fantasy world that we live in here.

Come on, man, what will you drink?

Let's keep drinking Rakia (plum brandy).

One shot... two shots...

We drink until dawn!

(because he called me a dork)

We always kid about quitting our day jobs and going around and being a band.

But even winning this competition would not create a scenario that would enable us to do that.

It would be a validation of something we've been doing for 30 years.

But...

I think about coming home with that.

Lower third: St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Church
New York City

I missed the coda. I knew that but I...

Glad our competition isn't tomorrow.

You were late on the opening.

Ba-da-da-da-da-chu was late

Late?

Late.

Okay.

Listen.

Late right?

Yeah, you were right.

I don't know how to make you do it better.

I don't know either, but I'll work on it!

Maybe we should just do a drum solo there.

Oh come on, I can learn it!

Not because it's not coming out right now. I'm not sure it sounds...

Don't give up so easily.

No, I'm not giving up...

Can I say that we're long shots at this competition? Is that fair?

I believe that's fair.

Okay.

I've never heard of almost all the other bands.

That's fine.

Let's say we're medium shots.

To make an impression this tune needs to be not just your standard, I don't want to say slumpy, but just standard folk rendition of Zapevala. It needs to have some excitement and oomph to it.

I think the piece should have dynamics.

Yes, yes.

And we should get softer and louder sometimes.

Once in a while.

This will be what we're really judged on, I think.

We have to do well on the other piece, but this is what they're going to know, so this is what they're going to judge on more.

The more we can make it Serbian, the more we can honor the tradition behind it the better off we'll be about it.

Hey these guys, these Americans, they got the roots somewhere!

Are we ready to do this?

Squeeze in!

Smile!

Wait, Emerson, you have to let us know.

Well I'm just going to take a bunch.

Wait, Emerson, no. We're going to take a bunch when we're ready to take a bunch!

On yours marks, get set...

Oops.

Lower third: Belgrade, Serbia

Who's going to win in Guča?

Me!

No, you can't. I have to.

I don't need anything else, right?

I have my trumpet.

Give me a kiss.

Bye love.

She misses him terribly.

When he's gone I talk to him on the phone a hundred times a day.

But she's little and can't really talk on the phone.

She takes her dolls sometimes and talks to them as though she's talking to her daddy.

So...

He hasn't participated in her childhood.

When she was a baby, more. But now, not really.

Jovana, please don't.

When I was a boy, I wished my father were around.

But he was always away working - playing the trumpet.

When I was little, my dad left to fight in the Bosnian War.

When he finally returned he was half a man.

Text: March 24, 1999

My fellow Americans, today our armed forces joined our NATO allies against Serbian forces.

We've seen innocent people taken from their homes, forced to kneel in the dirt and sprayed with bullets.

Ending this tragedy is a moral imperative.

Diplomacy has failed, next it's bombs away in the Balkans. The United States is revving up its air power tonight and Serbia is preparing for sustained bombing attacks.

Here's the latest: as Serb forces pressed a relentless ethnic cleansing military offensive on the ground, in Kosovo NATO goes that they go ahead to strike back from the air.

Lower third: Drenica, Kosovo

NATO has launched air strikes against Yugoslavia. The strikes originally by Cruise missiles began just over two hours ago. Among the targets hit are military (fades out)

Text: Ethnic cleansing offensive escalating

Slobodan Milošević has been indicted as a war criminal.

The first reaction from Serbia was what you'd expect from a nation under attack by the major military powers: resentment and anger.

I will never forget those two months when they bombed us in Serbia.

We watched every night as bombs dropped near our town.

As a kid, I would imagine that the bombs were shooting stars.

When you mention Serbians, all people this is "war."

So now we're trying to show off our music

to all the countries of the world.

...you see all the wonderful people who came together to create something

to give Serbia passage into the world.

And with that, I officially problem the 50th Guča Festival open!

Hey, we made it!

Alright, go to the first right and go a little bit past that park on the side.

41'52"

Emerson.

Emerson? Zoran

That's a new one.

How are you, Marian?

Good, and you?

This is a secret...

The ambassador of the U.S. is coming down.

I know.

You know?

Did I tell you?

No.

Somebody told you.

People here know.

They do?

Bojana knows.

Bojana told us.

It's supposed to be a secret.

Okay.

Why should it be a secret?

Because they don't want it out ahead of time for security reasons.

Okay, right. For security reasons.

Did I tell Bojana?

I don't know.

It's wonderful, huh? It's good news!

We should keep it under the hat.

Okay.

Stop here so I can talk to these assholes.

Hey friends!

We have a concert and we have to unload all the equipment.

Hey bro. Thank you, thanks.

Do you have money?

I don't have any money, I don't.

Come on, please, please?

Here you go. Here kid, here.

Remind me to get a little trumpet for Jovana.

Now you look like a real Serb.

Good morning!

Do you have an extra mouthpiece?

I don't even know...

One that I can borrow?

Oh no.

You didn't bring an extra?

From where you are?

New York?

It's good...

...to be here.

It's not that good here.

There are a lot of problems.

Okay, we need to go backstage.

I wasn't joking two years ago when I invited the U.S. and Russia to start a war here in Serbia.

Lower third: Slobodan Jolovic
Mayor of Guca

A "War of Trumpets," of course!

Because for the first time, we're holding an international trumpet competition.

Lower third: Mary Warlick
U.S. Ambassador to Serbia

So I'd like to say it really is an important sign of uh... how important the cultural ties are for the relations between, uh, the U.S. and Serbia.

It's our particular pleasure this year as the U.S. Embassy to be able to support the American band, Zlatne Uste, in the International Competition. We wish you all the best this evening.

You're the face of America for everyone here today.

All the best in the competition tonight. Really great to see you all.

Zlatne Uste, I remember them.

I was little when they played. I was very little.

Only English...American.

It's okay, I can't understand you either.

I was very little. Me and my brother.

And you all were here.

It's Demiran!

Good, everything.

Are you playing here?

Yes, we're playing in the international competition!

You'll have to check it out.

Oh international, all right.

Are you playing at any restaurants?

We walk around and whoever asks us, we play for them.

They're going to wander around.

Like every band here, we're wandering around just trying to earn some money.

So here it is:

The black players live through the trumpet. There's a love associated with it.

But the white bands have commercialized the whole thing.

And so the black bands, with their spirit and style, they've won over Guča.

Spirit.

That's what the black orchestras or "Gypsies," as we affectionately call them, that's what they bring to the music.

You're Dejan Petrovic!

I recognize you from the pictures.

Good luck.

Can you play for us?

I don't want to talk to anyone.

I've talked to two hundred million people today.

I'm nervous and angry.

I need to concentrate on the competition.

I don't want anyone to recognize me.

Would you like a drink?

Water.

In large quantities.

You're drinking water like you're gonna die.

We're going to beat these guys, right?

We're going to play carefully, delicately

and we'll keep the tempo steady while you do your thing.

I have to go see my family.

Go to your Dad.

Look at what I brought.

What did you bring?

Pluto?

Just hold her while I'm dealing with this.

Is it better for us to be back here with you or out there?

Out there.

Out there in the audience?

No, I already have two orchestras here.

Find the boss.

I'll feel much better after we're done with this performance...

I think everyone'll be able to relax a little bit and enjoy being here.

Okay, go, go, go, we'll catch up with you.

(text on shirt) "Serbian Hero"

THE INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION

Here, in the 50th year of the Guča Trumpet Festival...

we present the very first international competition for best brass band in the world!

From this year on, we hope Guča will represent the trumpet to the rest of the world and turn a new page in history.

He was the first to win after Demiran Cerimovic won.

He's fast.

Motherfucking fast.

Yeah, he's good.

He looks nervous.

Lower third: LES 38 TONNES
France, International Competitors

Lower third: LOBEZ ORCHESTRA
Poland, International Competitors

This is it, this is it people!

Only 20 years of hard work for this!

I remember in 2003 and all the stories, "we will never compete because we are foreigners."

Yeah, that's true.

And now they made it for you.

I think they might have actually made it just to have a setup so that they can proclaim their trumpet players are the best in the world.

I'm nervous.

We're next.

Thank you to the Slovenian band.

We'll continue our live programming after the commercial break with the most beautiful energy you'll find in Serbia and the world.

Keep your instruments warm.

You see Marian? The woman with the trumpet?

And there's Emerson!

With us right now is the band Zlatne Usne -er... Uste.

"Golden Lips" or Zlatne Uste, or whatever.

Welcome to Serbia again!

Thanks again to Zlatne Uste, from the United States of America.

And now our first performance from the representatives of Serbia.

Master trumpeter Dejan Petrovic of Užice!

Good job, man.

Way to go!

Great work!

Probably the best we've played!

Let's sit down, let's drink something.

Cheers.

...he told me we played too well.

We should play a little worse, so other people can realize their dreams.

Get your instruments.

If we win, man, we're playing

I wouldn't get your hopes up too high about winning anything, but it's possible.

The jury has finished deliberating.

These are the best orchestras and trumpet players of the world.

Third place, the bronze medal, goes to...

...the Austrian band!

Second place in this international competition goes to...

The Macedonian band!

The judges were unanimous in declaring first place in this competition.

It goes to the representative of...

Serbia!

Dejan Petrovic!

Say "Dejan is a master."

Dejan is a master.

Of course I'm happy! What are you asking me that?

Will you have a tougher time in the domestic competition tonight?

Of course! There are 60 bands and they all play well.

Here's me mother, hold on.

Hey Jovana...

Hey little child, wake up.

Congratulations, I love you.

I want all the best for you, and I know you're still young.

Did you see when I fell?

Yeah, you almost broke the stage!

No I didn't.

What are you talking about?

That's the consolation prize for showing up.

Yeah, for showing up and being good sports.

Hey, cheers!

Where are you from?

New York. We're a brass orchestra.

We just played in the international competition.

What place did you come in?

First? Two?

...thirty?

No, we didn't win.

We were playing in the midst of giants.

I suppose if any of us still did any hallucinogenic drugs we might have momentarily thought we had a chance of winning something.

That's not what we came for.

You know this tune, Shvristovsko Oro, from Bulgaria?

One hundred years old.

It's good, very good.

What instrument do you play?

Bass tuba.

With Zlatne Uste.

I play Baritone.

I'm Ivan.

Ivan, Emerson, nice to meet you.

Our past between Serbia and America is crazy, you know that.

Our politics...

On and off.

We were here when it wasn't.

We were here the first time in 1987.

It wasn't different then. We hadn't bombed you yet.

It's crazy years.

But I forgot it. Little, forgot it.

I hope so.

This is not a really good pictures of Serbia.

All people here are very drunk.

When the Serbian people are drunk they...

they are too happy to show some real face of them.

No no no, American people doesn't...

doesn't know about us.

Well there's twelve of us that do!

There was this quality of love.

I mean if love means that connection that, like, somebody seeing you...

...and connecting.

For me, it really was that.

It's like, nothing else matters right now but this.

It's like saying, we are here this is real. Nothing else counts.

I don't care, maybe it counts another time, but we are here now,

and this is what's happening and it's fantastic.

Let's be here.

Lower third: THE SERBIAN COMPETITION

...and now we anoint a new Serbian trumpet champion!

How does it feel to play in front of 100,000 people

with the cameras rolling and everything?

When I walk out there on stage...

I start shaking, and sweating.

My father isn't want me to start playing the trumpet.

He knew how hard it would be

and how much I would have to struggle.

But I love this instrument.

So I tell myself:

"Demiran, just play your songs, and forget about everything else."

"Just feel the music."

And the 12th performer is:

Demiran Cerimovic's orchestra

from Vranje.

Dejan Petrovic is good, but I don't think he'll win it twice in a row.

The traditional award is the trumpet that goes to the best orchestra.

And the award for "best Serbian orchestra" goes to...

The Dejan Petrovic Orchestra from Užice.

What are you showing to people in America?

That these are savage people that they bombed, that they deserved it?

Please, I can't allow that.

You can come back to film at noon and see how everything is clean.

There are a lot of people who love our music.

Not just Americans - It's Swedes and Germans...

I don't know what it is about our music.

There is some beauty in it.

Come over here!

Can we go play?

You want to play?

I want you to drink your juice.

Then we'll go to the playground and play, okay?

Goodbye Mili.

Thank you so much.

See you next time.

Next year in Guča?

Expensive.

Shit.

Not every year.

But, I will come.

a film by the
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