

INTERVIEW MS. JADRANKA NEJAŠMIĆ



Jadranka Nejašmić has been the director of the Municipal library Hrvatska čitaonica Bol since 1994. She founded the cultural event Bolsko lito, which she led for 20 years. She also founded the event HUM/CROART. In cooperation with the Ethnographic Museum in Split, she restored the folk wear of the island of Brač. She initiated the cooperation with the Omiš festival of Dalmatian klapas, as well as organizing debut evenings in Bol. The movie by Šime Strikoman, that was based on the play directed by her and Franjo Daković called Dragon's village was named the best film at the 19th International Tourism Film Festival in Solin. She has made multiple documentaries and she is the editor of the collection of works by Frano Radić called Život i djelo. She is also the author of the book Bolski glazbeni spomenar, 1996.-2017.

You have been involved in the promotion of the cultural heritage of the island of Brač for many years, what made you interested in it?

I had the luck in life to meet Petar Šimunović, an academic. Through time I realised that children here don't know nearly enough about the cultural heritage of our island. I wanted to educate them about it because only if they are educated, they can be proud of it. And if they are proud, they will want to transfer that knowledge to others. I believe that this isn't just a shepards island, but an island with rich history. Petar Šimunović played a big role in my education about the topic of Brač's heritage. Every summer he would give us the same lecture, but in a different way. At that point I became aware of how important our heritage and history are.

How has your engagement in this field affected your work?



I've been working in the Municipal library Hrvatska Čitaonica Bol since 1994. I love my work, but I realized as time went on, that I don't have much to do here. I felt a calling to use my time to culturally enlighten the people living here. In 1989, I founded the cultural event Bolsko lito and I led the organization for 20 years. Throughout the years, I worked on multiple projects connected to our heritage and culture and I'm satisfied with all my work.

What motivates you to keep restoring the customs and traditions of the island of Brač? It surely isn't always easy.

It's not easy at all. We are surrounded by people that don't understand the importance of our culture. There is a lack of spirit in them. I know what I want, and I'm not doing it for someone else. I'm very sensitive as a person, however I have my goal and I am grateful to God that he has given me so much strength to keep going through life.

How did the process of founding the cultural events and manifestations like Bolsko lito look like?

It was in 1989 when one of the directors of Zlatni rat gave me permission to organize concerts of classical music in Bol. It was one of my first project, and later in life I just wanted to work on the preservation of our heritage. It's important to have the persistence to organize all of this while still being sure of myself. Not everyone approved of my projects, but I learned that it's not my problem and that I must keep doing what I think is the best.

How has your work impacted the preservation of the cultural heritage of Bol and Brač and do you think people were affected by it?

I think so. I worked with Šime Strikoman on the project Bročko blogo and we included around 250 people from Brač in it. I wanted to include as many people as possible to teach them about our heritage. They were locals and they started to realize the importance of our culture. During my upcoming retirement I want to start a class to educate more young people about our customs and traditions, as well as their importance. I believe that the time of entrepreneurs of culture.

How did you come up with the idea of making a play about Dragon's village, what does it represent?

It's a sad story actually. The man I planned to make it with at first, Dinko Ružić, passed away soon after we talked about the realization of the project. I still wanted to make our idea into reality, so I made an agreement with the Academy of Dramatic Art in Split. I also wanted to represent it in more languages, not only Croatian. I wanted to include locals, so I asked some people from Murvica to participate in a way where I wouldn't pressure them into it. It was important they felt comfortable, which I believe played a huge role in making this play so accepted by others. This is one of my favorite projects in my life and my career.





During your work on the project Bročko blago which aspects of the mythology and culture of the island of Brač did you deal with?

The goal was to present 10000 years of cultural and mythological history of Brač. We used various mythological beings and we took pictures of local historical sites. The connection between mythology and reality was the most wonderful connection in my life and in literature throughout the years. Storytelling while including myths and legends, is way more affective and has more impact on people's memories, in comparison to simply stating factual data.

Why do you think that national folklore is important for a country, and can you briefly introduce us to the folklore group Krejonca?

It is important because folklore is our cultural heritage and folklore dances of Brač were rich with traditional songs and traditional tunes. We are not sure if Brač had traditional costumes. Since the neighboring island and shore did have it, then it is to believe that Brač also had it, but it was lost so I wanted to renew it so that we could have our own authentic product, because I don't like copies. We need authentic programs that we will be recognized by. Krejonca means nice behavior, kindness, love, that is Krejonca, creating your authentic cultural product.

What do you think is important to know about traditional klapa singing and how come you decided to organize debut nights in Bol?

It happened accidentally at the first historical audition of Bols Klapa. Which, I named Braciera, and the director of Omiš festival, Mr. Grgić, felt our excitement and suggested that I organize the debut nights in Bol. I accepted it with enthusiasm. Jurica Bošković was present, but he told me that it will be impossible because they wouldn't let Omiš festival leave Omiš, but they recognized my idea and my plans, and when it was all finished, they were amazed.

According to what we have learnt about you, you are going to continue supporting the revival of the cultural heritage of the island of Brač, what are some of your plans referring to it?

I already made draft plans for the future, since I'll be working half time soon. In the first place I would work on the dictionary of Bol speech, on the digitalization of Bol's cultural heritage, I would also continue on the renewal of Piscina, renewal of churches, the transfer of church St. Liberats, continue with the project Terra Croatica and filming new scenes, decorating Bol's music school, etc.

Which advice would you give to the youth living on the island in terms of preserving its natural and cultural heritage?



They must get educated on our cultural heritage, I will try to work on the education, not only that but also site tour of all cultural heritage sites on Brač. I also think that there should be an extracurricular activity in school, and even if it's possible an additional subject on cultural heritage of Bol and Brač.

