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PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

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THE WORLD MUSIC EVENT OF THE SEASON!

GORAN BREGOVIC **AND HIS WEDDING & FUNERAL ORCHESTRA**

BASS CONCERT HALL
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17, 2009, 8:00 P.M.
FOR ONE PERFORMANCE ONLY!

TICKETS ON SALE NOW!

“Goran Bregovic and his Weddings and Funerals Band...had the audience eating out of their hands...Bregovic makes a music that runs the spectrum from ecstatic, robustly earthy dance music, to naughty pop tunes, to vocal and string arrangements ripe with sentimentality...a lyrical, beautifully paced evening.” – *Daily Star, Lebanon*

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It's difficult to think of any artist who epitomizes world music – music with roots – more than composer Goran Bregovic.

Roots in the Balkans where he stems from, head in the 21st century which he fully inhabits, Goran Bregovic's music marries the sounds of a Gypsy brass band with traditional Bulgarian polyphonies, those of an electric guitar and traditional percussion with a curious rock accent—all against a background of a bedeviled string orchestra and deep sonorities of a male choir, creating music that our soul recognizes instinctively and the body greets with an irresistible urge to dance.

Born in Sarajevo of a Serbian mother and a Croatian father, after a few years of (very unenthusiastic) violin studies Goran formed his first group, the White Button, at the age of 16. Composer and guitar player ("I chose the guitar because guitar players always have most success with girls"), he admitted his immoderate love for rock 'n' roll. "In those times, rock had a capital role in our lives. It was just about the only way we could make our voices heard, and publicly express our discontent without risking jail."

Studies in philosophy and sociology would most certainly have landed him a position teaching Marxist thought, had the gigantic success of his first record not decided otherwise. There followed 15 years with the White Button, marked by marathon tours and endless autograph sessions. At the end of the eighties, Bregovic took time away from this hectic schedule to compose music for Emir Kusturica's film *Times of the Gypsies*, and to make his childhood dream come true: to live in a small house on the Adriatic coast. The war in Yugoslavia shattered this, and many other dreams, and Bregovic had to abandon everything for exile in Paris.

Coming from the same background, the same generation and survivors of the same experiences, Bregovic and Kusturica formed a team that didn't need words to communicate. After *Times of the Gypsies*, Bregovic had a free hand to compose the original soundtrack for *Arizona Dream* (1993). The music lives up to the film—poetic, original and incredibly enhancing. His next film project was Patrice Chereau's *La Reine Margot*, winner of a Palme d'Or at the 1994 Cannes Film Festival, for which he delivered a majestic piece with rock accents. The music for Kusturica's *Underground*, Palme d'Or winner at the 1995 Cannes Film Festival, was also composed by Bregovic. He recently composed spicy music with a "kletzmer" flavor for Radu Mihaelanu's *Train de Vie*, acclaimed by the critics in Venice, Sao Paulo and Berlin, and by the public everywhere it was shown.

Bregovic has since devoted himself to his own music projects and a second stage career—without completely abandoning the movies, however. His other film credits include Nana Djordjaze's *27 Missing Kisses* (2001) and Unni Straume's *Music for Weddings & Funerals* (2002; original music and the lead male role). In 2004, Bregovic repeated the same adventure: he composed music and played the main role in an Italian film, *Giorni dell'Abandono* (The Days of Abandon) which premiered in fall 2005.

Silence of the Balkans was an ambitious multimedia project performed in 1997 in Thessaloniki, under the direction of Slovenian Tomaz Pandur with video images by Boris Miljkovic. This was followed by a collaboration with Teatro Stabile from Trieste, for whom Bregovic wrote the stage music for a very unusual *Hamlet*. He next collaborated with the noted Italian director Marco Bailani, for whom he wrote the music for *The Children's Crusade* (1999). Recently, Bregovic wrote music for a staging of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, directed by Bregovic's long-time collaborator Tomaz Pandur from Slovenia.

For over 10 years after he abandoned pure rock in 1985, the music of Bregovic had never been performed live. This all changed in 1995 when, with a band of 10 traditional musicians, a choir of 50 singers and a symphony orchestra, he undertook a series of mega-concerts in Greece and Sweden followed by a concert given October 26 at the Forest National of Brussels for an audience of 7,500. Very few concert performances

followed in 1996, as the idea of 120 performers on stage scared even the most enthusiastic promoters.

In June 1997, the group was reduced to 50 musicians for a two-hour concert with Bregovic's music for films. One success after another followed as he undertook a triumphal tour of Europe with his Wedding and Funeral Band, presenting his most beautiful pieces, from the famous "Ederlezi" (*Times of the Gypsies*) to "In the Death Car" (*Arizona Dream*) and the energetic "Kalasnikov" (*Underground*). A concert in May at the Piazza St. Giovanni in Rome in front of 500,000 people confirmed beyond any doubt that his music now had a real impact on an international level.

Bregovic is honored by collaborations with talented performers from diverse cultures: Iggy Pop (*Arizona Dream*), Ofra Haza (*La Reine Margot*), Cesaria Evora (*Underground*), Scot Walker in the UK, Setzen Aksu in Turkey, George Dalaras in Greece, and Kayah in Poland. Some critics have called *Tales & Songs from Weddings and Funerals* his neo-classical album, in which he presents a range of musicians playing in his various musical styles—from tango and reggae to Gypsy brass band music.

In 2000 Giovanni Feretti of the legendary Italian group CSI asked Bregovic to be the ambassador of music from the Orthodox countries for a night-long fiesta on June 27. Bregovic called it "Hot Balkan Roots" and invited three brass bands from Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia and a group of Russian female voices. A joint concert of Bregovic and CSI topped it off, and the show was repeated June 29 at the prestigious Nuovo Auditorium Di Roma.

To start off his Italian tour in summer 2000, Bregovic concocted a "Big Wedding in Palermo" for the Santa Rosalia Celebration on July 14, for which he shared artistic direction with the famous musicologist and composer from Naples, Roberto de Simone. For one very special night, Bregovic assembled artists from countries that he calls his "musical feeding-ground," between Budapest and Istanbul. To Bregovic's music and images by Belgrade video director Boris Miljkovic, Slovenian and Greek dancers performed under the direction of a gifted Romanian choreographer, Edward Clug. Once again Bregovic called on brass bands (a wedding with no brass band is no wedding) to lead 80 brides and bridegrooms from opposite parts of Palermo to the central square where, around three in the morning, they met with Clug's professional dancers and Bregovic's Wedding and Funeral Band for a long, final wedding dance.

In June 2002, in the St. Denis Basilica near Paris, Bregovic united three star singers from three religions with the Moscow Orthodox choir, a string section from Tetouan in Morocco, and his Wedding and Funeral Orchestra for a special program called "My Heart Has Become Tolerant" on the theme of reconciliation, commissioned by Festival of Sacred Music of St. Denis (that year entitled "From Bach to Bregovic"). Luciano Berio invited the same project to his Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome in July, followed by concerts on the Esplanade of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao and the Festival of Sacred Music in Fez, Morocco.

Tours across Europe and South America throughout 2002 included four triumphant concerts in Paris in November. The next year saw more European tours, performances of "My Heart Has Become Tolerant" at the Festival of Sacred Music in Fez, Morocco and

at the Guggenheim Foundation in Bilbao, and two incredible sold-out concerts in the legendary Luna Park Stadium in Buenos Aires.

In 2004 Bregovic composed his first opera, *Goran Bregovic's Karmen with a Happy End*, the first Carmen with a "K" and a Balkan accent. A combination of naive theater and opera, *Karmen* premiered in Italy on April 17, 2004 and has since been performed over 100 times. Written, composed and directed by Bregovic (only a few quotes from Bizet's *Carmen*), this Gypsy opera is interpreted by the musicians of his Wedding and Funeral Band. Since recent publication of the album, a Web site has been created with music, scores for free use and information: <http://karmen.artistes.universalmusic.fr>

The years 2004 and 2005 brought more tours throughout Europe, the Middle East, South America and Asia. In June 2005, Bregovic's legendary group White Button (Bjelo Dugme) reunited for a sold-out tour of the capitals of three former Yugoslav republics. An audience of 70,000 in Sarajevo and Zagreb, and 200,000 in Belgrade proved him right in the hope that people separated by wars could at least share and enjoy a common musical heritage.

July 2006 offered a first opening of North American territories for Bregovic's music: an extraordinary concert at the Montreal Jazz Festival and performances in Chicago's magnificent Millennium Park and the Avery Fisher Hall at the Lincoln Center Festival in New York. The year also included further European touring and a return to Korea with a concert of *Tales and Songs for Weddings and Funerals* with local musicians and Bregovic's Wedding and Funeral Band in Seong Nam on August 31, and Goran Bregovic's *Karmen with a Happy End* in Seoul on September 2.

Bregovic's next adventure was a project titled "Forgive me, is this the way to the Future?"—Three letters for three prophets, commissioned by ECHO (European Concert Hall Organisation) for a tour of 10 concerts in major European concert halls in April 2007, interpreted by Goran's Wedding & Funeral Band plus Kristjan Järvi's Absolute Ensemble, all under the direction of Kristjan Järvi. The year 2007 also saw more tours in Europe, including a return to Poland after a long absence, and a first visit to Australia. Then Mexico in September, Russia in November...Gypsy life full to the brim continues for this eclectic composer figure.

In January 2009, the first part of the new CD "Alkohol," recorded live in Guca in the summer of 2007, came out in France. Guca is a small town in Serbia of approximately 20,000 inhabitants that holds an annual contest of brass bands each August and swells to 150,000 people. Shaded by tents from the scorching heat, they drink, eat grilled meat and sour-kraut, drink, listen to the music and drink again for three days.... which explains the title. The remainder of 2009 includes an American tour in June, a new piece for "Bang on a Can" with a première at Lincoln Center in August, more tours in Europe and the second part of "Alkohol" in the fall.

Goran brings his 20-piece Wedding and Funeral Orchestra to the Bass Concert Hall stage on Wednesday, June 17, 2009 for one of a handful of concerts in the United States this year. This spectacular Orchestra includes a Serbian brass band, string ensemble, and choir. This is certain to be one of the most talked about world music events for years to come!

CALENDAR LISTING

Wednesday, June 17, 2009, 8:00 pm – The University of Texas at Austin Performing Arts Center presents ***Goran Bregovic and His Wedding and Funeral Orchestra*** at the Performing Arts Center's Bass Concert Hall (E. 23rd St. and Robert Dedman Dr). A map of the campus:

http://www.utpac.org/visit/maps_directions. Tickets (\$26.00 - \$42.00 / \$10 student tickets / discounted tickets available for UT faculty & staff, seniors and Military) are on sale now at the authorized ticket outlets, which include the Bass Concert Hall Box Office, most H-E-B stores and all Texas Box Office outlets, online at www.utpac.org, or by calling (512) 477-6060 or (800) 982-BEVO.