

Jazz Do It 2014

Venue: **Niš, Serbia**

Date: **12.08.2014 - 19.08.2014**

Organizer: **LC Niš**

Participant: **Patrick AGOSTINI**

Sponsors: **YUMIS, CHIPS WAY,
STATUS, NIŠVILLE,
ČAIR (ČAMP)**



Since 2006, Serbia's third largest city Niš hosts during four days one of the country's largest Jazz-festivals called *Nišville*. The festival is held amongst the walls of the city's medieval fortress in a very picturesque and pleasant atmosphere. It is known for featuring a huge variety of Jazz/World Music acts ranging from international Jazz-greats like: *The Cookers(USA)*, *Candy Dulfer(NL)* or *The Blues Brothers(USA)* to very local Jazz-acts like: *Vlatko Stefanovski i Miroslav Tadić(MAC/SRB)*, *Viva Vox(SRB)* or *Fish in Oil(SRB)* and with acts like: *Zuralia Orchestra(ROM)* or *Valy Balkanska & Orkestar(BUL)* it also tries to emphasize traditional Balkan folklore.

Since 2012, LC Niš organizes an exchange for the occasion of this Jazz-festival under the name of **Jazz Do It**, to listen to some good music and have fun with fellow EESTECers. The whole event was free of charges, food and accommodations were being greatly taken care of by the organizers and every participant got a free pass for the whole festival.

The event officially started on the 12th of august but for reasons of traveling costs I only arrived on the 13th of august so that I missed the opening ceremony. My choice of traveling to Niš was by bus meaning that I was sitting 27 hours in an old Serbian bus driving through the middle of Europe, nice experience but I would not do it again. After my arrival I was immediately soaked into the action of the event. A city rally was on the plan. The participants were divided into groups of four and sent to the city to accomplish tasks and find answers to questions concerning the city. The rally drew us through the whole city and got us a nice insight about the city's major monuments and gathering places and the first group to accomplish all tasks won a bottle of wine. In the evening, the international evening was scheduled. Here every participant presented traditional dishes and drinks from his home country. The following countries were represented: Poland, Greece, Montenegro, Slovenia, France, Germany and of course Serbia. The evening became pretty wild, especially after the Serbian organizers pulled out a bottle of their traditional drink called Rakije and everybody went out to the riverside for a huge after-party.

After this exhausting night, the following day started in a pretty mellow mood. After breakfast, we took part at a workshop organized by the festival where one of the artists playing the festival would introduce us to his art followed by an Q&A. In the afternoon, after that everybody was fit again, the organizers took us to visit the city. Here Nikolai Vucic (one of the organizers) alias "Walking Google", introduced us to the city's major monuments and told us very extensive and detailed historical facts to each sight. The tour took the whole afternoon and was quite exhausting but worth it. In the

evening, we finally got our festival passes and the festival officially started. The festival sight consisted of two neighboring main stages, on which the main acts played alternately, and an open stage, which was accessible without pass, where mainly local young talents performed. The festival started off with traditional Balkan music played by *ValYa Balkanska & Orkestar 101* followed by a small gipsy marching band. The following acts were then kept in a more modern Jazz-oriented genre and as the evening's final act, the *Zuralia Orchestra* from Romania literally rocked the stage with their Romanian folklore.



The third day of the event started again with a workshop. The artist leading the workshop was Funk-Queen *Candy Dulfer* from the Netherlands. She was playing the festival for the third time and has somehow become a local hero. The workshop was a lot of fun and everybody enjoyed it a lot. In the afternoon, the organizers took us to visit a local winery which produces wine in so called amphora's, which is a traditional way of wine making. The visit took the whole afternoon and involved a lot of wine-tasting. The wine produced in amphora's showed to have a very distinct and interesting flavor in comparison to modern wines. After this very insightful look into Serbia's wine-making tradition, the second evening of the festival started. The line-up was again great and rich in variety. Especially the main act, *Candy Dulfer* and her band, were really good, to the delight of all the Serbian folks.

After the whole cultural and instructive activities of the first three days of this event we needed some rest, so that the fourth day of the exchange consisted mainly in hanging out around the pool, playing beach volley and getting tanned. In the evening before going to the festival, we decided to

visit the local wine-fest which also took place in the fortress. Here we had the chance to taste a huge variety of Serbian wines and of course we could also taste some Rakije. The line-up for the festival was like the previous days, awesome. The Serbian a capella group *Viva Vox* amazed everybody with their great voices and arrangements and when it started to rain, the "Voodoo-Funk" group *Mop Mop* from Germany and Italy set the right atmosphere for dancing in the rain.

To my amazement, I found out the next day, that Sunday is apparently sports-day in Serbia. Or maybe not. Well, never mind, at least the organizers organized a sport activity which consisted of a training session in the martial art called Aikido, held by one of the organizers who is an Aikido-Master. The training session involved doing some painful stretching exercises and learning some self-defense techniques. In the afternoon, the organizers took us to visit a local recording studio. Here, a self-taught recording engineer, who is actually a lawyer, introduced us to his recording studio and told us how he gained technical knowledge about sound engineering in times when Europe still was divided. In the evening, the last day of the Jazz festival started. The main act of this evening were *The Blues Brothers Band* which, like all the other main acts, were great.

We spent the last day of the exchange at a thermal bath located in the hills of Niš called *Nishka Bania*. We were mainly just hanging around at the park surrounding that thermal bath, playing some group games, some soccer and relaxing after this exhausting week. In the evening we then went to a traditional Serbian Kafana, a sort of Serbian pub, to celebrate the farewell party. Surrounded by traditional Serbian Kafana music, food and drinks, every participant officially thanked the organizers in the name of their LC's. The evening went on with drinking and dancing till the early morning hours.

All in all, those seven days in Niš were a great experience and a lot of fun. I met a lot of interesting new people from all over Europe, made a lot of new friends and got a very nice insight into the Serbian and Balkan culture, which I have grown to like very much during those seven days. I would like to thank all the organizers from LC Niš for organizing such an awesome event and for all the good and fun moments we had together. Živeli!