



HOJSAK & NOVOSEL

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One in a million. These were the odds that two instrumentalists of completely different musical backgrounds would cross paths and start a band that would later become one of the most recognized Croatian cultural brands. But that is actually how the story of Filip Novosel on a Croatian traditional instrument – tambura, and Tihomir Hojsak on a double bass started. An encounter of a sheer coincidence on a local jam session was the spark to start the fire. Coming from two different backgrounds, traditional and classical, with huge love towards jazz and improvised music they started under pseudonym of Bow vs. Plectrum.

Although double bass is widely used in all genres of music, there are only handful of players that are capable to play versatile as Tihomir Hojsak does. Weather it comes to a groovy pizzicato or lyrical bow playing, treatment of double bass as a solo instrument is not something you hear every day. Filip Novosel on the other hand is the only established soloist on a tambura – a stringed guitar like instrument with very specific timbre. He took the instrument mostly associated with weddings and other social celebrations in Croatia to concert halls and jazz clubs all over the world. A pioneer in many things when it comes to tambura found a perfect partner in versatile double bass player.

First album released in 2016 entitled Bow vs. Plectrum immediately made an impact on a regional scene, but also gave the band an opportunity to tour in the US (Los Angeles, San Jose, Pittsburgh, New York, Washington D.C.). Guests that appeared on the album were legends of regional scene like Vlatko Stefanovski on guitar and grammy-awarded Theodosi Spassov on Bulgarian kaval; the most prominent Croatian jazz pianist Matija Dedić and Žan Tetičković on drums. Having such strong guests on the debut album made a huge impact on a duo's credibility.

In 2017, duo made a collaboration with the strings of Zagreb Philharmonic Orchestra and proved not only as great instrumentalists, but also as a great arrangers and orchestrators. In the liner notes of their second album "Strings Only" a BBC Composer Bill Connor stated that "There is no album like this".

Not only classical and jazz musicians spotted Tihomir and Filip but also a major Croatian pop singer – songwriter Gibonni, who didn't waste any time and invited the duo to arrange and record some of his most popular songs in their unique way. The duo was introduced to wider audience performing along Gibonni on several occasions (arenas and sports halls), but also as an opening act at some concerts.

Being marked as cultural ambassadors of Croatia, playing from China to US and in many other European countries, duo played at many high events during the Croatia's European Union presidency in 2020. The performances involved a concerts in Strasbourg's Council of Europe, Embassy of Croatia in Washington D.C., The house of the Blackheads in Riga, Latvia and also in Swedish museum of natural history in Stockholm, Sweden.

Just when it seemed that the duo is ready to establish globally, COVID pandemic shut down all the music industry and due to pandemic all their concerts got cancelled. Duo stayed active creating their fourth album "Traditional Songbook". This album puts a highlight on diversity of Croatian traditional music. After the pandemic they started promoting the album on concerts with refreshed playlist. The audience embraced it even more, especially song entitled Hojsak Lindo – which combines Indian konnakol and traditional dance from Dubrovnik – lindo. This tune was also recognized by the Indian ambassador to Croatia, Mr. Raj Srivastava who recommended them for cultural exchange tour in India which duo did in November of 2023.



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In the meantime, the duo continued their collaboration with Theodosii Spassov, and released their first live album called Duckling Soup. The album had a promotion both in Croatia and Bulgaria and made an impression on maestro Matija Fortuna, chief conductor of Tambura orchestra of Croatian Radiotelevision who invited them for a special concert in which Tihomir and Filip will once again show their arranging skills, but this time in arrangements for tambura orchestra in a project called "Duckling soup REARRANGED". Throughout 2025, they performed numerous concerts celebrating 1,100 years of the Croatian Kingdom, featuring their original three-movement work *Duo Concerto for Tambura and Double Bass*, also known as *The Royal Concerto*.

Regardless whether they perform as duo or with guests, Hojsak & Novosel continue to amaze audiences around the world.



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