**Opera Industriale in the Rijeka Port**

Before the eyes of Europe, Rijeka pays homage to its workers, artistic avant-garde and the tradition of the region that surrounds it, whilst at the same time reminding us of the fundamental social values on which modern Europe was built.

**Rijeka Port – Port of Diversity**

The central opening programme takes place in the Rijeka Port, a space that, surrounded by piers and the Molo Longo, represents a strong point of identity for Rijeka. In the history and present of the city, the port was and is a **symbol of a modern and open Rijeka**. Here, ships would sail into the city, and bring with them people, ideas, innovations, invaders, and liberators. It is the port that made Rijeka enticing to all, and it was thanks to the port that Rijeka survived and endured. Generations of port workers and seafarers provided for their families by working in the port and on the sea.

But it was much more than that – the port indirectly expanded the horizon and outlook of the people of Rijeka and the surrounding region, and made them into an open and tolerant people who embrace diversity, and who, when faced with something different and new, see opportunity and possibility rather than rejection and denial. It is for precisely this reason that the port has been selected as the venue for the European Capital of Culture opening ceremony.

**With the symbolism of this space, Rijeka is sending a message to Europe about the significance of the Port of Diversity**, and about the harmony that is only possible if there is a safe harbour accepting sails of all colours.

**Work and pride, rebellion and the avant-garde, heritage and tradition**

In the central artistic programme of the opening ceremony, Rijeka thematically gathers important parts of its identity in the urban ***Opera Industriale***, based on the musical template of the Rijeka art duo **JMZM – Josip Maršić**(CRO) and**Zoran Medved** (CRO) – and on the orchestration of the Croatian composer, maestro **Fran Đurović** (CRO). More than a hundred performers will perform on the big stage, located at De Franceschi’s Pier in the Rijeka Port, with the programme even involving the audience.

Welders, sparks, the noise of grinders and drills, metalware and ironworks – **symbols of labour and the workers who built Rijeka with pride**. With the sounds of industry, the opening ceremony expresses respect for and pays homage to the working class and conveys a message about the dignity and strength of workers in the life of a modern city.

Labour, new ideas, the city’s industry and its rise represent the bedrock on which the historic and contemporary Rijeka was built. It is here, in the city that has always boldly pursued progress, that the poet of the obscene grew up, an uncompromising artist who announced the arrival of a European avant-garde with the power of his written word – **Janko Polić Kamov**.  With its opening programme, Rijeka brings the energy of his lyrics, upholding thereby the European status and magnitude of its author. Kamov transcended the physical boundaries of Rijeka and Croatia, as well as the artistic boundaries of Europe at the time, ushering in a new era, a revolution, and a literary avant-garde.

Kamov lived in a Rijeka divided between the Hungarian and Croatian governments, as accustomed to change as all future generations of this city, which saw incredibly frequent changes of rule under which it has developed throughout its history. The arrivals of different conquerors, their passage through the city, and their strength and power have woven into Rijeka an innate clarity in distinguishing good from evil. This is why, from its more recent history, Rijeka wholeheartedly nurtures its **legacy of European historical anti-fascism**, reflected today in the openness and tolerance of its citizens, and their respect for human rights. This historical European anti-fascist position of Rijeka is also emphasized in the opening programme, reminding Europe of the fundamental social values on which it was built in the modern period, after the suffering of the last pan-European war.

It is a city whose past was marked by borders that opened precisely because it learned how to transcend, ignore and change them. The creative energy and the power of artists were a reflection of their resistance in times when the position and goals of art were diminished and questioned. It was this resistance, but also the city’s orientation towards the Western European cultural circle, that created the propulsive **energy of Rijeka’s punk and rock**, and the power of the sound of electric guitars, which represented a rebellious and bold Rijeka at the time.

And finally, not forgetting for a single moment one tradition and its all-encompassing, almost magical energy upon which life in the city rests in its primordial form, Rijeka is concluding its opening ceremony with the strongest sound that has echoed through it since ancient times. In an ancient magical pagan ritual, **bell ringers** will create an enormous noise with their bells, driving away winter and heralding spring in the European Capital of Culture, a new era that Rijeka is entering on 1 February 2020.

**Sound and light**

Devoted to these themes, the ***Opera Industriale*** is performed live by numerous performers to backing tracks, combining sounds of the city, industry and noise, classical instruments, choral singing, ringing bells and sounds of the audience, which is actively involved in the performance. Sound, music and noise, effects created by a combination of light and darkness, powerful symbols of Rijeka and Europe – this is the crux of the attractive opening ceremony programme.

The Opera Industriale is performed by the **House of Extreme Musical Theatre** of **Damir Bartol Indoš** (CRO) in collaboration with the Rumorists, who play unique instruments – the schachtophones – and musicians playing two prepared pianos, guitars, bass, drums and the saxophone.  The performance also includes a particularly intriguing **Finnish men’s chorus that performs by shouting**, rattling and screaming – Mieskuoro Huutajat (FI). Also performing on the main stage is the mixed choir **Jeka Primorja**, led by **Igor Vlajnić** (CRO) and an **orchestra of strings and wind instruments on cellos**, the double bass, clarinets, trumpets and trombones. An ensemble of **twenty-five Rijeka guitarists**, **ten drummers, dancers and a workers’ orchestra of grinders**, welders and sparks are also included in the performance. The audience, situated along the Molo Longo, is given the opportunity to ring, cheer, make noise and create light, thus participating in the performance as a **living instrument that represents the people – the most powerful part of the city’s identity**.

A number of **custom designed spatial light installations** will be positioned at several locations within the port, with **smaller illuminated boats** also taking part in the programme. Screens arranged throughout the port area will show a video that combines the performance on the main stage, images of the audience on the Molo Longo, and other visual elements.  The **Pixel Wall**, a light installation positioned in front of the Maritime Passenger Terminal building on the Molo Longo, shows text messages of various content and select pictograms, as does the **Migrant Waves** light installation further below on the breakwater. Light installations are also positioned on the Ri Department Store building and backstage on De Franceschi’s Pier. At three different locations leading to the port, spatial installations are placed – **kaleidoscopes** composed of a modular scaffolding and lighting that illuminates the interior space.  The end of the ceremony will be visually marked by **fireworks and a special artistic light installation** by a contemporary art group from Mexico, **Ale de la Puente**.

**Audience**

The area intended for the audience extends along the entire port area, on all piers.  **The Molo Longo auditorium is also the area envisaged for the audience participation in the programme.** With a part of the programme taking place centrally on the main stage on De Franceschi’s Pier and other parts of the programme arranged elsewhere along the waterfront, viewers and participants can watch the programme live on video screens in the port area.