**Rijeka, February 1st 2020**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Opera Industriale transforms Rijeka Port into an amazing stage, leading Rijeka into a year of the European Capital of Culture**

Tens of thousands of people attended the central EcoC opening programme hat communicated the courageous messages on the values upon which modern Europe is founded

This evening, the uncommon Opera Industriale transformed Rijeka Port into a huge stage, where thousands of performers performed, accompanied by the sounds of work, industry and noise. The Opera Industriale’s final song “O Bella Ciao” symbolically reminded Europe and Croatia of the freedom which the citizens of Europe have been enjoying for the last 75 years with words “È questo il fiore del partigiano, morto per la libertà! / This is a flower for the partisan, who died for the liberty”. Messages appearing on light installations were: RIJEKA LET'S GO; FORZA FIUME; PORT OF DIVERSITY; TOLERANCE; RESPECT; COEXISTENCE; PEACE, ANTIFASCISM; ART; EUROPE, CULTURE

“Through the programme in the port, in front of the eyes of Europe, Rijeka paid respect to its workers and its industrial heritage, its avant-garde art and the tradition of its surrounding region, at the same time reminding us of the core values the modern Europe was built on. Rijeka Port was chosen as the symbol of modern and open Rijeka, for which reason the motto of European Capital of Culture Rijeka is **Port of Diversity**. The uniqueness of this program was ensured by the huge audience which rang the cowbells, cheered, created noise and lights, and thus participated in performance both as a living instrument and as the very reason for the existence and realization of the European Capital of Culture,“ said **Emina Višnić**, Rijeka 2020 CEO immediately after the ending of Opera Industriale.

Opera Industriale is based on the musical framework designed by Rijeka art duo JMZM **(Josip Maršić and Zoran Medved)** and orchestrated by Croatian composer, maestro **Frano Đurović.** Besides them, this central opening programme in Rijeka Port featured numerous artists, including **DB Indoš – House of Extreme Musical Theatre** with **Rumoristi, the mixed Choir of The Opening of European Capital of Culture** which waslead by  **Jeka Primorja choir** and fronted by Igor Vlajnić, and string and wind orchestra. The Finish Choir **Mieskuoro Huutajat** offered an especially attractive performance that included screaming, shouting and rattling. Opera Industriale also featured around twenty Rijeka guitarists, ten drummers, dancers and the workers’ orchestra of grinders, welders and sparks.

This urban Rijeka opera has brought forth a reminder of the rich and stormy Rijeka past, along with the messages of respect for the **power of workers in the life of a modern city,** the working people who proudly built Rijeka. In regard to the tackled themes, this performance also included a reference to **Janko Polić Kamov,** the greatest Rijeka writer and a predecessor of the European avant-garde, whose verses were recited in a very peculiar style. A Finnish choir of screaming men sang the hymns of all the states in which Rijeka existed during the past hundred years. During Opera’s grand finale, the famous song of Italian antifascists “O Bella Ciao” was jointly sang by all the performers: rock guitarists, drummers, The Choir of The ECoC Opening, orchestra, Finnish Choir Huutajat and DB Indoš along with a large part of audience. Through the messages that pervaded this programme, Rijeka clearly demonstrated the values it cultivates and represents, the messages it wishes to send to both Europe and the world. Programme’s narrator was **Zoran Prodanović Prlja,** a well known Croatian rock frontman. The spectacle was rounded with spectacular fireworks.

**Rijeka has been having fun from the early mourning hours**

Following Opera Industriale, entertainment and fun will continue to the early morning hours, in Rijeka’s cafes and clubs, its streets and squares.

Welcome to Rijeka, the European Capital of Culture, one of the most interesting European cities this year.

This is a message from Rijeka!