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## Famous Ljubljanians

**Most of the famous Ljubljanians made a name for themselves with their innovative work, which ranges from the historic reforms introduced by Primož Trubar, the father of the written Slovenian language, to the seminal scientific work of Jurij Vega and Friderik Pregl, the unique architectural oeuvre of Jože Plečnik, which represents one of the pinnacles of the 20th century architecture, and the work of the alternative music group Laibach, renowned for their singular provocative artistic stance.**

Particularly significant in the history of Ljubljana and Slovenia was the creativity of Slovenian artists. Caught up in the swirl of European history and faced by moments when the existence of the Slovenian nation was endangered, they helped the awareness of Slovenia's identity as a nation survive through the hardest of times. Always keeping pace with time, they absorbed European influences and, using them in their art, adapted them to the characteristics of the Slovenian soul. Their creations, often exceptionally innovative, represent a fine contribution to the treasury of European culture.

### Primož Trubar (1508-1586)

Primož Trubar, one of the most important figures to contribute to the development of Slovenian culture, was born in 1508 in the village of Rašica near the town of Velike Lašče (Ljubljana's surrounding area) and died in 1586 in Derendingen, Germany. Being a central figure in the Slovenian Protestant movement, he acted in accordance with the belief that church ceremonies should be performed in the language of the common people. Persecuted by religious authorities in his homeland, he fled to Germany. In 1550 in Tübingen he published *Catechismus* and *Abecedarium*, the first two books ever printed in Slovenian.

### Janez Vajkard Valvasor (1641-1693)

Janez Vajkard Valvasor entered history as the first chronicler of Slovenian towns and villages and their residents' life habits and cultural rites. He was born into a noble family and trained as a soldier, but he dedicated most of his life to scientific work, collecting and research into the Duchy of Carniola, which occupied the central part of the present-day Slovenia.

The work of his lifetime is *The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola* (Die Ehre deß Herzogthums Crain). This vast book of 3,532 pages illustrated with countless drawings produced by Valvasor himself was published in 1689 in Nuremberg, Germany. Aimed at presenting Valvasor's homeland to a wide German-speaking public, it was written in German.

### Jurij Vega (1754-1802)

Baron Jurij Vega, one of the most prominent Slovenians, was born into a modest peasant family in the mountain village of Zagorica near the village of Dol pri Ljubljani. His major contribution to the world of science was his improvement of the accuracy and usefulness of logarithmic tables, the most widely used calculation tool until the mid-20th century, when tables of logarithms began to be replaced by electronic

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calculators. Vega is also honoured for his achievements in astronomy, ballistics and other technical sciences. He was active as a mathematician, physicist, geodesist, meteorologist and an artillery officer.

### **Rihard Jakopič (1869-1943)**

The painter Rihard Jakopič is probably the most renowned Slovenian fine artist of the first half of the 20th century. He is credited with being the originator of Impressionist art in Slovenia, whose other major exponents were Matej Sternen, Matija Jama and Ivan Grohar. Jakopič studied and worked not only in Ljubljana but also in Vienna and Munich. In Ljubljana he built the city's first art gallery, known as the Jakopič Pavilion (Jakopičev pavilijon) and set up the first historical exhibition of the 19th century Slovenian art. As a member and co-founder of the Sava Artistic Society (Umetniško društvo Sava), he took part in a highly acclaimed exhibition of Slovenian Impressionist art held in Vienna in 1903.

### **Jože Plečnik (1872-1957)**

The architect and urban planner Jože Plečnik left behind some of the most important works of the European architecture of first half of the 20th century. In creating his architectural and design works he developed his own distinctive style characterized by a modernist reduction and an original synthesis of historical and modern elements. His major works in Ljubljana include the Triple Bridge, the colonnade of Ljubljana's central market, the barrier on the Ljubljanica river, the National and University Library, the Tivoli park's main promenade, the Cobblers' Bridge and the Žale cemetery. Due to his unique design, the so called Plečnik's Ljubljana rates among the 20th century's most prominent total works of art.

More information: <http://www.plecnik.net/>

### **Friderik Pregl (1869-1930)**

Friderik Pregl was a general practitioner and university professor of medical chemistry who immortalized himself in the history of Slovenian and international science as a Nobel Prize winner in 1923. He received his Nobel Prize for his improvement of Liebig's methodology for quantitative organic microanalysis at the Institute for Medical Chemistry in Innsbruck, Austria.

### **Marjana Lipovšek (1946)**

The internationally renowned Slovenian concert and opera mezzo-soprano and alto Marjana Lipovšek comes from a well known Slovenian musical family. She regularly collaborates with the world's foremost orchestras, such as the Vienna, Berlin and New York Philharmonic orchestras, the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, and performs under such famous conductors as C. Abbado, N. Harnoncourt, W. Sawallisch, G. Solti and many others.

Her first Delilah in Saint-Saëns's opera Samson and Delilah performed at the Bregenz Festival in Austria was a spectacular success. She gathered her initial experience as a member of the ensemble of the Vienna State Opera.

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Later she sang with the Hamburg and Bavarian State Operas. In 1993 she was awarded the prestigious title of "Bavarian Chamber Singer" and in May 1996 in Vienna the honorary and professional title of "Chamber Singer" in recognition of her outstanding artistic achievement. She has also received the most prestigious national award for cultural achievement, the Prešeren Prize.

### **Irena Grafenauer (1957)**

Irena Grafenauer, one of the world's most distinguished flutists, is the most internationally renowned Slovenian solo instrumentalist. She was awarded first prizes at international music competitions in Belgrade (1974), Geneva (1978) and Munich (1979). From 1977 to 1987 she was principal flutist with the famous Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra under the artistic direction of Rafael Kubelik and Sir Colin Davis. Since 1987 she has been teaching flute at the Mozarteum University of Salzburg, Austria. In 2005 she received the highest Slovenian cultural award, the Prešeren Prize for lifetime achievement.

### **Tomaž Humar (1969-2009)**

Tomaž Humar, the most successful Slovenian alpinist, achieved international renown in 1999 for his solo ascent of the north face of the Himalayan peak of Dhaulagiri (8167 m). He has completed around 1,500 ascents, 70 of them first ascents of peaks in Slovenia and abroad. Since 1987 he had been a member of the Kamnik Alpine Club (Alpinistični odsek Kamnik). In 1990 he attained accredited status as an alpinist, and in 1993 the status of an alpine climbing instructor and mountain rescuer. By profession he was a customs officer. In November 2009 he died in a climbing accident while ascending the Mount Langtang Lirung in the Himalayas.

More information: <http://www.humar.com/>

### **Lara Bohinc (1972)**

Lara Bohinc is a young internationally acclaimed fashion jewellery designer living and working in London. She has collaborated with some of the brightest stars in the fashion world such as Gucci, Costume National, Lanvin, Exté, Guy Laroche and Julien McDonald. Her jewellery is worn by Madonna, Janet Jackson, Cameron Diaz, Lucy Lu, Sarah Jessica Parker, Christina Aguilera and several other film and music stars.

More information: <http://www.larabohinc.com/>

### **Peter Mankoč (1978)**

Peter Mankoč was the best Slovenian swimmer in the last few decades. He was one of the youngest competitors at the Atlanta Olympics in 1996. After that his sports career rocketed. He is a five-time consecutive European champion in the 100-metre individual medley. He has won six gold, two silver and four bronze European Championship medals and several 100 and 200-metre medleys at World Cup competitions.

### **Nika Zupanc**

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Product and interior designer Nika Zupanc became a globally recognised name with the launch of the Lolita lamp, her first object to be produced by Moooi. Zupanc works as an independent designer who is constantly involved in fresh projects that grow out of distinctive interpretations of modern culture, contemporary design and available technological options. Her products are part of the range of distinguished design companies such as Moooi, Moroso and Nodus. Her praised limited edition collections and installations are exhibited around the world, sometimes as part of high-end collaborations like the one with Rossana Orlandi. Along the way, Zupanc continuously produces objects under her own brand and is involved in various interior projects.

More information: <http://www.nikazupanc.com/>

### **Laibach (1980)**

The world renowned Slovenian alternative band Laibach developed their distinctive expression in music in collaboration with the artistic movement known as the NSK (Neue Slowenische Kunst). Their own original style combines elements of industrial, rock, contemporary classical and electronic music. Founded in the mining town of Trbovlje in 1980 and named after the old German name for Ljubljana, they won recognition as a distinctive cultural phenomenon back in the time of the former Yugoslavia, particularly for their provocative use of the symbolism and aesthetics related to totalitarian ideologies.

More information: <http://www.laibach.nsk.si/>

*Text last updated: August 2015*

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