

The Amazing Story of the Beauties from Lipica

In the production of the Kolut Association from Postojna, a documentary film titled "The Incredible Story of the Beauties from Lipica" has been released, narrating the story of the legendary rescue of Lipizzaner horses during World War II. The premiere took place at the Park of Military History in Pivka and was attended by the Czech Ambassador, His Excellency Júraj Chmiel, Chargé d'Affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Slovenia, Her Excellency Melania Arreaga, Mayor of the Municipality of Pivka Robert Smrdelj, and the Director of the Lipica Stud Farm, Tatjana Vošinek Pucer.

Slovenian Lipizzaner horses in Lipica represent one of the most important cultural and national treasures of the country. Their fate was extremely uncertain during World War II when they were taken by the Nazis to the Czech town of Hostouň, where a breeding center for horses from the best stud farms in Europe was established. At the end of the war, the horses faced great danger as the area came under the control of the Red Army. The U.S. Army, led by General Patton, decided to embark on a daring military rescue operation called "Operation Cowboy" to save the horses and bring them to the West. "It was actually a combination of exceptional circumstances, a miracle if you will, that the Lipizzaner horses were saved at that time. The right people were in the right place, people who had an immense love for horses and were willing to risk their lives to save them," says Mag. Janko Boštjančič, Director of the Park of Military History in Pivka, speaking about the operation in the film.

"Lipica is not just a stud farm and not just a tourist destination, but above all, an important cultural monument. Not only because of its age but also because of the content of its historic buildings, the exceptional cultural landscape of the stud farm, and, of course, the Lipizzaner herd, which gives it this unique character and connects everything together. Everything we have in Lipica was created because of the Lipizzaner and for the Lipizzaner," emphasizes Mag. Janez Rus, Head of Horse Breeding and Equestrianism at the Lipica Stud Farm, in the film.

During the presentation, the Czech Ambassador, His Excellency Júraj Chmiel, highlighted the remarkable success of Slovenia and seven other countries in inscribing the tradition of Lipizzaner breeding on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Chargé d'Affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Slovenia, Her Excellency Melania Arreaga, added that there is also good cooperation not only with the Park of Military History in Pivka but also with the Kolut Cultural Association, as they have supported the film production of this Postojna-based association for the second time.

The film screening was accompanied by the opening of a traveling exhibition titled "Lipizzaners - Living Legends" consisting of four panels, prepared at the Park of Military History in Pivka. The story of the Lipizzaner horses from 1945 was placed in a broader context with this exhibition. Lipizzaners were not relocated from Lipica only during World War II; they were already moved four times under Austria due to wars - once during World War I and three times during the Napoleonic Wars. The Austrian court, as the owner of the Lipica herd, considered permanently relocating the Lipizzaners

somewhere in the interior of the monarchy, to a safer location, given the challenging logistical feats, such as the migration of over 300 horses, including pregnant mares and young foals, over hundreds of kilometers. However, the Lipizzaners always returned to Lipica because that's where they belong and because there is no better place for their breeding in the extensive Habsburg Empire, which includes all of Central Europe, as emphasized by Janko Boštjančič, Director of the Park of Military History in Pivka, in his speech.

The incredible story of the rescue of the Lipizzaner horses was brought to life on film by the Kolut Association with the support of the U.S. Embassy in Slovenia, the Municipality of Postojna, the Park of Military History in Pivka, the Lipica Stud Farm, and Triglav Insurance. The screenplay was written by Drago Mislej Mef, and the film was directed by Dušan Milavec. The role of General Patton was played by actor Vladimir Jurc, and other participants included Marija Stopar, daughter of horseman Andrej Stopar from Lokve, and witnesses from the Czech Republic: Miroslav Rauch, Mayor of the Czech town of Hostouň, Michaela Kodadová, a horse breeder in Svržno, and Bohuslav Balcar, a writer from Domžlice. The portrayal of military events was co-created by Igor Volk, Borut Frantar, Nejc Muha, Aleš Čarman from the Oldtimer Club Škofljica with their jeeps, and employees of the Lipica Stud Farm: Matej Valenčič, Urban Kranjc, and Nikola Jakovljevič. The riders of the Lipizzaner horses were Urban Kranjc - 802 F. STRANA XI, Matej Valenčič - 511 F. SLAVINA XIX, Miro Dragić - 647 M. ALLEGRA I, Urban Kranjc - 573 S. GRATIOSA III, Miran Mavec - 631 C. BONADEA XXVI, Gregor Turk - 759 P. BATOSTA XXXII, and Matej Valenčič - 312 P. SAMIRA XVIII.

The production team also includes Director of Photography Manuel Tomšič, cameramen Manuel Tomšič, Neja Kalan, and Luka Vovk Vižintin, designer Tjaša Spetič, music and sound designer Drago Kočič, narration by actor Vladimir Jurc, project and production manager Alenka Furlan Čadež, and executive producer Ernest Zakarija.