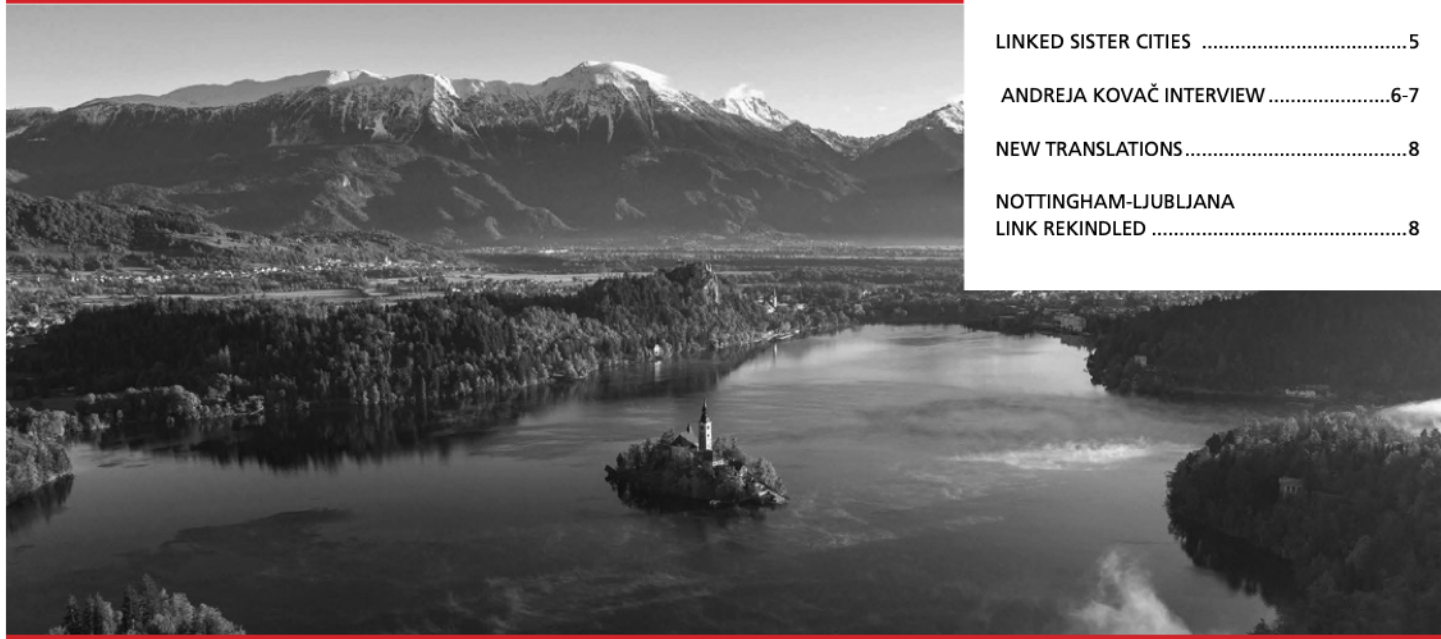




THE SOCIETY
for SLOVENE STUDIES

LETTER

WWW.SLOVENESTUDIES.COM | FALL 2021 | #87



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Secretary's Message... "JOIN US! VLJUDNO VABLJENI!"

It's a pleasure to invite you to read the latest issue of the Society's newsletter, which was curated and edited by my colleague **Olivia Hellewell** (University of Nottingham) and me. As we began to collect ideas for the fall newsletter, we were motivated to, as usual, track events of note and to display the Slovene-relevant panels at the upcoming Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES) convention. As we researched, I was struck by the number of panels that existed online, and by the range of events in Slovene studies generally now available in virtual form. We could not include all of them in the letter, as not all dates and times lined up with our publication schedule, but the seemingly greater number of online opportunities this year strikes me as exciting for our field, though it must be acknowledged that they were born out of difficult and, for many, devastating pandemic circumstances.

Of course, there is surely nothing better than a face-to-face interaction, and I have always valued my travels to Slovenia and to ASEEEES for the opportunity to connect with folks from around the world. Yet such face-to-face communication is not always feasible, even when pandemic conditions do not obstruct travel. The collaboration Olivia and I sustain--from Nottingham in the UK to Amherst in the US--takes place over Zoom, and simply wouldn't happen without it. Maintaining parts of conventions and other Slovene studies business online allows for more participation and

different forms of accessibility, providing opportunities to connect across continents over a shared commitment to Slovene studies.

I invite all of you to read the exciting pieces in this newsletter which showcase the work that can be accomplished across borders, often online, from Olivia's conversation with Andreja Kovač about translating Cankar's work with a group of international translators across time zones, to two pieces that draw our attention to enduring cross-border connections: Josef Laposa's profile on sister cities Indianapolis and Piran and Katie Harrison's write-up on the Nottingham-Ljubljana link. As you read these articles, and other parts of the letter, I invite your reflection and ideas for future articles or profiles. You may reach out at any time to kristina.reardon@gmail.com.

And if you have registered for ASEEEES, **please consider joining us for our annual ASEEEES/Society for Slovene Studies meeting online on 2 December at 2-4 P.M. Central Standard Time.** Our meeting is normally held in person at the convention, but for a second year in a row we have opted to host it online to maximize participation--not just among those not ready or able to travel (myself included) who might otherwise attend in person... but to provide a space for more members to connect and interact across borders and time zones. ■

Kristina Reardon,
SSS Secretary & Newsletter Co-Editor, Amherst College

FROM THE TREASURER

NEW MEMBERS

Mackenzie Celestina

Columbus, Ohio

Kate Kligman

San Francisco, California

Andreja Kovac

Mississauga, Ontario

Bojan Mihajlovic

Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Robert Rockwell

Middletown, Maryland

Craig Toocheck

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

CONTRIBUTIONS TO SSS FUNDS

Rado Lencek Graduate**Student Prize**

Gretchen Bakke

Maya Margaronis

Karen Zuga

Joseph Velikonja**Undergraduate Student Prize**

Michael Antolin

Gretchen Bakke

Josef Laposi

Maya Margaronis

Printing Fund

Michael Antolin

Michael Cummins

Ludmila Lazar

Timothy Pogacar

Center Fund

Marieta Jamsek-Rolnik

**Thank you to all members who
generously contributed to
the SSS funds!**

Timothy Pogačar, editor, *Slovene Studies*

FROM THE EDITOR

Volume 43, number 2 (fall 2021) is slightly delayed due to technical issues. Members can expect to receive it in December or January 2022. Thanks to all who contributed articles and reviews to the journal during the past year, and thanks to those who have helped maintain the journal's quality by (anonymously) evaluating submissions.

Timothy Pogačar, editor, *Slovene Studies*

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THE SOCIETY FOR SLOVENE STUDIES AT THE 2021 ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ASEES* NOVEMBER 18-20 AND DECEMBER 2-3, 2021

*Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies

compiled by **Veronica Aplenc**, SSS Program Coordinator (vaplenc@yahoo.com)

After a year online, the 2021 annual convention of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies will resume its face-to-face format in New Orleans, Louisiana from November 18-21, 2021 with the theme "Diversity, Intersectionality, Interdisciplinarity." The program explains that the theme considers issues of class and economic diversity alongside ethnicity, gender, language, race, religion, and sexuality. In addition to a diverse array of panels related to Slovenia on the New Orleans program, there will also be an online follow-up from December 1-3, 2021 for those who cannot or may not wish to attend in person.

Details on the 2021 convention, including registration fees for the online portion, may be found as aseees.org

All times listed in CST, the time zone of the conference.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2021

5:00pm | New Orleans

The Major Genre?: The Socio-Cultural Coordinates and Politics of Slovenian Folk-Pop

The panelists identify and explore Slovenian folk-pop as an invented tradition. They trace the varying symbolic significance of the genre since its invention in the mid-20th century, pointing out gradual transformations in the genre's aesthetic and popular appeal.

8:00pm | New Orleans

Film Screening: Active (citizen)

This is a film screening. 'Active (citizen)' focuses on the efforts of a Roma refugee from Kosovo living in Novi Sad, Serbia, who tries to improve not only his own life but also that of other citizens of the city. It is a visual ethnography focused on the material, sensory and kinaesthetic realities of the protagonist's work and its political and social significance – the daily activism beyond the scope of public recognition.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2021

2:00pm | New Orleans

Relations, Transfers, and Discursive Spaces in East-Central Europe during the Seventies and Eighties

The purpose of the panel is to present the relations, transfers and dialogues between the political and economic elites and different opposition groups in East-Central Europe in the 1970s and 1980s. Research examines the political and economic processes of the region in a transnational approach.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2021

2:00pm | Online

Coping with Diversity: Minority, Youth, and Associational Culture in Interwar Yugoslavia

Through understanding the civil society and public sphere as a space of interplay of different politics of belonging and loyalty, the panel will draw the attention to the way associations were conducive to mobilizing political and ideological support for the state and, in other cases, turning its citizens against it.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2021

8:00am | Online

Visions of Yugoslavia: Perspectives on Post-Imperial State-Building

This panel presents three distinct perspectives on state-building from the interwar Yugoslav political scene: variations of republican political thought in Serbian, Croatian and Slovene regional contexts, pro-centralist criticisms of the Slovene People's Party leader Dr Anton Korošec from within the Slovene opposition, and British Foreign Office perceptions of the Yugoslav constitutional debates which characterised the period.

10:00am | Online

Microhistories of Yugoslav Socialism: Ethnicity, Class, and Gender in Croatia and Slovenia in the 1970s and 1980s

The four papers in this panel focus on the local level to provide microhistories of Yugoslav socialism, particularly in Croatia and Slovenia. They are placed at the intersection of ethnicity, class and gender, in the realm of labour, migration, political

activism, memory culture, everyday conflict and cooperation.

10:00am | Online

Europe's Last Peasant War?: Rethinking the 'Age of Catastrophe' in East Central Europe

This panel presents the initial findings of the project 'Europe's Last Peasant War: Violence and Revolution in Austria-Hungary and its Successors, 1917-1945' funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (UK). The project aims to rethink the most catastrophic decades in European history from the perspective of peasant villagers in the continent's most unstable and combustible geopolitical region, east central Europe.

12:00pm | Online

Peace, Trust and the Discourse of Power in the Disintegrating Yugoslavia and its Aftermath

This panel aims to investigate and re-evaluate several narratives which have been a constant in academic discourse regarding the Balkans and the collapse of Yugoslavia in 1991.

12:00pm | Online

Post-Habsburg Borderlands and their Institutions, 1918-1939

Recent scholarship has just begun to explore institutional transitions from the Habsburg Monarchy to the successor states in the aftermath of the First World War. Each of the papers on this panel takes a regional approach to examine institutional transitions—in schools, in the Catholic Church, and in the use of political symbols—in post-Habsburg borderlands.

SOCIETY FOR SLOVENE STUDIES

2021 NEW MEMBERS

We welcome new members into the Society for Slovene Studies and invite them to email kristina.reardon@gmail.com with biographical information to be featured in a future newsletter! Here, we present the thumbnail biographies of five members who joined our ranks in 2021, with gratitude to these members for their generosity in sharing details about their Slovene connections, whether academic, familial, or otherwise.

GEOFF PUCKETT

A former Disney Imagineer professionally active across more than four decades, Puckett is a writer and consulting producer for entertainment, learning and museum endeavors. His travels through 37 countries provide a colorful canvas to source project ideas and story solutions. In 2019, Slovenia captured his interest. Geoff enjoys crafting environments where people theatrically share their cultures, as he did while creatively producing New York City's 'Times Square 2000' millennium celebration. Together, how might we present centuries of Slovenian stories in memorable, 21st century ways?

ROBBIE ROCKWELL

Rockwell is a graduate student at New York University pursuing a Masters in History. Prior to that, he received his bachelor's degree in history from Penn State University in 2019. His research interests are mainly focused on 20th century US political history, but he also has a strong interest in Slovene history due to his Slovene heritage. He has been a member of the Slovene National Benefit Society (SNPJ) since birth, and he is currently very involved in the organization, which is where his interest in Slovenian history was sparked.

CRAIG TOOCHECK

Craig is a transportation planner based in his hometown of Pittsburgh. He has previously lived in Washington DC (where he studied Architecture at the Catholic University of America, which holds monthly Slovenian masses in the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception on the CUA campus), Italy (for study abroad), Germany

(as part of the Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange for Young Professionals), the Bay Area (where he studied Urban Planning at UC Berkeley), and New York City. His great-grandparents Jože and Marija Kučič came to Pittsburgh from Dolenjska around 1910, and he still has relatives in Črneča Vas, near Kostanjevica na Krki, whom he and his family have kept in contact with and have visited on a few occasions since. Craig is an amateur accordionist and can play a few Slovenian tunes; likes to cook occasional Slovene dishes, including baking a dozen or so *potice* around Christmas and Easter; and can speak a bit of Slovenian (though that is frequently confused with Serbian learned from friends and neighbors growing up).

ANDREJA KOVAČ

Andreja is a Slovenian stage director, producer, arts educator, and administrator currently based in Canada. Andreja sits on the Board of Directors for UNIMA Canada and the Ontario Puppetry Association. She is the founding Artistic Director of Canadian professional theatre Crane Creations Theatre Company. She studied stage directing both in Slovenia at the AGRFT (National Conservatory for Theatre, Radio, Film and Television) and at the prestigious National Theatre School of Canada in Montreal. Her work as a stage director has been awarded internationally and has toured extensively. Her directing credits included Shakespeare, contemporary work as well as opera and work for young audiences. Andreja is passionate about promoting Slovenian arts and culture and advancing intercultural dialogue about topics such as immigration and inclusion.

KENZIE CELESTINA

Kenzie Celestina is a second-generation Slovenian-American. Her grandparents are refugees who fled Slovenia during World War II. She grew up celebrating her Slovenian culture and was looking to be more involved in the community. She notes that she still has a lot of family in Ljubljana and is currently working on the process of acquiring dual citizenship.

2021 EVENTS OF NOTE

19 NOVEMBER: For the fifth time, the Slovenian Australian Academic Association will be hosting its annual conference on 19 November 2021. Taking place in Adelaide, Australia, parts will also be available online. More than 25 speakers on a range of topics--from Slovene academic connections, to aviation, to the role of wine centers--will be featured, and keynotes include talks by: Ivo Boscarol, Professor Alice Gorman, and Professor Laura Grenfell. Registration is free and may be found at saaa.si by navigating to the events tab.

18–21 NOVEMBER: The annual Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies convention. New Orleans, Louisiana, USA. See below for more information on Slovene-specific panels.

1–3 DECEMBER: The annual Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies convention. Online. See below for more information on Slovene-specific panels.

2 DECEMBER, 3 P.M.: Society for Slovene Studies virtual annual meeting during the virtual Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies convention (registration required).

1–3 APRIL, 2022: Midwest Slavic Conference at the Ohio State University

INDIANAPOLIS AND PIRAN: **LINKED SISTER CITIES**

by Josef M. Lapos, IPSCC president



Piran, Slovenia



Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

The primary purposes of the Indianapolis-Piran Sister City Committee are to promote and preserve Slovenian heritage in Indianapolis and maintain connections with our ancestral homeland by educational and cultural exchange with officials in Piran.

The Indianapolis-Piran Sister City Committee (IPSCC) was established September 2, 2001 at the Indianapolis Slovenian Festival. **A brief synopsis of activities comes in three main areas:**

EDUCATIONAL

The most important IPSCC goals are educational exchanges. Video conferences between Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis and University of Primorska tourism classes occur every fall semester. Indianapolis Public School #2, Allisonville Elementary School, and Franklin Central High School have had video connections with the Ciril Kosmač school in Piran. Students enjoy the opportunity to talk to their counterparts about school, pop culture, family, music and, of course - pizza!

CULTURAL

IPSCC participated in the Indianapolis Sister Cities Festivals and from 2013 through 2015. "Slovenian Day of Culture" programs were held at the Indianapolis Slovenian National Home (SNH) to celebrate France Prešeren. Books on Indianapolis history have been shipped to Piran Municipal Library, including the program for the 1940 opening of the SNH and Indianapolis Italian community.

PERSONAL

The essence of our Sister Cities relationship is person-to-person diplomacy. In addition to regular electronic communications, reciprocal visits have been made to the respective cities. Slovenian musicians have also performed concerts at SNH. IPSCC is among the nine Sister Cities of Indianapolis and participates in Indianapolis Sister Cities International activities.

Slovenians were recruited to Indianapolis during the 1880s to work in foundries and meat packing plants. They settled in the westside neighborhood of Haughville. The two main institutions were the SNH (1918– present) and Holy Trinity Catholic Church (1906-2014). For further information, please feel free to check out the Facebook pages: Indianapolis Piran Sister City Committee and The Slovenian National Home Group of Indianapolis. ■

A CONVERSATION WITH **ANDREJA KOVAČ**

by Olivia Hellewell, SSS Newsletter editor

founding and creative director of
Crane Creations Theatre Company



Andreja recently spearheaded a pioneering project to have all seven of Ivan Cankar's completed plays translated into English, working with a team of translators from across the US and Slovenia. Here she talks with newsletter co-editor Olivia Hellewell, about her work and the project. Olivia and Andreja spent a wonderful hour talking about all things theatre and translation: these are just some of the highlights! Thank you to Andreja for taking the time to share details of this exciting project.

Let's start at the very beginning: can you tell us a bit about the beginnings of your career in theatre?

I'm originally from Maribor, and spent the first 30 years of my life in Slovenia. I studied Theatre and Radio Directing in Ljubljana, at AGRFT. I travelled around Slovenia pursuing a career in theatre – like a kind of Slovenian nomad. I then moved to Canada to follow my heart, and it was there that I founded Crane Creations.

What are your standout memories, or favourite projects, from your time working in theatre in Slovenia?

I have lots! One would have to be directing the inaugural show at the newly-built Puppet Theatre in Maribor. It's rare for a new theatre to be built; they campaigned for 30 years for that theatre, and it was built in the ruins of a 12th century monastery by the river, so it's a beautiful building with state-of-the-art technology. I was invited to direct the opening show on the main stage, and so that was a really special thing.

I also really enjoyed working at Drama, the Slovene National Theatre in Ljubljana. I directed Žanina Mirčevska's *Žrelo* – which I guess we might translate as *Gluttony* – in 2009. It's a modern play, which was a finalist at the Slovene National Drama Festival, so that was a really special show to work on; and I worked with Marko Mandič, who is an amazing actor. And then of course, there have been many collaborations with my most favourite theatre of all: Prešeren Theatre Kranj.

If we move forward to the project we're here to talk about – the translation of 7 plays by Ivan Cankar – could you take us back to the beginning, and tell us how this project came into being?

I was in Canada, and looking to pitch a Slovenian play to a big theatre company here, the Shaw Festival (so named because their mandate states that plays produced must date within the lifetime of George Bernard Shaw). Not only does Cankar fit within that time period really well, but Shaw wrote very socially engaged plays – and so did Cankar. So at the time – this was around 2017/18 – I was convinced that Cankar had

been translated into English. *He must have been!* I thought. So I started searching in the Slovene National Library, but I couldn't find anything. I tried archives, I tried calling the Slovenian PEN Club... and everyone said, "Yeah, of course Cankar is translated into English," but nobody had a translation.

In the summer of 2018, I met with Marinka Poštrak, artistic director at Prešeren Theatre Kranj, and told her that I was looking for translations of Cankar, in order to pitch them in Canada. "Of course he's translated," was her response – but we couldn't find them anywhere. So we had to start thinking: *Ok, what if he really isn't translated... And what if we translated them?* I started researching grants available at the time, and it just so happened that there was an open call for translation funding from the European Union. It appeared that things were beginning to align, and so I proposed to Prešeren Theatre Kranj that I would undertake the grant writing, if they would be happy to partner on the project. We had little hope that we would succeed, but I wrote it, and we received it!

Amazing. So it all began as an idea – a personal project – that was fueled by the discovery that this was an untapped area, and that there was still a lot of work to be done. Can you tell us a bit more about what the project entails?

Yes, absolutely. The project focused on Cankar's entire playwriting opus, and included the translation of all seven of his completed plays. Because we figured: why translate just one or two? Who knows when the next opportunity to tap into such a project would come along. He has some unfinished plays, but we didn't touch those.

At present there aren't any concrete plans for staging, because convincing a theatre to stage a play from a small nation with two million speakers is a really difficult task. Theatres are reliant on ticket sales, and they are very calculated in terms of their programming. We are organising readings, as part of our promotion of the plays, and inviting theatre practitioners to read the scripts, in order to entice the theatres, because

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

we know that the texts are really good. Some contain ideas so relevant to today's world, such as political corruption, division between the rich and the poor... The way that Cankar writes about these issues is very relevant, too: he has complex characters, he has great female characters. In a best case scenario, if we could see a show produced within 3-4 years, that would be the fastest timeline.

The translations will also be published in book and digital form. All translations were completed back in the Spring [of 2021], and are now currently in assembly.

You worked with an incredible group of translators on this project: what was it like to coordinate such a big team?

It was challenging! The translators are spread across different time zones, plus the pandemic hit as the project began, so that impacted on everyone's schedules and we all had to learn how to 'be' online. We could have met online, but I felt that it was my role to stay out of the translation process, and give the translators as much space as possible. It was their baby, and I was there to coordinate.

What sort of things did you consider when framing the project? Did you have any thoughts beforehand about how these plays might be perceived by an anglophone audience?

We put a huge amount of thought into that. I knew that Cankar was perceived differently in Slovenia because we know him; he's such a fundamental writer. You grow up with him, from first grade, reading his stories, and then basically throughout the whole of high school you study his works. But I knew that there were certain topics that English-speaking countries would have a different relationship with, compared to Slovenia. A key one would be the relationship to servitude: in an English-speaking country, the idea of serving your country or government is an honourable one; it's something to be proud of. In the Slovene tradition, the idea of serving someone is a demeaning act. With the title of one of the plays – *Hlapci* (which literally means 'farmhands') – we had a lot of back and forth regarding how to translate it. It's a canonical play, and the central reference deals with the problem of Slovenes as a nation, constantly serving some other Empire. In order to get across the negative connotation of what that meant for Slovenes, we settled on a translation of 'Lackeys', so that it expressed this idea of being under someone else, and that being a negative thing.

The reason he's a canonical author in Slovene is because he talks about Slovenes being a nation; all of his plays are about some people forming a nation, in the name of the nation, fighting for the nation... and yet, the name "Slovenia" is completely absent from the plays. That was a huge surprise to me. So here we have this playwright, writing about the idea of this nation which doesn't even have a name yet, and for me, it's almost like he wrote the nation into existence.

It's interesting to hear how the process of hearing these plays in English led you to see things that you might not have noticed before, despite having studied and known his work for such a long time.

We were shocked at just how *good* Cankar is when we read him in English, and when thinking in terms of other playwrights, such as Chekhov or Ibsen. We created a timeline [which will be published in the box set of translated plays] and it reminds you that he was actually writing these plays before Chekhov, and you literally read a play which reads like the Cherry Orchard. It's the same! And Cankar was writing years before that came out. So that was really shocking to see. And the conflicts in his plays... every character has an arc. You see that Cankar really is a playwright: he's not a novelist, these plays aren't prose written in dialogue. Conflict really is at the centre of the show.

And I imagine that when you start to translate a play, taking it apart and rebuilding it for a different audience, I guess that allows you to see all those constituent parts- the mechanics of it- much more clearly.

Yeah, it's very true – and I think when we read plays it's a very different experience from when we see them on stage. And with Cankar... it surprised me: we had to study him a lot in Slovenia, but I think I gained appreciation personally from reading him in English and seeing how these characters start at one end and are, let's say, really humble - and then become these overlords by the end of the play. Or they start out as a conniving character and end up as someone looking deeply within their own psyche. It's really interesting how he does that.

I can't wait to read them – and more importantly, I hope I get to see them on stage!

I think that's where they'll really come to life!

Thank you to Andreja for sharing her insights, and moreover, for initiating such an exciting project. Andreja also wanted to conclude the interview by giving thanks to all of the people involved in this huge project, especially to the museums and archives. The limited edition, printed box set of translations will include archival photos of Cankar's plays over time, from the 1920s onwards: some of them being first productions of his work, from lots of different theatres, offering readers the opportunity to get a feel of how his works looked throughout different periods. ■



Further details about the project can be found on
cranecreations.ca/plays-of-ivan-cankar/

LIST OF NEW TRANSLATIONS

At intervals, we will assemble lists of **recently published Slovene literature in English translation** for Society members and our other readers to pursue at their pleasure. This list contains major work published in English translation in calendar year 2021, as well as titles from 2020 that did not make it onto our last list. Readers may also consult the **Slovenian Book Agency's database** for literature published in English and other languages in 2021 and before.

The Visoko Chronicle

Ivan Tavčar (CEU Press, November 2021)
trans. Timothy Pogačar

The Secret Collector

Slavko Pregl and Leon Pogelšek (ARCA Publications, 2021)
trans. Irena Duša Draž

Blind Man

Mitja Čander (Istros Books, 2021)
trans. Rawley Grau

The Masterpiece

Ana Schnabl (Istros Books, 2021)
trans. David Limon

And Love Itself

Drago Jančar (Dalkey Archive Press, 2021)
trans. David Limon

Every Child Is Beautiful When Born: Selected Poems

Esad Babačić (Dalkey Archive Press, 2021)
trans. Andrej Pleterski

Alice in Crazyland

Evald Flisar (Sampark, 2020)
trans. David Limon and Evald Flisar

The Dream Collector

Evald Flisar (Sampark, 2020)
trans. David Limon

If you or a scholar you know has recently translated work into English, please write kristina.reardon@gmail.com for inclusion on the next list.

NOTTINGHAM-LJUBLJANA LINK REKINDLED FOR INTERNATIONAL TRANSLATION DAY

by **Dr. Katie Harrison**, Nottingham UNESCO City of Literature

Although it has now been several years since Slovene language teaching at the University of Nottingham was brought to an end after over forty years, during which time over 300 students opted to study the language, this has not spelled the end of the relationship between Nottingham and Slovenia. Having been one of the University of Nottingham students fortunate enough to have the opportunity to study Slovene during my undergraduate degree, upon starting a new role at Nottingham UNESCO City of Literature in April 2021, I was pleased to learn that Ljubljana is also a UNESCO City of Literature and that the team in Ljubljana are also working on the project I am working on over the course of the next couple of years.

As initial plans were being made in the Nottingham office to commemorate International Translation Day on September 30th, and being aware of Olivia Hellewell's translation work, it seemed natural to bring together Nottingham and Ljubljana to discuss all things literary translation. Olivia, currently working as a Teaching Associate at the University of Nottingham, was brought together with Ljubljana-based translator Tadeja Spruk to discuss a whole host of matters related to translating between English and Slovene.

The conversation was lively and informative, whilst also touching on some of the practical issues faced by literary translators, and can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pfebH4IZrCc>

