

# NEWSLETTER



## Celebrating Community Spirit: Paul Cronin Honored for His Continuous Support in Vareš

In a heartfelt ceremony during the Municipality Day celebration, Paul Cronin was honored with a plaque recognizing his unwavering support for the local communities of Vareš.

The plaque was presented by Mayor Zdravko Marošević, who praised Paul's dedication and contributions: "Paul Cronin has been a pillar of support for our community since the founding of Adriatic Metals BH, consistently working to improve the lives of our residents." Adding to the accolades, the Chairwoman of the Municipal Council, Mahira Brkić, also delivered a speech highlighting the significant impact of Paul's support to the community. Given that Paul is leaving Adriatic Metals BH, she added: "This is farewell, not goodbye." Paul Cronin, visibly moved by the recognition, thanked the community for the honor: "I've always stressed how a company's true value is in its social license to operate, and this award indicates that our messages are well received." The event, which took place in Radnički dom, was a celebration of 133 years of municipal administration and a testament to the strong bonds between the community and its benefactors.



# PUBLIC LIAISON COMMITTEE EIGHT SESSION HELD IN AUGUST

In the hall of the Municipality of Vareš, on August 22, 2024, the eighth meeting of the Public Liaison Committee of Adriatic Metals BH was held.

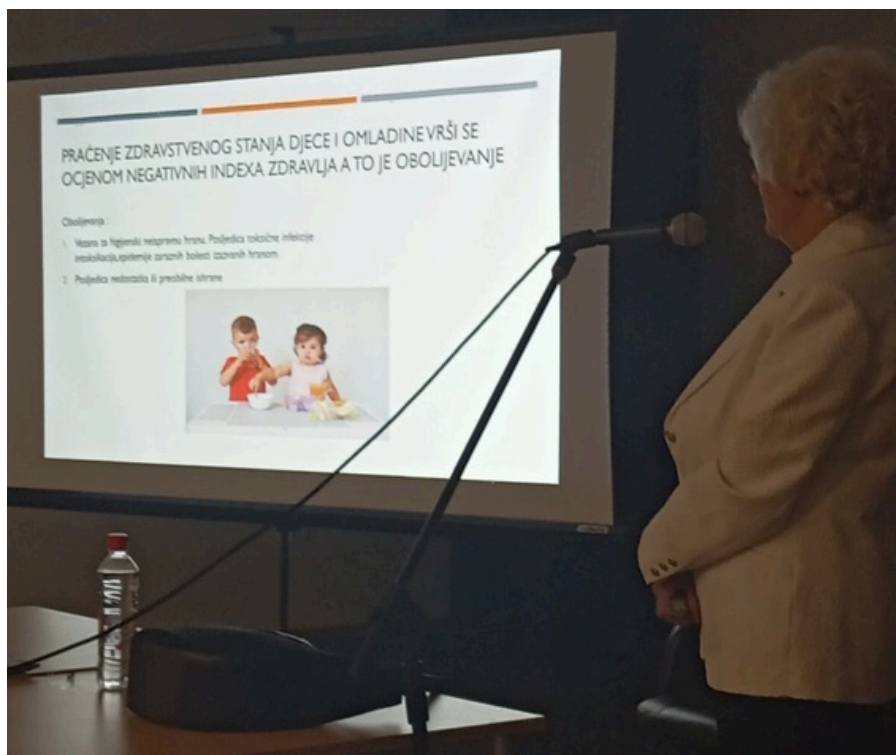
Key information about current project activities and future plans was exchanged at the meeting. The Corporate Social Responsibility team presented projects implemented in the past period, such as the successful organization and implementation of a free mammography screening project for 50 women, the implementation of the health project "Prevention of Cardiovascular Diseases" in the local communities of Borovica, Pržići, and Daštansko, support for the organization of the VAART festival, as well as support programs for students of the "Nordbat 2" Mixed Secondary School.



The Head of the Sustainability Department provided a detailed overview of environmental issues related to the impact of the mine on surrounding watercourses. She specifically addressed the report proving that ore exploitation at the Rupice mine has no negative impact on watercourses due to the presence of hydrogeological barriers. The Haulage & Fleet team shared information about the status of road construction. It was highlighted that certain sections of the road are planned to be asphalted before the start of the winter season, while others have already been asphalted to reduce dust and ensure better traversability. Another successful meeting of the Public Liaison Committee demonstrates how good communication builds the foundation for successful cooperation and creates lasting positive changes in society.

## “HEALTHY NUTRITION FOR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN.”

Within the premises of the Public Institution Center for Culture Vareš, on September 16, Adriatic Metals BH, in collaboration with the Public Institution Children’s Kindergarten Vareš, conducted an educational session titled “Healthy Nutrition for Preschool Children.”



This session is part of a broader health initiative implemented by the company to enhance health and quality of life within the local community. The session was led by Dr. Mejrema Ismić, a specialist in pediatrics and an expert in children’s health. The primary goal of the session was to raise parents’ awareness about the importance of proper and healthy nutrition from an early age. The significance of a balanced diet, which includes all food groups, was emphasized, along with explanations on how to properly combine meals to achieve optimal nutritional balance.

Following the session, children had the opportunity to enjoy a snack that included healthy foods and natural juices, practically supporting the session’s theme. The “Healthy Nutrition for Preschool Children” session left a positive impression on all attendees, once again demonstrating Adriatic Metals BH’s commitment to the health and well-being of the local community.



# LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

## Andrea Nikolić

**First and foremost, I would like to extend my greetings and express my gratitude for agreeing to speak for our newsletter, which is part of the "Living History Project." To begin, could you please tell us more about yourself?**

**What motivated you to initiate the "VaClaF" festival?**

Throughout my extensive educational journey and career prior to VaClaF, I traveled to festivals across Europe and observed that artists, who were my role models at the time, would return to their hometowns and communities to create inspiring and significant projects and festivals for the betterment of the entire community. Vareš, with its rich cultural heritage and similarities to those small towns in Switzerland and Austria – such as Verbier or Lockenhaus – and primarily due to my family history and connection with the town and community, as well as my desire to proudly leave a personal artistic mark here, was simply the perfect place to launch a unique project. This project would be better and different from all others, bringing new cultural life and opening horizons in various directions for the town from which I come.

**As a violinist, conductor, and artistic director of the festival, how do you balance all these roles, and what does a typical day during the festival look like for you?**

All my roles complement each other and, in fact, one arises from the other. During the season, I strive to balance the number of concerts as an instrumental performer and as a conductor, as these two disciplines require different physical and mental preparations. However, precisely because my activity is so versatile, I am often engaged in these roles simultaneously, which brings me special satisfaction and a unique challenge. Leading the festival as an artistic director and manager requires a completely different discipline and set of skills that fulfill me in a completely different way; I enjoy understanding how things function structurally, what enables them, and how people can work together successfully.

As an artistic director, I design programs, structures, and concepts and gather great people for projects I am proud of, while also finding ways to finance these projects and ensure their long-term sustainability and relevance. Through years of truly intense and dedicated work in all these disciplines within the art I practice, all these roles have become an integral part of me and my personality. I no longer know how I would exist without all of them. Therefore, my day is very dynamic: it consists of correspondence with artists, institutions, managers, promoters, and organizers of my concerts, followed by managing my own organization and team, planning and implementation, and finally, isolated dedication to preparing the works I perform on stage in various roles. But in the end, I must admit, playing and performing music on stage is by far my favorite role.

**Could you share with us a brief history of the festival from its inception in 2013 to this year's twelfth edition? Are there any moments you would particularly highlight?**

The first concert, "Children of Vareš for the Vareš Audience," was held in 2009 at the Old Church. This beautiful success and reception inspired me to establish the festival in 2013, together with Petar Jelić – who had been the initiator and leader of the Miholj Classical Music Concert in Vareš until then – and with the support of the then parish priest, Fra Mirko Majdandžić. It required a lot of effort and persuasion, but the festival was met with great success, which motivated me to persevere. I have strived each year to create a better, more significant program and to grow the festival uncompromisingly, modeled after world centers. One of the most special concerts in these twelve years remains "Music for the Beginning and End of Time" from 2015, where I combined traditional Balkan songs in a cappella performances by the female vocal ensemble Corona with Olivier Messiaen's Quartet for the End of Time, performed by my Vienna ensemble. The concert was moving, and the ovations and applause lasted for about ten minutes. There have been many other special concerts, including the documentary film "Music I Call Home" from 2018, online concerts during the pandemic, and the Sarajevo Philharmonic's performance for the 10th anniversary in 2022. Each year is special in its own way.

**What challenges have you faced in organizing an international music festival in a small community like Vareš, and how have you overcome them?**

The challenges are varied. It is extremely difficult to attract sponsors from outside for our small town. Generally, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, there is no political will to value and nurture art in a way that is necessary for it to be economically and socially successful and visible. There is no cultural strategy, and public funds for the independent sector are so small that they can actually be called non-existent. The biggest problem is the lack of qualitative criteria, and everything is lumped together – from amateur celebrations to professional festivals. In the actual realization of the festival, I encountered various misunderstandings, but I tried to communicate all problems and understand the environment in which I work. Sometimes it takes a little more time, but without challenges, the satisfaction of success would be less.

**1. "VaClaF" now includes theater, literature, and visual arts. Why is a multidisciplinary approach important?**

It is important to me that VaClaF creates the highest quality artistic content, that we work with people who are inspiring and active in an international context. Also, to build a platform for young generations that can launch their careers. VaClaF will always be a music festival, and all other disciplines arise from the need for broader artistic communication. I would love if we had the conditions to stage operas, to have more musical theater, and to include architecture. All branches of art, as well as science and everything in life, are intertwined. It is important to know how to connect and understand them in a broader context.

**1. This year's theme is Dreams to Come True. What can the audience expect?**

This year's edition is held in collaboration with the Zvezdane Staze Artistic Residency and its founder and director, composer Belma Bešlić-Gál. With such enthusiasm, we created everything we wished to come true, making Dreams to Come True the only logical theme. This year, over a period of three months, five artists will reside and create at the residency in Mijakovići, while the festival concerts, academy, and tour will take place in Vareš, Mijakovići (which also has its own concert series, workshops, and a rich accompanying program as part of the residency), Borovica, Tuzla, Zenica, and Mostar, with various collaborations.

A special concert will be held on September 19th, featuring Amira Medunjanin, with whom we have prepared a unique project with completely new arrangements written for VaClaF and the URZS project. These will be performed under my direction, with Amira's vocals, by the Cipra Quartet from Vienna, Ivana Nikolić on oboe, and Boško Jović on guitar.

**1. What are your hopes and dreams regarding the future of the festival and the impact it leaves on the cultural scene of Vareš?**

I would love for us to have better transportation and road infrastructure to expand our audience reach and further develop the festival's cultural-tourism concept. The dream remains for Vareš to become the Bosnian Verbier, or perhaps Salzburg, as a vision of how a festival town can look and be economically extremely prosperous. The impact we have made so far is unique because no other festival has the continuity and reach, we have achieved in these 12 years, especially in terms of the program, but of course, there is always room for improvement. My wish is for us to work year-round and have a team of about twenty employees, similar to festivals in Austria, for example, then much more new and bigger things would be possible.

**1. With the opening of the Adriatic Metals BH mine and the arrival of a large number of employees from different cultural and traditional backgrounds, has interest in the festival increased?**

I am not sure how much the opening of the mine has generally increased interest in the festival; perhaps not all employees are yet familiar with it, which we are definitely striving to change, as we are somewhat accustomed to our loyal audience following us for years. There are definitely new faces, but what truly excites me are the new collaborations, initiatives, and opportunities for growth and progress in the entire town in all fields.

**1. What would you say to young people who are just starting to build their careers?**

Perseverance pays off. Talent is only a small part and a predisposition that, without work, persistence, and perseverance – and ultimately the belief that anything is possible – will not bring success.

**Thank you for your time.**

Thank you for the interesting questions and your interest in my work!

