

OPATIJA - ABBAZIA



Amir Muzur

Itinerary for Researchers and the Inquisitive



adamić

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Itinerary for Researchers and the Inquisitive

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A manuscript of this type rarely ever has reviewers: it is a manual, compiled from the results of earlier researches or texts of others. In better places and times guidebooks are repeatedly published every year, allowing the author and readership possibility to make corrections and perfections at a leisurely pace. Since such publishing dynamism, even in the case of Franjo's hyperactive publishing house *Adamić*, is never certain (after all, if we don't count the guidebook through the parks and the sacral guidebook, which are riddled with errors, the last good guidebook was published more than a quarter of a century ago), for all that, I still presented this manuscript to my good old friend, Jan Bernd Urban, not only to read it but also to have someone share the responsibility with me so that later on, as is his custom, he can't take me at my word. Jan, as always, invested his patience and effort and proved himself a precious commentator. So after all, this text got its reviewer, the man to whom I must once again lift my hat.

Prologue

In full view Opatija spreads before you, dissected into slices of various thickness, as the shaky hands of nervous hosts wanting to satisfy all their guests at once are prone to do. This isn't a text for incidental passers-by and bashful observers: it's a manual for the likes of those who can't reconcile themselves to secrets and lack of knowledge, who don't flinch from turning over every stone or from coalescence with the town in which they are staying for a longer or a shorter time.

The chapters of this booklet are called itineraries, yet their implication is not always and only traveling through space. The readers are sometimes called upon to take a dive into some other time, with a dedication and understanding as if it were their own past, and to adapt their ideas to those of their hosts, just like the chameleon changes its colors to blend with its surroundings. Some of these itineraries are just a handful of hallmarks and signposts, skimpy guideposts intended to prevent straying and show the various points scattered about town. Others are stories spun out of memorabilia and premonitions, and the third are, again, the challenges of a new and different aspect of viewing the familiar and within reach.

Those whose patience and passions undergo the promenades in all the directions and paths that are offered, will be able to say that they've got under Opatija's skin. Suddenly, and without having planned it, they will start to understand the whole town and thereby become a part of it forever.



Pavilion *Juraj Šporer*



The Helios & Selene Fountain
(author: Rathausky)



Pre-Tourist (folk, old-time) Opatija

In any case, “old” in the terminology of Opatija designates the pre-tourist time, in other words, the Opatija before 1880 and the cycle of facelift operations directed by the Southern Railways Company (*Südbahngesellschaft*). As the old-timer reasoning of the local fishermen, mariners and weavers melted away, so in likewise manner did their hovels dissolve in favor of the new tourist logic – either through surrender to the general director Friedrich Schüler, or through transformation into catering barracks under the same owners.

To acclimatize with the “old-time” Opatija means to plunge into a street layout a good deal different from the one we now see. If we wanted to go for a walk along the pre-tourist main street today, we would encounter an array of surprises. The northernmost part of the “proto-Marshall Tito Street” ran the same course as it does now: from Škrbići to the Marketplace time has made its impact on the people and buildings, but not on the street. However, going further on we must step into the drab subordinate quarter of the **Workers (Radnička)** road, winding from the Marketplace (Mrkat) up into the hill, passing between *Barić* and Rijeka Bank and then downhill to the Fishermen’s Square (*Ribarski trg / Piazza vecchia*) behind today’s photographer shop *Luigi*. This was the locality where fish, fruits and vegetables were sold long before the building of the Marketplace of our own time. Cramped in between villas *Dalibor* (abode of the writing-office of the “St. Cyril & Methodius Society for Istria” and apartment of writer Viktor Car Emin) and *Ertl* (later called after its owner, *Rosenberger*) on one side and *Ježice* on the other, the main street swings out uphill to the square called *Stendardo*, called after



Stendardo
Square

the flag that used to hang here on holidays. Here, at the intersection with today's St. Florijan Street, only a couple of decades ago, the dwellers from the slopes of Mount Učka sold firewood and coal from the backs of their burdened donkeys. On the downhill sequel of St. Florijan Street that follows, the old main street would have led us further on the Hotel *Palma*: at this point we are back on Marshal Tito Street, the main street of today's Opatija. But just below café *Paris* we must turn off the road again, into the narrow **Tesla Street**. Here we come face to face with the ungainly megalomaniacal building of villa *Rudovits* (alias *Schanzer*), the St. Kuzma chapel, *Zora* and the remnants of the remains of Opatija's once famous cinematograph. Here in front of *Zora* a flight of stairs comes out on to the former main road (compressed between house numbers 118 and 120 of M. Tito Street) and the flight continues on from the other side of today's main street down into the cleft between villa *Devan* and hotela *Atlantik*: this was the junction of St. Jacob's Church and old Opatija's street network. However, following the logic of the old main road, we will continue onward to the **Stairs of Theodore Billroth and Edith Stern** (going that way today we cross Dobrila Street and Nova Cesta Street), all the way to Vrutki Street.

Opatija's second artery, a merger of two streets that are still active to this very day – E. Kumičić Street and Vrutki Street, used to be the longest continuous stretch of road, intersected not longer ago than in our century with the building of the New Road (Nova Cesta) in 1908. The shortcut that linked divergent routes (E. Kumičić-Vrutki and the lower street – “proto-M. Tito”) after the bifurcation near the market place, was today's St. Florijan Street (ex M. Gorki).

The houses of old Opatija were not exclusively grouped around these thoroughfares, but also went after the ancient logic of running away from the coast that is exposed to numerous perils. Such a prominently large group of houses was Jelenkino or Jelenkina Vas (Jelenka's Village), in those times an independent settlement located around the northern part of today's B. Žele Street and running on to the Road to Bregi Street and E. Bošnjak Street. About 25% of Opatija's houses were concentrated here on a proportionally small area – a location furthest away from the St. Jacob's Church, but there is no doubt that Matija Dujmić's inn at number 88 gave the “settlement” a mark of distinction.

But of course, in spite of all the interventions that tourism imposed on the town's appearance, some of the facades of the older era have withstood time, their narrower sides often facing the sea, according to safety measures that were meant to protect them from the eyes of pirates. Although many of the houses, recorded on the only pre-tourist cadastral register (1820.), have disappeared, such as for example, the houses on the site of today's fountain in the Slatina district, or the house of Pasquale Jačić in front of the main entrance to Hotel *Imperial*,

Vrutki



or the hovel of Jurković Suc on the site of the concrete bathing beach in front of villa *Amalia*, many have held their ground, surviving frequent reconstructions and expansions. One such house is at the address of M. Tito Street 78 (*Maxi-bar*), then there is a whole nucleus around Vrutki 23-27 (perhaps Opatija's oldest residential nucleus, where the first colonists of the Giusti family dwelled, in the vicinity of the Vrutki stream along the edge of land owned by the church), or the house at the address of Tesla Street 4. The house at Vrutki 15, beside the house of the Šikić family overlooking the Marketplace parking lot, has preserved a "shod" (an arched entrance) that is very rare in Opatija, and at St. Florijan Street 12, where poet Zoran Kompanjet was born and where poetess Maria Trinajstić lives, behind the thick walls of the house and under the low roof-beam there still stands the old "napa" (fireplace hood) right above the old kitchen stove.

To take a stroll through that "old" Opatija of Vrutki, Jelenkina Vas, Strojbarić, Križišća and St. Florijan, means to get a whiff of dinners being cooked, to overhear family quarrels and to take a peek into the everyday life of the descendants of the folks who could not build Opatija, but whose hands have forever nurtured her and kept her alive, like they would some rare plant in their own garden.



Camellia –
a symbol of
Opatija

Ten localities

in Opatija that should not be missed



Saint Jacob's Church

1. Saint Jacob's Church

Most probably built in 1420, as a colony of Benedictine refugees from the Friulian monastery of Saint Peter in Rožac (San Pietro di Rosazzo), the entire settlement will later be named after this abbey. Today

very little has been preserved of its original appearance: in 1506 abbot Šimun built or reconstructed the church, according to the inscription above the portal; near the end of the 18th century the church was thoroughly renovated, and in 1930 it was considerably expanded. Among its attraction, it houses a replica of one of Mestrovic's relievos.

Since earliest times, when it still stood isolated, the abbey was a site where court trials were held and served as a fairgrounds that on St. Jacob's Day attracted visitors from the surrounding countryside to dances and sales and purchases of goods, and located in its vicinity were the first burial-ground for the dead of Opatija, whereas in the 19th century this was also the site of the first school in Opatija. The building passed from hand-to-hand of a whole series of religious orders, from the Benedictines and Augustinians to the Paulists and Jesuits. Today, besides prayers and masses, chamber concerts are also held here.

2. Villa Angiolina

This is the building that certainly marked the beginning of the tourist epoch in the history of Opatija.

Pending its building in 1844. (actually a reconstruction of an older building owned by baron Haller von Hallerstein), Opatija was a relatively large settlement with about 120 houses, clustered mainly around plots further away from the sea coast and chiefly oriented towards fishing and seafaring. With the arrival of Iginia Scarpa, a patrician from Rijeka, and building of his summer house *Angiolina* (named after Scarpa's then already deceased wife, originating from the Sartori family), Opatija opened her doors to a whole line of guests and passengers, among whom it is noteworthy to mention the Austrian empress Mary Ann, the botanist Heinrich Noë, the



Villa Angiolina

Croatian ban Josip Jelačić and others who in their enthusiasm for the local vegetation and climate spread the fame about Opatija and thus prepared the ground for the future health resort.

After Scarpa and his son Paolo, who as early as 1869 entertained the idea of establishing a sanatorium, the villa was owned by the Moravian nobleman Chorinsky, the Southern Railways Company (during their proprietorship the villa accommodated the heirs-to-the-throne couple Rudolph and Stephanie and their guest, the Styrian satirist Rosegger), the International Wagon-lit Society, the Health Resort Commission, and others. As the price of the villa rose and taking into account the fact that Iginio Scarpa purchased the entire grounds at the price of 700 florins, in 1910 the villa with the surrounding park full of exotic plants was sold for 2.5 million crowns. In Scarpa's time

Hotel Kvarner:
details of the
façade



the meeting-place of the upper crust of Rijeka, thereafter the site of summertime entertainment on its terraces, during the end of the Austrian period the seat of the Health Resort Commission with an orchestral pavilion and lively promenade in front of its southern façade, today the villa is foreordained to become the town museum of Opatija, in the state of being developed.

3. Hotel Kvarner

This was the first hotel in Opatija, and probably on the eastern coast of the Adriatic. It was built in 1884 on the site of previous vineyards that belonged to the Tomašić family, and the building construction lasted only ten months, involving craftsmen and building materials from all parts of the Monarchy. At first the hotel was planned as a sanatorium for lung disease patients and for this reason the cemetery in its proximity was moved to another location (while the moving of St. Jacob's church was unsuccessful). The whole initiative and investment was financed by the Southern Railways Company and its director, Friedrich Julius Schüller, while the building contractors were officiated by architect designer Wilhelm and engineer Meese.

The oldest part of the hotel is its southern, classicistic corpus. The northern part initially housed the hot water baths (*Warmbäder*), connected to the hotel with a roofed corridor (*Wandelbahn*). In front of the hotel, and all the way to the shoreline, was the terrace of "The Most Elegant Café in the World", which was later withdrawn from the seaside promenade. In place of the burned up hot water baths, the Crystal Hall was built in 1913, and to this very day it is the site of the most festive events and balls held in Opatija.

Hotel Kvarner





4. Hotel Imperial

This was the second hotel to be built in Opatija. As soon as it became evident that the *Kvarner* would not be able to accommodate the steadily increasing number of guests, the Southern Railways began building a new hotel, which was already opened in 1885 and named after the heiress to the throne

Hotel Imperial Kronprinzessin Stephanie who, with her husband, attended its opening. Wilhelm, the architect, on this occasion also offered his guests all the luxuries of that period, from central heating to a swimming pool and a cinematograph which were connected by corridors to the principal part of the hotel. Thanks to its representational form and location, it was no wonder that this was the choice of guests such as James Joyce, Franz Josef I, or Josip Broz Tito who stayed here in 1946, to for the first time set foot on the Istrian soil that had been returned to its mother country.

The hotel is also interesting for the fact that through the changes of its names one can recapitulate the entire political history of this region. The Italians changed the name to *Regina Elena*, who was the wife of Victor Emmanuel III; from 1945 to 1948, hence during the era of the Yugoslav-Soviet love affair the hotel was called *Moscow*, and after the break with the Cominform it changed its name to *Central*. With the fall of Ranković and centralism in 1966, the hotel was named *Imperial*, and is known as such to this day.

5. Maiden with Seagull and the Madonna

On the promontory in front of the one-time cemetery a girl of stone extend her arm to a gull. This, however, is a new sculpture, the work of sculptor Car, and it was erected here in 1956 and turned into one of Opatija's symbols. Before that, in its place, namely until demolished by a storm, stood

the “Madonna del Mare,” the work of sculptor Rathausky from Graz (his also is the fountain “Helios and Selene” in the park between St. Jacob’s Church and hotel *Imperia*). The “Madonna” was erected to keep vigil over the soul of count Arthur Kesselstadt, who vanished, not far off from that promontory swallowed by the pre-Easter waves in 1891. During that excursion the countess Fries also lost her life, but her son Georg was saved.



Maiden with
a seagull
(author: Car)

Today a gilded variant of the Madonna can be seen in front of Saint Jacob’s Church.

6. The Open Air Summer Theater

Here, where motion pictures are shown today was, according to the plans of the Austrians, supposed to have been a huge “health resort palace” (*Kurpalast*) with dance and concert halls, a pool with simulated waves, shops and cafés. The project collapsed with the breakout of World War I, and the new Italian rulers took advantage of the filled up ground, that rests on piles, to make a beach (today’s Lido) and used the mid-section for tennis courts, to later turn them into an open air theater where European festivals of operettas were held during the 1930’s starring guests of caliber of a Kálmán and Lehár. During the 1950’s the stage was reanimated and the opera, in proportionality with the new trend, was gradually pushed out by the cinema.

Lido





Church of
Annunciation
of the Virgin
Mary

designed by architect Karl Seidl. During the war itself, the barely covered construction served as a shelter for mules, and on one occasion the entire roof caved in. The Italians continued building it with stone supplied from Kastav by means of the New Road (the "Upper Road" or "High Road" that was penetrated in 1908, but was not asphalted until 1930), whereas for the interior decoration donated stained glass were used and pictures by Kralj, a Slovenian artist.

Villa *Amalia*



8. Villa *Amalia*

It was built in 1890 as an annex to the six years older hotel *Kvarner*, immediately behind the buildings for cold water baths (*Kaltbäder*), where the secession-styled wooden bathing beach *Jadran* was located until the fire in 1989. Villa *Amalia* was designed for the most sophisticated guests who preferred to distance themselves from the other hotel clientele. And indeed, the guests in the villa were the Rumanian royal couple, Carol

and Elizabeth (*alias* Carmen Sylva), the founders of the woodland promenade; in 1894, the villa was the meeting place between Franz Josef I and William II, it accommodated the German royal family, as well as Isadora Duncan, the dancer who observed the flutter of palm leaves in the wind and learned her movements from them, then there was the grand duke of Luxembourg, Alfred of Nassau, who celebrated his silver wedding anniversary here, while the inhabitants of Opatija remembered his everyday strolls to the concert pavilion with a meter-long cigarette (which he had made after his physician agreed to allow him to smoke a cigarette a day). During the interwar period, as the residence of the Italian Savoia dynasty, the villa Amalia was raised with an additional floor.

9. The Port

Although the oldest port in Opatija is most probably the small bay (“Portić”) in front of St. Jacob’s church, the current port (“Mul”) must also be pretty old, since it was already entered in a map made in 1820 under the name of “Porto Herdt,” which is the distorted Italian word for the domestic term for promontory or headland “Rt” (“Zert”). In any case, it’s dimensions were already altered by the builder

Onetime
Lakatos
Sanatorium,
now Villa
Ambasador



of villa *Angiolina*, Iginio Scarpa, who wanted to make it suitable for his yacht, and it got its definitive shape during the interventions and expansions executed at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. Next to the present-day restaurant *Galiya* (ex *Padovan*, *Jedro*) was the one-time customs branch-office, and during the Italians today's Yachting Club was the canoeist club (*Club dei canottieri*). From the pier, which has for the townspeople of Opatija on several occasions in history been the scene of important events (the dismay caused by the arrival of the Italian navy in December of 1918, the celebration of the capitulation of Italy in September 1943), one has the best view of the entire "North Strand" (*Nordstrand*), with its former sanatoriums *Schalk*, *Mahler* (*Horvat*) and *Lakatos*.

10. The Seaside Promenade ("lungomare")

Built in phases, this path stretches from Preluka to Lovran and its total length is approximately 12 kilometers. The initiator of the operation was the Scenic Improvement Society (*Abbazianer Verschönerungsverein*), and the conductors of the works were Heinrich Gintl, Alfred Manussi and Konrad Rubbia. They were confronted with great land

Lungomare
(Seaside
Promenade)



purchasing problems and countless disputes had to be settled through the authority of Jettmar, the county captain. The first, northern phase of the path (Volosko-Slatina) was completed in 1889, when Opatija officially becomes a Health Resort (the stretch from Dražice to the port was finished around 1888), and the southernmost section (that connected Opatija with the promenade in Lovran) only around 1911, thanks to the commitment of physician Julius Hortenau.

Carmen Sylva
Promenade



Planned as an important trump card for health tourism, this path, together with the parallel woodland path in the town's hinterland (today's *Carmen Sylva Promenade*) is a potential of psychophysical recreation that is indeed insufficiently exploited. In addition to this, the Promenade passes by most of the significant structures of Opatija's history, linking the old sanatoriums of the North Strand, the port, Lido, villas *Angiolina* and *Amalia*, hotel *Kvarner*, St. Jacob's church and finally the hotels with the villas of the South Strand. One of the highest points above sea level is the *Grotta del Diavolo* (*Teufelsbrunnen*) near the residence of the consul of Venezuela.

Some features of the seaside promenade have been lost: the bust in honor of Admiral Littrow on the North Strand is gone, the Dr. Masarei foot-bridge has disappeared – replaced by the reconstructed path in front of hotel *Admiral*. Again, there are points that have changed only, in appearance, location or through use: Schwerdtner's relieve of Billoth made in 1907, with the inscription *Dem großen Arzt und Förderer des Kurortes* ("To a great physician and promoter of the health resort"), was destroyed in World War II, and Dolinar's new one, with the inscription "An outstanding surgeon and a friend of Opatija," was erected in 1965 several meters further to the south, on the chapel wall. Rathausky's bust of Schüler (Rathausky is also the sculptor of the *Helios and Selene* fountain in front of the *Imperial* and of the *Madonna del Mare*, now located in front of St. Jacob's church) once stood on the seaside promenade in front of hotel *Kvarner*, and today it stands in the *Angiolina Park* (ex *1. maja*) among the bananas. Finally, there are newly erected symbols, such as the memorial tablet to Pilsudski in the Sv. Jakov Park, not far from the *Maiden with a seagull*.

Memorial
plaque in
memory of
Pilsudski



Mul (the Pier)





Ten persons

in Opatija that you must get to know

1. Friedrich Julius Schüller

Born in 1832, in Mödling near Vienna, acknowledged as a successful manager who made it to the top ranks of the *Südbahn-Gesellschaft* (Southern Railways Company) with lightning speed: after holding the positions of general inspector and commercial director, in 1878 Schüller became the general director of this company. Having saved the Company from going bankrupt, he established the first Austrian overseas tariffs, painlessly settled the issue of military transports to occupied Bosnia, initiated the first electric tramway in Austria (Mödling-Hinterbrühl) and demonstrated his farsightedness by building a series of luxurious facilities alongside his railway lines. This series included Opatija, along with Toblach and Semmering, where he invested in building the first hotels – *Kvarner* and *Stephanie (Imperial)*, a string of villas and infrastructures, and he brought Julius Glax and other medical authorities here. He died in Mödling in 1894, where he rests in peace in his family mausoleum.



F. J. Schüller
(author
Rathausky)

Opatija made requital to him with a bust (author Rathausky) that initially stood in front of hotel *Kvarner*, but today it is hidden in the banana trees of *Angiolina Park*. The stairs that connect the New Road with the *Carmen Sylva* Settlement are also named after Schüller.



Tomb of Julius Glax in Opatija

2. Julius Glax

He is without doubt the most noteworthy inhabitant of Opatija in the town's history to date. Born in Vienna in 1846, he finished his studies in medicine in Innsbruck, Vienna and Graz, specialized balneology and on his 34th birthday was already chosen for the post of university professor. He performed his practice as a spa physician in Rogaška Slatina up to the moment when Friedrich Schüller lured him into going to Opatija in 1883. As an initiator, and later the head of the Health Resort Commission, Glax participated in solving all the key prob-

lems of the town, from the waterworks and sewage system to the ambulance station and cemeteries. He organized world congresses on thalassotherapy, wrote textbook on balneology and treated a whole line of Opatija's most distinguished guests.

He lived at several addresses in Opatija: at first in the villas *Tomašić*, *Musil* and *Haas*, and finally in villa *Porthheim*, where he met his death in 1922. He is buried in Opatija, where he shares a grave with his wife Hermine. And like Schüller, his lot was also to be dedicated a modest stairs that climb from the New Road to the *Carmen Sylva* Settlement.

3. Theodor Billroth

In contrast to Schüller and Glax, who meant something only for Austria and Opatija, Billroth is a name that is entered in the history of world medicine. A surgeon of great authority who was the first to perform specific resections of the oesophagus and stomach (later named after him as Billroth I and Billroth II), Billroth also remains noteworthy for his dissertations on music. He was born in Rügen in 1829, worked in Berlin, Zürich and Vienna, and died in Opatija in 1894. During the last ten years of his life he was a regular visitor in Opatija and, elat-

ed with the climate, vegetation and promenade paths, he sent letters to his acquaintances confirming himself as Opatija's best promoter and friend.

In addition to a memorial-relievo on the seaside path below St. Jacob's church, the inhabitants of Opatija have rewarded him with the stairs that link Nazor Street and Dobrila Street.



4. Karl Seidl

Malevolent persons say that everything of any worth in the architecture of Opatija originated from Karl Seidl. And indeed this eclectic architect, born in 1858 in the Moravian town of Šumperk, has left a distinctive imprint on the Liburnian Riviera. A pupil of Zurich and Vienna (he studied under Hansen), in Volosko and Opatija at the turn of the 19th/20th centuries, he built the villas *Brühl* (alias *Schmidt-Zabierow*), *Brunitzky*, the Evangelist church, the court building, the townhall and other facilities, and he also intervened in the reconstructions of the boarding house *Hausner* (the site of today's hotel *Millennium*) and *Ariston*. In Ičići he left villa *Tomašić*, in Lovran the villas *Frappart*, *Magnolia*, *Santa Maria* and others, and maybe the villa of the Terzi family in Medveja. Combining his fascination with the Romanesque along with his respect for the autochthon and what he would come across, Seidl managed to compose his work into the surroundings and at the same time give them his own imprint. After having spent a good part of his life on Opatija's Riviera, Seidl died in 1936 in Vienna.

Billroth's relief
on the
seaside road

5. Andrija Stanger

Lawyer from Volosko, born in 1853. As a populist leader, in 1895 he became the mayor of Opatija and held the post until the Italians removed him in

1918. He introduced the use of the Croatian language in public local-government services, he fought for setting up a hospital in the donated building of the Delmestri family (in 1919 the Italians reaped the credits for this), and he was also one of the founders of the small Communal General-Program Secondary School in 1909. In 1914 he caused a scandal by greeting San Giuliani, the Italian minister of foreign affairs, with a speech in the Croatian language. He died in 1934 in Volosko, where he is buried.

6. Andrija Mohorovičić

A strange monument stands in the center of the old nucleus of Volosko, and it is supposed to represent the strata of the Earth. One of these stratum, known as “Mohorovicician discontinuity” or simply as the “Moho-layer” enables earthquake waves to pass through at a greater velocity. This boundary at a depth of 55 kilometers was discovered by Andrija Mohorovičić, geophysicist born in Volosko in 1857, in a house on the seashore that is now marked with a memorial-tablet in his honor. He studied in Prague, and taught at the Nautical School in Bakar, secondary school in Osijek and the faculty in Zagreb. He was a member of the Academy of Arts and Sciences, and one of the

Monument to
the
Mohorovicician
Discontinuity



craters on the Moon was named after him. He died in Zagreb in 1936.

7. Drago Gervais

Descendant of a French soldier who came here during Napoleon's occupation, Drago Gervais still remains the greatest name that the literature of all of Liburnia has to offer. Born in 1904 in a house on the New Road, a lawyer by profession, Gervais left Opatija a collection of poems in the Chakavian dialect, several dramas (he was also the theater manager of the Rijeka Theater) and short stories and – more or less, that would be all. However, whole generations were brought up on this handful of simple structured verse and consequentially created a long line of less successful epigons. He died in rather bizarre bohemian circumstances in 1957 in Sežana, and was buried in Opatija. The least that the inhabitants of Opatija could do for him was to name the secondary school in Gorovo after him and erect a bust of Gervais in front of the school.



Bust of Gervais in front of Opatija's Secondary School

8. Ivan Matetić Ronjgov

Another wretched soul, born in 1880 in the village of Ronjgi near Kastav (hence his nickname). Living his entire life on the verge of poverty, Ronjgov taught singing on the top floor of today's Vocational School and brought up generations of Opatijans in his uncompromising populist and Pan-Slavic style. He also composed music, collected the musical heritage of Istria and Kvarner (having walked through and listened to the music of all these regions, and got a tape recorder as a gift shortly before he died), and he also described the so-called Istrian musical scale with its characteris-



Bust of
Matetić-
Ronjgov

tic semitones. He died in Lovran in 1960. In Opatija today, save for his grave, the only token to remind us of him is his bust next to the villa *Angiolina*.

9. Čedomil Plavšić

He used to come to Opatija as a boy, but in all likelihood he probably never imagined that he would as an adult play a crucial role in the history of that town. Born in 1902 in Sarajevo, he spent his youth in Zagreb, studied and finished medicine in Belgrade and specialized internal medicine in Paris. When he already had an international reputation, he was invited to come to Opatija in 1954, where he founded the *Thalassotherapy* institute, the backbone of the new era of Opatija's health tourism. Plavšić's avant-garde ideas for rehabilitation of patients with cardiac infarcts attracted to Opatija a whole series of congresses, foreign experts, and also brought about the revival of the town's economy. Čedomil Plavšić died in 1987, and is buried in Opatija's cemetery.

10. Ivo Kalina

Many paintings bear the signatures of Opatijan masters: some of them had spent only a period of their lives here, like Edo Murtić or Jungnickel from Klagenfurt, others have lived here, like Stephanie Glax or are still living here, like Claudio Frank. By giving him a street, Opatijans chose Ivo Kalina. Born in Zagreb in 1925, he spent his childhood in Opatija, but was back in Zagreb to finish the Academy, however since 1963 he again lived in Opatija. His paintings are oil and pastel, abstract compositions or motifs from Volosko such as boats drawn out onto the shore and compressed nuclei of Liburnian citadels. Concluding his bohemian lifestyle, Ivo Kalina died in 1996.

Panorama
of Opatija



Ivo Kalina

