

LAIBACH live at Kampnagel, Hamburg (06.03.2019)



Double déjà vu:

Only three nights after [worshipping the drone out of *Sunn O\)\)\)*](#) I found myself driving through almost the same guess-the-lane-marking piss weather to the *Kampnagel* cultural center in Hamburg again.

And only two nights plus one year [after the stellar "*Also Sprach Zarathustra*"](#) performance right there *Laibach* were again gracing the venue with their presence.

This time the vast *K6* hall seemed just one degree too big, so it wasn't sold out or close to that like in previous years. Why was that? The weather? Doubtful. The date on a Wednesday? More likely.

Or is Hamburg, which has seen the Slovenes quite often in recent years, just suffering under *Laibach* fatigue? Or is it because not all fans are happy with the album ["The Sound Of Music"](#)? Or maybe they were sceptical, because singer *Mina Špiler*, who we all have come to love so much, is sitting this circle out due to maternity leave? Well, if any of the latter three were *your* reasoning to let them pass by, you've clearly made a mistake.

Even though the instrumentalists on drums, guitar and keys and knobs were the same as on the previous tour, the setlist was drastically different. With "Ti, Ki Izzivaš", which during the last decade has really grown into one of their greatest hits, there was in fact only one song being played in both two hour shows.

You can of course argue that *Laibach* already did a "Sound Of Music" tour [back in 2016](#), and that the "*Laibach* revisited" material has been part of their shows [for even longer](#). But not only have the songs of both subjects undergone a certain evolution to their current versions, but there have also been introduced several new tracks. So even if you've followed all the tours closely - this was once again a new beast.



The first act was predetermined by the recent album, which was performed

in full.

Supreme basement grumbler *Milan Fras*, dressed in innocent white, was accompanied my guest singer *Marina Mårtensson*, whose fabulous curly hair was tamed in a fashion which along with her strict classic dress gave the impression of *Cate Blanchett* in "Elizabeth".

Her presence was charismatic and her vocal performance flawless, no matter if she channeled her inner *Julie Andrews* or interpreted parts which were sung by the incomparable *Boris Benko* on the album. Yes, unfortunately *Benko* is only appearing on a couple of selected concerts, so seeing him live with ***Laibach*** still remains on my bucket list.

Mårtensson didn't have to take over all his stuff. Instead some key parts came as playback with video. In this way also the children's choir was featured in the show.

The ride through the ***Rodgers & Hammerstein*** music was catchy and kitschy, bombastic here and quite creepy there. And sometimes just outright silly like in the most borderline song "The ~~Yodeling~~ Lonely Goatherd", which ends on the probably cleanest notes *Milan* has ever uttered on stage.

While the album is based on some kind of electro art pop, it ventures into many different alleys, especially with the new flavors and textures the guitar adds to the live versions. Want a metal riff here? A hint of post rock there? A bit of shredding? This guy has got you covered.

It's pretty amazing how alls this flows together so seamlessly. The theatrical heightening which lies at the core of everything ***Laibach*** is doing enables them to pull off almost everything without ever feeling out of place.

And they are trying hard to do so, especially with the encores. But before that it's time to close the first part with a beautiful rendition of the Korean folk traditional "Arirang" - and of course the whole Act II.



For the second part of the show *Milan* returned in black and took the center of the stage alone. Now *Mina Špiler* joined him for a couple of virtual appearances.

Starting with the double of "Mi Kujemo Bodočnost" ("We Are Forging The Future") and "Smrt Za Smrt" ("Death For Death") it was unmistakably clear, that this was the sinister, heavy, industrial part of the show.

The modernized tone of the reworked / "revisited" classics still ranks among the mightiest and most monolithic *Laibach* has to offer. With the new originals of the title track and two other compositions from "Nova Akropola" half of this set premiered new stuff.

My happiest moment of the whole night was when there were only four persons (*EberSaligerDachauerKeller*) on stage and they played "Vier Personen". The version started relatively close to the old original, but at some point went into a more *kraftwerkian*, but then totally bonkers chaotic industrial jazz state. So fucking good!



One particular thing which made *Laibach* fans chuckle throughout the whole coverage of their trip to North Korea was the media's insistence of calling them a "western rock band".

But hey, they can be rock if they want. And seldom have they done so more than with the version of *The Rolling Stones'* "Sympathy For The Devil" which kicked off the encore and saw *Marina Mårtensson* return to the stage.

After that it got even more atypical with two tracks from the soundtrack of the upcoming "Iron Sky 2" movie. While the stomping blues rock of "The Coming Race" had been touched on with "See That My Grave Is Kept Clean" before, the very last song of the night was a complete novelty for *Laibach*.

"Surfing Through The Galaxy" is a silly country song including *Mårtensson* playing acoustic guitar, *Milan* wearing a cowboy hat and a video of 8-bit 80's *Milan* riding on a rocket collecting hearts.

And since the deep narrating voice is an established country cliché this nonsense actually works better than it should.

Just like "Take Me To Heaven" from the first "Iron Sky" movie this soundtrack composition enables *Laibach* to throw their listeners out of the comfort zone even more than they usually do. They are without a doubt having a shitload of fun with it.

And so did I. All in all this was *Laibach* killing it in every possible way once again. Musically, visually, conceptually... it just still is a complete package like no other.































