



**Esplanade  
Presents**



**Music for Violin and Piano From Bulgaria**  
by Radostin Kirchev and Vera Boyadzhieva  
(Bulgaria/Singapore)

26 Sep 2022, Mon, 12.30pm  
Esplanade Concert Hall

# Programme

Pianist Radostin Kirchev and violinist Vera Boyadzhieva present a programme of picturesque music for violin and piano from Bulgaria. Reflective of the unique folklore music and dances, the repertoire features works by Bentsion Eliezer, Parashkev Hadzhiev, Georgi Zlatev-Cherkin and Pancho Vladigerov.

## 1. Parashkev Hadzhiev – Sonata No. 1 for Violin and Piano

Son of a conductor and an early champion of Bulgarian opera, Parashkev Hadzhiev is one of the most important and prolific Bulgarian composers. He wrote 21 operas, six operettas, three musicals and one ballet. He also composed symphonic, chamber and instrumental music, more than 500 choral songs and over 1,000 children's songs. Hadzhiev graduated from the State Academy of Music in 1936, where he studied piano with Professor Andrey Stoyanov and composition with Professor Pantcho Vladigerov. In 1937, he specialised in composition with Joseph Marx in Vienna then went on to another specialisation with H. Tissen at the Hochschule fur Musik in Berlin from 1938 to 1940. Upon returning to Bulgaria, he was appointed Professor of Harmony and Composition at the State Academy of Music, where he taught for over 40 years.

Hadzhiev composed four sonatas for violin and piano. All of which, are examples of great pieces of music, and a significant and valuable contribution to the Bulgarian chamber instrumental music scene. The young composer completed his first sonata, also his diploma work in 1940 in Berlin, Germany.

The music of his first sonata fascinates listeners with its vivid melodiousness and emotional experience. The piece has a complex form, and the composer greatly covers its broad horizons by developing the themes, enlarging their scope, and contrasting them with one another. The music expresses the rich soulfulness of the Bulgarian people. One can feel it in the very first solo of the violin (1st movement) and in the inspired melodies of the long-drawn *Song without words* (2nd movement). The finale is a motley picture of people celebrating and impressing with the spontaneity of the folklore rhythms and tunes, of which the composer is particularly keen on.

## 2. Georgi Zlatev Cherkin – *Sevdana*

Following his studies at the State Academy of Music in Sofia, Bulgaria from 1923–1925, vocal pedagogue and composer Georgi Zlatev–Cherkin fulfilled his dream of furthering his studies in Vienna. Under the guidance of vocal pedagogue Professor Theo Lierhammer, he graduated from the High School of Music and Dramatic Arts in 1929. It was during this time that he also studied composition with Joseph Marx. Later, he went on to teach at the State Academy of Music in Sofia and assisted Professor Theo Lierhammer in Vienna. He was vocal pedagogue at Conservatories in Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin, China. Known as the “Bulgarian Schubert” in Vienna, Cherkin nurtured many famous opera singers and is one of the most important Bulgarian vocal composers.

Cherkin’s most emblematic instrumental work, *Sevdana*, is a piece for violin and piano. The work was created and premiered in 1944 with Nedyalka Simeonova on violin and Lilyana Bainova on piano. According to some researchers, Cherkin drew inspiration for this enthralling musical poem from *Beneath the Olden Skies*, a play by Tzanko Tzerkovski. Regarding the title, the composer’s grandson Georgi Cherkin, an outstanding Bulgarian pianist said “as to the title *Sevdana*, it is the name of a girl, with whom I believe my grandfather was in love with, but as this love was never fulfilled, he expressed his great passion in this beautiful piece of music”. Even to this day, *Sevdana* remains one of the most popular and loved works among great Bulgarian violinists.

## 3. Bentsion Eliezer – *Sonatina for Violin and Piano*

Bentsion Eliezer was a self-taught clarinettist and saxophonist who worked his way to become a reputable Professor of Harmony, conductor and composer. He graduated from the State Academy of Music in Sofia, Bulgaria in 1953 where he studied composition with Professor Parashkev Hadzhiev and conducting with Professor Assen Dimitrov. Eliezer was one of the composers who laid the foundations for Bulgarian pop music. His philosophy was entirely focused on shaping a national style using elements from the Bulgarian folklore tradition. One of his most interesting compositions is *Fantasy for piano and jazz orchestra*, which has traces of the Bulgarian folk dance *buchimish* throughout. Eliezer wrote works for symphony, string and traditional music orchestra. He also wrote pieces

for chamber and instrumental ensembles, as well as for piano and songs for children, pop, jazz and theatre. He has also arranged more than 250 traditional songs.

In 1954, a year after he graduated from the State Academy of Music, Eliezer wrote *Sonatina*—one of his four chamber music works, for violin and piano. Though wonderful and unique, the piece is not among the most popular Bulgarian chamber music repertoires.

The piece starts off with the energy and vividness that promises the listeners a little adventure. With its short, but colourful and characterful themes, the first movement is lavished with musical content. The second movement is slightly melancholic and leads straight into the playful and lively finale by using traditional folklore elements—the composer’s signature. Deceptively light and easy-going, Eliezer’s *Sonatina* for violin and piano is a challenging chamber music work with traditional classical form, and fresh and unique musical ideas.

#### **4. Pantcho Vladigerov – Chant from Bulgarian Suite Op. 21 No. 2**

Pantcho Vladigerov and his twin brother Lyuben were born in Zurich, Switzerland. Both were endowed with musical talents—Lyuben became a violinist and Pantcho, a pianist and arguably, the most prominent Bulgarian composer. He studied piano with Henrich Wisner and composition with Dobri Hristov at the Private School of Music in Sofia, Bulgaria. Between 1912 and 1915, he studied at the Staatliche Akademische Hochschule fur Musik in Berlin, under the tutelage of Heinrich Bart in piano and Paul Juon in composition. In 1922, Vladigerov graduated with honours from the Berlin Academy of Arts where he majored in piano under Leonid Kreutzer and composition under Friedrich Gernsheim and Georg Schumann. In 1932, he returned to Bulgaria and for four decades, served as Professor of Piano, Chamber Music and Composition at the National Academy of Music in Sofia, which has now been renamed after him. Vladigerov has nurtured an entire generation of composers including Lazar Nikolov, Konstantin Iliev, Alexander Raychev and Vassil Kazandzhiev. He was also the first professional piano teacher to one of the most famous pianists of the 20th century, Alexis Weissenberg.

Vladigerov composed the *Bulgarian Suite* in 1926. Originally written for solo piano, he completed the orchestral score the following year. The work is in four movements and based on authentic motifs from Bulgarian folklore. It also carries the dedication “To My Fatherland”. Each individual movement has its own title—*March*, *Chant*, *Horo* and *Rachenitsa*. In 1977, nearly half a century after its creation, Vladigerov made the only transcription of the suite in its entirety—an arrangement for two pianos.

The *Bulgarian Suite* is an extremely popular piece and its second part *Chant*, is the jewel of Bulgarian musical art. It has undergone several arrangements—for cello and piano, for violin and piano, for violin and orchestra and for chamber orchestra. The beautiful, flowing, and evocative melody of *Chant* has an enchanting intimacy about it and reaches straight to the heart of the listener. The piece has a permanent presence in the repertoires of most Bulgarian musicians, and even more so with violinists. One of the most frequently performed movements of the suite, *Chant* is the preferred choice for encore performances or as a stand-alone in concert programmes.

(30mins, no intermission)

# About Radostin Kirchev



Born and raised in Bulgaria, Radostin Kirchev is an experienced piano teacher and talented piano performer. Under the tutelage of Romyana Shishkova, he began learning the piano at the age of seven in his hometown. During his days in the music school in Stara Zagora, he was invited by the reputable piano professor and pianist Dimo Dimov to further pursue his studies at the National Academy of Music in Sofia, where he graduated with honours obtaining both a bachelor and master's degree in Piano Performance.

Kirchev has given numerous concerts, both as a soloist and with orchestras in Bulgaria, France, Italy, Germany, Singapore and Indonesia. He had attended masterclasses with some world class pianists such as Aldo Ciccolini, Fabio Bidini, Einar-Steen Nokleberg, Krassimir Gatev, Ivan Drennikov and Boyan Vodenicharov and many more.

When Kirchev moved to Singapore in 2012, he gave masterclasses at some of the top schools like Raffles Junior College and Crescent Girls School. His students have distinguished themselves in competitions in Singapore, including winning the 2nd Prize in the National Piano and Violin Competition 2015 in the Junior Category, 2nd and 3rd Prizes in the 7th ASEAN International Chopin Piano Competition 2018, as well as many other international competitions in Poland, England, France, Greece, USA, Taiwan, South Korea and Malaysia.

Kirchev performs regularly in Singapore and around Southeast Asia. He was soloist at *Destiny 2016*, ESO Symphony's annual concert at Victoria Concert Hall and has been involved in various charity concerts in Singapore. He was invited to be a judge in the inaugural Music Singapore International Piano and Violin Competition 2021 and is currently the Head of Piano Department in Asia Music.

# About Vera Boyadzhieva



Vera Boyadzhieva was raised and educated in the city of Varna, Bulgaria. She embarked on her music education at the State School of Music in Varna when she was five, under the guidance of violinist Krasimira Odzhakova. Boyadzhieva gave her first performance at the age of 11 and has since taken part in many solo recitals, chamber music performances and orchestral concerts across Europe, Egypt and Japan.

Boyadzhieva graduated and received her master's degree in violin from the State Academy of Music in Sofia, Bulgaria, where she studied under Prof. Ginka Gichkova.

In 1996, she commenced work with Varna Symphony Orchestra and thereafter, with State Opera Varna.

In 2006, she relocated to Cairo, Egypt and spent five years with the Cairo Opera Orchestra in the position of Assistant-Concertmaster. Boyadzhieva has acquired extensive experience and possesses a wide repertoire both as a solo violinist and orchestra player.

Boyadzhieva has been teaching the violin in Singapore since 2011, and in 2013, she took the position of violin teacher at Musical Art Studio, Singapore.

# Coming up next



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An exploration of Chinese mythological figures — Pan Gu, Nu Wa and Huang Di, through music and multimedia.

21 Oct, Fri  
7.30pm  
Esplanade Concert Hall

**\$38\*, \$58\*, \$88\***



## An Esplanade Commission Illuminations Singapore Symphony Orchestra

The Singapore Symphony Orchestra and choruses come together for an evening of classical music to commemorate Esplanade's 20th anniversary.

5 Nov, Sat  
7.30pm  
Esplanade Concert Hall

**\$38\*, \$58\*, \$88\***

A programme of *In New Light – A Season of Commissions*, in celebration of Esplanade's 20th anniversary.

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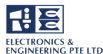
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