

THE HERITAGE OF VLADIGEROV – THE MUSEUM UP CLOSE

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Abstract: The preservation, scientific processing and presentation of the rich material and musical heritage of the classic Bulgarian composer Pancho Vladigerov are the main goals of the Pancho Vladigerov House Museum – Sofia. In fulfillment of Vladigerov's will and thanks to the donative gesture of his wife, Mrs. Elka Vladigerova, today the composer's former home houses his archive, painstakingly collected by him throughout his life. The diversity and uniqueness of the collections in the museum's holdings are a prerequisite for the development of thematic documentary exhibitions, educational programs, and multi-genre concerts, as well as many accompanying events that attract young audiences and introduce them to the composer's personality and the recognition he received as a leading figure in Bulgarian musical culture, as well as on a European and global scale. The team's work is focused on turning the house that has preserved the unique atmosphere of Vladigerov's home in the capital's Lozenets district at 10 Yakubitsa Street into an attractive cultural center.

Keywords: Museum; heritage; cultural institute; production center; exhibitions; educational programs; concerts

THE BEGINNING

More than 20 years passed between the decision to establish a museum in Sofia and the opening of the permanent museum exhibition. Act No. 182, dated 3 March 1980, of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, was decreed to perpetuate the memory of Vladigerov. The composer's house on 10 Yakubitsa Street, which he occupied until his death in 1978, was to become a house museum. This act

also corresponds to the composer's last will, as expressed in his testament of 29 October 1976:

„In the event that the State makes a museum of the part of the house occupied by my wife and myself, it is my will that my wife should remain living there for as long as she lives and that she should be entrusted with the curatorship and custodianship of this museum. It is also my will that all of my autograph manuscripts, all of my sheet music and scores, all of my phonograph records and magnetic tapes, and my entire archive... remain in my home, regardless of when it is converted into a museum.“

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и топла атмосфера, необходими
условия за моето творчество.
В случай че държавата направи
музей обитаваната от мен и съпругата
част от къщата, моята воля е:
Съпругата ми Елена Владигерова
да остане да живее в нея докато
е жива и да ѝ се възложи да
бъде уредник и пазител на този музей.
Моята воля е също: всички мои авторски
ръкописи, нотни и всички мои преписани творби,
всички мои нотни и партитури, всички мои
 грамофонни плочи, магнетофонни ленти,
хипотек и цели ми архив, състоящ се от
руси и най-различни други документи
да останат в дома ми независимо от
това кога той ще бъде превърнат в
музей.
Завещанието правя по моя собствена
свободна воля.
София 29.10.1976 г. За вестник:
проф. Павел Харизанов Владигеров

Facsimile of Vladigerov's will

In April 1984, Mrs. Elka Vladigerova donated her share of the house to the "13 Centuries of Bulgaria" Endowment Fund, with the explicit will "to establish a Pancho Vladigerov Museum." She also donated the composer's entire archive, consisting of nearly 7 thousand meticulously organized and preserved items. This collection included about 20 thousand pages of manuscripts, ranging from Pancho's earliest childhood compositional attempts, neatly inscribed in his childhood music albums, to the last sheet of music found in his closed grand piano. Furthermore, the archive contained other notable items, such as personal documents, correspondence, photographs, programs, posters, sheet music editions, gramophone records and tape recordings, greeting addresses, telegrams, publications in the periodical press, etc. Alexander Vladigerov, the composer's only son, also became a co-donor of the archive. Unfortunately, this was followed by years of disputes between the state and the heirs over the status and existence of the museum, ultimately leading to court cases.

During this period, the museum collection was designated as a branch of the National Literary Museum (NLM), part of the system of the Ministry of Culture. This strange decision was dictated by the considerations that the scientific treatment of the archive, as well as its systematization, preservation, conservation, and promotion, are based on the requirements for any archival collection and are similar to those of authors. The gradual transfer of the individual collections of the archive, accompanied by an assessment of the material heritage, was entrusted to musicologists, specialists of the 13 Centuries Bulgaria Fund, and the NLM. During this period, the main, scientific, and auxiliary collections and the scientific archive of the future museum collection were formed. The court disputes and the reconciliation of responsibilities and obligations between the institutions were the reasons the museum's opening was delayed.

Only with the Council of Ministers letter No. 300 of 8 November 2004 did the branch of the National Museum of History acquire the status of an independent legal entity – a state cultural institute. This change paved the way to the successful development of the future museum exposition.



The Yakubitsa Museum 10
Photography: Slavi Georgiev

EXTRACT

The main task for the newly established cultural institute was the design, construction, and opening of the permanent exhibition. Creating a museum collection is a significant challenge for any museum professional familiar with its intricate richness. In this case, the challenge arose from the objective reality: the limited exhibition space necessitated setting up a documentary exposition and household reconstruction, while simultaneously needing to showcase a diverse array of valuable materials to the general public through art and documentary displays. It was decided that Vladigerov's study would be restored in its completely authentic form, exactly as the composer left it. Similarly, another of Vladigerov's favorite places in the house – the glazed veranda in a domestic style, offering a view of the street – where he used

to relax with a cup of aromatic coffee or tea, was also to be restored. From the entrance to the house's beautiful courtyard, visitors are greeted by an original wrought iron door, specifically commissioned by the composer. It bears Vladigerov's name and two stylized nightingales – the emblem of the Union of Bulgarian Composers. The door was a sign to neighbors and passers-by on the street that this was the home of a composer – little symbols that the Maestro clung to.

The documentary exposition, which marks highlights of Pancho Vladigerov's main life and creative stages, presents some of the earliest archival materials related to Vladigerov's childhood years. The collection features materials concerning his initial education in Shumen and Sofia, as well as the German period from 1912 to 1932 – his twenty years of intensive piano and composition studies, specializations, creativity, and intensive work as a composer and manager in the theatres of Max Reinhardt.



Max Reinhardt (links) bei einer Probe
Rechts Eugen Klöpfer

During a rehearsal with Max Reinhardt

The exposition also explores Vladigerov's mature years, after his final return to his homeland: the creation of his emblematic stage and instrumental works, his active pedagogical work as a professor at the State Academy of Music, and his outstanding public prestige as a guest and jury member at international competitions and important musical and public forums in Brussels, Stuttgart, Bolzano, Budapest, Paris, Rio de Janeiro, among many others. The global recognition of Vladigerov both as a person and an artist

is also highlighted through the display of his international and Bulgarian awards and prizes. The Pancho Vladigerov House Museum – Sofia, along with its permanent exhibition, were opened to visitors on 25 March 2005, on the day of the feast of Annunciation.

In recent years, the museum workers have aspired for this place to become more than a stagnant museum space but also a vibrant cultural, musical, and production center of the capital – a place for gatherings, music, people, events, as it was during the composer's lifetime. Their goal is for visitors to experience the tranquility of the Lozenets district and the special atmosphere of Vladigerov's home, to see the composer's well-maintained piano and grand piano, as well as the unique grand piano used for professional masterclasses, and to attend productions, educational concerts, temporary exhibitions, celebrations, chamber concerts, and presentations of CDs and literature on the topic of music and art.

Over the years, active partnership relations have also been established with leading cultural and educational institutes, music festivals, and forums, including the Sofia Municipality and the Lozenets district. In the brief period of its existence, the Pancho Vladigerov Museum has established itself as an authoritative cultural center of the capital, an attractive place for performers, amateur music lovers, students and pupils and locals alike.

The diverse individual collections within the museum's holdings, curated meticulously by the composer throughout his lifetime, serve as the primary inspiration for the museum's focus on presenting thematic art-documentary exhibitions. These exhibitions aim to elaborate on, illustrate, and detail various fascinating and significant themes and periods of Vladigerov's creative career for the general public.

Here are some of them:

FOR VLADIGEROV – PERSONALLY

The idea of creating this exhibition was provoked by the collection of family albums that the museum received as a donation from Pancho Vladigerov Jr. – the composer's grandson – after the death of Mrs. Elka Vladigerova. Until her last breath, she refused to part with them. To her, these albums represented the living memory and tangible presence of her beloved husband. Hundreds of amateur photographs from the daily life of the artist reveal Vladigerov's intimate world. The carefully selected images in the exhibition have captured the Maestro's personal moments of creative work, the hours spent listening to music, working with his students, walking his pets, and playing with the neighborhood children. Most notably, they showcase Vladigerov's many meetings with friends, colleagues, and foreign guests – performers, conductors, and public figures seeking contact with the famous composer. These moments illustrate the personality and active, vital presence of an artist wholly dedicated to the pursuit of music.



In the office
Photography: Stefan Lazarov

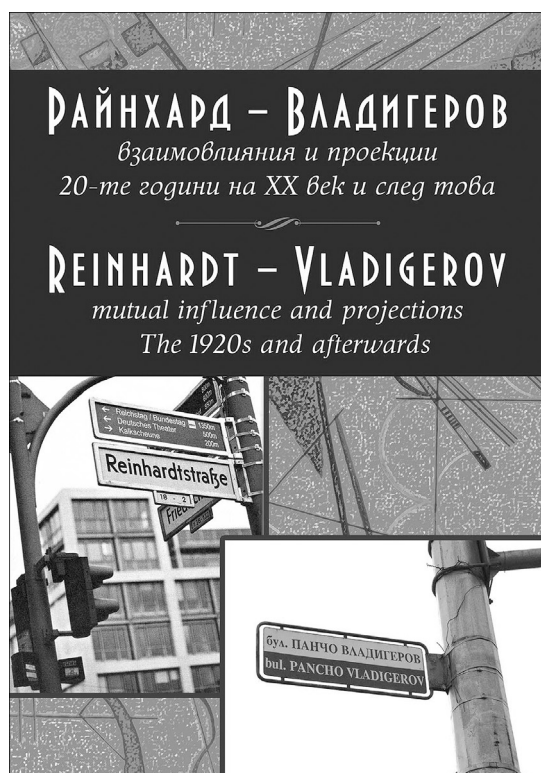
REINHARDT – VLADIGEROV. INTERACTIONS AND PROJECTIONS is another interesting exhibition which aims to lift the curtain on forgotten or obscure facts of the composer's life. The art documentary panels present a little-known period of Pancho Vladigerov's creative biography. From 1920 to 1932, Vladigerov worked in creative tandem with the famous theatre director Max Reinhardt in his theatres in Berlin and Vienna as a composer and musical director. The exhibition tells the story of the creative collaboration in the cultural context of the atmosphere in Berlin and Sofia in the 1920s.

DEUTSCHES THEATER – BERLIN staged performances of *Caesar and Cleopatra* by Bernard Shaw, *A Dream Play* by August Strindberg, *Judith* by Friedrich Hebbel, *The Circle of Chalk* by Klabund (Alfred Henschke) and *Much Ado About Nothing* by Shakespeare to music by Vladigerov. Other plays presented in the Viennese Theater in der Josefstadt were *The Merchant of Venice* by Shakespeare and *Juarez and Maximilian* by Franz Werfel, also accompanied by music of the Bulgarian Maestro. There is scant evidence of this period in the German and Austrian archives, and both the onset of

fascism and war and the distance of time have erased many of the traces. In the archives of Deutsches Theater in Berlin, only a few pages of music by Vladigerov for the play *School for Women* have survived, stored in a folder labeled "music by Jewish composers." This score, as well as the programs and posters that the composer and his family carefully preserved and collected, serve as testimonies of that period of time and its effects on the musical and theatrical art in Bulgaria. They prove Vladigerov's extensive work in this creative tandem on a European and global scale. In his reminiscences of those glorious years, the composer recounts his interactions with world-renowned figures – not only musicians, but also writers and playwrights such as Stefan Zweig, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, and Berthold Brecht.

"I met Stefan Zweig when I was composing the music for A Dream Play, a play by August Strindberg. I wrote it in Salzburg. I was invited to Reinhard's palace "Leopoldskron", it was truly a sanctuary of art. Richard Strauss and Stefan Zweig came there. I remember this man – he sat with me for hours at the piano, asking me to play this for him, to play that for him..."

(Pancho Vladigerov)



Entrance board of the "Reinhard-Vladigerov" exhibition. Art design by Ivelina Velinova

The exhibition REINHARDT – VLADIGEROV. INTERACTIONS AND PROJECTIONS is another story about the influence of new modern art in Germany and Austria in the 1920s, which swiftly permeated Bulgaria. The composer Pancho Vladigerov, the director Hrisan Tsankov – a specialist at the Reinhardt theatres, the painter Ivan Penkov, and the conductor Kosta Todorov – also German graduates, joined forces in the staging of Klabund's *The Circle of Chalk* at the National Theatre in 1926 and presented the new trends in art. Their work received a mixed response from conservative artistic tastes, but even amid this, critics unanimously praised Vladigerov's music. The composer continued his artistic explorations in the field of theatre music with his work on Georgi Rachev's play *The Deer Kingdom* and Carlo Goldoni's *The Fan*, both staged at the National Theatre, followed years later by the music to Orlin Vassilev's play *Happiness*. Overall, the conclusion is that theatre music, with its vivid illustrative and dramaturgical charge, is a rich creative laboratory, a source of vivid thematicism from which Vladigerov drew ideas for many of his later works. The exhibition aims to provide further evidence of the early appreciation shown by the twentieth-century European intellectual elite for the exceptional gift and creative invention of the classic Bulgarian composer. In an interview given in Berlin in 1987, Gottfried Reinhardt, Max Reinhardt's son, said:

"He (Vladigerov) was the only Bulgarian pianist and conductor who collaborated with my father for many years...Unfortunately, I have never been to Bulgaria. My idea of Bulgaria is Pancho Vladigerov and his music."

One precious exhibit from the museum's permanent collection, *The Double Portrait of the Vladiger Brothers*, recalls another historic encounter that marked Vladigerov's years in Germany. In 1929, the great Bulgarian artist Boris Georgiev, who was also living and working in Berlin at the time, organized an exhibition featuring *The Double Portrait of the Vladiger Brothers* and a portrait of the physicist Albert Einstein. The exhibition became an opportunity for a young Vladigerov to meet the world-famous author of the *Theory of Relativity*. The amateur violinist Einstein expressed his admiration for Vladigerov's music, which he was already familiar with from the recordings distributed by Deutsche Grammophon. The music brought them closer and Einstein often visited the Vladigerov brothers' lodgings on Schumann Strasse, or as it was jokingly called, the Schumann Strasse where they played sonatas by Beethoven and Brahms.

Another angle to the presentation of the richness of the museum's holdings – the material, and spiritual legacy of Vladigerov – is the exhibition PHOTOS AND MEMORIES FROM VLADIGEROV'S CABINET. The materialization of this exposition was inspired by video recordings of interviews with Vladigerov's students who visited the house museum. Yulia Tsenova, Georgi

Kostov, Milko Kolarov, Milcho Leviev, Vasil Kazandjiev, Ivan Drenikov, Pavel Gerdzhikov, Milena Mollova, Stefan Lazarov, and Stefan Dragastinov recall their unforgettable moments with their teacher and the lessons he taught them not only in music but also in life with affection and respect. The exhibition is a continuation of the story of the man and the artist, illustrated with rich photographic material. The many photographs on the walls of the composer's study, restored in this unique panel as Vladigerov himself left them, and the memories of his students, interpreters, colleagues, and friends, tell the story of the house on Yakubitsa Street as both a home and a temple. They reveal not only the image of a genius composer and a strict teacher, but that of a charming, warm man. It is also striking that everyone remembers Pancho Vladigerov fondly and his memory is still alive, regardless of the time that has passed. The panels showcase moments from his creative process and recount meetings both inside and outside the study. The valuable photographic material is complemented by Vladigerov's famous aphoristic expressions and his students' thoughts on the unforgettable Maestro. The exhibition also aims to convey Prof. Milcho Leviev's sentiment:

"...Vladigerov is not a memory. He just is."



Pancho Vladigerov – grandson and Dimo Dimov at the piano in Vladigerov's office.

Photography: Vasilka Balevska



The exhibition is visiting the National Library "St. St. Cyril and Methodius"

The last art exhibition in this cycle is VLADIGEROV IN THE MUSICAL KALEIDOSCOPE OF THE 20TH CENTURY. DIRECTIONS, CONNECTIONS, REFLECTIONS. The exposition was created on the 120th anniversary of the birth of Pancho Vladigerov. It is another opportunity to honor his place and contribution to the development of Bulgarian and world musical culture in the 20th century. Having received high praise and recognition for his talent at an early age, and having developed his gift into a multifaceted oeuvre with a strong national presence, Vladigerov left a significant contribution to the building of our national culture and is deservedly recognized as the "Patriarch of Bulgarian Music". The composer's archive contained carefully scribbled notes with names of composers, performers, and bright creative personalities of the twentieth century, inspiring the idea. Vladigerov wrote down the names, this most likely gave him self-confidence and encouragement in his work. The list is impressive. The names, including Richard Strauss, Béla Bartók, Zoltan Kodály, George Enescu,

Erik Korngold, Arnold Schoenberg, Karol Szymanowski, Alan Busch, Aram Khachaturian, Joseph Marx, Dmitri Shostakovich, Sergei Prokofiev, Rodion Shchedrin, and others, are respectable and a testament to our composer's vivid personality, decades in the making. The exhibition *Vladigerov in the Musical Kaleidoscope of the Twentieth Century. Directions, Connections, Reflections* is an attempt to present the artist in the context of the musical world's traditions over the last century, in the surroundings of the brightest names in European and world musical culture – the composers Richard Strauss, Zoltan Kodály, Béla Bartók, Dmitry Shostakovich, George Enescu, Aram Khachaturian; the conductors Bruno Walter, Isai Dubroven, Herbert von Karajan, Edward Mörike, Djordje Giurescu, Sasha Popov, Evgeny Svetlanov; the pianists Alexis Weissenberg, Dino Lipatti, Sviatoslav Richter; the violinists Max Rosen, Gustav Havemann, Bronislaw Huberman, David Oistrakh, Leonid Kogan, as well as other representatives of the intellectual elite of Europe in the twentieth century – singers, producers, poets, writers, playwrights, directors.

Vladigerov's contacts with the bright artists of the last century made their mark on his growth as a world-class composer and pianist, establishing him as a bright name and presence in Europe's cultural programs and posters for decades. His work has been performed in Berlin, Leipzig, Munich, Dresden, Vienna, Salzburg, Paris, Utrecht, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Brussels, New York, Rome, Warsaw, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Athens, Belgrade, Bucharest... The testimonies and archival materials presented in the exhibition – photographs, manuscripts, programs, posters, letters, and personal correspondence, which record Pancho Vladigerov's active creative and personal contacts, are also an expression of the high appreciation of leading musicians and intellectuals for the composer's talent and his bright presence in the European musical culture of the 20th century.

ВЛАДИГЕРОВ СРЕД НОВОТО ПОКОЛЕНИЕ „ТОНОВИ ПОЕТИ“ VLADIGEROV AMONG THE NEW GENERATION OF "TONE POETS"



Братя Владигеров с приятели в Залцбург, 1925 г.
Vladigerov brothers with friends in Salzburg, 1925.



Карточка „Млади международни тонови поети“.
I ред (горно надясно): Игор Стравински, Паул Хиндемит, Ерик Корнгелд, II ред: Панчо Владигеров, Ернст Кренк, Йероми Виндбергер, Казимир на Вестмарк, „Deutscher Kultur Post“, 1930 г.
Post card "Young tone poets of international acclaim".
First row (vertically): Igor Stravinsky, Paul Hindemith, Erich Korngold, Second row: Pancho Vladigerov, Ernst Krenk, Jerami Windberger, Printed by "Deutscher Kultur Post", 1930.



На 23 април 1921 г. Виенската филхармонична оркестрация в самото на „Novitäten“ партити цялостен концерт с български съвременни музика в ръководство на Хераклит Нестороф.
On April 23, 1921, the Vienna philharmonic orchestra performed the first all-Bulgarian symphonic program under the conduct of Heraklit Nestoroff.



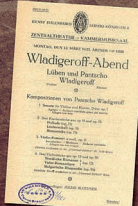
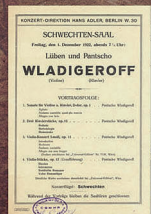
Хераклит Нестороф (1896-1940 г.) – композитор, диригент и глумец от българо-виевски произход. През периода 1920-1921 г. е назначен за директор на Виенската филхармония, работи в киното и театъра в Виена след това. Умира през 1940 г. по време на бомбардировките в Берлин, които стават причина и за унищожение на значителна част от неговите ръкописи.
Heraklit Nestoroff (1896-1940) – composer, violinist and conductor of Bulgarian and German origin. In 1920-1921 he served as a conductor of the Vienna philharmonic orchestra, in which he also worked as a violinist. He died in 1940 during the bombings in Berlin, which also destroyed a considerable part of his manuscripts.



Постановка на Макс Райнхардт на пиесата „Чудо“ на фестивала в Залцбург, 1925 г.
A staging of the play "Miracle" by Max Reinhardt at the Salzburg festival, 1925.



Емил Херска – глумец на „Universal Edition“, Виена
Emil Herzka – director of Universal Edition, Vienna



Произведенията на Владигеров все повече звучат в концертните зали.
Vladigerov's works can be heard more and more often in the concert halls.



През 1922 г. Владигеров подписва договор с престижното българо-виевско издателство „Universal Edition“ за издаване на неговите произведения. Първият издателски концерт от 11.
In 1922 Vladigerov signed a publishing contract with "Universal Edition", Vienna. The first edition of the violin concerto, op. 11 – was published in the same year.

From the exhibition "Vladigerov in the musical kaleidoscope of the 20th century. Directions, Connections, Reflections".

A successful attempt to go beyond the museum collection and unite archival materials with other cultural institutions was the exhibition A Tempo, dedicated to the anniversary of the prestigious Sofia Music Weeks international festival. The exhibition is based on extensive photographic

and documentary material from the festival's archive and materials from the museum's collection. It tells the story of the beginning of the active creative exchange and the glamorous artistic presence of the most outstanding, leading musicians and ensembles in the 1970s and 1980s, of the festival's rise to a prestigious European forum and entry into the European Association of Music Festivals. A significant place is given to the vivid personal presence and contribution of our distinguished musicians – Vladigerov, Bogomil Sturshenov, Peter Stupel, Plamen Djurov, and many others in raising the prestige of this distinguished music festival.

Another direction in the choice of themes for the presentation of Pancho Vladigerov's legacy is the theme of the composer's Jewish origin. This is the reason for initiating a partnership project with the organization of Jews in Bulgaria – “Shalom”. After years of creative and performing upsurge, gaining immense popularity in the musical circles of Europe, the composer decided in 1932 to return to Bulgaria. This event was connected to his Jewish origin – an intimate and delicate subject that Vladigerov did not publicize, but carried in his heart. His mother, Dr. Eliza Pasternak, was Jewish, born in Odessa. In an interview, Vladigerov mentioned that his cousin was the great Russian writer and Nobel laureate Boris Pasternak. No documentary proof of this fact has ever been found, but there was probably an intertwining of the lineage of the two. As National Socialist sentiment grew in Germany, it became uncertain for Vladigerov to remain in the German capital. Years later, this was confirmed by the fact that his name was published in the *Lexicon of Jews in Music* published by the National Socialist Party in Berlin, in 1941, where he was listed as a composer of half-Jewish origin whose music was not to be performed. The Jewish theme for him was a sentiment of destiny, and years later he poured his feelings into one of his most vivid works, *Jewish Poem*.

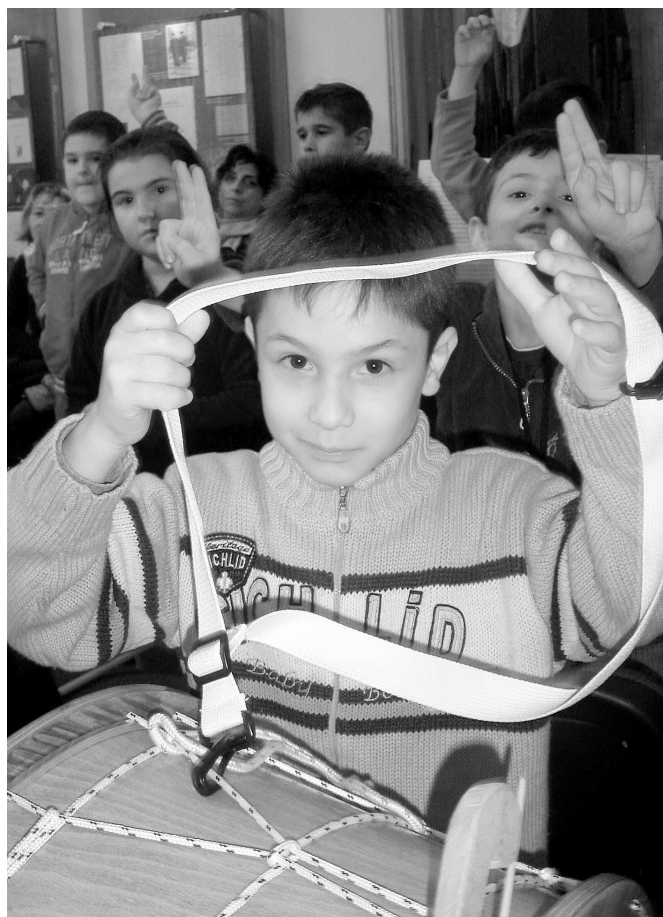
This theme was developed in the project THE JEWISH PRESENCE IN BULGARIAN MUSICAL CULTURE, which also included other prominent representatives of the Bulgarian composer and musician community – Acad. Nikolai Kaufmann, Jules Levy, Benedikt Molchow, Maurice Aladjem, Bencion Eliezer, Peter Stupel, Alexis Weissenberg, Leon Surujon, Samuel Vidas, Leon and Simo Lazarov, Nina Aladjem, Milcho Leviev, Dina Schneiderman and many others. The work is reflected in several artistic products – an exhibition, video interviews, documentaries, and an informational website.

The exhibition WITH ACCELERATED RHYTHM presents archival materials about most of the mentioned above musicians, attesting to their outstanding contribution to the development of Bulgarian music culture from the 1920s to our times.

The work of this project expands and enriches the museum's production

activities. The project includes interviews with members of the Jewish musical community. Based on these interviews and the rich documentary film archive of the Bulgarian National TV, the Pancho Vladigerov House Museum co-produced a series of documentaries: *Kaufman & Kaufman*, *Benedikt Molkhov and the Theatre*, the Jewish Singing Society – in two series – *The Creation* and *Directions*, and the film *It's Dark, It Means Dawn*. This is a very active production work by a small cultural institute, made with the ambition to present the legacy of the Bulgarian musical classic through different themes.

Since 2006, the museum's accompanying activities have been focused on children's music education projects: *Up and Down*, *Up and Down*, *Let's Paint a Picture with Sounds*, *The Sound of Celebration*, *Musical Journey*, *See and Hear*, etc. The team and the partners aim to create in the children the pleasure of producing sound and of making music together collectively; to overcome the boundary between the serious and the entertaining; to arouse attention and interest in sound, music, and other types of art, through the interactive methods of play, aimed at organizing sounds into complete musical pictures, in combination with speech, image, movement; to stimulate the activity of all and awaken their creative talents. The aim is to build habits of listening and joining in the common whole, creating a sense of musical organization, preserving spontaneity, regardless of the learning need for repetition, contact through the music, and discovering its meaning with the help of the narrative and additional sounds and images. Through the interactive methods of play and the pleasure of making music together, a journey through time and space is made, habits are created not only of listening to music but also of visiting places connected with cultural and historical heritage and the arts, an active attitude to knowledge and music is stimulated. Observing the objective circumstances emerging over the transitional years, of distancing from art and its manifestations, the team aims to overcome the broken link between different generations. What is certain is that the music education projects have left lasting memories and have won admirers of the musical art.



Music-educational classes in the museum

Another interesting and sustainable project, provoked by Vladigerov's stories and the intimate atmosphere of his home, is a series of chamber concerts *Days and Evenings of Home Music-Making*. It seeks a restoration of the house concerts once held in the salons of the city's aristocracy, an intimacy of communication different from the traditional concert hall, with a distance from the performers, and immediate communication through music. This series gives a stage to young performers – students of the National Academy of Music “Prof. Pancho Vladigerov”, as well as established names, including Angel Stankov, Joseph Radionov and Zornitsa Radionova, Rostislav Yovchev, the Vladigerov brothers with Stoyan Yankulov – Stunji, Daniela and Yuri Rizovi, Desislava Shtereva, and Evgenia Simeonova and many others.

A serious deployment of the team's organizational potential is the successful implementation of the MICROCOSMOS project. It is a bold attempt to unite musicians from all over the world. 60 contemporary composers, from 60 countries, were challenged to create a short piano work of 60 seconds, the result being a snapshot of the new piano music. 60*60*60 – macrocosm and microcosm at the same time. The museum became the territory of the workshops and a center of attraction for young performers and composers. The project was realized in partnership with the National Academy of Music “Prof. Pancho Vladigerov” and New Bulgarian University.

In recent years, the museum has also been active in the realization of multi-genre projects that synthesize different types of art. One interesting project from 2017 is DANCE OF THE SENSES, an exhibition of paintings and a demonstration of the fine ancient art of candle decoration, accompanied by music. The result is a synthesis of arts and perceptions – music, painting, and candle decoration. The audience is led on a quest to answer the question, what connects Chinese emperors, Roman aristocrats, Baroque concerts, and Venetian lavish carnivals to our modern times?

The answer is light.

Through the light of the candles, the fine art of their decoration, and the sounds of Renaissance music, visitors have the opportunity to enjoy the paintings of the artist-musician Irina Mikhailova and the art of candle decoration, with a demonstration of Venetian carving technique by master Maria Argirova. *Dance of the Senses* delights all the senses. What is particularly interesting about it is its interactive moment – the opportunity given to all who wish to try out the ancient techniques of candle decoration /carving/ under the masterful eye of Maria Argirova. The project aims to influence perceptions and convey the power, beauty, and grace of the art of candle decoration.

Another original multi-genre project is SYN(es)THESIS. Launched in 2020, it aims to build a bridge between the arts, exploring the many possibilities for their interplay and synthesis. The different stages of the project open up new avenues for young artists – musicians, painters, actors – to unleash their artistic and creative potential and fill an important but rarely addressed creative and educational niche. The team faces the challenge of attracting new audiences to concert halls to experience the creative explorations of young musicians and artists. This project aims to remind and promote our rich musical heritage – the work of classical and contemporary Bulgarian composers. This is the beginning. Young artists are provoked to focus exclusively on the relationship between perception in visual and musical art. In the first editions, painting students from the National Academy of Arts present new paintings, each inspired by a musical work of their pre-selection.

The paintings from this first stage inspire the creation of new musical works written by young composers. The natural development of the project led to the creation of an International Composition Competition, which was a highlight. In the first edition of the competition, 23 composers from 17 countries in Europe, Asia, North and South America participated. In the next stage, a new musical selection became the occasion for the creation of further artistic works and the holding of another event.

The project's continuation was held in 2022 and 2023 with the attraction of new participants and new directions in art. The THEATRE OF MOVEMENT with the participation of students of the specialties "Acting" and "Pantomime" from the National Academy of Theatre and Film Arts "Krastyo Sarafov", whose presence expands the scope of the project and opens new avenues in the presentation of this exceptional creative communication. In 2023 SYN(es)THESIS successfully realized the third edition of the competition with a composition competition in two categories – MUSIC ON A PAINTING based on a new selection of paintings from previous editions of the project and MUSIC ON A SCENE FROM THE THEATRE OF SHADOWS with the participation of the troupe of blind actors "Unseen Theatre".

The International Competition has enjoyed great interest: 70 composers from 26 countries on 4 continents have applied to participate in both categories. Through the successful implementation of this original innovative project, the popularity of the museum has expanded, the creative invention of young artists has been provoked, and partnership relations with the largest art educational institutes have been intensified. The museum is becoming a center, a creative laboratory for interesting and innovative creative explorations.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the multidirectional activity of the team of Pancho Vladigerov House Museum is subordinated to the aspiration to restore and preserve the authentic atmosphere of Vladigerov House, where there has always been a unique artistic presence and a lot of music played. Driven by the aspiration to preserve and present the heritage in a dignified manner, as well as the ambition to transform and establish the home at 10 Jakubica Str. into a cultural center, the team continues its search for new and diverse themes and ideas to enliven the museum space and consciously engage with music, following Vladigerov's testament.

About the Autor:

Nadia Sotirova has been the Director of the Pancho Vladigerov House Museum in Sofia since its official opening in 2005. She is the author of the museum's permanent exhibition and thematic art and documentary exhibitions about Pancho Vladigerov and other personalities and events. She is a compiler of representative editions of the museum and a producer of concerts, recordings, music-educational programs, documentaries, and series. Sotirova participates in international programs such as "The Jewish Presence in Bulgarian Musical Culture" and the Reinhardt-Vladigerov Program, in partnership with leading Bulgarian and international organizations.

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