



OVERVIEW

Last year edition of "Varna Summer" celebrated the 90th anniversary of the festival, which has been faithful to the legacy of the founders in 1926: *"To present to the citizens of Varna the best of Bulgarian and world music scene."* Over the years, tradition and modernity complement each other to present and highlight the achievements of Bulgarian and Varna musicians in the context of European music art. This year the festival pays special attention to youth projects as part of the overall atmosphere of Varna – European Youth Capital 2017.

The rich multi-genre program is structured in six modules:

CORE PROGRAM - SYMPHONY AND CHAMBER MUSIC (25 June - 7 July)

INTERNATIONAL SUMMER MUSIC ACADEMY (1–14 July)

VARNA SUMMER MUSIC LAB (16 – 26 July)

CROSSOVER (10 – 12 August)

OPEN-AIR OPERA, MUSICAL AND BALLET (29 June – 9 August)

EARLY AND BAROQUE MUSIC (17 – 21 September)

Modules are complemented by a series of collaborative projects and a parallel program.

Concert programs feature music ranging from fifteenth to twenty-first century. This year again the festival pays special attention to Bulgarian music with first performances of works by Emil Tabakov, Anatoly Vapirov and other Bulgarian composers. Musicians from Austria, Bulgaria, Great Britain, Germany, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Russia, Slovenia, Turkey, Hungary, France, Canada, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, etc are guests at the festival.

CORE PROGRAM – SYMPHONY AND CHAMBER MUSIC (25 June – 7 July)

The core program includes 13 events – symphony concerts, chamber music and recitals.

The symphonic programs are by the **Varna, Rouse and Sofia Philharmonic Orchestras**, with the special participation of **Webern Kammerphilharmonie** from Vienna. The beginning of the module CORE PROGRAM is set by the Varna Philharmonic under the conductorship of Emil Tabakov and soloists Mincho Minchev, Evgeni Bozhanov and Yang Chang Cho. Beethoven's Triple Concerto together with Rhapsody "Vardar" by Vladigerov and Five Bulgarian Dance by Tabakov are among the highlights of the festival program. Other highlights are the thematic Brahms program of the Sofia Philharmonic with soloists Svetlin Roussev and Xavier Phillips and the guest performance of the violin virtuoso **Emmanuel Tjeknavorian** as a soloist of Webern Kammerphilharmonie. The Rouse Philharmonic will mark the 70th anniversary of Anatoly Vapirov with his original music and with the participation of **Antoni Donchev** and **Stoyan Yankulov-Stundzhi**. The orchestral variety is enriched by the "Sofia Soloists" with a program that will surely delight music lovers - Schubert and Tchaikovsky with soloist Georgi Cherkin and Ensemble "Sinfonietta" - Varna with the participation of prominent Varna choirs and soloists. The chamber concerts feature internationally renowned Bulgarian musicians in joint projects with stars from the European scenes: **Ludmil Angelov with Lana Trotovsek, Svetlin Roussev with Xavier Phillips and Elena Rozanova.**

The undisputed focus of the chamber program is the first visit to Bulgaria of **Artis String Quartet** from Vienna who regularly participates in major festivals in Salzburg, Vienna, Berlin, Warsaw.

INTERNATIONAL SUMMER MUSIC ACADEMY (1–14 July)

The courses in the International Summer Academy were the first music master classes in Bulgaria. The Academy is a kind of creative laboratory that is constantly looking for new innovative forms of development of young talents. The combination of master classes with concerts creates the atmosphere in which the young performers start establishing their career on the stage. Part of that atmosphere is “The Violins of Prof. Mincho Minchev” Competition, held for the fifth time in Varna. The winners receive the opportunity to use craft-made instruments from the fund of Prof. Mincho Minchev within one year.

This year the International Summer Academy includes two master classes – **violin with Mincho Minchev** and **opera singing with Emil Ivanov**. In the week between 8 and 14 July the program offers recitals by renowned artists: Liya Petrova – violin, Gareth Lubbe – viola, Marcelo Nisinman – bandoneon, Et Arsis Piano Quartet as well as recital by prizewinners of “Pancho Vladigerov” Competition 2017.

“VARNA SUMMER” MUSIC LAB (16 – 26 July)

This year the module “Varna Summer” Music Lab presents six concerts of musicians connected with Varna. The artists are different in age, with a diverse artistic career, many of them living and working around the world, but they have all started from Varna and are graduates of the Varna School of Music. They are bound together both by their love for music and their affection for the home town.

In “Varna Summer” Music Lab 2017 their own projects especially prepared for the festival will be presented by Ivo Stankov and Whitgift School Orchestra and Choir London, Alissia Rafaelian and Christian Roellinger, Schubertiada with Atanas Krastev and “Dobri Hristov” Quartet, Orpheus and Eurydice by Gluck – collaborative project between musicians from Varna and Cyprus. The highlight in this module is the well-known project “Preludes” by Vesko Stanev, who has already toured the most prestigious concert halls in Europe. A spectacular finale of the festival program in July will be the concert by the “Pioneer” Philharmonic Orchestra in the Open-air Theater with the Varna Navy Band, where the impressive overture “1812” by Tchaikovsky will sound.

CROSSOVER (10 – 12 August)

The *Crossover* module arouses great interest among a wider audience. Crossing the boundaries of classical music and entering the territory of other genres such as jazz, pop and ethno, the festival has already established its own traditions in presenting modern projects. This year will present three concerts in the Archeological Museum: the project

“Time After Time” with Mira Katsarova, jazz trio and Varna Chamber Orchestra, Konstantin Kostov Trio with improvisations on classical and Bulgarian themes, and “Cosmic Voices” Choir, conducted by Vanya Moneva.

EARLY AND BAROQUE MUSIC (17 – 21 September)

One of the most favorite modules for the audience has already stood as an independent event of three exceptional evenings in September at the Aula of Varna University of Economics. This year some of the most acclaimed baroque ensembles over the years return on the stage of the “Varna Summer”: **Marquise Ensemble** from Hungary with their program *The Passion of Early Music*, **Zefira Valova and Vasilii Ilisavski** will present *Handel in London*, and the Baroque ensemble **Le Tendre Amour** from Spain participates with a new stage performance of the opera buffa *La serva padrona* by Pergolesi.

OPERA, MUSICAL AND BALLET IN THE OPEN-AIR THEATRE

Opera in the Open-air Theatre, the most important event of the artistic production of the Varna State Opera, this year again is favoured by the support of "Varna Summer" IMF. Within the frame of the prestigious international festival the Open-air Theatre will host the premieres of the musical *The Three Musketeers*, the operas *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Attila* and *Manon Lescaut*, the spectacle of the ballet *Don Quixote*, and on the Main Stage of the Varna State Opera - the premiere of the ballet *La Fille mal gardée*.

On 29 June will be the Bulgarian premiere of the musical ***The Three Musketeers*** by Maxim Dunayevsky based on the novel by Alexandre Dumas, father, libretto and stage production Nikolay Aprilov, conductor and arrangement of the songs Statsimir Pavlov, stage design and costumes Asya Stoimenova, translation of the songs Maria Doneva, choreography Tatyana Yaneva, with the special participation of the famous theatrical and film actor Ovanes Torosian in the role of D'Artagnan. "*The Three Musketeers*, as everyone knows, is a story of knighthood, courage, valour and bravery - qualities that should be brought in young people, especially important for boys, so in the year when Varna is the European Youth Capital, we are addressing our production to them", says Nikolay Aprilov. In this large-scale staging the director has included opera artists, dramatic actors and young talents from the Varna Children's - Youth Opera.

On July 4 we will enjoy the brilliant belcanto work by Gaetano Donizetti ***Lucia di Lammermoor***, the first of the opera premieres in the program of "Varna Summer" IMF, dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the Varna Opera. The dynamic and contemporary direction of Ognian Draganoff, the impressive stage design of Dimo Kostadinov and the original costumes of Salvatore Russo (Italy) inspire the soloists Irina Zhekova - Lucia; Svilen Nikolov - Enrico; Nazar Tattshin (Turkey) - Edgardo, Plamen Dolapchiev - Normanno, Hristo Ganevski - Arturo and Eugeniy Stanimirov - Raimondo to show their singing and artistic mastery. The conductor Nicoletta Conti (Italy) is one of the renowned interpreters of belcanto operas on the contemporary European scene.

Attila by Giuseppe Verdi, directed by Deyan Miladinovich (Serbia), will be the opera event on July 7. In this elite staging, co-production with the National Theater of Belgrade, the Hun's invasion of Italy in the 5th century will be recreated by the excellent soloists: Svetlozar Rangelov – Attila, Ventseslav Anastasov – Ezio, Linka Stoyanova – Odabella, Georgi Sultanov – Foresto. True to his style, the chief conductor of the Varna State Opera, Jan van Maanen (The Netherlands), will create an atmosphere of strong emotion.

Don Quixote by Ludwig Minkus will triumph in the Open-air Theater on July 14 in the cheerful production by Sergey Bobrov, honored artist of Russia, Chief Ballet Master of the Varna State Opera. His own contribution to the ever-increasing visions of this ballet is the final dance Fandango, inspired by the popular Spanish folk dance. In the major roles we will see the laureates of the last year International Ballet Competition in Varna from Russia Elena Svinkko - Kitri and Dmitriy Dyachkov - Basilio.

The Ballet Summer 2017 will give us to opportunity to see on August 2 on the Main Stage of Varna Opera the stars of Kremlin Ballet, Saori Koike and Yegor Motuzov. This artist couple, whose perfect performances make the audiences to hold their breath, will dance in the premiere of ***La Fille mal gardée*** by Peter Hertel. The ballet is staged by Sergey Antonov, a soloist of the Bolshoi Theater. The both ballet performances will be conducted by the youngest conductor of the Varna State Opera, Milen Apostolov.

On August 9, we return to the Open-air Theater for the premiere of ***Manon Lescaut*** – the opera which gave G.B. Shaw the reason to declare Giacomo Puccini the true successor of Verdi. Director Alexander Tekeliev, conductor Jan van Maanen. The story of freedom-loving peasant girl who is torn between love and dreamt life in luxury, will be recreated by the young Italian soprano Valeria Sepe – Manon Lescaut, in partnership with the magnificent baritone Plamen Dimitrov – Lescaut and Efe Kislali (Turkey) – Des Grieux, described by the critics as a "tenor with a baritone nuance, brilliant in the high register".

COLLABORATION and PARALLEL PROGRAM

Varna Summer presents a varied parallel program with joint projects. The program in partnership with the International Theater Festival this year includes the modern flamenco show *Desplante* and the satellite broadcast of the opera *Traviata* from the Metropolitan Opera. Connoisseurs of the opera can see the exhibition *70 Years Varna Opera – documents, photographs, drawings* during the performances in the Open-air Theater.

The presentation of the book *To the Portrait of Nikola Gyuzelev* by Vladimir Gadzhev, with the participation of the author and the conductor Plamen Dzhurov, will remind the life and the artistic career of the great opera singer. The summer atmosphere of the festival will be highlighted by the Mastretta Ensemble's concert from Spain and the music of their last album - a kaleidoscope of popular and contemporary music with Mediterranean sensuality, experimental elements and rock nuances.