

From *The Summer of Bulgarian Culture* (Prof. Rozmari Statelova)

The Summer Music Celebrations in Varna originated in 1926.

The great Bulgarian composer, scientist, public figure – and Varna citizen! – outlined right at the beginning the clearly definite purpose of this initiative. “I do hope – he said – the Varna music celebrations will evolve into a nice tradition in the cultural life of Bulgaria”. The prediction came true. The Varna Summer, the successor of the Music Celebrations from 1926 has already turned into tradition in the life of Bulgaria. (p. 3)

The oldest in Bulgaria and amongst the oldest ones in Europe, today the *Varna Summer Festival* reveals itself as a *universe* of artistic acts, of human experience and destinies which – in the course of 85 years – have encountered each other within the unforgettable moments of thousands of festival evenings to go deep afterwards into the human cultural memory. The merit of the city of Varna is that it has made all these moments possible and still makes them possible – at times when it was very difficult, later not so difficult, after that again quite difficult, but regardless of the situation it has been done with great dedicated efforts. As a result a tradition named *Varna Summer* exists now – an international music festival situated at the furthest east point of the European festivals’ map. Varna – the beautiful east gate of Europe towards art. (p. 4)

During all these 85 years the *Varna Summer Festival*:

- has proved its importance in culture development;
- has awoken a creative enthusiasm;
- has revealed new artistic horizons;
- has contributed to the contacts between people all over the world;
- has been taken as a desired stage of performance;
- it has always been a great honour to take part in;
- and – in the first place – it has been a centre of music art and particularly of Bulgarian music of high aesthetic importance. (p. 4)

Today we take the Bulgarian Music Celebrations from 1920s, Varna Summer Music Celebrations from 1930s, Musical and Cultural Celebrations in Summer, held after 1957 and the International Music Festival in Varna since 1968 till now as one general tradition, bearing the name *Varna Summer International Music Festival*. (p. 85-86)

The *Varna Summer International Music Festival* is held every year in June and July.

Achieved national and international acclaim today the festival is an important and prestigious forum of Bulgarian and world music and performing art in the field of classical music. The diversity of genres of the festival programme features opera, symphony concerts, chamber and choral music, thematic series, International Summer Academy.

During its 85-year existence *Varna Summer International Music Festival* has won national and international recognition. It has contributed greatly to the promotion of Bulgarian music and performing art. The slogan of the founders "to bring together the greatest music authorities in the country" has found its followers in the promotion of Bulgarian music culture. A great number of Bulgarian music pieces have been first performed in the framework of the *Varna Summer*.

Masterpieces of Bulgarian and world music culture and internationally renowned performers mark the overall image of the festival. Varna Music Institutions and outstanding Bulgarian performers and ensembles are regular guests on the stage of the Varna Summer. Foreign soloists, conductors, symphony and chamber orchestras, choirs, opera ensembles, ballet companies of world value impress with their performing art. Among them are Bolshoi Theatre – Moscow, The Academic Maly Drama Theatre – Leningrad, The National Academic Theater for Opera and Ballet - Odessa, Ballet of the Hungarian Opera, Ballet Company of Komische Oper-Berlin, Piccola Scala-Milano, Gyorgy Ballet, Royal Ballet of Flanders, Royal Swedish Ballet, Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra, Leipzig Radio Symphony Orchestra, Leningrad Radio Symphony Orchestra, Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra, Lyon Philharmonic Orchestra, Prague Philharmonic Orchestra, La Scala Chamber Orchestra - Milan, Schubert Ensemble, Camerata Amsterdam, Camerata Trajektina, *Moscow Soloists* Ensemble and Yuri Bashmet, *Amarcord* Vocal Quintet, *Divino Sospiro* Baroque Ensemble, Spirit of Europe Orchestra, the quartets *Ysaye*, *Debussy*, *Borodin*, ...