

Pieces for Solo Violin by Bulgarian Composers:  
A World Premiere Recording of Works by Souroujon, Goleminov, Zaimov and Goshev

by

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PIECES FOR SOLO VIOLIN BY BULGARIAN COMPOSERS:  
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 Olga Draguieva  
 Doctor of Musical Arts: Violin Performance

ABSTRACT

The Doctoral Performance and Research submitted by Olga Draguieva, under the direction of Professor David Perry at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, in the fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Musical Arts consists of the following:

I. Written Project:

"Pieces for Solo Violin by Bulgarian Composers: A World Premiere Recording of Works by Souroujon, Goleminov, Zaimov and Goshev"

This written project contains a compact disc with World Premiere Recordings of works by Souroujon, Goleminov, Zaimov and Goshev, with program notes exploring the composers' life and works. It includes Soutana Souroujon's biography and the painting she made of her brother Leon Souroujon. There is an annotated bibliography using several sources available only in Bulgarian with their corresponding translation.

II. Chamber Music Recital, 11/21/2010, Morphy Hall

String Quartet op.74–Ludwig van Beethoven  
 String Quartet no.1–Karl Amadeus Hartmann

III. Chamber Music Recital, 4/1/2011, Capitol Lakes

Sonata no.2 for Violin and Piano–Krzysztof Penderecki  
 Sonata no.2 for Violin and Piano–Quincy Porter

IV. Chamber Music Recital, 12/10/2011, Antietam Hall

Langsamer Satz–Anton von Webern  
 String Quartet op.18, no.3–Ludwig van Beethoven  
 Piano Quintet op.57–Dmitry Shostakovich

V. Solo Recital, 3/3/2012, Antietam Hall

Cadenza–Krzysztof Penderecki  
 Suite for Solo Violin no.1–Karl Amadeus Hartmann  
 Suite for Solo Violin no.2–Karl Amadeus Hartmann  
 Little Suite for Solo Violin–Marin Goleminov

VI. Concerto Recital, 5/8/2013, Antietam Hall  
Violin Concerto no.1–Alfred Schnittke

VII. Lecture-Recital, 4/30/2015, Morphy Hall

"A presentation about the violinist Leon Souroujon and his sister—the painter Soutana Souroujon"

An exploration of their life and works with slides, a performance of Souroujon's Etudes no. I, IV, V (compilation 1976) and V (compilation 2013) with corresponding examples from the violin literature.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the Summer of 2014 while visiting Bulgaria, I came across several pieces for solo violin by Bulgarian composers. They were given to me by Yossif Radionov, who is a longtime violin professor at the National Academy of Music-Pancho Vladigerov in Sofia, an incredible musician, and a wonderful human being. Many of his students are now playing and teaching all over the world. I had the privilege of being his student for nine years while I was studying at the National School of Music-Ljubomir Pipkov in Sofia, and later at the National Academy of Music. He is the person who brought the pieces you will find in the accompanying CD to my attention and I am grateful for his invaluable knowledge and support.

I would like to thank my major professor and advisor David Perry for his incredible support throughout my Doctoral studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Without his guidance and help this CD would not have been possible.

## INTRODUCTION

This compact disc consists of pieces for solo violin by Bulgarian composers written between the 1970s and the beginning of the 21st century. Most of the works have only recently been published in Sofia. The first compilation, *Works for Solo Violin by Bulgarian Composers*, was published in 2013 by Orange Factory. The other collection was titled *Leon Souroujon: Music for Solo Violin with Variants for Viola and Cello* and published by the Union of Bulgarian Composers that same year. Some of the works have been performed and recorded, but others are unknown even by the audience in Bulgaria and they have never been recorded. I checked the musical archives of the Bulgarian National Radio for recordings of the pieces which are the focus of my compact disc and found none. Furthermore, with the exception of Marin Goleminov, a renowned Bulgarian composer, there is little biographical information available in English about these composers.

My goal throughout this project has been to shed some light on these unknown pieces and present them to audiences in the USA and Bulgaria. I have translated some of the information I found only in Bulgarian to English in order for it to be more accessible to a wider audience. Two of my professors at the National Academy of Music, Yossif Radionov and Angel Stankov, studied with the violinist and composer Leon Souroujon. When I studied with them, they shared some of their memories about him.

All of the pieces recorded on this compact disc are virtuosic works and as such, they present numerous challenges to the performer. Since there are no previous recordings and the

quality of some of the printed sheet music was not at the highest level, I had to make some decisions myself about missing dynamics, accidentals and tempo markings. It is my hope that I deciphered what the composer was envisioning. Even though the pieces I chose for this CD are quite different from one another, one can hear many Bulgarian folk music influences and typical Bulgarian rhythms throughout all of the works.

The famous Hungarian composer Béla Bartók investigated the variety and richness of the irregular meters in Bulgarian folk music. He was so impressed that he called these rhythms "Bulgarian."<sup>1</sup> We can find irregular meters in some other Balkan nations, but the quantity and variety used in Bulgarian music is unprecedented.<sup>2</sup> These meters are found not only in the folk songs, but in the instrumental music as well. The combinations of different irregular meters are endless, but some of the most common are 5/8 (which could be divided into groups of 3+2 or 2+3), 7/8 (which could be 2+2+3, 3+2+2 or 3+2+3), 9/8, 11/8, and so on. The famous Bulgarian dances "*Paidushko*" and "*Rachenica horo*" are usually in 5/8 and 7/8, respectively.

Bulgarian folk songs use many dissonant intervals such as minor and major seconds; folk singers purposefully seek out dissonances. Most of the time the intervals are not resolved in the classical Western manner. This makes the songs appear out of tune to the classically trained musician. Usually Bulgarian folk songs use close intervals. A common practice is for the voices to start in unison, separate up to a fifth and then converge in unison. The voices may also cross paths with one another. The composer Leon Souroujon as well as

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<sup>1</sup> Kaufman, *Българска народна музика* [Bulgarian Folk Music], 35.

<sup>2</sup> Information on Bulgarian Folk Music is derived from Kaufman and Litova-Nikolova, *Bulgarian Folk Music*.

Marin Goleminov studied and lived for many years outside of Bulgaria and they were influenced by many other European composers; even so, one can hear some distinct Bulgarian sounds.

MARIN GOLEMINOV (1908–2000)

*Three Improvisations for Solo Violin*

Marin Goleminov<sup>3</sup> is one of the most famous Bulgarian composers. He graduated from the State Academy of Music-Sofia in 1931 with a degree in violin performance and music theory. From 1931–1934 he studied composition at the famous Schola Cantorum in Paris with Vincent d'Indy. At the same time, he attended the Sorbonne where he studied French literature, aesthetics and music theory. In 1934 he returned to Bulgaria where he played second violin in the famous Bulgarian quartet Avramov. He was also a music teacher at the School of Music in Sofia. Between 1938 and 1939, he went to Munich to study composition with Joseph Haas and conducting with Heinrich Knappe. In 1943 Goleminov became a professor at the State Academy of Music, teaching classes in orchestration, composition, conducting, and organology.

Goleminov wrote two dance dramas, the best known of which is *Nestinarika* (The Fire-dancing woman). He also wrote four operas, four symphonies, a concerto for string quartet and string orchestra (1963), eight string quartets, two wind quintets, two concerti for cello, one for violin (1968), and many others. His last work was a sonata for violin and viola dedicated to my professors from the National Academy of Music—the Stankov-Radionov

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<sup>3</sup> Information on the biography of Marin Goleminov is derived from Minchev, *120 Бележити композитори* [120 Famous Composers] and [www.ubc-bg.com/en/composer/232](http://www.ubc-bg.com/en/composer/232), accessed June 15, 2015.

duo. Goleminov was awarded many prizes of distinction such as the Gottfried von Herder Prize of the Vienna University (1976). He was a rector of the State Academy of Music (1954–1956) and a director of the Sofia Opera (1965–1967).

Goleminov's *Three Improvisations for Solo Violin* were written in 1981 and are not well known even in Bulgaria. They were dedicated to the violinist Elena Polonova who performed them in 1982. The improvisations are quite different from the style of Goleminov's *Little Suite for Solo Violin* which is frequently performed in Bulgaria. *Little Suite* was written in the 1950s and draws inspiration from Bulgarian folk songs and dances. Each movement bears a title taken from the life of the common people. While we can still sense the folk influence in the *Three Improvisations*, this is a work Goleminov wrote in the later part of his life. The harmonic language is different and more dissonant.

The first improvisation is *Moderato con moto*. It is an energetic movement in an ABA form with a constant dialogue between two statements in the outer parts. The first statement is marked *forte* with many chords, occasional accents, and interesting harmonies throughout. The second statement is in the *mezzo piano subito* dynamic with a line moving by half steps. The B section is *pianissimo*, ghostly sounding, with moving parallel sevenths which add even more unease to the character of the section. The whole improvisation has many parallel intervals. Some are consonant while others clash, such as the major second, seventh and the minor ninth which we can find in Bulgarian folk music. Chromatic motion is used throughout, which is also typical of Bulgarian folk singing. After the the B section, the material from the A section returns, and the whole improvisation ends triumphantly with a

*fermata* in the *fortissimo* dynamic.

The second improvisation is *Andante*. It starts out with a repeated sigh from *piano* dynamic to *sforzando* followed by playful thirty-second notes played as a *ricochet*. There is a dramatic and singing melody which should be played on the G string. Again, there are many clashing intervals like the minor and major second which are not resolved. Towards the end of the improvisation the theme from the beginning, which was played on the G string, is transposed an octave higher with an added voice and a bell-like *pizzicato* accompaniment. The improvisation ends, unsettled, with another *ricochet*.

The third improvisation is *Allegro moderato*. It is in ABA form followed by a fast Coda. The improvisation starts passionately with a dramatic motive in *fortissimo* on the G string followed by many double stops. The second theme is softer and more playful. A *marcato* section leads us into the climax of the "A" section in a very high register. After a *fermata*, the intensity subsides and the "B" section starts, which is slower, more melodic, dreamy and transparent. Several *pizzicati* prepare us to return to the beginning of the improvisation and the "A" section repeats. The Coda is *poco più mosso*—fast and unpredictable. The meter and the dynamics change very quickly. The improvisation ends triumphantly with a repeat of the opening motive in *forte*.

## LEON SOUROUJON (1913–2007)

*Etudes for Solo Violin*

The name Leon Souroujon<sup>4</sup> is barely known nowadays even though he was a brilliant performer and one of the most influential violin teachers in Bulgaria and Belgium in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was born in 1913 in Novi Pazar—a small town in northeastern Bulgaria, close to Shumen—to a middle class Jewish family. Leon Souroujon's father was a businessman, but the whole family was very artistic and musical. Everyone sang or played an instrument. Leon first started taking violin lessons from his older brother and the violin teacher in town named Keremidchiev. Later, the whole family moved to Sofia in order for Leon to study with better teachers and advance on the violin. In Sofia he studied with Spas Stanulov and Anna Zheliazkova. Soon his talent became apparent and he started attending the State Academy of Music at the age of 12 in the class of the Czech professor Hans Koch.

When Leon was 15, Hans Koch moved back to Prague and Leon was sent to study with him. Leon succeeded in graduating from the German Musical Academy in Prague in 5 years instead of 7. In 1933, he came back to Sofia and became the concertmaster of the orchestra of the National Opera House. He performed many concerts as a solo violinist and

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<sup>4</sup> Information on the biography of Leon Souroujon is derived from Pavlova, "*Леон Суружон—едно особено излъчване*" [Leon Souroujon—A Man with a Special Aura], 66-77. Zidarov, *Цигулковата магия* [The Magic of the Violin], 208-210. Zidarov, *Цигулката и цигулковата култура* [The Violin and the Violin Culture], 123-124. <http://bnr.bg/radiobulgaria/post/100235717/sto-godini-ot-rojdenieto-na-prof-leon-surujon>, published March 23, 2013. <http://souroujon.blog.bg/technology/2015/01/22/in-memori-8-godini-bez-maestro-surujon-materialyt-se-posve.1332258>, published January 21, 2015.

his talent and high quality of playing made him well respected in the musical scene. Even though Leon was a humble man, he was quite ambitious and had a constant desire for improvement. The vivid Polish violinist Bronislaw Huberman advised Leon to go to Paris in 1937 and study with the legendary George Enescu—one of the most influential musicians of the 20th century. Leon took Huberman's advice and went on a two year specialization with Enescu. Unfortunately, the Second World War broke out in 1939 and Leon was forced to come back to Bulgaria.

On January 21, 1941 the Bulgarian government enacted the Law for Protection of the Nation<sup>5</sup> which was modeled after the Nuremberg laws in Germany. This law placed legal restrictions on Jews, such as prohibiting them from voting, marrying or cohabiting with Ethnic Bulgarians, obtaining a Bulgarian citizenship, working in government positions or owning rural land. The law also limited the number of Jews in Bulgarian Universities to less than 1%. Many people from the Orthodox church and numerous professional organizations such as the Union of the writers, artists and lawyers opposed the law and labeled it as "unnecessary, socially harmful, and contrary to our (Bulgaria's) legal system and to all principles of justice."<sup>6</sup> A great number of letters of protest were sent to the government.

Bulgaria maintained neutrality in the Second World War until March 1, 1941 when the country joined the Axis powers of Germany, Italy and Japan. During most of the war,

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<sup>5</sup> Historical details on the Rescue of the Bulgarian Jews are derived from Todorov, *The Fragility of Goodness*, <http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/stories/peshev.asp>, accessed June 15, 2015.  
<http://newpol.org/print/content/rescue-bulgarias-jews-world-war-ii>, accessed June 1, 2015.  
<http://www.holocausteducentre-bg.org/balgarskiat-sluchai/spasiavaneto-na-evreite-v-balgaria/>, accessed April 15, 2015.

<sup>6</sup> Todorov, *The Fragility of Goodness*, 49.

Bulgaria was a constitutional monarchy ruled by Tsar Boris III, a Prime minister, and a Parliament. On January 20, 1942 at the Wannsee conference held in the Berlin suburb of Wannsee, it was decided that most of the Jews in Europe would be deported to Poland and murdered. Adolf Eichmann who was the head of the Gestapo at that time wrote a list with the numbers of Jews in every European country. On that list, across the name of Bulgaria was the number of 48,000 people who were to be killed. After the massive deporting from Italy, Holland, Croatia, France, Poland, Greece and other countries, more than 6 million Jewish people were murdered in death camps.

In 1943 Leon Souroujon was sent to a Jewish labor camp in Beli Izvor, in north-western Bulgaria. He was allowed to take his violin with him and the instrument brought him consolation when he played it in the evenings. People say that he was beaten during the day but he still managed to play songs by Dvorak and Schubert after the hard labor in the camp. Many of his friends and colleagues from the Academy in Prague disappeared in the concentration camps during the Second World War.

Bulgaria was hesitant to comply with the German requests for the deportation of 48,000 Jews, but after persistent pressure from Germany, Bulgaria signed a secret agreement that on March 10, 1943 all 48,000 Jews would be deported from the Kyustendil railway station and sent to death camps in Poland.

All of these 48,000 people were saved on March 9<sup>th</sup> eve thanks to leaders of the Bulgarian Church, Tsar Boris, Dimitar Peshev—former Minister of Justice and then vice-chairman of the National Assembly—and ordinary citizens. After much persuasion and

pressure from several deputies, the Minister of Internal Affairs Petr Gabrovsky cancelled the order for deportation by 5.30pm on March 9<sup>th</sup>, 1943 thus saving the lives of 48,000 people. Nonetheless nearly 20,000 Jews were forced to leave the capital. They were evacuated to the provinces where they were used for labor such as building roads.

On 31 August 1944 the Law for Protection of the Nation stopped being enforced and in October the Sofia's Jews were allowed to return to their homes. After the war Leon Souroujon renewed his performance career and met with George Enescu again. In 1947 Leon Souroujon won the George Enescu violin competition in Paris. Throughout his life Souroujon performed many concerts as a soloist with orchestra and as a chamber musician with his wife, the pianist Katya Kazandjieva. Both Katya and Leon were brilliant as a chamber music duo. Besides having concerts in Bulgaria, Leon Souroujon performed in France, Czech Republic, Russia, Poland, China, South Korea, Israel, Cuba, Belgium and Spain. He played pieces by Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, Paganini and Vladigerov with style and expressiveness.

From 1948 Leon Souroujon became a professor at the State Academy of Music in Sofia (now the National Academy of Music). Among his students were Dora Ivanova, Vesselin Parashkevov, Angel Stankov, Yossif Radionov and Mincho Minchev—all of them prominent musicians and pedagogues who heavily influenced many generations of Bulgarian violinists. In an interview from 2013, Angel Stankov tells us that he “owes his career as a violinist to Leon Souroujon, and that he is going to cherish the feeling of gratitude until the end of his days. Leon Souroujon managed to give his students universal education—not only

in music, but also in arts, painting, architecture and poetry.”<sup>7</sup>

In the 1970s Souroujon moved to Belgium to play in the opera orchestra in Antwerp and later started teaching at the Music Academy in Brussels. He lived in Belgium until his death in 2007. Upon his wish he was buried in Bulgaria.

Leon Souroujon composed several pieces for solo violin and viola, etudes, caprices, and a compilation of scales and exercises for violin. The etudes which Souroujon called *Musical Images of Violin Mastery* were written in the 1970s. They are virtuosic works and represent various images, feelings and ideas. Therefore, I believe that Souroujon's *Musical Images of Violin Mastery* have truly deserved their name.

The seven etudes I chose to include in this CD are found in two separate compilations: one is the new collection with his works which was published in 2013. From this compilation I chose etudes number I, IV, V and VI. The etude numbering and ordering was done by the editors and is not by Leon Souroujon. The other three etudes I recorded can be found in a collection with six etudes which was published 1976. Leon Souroujon recorded some of his pieces for solo violin. There is a recording of his Etude Staccato for Solo Violin in the National Bulgarian Radio archives but there are no recordings of his other etudes. It is not exactly clear what his intention was when he wrote them, but it seems that he may have written them for his students with the goal of helping them expand their technique.

The etudes are virtuosic pieces with plenty of double stops, use of high positions (even on the G and D strings), many arpeggios, extensive use of whole tone and chromatic

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<sup>7</sup> Pavlova, 77.

scales, use of the minor second and irregular meters, which are typical of Bulgarian folk music and traditions. There are varieties of accents and numerous string crossings under slurs which should be performed very smoothly. Some of the etudes are reminiscent of the virtuosity found in the Ysaÿe Solo sonatas and the sarcasm of Prokofiev, while others have some incredibly sweet and lyrical moments that make us forget that we are listening to an etude.

Leon Souroujon incorporated a wide range of musical harmonies and it seems that he intertwined his Bulgarian heritage with the Western traditions. Some of the etudes are more "western" sounding, more closely related to the textures common in the music of Ysaÿe (such as parallel sixths, thirds and the whole tone scale), while others are more dance-like with irregular meters and harmonies typical of Bulgarian folk music. What I find valuable in these etudes, beyond the technical challenges, is their expressive and creative value. They are not just plain exercises, because they have a much deeper meaning. These etudes could easily be treated as encore pieces or studied alongside the Paganini Caprices in preparation for some 20th century violin concerti and solo pieces.

*Etudes—Musical Images of Violin Mastery*

**1976 Compilation**

**Etude II** is fast, energetic, edgy and mechanical. It is very technically challenging and uncomfortable to play, but it could be an interesting encore piece by a performer who could find his or her way through the labyrinth of jumps, arpeggios and surprising harmonies. The

main key is A minor, but there are plenty of accidentals throughout the whole piece, and the feeling of a lack of tonal center prevails. The whole etude is in sixteenth notes, with many accents and wedges. One can hear a bit of the sarcasm of Prokofiev, and some arpeggios reminiscent of Ysaÿe, but yet, the etude has its own distinctive character and style.

**Etude V** is the most lyrical and the longest of all. It is very imaginative, passionate and has an improvisatory character. There is no key signature and the etude wanders around many tonal centers. There are plenty of double stops throughout the whole etude—thirds and sixths in particular—and an extensive use of the whole tone scale, which adds an exotic flavor to its sound. It would be a wonderful piece by itself or as a preparation for some of the Ysaÿe Solo Sonatas, Walton Violin Concerto, Bernstein Serenade or many others. The tempo marking in the beginning is *Rubato con anima*, which means that the etude should be performed with "freedom and soul". This is the etude which has the most tempo changes and specific markings of how it should be performed. After a big climax in double stops there is a "*lusingando*"<sup>8</sup> (flattering, to be played in a coaxing, intimate manner) section which is very transparent and impressionistic. Many double stops in thirds follow, and the etude ends unresolved and unsettled with two chords accompanied by a left hand pizzicato.

**Etude VI** is included in the 2013 edition as well, but this time it is as part of a piece called *Prelude et Allegro*—the *Allegro* part is the same etude published in the 1976 edition. In the current compact disc I have presented it as an etude and the *Prelude* part is not included. This etude is a very virtuosic piece which starts with an octave on the note G and a dialogue

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<sup>8</sup> Lusingando— <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1O76-lusingando.html>, accessed June 15, 2015.

in minor seconds between the D and A strings (a Bulgarian folk reminiscence). It has many string crossings, plenty of unusual harmonies, arpeggios, and lots of accents. Around the middle part, there is a *rubato* section with bold and brilliant double stops which lead us into the next section, which starts with a repeat of the very beginning of the piece. There are many whole tone and chromatic scales in high positions throughout. The etude ends with another *Rubato* section in chromatic thirds and sixths which leads us into the end of the piece—a G Major octave which closes the circle.

### 2013 Compilation

**Etude I** does not have any tempo markings or dynamics in the beginning, which gives a lot of freedom to the performer. At the same time this leaves the musician with many questions. The first part of the etude is lyrical and melodic while the second part has many double stops—mainly sixths—and there are plenty of arpeggios as well.

**Etude IV** sounds like a tongue-twister with its many string crossings which have to be performed very smoothly under a slur. There are some occasional accents on off-beats or weak beats which add a dance-like feeling. There are many examples of string crossings under a slur in the violin literature, particularly in works by Brahms, and this etude is a wonderful preparation for them. Paganini Caprice number 12 in A-flat Major uses the exact same technique, but has many extensions in the left hand and is very uncomfortable to play. Souroujon's etude is influenced by Bulgarian folk music and uses many minor and major seconds. The tempo marking is *Allegro a la burlesca*. *Burlesca* in Italian means a joke or

mockery. A *burlesca* (Italian) or *burlesque*<sup>9</sup> (French) could also be dramatic works designed to cause laughter through caricatures of serious works. Since the Paganini caprice looks so similar we can only wonder if this was intentional.

**Etude V** is the most "Bulgarian" sounding of all the works by Souroujon sampled here. It is heavily influenced by the Bulgarian folk music with its irregular meters. It starts with a slower introduction which leads us into the *Allegro rustico* part, which means quick, rustic and unsophisticated. The meter changes almost every measure of the etude. It has a dance-like character with a variety of accentuations throughout the piece, indicated by normal accents or wedges. This etude could be a preparation for pieces by Stravinsky, Prokofiev or Bernstein, or the etude could be a wonderful encore piece by itself.

**Etude VI** has no tempo markings or dynamics throughout the whole piece. It is left to the musician to experiment and decide how it must be performed. The beginning starts out lyrically, dreamy and singing. Afterwards, the composer changes from eighth notes to triplets and finally to sixteenth notes, which adds a level of agitation. The etude has plenty of accidentals, there are many chromatic scales and arpeggios throughout. Some parts remind us of the Ysaÿe Sonatas for Violin Solo. Souroujon always leaves us wondering what will happen next. The main key is e minor but the etude keeps wandering around many different tonal centers. Overall, it is a wonderful piece and a great exercise for intonation, sound quality and long lines.

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<sup>9</sup> Burlesque-<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/burlesque>, accessed July 1, 2015.

## SOULTANA SOUROUJON (1900-1961)

Soultana Sourojon<sup>10</sup>—Leon’s sister—was a very talented and innovative Bulgarian painter. She was born in Novi Pazar in 1900. When the whole family moved to Sofia in 1919 and she tried to enroll in the State Art Academy, she was at first not accepted. Soultana almost gave up painting, but her older sister insisted that she try again. Eventually, in 1921, she enrolled in the State Art Academy. Her talent flourished under the direction of her professors. She is also remembered as a great singer, who loved to sing and play a guitar while surrounded by friends. Soultana had remarkable talent and artistic qualities. Her focus of interest in painting was the portrait, scenes of motherhood, female nudes and still life. In her portraits she was not looking for a physically perfect model, but rather, she wanted to represent the depth of the person's character. The critics in Bulgaria and abroad regarded her work as moving and highly creative. Unfortunately, she often struggled with lack of confidence. After she graduated from the Academy, she stopped painting for a while because she did not believe that she was able to portray what she saw and felt.

In 1938 she went to Paris and spent a year there. She was accepted as a member of the Society of the Independent French Artists and participated in an exhibition at the Salon du Grand Palais with three of her paintings of female nudes. Her works were very well received by the critics and her talent was recognized. She was finally regarded as one of the

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<sup>10</sup> Information on the biography of Soultana Sourojon is derived from Marinski, *Султана Суружон* [Soultana Sourojon].

<http://kafene.bg/изложба-напомня-за-султана-суружон-основателка-на-феминисткото-движение-в-българия-14768/article/>, published October 1, 2013.

[http://galleryplovdiv.com/en/news/view/97/donation\\_of\\_sultana\\_sourojon\\_canvases/](http://galleryplovdiv.com/en/news/view/97/donation_of_sultana_sourojon_canvases/), accessed April 15, 2015.

leading European female artists. This was a big success for her as a Bulgarian painter.

After The Second World War broke out, she returned to Bulgaria and was very concerned with the political situation. Both of her brothers were sent to a labor camp and she became increasingly worried about them as well. After all the laws against Jewish citizens came into effect, she was not allowed to show her paintings anymore. Sultana got married in 1940, but the marriage lasted only 4 years.

In 1948 her older brother moved to Israel with his family and she followed him in 1953. Throughout her life and career Sultana had financial difficulties and often did not have money for paint and materials. After she moved to Israel, she once again felt lonely and insecure. Sultana continued to paint, but she lived in one small room which served as her bedroom, kitchen and studio.

In 1956 she met the director of the National Museum in Jerusalem, who started supporting her. Because of his assistance, she was able to get a bigger apartment with a separate studio for painting. She was also invited to show her works at an exhibition in Barcelona. When her situation started to improve and she had many new creative ideas, Sultana got into a very tragic car accident. Her car was hit by a truck and she spent three days unconscious at a hospital. Unable to recover from the accident, Sultana Soroujon died on January 18, 1961. Her art is now in numerous private and museum collections in Bulgaria, Israel, Spain, Canada and the US.

Sultana depicts Leon Sourojoun in the painting *Portrait of my Brother, Leon Souroujon* (Fig.1) from 1940. In 1940, Leon was 27 years old. He is portrayed holding his

violin, very elegant and serious. Leon does not look straight at the viewer. Instead he looks down and we get the impression that he is sad and concerned about something. With the outbreak of World War II in 1939, 1940 was a politically turbulent year worldwide, as well as in Sultana's and Leon's lives. They were both forced to leave Paris, just when their careers seemed so bright and promising, returning to the dangers and uncertainties of Bulgaria. We can clearly see this brooding sadness and melancholy in Leon's portrait. The colors of the portrait are dark, smoky, his black suit and his hair almost blend into the surroundings. At the same time there is luminous light around his head and face, a light radiating from the inside, showing his willpower and strength. The violin is an important part of this portrait—an inseparable part of Leon's life. He holds it gently, close to his heart as if it comforts him at a time of grief and disappointment. Leon Souroujon donated this painting to the City Gallery of Fine Arts in Plovdiv in 2006 one year before his death. Currently, the painting is in the permanent collection of the Gallery.

VELISLAV ZAIMOV (born in 1951)

*Recitative, Aria and Toccata for Solo Violin*

Velislav Zaimov<sup>11</sup> was born in 1951 in Sofia, Bulgaria. He graduated from the State Academy of Music in 1977 with a degree in composition. He has taught classes in music theory, organology and orchestration. Currently, he is a Professor in Composition (since 2010) and teaches classes in score reading (since 1989) at the National Academy of Music.

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<sup>11</sup> Information on the biography of Velislav Zaimov is derived from personal communication and <https://amtii.wordpress.com/2009/03/26/камерен-концерт-творби-от-велислав-за/>, published March 26, 2009.

Zaimov has written numerous compositions including a requiem, 15 symphonies, 15 instrumental concertos, and more than 120 chamber music pieces and other solo and vocal works. He has dedicated several of his compositions to the Stankov-Radionov duo. His trio sonata for violin, viola and piano, written in 1988, was premiered by Angel Stankov, Yossif Radionov and Teodora Nestorova in 1992. Zaimov's sonata for violin and viola written in 1999 was premiered in 2001 by the Stankov-Radionov duo. The Sonata for Solo Violin was a birthday present to Yossif Radionov's 50th jubilee in 2001.

Zaimov's works have been performed in many European countries, USA, Canada and Australia and have been recorded by the Bulgarian National Radio.

*Recitative, Aria and Toccata for Solo Violin* was composed in 2002 and premiered by Nedyalcho Todorov in 2006 in Plovdiv. There is no recording in the National Bulgarian Radio of this piece. This work was composed for the Bulgarian Union of Composers' competition, requiring composition of a piece for the "Nedyalka Simeonova" violin competition in Haskovo, Bulgaria. It was included in its required program.<sup>12</sup>

The first piece, *Recitative*, is a slow and dark movement. It starts in a low register with the repeated note "B" in *mezzo piano*, after which there is motion in minor seconds. Towards the middle of the movement the intervals become wider and the register is higher. There are many repeated notes which add to a feeling of sadness and uncertainty. Towards the end of the piece a quick run in sixteenth notes brings us to the highest note—a desperate cry. The movement ends unresolved with *pizzicati* in *fortissimo*.

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<sup>12</sup> Velislav Zaimov, personal communication, July 25, 2015.

The second movement—*Air*— is a slow, lyrical movement. It starts quietly in *pianissimo*, like a sad memory of something from the past. Again, there is a feeling of conflict, a brooding sadness with chromatic motion. Towards the end, Zaimov leads us to the culmination of the movement with parallel minor sixths in a very high register on the violin, which sound very dramatic and passionate. The *Air* and *Toccata* movements are connected. The *Toccata* is fast, rhythmic and mechanical. There are some repeated notes and accents on weak beats, adding anxiety and agitation. It ends abruptly in *fortissimo* with an unresolved and dissonant chord.

YORDAN GOSHEV (born in 1960)

*Capriccio*

Yordan Goshev<sup>13</sup> was born on June 8, 1960 in Blagoevgrad. He graduated from the National Academy of Music in Sofia with a degree in piano and composition. Currently, he is a professor of piano, harmony and organology, and a head of the music department at the South-West University "Neofit Rilski" in Blagoevgrad. He is also a director of the Chamber Opera in Blagoevgrad.

He has written a concerto for piano and orchestra (1990), three symphonies, a concerto for violin and orchestra (2013), *Elegy* for violin and string orchestra, a string quartet, two sonatas for organ, *Contrasts* for violin and viola, and many other works. He is an

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<sup>13</sup> Information on the biography of Yordan Goshev is derived from personal communication and <http://www.ubc-bg.com/bg/composer/311>, accessed July 1, 2015.

author of several theory textbooks, and he has published two monographs on Bulgarian folk songs.

His *Capriccio* for solo violin was composed in 2002 for the Bulgarian Union of Composers' competition, requiring composition of a piece for the "Nedyalka Simeonova" violin competition in Haskovo, Bulgaria. The piece won first prize, but due to financial difficulties, the competition was cancelled that year and the piece was not performed. I had the pleasure of receiving second prize at the "Nedyalka Simeonova" competition in 2005, but this piece was not included in the required program this year.<sup>14</sup>

Goshev's *Capriccio* is a virtuoso piece and presents many technical challenges to the performer. He draws on many folk motives throughout the piece. It starts with a slow introduction in pianissimo with a glissando. The whole slow section is very soft (part of it is *sul tasto*), melodic and has a lamenting and expressive character. The section finishes with an extended harmonic. The middle section is completely different—very fast, brutal, and full of energy with many accented chords in fortissimo dynamics and abrupt and unpredictable changes to soft dynamics with quick *crescendi*. The *Capriccio* truly deserves its name—*Capriccio*<sup>15</sup> as a musical term means "a lively piece composed freely and without adhering to the rules for any specific musical form. "*Caprice*"<sup>16</sup> is also "a sudden, unpredictable change, as of one's mind or the weather," which we can hear in Goshev's piece. There is a section which reminds us of a swift "*horo*"(Bulgarian traditional dance). There are numerous

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<sup>14</sup> Yordan Goshev, personal communication, June 2, 2015.

<sup>15</sup> Capriccio, [http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/capriccio#capriccio\\_1](http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/capriccio#capriccio_1), accessed July 15, 2015.

<sup>16</sup> Caprice, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/caprice> , accessed July 15, 2015.

acrobatics—the performer has to switch back and forth between pizzicato and playing with the bow extremely quickly. Certain places require specific fingerings in order for the piece to be able to be performed effectively. After the very energetic and fast middle section, the tempo and dynamics gradually subside and we go back to the character of the beginning of the piece—lamenting and singing. The *capriccio* ends with repeated pizzicati dying out in the distance.

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<sup>17</sup> Translation by the author unless noted otherwise

<sup>18</sup> Translation by Mihailina Pavlova

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Fig. 1. Sultana Souroujon, *Portrait of My Brother, Leon Souroujon*, 1940.  
City Gallery of Fine Arts, Plovdiv.