

THE PROJECT

International Violin Competition “Vasco Abadjiev”

In our extremely globalized world the new discovery of cultural and national identity and self-esteem could be perceived as a catalyst for positive change in society, as well as a basis for acquiring new confidence and motivation to build a future working in Bulgaria.

Having three successful editions in 2011, 2013 and 2015 the International Violin Competition "Vasco Abadjiev" contributes to the strengthening of the cultural values by focusing on the cultural self-awareness of the Bulgarians, their national self-confidence and sense of belonging to the European family - not just spatially and historically, but through their remarkable artistic achievements as part of the pantheon of the European cultural memory.

The Competition has been named after Vasco Abadjiev and that's not by chance. He was a great Bulgarian violinist, undeservedly neglected over the past half-century. Vasco Abadjiev was a musician with global importance, bearer of one of the most sophisticated trends in violin and piano music traditions. He was a talented composer and genius performer. Since early childhood he wins the European stages thus paving the way for other prominent native musicians who contribute to the establishing of the Bulgarian violin school.

The musician Vasco Abadjiev is a rare phenomenon in the world classical music in general. He was unique and fascinating. While still a child he was compared to such violinists as Yehudi Menuhin and David Oistrakh. He was even called "the Bulgarian Paganini" and "Paganini of the twentieth century." Vasco Abadjiev had a refined and all-embracing sensitivity and intelligence, phenomenal memory and musical flair. He was an expression of those ideals that form the roots of a United Europe today.

Unfortunately he was destined to oblivion since the late 50s of the last century when he chose freedom and decided to leave his country and stay in Western Germany. At that time nearly three-quarters of his recordings were destroyed. All of his records produced by the “Radioprom” factory were melted. The books that had any reference to his name were blocked and subsequently confiscated from the libraries. In 1963 he was declared “traitor to the motherland”. Against him was formed a file that was archived in the Third Section of the State Security.

On December 14, 1978 Vasco Abadjiev died in Hamburg, Germany in total poverty and desolation. He remained a Bulgarian citizen refusing to accept foreign citizenship even though it was offered to him by Queen Elizabeth I of Belgium in 1939 and later on by the German government during the war, as well as by other European governments.

Objectives of the International Violin Competition "Vasco Abadjiev":

General objectives:

- Establishing the name and the person of the great Bulgarian violinist Vasco Abadjiev in our national memory.
- Restoration of the true magnitude of his significance both for the Bulgarians and for the connoisseurs of musical art in the United Europe.
- Contributing to the establishing of a positive cultural image of Bulgaria worldwide by a substantial prize fund, international jury and a high patronage.

Specific goals:

- Contributing to the practice of international competitions named after world famous violinists. Equal positioning on the map of similar forums in Europe and worldwide.
- Providing opportunities for starting and developing of successful careers of talented Bulgarian and foreign violinists.
- Establishing the authority and the prestige of the Bulgarian violin school and musical performance.

The competition **is organized** by the Club for UNESCO "Leonardo da Vinci" Sofia. For the realization of the project the Club **is supported** by the Ministry of Culture of Bulgaria. Traditionally the competition is held under the honorary patronage of the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education and Science, the National Commission for UNESCO to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the State Cultural Institute to the Ministry of Foreign affairs, the Italian Cultural Institute, His Excellency Mr. Gianni Stornello, Honorary Consul of Bulgaria for Piedmont and Val D`Aosta, Italy. Media partners are BNT, BNR.

The International Violin Competition "Vasco Abadjiev" **has established** itself as a highly authoritative forum for promoting of young violin talents worldwide. For participation in the third edition there were applications from five continents. The contest has a special contribution for the building of a positive

image of Bulgaria worldwide through the substantial prize fund, the distinguished international jury, the honorary patronage, the serious competition program and the participation of a symphony orchestra. It also contributes to the world practice of such competitions maintaining an equal rank with similar forums in Europe and worldwide elevating the authority of the Bulgarian art and culture. The competition creates opportunities for starting and developing of successful careers for talented Bulgarian and foreign violinists. The high professional level for participating is an incentive for the development of young talents. It stimulates their progress and reveals their creative potential. For their exceptional performance at the First, Second and Third International Competition prizes were awarded to: Stefan Tarara, Danbi Um, Ionel Manchu, Balint Kruppa, Zornitsa Ilarionova, Elina Rubio Pencheva, Ruslan Apostolov, Daichi Nakamura, Ljubov Stekolshchikova, Sanjar Sapaev, Eunmi Lee, Channele Bednarczyk, Mariya Krasnyuk, Johannes Strake, Dmitry Borodin, Tatiana Erofeeva, Aoife Mairead Ni Bhriain, and Valeriya Sidorenko.

The competition establishes and promotes a closer relationship between **the artists and the audience**. This forum provides access to culture for different social groups – professionals, connoisseurs, amateurs, students, etc. It draws the audience to the eternal values of cultural heritage. The competition enriches the cultural life and contributes to the protection and preservation of the cultural traditions in the field of performing arts. It also has a role in the cultural integration and aestheticism of the cultural space. The contest encourages the development of creative talents, knowledge, skills and competencies in the field of music. The turning of this forum into an event, its coverage and promotion has contributed to the socialization of an original and specific form of artistic expression.

The greatest achievement of the Third Competition was the introduction of a **third round** with the participation of an orchestra and a gala concert of the laureates **featuring an orchestra**, which raised the level of the competition enormously, reaching the world standards of such competitions.

The success of the Third International Violin Competition “Vasco Abadjiev” met our wildest expectations and set high success indicators that we measure as extremely high. The format of the competition adequately met the global musical standards. Its four days duration and featuring orchestra attracted more sponsors that provided additional prizes. This contributed to the participation of a **record number of violinists** in the competition. Once again the level of the violinists was extremely high, which on one hand made it harder for the jury, but on the other hand confirmed **selectivity**, attracting great talents to this

prestigious competition, turning it into a springboard for their successful music career.

The International Violin Competition “Vasco Abadjiev” decisively **proved** its **stability** by creating a stage and providing an opportunity for young violin performers from all over the world, giving them an incentive for their development and inspiration. It clearly showed that the Bulgarian audience has a need to experience culture and music that go beyond the borders of a separate country. It convinced us that the young people need examples from our national cultural history, such as the life and art of Vasco Abadjiev, so that they could take pride and build their self-esteem concerning the European and world music culture. The contest **meets** the cultural necessity of the professional and general audience for inclusion of classical music and preserving and development of the Bulgarian musical heritage.