

## Biographies of Bulgarian Composers

KUTEV, Filip (1903-1982). Among Bulgarian composers, Filip Kutev is perhaps the most recognized name worldwide. He was one of the most respected and important Bulgarian musical figures. In 1929 he completed his musical education under Dobri Hristov in composition and under Hans Koch in violin. In 1951 he organized the first Bulgarian State Ensemble for Folk Song and Dance and turned his attention to folk music. He led this ensemble for 32 years and wrote over 500 choral and vocal chamber arrangements for it. Those arrangements established a new tradition of Bulgarian choral music. In his arrangements, Kutev retained the style of singing with free and open voices reflecting the influence of a living folk heritage. Some of these songs, such as *Polegnala e Todora*, *Dragana i Slavei*, and others, are considered monuments to the tradition he established.

KYURKCHIISKI, Krasimir (1936-2011). Krasimir Kyurkchiiski is one of Bulgaria's mainstream composers. He was composition student of Pancho Vladigerov at the State Academy of Music in Sofia. Later he continued his musical studies at the Moscow Conservatory with Dimitri Shostakovich. He is a prolific composer and has written in all genres: ballets, cantatas, instrumental concertos, and symphonic works. In terms of musical style, Kyurkchiiski adheres to tradition. He follows in the footsteps of his teacher's legacy by eschewing modernist devices, employing folk modality, diaphony, and asymmetrical rhythms in lush orchestrations. He is best known as the principal conductor of the Filip Kutev State Folklore Ensemble, for which he has received international acclaim. Kyurkchiiski has produced countless folk song arrangements which have been performed by the ensemble. His work in this genre has had a strong influence on his symphonic writing, including the choice of themes and orchestral forces.

LYONDEV, Petür (1936). Petür Lyondev is one of the most active figures on the Bulgarian folk music stage. In 1954 he entered the State Academy of Music in Sofia in the violin class of Elena Geneva and also studied composition with Parashkev Hadzhiev and Bentsion Eliezer. In 1962 he began work as a researcher of folk music at the Institute of Musicology of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. He has been active as a lecturer and transcriber of Bulgarian village folk music. He is the author of several important folk music studies. Lyondev's compositional life began in 1975 when he published a number of works for children's and folk choirs that became very popular throughout Bulgaria. He is the recipient of several awards for more than 400 folk song arrangements, some of which appear in the series *Le Mystère des Voix Bulgares*.

STEFANOV, Kiril (1933). Kiril Stefanov is among the most important figures of Bulgarian choral art. In 1956 he completed his studies at the State Academy of Music in Sofia with a degree in choral conducting. The same year he was appointed Musical Director of the Pirin State Ensemble for Music and Dance in Blagoevgrad. As the director of the Pirin Ensemble, he created a unique approach to the performance of folk music by

introducing it as a form of musical theater. The concept proved highly innovative, adding an element of drama to the performances, and became popular with other folk ensembles. In addition to his work as a choral conductor Stefanov is active as a teacher. At present he is a professor of choral conducting at the Neofit Rilski South-Western University in Blagoevgrad. Stefanov has been the recipient of numerous awards for his recordings and publications, among which is a Gold Record from Nashville, Tennessee (1982) and a Gold Record from Balkanton (1983).