

## REVIEW

by **Prof. Daniela Andonova, PhD,**

Piano Department Instrumental Faculty,

*Prof. P. Vladigerov* National Music Academy

for the performing activity of

**Assoc. Prof. Velislava Angelova Karagenova, PhD**

for participation in the competition for the academic position

**‘Professor’ in piano (compulsory instrument)**

in professional field 8. 3. Music and Dance Art

at **Prof. Asen Diamandiev** Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv,  
announced in State Gazette Issue 64 dated 30.07.2024.

Velislava Karagenova graduated from the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts - Plovdiv with a Master's degree in two majors - Music Pedagogy (1992) and Piano (1993). Since 1996 she has been an assistant at '*Prof. A. Diamandiev*' Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts. Since 2013 she has been an associate professor there. Her pedagogical activity over the years includes several majors: piano, analysis and interpretation of piano literature, methodology of piano teaching, chamber music, harpsichord. In 2017, she was awarded the prize for the best piano performance in the world. V. Karagenova completed a three-year specialized course in organ and chembalo with teacher St. Dalchev. As a habilitated teacher she gave master classes in piano in Italy, Trieste, G. Tartini Conservatory, in Romania, Iași - University of Arts, in Pleven, *P. Pipkov* National School of Arts. In parallel with his pedagogical work, Assoc. Prof. V. Karagenova has an active concert activity as a pianist. Her interests are mainly in the field of chamber ensemble music. She collaborates with prof. Todorov - violin, prof. J. Licheva - percussion, prof. M. Chikcheva - cello, prof. P. Smilkov - piano, M. Panova - soprano, Assoc. Prof. N. Kuzmanova - piano, Assoc. Prof. E. Sarafian - clarinet, prof. B. Yasenov - flute. Works established in the chamber repertoire as well as premieres were performed.

In the period 1999 - 2019 Karagenova actively performed in two duos: with pianist Katya Vasileva and with Borislav Yassenov - flute. The piano duo Vasileva - Karagenova has 20 years of concert practice with a number of responsible performances - recitals, festival appearances and recordings for Radio Plovdiv.

V. Karagenova has strong interest in contemporary thinking and new Bulgarian music. The pianist has premiered and recorded for the Bulgarian National Radio with music by Bulgarian composers. Works by composers A. Diamandiev, I. Spasov, N. Stoykov, Y. Dafov, S. Karagenov, occupy an important place in her repertoire.

Karagenova also gives concerts abroad - in the USA, Italy, Germany.

In the reference of her artistic achievements for the period after her habilitation as Associate Professor, V. Karagenova presents a rich pedagogical, concert and publicist activity.

Her performing activity includes concerts, which are grouped in several directions: ensemble-chamber concerts, solo concerts, concerts with chamber orchestras, style-thematic programmes, participation in festivals, premiere concerts with first performances by Bulgarian and foreign composers.

She participated in the festivals 'Days of Chamber Music' in Gabrovo, 'International Chamber Music Festival' Plovdiv, 'New Bulgarian Music', 'Days of Music in Balabanov House' Plovdiv, 'Chudomir's Holidays' Kazanlak, Youth Chamber Music Festival 'At the Crossroads' Plovdiv).

Here are some examples of the different groups of concerts:

**1. Chamber ensemble concerts with thematic focus as part of these performances are included in festivals:**

- *'Masterpieces of European Flute Music of the Twentieth Century'*, within the 59th International Chamber Music Festival Plovdiv, 2023 together with Borislav Yassenov - flute;
- *'Baroque Messages'* with Borislav Yassenov, flute and Velislava Karagenova - piano/chembalo, with the participation of Yordan Vichev - cello)

- *Concert 'French Palette'*, French music by the composers Chabrier, Rabel, Poulenc, Saint-Saëns in Piano duo with Katya Vasileva, AMDFA Hall, Plovdiv
- *Concert 'Piano cycles for four hands'* Piano duo Velislava Karagenova and Katya Vasileva, AMDFA Hall, Plovdiv
- *Concert 'Oh, Spain...'*, Spanish music with Piano duo Velislava Karagenova and Katya Vasileva and Lilia Ilieva - mezzo-soprano, AMDFA Hall, Plovdiv
- ***Concert of the Festival Ensemble*** - Gabriela Garcia, Giovanni Piscas, Mariana Panova and Velislava Karagenova, within the framework of 'Days of Chamber Music', Gabrovo 2021

**2. Solo concerts:** Concerto recital at the Conservatory of Tarnini, Trieste, Italy. Contribution to our musical culture is the programme, entirely by Bulgarian composers (M. Goleminov, N. Stoykov, Iv. Spasov, S. Karagenov)

**3. First performances of works by Bulgarian and foreign composers,** which are contributions of her concert activity to our musical life:

- **J. Rheinberger** – *Sonata for 2 Pianos, op.122* and *Stabat mater op. 138* for choir and organ Performed in 'The Spirit of Romanticism' concert - with the participation of: Academic mixed choir Gaudeamus, B. Yassenov – flute, N. Kuzmanova – piano, V. Karagenova - piano/organ, in AMDFA Hall, Plovdiv
- **L. Jaramillo** – *Sonata for Flute and Piano* in the concert 'Flute Protuberances' with B. Yassenov - flute, AMDFA Hall, Plovdiv
- **M. Monn** – *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in D Major*
- **W. von Bayreuth** – *Concerto for Keyboard and Orchestra in G minor*  
Performed in Concerto 'Baroque Impersonations' - soloist of Gabrovo Chamber Orchestra with conductor Ivan Stoyanov
- **L. Jaramillo** – *Sonata for Flute and Piano*, performed in Concerto 'Flute Protuberances' with B. Yassenov - flute, AMDFA Hall, Plovdiv
- **S. Karagenov** - *collection of Miniatures in three cycles - 'Childhood Breath', 'Bird Tales', 'They Sing Differently'*, New Bulgarian Music 2020, Union of Bulgarian Composers Hall, Sofia
- **Y. Dafov** – *Capriccio for Flute and Piano* in concert 'Contrasts' Borislav Yassenov - flute
- **N. Stoykov** – *Six Metamorphoses on Etudes from Czerny Op. 92*
- **Z. Manolov** - *Concerto for Cello and Orchestra, 2 part.* Concert dedicated to the 90th anniversary of the birth of prof. Zdravko Manolov,
- **S. Karagenov** – *Sonata for Flute and Piano*

Parallel to the published articles, the two published books that bring significant emphasis to her work are particularly impressive: 'Proverbs of Hell' and 'Einojuhani Rautavaara and the Fire Sermon Sonata Op.64 - in Performance and Pedagogical Readings'. They are very professional, with a thorough and analytical research approach.

The positive reviews of the concert performances of Assoc. Prof. Karagenova are impressive. They have been published in authoritative publications by musicians such as: Prof. S. Simeonova 'Pictures of Music' in Artspector issue 36/2015; Assoc. Prof. E. Shevkenov, PhD, 'Winter Chamber Festival' in Artspector, issue 64/2023; Prof. R. Bogdanova 'French Palette' in Artspector, issue 40/2016; reflected in a broadcast of the program H. Botev, October 2021; A. Kaludova – 'Boryu Pamukchiev's Anniversary Concert' in Musical Horizons 8/2017; Diana Racheva 'Fifth International Youth Festival 'Crossroads' Artspector issue 56/2021; B. Mirchev, PhD and Lecturer E. Mateva 'Vita brevis, ars longa' IX International Competition Prof. I. Spasov in Artspector, issue 59/2022; Prof. Stela Dinkova, PhD in 'Musical Horizons' issue 2/2020 and 'Fascinating Interpretation and Stylistic Restraint', Artspector issue 42/2017; Assoc. Prof. L. Ilieva 'A Memorable Experience' in Artspector issue 43/2017)

Artistic contacts of V. Karagenova with composers J. Dafov, N. Stoykov, S. Karagenov have initiated the creation of new works for various ensembles. For example, the piano work 'Metamorphoses on Etudes from Czerny' op. 92 by N. Stoykov or the three cycles of miniatures by S. Karagenov's 'They Sing Differently', 'Bird Tales', 'Childhood Breath'.

**As contributing moments of V. Karagenova's concert activity, the following points can be outlined:**

- The first performances of works by Bulgarian and foreign composers, which undoubtedly enriched our concert life and gave up-to-date information about world musical processes.
- The programmes presented cover a wide stylistic spectrum with works ranging from baroque to contemporary music.
- Impressive are the concerts presented as a habilitation work in the period 2021-2024, included in the festivals listed above with significant works such as C. Franck's 'Prelude, Chorale and Fugue' for organ, works performed by her piano duo, in sonata duo with flute (the 'Flute Protuberances' and 'From the Flute

Music of Germany' concertos), the 'Rhetoric and Romance' concert, the concert dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the birth of Krikor Chetianyan, the 'Night of the Baritones' concert performed in San Jose, USA.

- V. Karagenova's affinity and musicianship have been proven - solo and ensemble in various chamber formations: piano and other duos, sonata pairs, trios, as a soloist of a chamber orchestra. Concert performances on various keyboard instruments: piano, cembalo, harmonium and organ prove the qualities and knowledge of Assoc. Prof. Karagenova as a complex musical performer and teacher.

- The success of her students is proof of her realization as a good educator. They have won prizes at the 'Orpheus Talents', 'Bach and his Contemporary', Vivapiano, MAGIC International Competition for the Performance of German and Austrian Music, the Fifth Competition for Chamber and Individual Performers, Borovets and have given many concerts.

- The publications of Assoc. Prof. Karagenova in the field of scientific activity are a strong point in the contributions of her scientific and creative activity. These scientific publications are contributions to performance and pedagogy. Assoc. Prof. Karagenova has a rich teaching and methodological activity at AMDFA. She teaches Piano Methodology, History of Piano Art, Analysis and Interpretation of Piano Literature, Piano. In the mentioned period she is the author of 4 scientific articles: 'Fanny-Zeissler – one of the heirs of Theodor Leschetizky', 'On the personality and activities of Theodor Leschetizky', 'E. Rautavaara and Sonata op. 64', 'Six Metamorphoses by N. Stoykov based on etudes by K. Cherny' and the studies: for the vocal cycle 'Proverbs of Hell', the book 'Einojuhani Rautavaara and the Fire Sermon sonata op. 64 – in performance and pedagogical readings'.

- Assoc. Prof. Karagenova is also the head of many artistic projects at AMDFA.

- As a research supervisor in 2024, her PhD student successfully publicly defended his dissertation. She also conducts a number of master classes and workshops.

- For high artistic and pedagogical results Assoc. Prof. Karagenova was awarded a Certificate at the Second International Competition for Young Talents in Croatia, 13-15.06.2022.

## **Conclusion:**

After careful study of the concert, pedagogical and scientific activities of Assoc. Prof. V. Karagenova, I believe that she possesses all the necessary qualities and achievements. The contributions are indisputable, therefore I confidently **propose to the scientific jury to award Assoc. Prof. Velislava Angelova Karagenova the academic position of ‘Professor’ in piano** in the professional field 8. 3. Music and Dance Art.

Sofia, 27.11.2024

Prof. Daniela Andonova, PhD