

PRESS RELEASE

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Bulgarian Classical Concerts—Los Angeles, a 501(c)3 non-profit
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A CHAMBER MUSIC ORGANIZATION TO FOSTER GLOBAL CULTURAL BRIDGES: Bulgarian Classical Concerts – Los Angeles

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– A new non-profit organization for presenting classical music in a global context has been founded by internationally renowned violin virtuoso, **Blagomira Lipari**, and the Grammy-winning film/concert composer, **Penka Kouneva**, who also serve as co-chairs of the organization. **Bulgarian Classical Concerts – Los Angeles** is dedicated to popularizing the orchestral, chamber, choral, vocal and solo music by Bulgarian composers, and introducing diverse Bulgarian and global masterpieces to broader audiences. Through performances by renowned and rising Bulgarian musicians, we also seek to engage the young generation via residencies, masterclasses and original, forward-looking concert programming. In the spirit of collaboration and inclusion, **Bulgarian Classical Concerts – Los Angeles** is committed to building cultural bridges between the Bulgarian diaspora in the US and diverse multi-ethnic audiences, performers and cultural institutions throughout the United States.

The inaugural concert of this new organization was *A Musical Journey through Bulgaria: Classical & Beyond* organized by The Consulate General of Bulgaria in Los Angeles on March 21, 2025. This first-of-its-kind concert on the West Coast attended by guests, city leaders, and VIPs from 20+ countries featured the iconic “*Vardar Rhapsody*” by Pancho Vladigerov, chamber quartets by Marin Goleminov and Petko Stainov, arrangements for strings and flute of the “*Mystery of Bulgarian Voices*” songs, piano solo compositions by the Bulgaria-US piano virtuoso Milen Kirov, Lyubomir Pipkov’s “*Nani mi nani, Damiancho,*” and Penka Kouneva’s “*Earth*” and “*Nestinarki.*” The concert featured multimedia and also collaborated with the *Violins of Hope* project. Bulgarian Classical Concerts-Los Angeles’ Inaugural Season 2025-26 will include three chamber concerts (November 2025, March and May 2026 in Los Angeles) featuring US and Bulgarian musicians and wholly original programming transcending borders and genres. Concerts in other US cities combined with masterclasses and artist residencies are also being planned.

Penka Kouneva, Grammy-winning composer and studio orchestrator, has worked in Hollywood for 26 years scoring television (*Dragon Age Absolution* Netflix series), films (*Aga, Encounter*), video games (*League of Legends, Prince of Persia*) and theme parks (*Heroes and Legends* at the Kennedy Space Center). Her two orchestral albums, *The Woman Astronaut* (2015) and *Rebirth of Id* (2017) were released by Universal Music. Penka was born and raised in Bulgaria and holds the first-ever Ph.D. in composition from Duke University (1997). Penka’s notable awards include Duke University Distinguished Alumna, BMI Impact Award, Hollywood Music in Media Award, Sundance Institute Fellowship, Ovation Awards, Game Audio Network Guild Recognition Award, and Aaron Copland Award-Residency. Penka has been a co-creator of multiple artist residencies for underserved students and populations, including the award-winning residency “*Voices Within*” by the Los Angeles Master Chorale and with Mallarmé Chamber Players (North Carolina). Penka has created and co-produced large, unique concerts including *America in Space: The Soundtrack of Exploration* with LA Phil

celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Moon landing at the Hollywood Bowl, as well as *The World of Video Games* – co-produced with Cantus Firmus Orchestra & Classic FM Radio & *America for Bulgaria* Foundation.

Blagomira Lipari, a versatile solo, chamber, and orchestral musician has been awarded the Ivan Vazov Medal for her significant contribution to Bulgarian art and culture around the world, and the Exceptional Prix from the International Chamber Music Competition in Neerpelt, Belgium. She has been a featured soloist with the National Academy of Music Orchestra in Bulgaria, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and New Millennium Orchestra in Chicago. She has appeared on Bulgarian, Spanish and US national television, WCNY Syracuse, NY, and WFMT in Chicago. Lipari serves on the Executive Boards of National Music & Global Culture Society in NYC and has been a co-chair of the Bulgarian Concert Evenings of New York. She has performed with Access Contemporary Music Ensemble, CUBE ensemble, DCINY, and the Society for New Music and has performed at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Getty Museum, Chicago Symphony, Metropolitan Opera, Stanford University, University of Chicago, Columbia College - Chicago, Harris Theater, and Paris Conservatory. A devoted and passionate educator, Blagomira Lipari is on the faculty of Hollywood Academy of Music and Arts, Arabesque Conservatory, and Vibe Performing Arts (Los Angeles). Mrs. Lipari holds a Doctorate degree in violin performance and orchestral conducting.

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