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## **DIGITAL ARCHIVING OF DATA RELATED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF STRING INSTRUMENT PEDAGOGY IN MACEDONIAN MUSIC**

**Abstract.** This text presents the data sources for research on the development of string instrument pedagogy in Macedonian culture, along with the process of digital archiving of the materials. The reconstruction of the history of string instrument pedagogy is carried out through archival documents, interviews and data digitization. Special emphasis is placed on interviews with two prominent violin teachers, Kiril Vangelov and Rumen Dimitriev (a documentary film has also been produced about the latter), which were subjected to thorough research work and documented through multiple blocks of questions detailing their lives and careers. The databases contain information on teachers, students and curricula, and a particular focus on the digitization of materials related to cultural heritage, including detailed organization and annotation of documents, photographs and audio/visual recordings. This process ensures the proper preservation of cultural heritage and creates a basis for future research in the field of string tradition in Macedonian music.

**Keywords:** history of music education, string instruments tradition, archival documents, digitization, cultural heritage preservation

### **1. Introduction**

Macedonian music has significantly advanced in the period following the World War II, particularly in mastering the Western European music for string instruments. This progress is also linked to the development of its own composer school. Macedonian string pedagogy, in the same period, managed to go through all the steps necessary to adapt and apply the modern approach in educating students in string instrument performance. This growth and development of string pedagogy is also a result of the favorable social, educational, and cultural climate, especially in the initial decades after the war.

This research falls within the domain of cultural heritage, with a particular emphasis on digitizing materials, primarily in graphic formats such as texts and photographs, adhering to the standards set by BuzAr (Buzarovski Archive). This archive has been engaged in digitizing musical cultural heritage for over two decades, as a “digital collection of video, audio, photos, books, papers, scores and other artifacts related to Balkan cultures and traditions” (BuzAr 2024a). In this text, we will discuss the data sources for our research as well as the processes involved in digitizing and archiving the materials. One of the most significant projects to date has been the digitization of materials received from Rumen Dimitriev, a prominent figure in Macedonian string pedagogy. A documentary film about him was also produced (BuzAr 2024b).

Additionally, we are conducting interviews with other teachers and artists to collect materials, which are digitized immediately. Recently, we had a structured interview with Kiril Vangelov, a teacher at the music school in Veles. During this

interview, we gathered valuable information about his life, music education, and the broader context of Macedonian music. During the same visit, Vangelov provided us with materials from his archive, including books, writings, and concert programs. We digitized these materials in accordance with BuzAr's cataloging and digitization standards and organized them into appropriate directories.

## 2. Data sources

We identified our initial data sources on string practice in libraries that house music collections. Our research began by examining monographs and articles published in anthologies, magazines, and newspapers that relate to our topic. We then reviewed materials from the archives of the Bureau for the Development of Education, the State Archives, the Archives of the City of Skopje, and other municipal archives.

The city and State Archives contain reports on music schools, curricula, and various documents that provide insights into music schools and musical life in general. Among these, we located the Curriculum for Primary Music Schools, issued by the Council for Education, as well as the Curriculum for the Secondary Music School, both published in Skopje the early 1950s. We also found a report from 1951 in the State Archives indicating that the schools were in poor condition due to a lack of professional teaching staff, resulting in teaching being primarily conducted by part-time instructors. The report also noted that the music schools in Veles and Skopje had changed locations several times, which negatively impacted their operations (1.1012.1.5/19–25). Additionally, an intriguing document is the Bulletin from November 16, 1956, which called for the promotion of music and culture among adults (01.1013.0002.0088/0326–0326).

Another significant document is a report on the graduation exams at the Secondary Music School in Skopje for the spring session of the 1955/56 school year, authored by violin teacher Stojan Krstevski (01.1013.0002.0057/0207–0209). He also provided a report on the teaching staff situation in music schools and the Ballet School, which offers valuable insights into the overall state of music education and musical life at that time (10.7.1956, 01.1013.0002.0058/0210–0215).

Given that our research is confined to school archives, the State Archive, and the City Archive, we anticipate some data may be inaccessible due to weather conditions, human factors, or the relocation of institutions to different buildings. Additionally, we have encountered incomplete information in some key documents regarding students, teachers, and the subjects studied. Challenges also arise from the incomplete tracking of curricula and programs, and it is possible that some records have not been preserved. Our attempts to contact schools for access to their archives have also presented limitations.

We input data from the school archives directly into Microsoft Excel databases, which include information on teachers and students of string instruments organized by school year. The completed databases are stored in a shared directory.

So far, we have contacted several teachers and artists to obtain various materials necessary for our research from their archives. For example, we received the Curricula for Vocational Schools, issued by the Council for Education, Science, and Culture in 1952, from Jovan Bicevski, a long-time viola teacher and director of the “Ilija Nikolovski – Luj” DMBUC in Skopje.

In the following text, we will present materials obtained from two significant violin teachers of the older generation: Kiril Vangelov and Rumén Dimitriev.

Kiril Vangelov was one of the violin teachers at the “Kiro Dimov” Music School, currently known as the “Stefan Gajdov” Music School in Veles. He was born in

Veles in 1936, completed high school there in 1957, and graduated from the Teachers Vocational School (music group) in Skopje two years later. He furthered his education at the Academy of Music in Sarajevo, where he graduated in 1966. In the 1970s, Vangelov had his own violin class at the Veles Music School.

During our interactions with Kiril Vangelov, we received the following materials:

a) Textbooks relevant to the violin methods: *Essays on Violin Methods* by Trendafil Milanov (1965), *Approach to Violin Practice* by Konstantin Georgievič Mostras (1970), and *The Art of Violin Playing* by Carl Flesch (1959).

b) Kiril Vangelov meticulously collected and translated these textbooks, using them as aids in violin teaching. He left behind manuscripts discussing the separate placement of both hands, the use of the four fingers of the left hand, ear training exercises, hand and body positioning, initial bowing movements, how to choose the right instrument size, and the violin exercise progression. We also received a manuscript containing a violin curriculum spanning from the 1st (preparatory) to the 6th grade of primary music education, along with newspaper articles by Ljubivoje Nikolić that discuss violin technique for the right hand.

c) From Vangelov, we received a program from the IV Competition of Music School Students in Yugoslavia, held in Sarajevo in April 1975. By reviewing the program performed by the students at this competition, we can compare it with the material played today by students participating in competitions. Additionally, it is interesting to note the scoring that the participants received for their performances, as Vangelov recorded the points awarded to each violinist in the program.

d) We also received collections of etudes, duets, and concertos that Vangelov used in his teaching, which are still utilized by teachers today.

As previously mentioned, a documentary film was created about Rumen Dimitriev, a renowned figure in violin art and pedagogy in Macedonia (BuzAr 2024b). The preparation of this film involved an extensive research process that included the collection and analysis of materials related to his life and work. Several meetings were held with Dimitriev, during which the following materials were obtained from his personal archive:

a) Personal photographs documenting various phases of his life, including family photos, childhood photographs of Miroslav and Rumen Dimitriev (with Miroslav being another significant violinist and a long-time concertmaster of the Macedonian Philharmonic), photographs of their teachers, professional development milestones, and images of performances and pedagogical activities;

b) Concert programs, posters, and invitations to events;

c) Awards, diplomas, and certificates;

d) Personal papers, letters, and souvenirs containing information about their professional development;

e) Monographs about the Macedonian Philharmonic.

During our meetings with Vangelov and Dimitriev, we conducted exploratory interviews. These interviews were structured and followed a template of pre-written questions, allowing the researcher to fill in the answers during the interview (if written) or later (as everything is recorded today) (Bužarovski 2012, 112). The questions in the structured interview aimed to explore personal experiences, teaching approaches and methods, contributions to music education, and reflections on the broader cultural and educational landscape in Macedonia. We conducted this type of interview with Kiril Vangelov, organizing the questions into several categories: beginnings, music education, teaching violin, outstanding students, performances, and other activities.

The documentary film about violinist Rumen Dimitriev is the result of thorough research, conducted through a series of questions divided into thematic blocks. This approach allowed for the recording of extensive video material, which was later edited into a 40-minute television program. The script and video editing were handled by Dimitrije Bužarovski, with camerawork by Andrej Lembanov. The scanning of photographs and other documents used in the film was performed by Trena Jordanoska and Biljana Veskovska. During the preparation phase, detailed conversations were held with Dimitriev regarding the photographs and materials from his archive to accurately reconstruct the personalities and events.

The questions were grouped into seven blocks:

1. Early life and education: Questions about his parents, early childhood, his brother Miroslav Dimitriev, where he learned to play the violin, and details about his musical career.

2. Influences and training: Questions about the influence of his parents – who were art lovers – and his brother, who played the violin, on his decision to become a violinist. This section also covers significant artists who inspired him, his education at the Ten-Year Music School and the Faculty of Music, his work with Zoran Dimitrovski, his experiences with the Jeunesses Musicales World Orchestra, and the impact of participating in seminars with Evgeniya Chugaeva and two years of training at the Moscow Conservatory under Elisaveta Gilels.

3. Performances: Questions regarding his solo performances, soloist with the Macedonian Philharmonic, and collaborations with pianists Vesna Petruševska, Evuška Trpkova-Elezović, and Jovan Karovski.

4. Macedonian Philharmonic: Questions related to Dimitriev's work as concertmaster of the MPh, the conductors he collaborated with, and his involvement with the Chamber Orchestra of Radio Television Skopje.

5. Questions about his career as director of the MPh, the greatest challenges he faced, and what achievements he is most proud of from this period.

6. Influential teachers: Questions about the teacher Ettore Balestri, his journey from the Trieste Philharmonic to Skopje, and other Italian violinists who taught at the music school in Skopje after World War II. Additionally, there are questions about Bogomir Gorše, his first violin teacher, and the teaching methods he employed.

7. Pedagogy: Questions regarding Dimitriev's teaching career and prominent students.

Given that we are examining nearly eight decades of history, we anticipated that information about many personalities and events – especially from the earlier decades – would be sparse. This is especially evident given the limited research on the tradition of string instruments. Consequently, we face challenges in verifying some of the acquired knowledge through triangulation (Bužarovski 2012, 103, 104).

### **3. Digital Archiving**

Digital archiving involves a systematic approach to ensure the preservation, accessibility, and precise annotation of materials collected during visits from teachers and artists (informants). This process is not only crucial for our research but also helps protect cultural heritage, providing relevant data for future researchers interested in the tradition of string instruments in Macedonian music. The digitization of the materials was carried out in several stages.

**3.1. Data Collection.** After obtaining consent from participants to engage in the research, we proceeded with data collection from the archives. This phase was conducted in direct collaboration with the materials' owners, ensuring that all items were properly identified and categorized during our communications.

**3.2. Sorting and Categorization.** Once we collected the relevant data for our research, we sorted it into categories to facilitate systematic archiving. For data related to an artist and pedagogue, we undertook the following:

- chronological categorization: grouping data by decades or significant life periods.
- type of material categorization: separating photographs from documents and audio/visual recordings.
- thematic categorization: organizing materials according to prominent themes recurring in the informant's life.

Each item was assigned an initial identifier, including a date when known.

**3.3. Digitization Process Overview.** The cataloging, digitization, and annotation of the files occurred simultaneously. Most of the materials we encountered were textual and graphic. The structure of the database (the secondary data catalog) includes the following fields:

- Serial number
- Document type
- Content (and names of individuals mentioned)
- Type of activity
- Place
- City
- Date/Year
- Author of the artifact
- Dimensions
- Photograph type (BW or color)
- Digitization details (equipment used and resolution)
- Date of digitization
- Origin of the artifact
- Notes

This structured approach ensures effective organization and accessibility of valuable resources

Artists and teachers are periodically consulted to verify the accuracy of the collected data and to provide additional context for certain materials. When necessary, we also seek input from family members or colleagues to supplement information or clarify details in cases where the primary informant cannot provide sufficient data or is uncertain about its accuracy.

The digitization process occurred in several stages:

a) Scanning and photographing:

Documents, photographs, and certificates were scanned using a Canon CanoScan LiDE 300 flatbed scanner at a minimum resolution of 300 dpi. For smaller photographs, a higher resolution of 600 dpi was utilized. Filters were removed during this process. Larger items, such as posters, were digitally photographed using professional equipment under controlled lighting conditions. The digitized graphic material was saved in JPEG format.

Documentation obtained from private sources was scanned by the researcher. For materials from state and city archives, it is not permitted to remove documents from

the archives, so data collection can occur in various ways. In some archives, photography or photocopying is allowed by archive services. We scanned any photocopied documents at a minimum resolution of 300 dpi. For all data collected from the archives, we recorded the serial number and the specific box location.

The digitized files are saved in directories named after the documents being scanned and are further organized into subdirectories based on shared characteristics.



Artifact 039\_RD: Concert Promo Photo of Rumen Dimitriev, Skopje, circa 1982. Dimensions: 9 x 6.5 cm. Digitized using CanoScan LiDE 300 in JPEG format on January 23, 2024.

b) Audio/Visual Conversion:

To date, there has been no need to digitize audio/visual materials (historical recordings, concerts, interviews etc.), such as cassette tapes or VHS recordings. However, if such materials arise in future work, they will be digitized using appropriate hardware and software, following the standards established in BuzAr (Jordanoska 2014).

c) Annotation:

To identify the digitized materials, we assigned a number (matching the serial number in the database) and the abbreviated initials of the artist or teacher. In cases with multiple scanned documents – for example, a text comprising several sheets or a photograph with important information on the back – these were annotated with the serial number, followed by lowercase letters (e.g., 12, 12a, 12b). Each scanned document's annotation was thoroughly reviewed to ensure completeness and accuracy of the data.

d) Archival Storage:

To ensure the longevity and security of the data, multiple backup copies are created on an external hard drive and in a personal cloud service (Google Drive). Access to sensitive and private materials is restricted to researchers and archivists only.

We commit to responsibly returning shared materials, such as photographs, posters, and programs, by the agreed-upon deadline and in the condition they were received. We also respect our informants by only sharing what they consider appropriate.

#### 4. Conclusion

In this text, we have explored various sources of data related to string pedagogy, including archives, published materials, and direct interviews with teachers and artists. A key aspect of this research is the digitization and archiving process, which helps preserve cultural heritage and facilitates its use in music education and research. We anticipate that further analysis of data from music schools and state archives will uncover additional details about the development of the music institutions and the teachers of string instruments, as well as the influence of political and social changes on Macedonian music pedagogy.

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