

# Macedonian Opera Evening

December 4, 2024  
19:00

Venue: Musiksaal,  
Hauptgebäude,  
Albertus-Magnus-  
Platz, Univeristy of  
Cologne

The event is supported by:

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism of  
Republic of North Macedonia  
University of Cologne  
The Forum of the International Association for  
Word and Music Studies (WMAF)

Ivana Trajanoska  
Talk

Female Characters in  
the Librettos of  
Macedonian Operas



Recital

Vesna Ginovska  
Ilkova - soprano

Ana Velinovska -  
piano



## PROGRAM

1. Sotir Golabovski - *Kraj ezeroto (By the Lake)*
2. Stojan Stojkov - *Zalez (Sunset)*
3. Tomislav Zografski - *Marika, moma ubava (Marika, a Beautiful Maiden)*
4. Blagoj Canev - *Cvetovi (Flowers)*
5. Jana Andreevska - *Tranquility*
6. Risto Avramovski - *Aria of Lydia from the Opera Lydia of Macedonia*
7. Trajko Prokopiev - *Aria of Simka from the Opera Razdelba (Separation)*
8. Trajko Prokopiev - *Moj galebe (My Seagull)*

The 7th Edition of the SMS-Culture at  
Universities 2024

# Ivana Trajanoska



Ivana Trajanoska is Associate Professor at the University American College Skopje (North Macedonia), an interdisciplinary researcher, a writer and a literary translator. She is the founder of the interdisciplinary initiative Student Musical Spring-Culture at Universities and since 2018 has organized numerous events on the intersections between literature and music at universities across North Macedonia and hosted many international and domestic word and music scholars.

She has been the UACS coordinator of the international initiatives Global Partners in Education (East Carolina University, USA) since 2009 and the Transcultural Communication and Translation Network (CEEPUS, University of Maribor) since 2014. Since April 2024 she serves as the Head of the Creative Writing Program at the UACS and Dean of the School of Foreign Languages. Since March 2024, along with Jan Czarnecki, she serves as the President of the Forum of the International Association of Word and Music Studies (WMAF).

Trajanoska holds a PhD Degree in Anglophone studies from University Paul Valery in Montpellier, France where she also completed her Master studies in the same field. She graduated from University Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Skopje at the Faculty of Philology in two concentrations English Language and Literature and French Language and Literature.



# Vesna Ginovska Ilkova



Macedonian soprano Vesna Ginovska Ilkova is the leading drama soprano at the National Opera and Ballet Skopje of the Republic of North Macedonia with a 30-year career on the stage.

The woman with the velvet voice, as she was described, impressed the audience with her musicality, charisma and strong musical drama. She is said to possess the most sophisticated piano as well as specific vocal creation in which everyone could recognize her performance and musical stage interpretation.



Her debut in the Macedonian Opera and Ballet was with the role of Michaela in Carmen (G. Bizet) in 1996. The critics recognized her as young Illyria-like soprano that owns a remarkable legato technique in her singing.

The international debut of her career began in 2001 at the National Opera in Sofia, where she took on the highly demanding role of Elisabeth in Don Carlo by G. Verdi. This performance led to her being cast in the next production of Tosca by G. Puccini, where she played the title role and performed at the Rostham Theatre and the Airborg Center in Copenhagen. Shortly thereafter, she starred in the Summer Histrina Festival at the Pula Arena in Croatia, performing the role of Aida in Verdi's Aida. She shared the stage with the National Opera - HNK Zagreb, under the baton of Maestro Pavle Dešpalj.

She later accepted the role of Desdemona in Verdi's Otello at the invitation of the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra, debuting alongside leading tenor Janez Lotrič. One of the most significant productions during this period was her appearance at the Aspendos Festival in Antalya, where she performed as Aida, partnering on stage with Boyko Tsvetanov.

For the first time, she participated in the Macedonian opera Lydia of Macedonia by composer Risto Avramovski, singing the title role of Lydia under the baton of conductor Janosh Przybylski.

The role of Cio-Cio San in Puccini's Madame Butterfly is synonymous with sopranos capable of moving audiences to their feet. Her performance in this role left no one indifferent and marked a pinnacle of artistic achievement. In the premiere of Puccini's Turandot, she debuted as Liu, earning high praise from critics: "She proved to be a true master of phrasing, capturing the sensitivity and depth of the character." Similarly, her portrayal of Mimi in Puccini's La Bohème became recognized for its emotionally dramatic expression.

She continued to build her repertoire with performances as Santuzza in Cavalleria Rusticana by P. Mascagni, Donna Leonora in La forza del destino, Amelia in Un ballo in maschera, and later debuted as Turandot in Puccini's Turandot.

Her career also featured roles in A. Ponchielli's La Gioconda (as Gioconda, NHK Rijeka Croatia), Lady Macbeth in Verdi's Macbeth, Amelia in Simon Boccanegra, Odabella in Verdi's Attila, and Tosca in Puccini's Tosca.



# Vesna Ginovska Ilkova



In concert, she collaborated with the Macedonian Philharmonic Orchestra, the Sofia Philharmonic Orchestra, and various chamber orchestras, participating in numerous recitals. Notable appearances include the opening of the prestigious Ohrid Summer Festival, where she performed Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, and the Skopje Summer Festival, where she sang Verdi's Requiem under the baton of Josip Šego.



Her artistic repertoire extended to the challenging format of recitals, where she performed works by composers such as Schubert, Schumann, Tchaikovsky, Glinka, Weber, Liszt, Sibelius, and Bernstein on stages and in concert halls worldwide. For the Macedonian National Television, she recorded several premieres with the Macedonian Opera and Ballet and released a CD titled True Values. She collaborated with esteemed conductors including Gianluca Martinenghi, Alessandro D'Agostini, Diego Garcia Rodríguez, Sergio Alapont, Francesco Rosa, Janos Przybylski, Noorman Widjaja, Simon Krečič, and Nada Matošević, among others.

Her contributions to the arts have been widely recognized. In November 2002, she was honored with the November 13th Award of the City of Skopje. Other accolades include the In the World of Success award in 2005, the title of Honorary Ambassador of Commerce of Macedonia in 2006, the Golden Lyre award from the Association of Musical Artists of Macedonia in 2009, the Virtuoso award in 2014, and the State Award St. Kliment Ohridski in 2019.

Vesna Ginovska Ilkova was born in Skopje in 1972. She graduated from the Faculty of Musical Arts in Skopje (N. Macedonia) in the class of Prof. Milka Efimova, and received an MA in the class of Prof. Radmila Bakochevic at the Faculty of Musical Arts in Belgrade, (Serbia). She teaches at the Faculty of Musical Arts in Skopje.



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# Ana Velinovska



Ana Velinovska is a pianist, performer, and researcher based in Lucerne, Switzerland.

She holds a Bachelor's degree in Classical Piano Performance and a Master's in Music Sciences from Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje. She further specialized in contemporary music, earning a Master's in Piano, Interpretation in Contemporary Music from the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts. Currently pursuing a PhD at KU Leuven, her research bridges musical performance, composition, and musicology, focusing on the evolution and performance strategies of extended piano techniques.

Velinovska is primarily active as a performer and improviser in the area of contemporary classical music, regularly collaborating with composers to explore new approaches to music creation.

Velinovska's performances and research investigate the piano's potential for new sound possibilities, employing both the instrument's interior and exterior, as well as amplification, preparations, and objects that become extensions of the piano itself. As an active performer, Velinovska has presented her work on stages across Europe, participating in notable festivals and concert series.

