The Thracians - Heritage and Mystery

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The Rose Valley

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Bulgarians save the world from credit card fraud

Bulgaria – 6th space power in the world

The myth of Orpheus comes to life in the new novel of British author Will Buckingham

24 May, the Day of the Slavonic Alphabet and of Bulgarian Education and Culture

The communist monuments' new clothes

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NATO urges Bulgaria to rearm its Air Force  

by Stoimen Pavlov

In April, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen met for talks in Sofia with the president, the PM and the ministers of defence and of foreign affairs of Bulgaria. As expected, the guest urged the country to rearm its Air Force with western fighters. The Russian fighters are incompatible with NATO aircraft and their maintenance and upgrading is fully dependent on the Russian company RSK MiG. The Bulgarian officials had expressed propensity for such a step in the days preceding the visit, however, the big question is who is going to foot the bill. NATO requires from its allies to allocate 2% of their GDP to defense while Bulgaria has, for the time being, not exceeded 1.5%. For this reason, apart from the option of obtaining secondhand machines, this country has also been eyeing the opportunity for joint purchases with other countries of Eastern Europe. The government is expected to make up its mind by mid-2014.

Rasmussen did not rule out a possible deployment of NATO military units and equipment to Bulgaria and specified that this would happen after the Alliance had updated its defence plans. The update is due in the coming days. In the context of discussions of the forthcoming NATO summit, the Bulgarian side has voiced firm support for an invitation for accession to be extended to Montenegro.

Unsurprisingly, central to the talks was the development of the crisis in Ukraine. In this regard the Bulgarian side reiterated its position that the only ways for the settlement of the crisis include political dialogue and diplomatic steps.

Bulgaria to spend EUR 1.8 B for nature conservation

Bulgaria will spend EUR 1.8 B by 2020 for protecting the European ecological network Natura 2000. The measures include monitoring, ecological infrastructure, management plans for protected areas, stimuli for the development of “green business”, ecotourism, trainings and compensations for owners whose land is in the Natura 2000 network. The sum is set in the National priority framework for Natura 2000. The environmental measures will be financed under various EU operative programmes, Bulgaria’s national budget and funds from Switzerland and Norway.
Four Bulgarians invented a special sticker which protects bank cards from being siphoned off. The sticker conceals the personal data from the magnetic stripe of the credit or the debit card so thieves cannot steal them using their devices installed in the ATMs. The sticker is licensed in Bulgaria and abroad and is on sale on the local and the international market. It costs only 5 euro.

Billions of US dollars are siphoned off each year from bank cards using the so-called skimming method which collects personal data from credit cards when holders insert them into the ATMs. The skimming device which resembles a scanner is installed in the cash machine. It reads and copies the data of the magnetic stripe of a given credit or debit card. People can not spot the skimming device and when they insert their cards into the slot, the skimmer records the whole information. The stolen data is transferred to a new plastic card and is later used to siphon money off the victim’s bank account.

The Skim Prot sticker invented by the young Bulgarians is the first of its kind in Bulgaria and abroad. It works with nearly all ATMs and can be used even at the POS terminals. This is the first anti-skimming protection device which makes sure the card is safe and the money never leaves the credit or debit card. All previous methods of protection were used after the theft. The sticker has successfully passed all tests in New Zealand, at the Institute of Criminology and at the bank laboratories in Bulgaria. The comments coming from all sides are positive. The boys started to sell the special sticker when the preparatory process was over. They suggested to local banks that they give the sticker to their customers together with their credit or debit cards. None of the Bulgarian banks, however, took up this proposal. According to the inventors of the sticker, the banks are too conservative and are very slow to accept new technologies. The Bulgarian lads hope that the banks will soon start collaborating with them. Bulgarian businessmen, however, gave credence to this invention and launched a company which is to deal exclusively with their distribution. The company faced an unexpected problem when trying to promote the sticker abroad. The bad reputation of Bulgarians, known as the most skilful swindlers, is a hindrance to the distribution of the sticker. After the initial scepticism, however, the foreigners were delighted with the simplicity of Skim Prot and its results. The young Bulgarians intend to conclude contracts for the distribution of the sticker in a dozen countries by the end of 2014. Their future plans include the production of more products for the protection of credit and debit cards.

Bulgarians Save the World From Credit Card Fraud

by Tanya Harizanova

Issue May / ZOOM Bulgaria magazine
Goulash, veal with potatoes, cocoa cream, yogurt, strawberries, honey… This is only a segment from the menu offered by space chefs in Bulgaria. The list is a long one and is prepared by Bulgarian scientists who cook for spacemen. This is so because Bulgaria is the third country in the world after Russia and the USA, which produces processed food for space crews. The Bulgarian Academy of Sciences /BAS/ plans its serial production due to the great interest in this business. According to Bulgarian scientists, all products we consume on Earth can be prepared in outer space as well. These foods can be used in the event of industrial accidents, disasters or for Antarctic and Everest expeditions. Bulgarian scientists were also the first to establish a space hothouse – radishes, fresh green salads, fresh wheat etc. are grown on board space stations and diversify the menu of astronauts.

Bulgaria is the 6th cosmic state in the world with two aeronauts. The day when a man first set foot on the Moon was a day of triumph. Unique jet engines helped it happen and these were developed by Bulgarian scientists. They provided for the smooth landing of the Eagle lunar module and the return of the astronauts onboard the spaceship. The two satellites of the Earth launched into orbit with Bulgarian scientific devices for measuring the physical parameters were among the most significant achievements of Bulgarian space technologies. No such devices existed even on the US Dynamic Explorer launched at the same time. Four Bulgarian cosmic devices were installed on the International Space Station, created by the BAS and a team of experts from 7 countries. The Bulgarian scientists are part of the Mars “expeditions” too. Bulgarian devices were included in the Phobos-Grunt interplanetary station for gauging radiation around Mars. Four Bulgarian sensors monitoring solar radiation levels can be found on the Bion-M space satellite. The data gathered played a key role for future flights to the Red Planet.

Bulgaria’s space history that kicked off back in 1964 is now being written by young Bulgarians. A team of Bulgarian students won the first award at NASA’s international contest, on the eve of April 12 (International Day of Astronautics). This country can well be proud of its work in the sphere even in the 21st century.
Let’s compare numbers. On one hand we have EUR 1.7 bln., on the other – EUR 1.2 bln. The first figure shows how much money Bulgarian emigrants sent to this country in 2013, the second is the amount of foreign direct investment. It is the emigrants that win out, i.e. Bulgarians abroad remain the biggest investors in this economy. This data comes from the Economic Research Institute with the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. And it cannot be argued, because we will compare numbers again. The first figure is 2.5 mln., the second – 2.2 mln. The first one is the number of people employed abroad, the second – those employed in Bulgaria. The difference is obvious once again. So, it turns out that Bulgarians abroad are boosting the economy at a time when foreign investments are reduced.

Many Bulgarian villages are now empty, with only a few old people living there, as the season for working abroad is now open. Lots of people from such places go to Greece, Spain, England and Holland for seasonal work and will return with the autumn. A spring wave of some 50,000 Bulgarians takes off to Greece each year. The number of Bulgarian emigrants across the Northern Mediterranean exceeds 500,000. The emigration issue has been commented many times. However, we will try to see its other side, or what the profit for our economy is. A Bulgarian MP stated recently that emigrants send about EUR 3 bln. each year to their relatives here. This is unofficial data, because most of them use different channels for the transfers. Otherwise, the official information of the National Bank of Bulgaria is about EUR 806 mln. for 2013. “It is not very clear how close to reality this method is,” Industry Watch’s economy expert Krassen Yotov comments for RB: “There are other channels inaccessible to official statistics and the figures are in fact higher.”

Some of the Bulgarians working abroad save money and do not send it back constantly. Whatever the manner, this money creates some added value, one way or another. Perhaps not the one we’d wanted, but it is certainly beneficial to the economy. “The influx of money from abroad is significant, maybe 7 – 8 percent of the GDP,” Krassen Yotov says. “Bulgarian emigrants very often send money from abroad to their relatives living in areas with higher unemployment rates, who have nothing else to rely on. The effect is even bigger, as the money in practice goes to those who need it the most. This is beneficial to areas with lower incomes and higher unemployment rates that produce the greatest percentage of economic emigrants.”

At the same time the Bulgarian economy is losing a lot with these 2.5 mln. Bulgarians working abroad. “The greatest loss is the fact that a large number of highly skilled people emigrate,” Krassen Yotov goes on to say. “This is most evident on the labor market, since unemployment is mostly among people with middle and low qualification. Unemployment rates are really low with the highly skilled. This comes to show that the Bulgarian economy is hardly able to attract foreign investment as it is restricted in terms of manpower. The loss is smallest for Sofia, where almost the entire domestic migration is targeted, but a shortage of young people is evident in most other towns. A vicious circle is created because companies prefer to invest in regions where qualified manpower is easier to find. Hence the economic chasm between different regions.”

During the transition years, Bulgaria has funded Western Europe with EUR 1.5 bln. via the emigration of university graduates during the transition years. Prominent attorney Prof. Ivan Todorov has estimated that the education of a student in medicine here is paid for by the state, while foreign students pay at least EUR 8,000 per year for their study. Upon graduation, the new doctor emigrates and starts practicing in Germany or the UK. Thus Bulgaria’s investment to the tune of EUR 48,000 goes to the West. At least 90,000 software engineers, doctors, engineers, pharmacists, chemists and geophysicists have emigrated at a market price of Bulgarian education of EUR 1.35 bln. When one adds nurses, paramedics and others, the overall sum exceeds EUR 1.5 bln.
The beginning of the 19th century. A small chapel on a hill near the village of Gela in the Rhodopes. A random traveller timidly opens the door of a sombre building. In its central part in front of the altar he beholds an icon. He has never seen one like it before - an icon of a saint holding in his hands a guitar...

It is a rare occurrence to come across titles from English-speaking authors writing about Bulgaria. One of them, *The Descent of the Lyre*, appeared on the British book market at the end of August 2012 and a few months later came out in the US. The novel, historical in genre, takes us to the European capitals Vienna and Paris and to Bulgaria which was then still under Ottoman oppression, telling the story of how a guitar appeared in the Bulgarian lands at the time. Amid the violence in the troubled times of Ottoman rule, when people had no command of even their own lives, a man possessed of a desire for revenge and with hands immersed in blood, is transformed by the music of an unknown guitarist bound for Constantinople.

A contemporary interpretation of the myth of Orpheus, the history of classical guitar, a fairytale parable of revenge and forgiveness - these are the main storylines in *The Descent of the Lyre*. Two years after its release on the book...
market in the UK and the U.S., the volume is already “at home” in the hands of its Bulgarian readers, thanks to Enthusiast publishing house and the Varna-based Lecti Center. When almost ten years ago he was for the first time travelling in Bulgaria, British writer Will Buckingham never imagined what impact the so-called Magical Mountain would exert on his senses. The village of Gela, Shiroka Laka, the Trigradsko Gorge and Devil’s Throat Cave, Bachkovski Monastery - there, among the mountain trails wanders the author as well as the protagonist in his novel Ivan Gelski. Why Bulgaria and why the Rhodopes - answers from author Will Buckingham himself who arrived in Sofia for the official launch of his novel in April in both Sofia and Varna.

“The reason I decided to set a novel here came out of my fascination with the myths of Orpheus”, he explains. “When I first came to Bulgaria in 2005, I visited some of the places associated with Orpheus, and as a guitarist myself who has always loved those myths and stories, there seemed something interesting. Also for a long time I had been fascinated with Bulgarian folk music with its somehow unworldly melodies and irregular rhythms. I came back the following year very briefly and I felt more and more intrigued by the places and people. That is why in 2007 I returned again, but this time to do real research. I spent a couple of months in the Rhodope Mountains, soaking up the sense of the landscape and hearing the music. I think the Rhodopes are a place where the landscape, the stories and the music are all tied in together in intricate ways and one can see this in the works of some Bulgarian writers such as Nikolay Haytov. It is precisely this close connection between them that provoked my curiosity”.

In order to feel the atmosphere of the country and to facilitate his communication with local people, Will began to study the Bulgarian language and progressed so much that during his third trip, he travelled across Bulgaria by himself. His only companion was his classical guitar. He went to all places in the Rhodope Mountains connected to the legend of Orpheus: the village of Gela believed to be the birthplace of the mythical singer, the Devil’s Throat cave where Orpheus descended into the underworld to bring back his beloved Eurydice, the Thracian sanctuary at the village of Tatul.

Besides his personal impressions from talking with locals, in order to explore Bulgarian history, folklore and traditions Will used multiple sources in English such as Bulgarian Folk Customs by Mercia McDermott and Monumenta Bulgarica by Thomas Butler. But quite surprisingly for the Bulgarian readers, in the novel we hear the strings not of the traditional Bulgarian tamboura or gadulka, but of the classical guitar. How did it end up in the hands of a Bulgarian rebel from the early 19th century and at the end of the novel in the hands of an unknown Orthodox saint?

“Surely this is extremely unconventional and my Bulgarian friends were initially rather sceptical of this idea”, Will recalls. “But I had to choose the guitar as it is my favourite instrument. I found fairly plausible historical reasons why there could be a guitarist travelling that way in this historic moment and how the protagonist Ivan could find himself playing the guitar. I made a serious study of the history of the guitar for the part of the book set in Paris, and also of Bulgarian history. It is surprising how few sources of Bulgarian history can be found in English. I read everything I could get my hands on, including an amazing book by American ethnomusicologist Timothy Rice, who helped me deepen my understanding of the interrelationships between the music, culture and folklore of Bulgaria. On the other hand, for me the novel is not so much a retelling of the Orpheus myth, but rather a set of variations upon themes, like musical improvisation. The story very simply is about a young man whose bride-to-be is taken away from him the night before the wedding. He takes the path of revenge, becomes cruel and unforgiving and it is here that music appears to transform him”, says the author.

Seven years after his last visit to Bulgaria, Will Buckingham was happy to see his cherished desire accomplished – his novel meeting with the Bulgarian audience: “It’s a pleasure to be here, to see old friends, to create new ones. I certainly intend to come back”, he said in his interview for Radio Bulgaria.
I
n the second half of 9th century, a new alphabet emerged in Europe. Its authors were the Holy brothers Cyril and Methodius from Thessaloniki. In 1980, the brothers were proclaimed Patrons of Europe by Pope John Paul II. Their work would lay the beginnings of the Slavonic script and civilization – a phenomenon of enormous dimensions imbued with a democratic spirit. In the 9th century as the populous Slavonic communities in Central and Southeastern Europe were being Christianized, Rome and Constantinople rivalled each other in gaining influence over them. With the new alphabet and the translation of liturgical books in their language, Byzantium sought to integrate the Slavs into the Orthodox Church. As Associate Prof. Georgi Nikolov from the Faculty of History at St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia remarks, there were attempts to translate the Holy Writ into Slavonic though abortive, even before the brothers from Thessaloniki appeared on the scene. In fact it was Cyril who was commissioned for the great mission, while his brother Methodius provided precious assistance. “Cyril was appointed for this mission owing to his exceptional erudition, solid education and brilliant talent that he made obvious as early as his teenage years. Senior officials invited him to Constantinople where he received excellent training”, Prof. Nikolov explains. “He mastered the liberal arts and used a few languages in which the Holy Writ was being translated. However, there was another important reason to choose the brothers for the mission – they came from Thessaloniki. Many Slavs lived in that city and its environs. The brief biography of Cyril describes his origin and even reads that he was of Bulgarian descent. With this the anonymous writer wanted to point out that Cyril belonged to the community of the Thessaloniki Slavs that would at that time identify themselves as Bulgarians because of their connection with the Bulgarian state. So the two brothers were fluent in both Slavonic and Greek, and they were also in the know of Hebrew and could find the best Slavonic equivalent for the Hebrew original. Mind you, the translation of abstract writing is a very tough job. And on many occasions Cyril had to coin the Slavic words for certain notions.” In translation the liturgical books were key. The holy brothers actually broke the dogma of holding the liturgy in the three sacred languages of Christianity: Hebrew, Greek and Latin. They were soon accused of heresy, but following a dramatic struggle, the Slavonic language was recognized by the Roman
Catholic Church as an official liturgical language. Cyril died in Rome in 869 and Methodius in 885, in the medieval Slavic country of Great Moravia where he had trained many disciples. However following the death of Methodius, the Slavonic language was banned there and the holy brothers’ followers were banished. In 886, the Bulgarian Prince Boris I took in their disciples Kliment, Naum, Sava, Gorazd and Angelarii. Two literary schools were founded in Bulgaria that would later yield abundant fruit. Kliment was sent to Ohrid, the centre of the southwestern Bulgarian lands, today in the Republic of Macedonia. One of his tasks was to preach Christianity and to train future priests, presbyters and other members of the Bulgarian Church. In the course of seven years he trained 3,500 people. However, he was also in charge of preaching Christianity, because back at that time, there were a few pagan communities in the Bulgarian Southwest. In the meantime, Boris I asked Methodius’ disciple Naum to remain in the region of Veliki Preslav and Pliska, Northern Bulgaria, where a second Bulgarian literary school had its inception. It was important in raising the civilization status of the capital of Bulgaria.

In the beginning the northern school was based in Pliska, the first capital of Balkan Bulgaria. When the son of Boris I, Simeon I, ascended the throne in 893, he moved it to the new capital, Preslav. The literary school would focus on both translation and on writing original works to lay the foundations of the first-ever Slavonic literature.

“This was a phenomenon that was very much evident for 50 to 60 years – the time of the activity of the holy brothers Cyril and Methodius and of their disciples. It seemed that a new literature was being born out of nothing, from scratch, and it was one with very rich and deep content”, Prof. Nikolov says further. “The body of literature was started with translations of Byzantine texts but we can see quite a few original elements in them, the creative input of the two brothers and of their disciples. It is not for nothing that one of the leading Slavic scholars Pavel Safarik termed the rule of Tsar Simeon I (893-927) the Golden Age of Bulgarian Literature. We should add that it was a Golden Age for European literature, too.”

In the Middle Ages Bulgaria emerged as a bridge for the dissemination of the Slavonic script and literature among other peoples in Russia, Serbia, Wallachia and Moldova. In a way a tragic event that happened to Bulgaria, its conquest by Byzantium in the 11th century, contributed to this great mission. It was then that many Bulgarian men of letters had to flee Bulgaria and took with themselves the Slavonic books. In this way the Russian literature in the Slavonic language had its start decades after the Russians had adopted Christianity.

The first alphabet created by the holy brothers was the glagolitic script. In the late 9th and early 10th century the Cyrillic alphabet emerged that was easier to use. Today it is still in use in a few countries in Europe and Asia. With Bulgaria’s accession to the European Union in 2007, the Cyrillic became the third official alphabet in the bloc along with the Latin and Greek alphabets. May 24, the Day of the Slavonic Alphabet and of Bulgarian Education and Culture, is one of the most venerated dates in this country.

“One of the leading Cyril and Methodius scholars, Frantisek Dvornik, wrote that by welcoming the disciples of Cyril and Methodius Bulgaria in fact saved the Slavonic script and literature”, Georgi Nikolov contends. And this is the truth since the disciples were in fact banished from Great Moravia after the death of Methodius. They did not have books with them; they had only the shirts on their backs. However, Prince Boris I was expecting them and they were given a warm reception in Bulgaria. Thus the disciples were saved, and with them the knowledge of the Slavonic translations that they had in their heads was saved as well. After settling in Bulgaria they restored the liturgical translations that had been made by Cyril and Methodius. Later on, these translations provided the basis of the medieval Bulgarian literature that had predominantly religious content. During the years of Ottoman rule and more notably during the National Revival in the 18th-19th century, Bulgarians revived the memory of the great work of Cyril and Methodius and of the Slavonic alphabet. On the initiative of prominent writer, linguist and teacher Nayden Gerov the feast of Sts. Cyril and Methodius was celebrated for the first time in 1851, at the grade school in the City of Plovdiv, Southern Bulgaria. From 1857, it emerged as a holiday of the holy brothers and of the Bulgarian schools. May 24 is a unique day, a day of letters and civilization.

“Present-day Bulgarians who often complain about their economic problems, should not forget to feel proud of having a day dedicated to their alphabet and educational tradition”, concludes Associate Prof. Georgi Nikololov from the Faculty of History at St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia.
Foreigners using the services of Bulgarian spa centers are keenest on treatments and therapies based on rose and geranium. Such programs that are typically Bulgarian, have a magic impact on the human system and have become a hit among foreign tourists.

Spa treatments practiced today are nothing new – they go back to ancient times, when Egyptian pharaohs used to take a warm bath with milk and rose petals. Today the rose is still largely favored by the fans of healthy living and of youthful beauty. Quite naturally then, therapies using the Bulgarian attar-yielding rose Damascena are widespread in Bulgarian spa centers. Other programs popular among foreign guests, are the ones based on essential oil extracted from geranium – a herb rated highly by Bulgarian traditional medicine. “The first thing that foreign tourists ask is whether we offer rose oil therapies or other typically Bulgarian treatments”, explains Veska Pishtalova – manager of a spa center in a hotel chain in the town of Sandanski, Southwestern Bulgaria. She contends that foreign fans of spa tourism are bored by the spa programs launched by famous companies that are on offer everywhere, including Bulgaria, and are looking for something new and different. And in fact, local spa centers do offer a very good quality and service. The Bulgarian therapies have a powerful relaxing and toning effect, help eliminate stress and leave the skin – especially of the face – radiant and youthful. More from Veska Pishtalova: “We have on offer quite intriguing therapies with Arabic names but actually based on typically Bulgarian products – attar of roses and attar of geranium. Attar is an Arabic word meaning perfume. The attar of roses represents a rich herbal bouquet – with rose, vitex and lavender. It is used for massaging the face, the neck, the neckline and the back. This is a therapy targeted at women, since the vitex has a potent beneficial effect on the female system, especially at a more mature age. The men’s version of it involves attar of geranium. By the way, very few people are aware that geranium is unique among herbs for having a natural UV filter. The therapy is stress-releasing and guests unwind and are charged with fresh energy.”

The root of the Bulgarian word for geranium “zdravets” derives from health, most probably because this plant is rich in antioxidants and essential oils. It lowers blood pressure and has a soothing effect. It is also believed to boost fertility. Massage and baths with rose oil overcome melancholy, improve self-confidence and boost the libido. Foreign visitors, who have used Bulgarian therapies, leave transformed and full of energy and many of them return the following year to experience the magic of spa treatments offered across the country. There is now a new therapy for ladies – it leaves the skin smoother, tighter and more radiant. The therapy is called Rose and has enjoyed keen interest from tourists. Veska Pishtalova comes back with more: “The therapy is in fact a fine peeling treatment with attar of roses. This is followed by a basic facial massage with a rose cream, and the result is brilliant. It also has a visible anti-wrinkle effect. Originally created for ladies, it is also quite suited for gentlemen too, and both Bulgarian and foreign guests do love it”, concludes Veska Pishtalova.
The Rose Valley is not the geographic name of the region, but has, with time, gained more popularity than any other valley in the country. It is the birthplace of prominent revolutionaries, poets and writers. Tucked between the mountains of the Balkan range and Sredna Gora, this lovely piece of land offers a bit of everything to the keen traveller – historical places of interest, wonderful scenery, mild weather and mineral water springs. The climate is temperate-continental, and the average annual temperature of 11°C makes it milder and warmer than in the other neighbouring sub-Balkan plains.

Industrialisation, major developments and motorways are kept away, so the area has managed to preserve its charm and quiet pace of life. Visitors are usually most impressed with the rose gardens, and in recent years – with the incredible archaeological finds of ancient Thracian cities and burial grounds.
If you are still wondering where to go in May or June, the answer comes by itself. The city filled just at this time of year with the unique aroma of rose oil, surrounded by the mysteries of the ancient Thracian civilization, lost in greenery and flowers, is Kazanlak. This is the geographic center of Bulgaria and the capital of the Valley of Roses and Thracian Kings. An amazing harmony of ancient culture, history, tradition and modernity, which nature has generously put at the center of a unique valley guarded by strict the peaks of Stara Planina.

The oleaginous aromatic rose, which is cultivated in the valley of Kazanlak is the emblem of Bulgaria before the world, from which is produced the best quality rose oil. The city holds the only Rose Museum on the Balkan Peninsula with more than 10 000 items related to rose production. In May and June the city of Kazanlak (09.05.2014 - 08.06.2014) is a magnet that attracts guests from all over the world with the 111 years already ongoing Rose Festival. A true celebration of beauty, wealth of traditions, songs, dances, carnival, crafts fair and unique Rose picking and Rose distilling rituals.

The Thracian Tomb of Kazanlak, included in the UNESCO list of world heritage, is a masterpiece of antiquity its outstanding frescoes. Nearby is the ancient capital Seuthopolis and the Valley of the Kings, where the unique Thracian tombs and temples have preserved over the centuries artifacts such as the golden mask of King Teres, the bronze head and the golden wreath of King Seuthus III, workmanship jewelry and war accessories.

Kazanlak is waiting for you with its generous nature, rich history and culture!

For more information: www.kazanlak.bg
The town of Kazanlak is also located in the gorgeous Valley of Roses at the foot of the Balkan Range. The natural geographical centre of Bulgaria is right here where the roads of domestic and international tourist routes intersect. The town is located about 200 km east of Sofia, 55 km east of Karlovo, 48 km south of Gabrovo and 75 km west of Sliven. The nature here is a perfect combination of the beauty and majesty of the Balkan Mountains and the fertility of the Tundja river valley.

The climate and the soils here are favourable for rose, peppermint, lavender, sweet basil and marigold growing. For centuries the fragrant Bulgarian rose has been grown here and the attar of roses has been extracted. So, the geographical centre of Bulgaria turned into its essential oils production centre. Since the 19th century, Kazanlak has been the centre of Bulgarian rose-growing and rose-oil manufacturing. Many people from all over the world associate Bulgaria with the fragrant rose of Kazanluk.
The Thracian Tomb of Kazanlak (4th – 3rd century BC) is the first Bulgarian monument on the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site List. It enjoys its international popularity due to the unique murals – some of the best preserved artistic masterpieces of ancient art.

The tomb of Seuthes III in the „Golyama Kosmatka“ Mound (the second half of the 5th century BC)
The preserved colored ornaments on the marble shrine door symbolize the four cardinal points and the circle of time. In the tomb was discovered the magnificent golden wreath of the ruler Seuthes III. Most likely the body was burned elsewhere according to the Orphic rites.

The Thracian tomb in the „Ostrusha“ Mound (4th century BC)
The central chamber is carved in a single granite block weighing 60 tonnes. The ceiling of the tomb features a cluster structure and the only surviving image of an exquisite female head. Around the 4th century AD the tomb-cult complex was plundered by the early Christians, and the frescoes on the ceiling were destroyed because they were considered as pagan.

The tomb in the “Golyama Arsenalka” Mound (5th century BC)
The temple is a round dome building where the floor in the second room is a stone circle representing the main Thracian symbol and god - Helios. Around the Sun there are three concentric circles symbolizing the ancient Thracian ideas of the construction of the Universe – the underworld, the real and the heavenly world.

The tomb in the “Shushmanets” Mound (4th century BC)
In the centre of the chamber there is a column ending with a big disc – a symbol of the Sun. The temple has no analogy on the Balkan Peninsula.

The tomb in the “Svetitsa” Mound (late 5th century BC)
The most significant findings in the tomb are the golden mask with individualized lines and a seal ring - one of the most valuable findings not only in the Valley of Thracian Kings, but in Bulgaria, too.
Karlovo - roses and history

Karlovo is a picturesque town at the foot of the Balkan Mountains, with some very good examples of typical Bulgarian revival architecture in its old part. The town originated on the banks of Stara Reka (Old River) as an administrative centre during the Ottoman domination of Bulgaria. It was called Karlovo after the name of a local Turkish feudal lord.

In the past Karlovo was a prominent centre of craft production, braid weaving and rose distillery. It was called the factory town on account of the numerous furrieries and foundries. Karlovo was famous for the taste and skill of its artisans, qualities which have made it the modern town with developed industry and eventful cultural life that it is today.

In late May and early June every year, the rose-picking season starts in the Valley of Roses and Karlovo turns into one of the centres of the Festival of Roses.

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Bulgaria is famous far and wide for its yoghurt and oil-yielding rose. The rose has become the country’s logo. A glance at a travel guide for Bulgaria will leave little doubt about that. Revealing sandy beaches and green mountains, guides will take you to a land of beautiful young ladies in traditional costumes embellished with rose wreaths, filling their baskets overflowing with roses on a spring morning. This tourist cliché, however, gives a very brief idea of all the attractions you can see in the Valley of Roses during the rose-picking season.

Sandwiched between the smooth slopes of Sredna Gora and the awesome crags of the Balkan Range, the Valley of Roses is the prefect place for growing the oil-producing rose, aka rosa damascene. Bulgarian rose drops are used for the production of some of the world’s most renowned perfume brands. A kilogram of Bulgarian rose oil costs 4,000-5,000 euro on the international markets. No wonder then that the production of the so-called “liquid gold” has become a profitable business for the local people, as well as a popular tourist attraction. Late May and early June are usually the peak seasons in the Valley of Roses. The vast rose crops are bursting with violet nuances, bringing joy to the eye. For the people from the municipalities of Kazanlak, Pavel Banya and Kalofer, these months are the hardest period of the year. It is then that rose picking begins. From early dawn rose pickers from nearby villages and curious tourists throng to the rose fields. The rose picking itself is a ritual, which has changed very little in the last 200 years. The best time for rose picking is from 5 a.m. to 10 a.m., or before the sun rays can evaporate the rose oil contained in the petals. If you happen to be in the area on a June morning, rest assured you will not regret it. Perhaps, you will be given a nylon bag or a basket, and will be invited to dip into the sweet-scented sea of roses shimmering in the wind and to pick some for yourselves. Each petal should be picked carefully, just below the rose bud, seasoned rose pickers would tell you.

Usually, the rose-picking is accompanied by songs and dances. The production is loaded on trucks and is transported to rose distilleries where the extraction of the “liquid gold” begins. At this time of the year, a lot
of rose distilleries work at full capacity. The territory of Pavel Bania has got over 500 hectares of rose crops and 9 rose distilleries. One of them is located in the village of Turnichene.

“What is interesting in our rose distillery is that you can follow live the production of rose oil”, explains owner of the distillery Dimitar Lissicharov. “We’ve got a museum and a colleague who shows tourists around, introducing them to the entire technological process. We’ve got 120 hectares of organic rose and lavender crops. During the rose picking season we take tourists to the fields to join the picking. After that, we put the rose petals in old tanks and demonstrate some old boiling practices”, Mr Lissicharov says.

The culmination of the rose picking season comes in early June, when each municipality organizes a festival of roses rich in folklore events, singing, reenactment of old traditions, the Queen of Roses pageants, etc. This year the traditional holiday of the rose and the mineral water in Pavel Bania is to feature a mummers’ procession and a traditional carnival with Bulgarian and foreign participants. Perhaps, many visitors will visit the Damascena Ethnographic Museum attractive for its small rose distillery, an adjacent museum, a cozy tavern, and a magnificent rose garden, where you can take a breather in the shadow of rose shrubs, inhaling the divine-scented air. “Japanese, Dutch, Swedish, Germans - the foreigners are deeply impressed by our roses!”, says inspiringly Grigor Yordanov, a technologist at the complex. He adds: “The complex has become popular not only in Europe, but also in Asia and South Africa. We get a lot of visits. Last year, more than 15,000 foreign tourists visited us. We’ve got 67 kinds of decorative roses. After May 6, everything is in blossom, filling the air with a delicate fragrance. Besides rose oil and rose water, we produce rose honey, liquor and rakia. Foreigners come here to taste our products. We’ve got a stall that sells them”, says Mr Yordanov.

Besides the fragrance of Bulgarian roses, the valley attracts travelers with its pristine nature and riveting landscape saturated with the tints of Spring. One can also take a walk along the Tunja River, or the banks of Koprinka Dam. A spa vacation in Pavel Banya, trekking, as well as bicycle touring in the Balkan Range are also among the things you can do in this part of Bulgaria. Many of the towns and villages in the region offer wonderful guest houses or small family hotels where the locals will welcome you with heart-warming smiles and delicious home-made food. Most of the houses have a yard with domesticated animals and organic vegetables, an open-air swimming pool and a tavern.

*The Valley of Roses is expecting you!*
THE VALLEY OF THE THRACIAN KINGS

THE THRAcIANS-HERITAGE AND MYSTERY

“... and he came with weapons of gold, enormous and wondrous to see; not for mortal men, but for immortal gods only...” - this is how Homer describes the Thracian warrior king Rhesus, participant in the Trojan War. And there are other mythological and historical names like Orpheus, Eurydice, and Spartacus which are connected with the Thracians.
The Thracians

Who were those mysterious people who lived in Antiquity and whose skills and traditions are reinvented in what are today the Bulgarian lands when one admires the golden Thracian treasures or raises a glass of wine for a toast?

Thracian tribes inhabited the lands from the Carpathians to Anatolia and some Greek islands from the middle of the 2nd millennium BC. During the 1st millennium BC, the Thracians were one of the largest nations in Europe. The first largest state formation on the Balkans was the Odrysian kingdom, established at the beginning of the 5th century BC by Teres I. Its center was located in the Kazanlak valley where king Seuthes III built the metropolis Seuthopolis on the left bank of the river Tundja and for the first time cut seven types of bronze coins in Thrace.

The Thracians are considered to be the most war-like people among the European tribes. Throughout Antiquity mercenaries were recruited mostly among them. War was considered by them a „noble“ endeavour, nevertheless the Thracian kingdom was unable to withstand the power of the Roman Empire and in the year 45 AD the Roman province of Thrace was established.

Thracian beliefs, myths and legends have influenced significantly the Hellenic religion – for instance, the mysteries associated with the cult of Dionysus. In Thrace the people worshipped the God of Wine and Joy - Dionysus, the God of the Sun - Helios. Later on came Orphism - a doctrine about the immortality of the soul, whose followers were the kings and the aristocracy, but the mysteries of the people remained centered around the natural beginning and the veneration of the Great Mother Goddess. For the richest Thracians tombs were constructed and so that they may not be wanting in the afterlife the deceased were put there together with food, gold utensils, weapons and chariots.

„The Valley of Thracian Kings“ is the name given by archaeologists to an area with about 1,000 mound necropolis during the archaeological excavations in the valley (1992-1997). So far, only 100 of them have been explored.
Wonderful gold and silver treasures, which travel across the globe, tombs with remarkable sculptures and wall-paintings, excavations that reveal each year new and interesting artifacts – this is what the rich Thracian heritage across our lands looks like at first glance. At the same time, as Thracians did not have their own writing, their past is shrouded in mystery. 42 years ago, a special unit was created at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences with the task of studying the history and culture of the Thracians. It was founded by renowned Bulgarian scholar Professor Alexander Fol. Right after his death in 2006, the Thracology center was named after him.

We talk to Professor Valeria Fol, his wife and also an expert in Thracian studies:

How old is the first evidence of the existence of the Thracians?

“The first written evidence of the Thracians is found in Homer’s *Iliad*. The name Thracians was used for one of the allies of the Trojans in their 10 year-fight against the people of Achaia during the Trojan War. This took place in the 13th century BC. This war is known in European history as the first clash for the redistribution of raw material bases and markets, and a struggle for control over the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. At that time Thracians were the people who inhabited the lands around the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles.

What are the spheres of Thracian heritage in our lands?

“Most popular of all are, of course, the Thracian treasures, which were hidden before rituals or given as gifts to the departed Thracian rulers and noblemen. These treasures are most popular of all, because they travel around the globe in the so-called Thracian exhibition. But why have so many Thracian treasures been found to date? On one hand, they are a sign of wealth and power and on the other, a sign of the sacral purity of those who officiated using them. Gold and silver are such metals that help people maintain a sacral purity. Thracians have left tombs, among which most popular are the Thracian tomb of Kazanlak and the Tomb of Sveshtari - both monuments on the UNESCO world cultural heritage list. Museums in Bulgaria as well as those abroad are full of relics of this ethnic group. Crossing the mountains or travelling in the valleys we often come across constructions of castles, tombs and sanctuaries. The Thracians have left a deep imprint in Bulgarian folklore heritage as well as in the heritage of other Balkan nations. That’s why fire-dancing,
which is a ritual dance on live coals is on the world cultural heritage list. Nowadays it glorifies Saints Constantine and Helena by rituals, the culmination being the dance on live embers. However, we must acknowledge that this custom is indeed the slightly Christianized tribute paid by the Thracians to the great Mother Goddess and its child-the Sun God. The fire set by those dancers is the earthly projection of the Sun and they go into the fire to honor both deities.”

What kinds of mysteries did the Thracians leave us?
“In fact they left us many mysteries, not only the scripts, written in Greek letters. There aren’t many such writings and we will look for ways of revealing their meaning. We know that in northern Greece bilingual writings have been found - both in ancient Greek and in the Thracian language, where the Thracian one was written in the Greek alphabet. When these writings are published we will be able to learn more about the Thracians. Such writings were found in the area of the Northern Aegean coast. Another mystery is the ability of the Thracians to find natural resources and to use them, without affecting nature. These people were very skilful miners and metal-workers. Many colleagues specialized in chemistry and metallography are currently working on revealing more about their skills, including their technological know-how”, says professor Valeria Fol.

Silver rython from the Big Mound near the villages of Malomirovo and Zlatitsa, Yambol District
SOFIA: 21 centuries, 2 kilometres

A city wikipedia to provide information about hotels and museums

150 signboards in Sofia’s historical centre will “speak” to passersby as of next month. They will tell the story of the city, but also of the lives of the people the streets have been named after. The streets that will relate our history are San Stefano, Tsar Assen, Tsar Ivan Shishman, Khan Asparouh, Neophit of Rila, Miladinov brothers, Alexander Stamboliiski Boulevard etc. The first interactive signboards will be put up in 35 key locations in the capital city. They will feature a QR code that can be read by mobile phone and refers tourists to the city’s official tourist site www.visitsofia.bg.

The history mile

The History Mile. The Key to Sofia is a new Sofia municipality project that aims to provoke interest in the city’s cultural heritage.

Under this project, 14 of the city’s landmarks will be united in a single tourist itinerary, available in Bulgarian as well as in English. All landmarks are in the very heart of the Bulgarian capital and can be reached by subway as well as all other kinds of public transport. For each of the sites there will be a textual description below the image as well as an audio presentation. There will be navigation in between the individual locations to assist pedestrian tourists.
Visitors to the city are now able to step over from century to century within just two square kilometers – one mile – by visiting www.sofia-history.bg and www.historymile.bg.

The History Mile starts at the western wall of ancient Serdica, built by Marcus Aurelius and Commodus (better known to the young from the movie the Gladiator). The itinerary continues to the St. George Rotunda which is the oldest building in the city, but also probably the oldest functioning church in the whole of Europe. In the crypt of the Alexander Nevski cathedral, visitors can see a unique collection of Christian art. The last of the 14 landmarks are the alleys of great Bulgarians in the Boris Gardens – the only open-air museum of its kind in the capital city.

The National Palace of Culture and the Largo in an itinerary of totalitarianism

The National Palace of Culture and the Largo in Sofia will be incorporated into the European tourist itinerary of totalitarian art. This will take place under a pilot project aimed at creating a cultural route, visualizing the architectural heritage of the 20th-century totalitarian regimes. The Bulgarian capital joined the Atrium Association, bringing together 11 European countries such as Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, Greece, Albania, Serbia. The route of tourist landmarks in Sofia could also include the controversial Monument to the Soviet army, Boyana residence and the Banner of Peace bell monument that once brought together children from all over the world. The idea is to register these sites as monuments of culture, with the first group of tourists starting on their way this autumn.
Monuments to Soviet soldiers, Bulgarian guerrillas and socialist heroes in the Bulgarian capital city of Sofia are more and more often seen transformed. The designers of the new clothes for the old communist monuments are young people engaged in street and conceptual art. Their messages vary from purely aesthetic to ideological. Every individual case triggers a wave of reactions, too.

The Monument to the Soviet Army downtown Sofia often becomes the target of art attacks. Discussions about its location emerged in the early years after the fall of the totalitarian regime. Some people see the monument as important in preserving historical memory, while for others it is a grim reminder of a totalitarian past, imposed on Bulgaria by the Soviet Union.

During the past year, the Soviet Army Monument was once painted in pink. “Bulgaria apologizes” was written in Czech too. The reason was the 45th anniversary of the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact troops, which marked the end of political liberalization in the country known as “The Prague Spring.” Bulgaria was the first country calling for military intervention in Czechoslovakia and the last to apologize for taking part in the suppression of the Prague Spring. This took place by a decision of parliament in 1990. Last year the monument also served to show support for the members of the Russian punk band Pussy Riot, protesting against the rule of President Putin.

In June 2011, the figures of Soviet soldiers in Sofia were transformed into famous American comic book heroes. People could see Superman with a gun, the Joker, Batman’s assistant Robin, Santa Claus with military binoculars and even Ronald MacDonald fighting under the U.S. flag “Abreast of the times” were the words written under the soldiers.

While authorities in the capital city continue arguing if the monument to the Soviet army should remain in the centre of Sofia, street artists continue their activities. Because of the Russian intervention in the autonomous region of the Crimea, the monument was recently decorated with a red inscription reading “Hands off Ukraine.”

“A Soviet monument in Sofia, Bulgaria has been painted in the colours of the Ukrainian flag, sparking protest from
Russia, the BBC informed. The Russian embassy in Bulgaria sent a note of protest to the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry, demanding investigation into this “act of vandalism.” On the occasion of March 1, another socialist monument in the Borissova Garden in Sofia was transformed. The monuments to communist guerilla fighters was painted in white and red, thus becoming a giant “martenitsa,” a Bulgarian symbol of the coming spring.

The Destructive Creation group, whose idea this was, chose this monument to remind us that we should not worship foreign heroes and should pay more attention to traditional Bulgarian symbols.

On March 5, the guerrilla monument was painted in the colors of the Polish and Ukrainian flags because of the anniversary of the Katyn massacre. On this day in 1940, 22,000 captured Polish soldiers, officers and intellectuals were executed by the Soviet secret police. In 1943 when Nazi Germany announced the discovery of the mass graves, the Soviet Union denied these allegations and accused the Wehrmacht of the massacre. In 1990, Gorbachev officially acknowledged and condemned the perpetration of the killings by the NKVD.

What are the monuments to Soviet soldiers symbols of? This question continues to divide Bulgarian society that was nurtured for decades with the cliché of the “brothers liberators,” but has already realized that history can be read from another perspective.
Kaloyan Mahlianov – KOTOŌSHŪ steps off professional dohyo

Tears in the eyes of a tough two-meter giant – that is how many people in Osaka will remember March 20, 2014 when a great sumo wrestler announced the end of his professional career.

The end of a career and we could exclaim – what a career! That of Kaloyan Mahlianov, a Bulgarian born in the village of Djoulyunitsa, in northern Bulgaria. In Japan he is better known as Kotoōshū Katsunori, a name every Japanese knows and respects. The name is widely venerated in the land of the rising sun as sumo is not only an ancient type of wrestling. An ancient Japanese legend says that the origin of the Japanese people itself was the result of a sumo battle. According to a legend, the Japanese people obtained control of the Japanese islands after the Takemikazuchi deity defeated his opponent. That is why even today high-rank sumo wrestlers are considered almost demi-gods and are the subject of enormous homage and veneration.

For Kaloyan Mahlyanov, everything started in 2002 when, during the open championship of Germany, he was presented to Yokozuna Kotodzakura, then head of the Sadogatake School. He invited him to Japan, where in that same year under the pseudonym Kotooshu, the Bulgarian made his debut on the professional dohyo (the ring in which sumo wrestling bouts are held). His athleticism and unorthodox technique brought him swift success.

In just two years he joined the Makuuchi top sumo division. Mahlyanov’s debut in the division which includes the 42 best sumo wrestlers came just after 11 tournaments - a record in the sport.

In 2005, Kaloyan Mahlyanov became Ozeki - great champion. This made him the first European and the fifth foreigner in the history of professional sumo to reach the prestigious title. A total of 6 sumo wrestlers born in Japan have climbed as high. Kotoōshū also became the first European to win the Emperor’s Cup. This took place in May 2008 after victories against two yokozuna - great champions Asashōryū and Hakuho. We can only imagine the euphoria that the name Kotoōshū caused in Japan then and exists to this day.

For gossips’ sake, we should also mention the forbidden love between Kaloyan and Asako Ando. For five years they kept it secret because sumo wrestlers cannot be seen together with a woman who is not their wife or fiancée. The sturdy Bulgarian man and the charming Japanese woman had to wait for the Sadogatake sumo school in Tokyo to announce their engagement. Reports of the ceremony were breaking news in Japan and registered millions of views online. On February 14, 2010, the wedding of Mr. Mahlianov and Ms. Ando took place.

Kaloyan Mahlianov is not severing his link with sumo and Japan and is now focused on his coaching career. The price, however, was his Bulgarian citizenship, which he had to give up. However, Mahlianov’s Japanese passport does not make him less of a Bulgarian, the wrestler says and we can trust him.
What’s on in May

May 1-2, Koprivshtitsa
Re-enactment of the April Uprising in Koprivshtitsa, Day of Koprivshtitsa

May 2-3, The meadows above the village of Rezovo, Tsarevo municipality
Rhododendron Festival

May 1-4, Petrich
“Southern Suns” National Folk Festival

May 6, Gabrovo, Etara ethnographic complex
St. George’s Day at Etara

May 8-9-11, Sofia
American Ballet at the Sofia Opera and Ballet House

May 11 to 18, Sofia
International Animation Film Festival "Golden Kuker”

May 17, Sofia
Concert of Aerosmith

May 15 to 17, Rousse
Tourism Exhibition "WEEKEND TOURISM ROUSSE, 2014”, Festival of tourist attractions and entertainment

May 17-18, Svishtov
"Eagle on The Danube” Festival of Ancient Heritage

May 31-June 1, Bansko
"Between Three Mountains” Folklore Festival

May 18, Sofia
100th birth anniversary of Boris Christoff - Gala concert at the Sofia Opera

May 18 - 19, Sofia
Night of Museums in Sofia and all major cities of the country

May 18-June 21, Plovdiv
"Music Days in the Balabanov House” International Festival

May 24, National holiday
Day of Slavic Letters and Culture

May 30 - 31, Troyan, Azareya Eco Village
Feast of spelt

May 31, Karlovo
Rose Festival
The Symphony Orchestra of the Bulgarian National Radio will perform live Howard Shore's musical score at the premiere of the Fellowship of the Ring Movie in Concert at Armeets Arena on 5 December, 2014. The screening of part I of J. R. R. Tolkien's Lord of the Rings Movie in Concert, with on-stage performance of orchestra and choir consisting of over 250 musicians, is in fact a premiere for the whole of Eastern Europe, combining an HD blockbuster with a live performance of the movie's musical score. The incredible show has already been seen by over one million on four continents with thundering success.

More than 100 musicians from the Bulgarian National Radio Symphony Orchestra have been selected by the Lord of the Rings in Concert management for this country out of several Bulgarian formations, one of the top requirements being the ability to perform live sophisticated music like Howard Shore's. The choice of playing the Lord of the Rings symphony masterpiece live fell on the BNR orchestra, as they are the musicians with the greatest amount of experience in recording and performing symphony and soundtrack music. The other important requirement is that the orchestra should be able to achieve a perfect synchronicity between sound and image – the show's particular brand. The orchestra will be joined by a choir of more than 150 and together, will make the epic musical show an unforgettable experience.

“We chose the BNR orchestra because it is definitely one of the top symphony orchestras in Bulgaria. We heard it perform and we are sure it will lend the best possible sound to Howard Shore's music. Based on our experience from the hundreds of screenings of the Lord of the Rings in Concert around the world I feel sure we have made the best choice – an orchestra with a huge amount of experience in film music, in itself a guarantee of success,” said Jeff Markowitz, General Manager for The Lord of the Rings.

Howard Shore has composed more than 80 motifs for each of the characters and scenes in the epic work; he has composed more than 12 hours of music for the three parts of the Lord of the Rings.

The BNR orchestra is one of the oldest symphony formations in Bulgaria, set up more than 70 years ago. It invariably takes part in major international music festivals in this country and has participated in a host of cultural programmes and concert tours abroad - in South Korea, France, Spain, Germany, Holland, Greece.
The Sound Recording Studio of BNR
First Studio

Area of 420 square meters
Volume of 4500 cubic meters
Reverberation time 1.35 s
Sound engineers’ control room
Area of 31 square meters
Volume of 90 cubic meters
Sound recording equipment
Audio mixing consoles:
- SSL DUALITY 48 channels
- DAW:
- 24 channels AD/DA Alfa Link MADI SX
- 24 channels AD/DA Alfa Link MADI AX
- SOUNDCAPE SS 32
- SOUNDCAPE Mix/Editor SW
- PC&HP XW 4600
- 2 monitors HP LP 2065
Audio monitors:
- GENELEC 1035
- GENELEC 1031

Other equipment:
- Analogue: STUDER A812
- Recorder SONY PCM 800-24
- DAT SONY 2800

Guitar amplifiers:
- DYNACORD TURBO
- DYNACORD B412
- FENDER SHOWMAN REVERB

Audio processing equipment:
- LEXICON 480 with LARC
- LEXICON PCM 80

Microphones:
- NEUMANN USM69
- BRUEL & KJAER
- U87; U89; U49Fet
- KMS84, KM84, TLM170,
- GFM132 AKG D224E, D12
- D140, C1000S, C747

Additional equipment:
- sound system
Musical Instruments:
- 3 STEINWAY
- YAMAHA
- FENDER-RODES 73
- HAMMOND ORGAN
- YAMAHA ELECTRON – E3
- Vibraphone PREMIER, marimba
- Xylophone and bells MUSser
- Timpani and big drum
- Drum set LUDWIG
- Glockenspiel, celesta
- Harpsichord and harps
The world Internet service of the Bulgarian National Radio

The birth date of Radio Bulgaria, also known in the past as the Foreign Service of BNR, is May 16, 1936. Since that day, despite the ups and downs of political life in this country, this programme has presented to the world Bulgaria’s cultural and national identity. Over the decades, Radio Bulgaria has become a basic and reliable source of information on this country for people all over the globe. Proof to that end are the dozens of thousands of contacts with people on all continents. These contacts have constantly been expanding, entering a new technological stage: as of February 1, 2012 our programmes are available on the Internet. You can find them in 11 languages, offering information in text, sound and image. Radio Bulgaria’s creative potential and technical level allows us to launch a multimedia product building the up-to-date image of this country. Through this product the team of the media would gladly respond, as it has always done, to each sign of interest in Bulgaria, to your desire to learn more about this country’s history, culture, traditions and folklore; the Bulgarians’ everyday life and their contribution to world processes. Our programme upholds, through the articles we offer, the public mission and prestige of the Bulgarian National Radio among its ever-growing listening and reading audience the world over.

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