

# BALKAN SOUNDSCAPES

TEODORA PEJAŠINOVIĆ PROUD, OBOE

ENEIDA LARTI, PIANO

Music by:

Stojan Stojkov

Isidora Žebeljan

Dimitri Nicolau

Thomas Simaku

Nikolay Kolarov

Igor Karača

Dejan Krdžić

Ștefan Diaconu

Oboe  
classics  
digital



*This album showcases eight pieces by Balkan composers who skillfully integrate the vibrant folk traditions of the Balkan region with their own compositional voices.*

The works in this album celebrate the cultural heritage and progressive compositional styles of composers from Balkan countries. They highlight common features of folklore and the unique characteristics that make each country distinct.

Historically, countries from the Balkan peninsula have been embroiled in geopolitical and religious conflicts. Having been born and raised in Serbia and Albania, respectively, Teodora Pejašinović Proud and Eneida Larti have experienced these tensions firsthand and yearned for a way to contribute to improved relationships.

Fortunately, in recent years, significant progress has been made in eradicating stereotypes that create division and fuel extremist nationalism within each country. This progress is partly driven by a movement in the performing arts that brings composers and performers together in concerts to celebrate each other's works.

In conducting research for the album, Teodora and Eneida contacted living composers from all the Balkan countries and received support from local performers. The compilation of works is directly derived from the submissions they obtained. These pieces investigate new compositional languages and techniques while skillfully blending traditional folk elements. These elements include traditional dance rhythms in 5/8, 7/8, and 11/8, advanced instrumental techniques, modal melodies based on the Balkan scale, and more.

In releasing this album, the performers hope to bring positive attention to music and composers from the Balkan region and, specifically, to generate interest for and provide accessibility to works for oboe and piano.

## About the performers:

[Teodora Pejašinović Proud](#) (University of North Carolina School of the Arts)

[Eneida Larti](#) (University of Idaho)

An [interview](#) of Dr. Proud as a [Howarth Artist](#).



1-3 **Sonata for Oboe and Piano (1976)**  
by **Stojan Stojkov (b. 1941)**  
I. Andante–Allegro  
II. Andante pastorale  
III. Andante scherzando

Stojan Stojkov's Sonata for Oboe and Piano skillfully blends traditional Macedonian melodies and rhythms with contemporary harmonies. The piece moves from dance-like rhythms and rustic harmonies to deeply expressive passages.

A renowned Macedonian composer and pedagogue, Stojan Stojkov is celebrated for his neo-folklorist style that draws on the rich traditions of Macedonian music.

4 **The Miracle in Shargan for Oboe and Piano (2002)**  
by **Isidora Žebeljan (1967-2020)**

*The Miracle in Shargan* is about a mystical eccentric who turns up in a place in the Serbian Provinces. He takes upon himself the illnesses, sufferings and troubles of all the people he meets, but instead of making their lives easier in doing so, he turns them into victims of his desire to help.

Isidora Žebeljan was the most outstanding and internationally acclaimed Serbian composer. Several albums of her music are available.

5-6 **Sonata for Oboe and Piano, Op. 171 (1999)**  
by **Dimitri Nicolau (1946-2008)**  
I. A Simple Song  
II. Fantasia in Greek Mood - III. Ballad

The Sonata, Op. 171 is in three movements. The first movement, titled "A Simple Song", begins with dissonant harmonies on the piano while the oboe enters with a melancholic melody. The long-pedaled texture of the piano and beautiful melody of the oboe create a complex texture and atmosphere. The composer incorporates extended techniques for the pianist that include plucking and sliding on the strings.

The second movement, "Fantasia in Greek Mood," is composed in the style of a recitativo secco, with the piano serving as the continuo. The composer highlights the oboe's virtuosic abilities while challenging the performer to produce a sound reminiscent of Greek folk instrumental improvisation.

The third movement begins *attacca* and, although, the movement is set in a 5/4 meter, the melody's eighth-note groupings and the piano's left-hand patterns suggest a 10/8 meter. It is possible that the composer is referencing an ancient Greek syllabic pattern of poetry: long-short, long-short, long-long.

[Dimitri Nicolau](#) is a composer, stage director, conductor, musicologist, and professor. Born in Greece, he was granted political asylum in Italy in 1967 from his opposition to the Greek colonels' regime. He composed over 290 works, including operas, symphonies and concertos as well as many film soundtracks.

7 **My Beautiful Morea (Moj e Bukura More) (2015)**  
by **Thomas Simaku (1958)**

*My Beautiful Morea* originates in Calabria in Southern Italy, where

an Albanian community has lived for over 500 years. The gentle melodic lines express a longing for the distant homeland.

[Thomas Simaku](#) studied in Tirana, the UK and the USA, and is a Professor of Composition at the University of York, UK. His music has been awarded a host of accolades for its expressive qualities and its unique blend of intensity and modernism.

8 **Rhapsodic Piece for English Horn and Piano (1978)**  
by **Nikolay Kolarov (b. 1941)**

The *Rhapsodic Piece* explores a broad spectrum of tonal colors from both instruments. The frequent changes in meter enhance the narrative quality of the piece with the traditional Bulgarian 5/8 meter of the piano part providing an introductory backdrop for the oboe's melodic story-telling. Drawing on traditional Bulgarian music, the composer explores the full range of the English horn. Kolarov writes cadenzas into both the English horn and piano parts, allowing each performer to have expressive moments, from long lyrical lines to faster, virtuosic sections.

Nikolay Kolarov was born in Varna, Bulgaria, and was principal oboist and English horn player with the Sofia Philharmonic Orchestra from 1978 until the early 2000s. He is also a painter and poet.

9-10 **Amber (2006) by Igor Karača (b. 1974)**  
I. Con moto  
II. Allegro molto

*Amber* is inspired by the book *The Chronicles of Amber* by Roger Zelazny, conjuring up a world of magic and technology, illusion and reality. Despite its neoclassical form, *Amber* oscillates on the border of tonality and free atonality.

[Dr. Igor Karača](#) is a Bosnian-American composer and pianist of classical and jazz music. He teaches courses at Oklahoma State University, USA, and is a Visiting Professor of Music at Sarajevo Music Academy, Bosnia-Herzegovina.

11 **Ballade for Oboe and Piano (1994)**  
by **Dejan Krdžić (1964-2013)**

*Ballade* for Oboe and piano is written ergonomically for the oboe and fits nicely under the fingers. It features long, beautifully developed melodies for the oboe and simple lines in the piano.

Dejan Krdžić was a Montenegrin composer and oboist. He is credited with over 100 compositions, including five works for oboe. His writing contains elements of impressionism, neoclassicism, and neo-romanticism.

12 **Bucovina for Oboe and Piano (2023)**  
by **Ștefan Diaconu (b. 1990)**

"The piece is inspired by Bucovina, a region in northeastern Romania. It is a traditional fast dance typically performed at weddings, inspired by the Carpathian folk style." (Ștefan Diaconu) Halfway through the piece, listen for the dayereh - a type of tambourine with attached jingles - played by the pianist. [Ștefan Diaconu](#) was born in Rădăuți, Romania, and works in Bucharest and Denmark. He is actively engaged in projects that spotlight Romanian music.