

## Fulbright Commission Activities in 2013

### Message from the Executive Director

**D**ear Fulbright alumni, grantees and colleagues, The time has once again come to look back, reflect and report on what we accomplished during the academic year 2012-2013 and most of the calendar year 2013. A special feature of the elapsed period was that all our activities described in the 2013 program plan were dedicated to the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Fulbright Commission. The anniversary was officially celebrated last November, i.e. in FY 2014, yet the festive spirit was there much earlier giving inspiration to all our efforts to perform better and deliver more.

Let me give you an overview of our activities that derived from the goals of the Fulbright program worldwide and the bilateral agreement between the US Government and the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria signed in 2003. They can be subsumed under three main sections: administration of the academic exchange of Bulgarian and American grantees; grant-related activities such as educational advising and program outreach, the Fulbright International Summer Institute, language training, and testing. Fund-raising is yet another no less important part of our work that allows for expansion and enrichment of existing programs and stimulates creative and innovative thinking for the benefit of Fulbright.



*Prof. Dr. Julia Stefanova,  
Executive Director, Bulgarian-American Commission for Educational Exchange*

### US Grantees in AY 12-13 and AY 13-14

In AY 2012-13 the number of US grantees was 33: five lecturers, four graduate students, twenty-three English teaching assistants, and one senior specialist. The lecturers came from the following fields: law, journalism, Slavic studies, American studies, and geology. They were placed at Sofia University, the American University in Bulgaria, the University of Veliko Turnovo, and the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. The senior specialist was an expert in the field of biostatistics and was hosted by the Medical University in Plovdiv.

The final reports of the US lecturers and the evaluations of the partner institutions are very positive showing that both sides were satisfied with the exchange and would like to continue the established contacts and relationships.

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The Commission also hosted four US graduate students in history, anthropology, urban development and music. They were placed at Sofia University, the Institute for Population and Human Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, and the National Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts in Plovdiv. Their research projects led to collaboration with other local and international institutions, as well as to community involvement. Two of the young researchers participated in international conferences in UK and the Netherlands. Another collaborated with a Roma youth brass orchestra and played at numerous events and festivals both in Bulgaria and regionally.

Thanks to the generous support of *America for Bulgaria* Foundation, the English Teaching Assistantship Program was expanded and again proved extremely useful for students and hosts alike. The ETAs were placed in high schools in the following cities: Sofia, Pernik, Vratsa, Montana, Vidin, Ruse, Lovech, Pleven, Gabrovo, Stara Zagora, Sliven, Burgas, Varna, Dobrich, Turgovishte, Razgrad, Shumen, Haskovo, Dimitrovgrad, Yambol, Kardjali, Smolyan, and Blagoevgrad. In December 2013, the Commission organized a teacher training seminar to address the specific needs of the young teachers. The event was hosted by the American College of Sofia and featured workshops with English Language Fellows, ACS lecturers, mentor teachers, and representatives of youth volunteer organizations. The wrap-up seminar in April 2013 was a great opportunity for the ETA grantees to showcase their achievements, discuss issues and ways of tackling them.

After one-year break the Fulbright Senior Specialist program was reinstated in Bulgaria. During AY 2012-2013 one senior specialist was hosted by the Medical University of Plovdiv. His project combined lecturing with faculty consulting and curriculum development.

To help the US grantees adjust to the new cultural and academic environment, the Commission staff invited them to attend the annual two-week Fulbright International Summer Institute held in Pravets in August 2013. Fulbright scholars, students, and ETAs were offered an introductory course to Bulgarian culture, a Bulgarian language course for beginners, and a wide variety of other interdisciplinary courses, workshops, and guest lectures. All grantees were highly satisfied with their FISI experience.

The AY 13-14 competition resulted in the selection of 36 US grantees. In the senior scholar category, there are six lecturers in political science, journalism, business administration, law, applied linguistics and computer science. There are three

students in creative writing, geography and media arts. The ETA program significantly expanded thanks to the support of *America for Bulgaria* Foundation: 27 students are already teaching at language high schools in the cities of Sofia, Vratsa, Vidin, Montana, Blagoevgrad, Dimitrovgrad, Kardzhali, Stara Zagora, Pleven, Lovech, Haskovo, Sliven, Ruse, Razgrad, Gabrovo, Yambol, Smolyan, Varna, Bourgas, Pernik, Dobrich, and the newly added schools in the towns of Pravets, Pazardzhik and Kyustendil.

## U.S. Grantees' Accomplishments

As a result of collaboration with the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in Varna, Fulbright scholar Prof. Rob Young completed the first detailed survey and analysis of beach and dune sediments for the entire Bulgarian Coast as well as the first complete aerial photographic survey of the entire Bulgarian coast. The results of the surveys are fundamental for the creation of invaluable scientific database, which will be updated further.

Graduate student Edward Raven recorded a music album with mostly original music in collaboration with over 30 Bulgarian musicians in four different ensembles. The album was Raven's final Fulbright project for which he received additional grant from the Commission. The album was dedicated to the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission.

Along with their teaching assignments, many ETAs took the initiative to create or participate in various side projects, such as establishing Bulgarian Forensics League (Bulgaria's National English Language Speech and Debate Organization), language cafes, cooking/ baking clubs, film discussion clubs and tolerance and diversity workshops. The Bulgarian Forensics League ([www.bulgarianforensicsleague.com](http://www.bulgarianforensicsleague.com)) was an initiative of six ETAs. Their initial efforts were supported with a grant from the U.S. Embassy in Bulgaria, and in 2013 the BFL won the prestigious Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund Award. This is the first time that such award was given to Fulbright grantees based in Bulgaria.

## Bulgarian Grantees in AY 12-13 and AY 13-14

In the academic year under review there were 12 Bulgarian grantees in the following categories and fields: five scholars in linguistics, Slavic studies, soil chemistry, sociology/national defense and logopedics; 5 graduate students in organizational psychology, urban design, law (2), and jour-

nalism; one non-degree doctoral researcher in business management, and one Civil Society research scholar in road safety.

The scholars and the civil society researcher were awarded 3-5 months grants at prestigious US universities, research centers and non-governmental organizations: University of California-Los Angeles, University of Kansas, University of Georgia, Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI), Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, National Organizations for Youth Safety, Gainesville, VA. All of them have returned to Bulgaria.

The visiting scholars' final reports express great satisfaction with the Fulbright experience in terms of academic achievement, professional co-operation, cultural interaction, and assistance from host institutions in settlement and adjustment.

The recipient of the scholarship for the study of Civil Society had a very productive grant period, marked by establishing numerous co-operations with US youth safety organizations, and resulting in outreach activities, training events and public presentations.

Of the 6 graduate and non-graduate students, four have returned to Bulgaria after completing their programs. The other two are still studying in the US. Their periodic reports indicate that they are doing well and most probably will complete their degree programs successfully.

We had a very productive co-operation with the IIE Foreign Fulbright Department in the graduate students' placement process. The strength of the 2012-13 graduate student selection was demonstrated by the significant tuition waivers offered: a total of \$ 114 000 for the 5 principal candidates.

The publicity campaign for the AY 2013-2014 competition yielded a total 52 applications: 33 for graduate study grants, 14 in the senior scholar category, and 5 for the Hubert Humphrey Fellowship. Although the number of applications has decreased from the year before (80), it remains higher than in previous years, and marks a return to normal patterns of applicant activity.

The highly competitive selection process resulted in the nomination of 5 senior scholars, 7 graduate students, one non-degree PhD researcher, two recipients of the Research Scholarship for the Study of Civil Society, and one Hubert Humphrey Fellow.

Five scholars were selected in the following fields: engineering/artificial intelligence, history/gender studies, linguistics, theology and philosophy. Three of them have already started their projects at prestigious US institutions: University of Arkansas-Little Rock, AR; University of Washington, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, WA; Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, MA. Two scholars will begin their programs in February, 2014 and June 2014 at Dartmouth College, Department of Philosophy, NH, and Stanford University, Center for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies, CA respectively.

In the student category 7 students were approved and are currently enrolled in Master's programs in architecture, screen-writing, entrepreneurship, business administration(2), law (2). Our graduate students were admitted to prestigious universities with financial support: New York University-Leonard N. Stern School of Business, The New School-Parsons School for Design, Georgetown University-Law Center, John Marshall Law School, Florida International University, California State University-Northridge and Temple University-Graduate School.

One six-month non-degree study grant was awarded to a doctoral student, working on her Ph.D. thesis in finance with joint affiliation at State University of New York-Stony Brook-Graduate School Department and University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, Ross School of Business.

The joint scholarship with Thanks to Scandinavia Institute was awarded for a seventh consecutive year. The grantee is enrolled in a master's program in law at Georgetown University-Law Center.

Two Research Scholarships for the Study of Civil Society were awarded for AY 2013-14. The recipients are a Bluegrass musician, whose research is hosted by Western Kentucky University, KY and the International Bluegrass Music Association, TN, and lawyer specializing in civil society development, hosted by the Center for International Private Enterprise in Washington D.C.

We are pleased that amid an outstanding group of candidates for the 2013-14 Hubert Humphrey fellowships, one has been approved to participate in the program. The award recipient is a specialist in law and human rights at the Office of the Ombudsman of the Republic of Bulgaria. Her affiliation is with American University, Washington D.C.

The grants competition for AY 14-15 was announced in November 2012, with a deadline on May, 2013. A total of 74 applications were received by the deadline: 54 for graduate study grants, 17 in the senior scholar category, and 3 for the Hubert Humphrey Fellowship. The number of applications in the graduate study category has increased with 20 in comparison to last year; the number of applicants in the scholar and Hubert Humphrey categories remains stable.

The interviewing committees nominated 6 principal and 4 alternate candidates for graduate study programs in business administration (2), international relations, law (2), sustainable development, architecture, entrepreneurship, communications, Jewish Studies; one non-degree visiting researcher in comparative literature; five principals and two alternate candidates for senior scholar grants in political science, law, environmental science, agriculture, public policy, physics, music/dance; one principal candidate for the Research Scholarship for the Study of Civil Society in sociology; three principal candidates for the Hubert Humphrey award in e-government, urban planning and human traffick.

## Bulgarian Grantees Accomplishments in AY 12-13

Prof. Yantsislav Yanakiev from G. S. Rakovski National Defense Academy had very successful cooperation with the U.S. Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI). The highly prestigious Sofia University Press published his book "People in Defense: Unified in Diversity", a direct result of his Fulbright research.

The recipient of the Civil Society scholarship and chairman of the Open Youth NGO Daniel Vankov developed a new outreach strategy for youth road safety, based on his experience with US partners. In addition to workshops and seminars, it includes promotional materials that should present the message for responsibility on the road in an accessible and fun way.

Fulbright student Vesselka Petrova graduated with honours from her LL.M program in Health Law at Columbia University.

## Grant-Related Activities

During the period under review educational advising continued to play a central part in the Commission's grant-related activities. The results are very good in spite of the intense

competition from Europe: in FY 2012 the number of users of Commission-offered services was 16,445; in FY 2013 it reached 16,724. Here is their breakdown: individual visits – 2,340; telephone inquiries – 2,980; mail, e-mail and fax inquiries – 2,850; library users – 1,610; attendees at outreach activities – 6,920; website visits – 56,472.

In AY 2012-13, fourteen of the 75 regular visitors to the Fulbright advising center were accepted to US universities and colleges with a total scholarship amount of 1,976,784 USD (\$ 494,196 per year x 4 years). Five of all accepted students were granted full scholarships and seven received partial financial aid. Among the schools where our advisees will be studying are: Princeton University, NJ; New York University in Abu Dhabi (NYUAD); Drexel University PA; Ramapo College, NJ; Dickinson College, PA; Pennsylvania State University, PA; Mount Holyoke College, MA; Franklin and Marshall College, PA; Ithaca College, NY; Colorado State University, CO, and Long Island Conservatory, NY.

The Commission continued to expand outreach all across Bulgaria and especially in the underserved regions. Our target audiences were university students, high school students and representatives of ethnic minorities. Worth mention is the Commission's regular participation and involvement in national and international exhibitions and fairs. Over 5,300 individuals and representatives of institutions interested in international education and exchange activities attended the IEW events in November 2013 and learned about educational opportunities in the United States.

During the period under review, the Fulbright Commission continued to carry out computer-based testing (iBT TOEFL, GRE and EPSO exams), English language training and preparatory courses for TOEFL, IELTS, GRE, GMAT and SAT.

The centerpiece of our grant-related activities was the 12<sup>th</sup> Fulbright International Summer Institute held at the RIU Pravets Resort on 12 – 24 August, 2013. A total of 111 students from 12 countries (US, Bulgaria, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Greece, Azerbaijan, Albania, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Singapore and Ukraine) attended 12 courses in a wide variety of fields taught in English by 31 lecturers from Bulgaria, the US and Pakistan. Six official guests, 24 mentor teachers and school principals took part in the institute. Ambassador M. Ries visited Pravets to meet and greet the participants. CAO R. Damstra and PAO E. Fitzsimmons took part in the orientation program for the US grantees. All English teaching assistants went through a two-week intensive teaching training. The US Fulbrighters were offered Bulgarian language instruction.

## Fund-Raising

Over the last five years the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission has established very productive cooperation with the *America for Bulgaria* Foundation. In 2009 the Commission received a three-year grant of \$ 120 000 from the Foundation to expand the Fulbright International Summer Institute. As a result, the number of participants almost doubled. In 2010 the Commission received another grant of \$ 100 000 to increase the number of ETAs in Bulgaria. In 2011 the Commission received \$ 240 000 from ABF to host 20 ETAs in 18 cities all over Bulgaria. In 2012 the Commission received a new three-year grant of \$120,000 for the Fulbright International Summer Institute and another grant of \$279 000 to host a new group of 23 ETAs in 23 Bulgarian cities. In 2013 the Commission received another grant from the Foundation to the amount of \$366 000 to host a group of 27 ETAs in 25 cities.

We deeply appreciate the generous support of the America for Bulgaria Foundation. It is worth noting that largely because of the increased number of ETAs Bulgaria is now on the list of 25 most popular destinations in Europe for US students.

The Commission received a USD 27,900 grant from the US Embassy to fund the participation of the AY 2013-14 ETAs in the 12<sup>th</sup> Fulbright International Summer Institute. The new group of English language teachers received a two-week intensive professional training and Bulgarian language instruction. We deeply appreciate of the commitment of PAO and

Commission Chair Elizabeth Fitzsimmons whose support was crucial for the success of the project.

Under the 2006 Fulbright-TSI agreement to cost-share a graduate study grant for a Bulgarian student every year, Commission received \$ 20 000 from the *Thanks to Scandinavia* Institute. We highly value the assistance of our TSI partners and hope that our cooperation will continue and grow.

Dear colleagues, the year 2013 is behind our backs and we have every reason to be satisfied with the work we did and the results we achieved. Of course, there is always room for improvement. Let us roll up our sleeves and mobilize our energy and creativity to increase the Fulbright capital and its potential to do more good in Bulgaria and worldwide.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all the members of the Fulbright Board and staff for their professionalism, responsibility and dedication to the Fulbright program. The Bulgarian Fulbright Commission also deeply appreciates the support of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the US State Department, the efficiency and commitment of its officers, and our partners and colleagues from CIES and IIE.

To all Fulbright alumni, grantees and supporters of Fulbright, I wish a happy, healthy, plentiful and productive New Year 2014!

*Julia Stefanova,  
Executive Director*



## БЪЛГАРО-АМЕРИКАНСКА КОМИСИЯ ЗА ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЕН ОБМЕН "ФУЛБРАЙТ"

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За информация: София 1504, ул. Панайот Волов 1, етаж II, тел. 944 0441, E-mail: [studycenter@fulbright.bg](mailto:studycenter@fulbright.bg), [www.fulbright.bg](http://www.fulbright.bg)

## Fulbright Office News

### Extended Outreach of the Fulbright Program and EducationUSA in Bulgaria

Over 2300 students, parents and professionals interested in international education and exchange activities attended the Fulbright Commission's 2014 January-March outreach events and learned about study opportunities in the United States. Educational Adviser Snejana Teneva presented the Fulbright Program and EducationUSA at *JobTiger National Career Days*, *Education Beyond Borders International Education Fair* and Student Recruitment Tours in Sofia. Snezhana Teneva visited the American Shelf at Turgovishte Regional Library, the Second English Language High School in Sofia and Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov Foreign Language High School in Haskovo, giving presentations and engaging in productive discussions about educational opportunities in the US. The Fulbright advising center in Sofia was visited by representatives of two US institutions of higher education: Savannah College of Art and Design, GA and New York University Abu Dhabi, UAE. They presented their institutions, the undergraduate application process and the opportunities for international students at American liberal arts & sciences colleges.



2nd English Language High School, SOFIA



Prof. Dr. Asen Zlatarov Foreign Language High School, HASKOVO



Education Beyond Borders, NDK, SOFIA



Job Tiger National Career Days, NDK, SOFIA



American Shelf at Turgovishte Regional Library, TURGOVISHTE

## Fulbright Office News

### Bulgarian Forensics League's National Speech and Debate Tournament



*Coaches, Second English Language High School, SOFIA*



*Participants, Foreign Language High School, HASKOVO*

On the 15th and 16th of February, students representing seventeen high schools across Bulgaria came to Kardzhali to compete in the Bulgarian Forensics League's second national speech and debate tournament of the 2013-2014 academic year. With the help of current and former Fulbright English Teaching Assistants, the tournament was a huge success! Students applied English-language skills learned in classrooms across the country to craft arguments, deliver convincing debates, and provide beautiful interpretive performances of literature. Over one hundred students competed in debate, original oratory, duo acting, prose, and poetry, and many different schools left the great Rhodope mountain city with trophies and medals to show for their hard work. Congratu-

lations to all of the students who competed! Hats off to students of Ekzarh Yosif I Foreign Language High School in Lovech and the Second English Language School in Sofia, winners of the overall school award in their respective divisions. We invite you to attend Bulgaria's Forensics League's culminating tournament at the American University in Blagoevgrad on 25th and 26th of April. For more information, please feel free to contact [bulgarianforensicleague@gmail.com](mailto:bulgarianforensicleague@gmail.com) and find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/BulgarianForensicLeague?fref=ts>

Alex Kieselstein  
English Teaching Assistant  
Second English Language School, Sofia

### Cultural Enrichment Activities for U.S. Fulbright Grantees

*Informal party at the Fulbright Language Training Center in Sofia to mark the Bulgarian National Holiday, March 3rd*



## Fulbright Office News

### Competing Voices

The one-day conference on Competing Voices: Multilingualism and Multivocality in Literature and Society was held at Plovdiv University on 18 January, 2014. Sponsored by the Cultural Difference and Social Solidarity Network, Competing Voices marks the second one-day CDSS satellite event, following on the success of the Liverpool seminar in the UK in 2013.

Competing Voices brought together scholars from the U.S., Cyprus, Slovenia, and Bulgaria, including four current Fulbright scholars and one CDSS alumna. Participants enjoyed a full day of presentations and convivial meals, as well as a multimedia art installation. Selected papers may be published in the CDSS biennial book volume or on-line publication, the CDSS Record.



Fulbright scholar James Napoli, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Sofia



Fulbright graduate student Minka Stoyanov, University of Library Studies and Information Technologies, Sofia

## Bulgarian Fulbright Alumni Association Membership Form



Full name .....

Home address .....

Field, Academic Rank and Degree .....

Present Place and Address of Employment .....

Phone, Fax .....

Type, Year and Duration of Grant .....

Place and Name of Host Institution .....

Please complete and return to the Fulbright Commission office address.

## To Chicago and Back

# Walking on blue grass and country road

Lilly Drumeva O'Reilly

Fulbright Research Scholar for the Study of Civil Society

AY 2013-14

**Research field:** music studies

**Host institutions in the US:** Western Kentucky University, Department of Folk Studies, Bowling Green, KY and International Bluegrass Music Association, Nashville, TN

### Background:

Between August and November 2013 I have worked in the US as a Fulbright scholar, researching the history and industry of country and bluegrass music. I have read a number of books and conducted around fifty interviews with music professionals and university professors. My goal was to have a good representation of all the layers in the music industry: songwriters, musicians, managers, agents, promoters, writers, historians, professors etc. The questions asked were such as: how did you get involved in bluegrass/country music, what do you like about it? Why is it so exciting to be part of it? What are the future trends? How would you describe bluegrass to a newcomer or foreigner? Also I was trying to find out why bluegrass music excited me and became so important in my life. It caught my attention twenty years ago and it became my philosophy, style and way of living. I became a country and bluegrass pioneer on the Balkans, promoting and spreading it through my concerts, radio programs and publications.

### Bluegrass – what is it?

"Bluegrass" is a very authentic and unique American music genre. It is a style of country music which is played on acoustic instruments such as banjo, fiddle, guitar, mandolin, Dobro and upright bass. The melodies came from England and Ireland with the first settlers who moved south, where they mixed with the blues of the African Americans. In the 1940s a man named Bill Monroe and his band "The Bluegrass Boys" started to record the music and made it popular. It became known as "bluegrass". Since then, it is performed around the world featuring specialized media, educational programs and a dedicated passionate



following. Bluegrass is a niche music, it is not often played on major radio stations but it is cherished and treasured by everyone involved. Bluegrass is also a lot more than just "music". Its social aspect, family friendly environment and camaraderie are unique. Some bluegrass artists (Alison Krauss, Rhonda Vincent, Ricky Scaggs) have crossed over to country music and have had success in the charts.

### What about country music?

Country music is a popular American genre which originated in the south. The melodies are descended from the British ballades brought over by early settlers. They started to compose new melodies with lyrics of daily life, about hard work, love and family values. The instruments used are acous-

tic guitar, fiddle, steel guitar, electric guitar, piano, bass and drums. Country music has evolved to a major industry since its first recordings in the 1920s. It is played on mainstream radio and has a lot of fans. Nowadays country artists such as Rascal Flatts, Carrie Underwood, Keith Urban and Taylor Swift are on top of the Billboard charts, together with their pop counterparts. Country music is a big tent. It comprises many sub genres such as western, Americana, alternative country, bluegrass, southern gospel and others.

## Blue moon of Kentucky keep on shining...

This is one of the most popular songs about Kentucky, written by Bill Monroe in 1946. It has become a classic, performed and recorded many times (I have featured it in my album "Sail on the wild wild wind" in 1998). Kentucky is known as "The Bluegrass State"; a nickname based on the bluegrass found in many of its pastures. In the past there was a lot of coalmining and horse racing. The climate is hot and humid in the summer and mildly cold in the winter. You can see its agricultural roots with big farm houses and horse paddocks. It is famous for its bourbon and its caves (I visited one in the Mammoth cave park). Kentucky is the home of bluegrass music. It is the birthplace of its founder and father – Bill Monroe. Other famous musicians from Kentucky are: Keith Whitley, Sam Bush, Merle Travis, The Judds, Patty Loveless, Skeeter Davis, Billy Ray Cyrus, Ricky Skaggs.

Early August I arrived in Bowling Green, KY, a small and quiet town especially when the students are away. I was warmly welcomed by Prof. Erika Brady, my host at Western Kentucky University (WKU). I was accommodated in a nice apartment offered by Mr. David Lee, the university dean. On the following day I made my way to the department of Folk Studies and Anthropology and established my first contacts. Everyone was kind and helpful, providing me with bibliography and a suitable workplace. I began studying the history of bluegrass music by reading a number of books, attending lectures and having informal conversations with university professors. My research also involved travelling to Owensboro, KY, visiting the International Bluegrass Museum and the birthplace of Bill Monroe. I had memorable meetings with Gabrielle Gray (museum director) and RaShe Jennings (curator of collections). Gabrielle offered me amazing hospitality and we discussed future collaborations. I discovered with joy that the museum already had a file on me and my band Lilly of the West in the section "International bluegrass". I attended a small bluegrass festival in the town of Annetta, near Leitchfield as well as several jam sessions around Bowling Green. I was humbled by the attention I received by the local press and media including radio, TV and newspapers. Articles about me and my re-

search work appeared in the University Herald (WKU, Bowling Green) and the Messenger Inquirer (Owensboro). I was also interviewed by Kevin Willies on the university radio station.

## I remember the night and the Tennessee waltz...

"The Tennessee waltz" is a song written by Pee Wee King and Redd Stewart in 1946. It became a number one hit for Patti Page in 1950. It was recorded and performed numerous times (I have featured it in my album "Lovin' you" in 2009). The popularity of "The Tennessee Waltz" also made it the fourth official song of the state in 1965.

Tennessee is located in the south east, below Kentucky. It is the home of country music and rock and roll. The climate is hot and humid in the summer with mild winters and beautiful fall. It is called "The Volunteer State", because of the many volunteers in the Independence war and the Battle of New Orleans in 1912.

Early September I moved from Bowling Green, KY to Nashville, TN where I established contact with my second host institution, the International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA). I found accommodation at the Scarritt Bennett Center, a conference, retreat, and education center. It was very well located: close to Music Row, Vanderbilt and Belmont universities. The area had also many restaurants and coffee shops. The first event I attended was Darrell Scott's song writing seminar which happened right in my hotel. Later in the same month, I watched his show together with Tim O'Brien at "3rd and Lindley", a renowned Nashville live music venue. I enjoyed an Italian lunch with my friend, singer/songwriter and teacher at Belmont university, Kathy Chiavola. I attended two interesting jam sessions, at Andy Wyatt's house (bluegrass) and Brian Christiansen's "Fiddle house" shop (old time). I interviewed legendary fiddle player Buddy Spicher, who performed with some of the major country music stars in the 60s/70s. I attended also the "Grandmasters fiddle championship", held at the Country Music Hall of Fame, where I spoke to the event manager Harold Harries. Twice I watched shows at the Grand Old Opry, featuring Thompson Square, Craig Morgan, Love and Theft, Little Jimmy Dickens, Jim Lauderdale, The Whites and others. I had an interesting conversation/interview with Sharon, Sheryl and Buck White backstage, which was made possible through my friend Mike DeVillez. My interview program continued with feedback from Don Cusic (professor at "Mike Curb College of Music", writer of many country music books), Bart Herbison (Nashville Songwriter's Association), Craig Havighurst (radio DJ "Music city roots" and IBMA board member), Jeff Walker (music industry professional, head of "Aristomedia", CMA board member).

A real highlight in my career was when I was called to perform on stage with the Time Jumpers, a fantastic western-swing band, that featured Kenny Sears (fiddle), Paul Franklin (pedal steel guitar), Vince Gill (electric guitar and vocals) and other top notch musicians. My live performances continued with a slot on the Viva Nash Vegas show, hosted by George Hamilton V at Handy Hardware Store in Franklin, TN. Middle of September I attended the Americana Music Conference, which was held at the Sheraton hotel, Nashville with gigs in the famous music venues downtown. I was at the Ryman (a historic music venue, home of the Grand Old Opry) during the Americana awards ceremony and enjoyed performances by Emmylou Harris & Rodney Crowell, Duane Eddy, John Fulbright, Holly Williams, Liza Marie Presley and others. I made friends with Texas singer/songwriter Kim Townsend and journalist Steve Morley ("Nashville Monitor", "Nashville Sports and Entertainment"). I discovered a very talented singer/songwriter named Nora Jane Struthers, whose acoustic music really impressed me.

### **Oh my sweat Caroline, maybe someday you'll carry me home...**

This is a beautiful song written by Americana artist Ryan Adams in 2000, featured in his album "Heartbreaker". He is a native of North Carolina. NC ("The Old North State") is located in the south east coast. It is one of the old colonies, with rural landscape and plantations. It has traditions in country, bluegrass and blues music. Some of its well known artists are: Randy Travis, Johnny Milsap, Doc Watson and Nina Simone.

Right after the Americana conference in Nashville, I flew to Raleigh, North Carolina in order to attend the International Bluegrass Music Awards. I performed my original song "Turn away", which was selected for the songwriters' showcase; I teamed up with Japanese mandolin virtuoso Akira Oztuka for a couple of showcases in the pubs. A memorable event was to meet the mayor of Raleigh, Nancy McFarlane. I conducted also several interviews with leading bluegrass music professionals: Ken Irwin (Rounder records), Fred Bartenstein (award winning author), Tom Gray (bass player of legendary band "Seldom Scene"), Chris Jones (musician, songwriter and radio presenter) and many others.

### **Nashville Cats, play clean as country water...**

This is a fun song written by John Sebastian of the band Lovin' Spoonful in 1966. A "Nashville cat" is a professional studio musician, who plays on top country records. There are many of them in Nashville and they are some of the best in the business.

After rounding up the bluegrass conference in North Carolina, I returned to Nashville early October and continued to meet and interview interesting people. I talked to Paul Kingsbury (writer of the "Country Music Encyclopaedia", Country Music Hall of Fame), John Lomax III (music writer and music distributor, grandson of America's first musicologist. John Lomax I), Don Light (legendary music agent, worked with Keith Whitley, Jimmy Buffett, Dailey & Vincent). I had interesting conversations with John Pennell (musician, writer, author of Alison Krauss' early hits), and Russ Barenberg (acoustic guitarist and composer, part of the "Transatlantic sessions").

I thoroughly enjoyed the concert of Irish singer Maura O'Connell at the Franklin Theatre, Franklin, TN in the company of my friend, Dobro player Al Goll. We attended also the famous "Music city roots show" at the Loveless barn, hosted by Jim Lauderdale, who also contributed to my research.

### **Colorado Rocky Mountain high, I've seen it rain and fire in the sky...**

This is a line of John Denver's song "Rocky Mountain high", written in 1972. He is a native of Colorado and author of one of country music's anthems "Take me home country road". People around the world sing the song, it is even popular in China! (I perform it as well). Being in Colorado for ten days, I felt close to the spirit of John Denver. His music matches the scenery of the state. Colorado is located in the north east in the Rocky Mountains, with beautiful plateaus, rocks and lakes. The climate is dry, with cold snowy winters. It is called "The Centennial State". Population is sparse; there are a lot of wide open spaces. It is no wonder that the locals are crazy about the outdoors and live very healthy lifestyles.

I arrived in Denver in the middle of October and took the shuttle bus to Fort Collins. I stayed with my friends Carl Hammerdorfer and Kathy Lynch, who lead international programs at the Colorado State University. I focused on reading during the days. In the evenings I played music and enjoyed the company of local singers and musicians Barbara Clark (singer/songwriter) and Chat Fisher (mandolin). I performed live on the radio with Colorado bluegrass band Lineage, in a program hosted by Vincent Burkhart. I had a glimpse of the nightlife in Fort Collins, visiting the Swing house and watching local band Bluegrama. A highlight of my time in Colorado was the concert of Boston singer/songwriter Katie Curtis at Avo's. My friend Cathy Lynch took me for a scenic drive in Larry national park where I got to see the Devils Backbone and the Horseshoe Lake. We also passed the Poudre Canyon before stopping at the infamous Mishawaka restaurant.

## Walking on Music Row and Music Circle...

Exhausted, but happy I returned to Nashville where I resumed my meetings and interviews. It was a real honour to meet Robert K. Oermann, a renowned music journalist ("Country Music Journal"), author of several books and documentaries. At lunch I talked to Kari Estin, an artist manager and consultant, who worked for many years with legendary guitarist Tony Rice. I had an informative conversation with Mike Drudge, one of the leading bluegrass music agents, who shared some interesting inside stories. At dinner with IBMA's director Nancy Cardwell I learned lots about the organization and preoperational work for its annual conference. A memorable day was my visit to the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum and the meeting with its chief historian John Rumble. I interviewed Douglas Green ("Ranger Doug", of the legendary western band Riders in the Sky), who is also a renowned writer and scholar, as well as lovely singer/songwriter Irene Kelly, who had a brand new album out. I was invited back to perform on the Viva Nash Vegas show in Franklin, TN, where I interviewed George Hamilton IV (legendary country singer from the 60s/70s) and Kayton Roberts (steel player of country legend Hank Snow).

Most of my meetings took place in an area called Music Row. The majority of the music industry offices are based there on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> avenues and a couple of side streets in-between named after famous musicians such as Chet Atkins and Roy Acuff. It was exciting to walk in this area and visit historic places such as RCA studio B where Elvis, Patsy Cline, Dolly Parton and many others recorded. In the late 50's two genius men - Chet Atkins and Owen Bradley developed the so called "Nashville sound". They produced expensive glamorous quality records. Music row is also the location of the three major performers' rights organisations: ASCAP, SESAC and BMI. Music publishing is a big business in Nashville and almost everyone is a songwriter. South of Music row is Belmont University, renowned for its music industry programs. Nashville also leads the way in medical research from the Vanderbilt university hospital. It is one of the fastest growing cities in the United States. Each day about thirty people migrate to Nashville. It is the home of Country music hall of fame and museum, the Ryman auditorium, the Opry land hotel and theme park. Other famous areas are Broadway with its historic music venues and shops, the Gulch, Green hills, 12<sup>th</sup> South. Music permeates the life blood of Nashville, creating a buzz that justifies the title "Music City USA".

## A piece of Bulgaria...

I discovered a small Bulgarian community (about ten families) living around Nashville. Most of them are doctors or medical professionals who work in the Vanderbilt medical complex.

They gave me a warm welcome and organized a party in my honour on which I performed a mix of Bulgarian folk songs. Stella Antony, a moving spirit among the Bulgarian group, had prepared a delicious Bulgarian dinner. The night before, Stella treated me to a wonderful performance of Oscar Wilde's "The importance of being Ernest" at the Johnson Theatre and to a memorable visit of President Andrew Jackson's residence at the Hermitage. I spent also wonderful evenings with my friends Emmanuel & Suzan Lozanov and Alex & Susannah Petrunov who live around Nashville.

## There is so much to do and so little time left...

Gradually, knowing how things work in America, I became very good in organizing my appointments and reaching interesting people. I had two-three meetings per day and went out to see live music in the evenings. The more I did, the more doors opened with new opportunities. I noticed that I had only couple of weeks left and so much to do. I became very familiar with Nashville; I have explored different areas and have met lots of people. I felt almost as a local, as part of a big musical family! At the end of October I had lunch with Nashville musicians/songwriters Barry and Holly Tashian (The Remains, Emmylou Harris) and Nashville cat Scott Newbert (Hal Ketchum, Trace Adkins). I interviewed also Jeremy Garrett (top fiddle player and founder of the Infamous String Dusters), Becky Buller (top fiddle player, singer and songwriter). Early November I had memorable meetings with award winning sound engineer Bill VornDick, renowned music journalists David Ross (Music Row), Peter Cooper (The Tennessean), IBMA board member Jon Weisberger, well known bluegrass festival MC Sam Jackson (Bean Blossom), editor of CMA's trade magazine "Close up" Bob Dorschuk, legendary country music TV host and writer Hazel Smith and many others. I had the opportunity to visit legendary recording studios such as RCA Studio B (Elvis, Patsy Cline, Dolly Parton), Ocean Ways (Faith Hill, Tim McGraw), Studio 19 (Tony Rice) as well as world famous music venues: The Ryman, The Station In, Robert's, Tootsie's and many others.

## And the award goes to...

One of country music's biggest nights is the award ceremony of the Country Music Association (CMA). It is a huge event, taking place at Bridgestone Arena in Nashville and features some of the biggest stars. I was there and reported live for my radio station in Bulgaria. I also attended the CMA Christmas party, which took place two days later. I could see live performances of Rascal Flatts, Sheryl Crow, Kelly Pickler, Darius Rucker and many others. Before the show I could network at the CMA International reception, meeting country music pro-

professionals from around the world. I was delighted to talk to Bobbi Boyce (CMA's international director), Bob Harris (BBC Radio 2), George Lang (RTL, France).

## Fulbright alumni

A gathering of Fulbright scholars took place in Nashville as well, thanks to the efforts of Fulbright alumni Molly Chatterjee and Kathryn Skinner. I met interesting professors from Finland, Germany, China, India and Bangladesh. We exchanged contacts and had a great time. Maybe someday I will have the time to visit their countries.

## Off to Maryland and New Jersey...

Time flew by and I had to move closer to Washington, DC in order to catch my plane. I stayed with friends in Maryland and New Jersey. The second week in November I spent in Baltimore, MD where I continued with my research and worked closely with music promoters: Archie & Priscilla Warnock (Delaware Valley Bluegrass Music Festival). At their house I interviewed banjo player of the year Mike Munford. I took the train to Trenton, NJ in order to visit award winning journalist Stephanie P. Ledgin. I recorded an interview with her and explored her large collection of music books.

## Three things you absolutely need...

To survive on your own in the US, you need three things: a mobile phone (preferably a smartphone), a reliable internet connection and a car. I had no problems with my research but struggled sometimes with domestic things, such as: getting around, finding good food, washing my clothes etc. The American way of living is very different from the European: distances are huge, streets are large, some areas are not suitable for pedestrians, restaurants and offices are heavily air-conditioned. It takes some time to adapt and requires a lot of energy.

## Positive thinking and smiling...

One thing I liked very much about Americans is their attitude to life; always positive and optimistic. Everyone smiles and says pleasant things to you. It makes you feel better and brightens up your day. This is something that we, in Bulgaria need to learn.

## And so many plans for the future...

The bibliography studied, together with the material gained by interviews, official meetings and informal con-

versations will be featured in my book. It will contain the history and industry of authentic American music genres such as country, bluegrass, western, swing and others. It will be the first on the subject, written in Bulgarian language. Bluegrass and country music changed my life and I would like to tell everyone about it. A summary of it and a survey will be published in English in several European magazines and internet blogs. I will continue my weekly radio show, enriching it with new material and fresh information. I will attend the Country and Bluegrass Music Association International summits in London and Prague in March 2014. A further goal is to record a new album with my band Lilly of the West, produced by award winning sound engineer Bil VornDick. He is interested to visit Bulgaria and work with us on the next project.

## Great books with dedications...

During my Fulbright time in the US I acquired many interesting books. The amazing thing was that most of them were given to me by the authors personally. They are dedicated to "Lilly" and hold wonderful memories. I could not fit them all in my suitcase, so I had to post them to Bulgaria. I mailed three huge boxes of books, which arrived safely. I have now a wonderful collection of bibliography!

## More than fifty exciting interviews.....

I chose the interview, as one of the main instruments for my research. It was an interesting experience. In the beginning people were shy to talk, especially to an alien from Bulgaria. Gradually during the interview they opened up and at the end I got a hug. I heard very often the words "Lilly, you are one of us!" It was very flattering and I appreciated their respect. I have created a section on my website [www.lilly-drumeva.net](http://www.lilly-drumeva.net), entitled "Lilly's publications", which contains all the interviews.

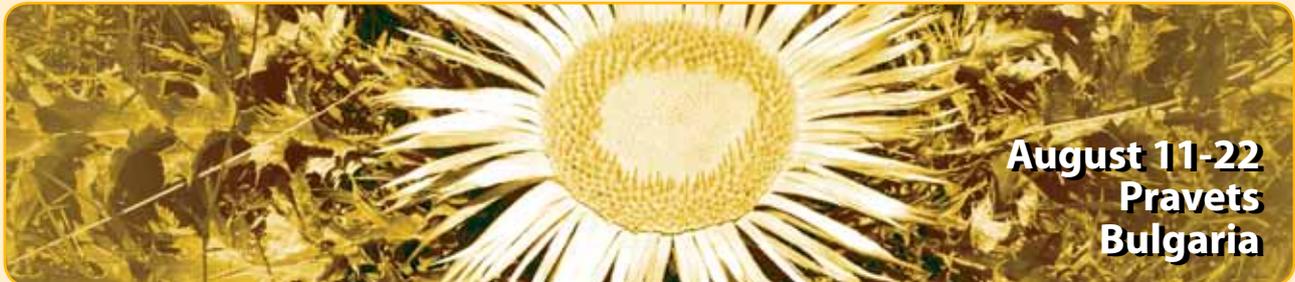
## Summary:

The time as a Fulbright scholar in the US has been an exciting and interesting experience. Professionally, it deepened my knowledge about bluegrass and country music. I made lots of useful contacts and new friends. I learned so much about the American life and culture. It has been an educational experience, a time to reflect on things and come back with more energy and optimism.

## Disclaimer

*The text is published in its original and unedited version.*

## FULBRIGHT INTERNATIONAL SUMMER INSTITUTE 2014



**August 11-22  
Pravets  
Bulgaria**

[www.fisi-bg.info](http://www.fisi-bg.info)

The Fulbright International Summer Institute (FISI) is an academic and cultural program created by the Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission in 2002. FISI offers one-week intensive courses in a variety of subject areas. All courses are taught in English by distinguished professors, and are addressed to undergraduate and graduate students, young researchers and professionals.

This year FISI is scheduled to take place from August 11 to August 22 at the RIU Pravets Resort, Pravets.

Participation fee per week: 350 BGN for Bulgarian participants; 350 EUR for foreign participants. The fee covers accommodation and meals for six days, tuition, study materials, cultural program. Partial financial aid will be available on a competitive basis.

Prospective participants have the unique opportunity to make their own selection of courses. A preliminary program with brief course descriptions and biographical notes for the lecturers is posted on FISI website ([www.fisi-bg.info](http://www.fisi-bg.info)). Applicants can choose between the following courses: (*see next page*).

### Facts about the Fulbright International Summer Institute

- FISI started in 2002 and since then it has hosted a total of 800 students from 42 countries;
- From 2002 until 2014 FISI has hosted 111 lecturers from 47 institutions;
- In 2010 the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission received the Fulbright Innovator Award of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the US Department of State "in recognition of outstanding innovation in designing and implementing the Fulbright International Summer Institute".

If you want to participate in this event, please visit [www.fisi-bg.info](http://www.fisi-bg.info) for practical information and application forms. You can also obtain general information from:

Bulgarian-American Commission for Educational Exchange  
17, Alexander Stamboliiski Blvd.; Sofia 1000, Bulgaria, Tel.: +359 2 980 82 12; E-mail: [rkaneva@fulbright.bg](mailto:rkaneva@fulbright.bg)

**Deadline for submitting applications: May 25, 2013.**

## FULBRIGHT INTERNATIONAL SUMMER INSTITUTE 2014

August 11-22, RIU Pravets Resort

### Business, Business Communication and Management

**Course 01:** Negotiation and Conflict Resolution

**Lecturer:** Prof. George Siedel, University of Michigan, Ross School of Business, Ann Arbor, MI, USA

**Course 02:** Business Communication: Acquiring the Skills and Tools for Successful Career Development

**Lecturer:** Dr. Maria Petrova, University of Massachusetts Boston, Boston, MA, USA

**Course 03:** Philanthropy and Fundraising for NGOs

**Lecturer:** Dr. George Kosar, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA

**Course 04:** Project Writing and Project Management

**Lecturer:** Dr. Danail Danov, Communications and Human Resources Development Center, Sofia, Bulgaria

**Course 05:** Crisis Management: Dealing With Personal and Professional Crises in Your Life

**Lecturer:** Assoc. Prof. Dr. Timothy Ilg, University of Dayton, Dayton, OH, USA

### Law, Sociology, Political Science

**Course 06:** D.A.R.E. --- Debate. Argue. Reason. Examine.

**Lecturer:** David M. Korn, Phelps Dunbar LLP, New Orleans, LA

**Course 07:** Ethnic Conflicts, Human Rights, and Civil Unrest in the EU and Its Neighborhood

**Lecturer:** Prof. Dr. Mark Kramer, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA

**Course 08:** Civil Society Development in Eastern and Central Europe

**Lecturer:** Lucien Peters, Offices of the Secretary General, European Parliament, Luxembourg, Luxembourg

**Course 09:** Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution in the 21st Century

**Lecturer:** Assoc. Prof. Dr. Syed Hussain Shaheed Soherwordi, University of Peshawar, Peshawar, Pakistan

### Communication and Cultural Studies

**Course 10:** Intercultural Communications: How to Survive and Thrive in the Global Workforce

**Lecturer:** Dan Fellner, Arizona State University, Phoenix, AZ, USA

**Course 11:** Activist Media: Post-Modern Documentary Films in an International Context

**Lecturer:** Prof. Kathryn Jenson White, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK, USA

**Course 12:** The Power of Telling True Stories

**Lecturer:** Nancy Bartley, Asst. Metro Editor, Seattle Times, Seattle, WA, USA

**Course 13:** Writing from the Body, Leading with Inspiration

**Lecturers:** Greg Harris, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, and Kathryn Posin, New York University, New York, NY, USA

**Course 14:** Language, Politics and Identity in the Balkans

**Lecturer:** Dr. Mary Ann Walter, Middle East Technical University, Northern Cyprus Campus, Nicosia, Cyprus

**Course 15:** Gender and Sexuality

**Lecturer:** Dr. Shaban Darakchi, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, Bulgaria

**Course 16:** Philosophical and Social Dimensions of Imagination

**Lecturer:** Prof. Dr. Alexander Gungov, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Sofia, Bulgaria

**Course 17:** Bulgaria in Literature and Film

**Lecturers:** Prof. Dr. Brenda Tooley, Monmouth College, Monmouth, IL, USA and Prof. Dr. Ludmilla Kostova, University of Veliko Turnovo, Veliko Turnovo, Bulgaria

**Course 18:** Hollywood in the 21st Century

**Lecturer:** Dr. James Deutsch, Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, Washington DC, USA

*Out of America*

## Fulbright Berlin Seminar March 23-27, 2014

**Iliana Dimitrova**

**Program Officer, ETA**

**Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission**

**A**s a program officer from the Bulgarian Commission, I was quite excited to attend the Berlin Seminar, I was quite excited. Minka Stoyanov, Duncan Ranslem and I reached Ramada hotel, Alexanderplatz, around 8:30 PM, after a 2-hour delay in Sofia. Thankfully, we were still able to introduce ourselves to some of the organizers and join the other participants for some drinks in the reception hall. There were around 600 participants in total from all over Europe, of which 200 German students and scholars preparing for their Fulbright year in the U.S, and 167 ETAs from Germany and the rest of Europe.

The program on the next day started with a welcome address by **Reiner Rohr**, head of the American Programs, who introduced **David Patrician**, a Fulbright alumnus and a moderator of the first panel, "**One Continent...Many Visions**". Participants were then split into 10 pre-determined workshop groups to discuss topics suggested by the participants by email: **Education, European/ Berlin Theater, Current Economic and Political Affairs in a Transatlantic Perspective, Global Health, Environmentalism, Gender Studies, Immigration/ European Integration, Cultural Intelligence, Media, Joker Panel**. I attended the Gender Studies workshop, which explored the traditional and modern roles of men and women at home and in the workplace, issues of sexism and discrimination as well as gender identification and top-

ics concerning the LGBTQ community. Participants were very active and time was not enough for everyone to share their views and ask questions during the workshops, so talks continued over the coffee break and lunch.

There were two more staff members from other Commissions, **Annamaria Sas** from Hungary, and **Tory Felle** from Spain, both program officers for U.S. grantees. We found each other quickly and spent a lot of time together over the next couple of days, sharing various aspects of our work and the Fulbright program in general. While our colleagues from Germany were extremely busy as organizers, we had a few brief opportunities to meet them, too.

The **Workshop for Ph.D. Candidates and Senior Scholars** the same afternoon had around 35 participants, who shared their Fulbright experiences, as well as some frustrations and obstacles they had encountered - bureaucracy, high costs of bringing along dependents, insufficient involvement, guidance and support from host-institutions, difficulties in finding research data and resources, finding accommodation and language barrier.

The **Opening Ceremony** on the first evening was an impressive event. All of us were transported to the **University of the Arts (Universität der Künste Berlin)** by bus. The ceremony



U.S. Grantees Elicia Silverstein, Baroque Violin; Jacob Street, Harpsichord

began with a welcome address by **Dr. Rolf Hoffman**, Executive Director, German-American Fulbright Commission. Then there were two more addresses by **Thomas Miller**, Minister-Counselor for Public Affairs, U.S. Embassy and Chair of the Bi-national Board of the German-American Fulbright Commission, and **Dr. Heinrich Kreft**, Ambassador and Deputy Director-General, International Academic and Educational Relations and Dialogue among Civilizations, Federal Foreign Office, Germany, and Vice-Chair of the Commission's Board. The keynote speech, **"Translating Senator Fulbright's Ideas into Today's World – On the Unabated Currency of Academic Exchange Across the Atlantic"**, was delivered by **Dr. Georg Shütte**, State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of Education and Research.

The evening concluded with musical performances by American Fulbright grantees: **Elicia Silverstein**, Baroque Violin; **Jacob Street**, Harpsichord; **Derrel Acon**, Bass; **Joseph Nykiel**, Piano; **David Degge**, Marimba. The concert was followed by a cocktail reception.

The second day of the conference started with the **European Dimensions Panel** at the **Berlin City Hall (Rotes Rathaus)**, with **David Patrician** again as the moderator, followed by a welcome speech by **Bjorn Böhning**, Head of Berlin's Senate Chancellery. The Q&A session after his speech stretched for an hour, with **Mr. Böhning** answering many questions about the urban development of the city, its support for the arts, building of affordable housing and growing immigration. Back in the hotel the same afternoon the **Fulbright Alumni Workshop, "Entrepreneurs in a Borderless World"**, created a forum for both current and former grantees to share success stories and explore ways for life-long cooperation. In the evening participants were invited to the opening reception

of the **Exchange** exhibition at the **Staycation Museum** – an opportunity for American visual artists, currently on Fulbright grants in Europe, to showcase their work. The exhibition was open for the whole duration of the seminar.

The morning on the last day of the seminar was dedicated to the **Fulbright English Assistantship program**, starting with presentations by ETAs from Andorra, France, Germany, Poland, Slovak Republic and Spain. All participating ETAs were then welcomed by **Saskia Asmus**, program officer at the German Commission, and 7 returning ETAs to Germany, who served as moderators for the following workshops. Participants were split into groups to discuss various aspects of the ETA experience, such as the role of the ETA in the classroom, the role of the ETA as a cultural ambassador, how to get involved in the community etc. I joined one of the discussion groups randomly and it happened to be one of only German ETAs, who were very excited to have an international voice in the discussion. The whole group expressed very keen interest in the way the program was set up in Bulgaria and the solutions the Bulgarian Commission has found for some of the most common issues.

The **Concluding Panel** in the afternoon had senior scholars and students present their projects, with **Reiner Rohr** as moderator. Placed on each seat was a schedule of the presentations as well as an article addressing the proposed budget cuts to the Fulbright program and the **SaveFulbright** initiative. After the engaging presentations by scholars participants were again queuing at the two microphones with many questions for all presenters, and project discussions



Left to right: Minka Stoyanov and Duncan Ranslem, Fulbright Fellows to Bulgaria, and Iliana Dimitrova, ETA Program Officer

continued over “Kaffee and Kuchen” in the hotel lobby. The farewell party took place in a night club called **Frantz Club Kulturbrauerei**. A pleasant contribution to the fun of the evening was the lottery, courtesy of **Ramada Hotel Alexanderplatz**, which gave two seminar participants the opportunity to spend a weekend at the hotel free of charge.

I would conclude that the Fulbright Berlin Seminar is a remarkable event which offers tremendous opportunities for Fulbright grantees and staff alike to network, share ideas and benefit from each other’s experiences and resources while building a sense of belonging to the greater purposes of the Fulbright program.

## Learning from Berlin: how civic agencies can facilitate organic development

Minka Stoyanov

U.S. Fulbright graduate student in applied computer systems/media arts

Host institution: University of Library Studies and Information Technologies, Sofia

From the 23<sup>rd</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup> of March, I was afforded the opportunity to attend the Fulbright Berlin Seminar. The seminar boasted 600+ participants; 200 German Fulbrighters, all of the American Fulbrighters currently in Germany, as well as American Fulbrighters from 25 other European countries. The seminar has evolved over its 60 year history into an exciting whirlwind of workshops, seminars, and networking. It allows participants to engage with and be inspired by the ongoing work of their international peers, and exemplifies the richness and importance of the Fulbright program in Europe. I was honored to represent Bulgaria’s program by my attendance as well as by moderating a workshop session on education. I took the opportunity to enlist the aid of a few German Fulbrighters in sampling Germany’s selection of brews. And I thoroughly enjoyed an exciting international art exhibition curated by the Hungarian Fulbright contingent. However, the event I found most intriguing was the opportunity to listen to, and speak with Berlin’s Head of Senate Chancellery, Björn Böhning.

Böhning spoke about the many challenges and triumphs that Berlin has faced over the last 25 years. He also spoke about how the municipality has enacted (or not enacted) policies to facilitate Berlin’s transition from a city-divided into the magnetic megalopolis it is today. Sustainability, affordability, and inclusiveness were cited as the government’s past and future priorities. My fellow Fulbrighters asked challenging

questions about sustainable development, gentrification and immigration. We learned that Berlin’s leadership is aware of—and sensitive to—these challenges. Many initiatives are currently underway (in various stages of development) to meet the current and future needs of Berlin’s growing populace. I asked about graffiti.

I completed my Masters of Fine Art in Glasgow, Scotland. International curator and frequent contributor to e-flux (online art journal), Hans Ulrich Obrist, has referred to a certain phenomenon in Glasgow, over the last 3 decades, as the “Glasgow Miracle.” The “miracle” to which Obrist refers is the seemingly unlikely emergence of a continuing stream of internationally recognized and celebrated “art stars” from this post-industrial backwater. How did the city, derided as a crime and drug-ridden, working-class, urban jungle produce the likes of Christine Borland, Douglas Gordon and Martin Boyce (among others)? The truth is, Glasgow has always played host to a thriving cultural landscape centered significantly around “the art school.” Noted architect, designer, and artist Charles Rennie Mackintosh (architect of the main building of the Glasgow School of Art) and his colleagues led a aesthetic revolution in art and design during the industrial age (early 20th century) that still colors Glasgow’s iconic facade. However, by the 1960s and 1970s, the decline of industrialization and of the ship-building/shipping industry left the city destitute. Glasgow’s revitalization story,



*Saskia Asmus, Program Officer at the German Fulbright Commission, opens the ETA Workshop sessions*



*Left to right: Anamaria Sas, American Programs Officer at the Hungarian Fulbright Commission, Iliana Dimitrova, ETA Program Officer at the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission, Catharina Haensch, American Programs Officer and Reiner Rohr, American Programs Director at the German Fulbright Commission, and Tory Felle, Program Assistant at the Fulbright Commission in Spain*

based in art and culture, has served as one model of the creative urban revitalization narrative that characterizes economic discourse at our own turn of the century. Theorists like Richard Florida have elevated the “creative class” to a deity-like status, saviours of urban blight. Every municipality from Bucharest to Detroit is left asking, “how do we lure ‘the creatives’?”

Berlin has undergone (is in the midst of) its own revitalization story. Europe's Brooklyn, Berlin has emerged triumphant from its divided past. By creatively re-purposing post-industrial wastelands, embracing its difficult history, and welcoming the varied perspectives of the international Other, Berlin has reinvented itself as a “go to” cultural capital of late 20th and early 21st centuries. Furthermore, this cultural revitalization does not exist within the hallowed walls of traditional arts institutions but is instead a grass-roots movement, spilling out of disused warehouses and factories and transforming the urban landscape. You know that you are in the hip part of Berlin when the walls have been subsumed by anarchistic outpouring. Every conceivably reachable (and sometimes inconceivably reachable) vertical plane teems with paste-ups, murals, stickers, and ‘tags.’ Berlin’s walls have become a living archive of an ongoing and un-curated dialogue of the modern age. This urban gallery belies an underlying cultural truth of the new millennium; hierarchy has been rejected, and replaced by dialectic. The new cultural revolution regularly opts to act outside of governmental structures. Until, of course, government structures interfere with said cultural revolution and are opposed – sometimes violently.

It is for this reason that I asked Böhning about the graffiti. I wanted to know what role his municipal government played in facilitating (in Berlin) this phenomenon which has come to signify a 21<sup>st</sup> century cultural hub. A phenomenon which is not so much about beautification of public space, but is a blatant outward display of the anarchist discourse occurring within its structures. What, in light of this rising culture of anarchy, should be the role of government? His response was what I had expected/hoped it would be, but not yet heard officially. When asked what Berlin did to support or encourage the artistic/cultural revolution he answered, “we didn’t stop it.” According to Böhning, the best decision Berlin made in its own revitalization was to NOT develop Berlin. Faced with a very small budget, Berlin chose to embrace what was already going on as opposed to mandating a plan. It cannot be denied that, after reunification, Berlin was blessed with a perfect storm of millennial draws. “Poor, but sexy;” low rents, an abundance of space, a liberal immigration policy, and the super-hip post-crisis ‘cred’ all helped Berlin seduce a flood of youthful and imaginative individuals. I would argue that Berlin's strongest action towards the creation of the cultural hub it is today was its “laissez-faire” approach to governing that transition.

Certainly, Berlin's only policy was not “no policy.” Berlin's municipality focused on a series of quality of life initiatives that served to empower individuals and communities. Berlin embraced the diversity of immigrant populations, recognizing the richness that a variety of perspectives can bring to a place (there are 30,000 Bulgarians living in Berlin). Furthermore, the municipality has supported social cohesion by creating a series of initiatives that empower neighbourhoods for self-gov-

ernance and facilitate locally-driven priorities. Finally, Berlin is currently seeking to support sustainable neighbourhood cohesion in response to increasing gentrification through housing subsidies and rent control policies. It is only now -- having sufficiently developed its human resources -- that Berlin is looking to develop policies to support, bolster, or encourage new industrial initiatives within the city. Because, Berlin may be "poor, but sexy", but, artists are sexy, but poor.

I came to Bulgaria to seek out and study Bulgaria's manifestation of millennial culture. By reaching out to open-source technology and artist communities, I hoped to highlight and learn from the true architects of Bulgaria's real sustainable economic future. While I am inspired daily by Bulgarians' creativity and resourcefulness, I am continually disheartened by their lack of hopeful vision. Can I blame them as I hear of the latest government plan to build a factory no one will work in, another resort no one will visit, or a casino no one will lose their money at? Certainly, I have found grassroots arts and technology initiatives that are supported by their municipali-

ties in Sofia and Varna (my two primary research locations). But I cannot shake the overriding sense that these initiatives are tertiary ("lagniappe" -- to use a New Orleans term) as opposed to the leadership's central economic ideology. While Bulgaria's own political resistance has been wonderfully non-violent, but questionably fruitful, I am bolstered by my knowledge that global youth realize growth can happen in spite of embedded government power structures as opposed to because of such structures.

As we watch increased nationalism and violent uprisings around the world, perhaps the lesson we can all take from Berlin is that strong leaders are actually good listeners, and the best policies favour facilitation over imposition. By embracing diversity and bolstering communities, governments can empower their citizenry to build a future of their own design. Because elected officials really are just other citizens, charged -- for a time -- with guiding the vessel away from oncoming storms. And then, if we are really lucky, we get to worry about gentrification.

## Duncan Ranslem

### U.S. Fulbright graduate student in geography

#### Host institution: Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Sofia

**N**avigating its canals and corridors, you might imagine Berlin a concretion of Italo Calvino's invisible cities.

*Thin cities:* with the growing shells of fresh construction tightly ensconced in a forest of overgrown pipes 'that end in taps, showers, spouts, overflows. . . like late fruit still hanging from the boughs'!

*Hidden cities:* in which the rubble and ruins of the old century are buried under the new.

*Continuous cities:* where 'every morning the people wake between fresh sheets, wash with just-unwrapped cakes of soap,

wear brand-new clothing, take from the latest model refrigerator still unopened tins, listening to the last-minute jingles from the most up-to-date radio'.

On Oranienplatz you can see a city of struggle; off Ebertstraße, a city of ghosts. These visions, among layers of countless others, unfurled through long walks and long talks in the company of new friends (and a few old ones) from around Europe. This was the pleasure and the wealth of the Fulbright seminar in Berlin.

#### **Disclaimer**

*The texts are published in their original and unedited version.*