

## In Praise of Nikolay Kaufman

*Timothy Rice\**

I met Nikolay Kaufman in April of 1972, when I arrived in Bulgaria to conduct fifteen months of research for my doctoral dissertation on village two-part songs (двугласни песни). It was a topic he knew very well, having written a book on it. My research was supported by a formal scholarly exchange program between the United States and the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAN). I was assigned to BAN's Institute for Music with Kaufman as my advisor or, more literally, my "scientific leader-by-the hand" (научен ръководител). Although it was a particularly tense time in relations between the communist and capitalist worlds, Kaufman, like so many Bulgarians at the time, was welcoming and kind to me, and he did everything for me that I asked of him. He wrote me letters of introduction to officials in the villages I wished to visit. When I asked about taking lessons on the kaval and gaida, he took me to a rehearsal of the orchestra of folk instruments at Radio Sofia and introduced me to their musicians. His kindnesses set the stage for, and were absolutely crucial to, whatever success I have enjoyed in my scholarly career. For them, I am forever in his debt. One other fond memory: I was honored to attend his doctoral dissertation defense at Sofia University along with a very large audience of engaged onlookers.

Stepping back from my personal experiences with Kaufman, I think it is not an exaggeration to say that Prof. Dr. Nikolay Kaufman created such a prolific record of scholarly achievement that it puts him on a very short list of the most important musicologists and musical folklorists in the world during the late twentieth century. Next to him on the list would be Izaly Zemtsovsky from the former Soviet Union and Bruno Nettl from the United States. I can think of few other scholars in these disciplines who match these three in the quantity and quality of their scholarly publications. Bulgaria can be very proud of Nikolay Kaufman, and I am very proud to call him my научен ръководител.

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