

**M.A. Marija Maksimova** is a pianist and an internationally recognized piano pedagogue, currently teaching piano and chamber music at the State Music and Ballet High School “*Sergej Mihajlov*” in Štip, North Macedonia.

Students from her class have successfully represented the N.Macedonia on the international stage and have won approximately 450 awards at prestigious competitions and festivals in France, Italy, the United States, Japan, Canada, Belgium, Russia, Ukraine, Spain, Hungary, Slovenia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Kosovo, and North Macedonia. Some of her students have also performed by invitation in renowned concert halls worldwide.

As a piano pedagogue, M.A. Marija Maksimova is the recipient of numerous Laureate diplomas and special prizes with maximum scores, awards for outstanding pedagogical achievements in the country and abroad, as well as certificates from seminars and masterclasses held by eminent pianists and educators. The quality of her pedagogical work is further confirmed by the fact that several of her students have been admitted to renowned conservatories abroad and today perform successfully around the world, acting as true cultural ambassadors of their country.

Marija Maksimova is the recipient of a Plaque for Best Pedagogue for many years of successful work, awarded by the Union of Music and Ballet Pedagogues of the Republic of North Macedonia.

She is also the recipient of the “St. Nicholas” Award for exceptional engagement and achievements, presented by the Municipality of Štip.

In 2018, she received a plaque from the Association of Journalists of Eastern Macedonia for outstanding success in music pedagogy in the field of classical music.

In 2019, she was awarded the “8th of November” City Award by the Municipality of Štip.

In the same year, in Belgrade, she earned the title “Best Teacher in the Former Yugoslav Republics” at the competition “Best Teachers from the Former Yugoslavia,” organized by the renowned association ANN\_EX\_YU. This association consists of leading educational professionals whose mission is to motivate, inspire, and recognize outstanding teachers-enthusiasts who contribute to the advancement of education across the region.

She was awarded a extraordinary music pedagogy diploma in USA, “Diploma of High Honors” at the international competition “Luigi Zanucoli”, Excellence Pedagogy Diploma in Spain, First Prizes diplomas with Honors in Belgrade, Grand Prix Diploma in Paris, In Treviso, Italy, she received an award for the promotion of musical culture at the international competition “Giovani Musicisti.” She has also received diplomas and recognitions for outstanding pedagogical achievements in Brussels, New York, Japan, Ukraine, Russia, Toronto, Spain, Serbia, France, and other countries.

The Municipality of Štip awarded certificates of appreciation to the young pianists from Marija Maksimova's class for their significant contribution to the promotion of the city and the country worldwide. Some of these students are recipients of scholarships for gifted students awarded by the Ministry of Education and Science.

She has extensive experience in organizing concerts, festivals, and competitions, including the International Youth Music Competitions in Atlanta, USA (2021), where she served as a member of the executive team and a global ambassador (IYMC); the French festival and competition "Les Clés d'Or" in Štip (2019); and as the founder and artistic director of the Golden Piano Talents Festival (2022–2025), which featured outstanding young pianists evaluated by an international jury composed of eminent pianists and pedagogues.

Marija Maksimova regularly serves as a jury member at numerous international music competitions and festivals across the United States, Canada, United Arab Emirates, Netherlands, Spain, Italy, Slovenia, Serbia, Bosnia&Hezegovina, Macedonia.

She has organized and performed in many concerts, including several charity concerts, with all proceeds donated to the Red Cross – Štip. Through her work, she continuously strives to elevate musical culture and bring classical music closer to the wider public, with a special emphasis on promoting Macedonian composers abroad.

In recent years, she has performed as part of a piano duo with soprano Violeta Arsovská, realizing several concert projects supported by the Ministry of Culture, and together they have released a compact disc (CD).

Marija Maksimova completed her primary music education in Štip in the piano class of Irena Spasikova. She graduated from the State Music High School "Ilija Nikolovski – Luj" in Skopje in the piano class of M.A. Stela Slezanska-Stojanovska. She earned her Bachelor's degree in Piano Performance from the Faculty of Music in Skopje, where she continued her professional development with the same professor.

She completed her postgraduate studies at the Faculty of Arts, Department of Piano Methodology, under the mentorship of Prof. Dr. Ana Gaceva, earning a Master's degree with the thesis:

"Specification of the Goals and Objectives of Piano Instruction in Secondary Music Schools and New Lesson Formats Proposed by the USAID and SEA Project – Activities in Secondary Education: Component for Professional Teacher Development."

She actively participates in the development and improvement of educational curricula organized by the Ministry of Education and Science and regularly attends professional lectures in the field of piano pedagogy organized by the European Piano Teachers Association. She also holds certificates as a mentor for teachers in the implementation of contemporary teaching methods, organized by USAID and SEA.

