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## **Musika: The becoming of an artistic musical metaphysics**

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## Curriculum Vitae

Stanimira 'Mira' Withers (1974) is a Bulgarian musicologist, pianist, music writer and teacher.

At the age of 7, Mira's parents asked her whether she wants to play the piano. She said "Yes" and began taking lessons. The following year her parents took a bank loan to buy her an instrument, so she stops 'practicing' on table tops. The Great Plan was to become a concert pianist, but life took a different course.

Mira holds a Bachelor degree in Music Pedagogy from the Theory, Composition and Conducting Faculty at the National Academy of Music in Sofia, Bulgaria (1998). After graduation, in 1999, she started working at Hristo Botev Radio, part of the Bulgarian National Radio Network, as a full-time music editor, author and commentator. She created the monthly broadcast *The Musicograph*, focused on 'classical' music discourses, texts and practices.

In 2002, Mira left her job and country for, what then seemed to be, a three-month pianist contract with a private club in Doha, Qatar. The three months extended to 16 years life and work abroad. Until 2005 Mira worked at the International Center for Music in Doha as a piano, voice, and theory teacher, while in the evenings she was playing at Doha Club. In Doha, she met Steve Withers whom she followed to Germany; he introduced Mira to the world of international schools, married her and fathered their two children. From 2007-2009, Mira worked as a music teacher at Suzhou Singapore International School, working with predominantly Korean population of students. In Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, Mira started writing in English and had a few short stories published in international magazines. After a year-short stop in Amman, Jordan, in 2012 the Withers moved to the Netherlands.

In Amsterdam Mira obtained a Master degree in Music Studies from the University of Amsterdam (2014) and then started a PhD program in artistic research at the Academy for Creative and Performing Arts, Leiden University (2016). From 2015-2017, Mira worked as a music teacher at Amsterdam International School, specializing in Early childhood music education. In 2018 there was an opportunity for moving 'back home' and the Withers settled in Sofia, Bulgaria. There, Mira finished writing her dissertation, while tutoring piano students and writing feature articles for the Kultura.bg, a platform for culture, art and society.

All these nomadic years of study, work, travel, and life, Mira's choices have been guided, informed, steered and conducted by music, and particularly, the piano.