



ACS ALUMNI MAGAZINE



Issue 27, July 2026

Yoana Napier '11
Zornitsa Stoyanova '01
Kristina Savova '18
Pavel Constantinov '04
Caroline Lazarova



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Outer front cover by Kamen Pintev '28

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Class of 2027 awaiting Class of 2026 at their Last Bell Ceremony

Dear Alumni,

We welcome and celebrate the ACS Class of 2026, our newest Alumni community members. Neither they nor we know what is in store, but we do know that they are equipped to make whatever is absolutely theirs. It couldn't or shouldn't be any other way. As alumni, you recognize this. You have come to know that any event perceived to be a milestone is just a point to reconsider direction. In each of the stories shared in this edition there is a reckoning of sorts: it is not about what Alumni have gone on to do but the path Alumni have gone on to test.

Zornitsa Stoyanova '01 speaks openly about her time at ACS as one sustained by everything that happened beyond the classroom. It was there, after the bell, that she found dance not simply as an activity, but as a way forward. As she reflects, "These after-school activities... gave me a way to be." Years later, that same instinct continues to guide her work.

Yoana Napier '11 describes a type of shift. One that was not immediate, but gradual, shaped by a moment when she began to think about what lay ahead and, in doing so, began to find her own voice. What followed was not just a field of study, but a way of seeing, where, "Every dataset has multiple stories to tell..."

For Pavel Constantinov '04, the throughline is exploration. His story moves across languages, countries, and disciplines, not as a series of changes, but as a continuous act of curiosity. As he reflects, "We always get to choose our own story to tell."

Kristina Savova '18 describes a space between almost parallel paths. In one path, structure and precision; in the other, creativity and expression. It was only when these were no longer seen as separate that her path became clear. As she puts it, to "stand between two worlds," not fixed, but coherent.

Alongside these alumni voices, we are reminded that this process begins well before graduation. As Caroline Lazarova, a newer to ACS prep teacher, reflects in her work with students and describes a voice that begins to take shape when a student is asked not just to respond, but to explain why. It is in that moment that something shifts from participation to ownership.

In last year's edition, I shared that the ACS experience is not a little, it is a lot, and it is a lot that takes an incredible amount of intention. We continue to create conditions for our current students to recognize what matters and to take responsibility for what comes next. Know that the 950 alumni-in-the-making are inspired by your path as Alumni and that we, your school, is proud of what you continue to become.

Let there be no single outcome nor a single direction.

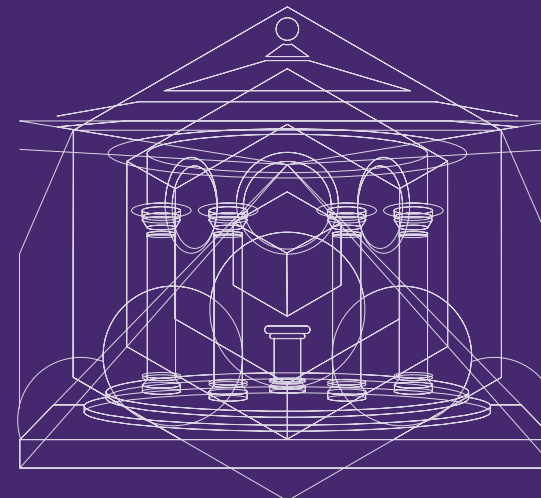
Thank you for remaining part of that larger story and for the ways in which you continue to contribute to it. We are here, and we are grateful.

My best,

Emily Sargent Beasley

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Dear ACS Alumni,

Stories are everywhere. They are found in the journeys we take, the choices we make, and the ways we come to understand the world around us. Even when we do not think of ourselves as storytellers, we move through life collecting moments and shaping them into narratives that reveal who we are.

This issue of the ACS Alumni Magazine explores storytelling in its many forms.

Within these pages, you will meet people whose worlds revolve around stories in all their forms. They teach, compose, analyze, perform, and live them. At first glance, their paths may seem very different. Yet they are united by a shared impulse to explore, connect, and find meaning.

As I listened to their stories, a common thread emerged. Storytelling is not only how we express ourselves, but how we interpret what we experience. It is how we navigate complexity and create meaning. A teacher helps students discover their own voices. A musician transforms emotion into sound. A dancer expresses through movement what words cannot fully capture. A translator reveals how meaning shifts across perspectives. A data scientist finds patterns where others see noise. Each, in their own way, is trying to give shape to what would otherwise remain unspoken.

Storytelling has always been central to the ACS experience. Every student arrives with a unique story and leaves with a broader understanding of the stories around them. Along the way, they learn to ask questions, challenge assumptions, listen carefully, and find their own voice. These lessons remain long after graduation.

And yet, not every story follows a straight line. Some unfold in unexpected directions, away from conventional definitions of success, only to find their form elsewhere. The ACS alumni community is itself a collection of such stories. Together, they remind us that no single frame can hold the fullness of experience. There are only countless ways to remain curious, continue learning, and contribute something valuable to the world around us.

As you read this issue, I invite you to reflect on the stories that have shaped your own journey. Which experiences changed your perspective? Who helped you find your voice? Where did your story change direction?

And what story are you telling today?

Warm regards,

Gergana Yaneva, Class of 2010

YOANA NAPIER '11

The Power of Patterns



There's a moment many ACS students recognize when school stops feeling like a checklist and starts feeling like a set of choices. Yoana Napier found her way into a field where questions matter as much as answers. For her, statistics is less about numbers and more about perspective. The same dataset can tell countless stories; it just depends on where you look. Today, she brings that same sense of exploration to her work in data science, where every project is a new puzzle with real-world impact.

You're now a Data Scientist at Rolls-Royce, working on airplane engines and optimization. What does a typical day look like for you?

There are three versions of a typical day for me. Option 1 is probably my favorite. I refer to it as a 'quiet day'. While I wait for all programs to start on my computer, I check my email and messages to make sure I am on top of all my projects. Then I spend the day coding and analyzing, writing documents about my findings and thinking of clever graphical representations of those findings to help portray the relevant information. Option 2 is study days where I have to do training. It could be anything from designing dashboards and their new features and how AI can be used to create a dashboard faster to an engineering course on how gas turbine engines work. Option 3 is going from one meeting to the next and making sure I take good notes so when I have a 'quiet day', I can make the right changes to my analysis.

Looking back at your time at ACS, what are some memories that stand out most?

The first memory that comes to mind is winning the House Cup with Burgundy. It was unexpected and very exciting. I'm left mostly with happy memories, and above all, gratitude for the many friendships I made. I am extremely grateful for all my teachers who pushed me to be a better version of myself not just academically but on a human level too. Over time, I really have found my appreciation for the CAS system because it made me better prepared to multitask at work and join initiatives such as the Data Science Guild and become Head of the Work Experience Committee.

You've mentioned that in 10th grade you weren't very excited about school but decided to change your attitude. What sparked that shift?

Like every teenager, I wanted to find my place under the sun. Equally, I did not find a subject to excite me. The real shift happened after that summer, when I started 11th grade. For the first time, I found myself thinking about university, my future career, and even where in the world I might want to live. Then I started talking to my friends at school and somehow within the sea of ideas, I found my voice. I remember a history assignment on propaganda during the First World War, and Dr. Semkova said I was the only person in the whole grade to focus on political cartoons. It finally started to click how to channel my unique voice.

Your father is a mathematician, but you initially resisted following in his footsteps. What eventually drew you back to mathematics?

It was a fundamental nature vs nurture debate. I felt that I am trained to love mathematics, but I was not sure that is what I wanted to do. I wanted my own path. It took me years to admit to my father I refused to join the math class in 9th grade. But it also gave me time to try out different subjects and find that I am genuinely good with numbers, and I enjoy working with them. So, it became my own choice rather than someone's advice and push in the right direction.

How did he react when he learned you were going to study mathematics at university and pursue a career in the field?

My original offer was for a Mathematics and Statistics degree, and he was happy about the mathematics part. As statistics started winning me over and I could explain why statistics is so obviously better than mathematics, he has become very proud of me. I even got to teach him a bit about modeling.

Why statistics? What did you see in it that felt especially meaningful and practical?

I think the beauty of statistics is that it is universal. Every academic field and every company needs to understand their data.

Modeling is like a tent. You can pick it up and move to any field (engineering, psychology, physics, marketing, etc.), and with just a few adjustments, you can set up and be ready to do your bit. The statistics lecturers always spoke with such passion about their work. It was mesmerizing. It drew me to statistics seeing how much people loved what they were doing. It is the story of a universal problem we can all agree with such as "How can we prepare for 'bad' meteorological conditions to avoid high air pollution" and translate it into numbers to get a meaningful answer.

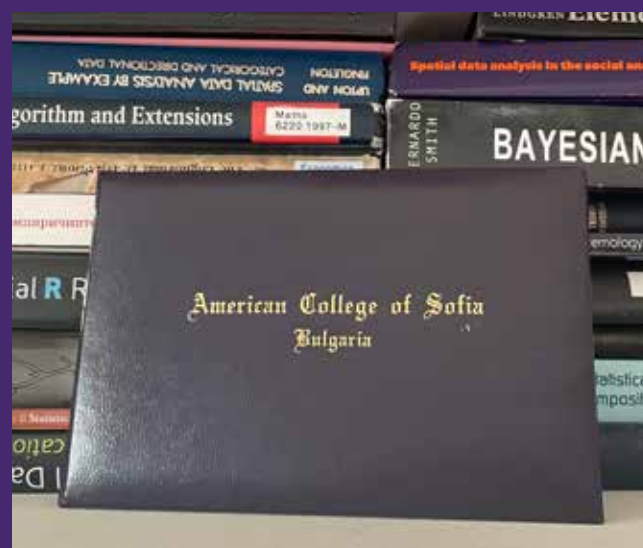
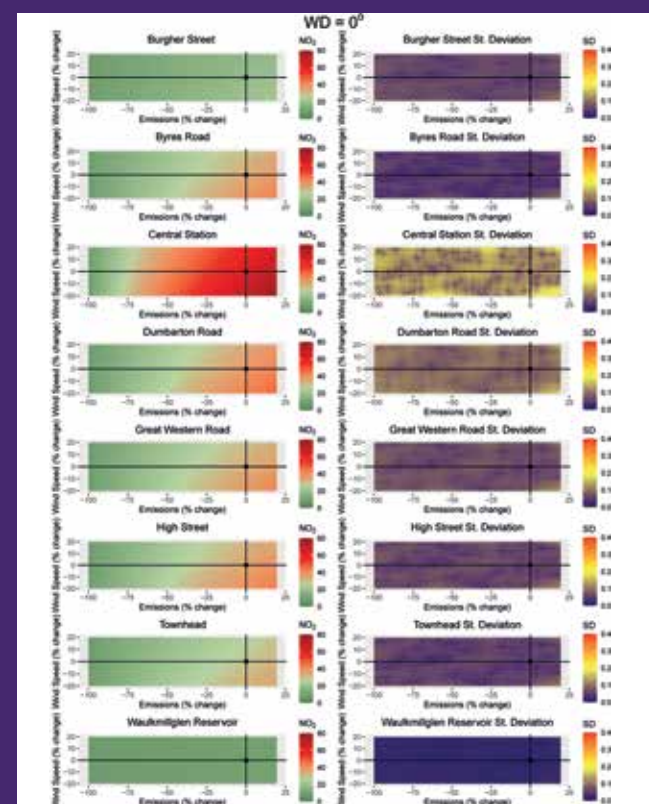
You've said your university professors inspired you to go deeper into mathematics and statistics. What about them or their teaching left such a strong impression on you?

The classes are as much about calculations and analysis as they are about the right story to tell. A

project might require you to use 10 different models and each of them to give you a piece of a puzzle. Being able to put everything together so that it highlights the most important conclusions is an art form. My favorite bit of statistics is visualization – choosing the right plots to get to know the data and then to showcase your findings in a way that these graphics stay in the mind of your audience. Even now, when I prepare a report or presentation, I always imagine showing it to my PhD supervisors Prof. Marian Scott and Prof. Duncan Lee and what their comments would be.

You specialize in hyper-spatial temporal modeling. Can you explain what that means for readers who may not have a technical background?

Temporal modeling is used to understand trends over time, which can measure in everything from millisecond to years or decades. One of the most common examples is tracking the price of a share on the market. Spatial modeling is an extension of temporal modeling as it adds another dimension with which you can describe geographical locations. If you have measured values at two locations, you can interpolate the values for new locations between the first two initial points. An example for spatial modeling is if you measured the ozone concentration in front of the National Theatre and then in front of the Parliament, you could have a good guess at what the ozone concentration will be at the Crystal Garden without measuring it. When you combine spatial and temporal modeling, you can take measurements



every day for 10 years of the ozone concentration at the National Theatre and Parliament, create a spatio-temporal model and predict the ozone concentrations for the following year at both the Theatre and the Parliament as well as the Crystal Garden.

What are some of the most exciting projects you've been involved in so far?

Every project is exciting to me. They all taught me something which I then got to re-use later in a different project. Right now, I am very proud to be working on a project which investigates the effect of air pollution ingested by airplane engines. This helps Rolls-Royce be more precise in their maintenance schedules, which then allows airlines to follow their flight schedules which makes the passengers happy and more importantly, safe. My colleague and I got to present at the Royal Statistics Society conference in 2025, and the feedback from people at the talk was fantastic. Best of all, my PhD supervisor came and had some very kind comments.

If we consider statistics to be storytelling with numbers, what is the story you want to tell?

Every dataset has multiple stories to tell depending on how we slice and dice it. When I first started analyzing data, I wanted to focus on the main story, the obvious answer, sort of speaking. I have come a long way since then and now I like to focus on outliers, the points that for some reason do not quite fit with the majority of the data. They are a side character in the movie that in the beginning it might not even be clear why they are part of the movie, but in fact they are the catalyst for personal growth in the main character. They will say the most quotable line that the audience will remember.

ZORNITSA STOYANOVA '01

A Life in Dance



Zornitsa Stoyanova was never a model student. On the edge of academic probation, she stayed at ACS not for the classroom, but for everything that happened after the bell rang. It was on stage that she found not only her passion, but a way forward. Decades later, that same instinct and an ongoing commitment to making art on her own terms still drives her work as a choreographer and performer.

You've mentioned that you never really considered other schools for your high school education. What made ACS stand out as the right choice for you?

A year after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1990, when I was 8, I had the chance to go to the United States. My aunt had already immigrated there and my family tried to do the same. We managed to stay and live in New Jersey for about 3 months. During that time, my sister was born, and I went to an all-American public school. When we came back to no electricity, water, or gasoline, I was always dreaming of the United States.

In the mid 90s, I had already met two girls who were studying at ACS. I remember the two girls I knew from ACS as being far superior to me. That naturally attracted me. At that time, the college had been open for only 4 years. It was possibly the most exclusive, expensive, and totally unpredictable in terms of outcome school. Ultimately, I think it is very much in my nature to want to be different, interesting, to seek places where there is some kind of exclusivity. ACS felt very much like that.

Looking back, is there a particular memory from your time at ACS that has stayed with you?

There are many memories for sure. In prep class, Ms. Downs made us do theater games, and I felt like I found myself. At one point, we had a brilliant English and History teacher - Mr. Curtis from Canada. He was so charming, so good-natured, so willing to teach us. He was a bodybuilder and played the guitar. We were awestruck. In his attempt to get his point across, he had the bad habit of saying OK after each sentence. It became a sport to count the number of times he said OK in each class. At one point, it was about 30 per minute. We loved him regardless. I remember discovering the abandoned swimming pool. With my dance, or was it pantomime group, we went there and filmed a video. A core memory was when the graduating class of 1999 lifted by hand Mr. Smith's Trabant from the parking lot, carried it to the lawn behind Sanders Hall, and covered it with toilet paper. Mr. Smith thought it was the greatest thing, and the whole school laughed and talked about it forever.



Zornitsa Stoyanova and Margarita Delcheva - original dance, ACS concert

You've shared that academics weren't your strongest suit. What aspects of the ACS experience were transformative for you?

I worked very hard to get into ACS. It was a huge dream of mine. I worked really hard and still, I barely got in. My journey at ACS remained basically the same. I was always on the edge of academic probation with a 4.5 GPA. I remember constantly going to meetings, and teachers being very worried for me. My saving grace was all the after-school activities. I didn't care about anything else and went to school only to endure, so I could do all of the things I chose, which were many.

Initially, I joined Ms. Downs' Drama Club. I absolutely loved art class and started going to choir practice, as well. A couple of other kids and I started a fashion club where we created our own clothes. Ms. Downs was one of those teachers who stayed at ACS only for a year, so once she was gone, the drama club was dismantled. I got into the pantomime club, where I met Eli Yordanova - a very important and prominent name in the contemporary dance history of Bulgaria. She was teaching both pantomime and modern dance and invited me to join. The people who went to pantomime became my idols. Everyone was older than me, and they were the most alternative, cool people you'd ever meet.

Over the years, I participated in all of the choirs and the musicals, the dance shows, both at ACS and outside of school. I clearly remember that for one of the Christmas concerts, we organized the performances in such a way that my friend and colleague to this day, Margarita Delcheva, and I could have enough time to change between performances. I was on that stage a lot.

By the end of 8th grade, I went to school only for the dance club on Thursdays and Fridays. When Eli received a Fulbright grant to study Dance Therapy at Sarah Lawrence in New York, we all felt her absence. Another teacher who has influenced me greatly as a dancer is Antonia Katrandjieva - Toni. Toni is also a very prominent dance influencer here in Bulgaria during the

90s. Her movement was an explosive taffy, with spine and limbs flying like a whip. She used her electric blue gaze to pin you and inspire you at the same time. In her class, I knew for a fact - this is what I want to do for the rest of my life. With both Toni and Eli, I got to perform and be part of a bigger dance world in Sofia. When Eli came back after her studies, I continued to dance with her in Sofia. They brought dance books and translated them, sought new knowledge, and freely shared it with us kids. Maybe it is unsurprising that they both create work, dance, and teach in New York at the moment. These after-school activities saved me from depression and apathy, and gave me a way to be. I don't think I would have discovered my passion in any other school.

When you're choreographing, do you start with the body, the music, the story, or something else entirely?

When I am choreographing, I start with an interest - a curiosity.

I never put a priority on how I start, but rather that I need to start in any way possible.

In 2016, I started with the question: What is honesty? We were just at the beginning of the era of alternative facts, and I was seeing lots of polarization. I was questioning how regular people choose to believe blatant lies. Instead of making a performance about how terrible the political situation was, I kept investigating what honesty is in myself and how it shows through dance.



Bennington College, 2006, Zornitsa Stoyanova and Carson Efird in the back.



Arts Fest, 1998. From left to right - Sonia Todorova, Margarita Delcheva, Zornitsa Stoyanova, Eli Yordanova, Zornitsa Vodenska, Iliyana Racheva, Ralitsa Donkova, sitting Benita Primo.

My practice in the studio became dancing freely and talking. I was committed to staying honest to myself, not going into a fantasy world, and if I ever said something that rang untrue, I would have to immediately acknowledge it. I called this practice Brutal Honesty. For years, I taught numerous classes in this experimental method in the United States, Bulgaria, and the Netherlands. People kept telling me how therapeutic it was for them. But I'm not a therapist, I'm an artist.

Over the span of 3 to 4 years, through improvisation, research, and lots of performing this practice in front of people, a structure for a piece emerged. This piece is now called Honesty and Other Fiends and premiered in 2024 at the Philadelphia Fringe Festival. I performed it in the Netherlands as well, and finally, this year, in 2026, I performed it in Sofia at Toplocentrala.

This is a very typical way of working for me. To start with an interest and research it over the span of years (keep in mind it's not full-time and it is not paid work). One of my previous solos and the only one with an award - Explicit Female - started from an interest in using the mirroring effect in video and photo, and initially had nothing to do with femaleness. From that research on Explicit Female, many films and even a few solo visual art exhibits were born.

For those who dream of a career in dance but doubt their ability or worry about making a living, what advice would you give?

I've been doing dance and performance for over 20 years now. I've made my own work, but also had a chance to dance for some big names, as well. I spent 18 of those years in the United States, and I have never made a living from it. Don't get me wrong, I've made money, but I've always had a different job. I've done everything you can think of related to the stage - master carpenter, lighting designer, sound technician, electrician, stage hand, stage manager, front of

house manager, events coordinator, to name a few. This knowledge has also made it possible for me to continue to create my artistic work.

It is important to say that in the political climate of Bulgaria and the United States, making a living as a performing artist is very difficult, if not close to impossible. I see my colleagues in Western European countries also struggling, but the struggles are different, and the possibility of making a living is a bit more achievable.

My advice is this:

You do you. Do it because you can not live without it. Do it because you love it. Do it no matter if there is money, fame, or fortune.

Learn to get up faster every time you go down. It is much easier if you are a man. There are always more opportunities because fewer men are professional dancers.

That said, become a good dancer. Train, seek knowledge, experiment. Show up on time, communicate well, and show everyone that you have a good work ethic. Choreographers, organizers, and producers are much more likely to call back an average dancer who has a good work ethic, instead of the brilliant dancer who is a diva, and they are not sure whether she/he will show up for rehearsal. Be nice to everyone and don't burn bridges.

Do not dance on concrete. No matter what kind of fancy shoes you have. Your body and hips will thank you once you reach your 40's, or by 50, you may need a hip replacement.



1998-99 Trio dance at Kvadrat 500. From left to right - Antonia Katrandjieva, Gergana Ivanova, and Zornitsa Stoyanova.



Last but not least, a career in dance, choreography, acting, directing, and anything on stage is not for the faint of heart. Be prepared to have the highest high and the lowest low. Oftentimes, you get a big dreamlike gig, only to realize that the time, money, and resources are so little, it will almost kill you to do it. Always have a backup plan. All of us who have stayed in this field have worked out some kind of support system. Some have their own apartments and keep living costs super small. Some get money from their parents or partner. Some work at a restaurant and almost never spend money on food. Some are massage therapists or private yoga teachers. They can use their studios for free. Some are teachers in schools, only because they can use the space of the school for their own rehearsal space. Find ways to make life work that are not dependent on getting the dance job, getting the grant, or selling tickets to your show.

All that said... while you are young, try it elsewhere. Travel, go study with different people. Ireland now has a basic income for artists, where if you keep producing art, the country will subsidize a minimal salary for you, so you don't have to worry about food and shelter. Look at France, Germany, Belgium, or the Netherlands. The UK is abysmally bad at the moment for artists. If you go to study there, keep that in mind. And if anyone reading would like more information on this, definitely give me a call. I'd be happy to share what I know.

Tell us more about BAZA. How did you take your dream and turn it into reality?

BAZA is my new studio space in the heart of Mladost 4 and within walking distance from ACS. I've always dreamed of having my own space. Over the years, I've participated in many artist collectives and artist-run spaces and have watched many of them close their doors because of the skyrocketing rent. I knew that

when I opened my space, it had to be my own. When a space in the same building where my parents owned a restaurant became available for sale, I started remembering my dreams. A 90 sq. meter space, where my husband and I built a sprung dance floor, is finally open. Baza - a space for choreographic research - is already hosting workshops and a few events. It is built as a white box, and at present, I've already planned guest choreographers coming to teach workshops focusing on improvisation, somatic practices, and interdisciplinary performance. I have some theater lights as well, so small performances for an audience of up to 30 people can take place here. I am open to any suggestions and program ideas from the local community, and can't wait to see how this space develops. When the space is not rented, I'm usually there in the office or rehearsing for my own work.

What stories are you telling through your performances?

I try to tell political and personal stories through humor and irony. Lately, I'm really fed up with the doom and gloom of the world. Reading the news, I feel there is no hope. Seeing my children so obsessed with YouTube and screens, I feel no hope. On stage, I try to be funny, to laugh at it all, and to create an environment where, together, all of us present in that room can cope with reality.

Sometimes being on the stage feels like I'm saving my own sanity and my own life.

KRISTINA SAVOVA '18

A Story of Music, Math, and Meaning



Kristina Savova has built a life that naturally weaves together logic and artistry. By day, she works as a project coordinator in the IT world; outside of it, she turns to music, composing, performing, and creating stories through sound. What might seem like two separate paths are, for her, deeply connected parts of a single journey. In this conversation, Kristina remembers her first impressions of ACS, the moments that shaped her years as a student, and the ways the ACS community has evolved over time. She looks back on how her experiences after ACS helped her pursue her passion for music and how she manages to keep both sides of her life in rhythm with each other.

You are a project coordinator at an IT company and a pianist, singer-songwriter and film and theater composer. What does a typical day of your life look like?

As one of my favorite metal musicians, LEAH, sings, I feel like "I stand between two worlds". It really does feel like I lead two very different lives sometimes. On weekdays, I work in an office. Outside of working hours, or on weekends, I spend my time doing what I love: composing a theatrical soundtrack, scoring a film, writing my own music, or simply playing the piano and singing. And somehow, I still manage to fit in a social life and a little "me" time.

Honestly, I'm not always sure how I find the balance at all. Sometimes it means sacrificing sleep or running from one place to another to get everything done. Anyone in my position - or anyone who grew up watching *Hannah Montana* - will know that leading a "double life" can be challenging. But it's also unique, unusual, and fascinating, because it lets me combine the structured world of IT with the boundless imagination of music. And that, for me, makes life feel complete.

Let's go back in time. When was the first time you visited ACS? What was your first impression of the college?

Oh, I still remember that day so clearly. I was in 3rd grade and my older sister, Elizabeth ('13), was just starting her prep year at ACS. Walking around the campus, I remember listening to Ellie say, "Here I study

Bulgarian, and here's where I have my Math classes, my Science classes..." I was blown away. "What? There's a dorm? And what about those small houses on the other side?" "That's where our teachers live," she explained. I was astonished! I even paid attention to the street signs and their numbers. I felt like I'd stepped into a smaller town within Sofia. From that moment, I knew I wanted to study here. I also remember so vividly the time when Hair (the Musical) was staged at Whitaker Auditorium. I was left speechless! Even though I was so young, I admired those kids so much. How talented, enthusiastic and colorful they were up on the stage, looking so free to express themselves in every possible way.

I had excellent scores at the state exams after 7th grade but I didn't even apply to other high schools in Sofia."

My only goal was ACS. Looking back, I guess I was pretty brave for my age.

You've witnessed first hand the renovation of Ostrander Hall and the construction of the America for Bulgaria Campus Center. How has ACS changed over the years?

Yes! Our Class of 2018 was actually the first to enter the newly renovated America for Bulgaria Campus Center, literally right before our graduation. I remember feeling proud, and I'll admit, a little envious of all the students who would get to use everything that new building offered. And it still makes me laugh that, as seniors, we also happened to catch the very first year of having Chromebooks in the classrooms. Looking back, I realize how much I personally have witnessed over the years.

I've seen ACS evolve (architecturally and socially) from three different perspectives: through my sister Ellie's experience, through my own years as a student, and later through my experience as a teacher, five or six years down the line.

I'm genuinely grateful that I got to experience the "old" Ostrander Building, too: the cafeteria in the basement, grabbing hot chocolate from Onda, studying in the library on the third floor, having English classes with Ms. Grimesey on the second floor in 9th grade... and of course, watching and performing in unforgettable theatrical and musical productions in the old Whitaker Auditorium. These are memories I hold close.

When it comes to people, though, ACS has changed in a different way. Kids today are nothing like who I was at 14, let alone Ellie's classmates! Students now have incredible potential and countless opportunities in front of them. But I do think they struggle to live in



With my mother and sister

the present. With the technological boom of the last few years and the constant stream of online content, their worldview is shaped very differently from ours.

At the same time, we probably didn't live fully in the moment either, not when compared to Ellie's generation. I remember how calm and carefree they seemed, how genuinely happy they looked, even though their schoolwork was so much tougher than ours, at least in my opinion. Without today's level of digital overload, their mindset and their way of experiencing life felt different: more focused, more grounded in the important things.

Is there a specific moment which comes to mind when you think about your ACS experience?

Oh, there are plenty of them. One of the first that comes to mind is my very first classical concert at ACS, when I played Debussy's *First Arabesque*. I still know it by heart, and still play it once in a while! It remains one of my favorite classical pieces to this day. I remember Dr. Paul Johnson's wife attending one of our rehearsals in the music classroom. It was so unexpected, at least for me. I was just a prep, still figuring out life, figuring out where I was, and moments like that felt huge.

At the concert itself, as soon as I finished playing, the whole audience went wild. My mom still refers to that day as the day she felt the most proud of me. Dr. Johnson came up to me afterward and shook my hand. To this day, I can't express how much I appreciate and respect both him and his wife and how kind they were to me.

Another memory I will never forget is our Senior Dinner. It was such an exciting evening. At each table, we kept guessing who would receive which award. My table happened to be full of people who loved all forms of art, so naturally, we talked a lot about the Arts Award and who might get it. We thought of everyone who had been part of the musical.

I remember listening to Mr. Pankin's speech as he described the achievements of the student who would receive the award. At one point I thought, "Wait... is he describing my journey? No, it can't be..." My whole body went numb for a second (in a good way!). And eventually, he said my name. I genuinely never expected that recognition. Even now, I still get a little shaken thinking about it. That's how I became the recipient of the 2018 ACS Arts Award.

Music has been a guiding force in your life. What meaning do you find in music?

Music has always been the language I speak best. I don't know how it is for other people, but for me, about 90% of the time there's some musical piece playing in my head. I rarely experience complete silence.

The meaning I find in music is this: it's my form of escapism, my way of expressing myself, my way of unwinding, and the way I find my inner center when it's been shaken or even lost. No matter how cliché it may sound, music is my way of breathing.

Earlier this year, someone told me: "Krissi, this world isn't made for art and music anymore. People's priorities have changed. Hard times are coming. The last thing people want is to go to concerts or visit theaters or cinemas. You need to get serious."

Well, my short answer is: Yes, complex times are coming. And precisely because of that, people need art and music more than ever. There will always be people going to concerts, jamming together, visiting theaters, stepping into galleries.



Art and music give us meaning, or, at the very least, they keep us alive.

You've mentioned your love for mathematics. You were a math teacher at ACS for a while. What's the connection?

That's right! In 2024, I returned to the ACS community, but this time on the "other side of the desk." Some of the students might even remember me. I had the chance to work alongside incredible colleagues, including Nadezhda Konstantinova, who happened to be my teacher when I was a student at ACS. I've learned so much from her, both as a student and as a teacher. She was always supportive, inspiring, and a great mentor. Some of my colleagues became friends, and we still meet up once in a while.

My love for math actually comes from my grandmother, Elka, who was a math teacher herself. She had this natural talent for making complex concepts feel accessible, almost playful. My sister Ellie and I would spend summers in the countryside, and she'd give us math problems to solve during the hot afternoons. I never found it tedious. She had a way of turning it into a game, and it became our little summer ritual.

Tell me about your educational journey and career path after ACS.

Oh my God, where do I even begin?

Right after ACS, life led me to the Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics at Sofia University, where I studied Information Systems. As the years passed, I kept feeling that something was missing. I wasn't happy. I missed the creative part of myself. At one point, I realized I hadn't touched the piano in months, and it was tearing me apart. Something had to change.

I then discovered that New Bulgarian University offered a major in Information Technology with the option to add a minor in Electronic and Computer Music. Within a year, my life turned 180 degrees. I felt reborn. Suddenly, opportunities started appearing everywhere. Most importantly, my first official musical project, "The Story of Erin," came to life and even reached the Bulgarian National Radio! It was a dream come true.

At New Bulgarian University, I met Simo Lazarov, "the patriarch of electronic music in Bulgaria", as well as Associate Professor Dr. Rositsa Becheva, one of my mentors to this day. She guided me through my first steps as a professional musician. In 2023, I met Bulgarian actress and director Diana Doseva who became (and still is) one of my key creative partners. She was preparing her Master's project, *Follow Antigone*, a promenade performance. But... What's a promenade

performance, you ask? Trust me, I wondered the same thing. Basically, it's a performance that doesn't take place in one location. The action moves, and the audience moves with it. In our case, the audience walked around the entire university campus.

Our next project together was *Beyond the Net* (Отвъд мрежата). This was my first big breakthrough as a theater composer. The production explored how digital content affects our lives, our growth, and our inner worlds. Every actor poured something personal into it. I'm incredibly grateful I got to fulfill another dream: writing the music for a theater production and even stepping on stage as part of the cast! Just a year earlier, I had been living a completely different life, and suddenly I was in this "somebody pinch me" moment. Experiences like that force you to reconnect with yourself. They teach you who you are and what truly excites you. Those two theatrical works changed my life. And at the 2024 Author's Theater Festival, *Beyond the Net* even won the Best Music Award.

In 2024, I also worked on another theatrical production: *Dance of Death* by August Strindberg, directed by actress Ivelina Koleva. It tells the story of a married couple living in a kind of "prison fortress" isolated on an island in Sweden. It feels like purgatory: darkness everywhere, and the audience never fully knows what is real or not. The music allowed me to experiment with completely different genres, including some heavier ones like metal and noise music. It was an unforgettable experience, as I learned so much!

What are some of the most exciting projects you've been involved in so far?

It has been an incredibly colorful year in terms of projects. It began with the theatrical performance "Парад на остроумието. Играта Shake-speare", yet another promenade performance featuring five street musicians (actors) in the Crystal Garden who explore Shakespeare's legacy and the popular idea that perhaps he wasn't one person at all, but a group of people hiding behind a single mask. The whole concept unfolds almost like a game. The performance is currently part of the program at the "Tear and Laughter" Theater, so anyone who wants to dive into the depths and philosophy of this "mask" is more than welcome to check the theater's schedule and grab a ticket or two.

I had the opportunity to join the creative team behind the short film *The Abyss*, a Bulgarian psychological thriller that explores a young woman's past traumas and her attempts to overcome them. It premiered in September at Vlaykova Cinema, and just a few weeks later, it was included in this year's program at the "Golden Rose" Film Festival in Varna. The final song I composed for the soundtrack, "Flickering Light (Out of the Void)", appeared both unexpectedly and completely naturally in the process; it almost wrote itself.

Another major project for me was the play *In the Pupil of Loneliness* ("В зеницата на самотата"). This was the very first production created within the Author's Theater Festival held at Toplocentrala. The performance delves into the loneliness of the modern person. It talks about what happens when someone

is left alone amidst all the noise, and the need to be heard reaches its breaking point. Composing for this performance was an emotionally intense and deeply meaningful experience.

Looking back on my journey from my graduation until now, everything still feels surreal. I can't believe I've had the incredible opportunity to be part of such energizing and inspiring projects and to meet so many motivated, creative, and genuinely wonderful people. And the fact that, for three consecutive years, I was individually nominated by the Union of Bulgarian Musicians and Dancers for the Crystal Lyre Award (2023, 2024, and 2025) in the category "Sound and Sound Design" still feels unreal to me.



What inspires you to create music? What is the story you want to tell?

On the one hand, people. It's always been people who inspire me. Sometimes it's through the projects I'm involved in with them, sometimes it's their personal stories, and sometimes it's simply who they are and the impact they've had on my life. Certain people just make me want to create.

On the other hand, I'm inspired by sounds themselves. I love experimenting with them. Like every musician, I want to find that unique element that makes my work stand out, but I also genuinely believe that everything around us is music. It's everywhere, we just have to listen.

As for the story I want to tell... I still find it difficult to share my own personal stories through my music. Instead, I'm drawn to telling the stories of places, cultures, and sometimes of other people. I love taking someone else's concept and "colorizing" it, helping it come to life through sound.

I wouldn't call myself just a performer or a singer-songwriter. I want to be known as a storyteller, and one day I hope to officially become a multi-instrumentalist, too.

Where can we listen to your music?

You can listen to my music (both songs and film and theater soundtracks) on YouTube, as well as on all streaming platforms (and yes, this includes Spotify, Apple Music, Deezer, etc). You can find me by my stage name Kristine Sav. I share a lot about projects I've been working on on my social media accounts: <https://linktr.ee/kristinesav>.

PAVEL CONSTANTINOV '04

Six Languages, Fifty Countries, One Story



Some people follow a plan. Others follow their curiosity. Pavel Constantinov's story doesn't follow a straight line, and that's exactly the point. Here, he reflects on where his journey began and where it has taken him. Along the way, he shares what travel, language, and experience have taught him, not just about the world, but about perspective. Because, more than anything, his story is about staying open, asking questions, and the freedom to continually redefine his own narrative.

Every story has a beginning. How would you introduce your story to someone who has never met you?

I'd probably introduce it as the story of a curious kid who kept exploring the world in different ways. I grew up in a family where books, language, and ideas mattered a lot, largely thanks to my mom, who was a translator and publisher. She taught me early on that books and words can open doors to entire universes. Over time, that curiosity took me in many directions – linguistic work, travel, music, business, design, and a constant search to understand how things work and why they are the way they are.

Take us back to your very first day at ACS. What do you remember seeing, feeling, or realizing as you stepped onto campus? How would you describe the ACS experience?

It all felt supremely novel to me. Today, we've all seen our fair share of movies and TV shows, so while the ACS campus looks very nice, it is not something fundamentally unseen or unfamiliar. Back in 1999, though, I'd never seen a place like this. Our idea of a school then was a mostly rectangular building with a "yard" covered in concrete, and perhaps a football field with two rusty metal goals that had no net. I was very fascinated with the campus – so spacious, green, with several beautiful buildings, well-kept sports fields... It was a whole new world.

Still, on day one, I had no idea what was what and why. No one from my primary school's class enrolled at ACS that year, so I didn't know a single soul there. In the first few hours, they told me I should go find my section, "eight six." Of course, I was used to sections having

letters, not numbers, so I thought that was because I was born in 1986 and this was the section for everyone born in '86. I had started school a year early, so I was used to everyone else being older, and I thought, "How nice, there are more people my age here!" But then I heard there were sections "eight three," "eight two," and even "eight one," and I remember being worried there for a second about having to study together with what, in the eyes of 13-year-old me, would've been very old people. Our class advisor, the legendary Ms. Ivanova, quickly dispelled my confusion, though.

You've dreamed of being an astronaut, built a career in translation, and explored design, investment, and electronic music. What's the common thread?

I think the answer is in the question - the keyword is "explore".

My mind tends to get easily fascinated with a wide variety of concepts and then urges me to dig deeper into stuff to understand how it works and why it is the way it is. Especially fields that allow a degree of creativity are a bottomless rabbit hole for my energy, because there's no right or wrong answer in music or design. Perhaps unexpectedly to some, but it's quite similar in the world of investment, too. You can always dig deeper, trying to get a feel for how the moving parts interact, and then figuring out how you can express your own ideas or hypotheses alongside those moving parts.

About translation – I am a second-generation translator, and I started in that field on a whim, just to help out my mom with some extra income during those hard years. My first translated book was published when I was a freshman at ACS, a Tom Clancy franchise novel about teenage detectives. I never thought I would become a professional translator, but my love for language helped me develop a knack for the actual work fairly quickly. Then my mom, forced by the terribly low pay in Bulgaria, came up with the brilliant idea of looking for translation work online in other countries. I know this sounds so natural today, but it was a very groundbreaking concept back in the early 2000s. From there on, my ever-exploring and ever-optimizing mind committed to finding interesting – and challenging – translation work online. I started offering my services for free so I would gain some experience to show for. Over many years, I never said no to a project, so I kept upgrading my skill set until I became the unicorn job seeker – both 20 years old and with 5+ years of experience.

What have you learned recently that surprised you?

Just yesterday, I learned that Tomaso Albinoni's famous Adagio in G minor was not actually composed by Albinoni in the 18th century, but by his biographer Remo Giazotto way later in the 20th century. Who would've thought?

You've visited six continents and more than 50 countries. What have your travels taught you about language, culture, and storytelling?

Most of all, that the world is so endless and so deeply beautiful and impressive in all its complexity. It's interesting how, when you are just starting to travel, you tend to notice all the striking differences between your home and where you are. Then, the more you travel, the more you can't help but start noticing the similarities instead – how humans will be humans, and life will be life. It makes you feel like you and we all belong to this crazy, huge bunch of people that we call humankind.

We always get to choose our own story to tell.

Circumstances will often be chaotic and may sometimes look like they're not in our favor, but even then, it is within our power to choose the way we respond to them.



To illustrate the point: Imagine it's Christmas. But there's no snow and no Santa, because you're in the middle of the jungle on the island of Borneo. Zoom in and you're at the tiny airport of Mulu – literally one strip of tarmac with a bit of grass on both sides in the vast green expanse of the tropical rainforest. The building of the airport itself is significantly smaller than Ostrander. You have a flight to catch, which would take you to a city on the island, where you have another flight to catch at 7am the next morning that would take you to another city, more than 1,500 km away, where you want to spend the week and New Year's.

An hour of waiting later, with the typical Bornean big smile and hearty attitude, a local informs you that your flight was canceled, and wishes you Merry Christmas with a happy grin. You have no internet and you don't speak Malay – and they don't really speak much English, either. You somehow manage to learn that the only other flight for the day goes to a completely different city more than 1,100 km away from the original plan – and is departing in 30 minutes. You have no idea if that city can even connect you onward to your next destination. You manage to get a hotspot from the big-smile guy, but you're in the middle of the jungle, so the connection is useless, and the small turboprop plane is getting ready to leave. So you just have a minute to decide if you want to go all in and fly your girlfriend, yourself, and 40 days' worth of luggage to a city you didn't know existed about 5 minutes ago.



And this is where you get to decide – is this a fun adventure? Or is it a stressful mishap that ruined your holiday plans at the other end of the world?

That's the best part – it is up to you to choose what narrative you want for that story. And that lesson works for pretty much everything that happens in life. Any time something goes sideways, you get to decide: do I let this wave wash me away and leave me on the shore crying about it, or do I find a way to ride it, go with the flow, and see where it takes me?

You speak six languages - that's six different worlds. How does each language shape different parts of your personality?

If you'll pardon the ancient reference, they're kind of like Voltron – five of them together make up the whole of me. Bulgarian is the language of my heart. English is the language of my mind. Spanish is the language of many of my adventures. Italian and French are the languages of my senses. And Serbian is, well, the language of an ex of mine.

You've shared that one of your dreams is to make a movie. What story do you want to tell?

It's a story of two boys. One never met his father; had to struggle with poverty; was forced to work as a child to make ends meet; never had a chance to travel outside of his country in the first two decades of his life; lost many of his relatives and then his mom way too early. The other boy had many memories of a beautiful analog childhood, full of play and games and a loving parent figure. He made a lot of good friends; he learned plenty of skills from a very early age that helped him build and expand a career, a business, and a life that took him across dozens of amazing places around the world; he then started a family of his own.

The plot twist is that these are both the same boy, and life is very often a matter of perspective. What we choose to see in everything that destiny sends our way often determines the story we want to tell.

Returning to ACS as the 2024 commencement speaker must have been a full-circle moment. What message, above all else, did you hope would stay with that graduating class?

Yes, it truly felt like a full-circle moment. Standing there, looking at the graduating class, I couldn't help remembering that I once stood exactly where they were – full of excitement, but also uncertainty about what comes next.

The message I hoped would stay with them is that life rarely follows a straight path, and that's actually a good thing. Keeping your mind and heart open matters much more than having a perfectly planned roadmap. If you keep learning, keep exploring, and keep treating people well, opportunities tend to appear in unexpected places.

ACS gives students something very valuable: the confidence and skills to step into the world and figure things out. I hope they carry that confidence with them wherever their journeys may take them.

After your mother passed away, you established a scholarship in her name. What part of her legacy lives on through that scholarship?

My mom used to say that, most of all, love is freedom. I hope a part of her legacy that would live on through the scholarship is her endeavor to give the freedom for people's souls to spread their wings and fly. That is what my mom always strived to do with the books she translated and the ones she published – to explore through the written word what the Universe is and how we fit in there, and through that exploration to open up space for the soul of anyone willing to join the literary journey to feel free enough to explore the Universe, too. I hope this scholarship, through education, gives that freedom to some bright minds at ACS, so they can open up their wings and see where their flight can take them.

How do you hope your story - so far - will inspire others?

I hope it will inspire them to always give kindness and to never give up on kindness. A kind heart, when bolstered by an unbending spirit, can be extremely resilient in the face of adversity. It does not have to fade away, just because life can be hard sometimes. It does not have to give way to bitterness, just because it might be easier to be cynical.



CAROLINE LAZAROVA

ESL Teacher

The classroom where students find their voices



In every classroom at the American College of Sofia, stories are constantly unfolding. Sometimes they are spoken aloud. Other times, they quietly take shape on a page. For Caroline Lazarova, beloved ESL teacher, storytelling is not just a skill to be taught, but a way of understanding the world and one another. Shaped by life between cultures and languages, she brings a deep appreciation for expression in all its forms. In this conversation, she reflects on how students begin to discover their voices, why silence is never truly empty, and how, at its core, storytelling builds empathy, connection, and community.

St. Andrews

and then we hurried to the coast,
couldn't bear to be landlocked

even with each other. Saline sunlight,
late March lithic beach under

under our feet, and your rough
hands searching for shellfish.

In the mist it hid so well,
the breaking

and the binding, no body
beyond what begged

to be forgiven. A northern spring
so much like home, vernal ache

in our bones. Someday it will matter
so little, the body breaking or the heart

binding to what is destined
to destroy it. Seaweed will

decompose into itself,
brackish water corroding

the shore, and it will be like
we were never here.

A poem by Caroline Lazarova

How would you describe the ACS story to someone who has never experienced it?

The ACS story is one of building community through shared passions.

How has living between cultures shaped your understanding of language? Are there emotions or ideas that feel easier to express in one language than another?

Living between cultures - and languages - helps me see how truly essential it is for us to understand one another. Language is communication in its most necessary form, not just the communication of words but emotions and experiences. I'm fascinated by words that don't have a direct translation in any other language.

What draws you to poetry specifically, as a form of storytelling? What is a line of poetry, your own or someone else's, that you return to often?

I'm drawn to poetry for its lyrical possibilities, the way you can express things in a poem that are nearly impossible to encapsulate in standard prose. In its capacity for excess and vulnerability, poetry also blatantly defies the modern push for optimization and productivity. It's art entirely for art's sake. A line of poetry I return to often is by the Romanian-American poet Maya C. Popa: "Let's be hungry a little while longer. Let's not hurt each other if we can." I think it encapsulates the human experience so clearly.

How do you see eighth graders beginning to claim their own voices? When does a student realize they have something worth saying?

I love watching their individual voices start to appear during our first persuasive writing assignment. When they take a position and need to defend it, when they need to explain the why - that's when they start to see the purpose of having a voice.

What surprises you most about your students?

The wild spectrum of their interests. I've learnt so much about the most random, unexpected things just from talking to my students about their passions and hobbies.



What does silence mean in your classroom?

A strong classroom is never truly silent.

Even if students aren't speaking to each other, we can still hear the ambient noise of learning: the tapping of Chromebook keys, pencils scraping, pages of a novel turning. That's my favorite kind of classroom sound.

If eighth grade were a metaphor, what would it be?

Eighth grade is a blossoming tree. By springtime, our students have grown so colorful and alive, reaching for the sun.

In what ways are teachers storytellers?

I think of teachers more as facilitators of students telling their own stories. Part of our job is to empower them to discover what new places their stories might take them.

What do you hope your students carry with them long after they leave your classroom?

I hope my students can always carry the knowledge that they are valuable regardless of their grades or achievements, and that they are capable of doing difficult things.

Do you think storytelling can change the world?

It absolutely can. Storytelling in its many forms - literature, art, oral histories - teaches us empathy. They allow us to understand and interact with experiences that are not our own. This understanding is essential for bringing about positive change in the world.



You wrote your first chapter at ACS.
Someone made that possible.

Now it's your turn.

Help someone else begin their story at ACS.

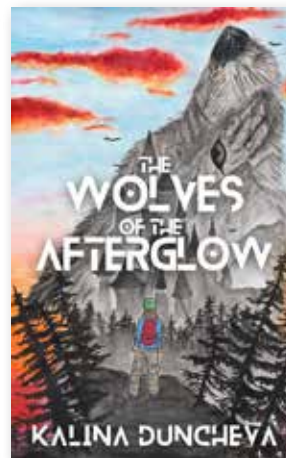
Give today.



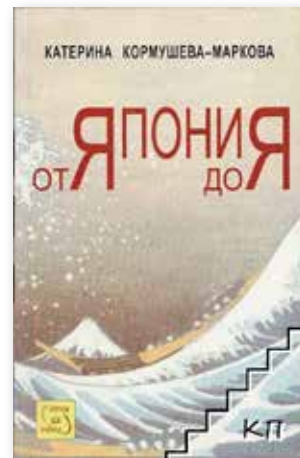
ALUMNI BOOKSHELF



Petar Kanchev '06



Kalina Duncheva '23



Katerina Kormusheva '97



Lana Popovic '03



Alexander Shpatov '04



Yoanna Laleva '24



Teodora Miteva '24



Teo Chepilov '97



Liliya Yovnova '17



Dena Popova '06



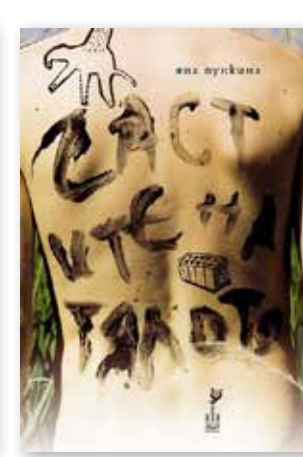
Dimitar Kenarov '99



Margarita Delcheva '03



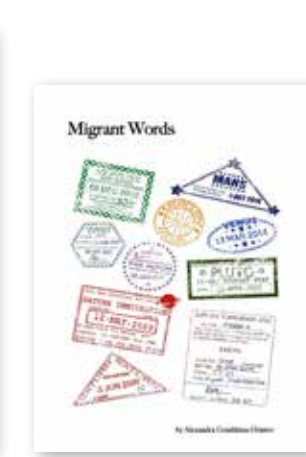
Maria Vassileva '06



Yana Punkina '02



Svetla Baeva '03



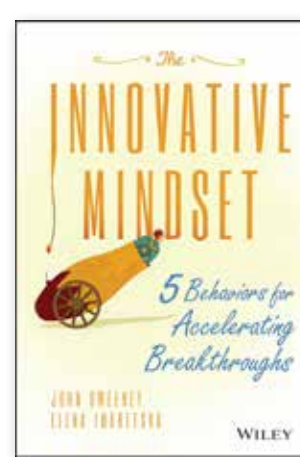
Alexandra Grashkina-Hristov '00



Nadezhda Trichkova '12



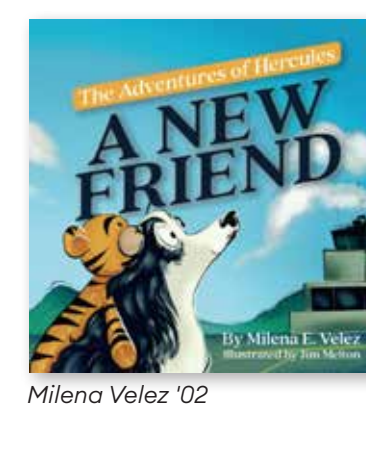
Petya Dikova '03



Elena Imaretska '00



Eliza Ivanova '06



Milena Velez '02



Maria Popova '03

The books featured in this section represent a selection of works published by ACS alumni and are not intended to be a comprehensive or exhaustive list of alumni publications.

NELI KOLEVA '98, ALUMNI SPEAKER

Commencement Ceremonies for the Class of 2026



Dear graduates, families, teachers, and fellow ACS people,

Today is one of those rare days when time behaves strangely.

This morning, you were still students of the American College of Sofia. By the end of this ceremony, you will be graduates. Alumni.

Around you are the people who helped carry you here: your families, your teachers, your friends, and classmates. For the past five years, these people have seen you at your highs and lows - brilliant, exhausted, hilarious, dramatic, generous, stressed and occasionally under-caffeinated.

So before I say anything about the future, I want to say this: pause for a second. This day is not just a bridge to what comes next. It is a celebration of what you have already done.

If memory serves - after all, I was a student here in the previous century - you made it through essays, deadlines, exams, group projects, performances, competitions, late nights, early mornings and a thousand other things. Most importantly, you made it through the many moments when you were asked to become a little more serious, a little more brave, a little more yourselves.

Well done.

Whatever happens next, today you become part of a strange and wonderful tribe: ACS people.

Being ACS people does not end when you leave this campus. It does not expire with your student ID. It becomes portable, because it is a way of moving through the world as a curious and restless person, as well as one who refuses to accept that "this is just how things are" is a good enough answer.

No matter how your lives shape up going forward, they are likely to involve some measure of packing.

So that's what I'm here for - to share a few things I hope you pack for what comes next.

First: pack curiosity, not certainty.

One of the great myths about adulthood is that by 18 you are supposed to know exactly who you are, what you will study, and what career you will pursue.

You do not.

And that is not a problem. It is the beginning of the interesting part.

You are not headed to a museum where finished people go to display their talents. You are headed to a workshop. The point is not to arrive complete. The point is to keep becoming.

ACS has already trained you for this. You already know that we grow the most not when we arrive with the strongest opinions, but when we arrive with the strongest questions.

You have been asked to think, to argue, to explain yourself, and to change your mind when evidence demands it. Take that with you. Take your questions seriously, and let yourselves be surprised - dangerously and deliciously - by yourself.

Second: pack humility, and the courage to be bad at new things.

In high school, many of you have been known for something.

The smart one. The athlete. The debater. The artist. The dependable one. The funny one. The one teachers mention by first and last name.

Forgive me for what I am about to say next, but in the next stage, you may discover that you are not quite so special.

There will be many other smart, talented, ambitious, complicated people beside you. I hope you receive this as excellent news. Because in the next stage,



being exceptional can finally stop being your identity and become your invitation to grow.

I hope you are awkward. I hope you are wrong. I know, with great confidence, that you will say something at least once and leave people deeply unimpressed.

This is normal.

Growth is embarrassing. If you only do things that make you look impressive, you will miss the experiences that make you wiser.

ACS has prepared you not because it made everything easy, but because it taught you that excellence is a practice. It showed you that it is effort, revision and feedback.

Third: pack the habit of doing.

ACS people are not only known for questioning. They are known for doing.

You have seen this here. So many things began as someone saying, "Wouldn't it be cool if..." and somehow this if became a spreadsheet, a poster, a budget, and brought about a mild to severe panic attack.

Keep that habit.

Whatever you do in your next stage, I beg of you - do not become a collector of credits, certificates and LinkedIn lines. Instead, build something. Join something. Start something. Help something survive.

The world does not need more people who only have opinions about what is broken. It needs people who notice the broken thing, gather others, and begin fixing it.

Do not wait until you feel perfectly ready. Ready is often just doing something while being scared.

Fourth: learn to care about people who are not like you.

At ACS, you all sat the same entrance exam. You were held to the same standard. You shared the same campus, the same expectations, and, in one way or another - let's be honest here - the same strange ecosystem.

But in the next stage, you will meet people shaped by very different circumstances. Some of them will

confuse you. Some will challenge you. Some will quietly change the way you understand the world.

Learning how to live with them, disagree with them, and still care about them may become one of the most challenging aspects of the next stage.

Among those different people, the world ahead will be full of noise. There will be pressure to compare yourself constantly, to optimize every choice, and to measure your life by someone else's scoreboard.

In that noise, your high school days may start to feel very distant. ACS will feel far away as you navigate new cities, different languages, unfamiliar classrooms, and ever-changing versions of yourselves.

But then something will happen.

You will ask one more question than everyone else.

You will volunteer when staying silent would have made your life easier.

You will refuse to drift.

You will find another ACS person across a room and feel a surge of trust and recognition.

And you will realize: ACS did not stay behind. It came with you.

And so the **fifth and final thought** I'd like to leave you with is this: trust that ACS will always be right there with you.

Not as a building. Not as a diploma. Not as a memory you take out only at reunions.

But as a way of practice.

It will show up when you need courage. It will show up when you need community. Most importantly, it will show up when you are asked to choose between what is easy and what is right.

This is the ACS spirit you will receive and share for the rest of your lives.

And that is the thing I hope you pack most carefully after today.

Congratulations, Class of 2026.

Welcome to the alumni community.

Thank you.



THE GALLERY

ACS Alumni Reunions





ACS ALUMNI MAGAZINE

Issue 27, July 2026



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