



**ACADEMY OF MUSIC AND DRAMA**

# **Resonating Voice**

*From the Roots to the Sound*



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## **ABSTRACT**

*In my musical practice, education and music making, I have always reached a point of using existing elements of others and felt empty in terms of not expressing myself. The question that would always come up was whether the music I made was my own authentic sound, or just memory or vocabulary, an idea of music and sound that I had learned in the past. How do I create my own vocabulary and develop it into my own sound? In this artistic research, I delve honestly and deep into developing, examining and researching what is behind music that I have created, or music that resonates with me. The reflection of this research concludes in a Resonating Voice.*

Key words: tradition, biography, self-reflection, creativity, real-time composing, physical practice, reflective writing.

# Table of Contents

<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1. THE TREE</b>	<b>4</b>
<i>1.1 Aesthetic values and musical self</i>	5
<b>2. PURPOSE AND QUESTIONS</b>	<b>10</b>
<i>2.1 Reflection on who I am in my music making, what I am doing, how and why</i>	10
<i>2.2 Reflection on a resonating voice</i>	12
<i>2.3 Reflection on origin and background</i>	13
<i>2.4 What fascinates me</i>	14
<i>2.5 The difference between a voice and an instrument</i>	14
<i>2.6 How the artist's individual personality shapes the music to resonate</i>	15
<b>3. MUSICAL CRAFTSMANSHIP</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Methods and experiments</b>	<b>16</b>
<i>3.1 Musical workout</i>	17
<i>3.2 Sounds under the microscope</i>	22
<i>3.3 "Other-wordly" musical painting</i>	25
<i>3.4 Real-time composing in movement</i>	29
<i>3.5 Arranging</i>	30
<i>3.6 Work(out) song</i>	34
<i>3.7 The story behind</i>	36
<b>4. THE AFTERTHOUGHTS</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>5. REFERENCES</b>	<b>44</b>
<i>BOOKS</i>	44
<i>VIDEOS</i>	45
<i>PHOTOS</i>	46
<i>RECORDINGS</i>	47

## 1. THE TREE



*Pic.1:* Photo: Lukovnjak U., Painting: Čuš T., *'If I would be a Tree'*, 2016

*Video 1.* Cijan N., Šalamun M., Knelt M., *'Portrait of Zvezdana Novaković'*, 2012,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tu6UYCgrds>, (accessed 20 May 2018)

## 1.1 Aesthetic values and musical self

It is impossible not to be personal or biographical when defining, describing or articulating who I am in the perspective of my art. Looking at the big picture of this artistic research, I can say that the origins of this thesis go all the way back to my childhood when I first started to learn and play music. Since then, I have gone through decades of musical education to this day, when I realise that all this education may be standing in the way of my artistic expression, creativity and even my own voice. In the last three years, I have realised that the focus on being technically capable of learning and performing certain music or genre has led me to abandon my own sound and expression within it. I had been focused only on sounding like someone else, but my aim today, which I set with this thesis, is to find and create my own vocabulary and sound that would resonate with me. In order to get closer to my voice and sound, I had to forget or limit all my previously gathered knowledge and start from point zero.

This research is based on a set of experiments and methods focusing on individual creativity, ideas, and the capacity of the voice and body. Following these same methods, different people would each get a completely different result. The experiments have led me to results that brought material for new songs, stories and vocal qualities that are closer to my voice.

I am a person who is constantly searching, a person with a great thirst for knowledge. As a child, I would never be satisfied with doing only one thing, I had to try everything—from studying the piano and singing three times a week in a semi-professional children's choir to sewing my own clothes, painting, and on top of that starting to study the flute and drums at a music school. While no teacher or parent would have supported this back then, today I realise it was a good thing for me, because we cannot only be one thing. As Laurie Anderson puts it:

I want to say for young artists: Be loose! I really was quite happy with calling myself a multimedia artist. It is a meaningless term! [...] But it will give you the freedom to do various things without somebody going 'You are a sculptor, why are you making music?' 'No no, I'm a B-artist.' 'Oh, OK, whatever that means.' But it's so easy to get pigeonholed in the art world and to do just this thing. [...] There are so many forces that are there to push you in certain directions, and they are traps. And curators do it. You know, curators are: 'This is our theme! So, stay in the theme!' [...] Let your own interest and own obsession rule that, and don't be caught in that trap of definition. Because it's a corporate tool. I realised that it's all about sales, you know, that it's not to help you make your work, it is to help other people sell your work. [...] **I'm an artist because I want to be free.** That's my whole goal, and I hate it when people tell me what to do. So, I would say that the branding thing is something to really avoid. Like Facebook stamping of who you are. And to resist that pressure, because that pressure is everywhere. [...]

Whatever makes you feel really free and really good, that's what to do.<sup>1</sup>

Laurie Anderson is a truly encouraging person and an idol to me. She does not let herself be put in a box. This is exactly how I feel. I am an artist/singer. But I am also many other things. I combine jazz, folk, improvised, classical music, I compose, make performance art, theatre, puppetry, play the harp and write poems. I also develop projects with multidisciplinary categories, educate people, collect folk songs, raise the funding for projects and make costumes. But at the end of the day, just to avoid confusing people I simply say: "*I am a singer and freelancer.*"

Throughout my studies and experience with music, I have been collecting and developing a compositional language. This was my musical journey of education. After a secondary school of classical music composition, I also finished three university study programmes: the first one was music pedagogy, the second was jazz singing and the third was a masters of Bulgarian folk singing, with the latter including seven years of travelling and studying in the field. Moreover, I studied Indian Carnatic music and Bharatanatyam dance. And on top of that, I learned from and played with Brazilian musicians for years, and got to know very well the different rhythms and song styles of traditional and modern Brazilian music. Every year, I take a singing workshop of Early and Baroque music, where I work with the biggest masters of that style. Not to forget, I have been playing the harp for the last six years, and this year I started playing the melodeon.

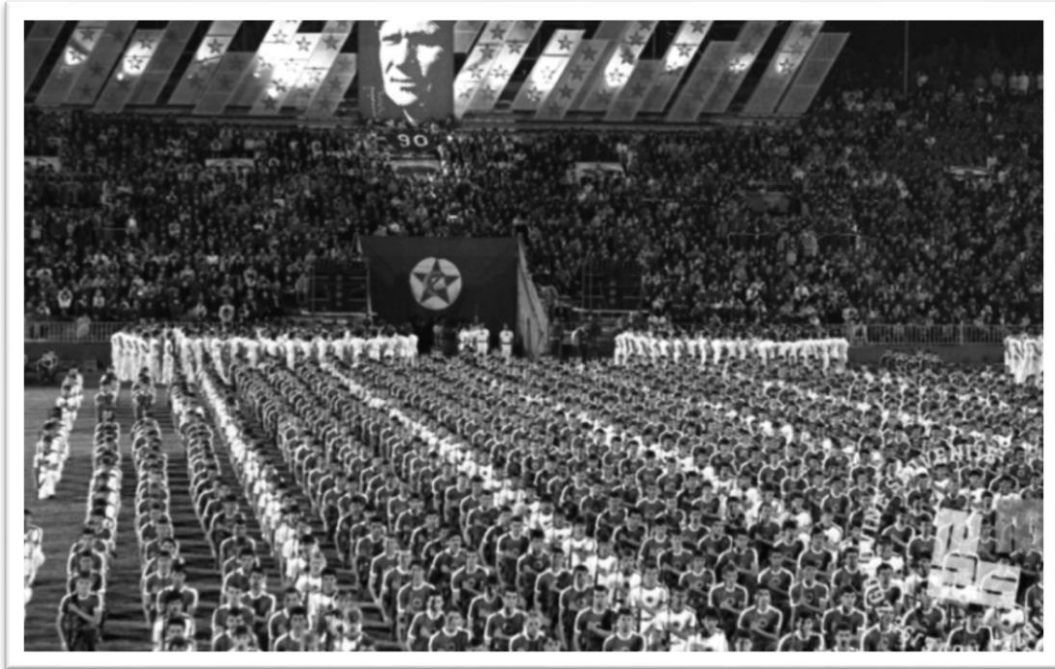
I love to always learn new things, and hope to stay a lifelong learner. With knowledge, I feel confident and safe. But now I have recognised there is a danger to being educated. The problem I have noticed is losing authenticity. Moreover, when I see and experience arts, particularly music, I am critical and can only very rarely take a distance from the analytical approach. But most of all, I am critical of myself when making music. I think the reasons for this lie partly in my past and partly in my personality.

I realised that growing up in a communist country has had a great impact on me. As a child, I would always hear about the Republic of Yugoslavia, but I never understood the essence of it. Not until I was much older and saw the huge difference when viewed from a distance, first when I moved to Bulgaria and years later to Sweden. In Bulgaria, where the Soviet-run regime was even stricter, that spirit of the old republic is still very much alive. I could see that in the architecture and monumental concrete buildings.

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<sup>1</sup> Luisiana Channel, 'Laurie Anderson interview: Advice to the Young', <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vzt2p4XkKco>, 2016, (accessed 20 May 2018).

If a single person stands in front of such huge buildings, they can hardly be recognised—only with large masses of people do they get their recognisable shape. The image in my mind is that of crowds of people celebrating some communist parade, such as May 25, which was celebrated as Youth Day.



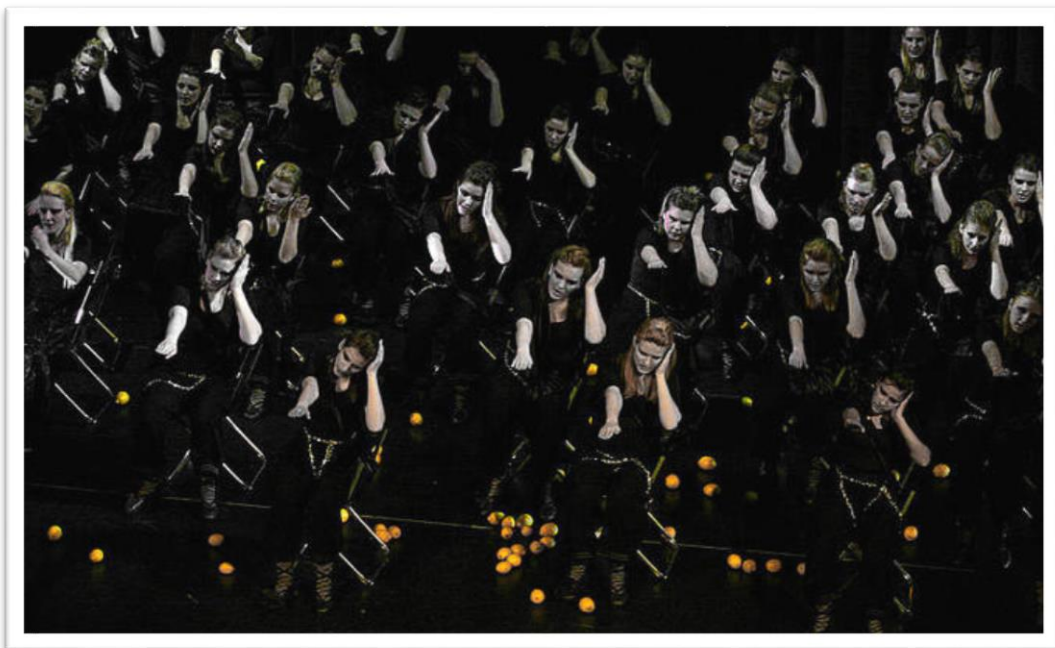
*Pic.2: Švabić M., 1957, 'Dan mladosti 25. May' (trans.: The Day of Youth 25 May), Ljubljana, The Museum of Modern History.*

In Slovenia, the system was much less strict, but the fundamental ideas were the same. The ideology of communism advocates equality of the entire population, state ownership (officially national property owned by the people) and financial equality. Of course, the state is controlled by a very small number of leaders, on which the entire nation depends. The main problem is that unifying and equalising an entire nation in this manner requires everyone to believe and follow the same ideas, with no room for dissent. In other words, there is only one state-mandated truth, and no one is allowed to ask questions or think with their own head. Most intellectuals who pointed out the flaws of the system were punished, and many were put away in concentration camps, like the barren rocky island of Goli otok in Croatia, the Yugoslavia's secret police would send the people who were declared dangerous to the state. This is the history of my country, and although it happened before my time, its impact remained strong for many years later.

These conditions also shaped the rigid education system that I have gone through. I simply had to follow the system and learn huge amounts of things I will hardly use in my life. But the most important aspect, which was hardly encouraged, is to see myself as an individual, to think with my own head and work on my individual creativity.

I see a very different picture in Sweden. Maybe because people are seen more as individuals, and are supported in working on their own needs and talents, not forced to follow the ideology of an old system. Here, I realised that people are responsible for their behaviour, and they always step back to think first, discuss, and only then react.

Another part of my childhood that has left an important mark on me that is still present today was being a member of the semi-professional children's choir *Carmina Slovenica*, led by Karmina Šilec. From the age of 10 and until I was 21, I was part of a very disciplined group with very high goals. The musical programme and level were incredibly high. There was nothing we could not perform, we just needed to put enough effort and time in it, and leave out our egos. We would perform medieval music by Hildegard of Bingen, then Gustav Mahler's 8<sup>th</sup> Symphony, as well as contemporary composers like Phillip Glass, Morton Feldman and Steve Reich. It was also where I first encountered traditional Bulgarian choral music and singing in the open throat vocal technique, which is completely different from classical choral singing.



*Pic.3: Carmina Slovenica production, 'CS Light', Ljubljana: 2008*

Video 3: Šilec K., 'Carmina Slovenica - CS Light (part 1)', 20 May 2008,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=92CoDbRPzs8>, (accessed 15 May 2018).

This unique education that I experienced was truly fundamental for my entire life path. I



experienced incredibly high quality of music already as a child, and most of all I had to work hard to perform it. Today, I am as strict to myself in making music as I had learnt back in the choir days.

But there, I was a tiny but important part of a huge musical body. We had to breathe together, and what is most important, not be individuals inside but one unit. For many years since then, even a decade now, I have been fighting to work on individuality and once again find the voice that will resonate with my needs and possibilities. This thesis reflects my desperate search for an authentic voice. I see it as a tree

that I want to grow. From the roots that I was given through the trunk with its sap that I have built and stand behind, and resolving into a new blossom of sound.

## 2. PURPOSE AND QUESTIONS

### 2.1 Reflection on who I am in my music making, what I am doing, how and why

Living as an independent artist means spending a lot of time on organising one's time, space and money in combination with other aspects of life. We must find strategies to make things work, strategies for circumstances where the daily routines contain more of the artistic practice and less administration.

But who am I in my art? What am I doing? How? And why?

In our daily lives, we develop different methods for different things. In my artistic practice, I use a toolbox of knowledge, from warm-up, imitation, improvisation, composition, poetry and storytelling to theatre. I did not plan to be an artist, vocalist, performer. This emerged over time through striving for autonomy and independence as an artist and for me it is the only right and natural thing to do. I have always searched for something else, something beyond institutions and the traditional educational system.

I am a person with many doubts and great curiosity combined with a strong desire to explore and examine possible and impossible ideas. I know I have the capacity to motivate myself and others, even when there are doubts.

This is Zvezdana Novaković:

***As a human being***

Female  
Slovenian citizen  
Constant questioner  
Hectic  
Dyslexic  
Without constant rituals  
Youngest of 4 children  
Lived in an apartment building the entire  
childhood  
Life-long student  
Born in 1985 in Ptuj  
Living in 3 different places in 2 different  
countries  
An improviser  
An optimist  
A friend  
A sister  
A daughter  
A partner  
An activist  
A believer  
A colleague

***Professionally***

An artist  
A singer  
An entrepreneur  
A performance artist  
A harpist  
A composer  
An artistic leader  
A follower  
A teacher  
A student  
Choir singer throughout childhood  
A control-freak  
A poet  
A driver  
A costume designer  
A music editor  
An administrator  
A producer  
A teacher  
A researcher  
A writer

The author of this thesis

## 2.2 Reflection on a resonating voice

An appropriate start for this reflection is the stunning quote by composer Arvo Pärt:

The most sensitive instrument is the human soul. The next is the human voice. One must purify the soul until it begins to sound. A composer is a musical instrument, and at the same time, a performer on that instrument. The instrument has to be in order to produce sound. One must start with that, not with the music. Through the music, the composer can check whether his instrument is tuned and to what key is tuned.<sup>2</sup>

This quote is essential to this entire thesis. This holds true for every single sentence, starting with “*The most sensitive instrument is the human soul. The next is the human voice.*”

As a singer I find this quote so true and honest, and I am relieved that master Pärt pointed it out. First, I would like to reflect on the physical aspect of the human voice, and later also on the spiritual aspect of the human soul.

Of course, I am a big questioner and I am never completely happy with the results, always looking for new ways. But as a singer, I got to a point where I need to have a strong opinion about what I would like to say, and how I will say it. All my life, I have been imitating, first classical choir singing, then Janis Joplin and Alanis Morissette, then Ella, Sarah, Anita, then Elis Regina, João Gilberto, and lately Bulgarian folk singers like Verka Siderova and Valya Balkanska and many others. But my biggest problem and question until now has been: Where am I in all of this? I am only an imitation of my past.

The short answer would be: “I am where my voice resonates: first with me, then with the music, and consequently with the audience.”

As a longer answer, this is discussed more elaborately in Chapter 3, from the methods I use to approach voice warm-up exercises, the search for the right sound, live composing, creating a story behind music to the research of the musical background and reflection on all of this.

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<sup>2</sup> Arvo Pärt's commencement speech at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, 31 May 2014, ‘*Arvo Pärt's Speech from his Musical Diaries*’, minutes 01:50-03:16, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qh-kjp2hLCw&t=200s>, 29 Jan 2018, (accessed 13 May 2018).

## 2.3 Reflection on origin and background

Everyone probably gets to a point in life where the question of origin becomes essential to the meaning of self-awareness and the work we do. How does my background define me today? What is my culture that can define me? Am I a part of any folklore? If yes, what would it be? Who were the teachers, schools or people that define who I have become?

First comes the family background. I am the youngest of four children born to loving parents and responsible siblings. I got a huge amount of love, but because of the wide age gap between me and my brothers and sister, I had to work hard to get their attention. The happy supportive childhood probably makes it easier for me to feel free in looking for my true interests and pursuing them today. And with the recognition of my siblings, I would say that today I have this ability to grab attention. This may also be the reason why I got into performing arts, where I am exposed to the audience, which is a situation where I feel truly at home.

I was born in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which broke up in 1991, when I was six years old, and my country, Slovenia, became independent. These are very important circumstances that affected my childhood and education, as well as my behaviour, or particularly self-confidence. Throughout my educational path I have been very strictly required to learn exactly as the school programme prescribed. However, the education system only works when it comes to interpretation of existing elements, complexity and technical issues, but not self-awareness and creativity. If you do not learn things perfectly, you do not pass. So, all my life, I have been learning to imitate and try to be someone else, which I was never happy with, because I always felt that I had to find some other way to be fulfilled. None of the school programmes would suit me individually, especially because I am dyslexic, which also nobody told me back at the time. This awareness started already as a young child, probably at the age of 10, but I could not define at the time what it meant. Today, I would say that I have learnt many skills that I try to forget now in order to find my own way. Also as someone from a former communist country, I am not fully committed to individualism, although I got a chance here in Sweden to open my eyes and taste a bit of more individualist society.

My mother is Slovenian and my father is Serbian. In Slovenian, there is a pejorative expression, “čefur”, which is used for people from other former Yugoslav republics or children of mixed marriages. I always felt different from my schoolmates and Slovenian friends, but as a child I did not understand why. Now I know that after the break-up of Yugoslavia in 1991, the relations inside the country changed drastically. Before, it was completely normal that Serbs, Croats, Macedonians, Bosnians and Montenegrins lived in the same country, without borders. But after the separation, Slovenia wanted to distance itself from anything that had to do with former Yugoslavia, so tendencies arose to shun citizens of non-Slovenian ethnic background. Which also meant my mixed family. Now I understand why my father lost a good job after the war, and even though he was better educated than his bosses, he could never get his position back. A similar situation happened to many people of ex-Yugoslav origin who stayed in

Slovenia, and in many cases the best job they could get was driving a taxi. To this day, nationalist tendencies remain a huge issue in Slovenia that I am dealing with on a daily basis.

## 2.4 What fascinates me

What truly fascinates me is a human voice that is pure, authentic and raw. Particularly when it comes from an older person as part of traditional singing. This kind of voice reveals personality, a past, a story and life experience. Generally, I find every authentic/traditional sound fascinating, maybe because my authenticity is so mixed that I subconsciously long for a single and deep tradition. This does not only apply to traditional singing. I also adore jazz singers and instrumentalists or musicians of any other genre who exhibit great authenticity.

Another element that fascinates me in music is rhythm. Sometimes it is more important to me than the melody. I build my music mostly on playing around or truly understanding rhythm.

What I also find truly fascinating in music is that it can be very simple but not empty. And another important element in music is the space and breathing.

## 2.5 The difference between a voice and an instrument

The sensation of singing in front of an audience is a sensation of nakedness. Because my instrument is built inside my body, and is not physically visible—in the sense: “These strings are too old, let’s replace them.” On one hand working with the voice is much more delicate, and it needs to be observed in a sort of spiritually transparent way. On the other hand, working with the voice is a completely physical approach of tuning the instrument. Also, with the voice you are exposed and cannot act or hide behind an instrument. For example, when you play a double bass or a piano or a harp, you are transferring music through a physical instrument, not directly to the audience. You are also physically behind something, and again, you are not projecting yourself directly to the audience. But with singing you *are* the instrument. This direct contact with the audience creates a big question about what the singer would like to project.

Of course, each instrument has a role, being the bass or rhythm, or being the harmony, or drawing a line with the melody. In all these aspects, the voice is limited, but on the other hand, has the ability that no other instrument has: telling the story with words/lyrics. But we should both learn from each other, vocalists from instrumentalists, and the other way around. What instrumentalists can take from vocalists is the breathing of the phrase, meaning that they should be able to sing the melody not only play it on their instrument.

In Indian classical music (Carnatic and Hindustani)<sup>3</sup>, the voice is at the top of musical hierarchy. When I was studying Indian Carnatic music, every Indian musician was able to sing

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<sup>3</sup> Carnatic music is system of music commonly associated with southern India.

a Raga<sup>4</sup> and every exercise before they approached an instrument, even if they only played a mridangam<sup>5</sup>.

And what would it be like if singers thought and practiced more like instrumentalists? That is definitely a very healthy approach for every singer. We would certainly have fewer issues with intonation. Moreover, writing and composing music is much easier when you think and act as an instrumentalist, especially a pianist. This idea applies particularly to musicians who are comfortable with improvising, but if vocalists worked more like instrumentalists, the structure of their music would be much clearer and we would also see music as a mathematical formula with degrees and modulations and chord changes and scales, and would not only rely on our ears.

## 2.6 How the artist's individual personality shapes the music to resonate

Of course, the voice resonates through the musician. Like a double bass does not resonate only through the massive body of the wood, but the musician who is playing it is also responsible for creating the frequency. In my point of view, it is always more fascinating to hear vocalists and musicians with a story behind their music making. And most of all, it is about how the story is presented, the intensity, character, space, questions, pain, playfulness, mystery. What is most fascinating here, is the possibility to enter the song and project your own imagination. This is the holy grail that I want to approach with my voice and music. This moment is what I am referring to when I say that music resonates.

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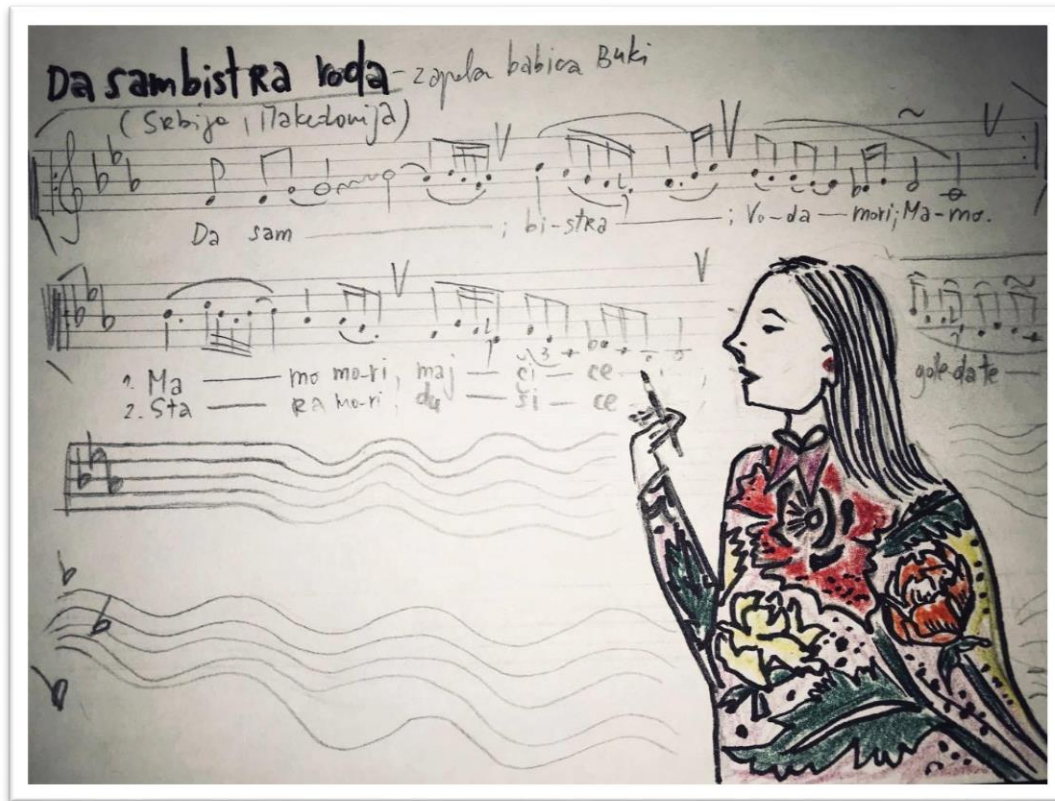
Hindustani is system of music commonly associated with northern India.

<sup>4</sup> A *Raga* in Carnatic music prescribes a set of rules for building a melody – very similar to the Western concept of mode.

<sup>5</sup> An Indian drum from classical South Indian – Carnatic music.

### 3. MUSICAL CRAFTSMANSHIP

#### Methods and experiments



Pic.4: "If I would be a clear water", drawing by Novaković Z., 2017

Video 4: Gobec G, 'Slovena Voices trailer', 2018

Slovena Voices project is independent music project that had premiere in December 2017, and is a result of methods that are introduced in a further text.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yGSbAtoYxLs&start\\_radio=1&list=RDMMYGSbAtoYxLs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yGSbAtoYxLs&start_radio=1&list=RDMMYGSbAtoYxLs)



### 3.1 Musical workout

This chapter highlights the importance of the connection between the body and the voice, links the two through various methods. Normally, the musical education system treats singing strictly analytically and the body is completely separated from the voice. Which means that singers rarely learn to prepare the body for using the voice. However, as Kristin Linklater said in her book *Freeing the natural voice*: “In order to unlock the analytical mind it is necessary to unlock the body!”<sup>6</sup> It is essential to work on the body as much as on the voice, and know where to find physical and emotional support. The crucial part of finding one’s authenticity may be in observing and noticing what is happening to the body while singing.

I have developed a short programme of daily musical workout, inspired by various psychotherapeutic disciplines, which can offer great support. It draws on Yoga, Tai Chi, Qigong and the Alexander Technique, as well as Carnatic singing. These helps free the emotional and psychological self by ridding the body of habitual tensions.

Within the programme, the singer chooses from a diverse set of exercises every day for a session of around 30 minutes. The programme is divided into three main parts:

- I. Breathing and body awareness**
- II. Resonating**
- III. Opening up the voice**

Below is an introduction to the programme and reflection on it, as well as a link to a video about it.

#### **I. Breathing and body awareness**

This is a set of exercises that draw mostly from Kundalini Yoga and were developed in accordance with personal needs in singing. They work great for breathing and awakening the core/diaphragm. Moreover, these exercises also help the singer recognise what is happening with their body, locate the tension and release it.

##### **1. Long, deep breathing**

*Long, deep breathing* is a term used in traditional Kundalini Yoga.

- Sit on the floor with legs crossed.
- The eyes are closed and turned upwards and in towards the eyebrow, the neck is long and extended, hands resting on the knees.
- Slowly inhale to the full and exhale. At the end of breathing in, pull the navel in and up towards the spine and release the last bit of breath. Release the belly and let it expand with the breath. This is combined with vocal exercises for developing the intercostal muscles on the ribs. This part is important for long singing phrases and better support. So, when taking the next breath, focus on

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<sup>6</sup> Linklater, Kristin. 2006: 2 p

expanding and lifting the ribs, front, side and back, and work on keeping the intercostal muscles expanded. When exhaling, try to keep them in the same position and not let them collapse. On the top of that, expand the ribs 3 more times holding one breath. Exhale releasing the shoulders, upper chest and belly, and repeat the exercise 2–4 more times.

## **2. *Breath of fire***

*Breath of fire* is a term used in traditional Kundalini Yoga.

- Sit on the heels.
- Hands are on the thighs, fingers spread. Lean slightly forward to feel the stomach free.
- Focus on a particular spot on the floor 20 cm in front of the knees.
- Extend the tongue and start panting.
- Try to keep the breath equal with respect to inhaling and exhaling.
- Try to keep the ribs and belly relaxed.
- Transfer this same feeling and exercise, only this time start to breathe through the nose. Try to keep the breath level (inhaling and exhaling) throughout the exercise—try to keep it very light and not think about pulling in the belly.
- Keep the belly, the diaphragm and the ribs relaxed all the time. Just think of the breath in and out through the nose. Feel it very lightly, like sniffing. The key to this exercise is to constantly keep relaxing the upper optimum area.
- After 3 minutes, take a long breath in and exhale relaxed.

## **3. *Forty per breath***

*Forty per breath* is a term that I developed.

- Hold the fingers in a bull position of Bharatanatyam mudra. The palms are up and forward. Straighten the spine, neck is pulled in slightly, eyes looking down.
- Inhale deeply, hold the breath and pump the stomach with the breath held in.
- Count every finger 10 times, making 40 pumps per breath.
- Perform this exercise on an empty stomach.
- Try to do 5 repetitions.

## **4. *Drawing circles***

*Drawing circles* is a term that I developed.

- Hold up on the knees and move the stomach in big circular motion, like drawing circles with the belly.
- After a few circles, change the direction.

## **5. Flex time**

*Flex time is a term that I developed.*

- Pull in the core and fold the legs between the ankles and knees, and start to flex the spine.
- Inhale forth and exhale back.
- Breathe through the nose.
- After 2 minutes, grab the knees and continue flexing. Now, work on the thoracic area of the spine.

## **6. Frog**

*Frog is a term used in traditional Kundalini Yoga.*

- Stand on fingertips and toes.
- Heels together and off the floor.
- Arms reach to the floor between the knees.
- Inhale, straightening up the knees and lowering the head.
- Exhale, bending the knees and raising the head.
- Inhale up, exhale down.
- This exercise pumps the blood through the body and wakes up the muscles.
- It also helps clear the head and fill up with oxygen.

## **II. Resonating**

The next section of the musical workout programme features a set of exercises drawing mostly from the warm-ups that actors use to loosen up the body, particularly methods from Janette Nelson. The focus here is on resonance of the voice, and to achieve it we use humming to get a sense of buzz right through the body, because we want the singing to be supported from the entire body. All the names of the following exercises are terms that I developed.

### **1. Humming massage**

*This is a term that I developed.*

- Start humming in the chest and massage it at the same time to loosen it up.
- Change the note but keep the breath low, and massage the ribs back, front and side. Do an extensive massage with wrists on the back, which is a fantastic place to feel the humming of the body.

### **2. Humming shake**

*This is a term that I developed.*

- Go down to the knees and start to shake and loosen up the voice.
- Progress up to the shoulders and shake them.

### 3. *Humming face*

*This is a term that I developed.*

- Progress up to the face, drop the head and start humming. Add chewing and do it at different pitches. While humming, bring the head up, raising the gaze off the floor and into the distance.

### 4. *Humming bumblebee*

*This is a term that I developed.*

- Hum all around the vocal range, from the lowest to the highest note, like a bumblebee

### 5. *Humming child*

*This is a term that I developed.*

- The last exercise in this part is imitating a child's voice, starting with a high head hum. Think about sending it into the ceiling, and from the highest note slide down slowly through the entire vocal range to lowest note you can sing on that day.

## III. **Opening up the voice**

After making a strong connection between breathing muscles and resonance of the voice, we continue by opening up the voice. Here, the exercises were developed using knowledge from yoga, Carnatic singing and Bulgarian singing.

### 1. *Lion*

*Lion* is a term used in traditional Yoga.

- This fantastic exercise once restored my voice after losing it.
- Sit on the feet with knees spread apart and hands in between. Turn the palms so that the fingertips are facing inside, towards the body.
- Take a deep breath and fill up the ribs.
- While exhaling, stretch and bend the spine, look up with eyes wide open, extend the tongue as much as possible and start to roar softly.

### 2. *Long notes*

Singing long notes is fundamental. Here, we can see what is truly happening with the voice on a particular day. It seems very simple, but it can also be very painful, because we can really see the problem in the eyes and work on the problematic parts, like intonation, longer breath, lighter voice or vibrato. This exercise requires the support of a drone. I use a Shruti box, a drone box from India. My personal drone is g#, meaning it suits best for my range and for further exercises. There are many examples of exercises for working on long notes, but only two will be highlighted here.

- Sit on the floor with legs crossed, and slowly start to sing long notes with the *ah* vowel.
- Continue singing over different scales. In India, the most common one would be Mayamalavagowla, which would be:



*Pic. 5: Indian scale Mayamalavagowla*

- Start to play around with the scale. For example, I really like the exercise that Indians call the “Non-ego exercise”. In this exercise you change the notes, but always come back to the drone. Figuratively, this means that no matter how high the position you reach in your life, you can never forget where you come from, what your roots are. The exercise looks something like this:



*Pic. 6: Indian vocal exercise*

- Do the same exercise, only this time change the vocal technique to the Bulgarian open-throat sound, where the fundamental resonance is a twang sound.

## 3.2 Sounds under the microscope

Working in the field of traditional music, it is important to understand what happens within a particular traditional music to be able to perform it. As it is necessary to respect the tradition, we need to look inside the complexity of the sound as precise as possible. I call this “sounds under the microscope”, because my approach is to take one little fragment, for example a five-second phrase with an ornament, and try to replicate it precisely.

In the microscopic view, we analyse:

- the intonation / notation, knowing exactly which notes are in the phrase
- the character / vocal technique
- the rhythm
- the sounds in between.

One of the most fascinating things about traditional music is that the intonation can be somewhere in between, meaning that it cannot be defined within the Western chromatic tuning system outside of the scope of this work. So sometimes what we call out of tune is actually the most authentic sound of a particular region. With the microscopic view, we develop and open our ears to new frequencies. It is important to internalise these frequencies. A great method is using a drone tone, as in one of the exercises above. It is important to understand the relation and tension of a particular interval, and what emotion it creates when singing it.

Another aspect to look carefully into is vocal technique, which I also try to imitate. We analyse whether it is more of a head voice, chest voice, more nasal, whether the brighter sides of the voice are amplified or the darker ones, where is the breath, what kind of vibrato is used.

Rhythm can be very helpful in a very complex phrase. Here, we are not talking only about songs that are in actual rhythm, such as 4/4 or 7/8, but also about the rhythm on a reciting tone and what makes it sound so natural.

The sounds in between are the most characteristic thing in traditional singing and are the hardest to imitate. We are talking, for example, about breaking the voice, because it switches from a head voice to a chest voice, or because the voice range changes. This includes things like exhaling and other sounds that may be completely new to us.

HOW to analyse sounds under the microscope?

Well, I do it in two ways. The first one is being fortunate to work with a teacher from a particular oral tradition. I learn the song by singing the same phrase over and over again. Then I ask the teacher to sing it very slowly or explain what is happening when they sing a particular ornament. Then I try to replicate it and teacher corrects me. It is very hard to find a teacher like that, but I have had some opportunities to learn it the really authentic way.

The second way is unfortunately more common, and it is the modern way of looking inside the mystery of ornaments. A useful method is slowing down a recording. Here is an example of a song that I had been trying to transcribe for a couple of years now:



*Pic.7: Sewing Bulgarian traditional ornaments, 2017*

*Video 5: Songs title - Zvezda Ogrya, sung by grandmother Dina, 2018*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yF3KNG\\_MU2s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yF3KNG_MU2s)

I must have listened to the song a hundred times, trying to unlock what the elderly lady is singing, but I just could not understand what was behind the ornaments. I could not hear the notes in between because the singing is too fast and there are a lot of in-between notes. So, this semester I looked inside with the help of a programme called Amazing Slow Downer, and this is what I got.

30  
A e Iz-gre-ya-lo zvez-da zor ni - - -  
2  
ca E ho da - ya, Čez na tra pe  
3  
za.

*Pic. 8: Transcription of a song Zvezda Ogrya, 2018*

Video 6: Song title: Zvezda OGREYA in a slower tempo, 2018

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ENMP-IQJF0>

After transcribing the notes, I made my own exercises from the difficult parts and used them as warmup exercises.

First exercise



Pic. 9: First exercise Zvezda OGREYA

Second exercise



Pic.10: Second exercise Zvezda OGREYA

This is an example of building one's own vocabulary, learning from tradition and transforming it into one's own voice. Over time, when I really know the phrases, I can start to vary on them and make them different.

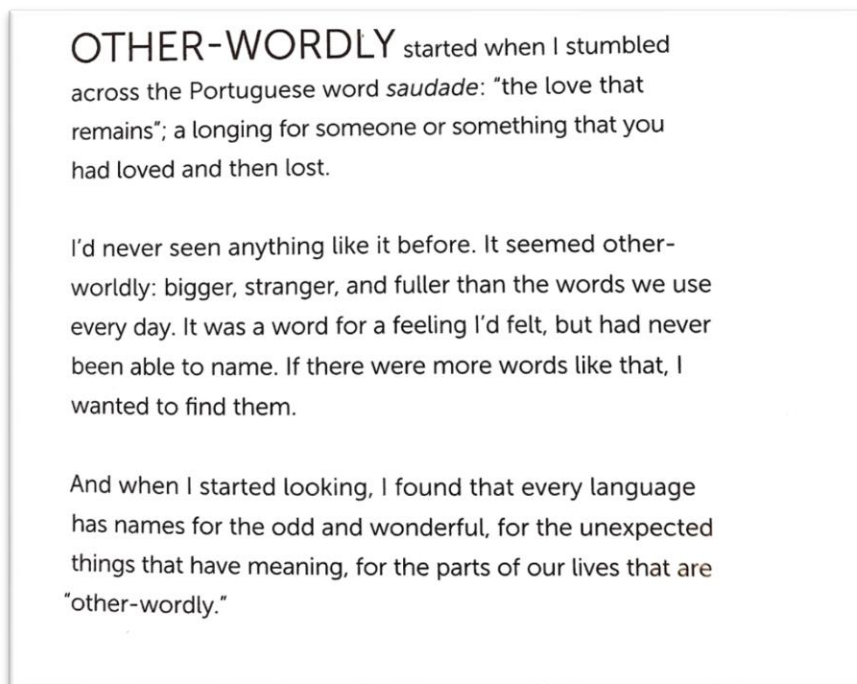


### 3.3 “Other-wordly” musical painting

This is a method for creating the atmosphere that I would like within my music. Because I am dyslexic, my brain has a hard time processing analytical parts, like reading, numbering, repeating the same complex phrase—like in classical music, where a lot of information/notes need to be detected and transformed into music. For me, it works the other way around, because my brain has developed a strategy for surviving in this complex world of music. I help myself by transforming music into some strong emotion or into the atmosphere.

And because music is the flow of energy with certain frequencies, I usually start the idea with one strong emotion and then add the story or images around. I call it musical painting because what I am really interested in are the colours and structures and lines.

I found great inspiration in the book *Other-Wordly* by Yee-Lum Mak.<sup>7</sup> Here is the author’s prologue to the book:



*Pic. 11: Mak, Y.-L. (2015). Other-Wordly. 1<sup>st</sup> page.*

The book got me wondering how I could transform these words for particular feelings that are hard to name into music.

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<sup>7</sup> Mak, Y.-L. (2015). *Other-Wordly: words both strange and lovely from around the world*. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books.

Here are a few fantastic Other-Wordly examples from the book that are just waiting to become music:

GÖKOTTA (noun, Swedish)

Lit. “dawn picnic to hear the first birdsong”; the act of rising in the early morning to watch the birds or to go outside to appreciate nature.

KOMOREBI (noun, Japanese)

The sunlight that filters through the leaves of the trees.

BRUMOUS (adjective, English)

Of grey skies and winter days; filled with heavy clouds or fog; relating to winter or cold, sunless water.

BRONTIDE (noun, English)

The low rumble, as of distant thunder.

MAMIHLAPINATAPAI (noun, Yaghan)

A look shared by two people who have reached an unspoken understanding or who desire the same thing but each wish that the other would offer it first.

CWTCH (noun, Welsh)

A hug or a cuddle; a safe place; the space or the cupboard under the stairs.

DÉRIVE (noun, French and English)

Lit. “drift”; a spontaneous journey where the traveller leaves ordinary life behind for a time to let the spirit of the landscape and architecture determine the path.

OFFING (noun, English)

The deep, distant stretch of the ocean that is still visible from the land; the foreseeable future.

PSITHURISM (noun, English)

The sound of the wind through the trees.

RADLJÓST (noun, Icelandic)

Enough light to find your way by.

But the one that really caught my attention was this one:



Pic.12: Novaković Z., 'Smultronställe', Selce pri Leskovcu, 2018

Smultronställe or Wild Strawberries was my first attempt to transform other-wordly feelings into music. I saw that this was exactly how I want my music to sound. I want to create this atmosphere of feelings that are long forgotten or that a person gets, not knowing what they are and why they are there. And above all, I want to create a space for each person's imagination to roam freely inside this music.

Here is a reflexion of how I approached this method.

1. We create a little story around the underlying idea, just trying to imagine what Wild strawberries meant to us. At first, we only think about it, without it down. We can meditate on the idea while walking, swimming, visiting the sauna or at other opportunities, where we have a chance for introspection.

2. We do some creative writing around the idea.

- In this particular example, I started with two words "Wild Strawberries", and then wrote for three minutes.
- Then we look at the text and underline another two or three words that we find important in the text.
- We write these new words on another sheet of paper, and do another three minutes of creative writing.
- We repeat this one more time.

3. What we get is a very honest idea that can be a surprise to the author, as it can reveal their subconscious feelings. This material usually unveils interesting atmospheres and may also be useful in terms of lyrics. We can select the lines that feel right together and write a poem. However, in this particular example, it did not choose for this option, because sometimes songs just come up as a whole. The next chapter introduces another method that can be very helpful for inspiration, ideas and writing.

### 3.4 Real-time composing in movement

Movement is a very good way to spur creativity. It must have something to do with blood circulation. Personally, I get most of my ideas for music while moving. The best ways for me are waking in the forest, running, swimming or being in the sauna. I have no higher logic behind it. For example, I simply go for a walk and when an idea appears in my head I try to record it on the phone.

This was the case with Wild Strawberries. I was walking next to Poseidon and the idea for a song appeared:

Track 1

<https://soundcloud.com/zvezdana-novakovic/1-wild-strowberies>

Little later, I repeated it again and tried to make the melody clearer:

Track 2

<https://soundcloud.com/zvezdana-novakovic/2-wild-strowberies>

Next, I improvised on a B-part:

Track 3

<https://soundcloud.com/zvezdana-novakovic/3-ws-b-part>

After that, I tried it on the piano and developed the harmonies:

Track 4

<https://soundcloud.com/zvezdana-novakovic/4-wild-strawberries>

This was followed by a longer stage, in which I first wrote all my ideas down in a music score on a computer and showed it to professor Anders Jormin. Afterwards, came the arranging part, which is described in more detail in the next chapter.

### 3.5 Arranging

How the music will sound and what it will communicate can be developed with the arrangement. In my arrangements, I want to expose the colours that transform into chords, and once again the atmosphere that creates a certain feeling and paints the story behind.

I have developed a simple and effective way of doing this, writing down the emotions I want to build, based on the lyrics.

#### LYRICS:

**(the beginning is mysterious, open, calm)**

*I have found*

*A little corner*

*Where they grow / **questioning***

*Wild strawberries / **resolution***

*Just for me / **different colours***

*Just for me, just for me. / **transition into rhythm, running***

*In my little magical place / **storytelling, warm, more minor, longing***

*I don't let inside the taste*

*Of sorry, stress, / **building up***

*No sadness waste, / **building up***

*No tears, no shout, no mourn,*

*Every day I go back to my little place, / **building up***

*Where I wonder, / **resolution into a minor and enthusiastic***

*Where I'm free*

*With my strawberries,*

**(calm down)**

*Wild and sweet, / **suspended***

*They grow just for me, /*

*Just for me,*

*Just for me. / **open, like levitation***

When we have the idea for an atmosphere, it is time to put it into instrumentation and form. Professor Stefan Bergman advised me to write down some kind of structure where I specify the form, instruments and actions/happening. So, this is the method I came up with:

Wild STRAWBERRIES

FORM gen chord

FORM	instruments	Happening
INTRO	acc., vl., vlc., vlc.	acc.: long notes / chords vl.: melody vlc.: melody
A1	voice, acc., strings	Rubato: voice melody - acc.: spremlja - str: play, still fast - last 4 bars vl + pr + gen
A2	voice, acc., strings piano	In tempo: - voice melody - strings stay - pr + vlc. later line - acc.: stays
B1	voice: pr, vlc, guitar	voice melody - vlc + pr: groove - guitar: bass - rhythm guitar
A3 instrumental	EVERYBODY TUTTI	melody: acc. + vl. ex bass: groove pr + vlc guitar: rhythm guitar gitar: rhythm guitar
B2 instrumental	TUTTI	solr: pr bass + groove: string acc.: chords still same

Pic. 13: Num.1: Hand written structure for a song Wild Strawberries

A1	strings + acc.	melody: strings acc.: long harmony
B-cela A, B, C	tutti	(A): vlc, pr + piano guitar (B): -   - + acc. (C): -   - + 4/4 + violins melody (C2) <del>strings</del> melody: acc + vl. ex groove: pr + vlc + guitar STOP ON GUS
coro (A)	tutti	

Pic. 14: Num.2: Hand written structure for a song Wild Strawberries

<b>FORM</b>	<b>INSTRUMENTS</b>	<b>ACTIONS / HAPPENING</b>
INTRO	Accordion violin, cello	Accordion: long notes – inhale/exhale Violin: flageolet; cello: melody
A1	Voice, strings, accordion	Rubato: voice melody; accordion: accompaniment Strings: flageolet sul tasto On the Gsus chord: cello and piano start groove
A2	Voice, strings, piano, accordion	IN TEMPO: voice melody Strings stay; piano + cello: bass line; accordion: stays
B1	Voice, piano, cello, guitar	Voice melody Violoncello + piano groovy bass Guitar: rhythm guitar
A3: instrumental	Tutti	Melody: accordion + violins 2x Bass: groovy piano + violoncello; rhythm guitar
B2: instrumental	Tutti	Solo piano; bass + groove strings Accordion chords; guitar: same
A4	Strings + accordion	Melody strings; accordion: long harmony
B – all	Tutti	A: violoncello, piano, guitar in a groove B: -II- + accordion C: -II- + violins melody C2: melody accordion + violins Groove: piano + violoncello + guitar STOP on Gsus
OUTRO A	Tutti	

*Pic. 15: Structure of a song Wild Strawberries, computer writing.*



This is how it sounded at our first rehearsal: Track\_05

[https://soundcloud.com/zvezdana-novakovic/05\\_wild-strawberries](https://soundcloud.com/zvezdana-novakovic/05_wild-strawberries)

And here is the final result on the stage:



*Pic.16: The Worlds in Motion concert, Gothenburg, 2018*

*Video 7: Song Wild Strawberries from the Worlds in Motion concert, YouTube 2018*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g0YVsUDD3eQ>

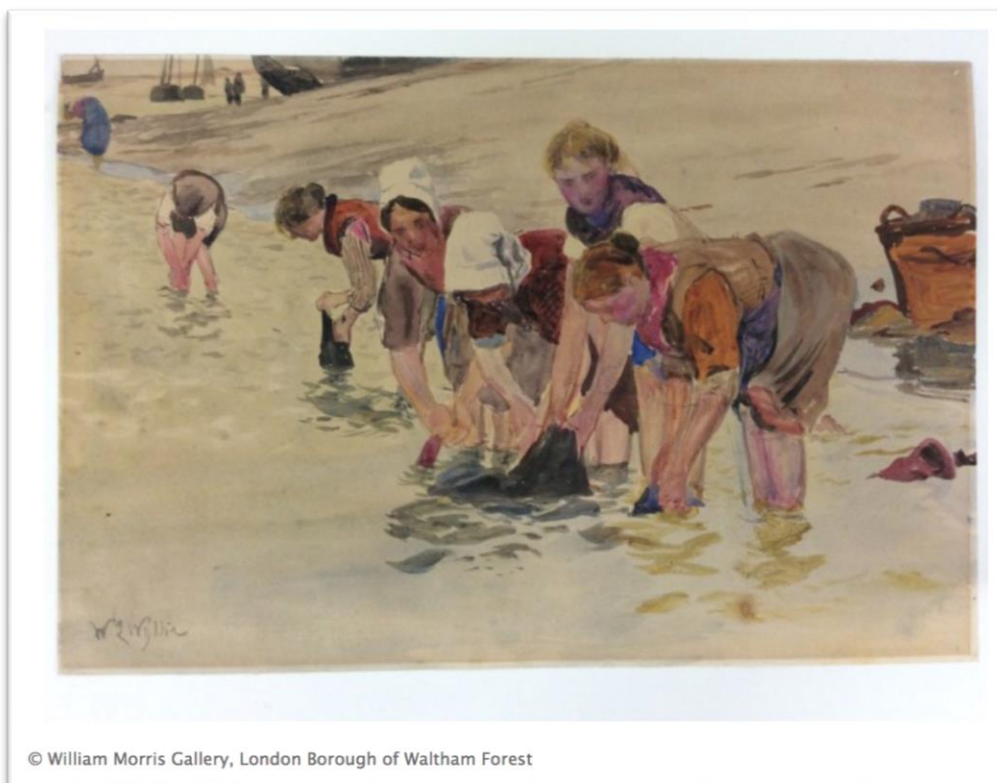
### 3.6 Work(out) song

The idea for the next method comes from the tradition of work songs. In the past, work songs were used to keep farmers' motivation up when performing repetitive or exhausting physical work.

As Ted Gioia points out in his book *Work Songs*:<sup>8</sup> "All societies have relied on music to transform the experience of work. Song accompanied the farmer's labours, calmed the herder's flock, and set in motion the spinner's wheel."

One of the tasks in every house was to bring drinking water. My Slovenian and Serbian grandparents, mostly grandmothers, still carried water from the nearest stream. They would carry around 20 litres uphill to the house, with the two buckets bringing the total weight to around 30 kg. And sometimes people would carry the water as far as 10 km, and more than once a day.

For example, a Serbian/Macedonian folk song "Elenko, mome malenko" talks about a woman going to bring water from a stream. Probably this was a song that they used to sing while carrying the heavy water. And by singing it, they would relieve the pain of the burden and the long steep paths.



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<sup>8</sup> Gioia, T. (2006). *Work Songs*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Pic.17: Lionel W. (1851 - 1931), Washing, London: William Morris Gallery

Track 6: Song *Mori Mitra pere na rekata*, Bistrishki grandmothers, 2018

[https://soundcloud.com/zvezdana-novakovic/track\\_5\\_mitra-pere-na-rekata\\_master-thesis/s-MTWdy](https://soundcloud.com/zvezdana-novakovic/track_5_mitra-pere-na-rekata_master-thesis/s-MTWdy)

Today, there is no longer any need for such physical labour on farms, such as carrying water from a stream, or cutting entire meadows with scythes, or ploughing fields by hand. To replicate the conditions, we would thus need to find a different extreme physical activity that can be as difficult and heavy as those of the past, but is applied today.

Probably extreme physical activities are different for each person, and many have none. For me, it is workout, and I tried with weightlifting.

This method incorporates an old-time work song and today's workout, so together we will call it work(out) song. With this method, it is important to achieve the vocal support that creates a certain vocal technique with an open throat. Also, the emotional state and expression is challenged here.

How to use this method:

- *Take a similar amount of weight - around 30 kg.*
- *Sing the song.*
- *While singing, do a weightlifting workout with squats.*



Video 8: Novaković Z. *Weight lifting song*. You tube, 2018

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=56aUZJ697mE&index=2&t=0s&list=UURBItsFYsKsULRjJBYjw>

### 3.7 The story behind

One of the essential elements for a song to resonate with the voice is knowing the story behind, and equally important is the way the singer came across that particular song. We will divide this method in two different parts. The first one focuses on the story of a folk song and the second refers to new compositions.

It is good to know the meaning, history, sociological, geographical aspects and the message of a song. Is it a ritual, harvest, wedding, war or a table song? Where does it come from? When the region is clear, we can start to shape the song according to the geographical position. For example, if the song comes from the Rhodope Mountains in Bulgaria, it is easy to imagine rounded shapes of the mountains, surrounded by forest. This kind of knowledge and visualisation helps with the intensity with which the song will be sung.

For me, the only folk songs that stay with me and that I will sing further are the ones that I have learnt by oral tradition. The story of how I found a certain song and the way it was presented is almost more important than the song itself. Moreover, it is also very important who taught me the song.

In my debut album *Slovena Voices*, I collected such stories with the songs featured. Here are a few examples:

**B I S T R A   V O D A**



1. Da sam —————, bis-TRA —————, vo — da, ————— mi-ri ma — me.  
2. Ja bi —————, tek-la —————, u — sred — Mit-ro-vi — ce.  
pe-ku mrga ————— Da — ja — na.

Ha — me mi-ri, Haj — ti — ce. ————— Ja — znam — gde da te — ču-ju

Serbian/ Macedonian Folksong  
»If I would be clear water, I know where I would flow. I would flow in the middle of Mitrovica, I would flow over the body of my darling.«  
This is a song of my Serbian grandmother, Milena, or Buki, as we called her.  
My grandmother sang traditional songs with the National Orchestra of KUD Polet Belgrade and worked with the legendary Vlastimir Pavlović Carevac. Her father, my great-grandfather, was an amazing folk musician who played the clarinet, okarina, and frula at weddings.

Pic. 18: *Slovena Voices*. [CD and sleeve], 2017

#### Serbian/ Macedonian Folksong

» If I would be clear water, I know where I would flow. I would flow in the middle of Mitrovica, I would flow over the body of my darling. «

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ОЙ НА ІВАНА КУПАЛА  
ЈУТРАНЈА

1. ОЙ НА ІВА-НА ТАЙ-НА КУПА-ЛА Там ПІВНИНОВКА Квіти з'вилі гала квіти з'вилі гала,  
2. ОЙ СВІ-ТИ, сонце СВІТИ, ТА НЕ ГІТИ Щоб ми віночок та й не згопів, щоб ми віночок,

в пч-чеч-ки плеліла, по-рич-ки нес-ла, в во-ду пус-ка-ла.  
хивим зостається щоб ми ланкому, в ружки Айс-тас-ся.

Ukrainian folk song / A. Bohorič  
In this composition, I connect two songs which represent the winter and summer Solstice. The first song is called Jutranja Pesem, and is written by Adam Bohorič. It is one of the oldest written songs in the Slovenian language.  
Second song is Ukrainian song *Oy na Ivana Kupala* sung on the summer Solstice or Kupalo, how we call it in Slavic tradition. On that day when the sun has the strongest power, young girls use to make wreath from the meadow flowers and throw then into the river. They also went from house to house and wish good year for farmers. On that day the plants had the strongest healing power and you could understand the language of the animals. Also on that day we are making giant fire or as we call it *kres*.

Pic. 19: Slovena Voices. [CD and sleeve], 2017

Ukrainian folk song / A. Bohorič

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**МИТРЕЛЕ/MITRELE**

Bulgarian Folksong from the Shope region  
 »People are saying that you are coming back, Mitre, my Love. And in the village far away they are saying that you are coming back. Even old women are saying that you are coming back, Mitre, my Love!«  
 A young girl, Blagovesa, taught me this song when I was visiting Shiroka Laka on Rodopian Mountain. I tried to go into the famous musical high school there, but because I didn't know anyone, I couldn't enter. I waited outside, and then Blagovesa came out. I stopped her and asked if she could teach me a song. I was so lucky to meet this amazing folk singer who taught me this song that day right outside of the school.

Pic. 20: Slovena Voices. [CD and sleeve], 2017

### Bulgarian Folksong from the Shope region

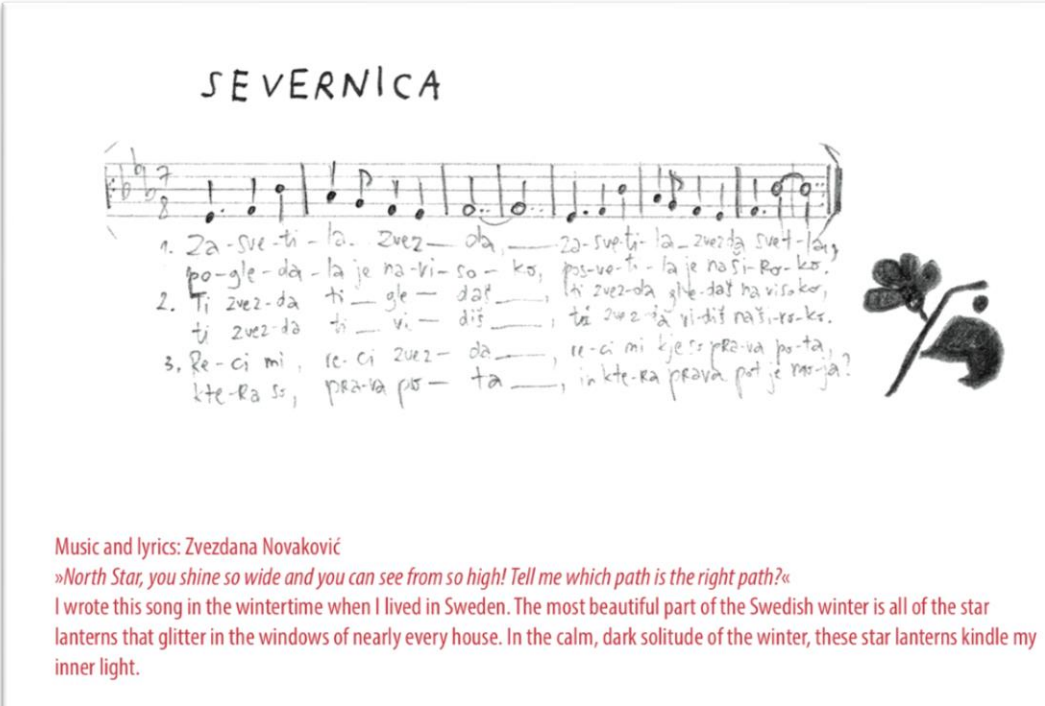
» People are saying that you are coming back, Mitre, my Love. And in the village far away they are saying that you are coming back. Even old women are saying that you are coming back, Mitre, my Love! «

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## 2. NEW COMPOSITIONS

The reasons for writing a song are usually related to strong feelings or a true story that we want to transform into music. Sometimes it is important to capture the little and subtle things, like the moment when you step outside at Christmas time in Sweden and see all the lanterns in the windows. Or capturing the feeling of a carnival and a crazy hypnotic dance.

Here are two examples, also from my debut CD *Slovena Voices*:



SEVERNICA

1. Za-sve-ti-la. Zvez-da, — za-sve-ti-la-zvez-da svet-la,  
po-gle-da-la je na-vi-so-ko, pos-ve-ti-la je na si-ro-ko.  
2. Ti zvez-da ti-gle-dat —, ti zvez-da gle-dat na vi-so-ko,  
ti zvez-da ti-vi-diš —, ti zvez-da vi-diš na si-ro-ko.  
3. Re-ci mi, re-ci zvez-da —, re-ci mi kje so pra-va po-ta,  
kte-ra so, pra-va po-ta —, in kte-ra pra-va pot je mo-ja?

Music and lyrics: Zvezdana Novaković  
»North Star, you shine so wide and you can see from so high! Tell me which path is the right path?«  
I wrote this song in the wintertime when I lived in Sweden. The most beautiful part of the Swedish winter is all of the star lanterns that glitter in the windows of nearly every house. In the calm, dark solitude of the winter, these star lanterns kindle my inner light.

Pic. 21: *Slovena Voices*. [CD and sleeve], 2017


Music and lyrics: Zvezdana N.

»North Star, you shine so wide and you can see from so high! Tell me which path is the right path?«

I wrote this song in the wintertime when I lived in Sweden. The most beautiful part of the Swedish winter is all of the star lanterns that glitter in the windows of nearly every house. In the calm, dark solitude of the winter, these star lanterns kindle my inner light.



**LIPE BILE MAŠKERE,**



Music and lyrics: Zvezdana Novaković

This composition is inspired by the Rezija region, the land that was Slovenian 500 years ago but is Italian today. This mysterious valley is still home to the oldest Slavic language due to its isolated position deep inside the mountains. Carnival celebrations which they call *pust* take place each year forty days before Easter. During *Pust*, young girls put on masks called *Lipa bila maščara* or beautiful white masks. They celebrate the whole night with wild, hypnotic dancing, singing, and playing instruments like the *Citira* (violin) and *Bunkola* (cello).

Pic. 22: Slovena Voices. [CD and sleeve], 2017

Music and lyrics: Zvezdana Novaković

This composition is inspired by the Rezija region, the land that was Slovenian 500 years ago but is Italian today. This mysterious valley is still home to the oldest Slavic language due to its isolated position deep inside the mountains. Carnival celebrations which they call *pust* take place each year forty days before Easter. During *Pust*, young girls put on masks called *Lipa bila mascara* or beautiful white masks. They celebrate the whole night with wild, hypnotic dancing, singing, and playing instruments like the *Citira* (violin) and *Bunkola* (cello).

## 4. THE AFTERTHOUGHTS

The main conclusion I reached while working on my thesis is that this artistic research merely opened the big topic that I will need to develop in the years to come, and this search may never even have a definitive conclusion. After two years of going deep into this topic, my research started to show the shapes, and I have realised that this will be a lifetime project of searching and development.

When I applied for the Master of Interpretation programme, I wrote in the motivation letter that I would like to find my musical personality and work on my sound. This is exactly where I ended up, and I am truly happy to open this chapter in my life. As I said, it will be a lifelong search that has only really started. But what is truly important is that I have become more confident in expressing my own ways in music.

The Academy of Music and Drama was a very neutral and non-judging place, where I could express myself without inhibitions and free of negative thoughts or conservative thinking. My journey through the Interpretation programme was very interesting. When I started, I thought I knew exactly what I would be working on.

The first semester was unproblematic. I was very focused on one idea, and worked on it hard. I performed my first semester project with a string quartet and my first arrangements. The concert was successful, and even I was happy and proud of it.

Here is an example of a song *Bistra Voda* from the concert *Worlds in Motion*, December 2016:

[https://soundcloud.com/zvezdana-novakovic/track\\_7\\_bistra-voda-strings](https://soundcloud.com/zvezdana-novakovic/track_7_bistra-voda-strings)

The second semester was a little harder because I started to feel the freedom that the school allows its students. So, my ground started to shake somewhat, and I very quickly reached a decision to prepare a program for a vocal group, because this is where I was confident and which has been my home field my whole life. Again, I was very happy with the process of the second semester project. It was a vocal quartet with all my new compositions, and I was truly satisfied with the result.

Another example of a song *Severnica*:

[https://soundcloud.com/zvezdana-novakovic/track\\_8\\_severnica](https://soundcloud.com/zvezdana-novakovic/track_8_severnica)

The third semester was the hardest. I got truly confused and started to doubt everything I had known. Big questions opened in my head, and it made me think that I needed to start everything from the beginning. I was especially confused about the sound of my own voice. At that time, I tried to distance myself from the traditional way of singing, which I found very conservative and in a way ethnocentric. My biggest question at that time was, why I was doing this and what

I wanted to tell with the music I did. I am not a Bulgarian, and I am neither completely Serbian nor completely Slovenian, so I cannot be traditionalist in that sense. Then I realised that I do not actually want to be a conservative traditionalist. This means I need to build my own tradition. I had huge support here from professor Anders Jormin, who truly helped me put myself together again. The music that was created in the third semester was very different from the other two semesters, because I truly distanced myself from the influence of the traditional sound. I was not too happy with the result, but I think it was a huge step forward in the sense of creating new original vocabulary and sound.

Song Wild Strawberries was born in 3<sup>rd</sup> semester, the one that I give a closer look in the Methods. Once more, here is the video to it:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g0YVsUDD3eQ>

In my last semester I got back to the roots. I started to compose in the style of a new personal tradition. The new compositions are based on fragments or sounds from different traditions, combined with new ways of arranging that I have developed through the methods presented in this thesis. The result will be heard at my final exam concert on May 27, 2018.

Here is a trailer for the concert:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9oOVpIq4H2U>

I would like to conclude this thesis with a Manifesto on Music:

- *The essence of Music, to me, are the story or the concept behind it, and its character.*
- *I am not interested in being part of a single definable and classifiable group, idea or frame. I want to be a lifelong learner, someone who is curious but openly critical towards different groups.*
- *Through music, “my” world can express hidden emotions, give a message, meditate, smile, cry, heal, annoy, make landscapes, unite the past, present and future, unite in a common idea, communicate in a metaphysical way.*
- *I intend to constantly search and learn, and set myself high goals that may be impossible or really hard to achieve, but I constantly learn and look for ways to get there. And on this path, I intend to make little stops and achieve micro victories, which keeps my musical wheel running.*
- *Music is not only a formulated work of art, but a higher force with transcendental power.*

## 5. REFERENCES

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- Video 5:  
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## PHOTOS

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- Pic.2: Švabić M., 1957, *'Dan mladosti 25. May'* (trans.: The Day of Youth 25 May), Ljubljana, The Museum of Modern History. Available at: <https://fototekamnz.com/2016/05/25/dan-mladosti-25-maj/> (accessed 20.5.2018).
- Pic.3: Carmina Slovenica production, *'CS Light'*, Ljubljana: 2008
- Pic.4: Novaković Z., *'If I would be a clear water'*, 2017
- Pic. 5: Indian scale Mayamalavagowla
- Pic. 6: Indian vocal exercise
- Pic.7: Sewing Bulgarian traditional ornaments, 2017
- Pic. 8: Transcription of a song *Zvezda OGREYA*, 2018
- Pic. 9: Fist exercise *Zvezda OGREYA*
- Pic.10: Second exercise *Zvezda OGREYA*
- Pic. 11: Mak, Y.-L. (2015). *Other-Wordly*. 1<sup>st</sup> page.
- Pic.12: Novaković Z., *'Smultronställe'*, Selce pri Leskovcu: 2018
- Pic. 13: Num.1: Hand written structure for a song *Wild Strawberries*
- Pic. 14: Num.2: Hand written structure for a song *Wild Strawberries*
- Pic. 15: Structure of a song *Wild Strawberries*, computer writing.
- Pic.16: Concert *Worlds in Motion*, 2018
- Pic.17: Lionel W. (1851 - 1931), *'Washing'*, London: William Morris Gallery
- Pic. 18: *Slovena Voices*, [CD and sleeve], 2017
- Pic. 19: *Slovena Voices*, [CD and sleeve], 2017
- Pic. 20: *Slovena Voices*, [CD and sleeve], 2017
- Pic. 21: *Slovena Voices*, [CD and sleeve], 2017
- Pic. 22: *Slovena Voices*, [CD and sleeve], 2017

## RECORDINGS

- Track 1: Wild strawberries work in progress. Available at:  
<https://soundcloud.com/zvezdana-novakovic>
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