

Veronique van der Meijden - Classical voice

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# Art song in Eastern Europe, Balkans, Anatolia and Caucasus

What is the art song repertoire in Eastern Europe?

## **Motivation**

In the first place I am driven by my passion and curiosity to discover what musical treasures are hidden in the above mentioned part of the world. My preliminary research has yielded already quite a number of scores, recordings and various mentions of music all over the internet. This has enthused me greatly to delve deeper into this realm.

Secondly, there is a more altruistic motivation to this research. For local singers, it is always good to start singing in their own language. From asking my foreign friends about scores I learned that they rarely know their own music. Referring to my research would be a wonderful way for them to get acquainted with this repertoire.

Thirdly, I would love for singers in the West to step out of their comfort zone and perform this repertoire for a wider audience. This repertoire deserves a wider audience. The reason it is so unknown lies not in its quality, but in the fact it has been neglected and devalued for over a century. Teaching these songs to Western singers will be one of my ways to help spread them to a wider audience.

Since this research focuses mainly on music from approximately 1850 until now, I wish to include art songs by contemporary composers. The final product will serve as a platform to make their music available and (linguistically) accessible to performers all over the world.

## **Goal**

I have multiple goals for this research:

1. To discover what exactly this repertoire is;
2. To bring this repertoire to a wider audience via various means, e.g. performing, presenting and teaching, live and online;

3. To create a 'passive' income source from a website dedicated to this research. Here scores, IPA transcriptions, translations, recordings and spoken poems (by native speakers) will be available for a reasonable price.
4. To meet with contemporary composers and promote their music.

### **Research process**

In the first place it is necessary to consider the dimensions of my research: since the subject is so broad, I will mainly focus horizontally, rather than vertically. I do not want this to be a musicological research, although for sure musicologists can put in their two pennies worth.

The first stage of the process involves discovering locations where this music may be hidden. I will send out e-mails to various conservatories and institutions in these countries in order to set up a network.

The second stage involves researching the pronunciation and the transcription to IPA of a number of songs per country. For this I will contact native speakers as well as native singers to discover what the most convenient pronunciation is for 'Western' singers.

The third stage consists of a little background research in the tradition of the songs, as well as the influence of any traditional elements in these songs. By 'tradition' I mean to discover where the composer has studied (Germany, Italy or France) to give a short mention of compositional style. By 'traditional elements' I mean in how far the composer has wanted to add a folkloric colour. By this I also mean the way in which he has arranged folk songs and added traditional elements such as ornamentation.

The fourth stage involves performance (and) practice. Here I would like to experiment through teaching workshops to singers how they experience learning music in such foreign languages but provided with the aid of translations and IPA. Furthermore, I would like to present my research to a number of organisations (like e.g. Vereniging voor Zangpedagogen and Vrienden van het lied)

Finally, the fifth stage will be about researching copy right and finding a way to put upload these scores, translations, transcriptions and recordings online in a webshop to create a relatively passive source of income.

### **Chosen format of documentation**

I would very much document this research in a report, since in this case, it seems to be the most appropriate format.

This research is very practically oriented: as I described in the aforementioned paragraph the several stages describe concrete steps that are not necessarily linear. These steps include: collect, catalogue, transcribe, translate, produce, perform and teach.

Since the result of this research is intended to be a saleable product, and consists of various interrelated circular layers (or islands) I need to be more free in my documentation. This

result must be a reference of sorts available to everyone: musicians, musicologists, amateurs and audiences alike. The information is to be easily digestible and engaging, the recordings of professional quality and the scores easily accessible. I would also be very happy if musicologists would

Finally, I do not intend to pursue a Ph.D. in this subject, so there is no need for a thesis form or anything otherwise academical. I wish to be as free as possible in my documentation.