

## Voice Twist

**How can classical singing technique support sustainable and diverse vocal practices in a co-created work for voice and interactive electronics**



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Zsuzsa Zseni-Clausen is a classical singer and Artistic Research Fellow at the Grieg Academy in Bergen. Her project *The Expanding Voice* explores how classical technique can support diverse vocal practices through extended techniques, alternative notation, and close collaboration with composers. She performs internationally

and works with ensembles and festivals that foreground contemporary creation and experimental vocal practices. As a member of the ensemble Tabula Rasa, she regularly co develops new works that combine voice, movement, electronics, and theatrical elements. Her artistic research focuses on singer agency in rehearsal laboratories, negotiated notation, and sustainable vocal health when working with new techniques. Collaborators include Andrea Szigetvári, Jostein Stalheim, Mirsaeed Hosseiny Panah, Craig Farr, Tord Kalvenes, and Knut Vaage. Zsuzsa aims to create new works while developing practical artistic methods and documentation that make co creative processes visible and transferable to other singers and composers.

### One page note on the performance

This research performance presents the musical work Voice Twist by Andrea Szigetvári for soprano and interactive electronics, duration about 20 minutes. The work is built on tongue twisters in English, Finnish, Portuguese, and Hungarian. The singer's role moves between speech, song, and gesture-controlled sound. A dedicated handheld game controller with two retractable cords tracks movement in three dimensions and sends real time data to the composer's sound engine. The result is a live instrument where vocal sound, language, and body movement form a single musical system.

The performance is an outcome of my PhD project The Expanding Voice, which investigates how classical singing technique can serve as a foundation for sustainable and diverse vocal practices. I define the classical base as breath management, resonance alignment, balanced registration, legato connection, and efficient articulation. Against this base, Voice Twist requires extended approaches that remain compatible with vocal health, including overtone resonance shaping, controlled fry onsets, occasional inhaled phonation used as color, and percussive articulations such as clicks and tongue slaps. My artistic choice is to work only with techniques that I find integrable with classical practice and safe for long term use.

The spoken introduction, up to 10 minutes, will situate the work inside my research questions. First, how classical coordination supports new sounds without loss of vocal economy. Second,

### Research Performances

how alternative forms of notation and real time mapping shift the singer's role from interpreter to co-creator. Third, how rehearsal laboratories and composer performer dialogue generate methods that are shareable beyond one project. I will briefly show one or two notational or mapping snapshots to illustrate how we iterated gestures and electronics until the result was both singable and musically clear.

The performance itself demonstrates interdependence and cooperation. The score is a framework that is completed in performance by negotiated gesture and sound. The electronic part reacts to motion parameters on 6 axes, so timing, color, and density emerge through embodied action rather than fixed tracks. This exposes the research focus on singer agency, negotiated notation, and sustainable limits. After the performance, I invite discussion on three points. One, where the classical base helps or resists. Two, how mapping design affects musical meaning and physical load. Three, what ethical and health frameworks are needed when extended practices meet demanding stage technologies.

In sum, Voice Twist is presented as an artistic research outcome that makes visible the dialogue between tradition and innovation. It shows how a classically trained voice can expand its expressive field through carefully chosen techniques, documented collaboration, and reflective iteration with the composer.

#### **Indication regarding student supervisor dialogue**

I apply as a doctoral student for a solo research performance session. I am not proposing the student supervisor dialogue format for this presentation.

#### **Technical requirements**

Provided by EPARM: grand piano, music stands, AV system with screen and PA.  
Requested additions within EPARM standards:

1. 2 microphones for voice and room capture
2. Stereo playback from computer, DI or audio interface to house PA
3. 1 small mixing desk if available
4. 1 table for laptop and audio interface near performance area -