

WBL PROJECT PROPOSAL FOR MODULE 3

An investigation of Female Registration in Greek and Middle Eastern Singing

As a singer, I have often performed traditional vocal styles among which are sub-styles of Greek, Turkish, Lebanese, Persian singing. These styles, though varied geographically, employ the low and middle female range (up to Eb5 for premier singers) and are characterized by rich and rapid ornamentations (Castellengo et al., 2020; Hamdan et al., 2006). As an Athens-based voice teacher I often work with singers of traditional Greek and Middle Eastern styles who seek for technical guidance. Most of them are self-taught professional singers or students of academic programs focused on repertoire that do not provide lessons on the voice technique of the styles (Ordoulidis, 2015; Hamdan et al., 2006). My teaching approach on these styles relied so far mostly on my experience as a singer and the documentation of the western classical and contemporary commercial female voice in the scientific and pedagogic literature, as there are no literature entries on Greek and Middle Eastern female registration strategies.

The present project aims to contribute to bridging the gap between western, evidence-based voice pedagogy and the Middle Eastern singing and teaching practice by investigating the resonance strategies employed by female singers of traditional Greek, Iranian, Azeri and Arabic styles. The research objective is to arrive at evidence-based tools, targeted to the particularities of the styles investigated and applicable in the voice studio. Such tools could be helpful to the teachers of these singing styles, usually trained in a master-student model (Aga Khan Music Programme, 2020; Bahadoran, 2016), but also to pedagogues trained in the western classical and CCM styles, who wish to understand the female Middle Eastern voice and develop a cross-over teaching approach regarding registration.

Given the scale of the project, the lack of access in scientific equipment and in a statistically significant number of participants, a qualitative research design combining data of diverse sources was considered most appropriate. In this context:

- Documentary evidence (Bell, 2005) including audio and video recordings of premier singers, available in discography and public video platforms, will be gathered. The audio samples will be qualitatively analyzed; the relative amplitude of the radiated spectral peaks, as well as the frequency locations of the source harmonics with the approximate resonance frequencies of the vocal tract will be compared using VoceVista software to note the possibility of consistent, intentional

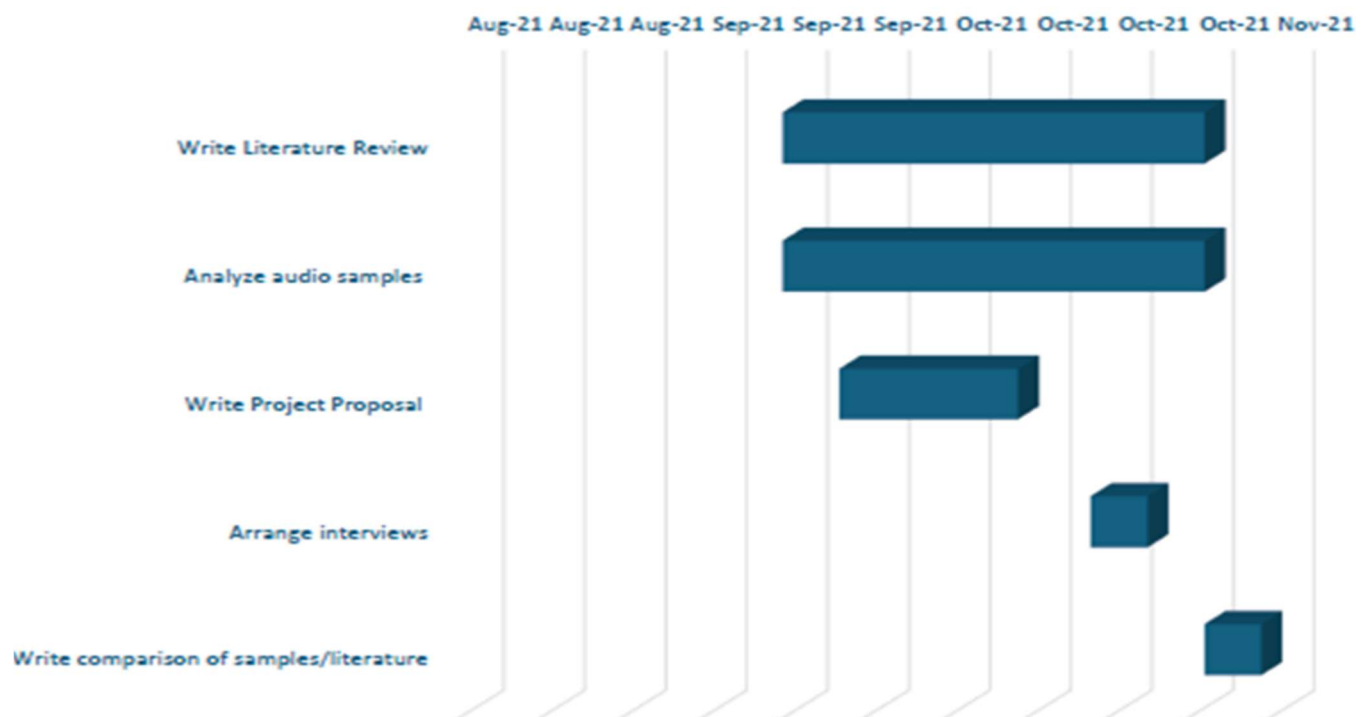
tunings. Video observations will be used for data collection regarding the shape of the lips and jaw of the singers along their singing range.

- The data extracted from the observations will be compared with scientific and pedagogic literature (Bozeman, 2013; Ballantyne, 2021) to note similarities and differences between the middle eastern and the documented western acoustic strategies.

- Semi-structured interviews (Bell, 2005) with female singers, experts in the styles investigated, will be used for data collection regarding the acoustic, kinesthetic, and pedagogic experience of the participants. The interviews will be recorded and transcribed, and the information gathered will be compared with the data collected from the audio-visual observations and the literature review.

The research will take place from 10/9/2021 to 14/1/2022 in Athens, Greece. The interviews will be conducted online via zoom or email. The expert participants will be identified by my familiarity with their work and standing in their field and they will be recruited accordingly from fellow colleagues and social media. The maximum expected number is 4. The GANTT chart attached presents the expected research timeline.

GANTT CHART: An investigation of Female registration in Greek and Middle Eastern Singing





To ensure anonymity for the interviewees, they will be given code names. To avoid data leakage, data will be stored to my password-secured laptop computer to which I only have access. Among the experts, no Athens-based voice teachers will be recruited to avoid potential conflict of interest.

My role as an insider researcher will inevitably influence the research approach. The crosscheck of the observations and the pedagogic literature with the opinions of the expert singers is expected to decrease the risk of bias, misinterpretations, or an unbalanced presentation of the findings (Bashir et al., 2008). On the other hand, my previous experience, and the common knowledge I share with

the participants, will be an advantage for the extraction of data and conclusions useful and applicable to practice (Saidin & Yaacob, 2017).

Regarding the personal learning outcome, with this research project I wish to deepen my understanding on acoustics and registration, to widen the field of application of theory to practice and to improve my services to the singers of the investigated styles. Moreover, my familiarization with the research process will enrich my academic skills and will be the first step for my further development as a work-based researcher.

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(755 words)

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