



Mediterranean Voices

A Video-Concert-Architecture about 12 Mediterranean Identities

The Mediterranean region: a transcultural space, whose themes immediately touch us. Fascinating in its diversity, but also confusing in its dynamism, charged with history but also with conflicts between the different cultures and religions, this space has shaped Europe's development from the ancient world until now.

How do Mediterranean artists define their individual aesthetic positions in relation to their native countries?

Mediterranean Voices is a project about the fragile identities in the Mediterranean. Twelve composers from twelve Mediterranean countries, from Morocco to Syria and from Spain to Egypt, have written pieces for the Neue Vocalsolisten. The video artist Daniel Kötter has visited the twelve home countries and represented the different situations of the artists and the regions in more than 100 relevant short films.

The performance of the twelve vocal pieces and the videos, separated on several screens, is conceived as a multi-part evening between concert and installation. The architect Sofia Dona has designed the architectural setting: an agora which allows a concentration on the music and the films, but also facilitates an exchange among the audience members about their experiences.

With 12 compositions for 3 to 7 voices by
 Dániel Péter Biró (Victoria)
 Zeynep Gedizlioglu (Istanbul/Berlin)
 Zaid Jabri (Damascus/Krakow)
 Nimrod Katzir (Tel Aviv)
 Brahim Kerkour (Rabat/London)
 Zad Moultaqa (Beirut/Paris)
 Samir Odeh-Tamimi (JalJulia/Berlin)
 Amr Okba (Cairo)
 Marianthi Papalexandri-Alexandri (Thessaloniki/Berlin)
 Silvia Rosani (Trieste/London)
 Evis Sammoutis (Nicosia)
 Josep Sanz (Barcelona)

Daniel Kötter (Berlin), video

Sofia Dona (Athens), architecture/stage design

Neue Vocalsolisten Stuttgart

Sarah Maria Sun (soprano), Susanne Leitz-Lorey (soprano), Truike van der Poel, (mezzo soprano), Daniel Gloger (countertenor), Martin Nagy (tenor), Guillermo Anzorena baritone), Andreas Fischer (bass)

World premiere on 9 February 2014, Theaterhaus Stuttgart as part of the ECLAT festival

A project by Musik der Jahrhunderte Stuttgart, supported by the German Arts Foundation, the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation, the Goethe Institute and the Akademie Schloss Solitude

Intercultural Dialogue

Mediterranean Voices focuses on the cultural diversity of the Mediterranean, where a clash of differential artistic positions and ways of thinking is evident. The project focuses on the artistic individuality of the twelve participating composers.

All of them have left their homes in order to study in Paris, London, New York, Krakow, Austria or Germany. Many of them live between worlds, establish themselves abroad for professional reasons, and it is often the situation of (artistic) exile that necessitates and triggers cultural self-questioning in the first place.

During 2013, three symposia brought the composers, singers of the Neue Vocalsolisten and the direction team together with experts from philosophy, ethnology, musicology, from the theatre, literature and visual art for an intense dialogue between European and Mediterranean positions. The new works of the twelve participating composers were created against the background of these discourses about aesthetics and cultural policy, as well as workshops about vocal techniques and interdisciplinary possibilities.



The Music

Singing and with it also poetry is often at the centre of artistic production in Mediterranean cultures. This phenomenon is an important basis for the Mediterranean Voices project. But it is not only a matter of what the voice can narrate and depict. The voice with all its techniques and sonic possibilities is also an expressive carrier of the most varying emotions, of immediacy, and of cultural identity.

The ensemble of singers thus becomes a projection surface for the expressive will of the twelve composers. The **Neue Vocalsolisten** possess the techniques, the adventurous curiosity and the empathy to understand and realize the divergent artistic positions. By slipping into different roles and converting highly contrasting ideas, states, expressions and characters into sonic and bodily forms, the Vocalsolisten will become mediators of cultural diversity



Road Movie

During 2013, the director, film maker and video artist Daniel Kötter has visited the twelve home countries of the composers. His film focuses on the “hybrid identities” of the Mediterranean, it discovers similarities and it describes borders: geographical, political, economic, religious, social, ethnological and musical.

Together with Daniel, each one of the singers of the Neue Vocalsolisten and one of the composers travelled for several days to their native country.

The film documents the creative exchange, the confrontations, misunderstandings and insights, which were received during this intense year.

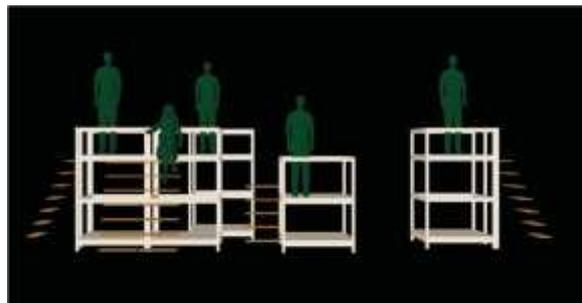
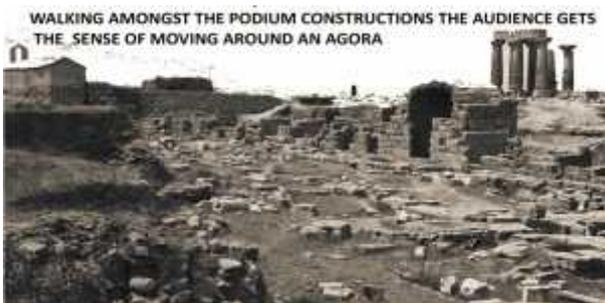
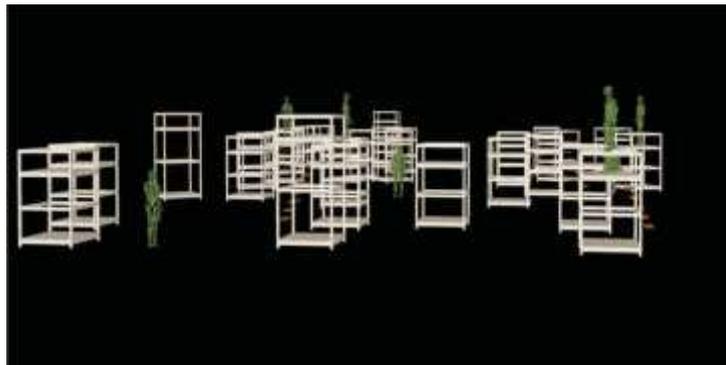
A large, multi-part film document comprising more than 100 short video clips was created, reflecting on the environments of the artists as well as the complex present situation of the Mediterranean region.



The Architecture

An important part will be assigned to the performance space, which will be a hybrid between exhibition and concert location. It is intended to enable the simultaneity of different events, i.e. the individual experience of the video documentations, as much as the concentrated joint experience of listening to the musical works on specially crafted stages in the space. The aim is to portray the multi-layered and contradictory nature of the Mediterranean region on different levels.

The Greek architect and stage designer Sofia Dona, who has long been working at the intersection of architecture and art, will develop an individual concept for each of the different performance locations on the basis of a modular system.





'Shortly after beginning my professional career, I decided to return to Cyprus and to try to make a contribution to the cultural life of the island while remaining an active composer both within Europe and beyond. This balancing act between the local and the global, between the specifically cultural and the universal, and between the personal and the communal is often evident in my compositions.'

Evis Sammoutis, Nicosia

'The composers of the Mediterranean area have always assigned a principal role to the voice. In this sense, the Neue Vocalsolisten are certainly the best choice to perform the project. But I find it equally interesting that they come from outside the Mediterranean world. The identities of these diverse but still self-influenced cultures are much easier for them to understand, because one can only see the whole picture from the outside.'

Josep Sanz, Barcelona

'I am very glad to see that Europe is taking real steps towards our cultures and trying to extend its hand to build a cultural dialogue, which we both need today. Now is the time to know and understand each other instead of depending on prejudice and political media.'

Amr Okba, Cairo

'Mediterranean Voices is a project that could finally bring me to confront the conflict between self-expression and society. In this project I found the ideal stimulus to confront social-identity and inherent cultural aspects. The idea of working with the human voice on these subjects serves the perfect tool for expression. The voice can thus clearly fuse the background, the inherent and subconscious, to the bizarre present, the rational conflict in which me and many others like me find ourselves in every day.'

Nimrod Katzir, Tel Aviv

'..to approach our own searches and "obsessions", beyond fashions or temptations to exoticism, which are so frequent today when dealing with Mediterranean artists in general and Arab artists in particular. To my eyes, the Arab composer's position is a difficult and delicate one. Belonging to and having roots within an oriental culture is obviously very enriching, but since there is a lack of existence of any contemporary music, everything has to be rethought. As Arab composers, we have no legacy in this field and are therefore born orphans, since Arab music did not have the same history as occidental music and never got rid of its millenary codes. That is why this project is so valuable.'

Zad Moulataka, Beirut

