

MASTER CLASSES

CREATING THE DRAMATIC CHARACTER

6 July - 19 July 2026, Jelsa, Hvar, Croatia

The aim of the Master Classes Creating the Dramatic Character is to help emerging opera singers feel natural and at ease on stage in specific dramatic situations. Participants will expand their vocal abilities and master the fundamental craft techniques of opera, with an emphasis on technical and physical development tailored to individual needs. The course includes ensemble work on stage, work with props and costumes, as well as the development of articulation, tone colour and facial expression. For young singers, it is essential to build confidence and a clear understanding of the character and its development throughout each musical number.

This year's courses will be shaped by the idea of connecting compositions from different countries, a theme that will run through all the themed evenings. Under the guidance of their teachers, participants will perform before an international audience at four concerts within the Kultúrne leto festival: Songs, Musica Sacra, Famous Opera Melodies, and the closing performance Opera Fragments, which will include a staged scene with dance from a national opera. The course is open to singers who wish to interpret opera, art song and sacred music. The Master Classes will take place at the music school and theatre in Jelsa, a charming seaside town on the island of Hvar in Croatia, in collaboration with KUD Jelsa and TZ Jelsa.



Pedagogical leadership

doc. Mgr. Klaudia Račić Derner, ArtD. - voice - opera character on stage
Academy of Arts Banská Bystrica, Slovakia

Mgr. art. Jana Juríčková, ArtD. - voice - vocal preparation
Music and Arts Academy of Ján Albrecht Banská Štiavnica, Slovakia

doc. Terezija Kusanović - voice - vocal preparation
Academy of Arts in Split / Prima Donna of the Croatian National Theatre Split, Croatia

MgA. Nicola Proksch - voice - vocal preparation
Internal doctoral student at the Department of Solo Singing, Faculty of Arts, University of Ostrava, Austria

MgA. Jan Martiník - voice - vocal preparation
External expert lecturer in solo singing, Faculty of Arts, University of Ostrava, Czech Republic

Perica Mileta - choreography - dance collaboration
Artistic director of KUD Jelsa, Croatia

Jelena Pavić mag. mus. - piano, musical preparation
Academy of Arts in Split, Croatia

Mgr. art. Peter Dekrét - piano, musical preparation
Academy of Arts Banská Bystrica, Slovakia

Mgr. art. Zulfizar Zázrivá, PhD., ArtD. - piano, musical preparation
Academy of Arts Banská Bystrica, Slovakia





Klaudia Račić Derner studied at the Conservatory in Košice under Eliška Pappová. She graduated from the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava, where she also earned her doctorate in Music under the supervision of doc. Magdaléna Blahušiaková. While still a student, she was engaged as a soloist at the Slovak National Theatre in Bratislava, where she performed for 25 years. She has performed both at home and abroad and is a laureate of international competitions, having received the 1st prize at the Mikuláš Schneider-Trnavský Competition, the Grand Prize of the Freunde der Wiener Staatsoper, the International Thália Award, and the Alfréd Radok Award for outstanding performance in the lead female role of Lady Macbeth in Dmitri Shostakovich's opera. She has received coaching from masters including Carlo Bergonzi, Gabriela Beňačková, Margaret Honig and Zlatica Livorová. She has created and produced several opera and operetta productions, with which she has successfully completed multiple tours in Japan, regularly featuring young emerging artists. She currently holds the position of Associate Professor at the Academy of Arts in Banská Bystrica, and leads masterclasses both in Slovakia and abroad.

Jana Juríčková - Slovak coloratura soprano, was a long-standing soloist of the Opera of the Slovak National Theatre. She studied singing at the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava under doc. Magdaléna Blahušiaková, under whose supervision she also completed her doctoral studies. While still an undergraduate student, she made her debut at the Slovak National Theatre in Bratislava as Blonde in Mozart's *The Abduction from the Seraglio* in 1999. Since then, she has appeared in numerous roles including Norina in *Don Pasquale*, Adina in *L'elisir d'amore*, Lucia di Lammermoor, Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro*, the Queen of the Night in *Die Zauberflöte*, Gilda in *Rigoletto*, Oscar in *Un ballo in maschera*, and Zerbinetta in *Ariadne auf Naxos*. At the National Theatre in Brno she appeared as Terinka in Dvořák's *The Jacobin*, Gilda, Musetta in *La Bohème*, and Queen of the Night, a role she also performed in the Czech Republic, Japan and Germany. At the Opera of the National Theatre in Prague she appeared as Olympia in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* and as Armida in *Rinaldo*. Since 2016 she has been teaching singing at the Conservatory in Bratislava. She currently holds the position of Assistant Professor at the Music and Arts Academy of Ján Albrecht in Banská Štiavnica.



Terezija Kusanović is a Croatian mezzo-soprano, opera and concert singer, Associate Professor of solo singing at the Academy of Arts in Split and principal soloist of the Croatian National Theatre in Split. She completed her studies in solo singing and vocal pedagogy, later earning a Master of Arts degree at the Music Academy in Zagreb. She has furthered her skills at masterclasses with renowned pedagogues, including Biserka Cvejić, Dunja Vejzović and Eva Blahová. At the Croatian National Theatre in Split she has performed the principal mezzo-soprano roles including Carmen, Dalila, Azucena and Ulrica. She has appeared as a guest on international stages, including the Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa and the festival in Diano Marina. Her concert repertoire includes solo songs, oratorios and symphonic works, among them Mozart's Requiem and Beethoven's 9th Symphony. In 2020 she founded the Mediterraneo project, dedicated to arrangements of Mediterranean music. She has received the La voce Verdiana award in Italy, second prize at the Prof. Dichler Competition in Vienna, and the Ante Marušić Award for outstanding operatic performance.

Jan Martiník is a bass singer of international standing, laureate of several competitions, winner of the Dvořák Competition and recipient of the song prize at the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World (2009). From 2008 to 2011 he was a member of the Komische Oper Berlin ensemble, and from 2012 to 2023 a permanent member of the Staatsoper Unter den Linden, where he portrayed roles including Sarastro, Colline, Daland and Sparafucile. He has appeared as a guest at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Volksoper Wien and in Geneva, and has collaborated with conductors including Daniel Barenboim, Sir Simon Rattle, Antonio Pappano and Zubin Mehta. On the concert platform he performs with orchestras such as the Czech Philharmonic, the London Symphony Orchestra and the Wiener Symphoniker. He received a Grammy nomination for his recording of Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* with the London Symphony Orchestra. Since 2017 he has regularly led workshops and masterclasses, most recently for the laureates of the international KBS KEPCO Music Competition in Korea. He is actively engaged in pedagogical work and serves as an external expert lecturer in solo singing at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ostrava.





Nicola Proksch is an Austrian soprano, multiple award-winner and laureate of the Antonín Dvořák International Competition (2010). Since her operatic debut in 2008 as Gilda in Verdi's *Rigoletto* on a tour through Japan, she has appeared on major international stages. Her signature role, the Queen of the Night in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, has taken her to the Staatsoper Unter den Linden, Volksoper Wien, Staatstheater Schwerin, Theater Bremen and Theater Erfurt. Among her further significant roles are Najade in Richard Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*, performed at the Volksoper Wien, Staatsoper Hamburg, Oper Zürich and Oper Leipzig, Olympia, Antonia and Giulietta in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Amina in *La sonnambula*, Ann Trulove in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*, Oscar in *Un ballo in maschera*, and in 2026 *Donna Anna* in *Don Giovanni*. She has collaborated with orchestras including the Czech Philharmonic, the Janáček

Philharmonic, the Bamberger Symphoniker and the Interpannonische Philharmonie, and with conductors Václav Luks, Jakub Hrůša and Manfred Honeck. As part of her internal doctoral studies at the University of Ostrava, she leads interpretation seminars, individual lessons and opera projects.

Jelena Pavić is a Croatian pianist, a graduate of the Academy of Arts in Split, where she studied under prof. Dorđe Stanetti and Karl Heinz Kammerling. After completing her studies she furthered her skills at the Steinway Society Piano Academy in Verona under prof. Federico Gianella. In 2011 she was selected at audition as the soloist for the opening of the jubilee 50th Music Biennale Zagreb, where under the baton of maestro Mladen Tarbuk she performed the Piano Concerto by Milko Kelemen in the Vatroslav Lisinski Concert Hall. She is a laureate of numerous national and international competitions, including the absolute prize at the international competition *Mladi virtuosi* and first prize for the interpretation of a work by J. S. Bach. She has received coaching from distinguished pianists including Dmitry Bashkirov, Jerome Rose and Konstantin Bogino. Since 2012 she has been actively engaged in pedagogical work and currently holds a position at the Academy of Arts in Split, where as part of her doctoral studies she also conducts research into the neurological foundations of piano technique.



Peter Dekrét is a young pianist who graduated from the Academy of Arts in Banská Bystrica and is currently pursuing doctoral studies at the same institution. He also serves on the faculty of the Department of Piano Collaboration at the Academy of Arts and works as a répétiteur at the Opera Studio, where he has collaborated on several productions including W. A. Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*, J. Strauss's *Die Fledermaus* (2024), C. W. Gluck's *Orpheus and Eurydice* (2022), and *Opera Fragments* (2022-2024). He has already accumulated several collaborations at the international level, including the Masterclasses in *Creating the Dramatic Character in Croatia-Hvar 2022-2024*, *Slovakia-Banská Bystrica 2022*, *Hvar 2023* and *Devín 2023*. He is a well-known and sought-after partner for chamber and solo concerts in classical music circles. As a répétiteur he also collaborates with the State Opera in Banská Bystrica.

Zulfizar Zázrivá studied piano in the class of the renowned professor Jelena Zablocka at the Music School in Dushanbe. She won 3rd prize at the Sergei Prokofiev State Piano Competition. She continued her studies at the Faculty of Music and Pedagogy of the Ural Pedagogical University in Ekaterinburg in the piano class and in choral conducting and singing. She completed her vocal studies at the Bratislava Conservatory under the guidance of doc. Magdaléna Blahušiaková and at the Academy of Performing Arts in Banská Bystrica. She is a doctoral student under the supervision of prof. Mária Tomanová. She works as an assistant at the Academy of Performing Arts. She studied operas at the Opera Studio: *Juditha triumphans*, *Dido and Aeneas*, *La serva padrona*, *The Improved Drunkard*, *The Magic Flute*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Rusalka...* and many fragments of operas and operettas.



Perica Mileta is a choreographer, teacher and artistic director of KUD Jelsa, a cultural and artistic society which she co-founded in 2011 and has shaped artistically ever since. Under her leadership, KUD Jelsa has become a regular participant in all major cultural events on the island of Hvar as well as significant folklore festivals at home and abroad, with successful appearances in Germany, Austria and at further international festivals. Each year in May, KUD Jelsa organises the International Folklore Festival in Jelsa and presents the scenic performance *Jelšonske užonce - da se ne zaborave*, capturing the life and customs of Jelsa from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. A special place in the ensemble's repertoire is held by the suite *Jelšanski tanci* by Antun Dobronic for string orchestra, which authentically preserves the dance tradition of the island.

In October 2026, KUD Jelsa will represent Croatian folk tradition at a prestigious festival in Bratislava.

Perica Mileta is also one of the organisers of the masterclasses in Jelsa, where the collaboration between local cultural life and an international teaching team creates a unique environment for the development of young opera artists.





Workshop Opera Operetta Fukushima, Japan 2018



Workshop UNI of Ostrava , Czech Republic 2022



Creating the dramatic character, Jelsa 2024



Maritza + Zauberflöte Japan 2019



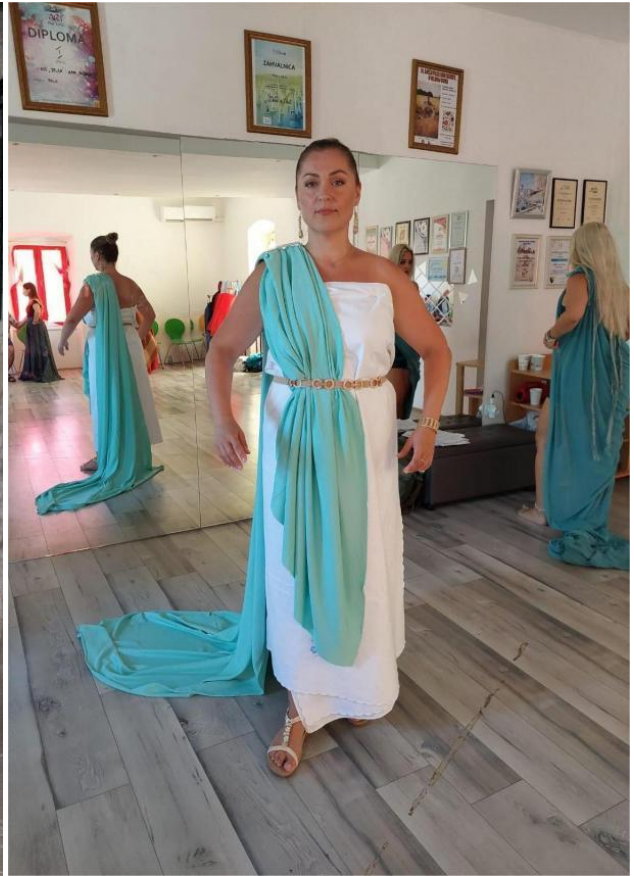
Costume preparation, Jelsa 2025



Don Giovanni – Japan 2016



After the performance Opera Fragments, Jelsa, Croatia 2024



Costume preparation, Jelsa 2024



Master Classes Devín, Slovakia 2023



Workshop Hvar, Croatia 2023



Devín, Slovakia 2023



Devín, Slovakia 2023



Workshop Fukushima - the Final concert Japan 2018



Concert Popular Opera Melodies, Jelsa, Croatia 2024



Concert of Slovak songs, Vrbanj, Croatia 2022