





Reflection

# On the Music of the 12<sup>th</sup> Socratic Lectures. Z-STEAM and Nanostructurome activities

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#### **Abstract:**

We describe and reflect on the cultural events connected to the 12<sup>th</sup> Socratic Lectures. The satellite events included, in the chronological order: the performance of Lara Oprešnik at the Musikverein, Vienna, as part of the New Year's Concert on January 8, 2025, the Z-STEAM social networking event with the concert on January 11, 2025 at the Julij Betteto Hall, Kazina, Academy of Music, University of Ljubljana, and the organ recital of Roberta Schmid from Napoli, Italy, at the Church of Assumption, at Tromostovje. Socratic Lectures continue as international events promoting science and arts.

**Keywords:** Baroque opera; Roman history; Venice carnival; Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus; Sabina Poppaea the Younger; Commedia dell'Arte

Citation: Kralj-Iglič V. On the Music of the 12<sup>th</sup> Socratic Lectures. Z-STEAM and Nanostructurome activities. Proceedings of Socratic Lectures. **2025**, 12, 121 –131. https://doi.org/10.55295/PSL.12.2025.I16

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#### 1. The concept of Socratic Lectures

According to Plato, a man named Socrates and his pupils assembled in a place close to the sea. They were discussing things that interested them in a pleasant atmosphere. Socrates stated and the pupils responded as to agree or disagree. Then they asked questions. It required little knowledge (in the form of data) from the pupils but a lot of curiosity and reasoning. The dialogues were respectful and polite and created a room of gentleness. It only took acknowledging and liking it to enter this room, which seemed simple and easy. In contrast to sophistic teaching, there was no formal scheme and no exchange of money. However, Plato's interpretation of the significance of money concerns not just teaching, but in fact all human activities (Schindler, 2009). Socratic Lectures aim at reaching the spirit of interest in the matter, common well-being, gentleness and politeness above all other reasons. In particular, it is a point where excellent scientists share their experience with the students and the students contribute and show their dedication. Also, it is a point where different fields from science and arts meet to inspire creation of new ideas. The team carrying out Socratic lectures is constituted of those who have donated as the participants of the activities of the Socratic Lectures.

#### 2. Z-STEAM activities and integration of science and arts

STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) Education is an approach to learning that uses Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics as access points for guiding student inquiry, dialogue, and critical thinking. While this approach has been acknowledged at the primary and the high school level, it has only recently been introduced to higher education (Carter et al., 2021). Socratic Lectures have early integrated visual arts and music with science and are open to other forms of art and achievements aiming at a life-friendly world and excellence. Formal collaboration has been established between nine faculties of the University of Ljubljana and the Academy of Music within the project Nanostructurome financed by the Slovenian Research Agency in collaboration with the University of Ljubljana. Participants from the Academy of Music contributed lectures at the symposium devoted to baroque music, in particular the work of Claudio Monteverdi, and at the concert performed selected pieces from Monteverdi's opera Coronation of Poppaea. The partners of the project Nanostructurome will support the production of the opera with the premiere set in July 2025.

# 3. Music events of the 12th Socratic Lectures

The satellite events included, in the chronological order: the performance of Lara Oprešnik at the Musikverein, Vienna, as part of the New Year's Concert on January 8, 2025, the Z-STEAM social networking event with the concert on January 11, 2025 at the Julij Betteto Hall, Kazina, Academy of Music, University of Ljubljana, and the organ recital of Roberta Schmid from Napoli, Italy, at the Church of Assumption, at Tromostovje. Socratic Lectures continue as international events promoting science and arts.

# 3.1. Lara Oprešnik and her performance at the Musikverein, Vienna, as part of the New Year's Concert

Lara Oprešnik started playing piano at the age of seven in the class of Professor Monika Vehovec and violin in the class of Professor Igor Ulokin. Later, she studied with Professor Jožica Grebenšek and Professor Jernej Grebenšek. She graduated from the Academy of Music in Ljubljana, Slovenia, under Professor Hinko Haas and from the University of Music and Performing Arts in Graz, Austria, under Professor Milana Černjavska. In 2023, she received her Master's degree from the Academy of Music in Ljubljana, in the class of Professor Ruben Dalibaltayan. She studied with Laszlo Baranyay, Jasminka Stančul, Lovro Pogorelić, Rita Kinka, Oleg Marševo, Natasha Kudritska and Julia Gubajdulina. During her studies, she received the Prešeren Student Prize of the University of Ljubljana. She has performed as a soloist with orchestras at home and abroad. In 2024, she recorded Saint-Saëns' chamber work *Animal Carnival* and a longer programme of her own compositions, approximately one hour long, as part of the *From the Pen of Slovenian Composers* series. She has given solo recitals at numerous national and international festivals (Vienna, Trieste, Tenerife, Lamporecchio, Ljubljana, Gorizia, Rome, Citta di Cervignano, Belgrade, etc.). On





8 January, 2025, she performed with the Vienna City Orchestra at the gala New Year's Concert at the Vienna Musikverein as the first prize-winner of the Vienna New Year's Concert, an international music competition.

Miha Červ who attended the concert at the Musikverein (Figure 1), reflected on the performance of Lara Oprešnik: "I wore the best suit I own - my wedding suit. I didn't want to go to the Musikverein dressed casually, because that's where the fine gentlemen usually gather. But it turned out that my fears were unnecessary, because the assembled company was very varied in the formality of their dress, and so I stood out neither as too well dressed nor as too poorly dressed. The concert was intended to showcase the soloists - the winners of the competition, accompanied by the Wiener Stadtorchester (Vienna City Orchestra) under the baton of Christian Schulz. Almost exactly at eight o'clock, the orchestra members came on stage and tuned up. The first part of the concert was introduced by the orchestra itself with a piece by Handel, and then the soloists took the stage for the following pieces; viola, two opera singers and oboe. After the interval, I returned to the hall, where a large concert Steinway had just appeared on stage. My neighbour, with whom I had chatted earlier, whispered to me: 'Jetzt kommt Ihre Favoritin!'. And after the orchestra had tuned up again, Lara Oprešnik started. She played the first movement of Scriabin's concerto for piano and orchestra in F sharp minor. The performance was sovereign and dramatic. The orchestra and Lara were well matched and the performance of the piece was without any perceivable mistakes for me. Lara earned a roaring applause and it was interesting to see her bow to the audience laughing after such a serious piece. This was followed by a piece for which the conductor changed and the winner of the conductor category took over the orchestra, and the opera singer appeared again. The concert ended with a piece written by Christian Schulz himself. After the musical performances concluded, the conductor presented the prizes to the competitors. I may be a little biased, but I would say that Lara received a little more applause than the other prize winners. At the end, I had the opportunity to congratulate the pianist briefly and then I returned home taken by the musical evening's performances."



Figure 1. Left: Performers after the concert at Musikverein. Right: Lara Oprešnik and Christian Schulz.

3.2. Social event at the Betteto hall with concert of classical and contemporary music and poetry The concert (Figures 2–5) had three parts, the first part was devoted to classical music, followed by an intermezzo of poetry by Ifigenija Simonović and Slovene choral music,





while the third part was devoted to contemporary music, with emphasis on original compositions integrating science.

#### Part I: Classical music

- C. Franck: Petit offertoire. Organ: Yelena Istileulova
- C. Monteverdi/G.F. Busenello: Prologue from opera Coronation of Poppaea. Sopranos: Fortuna: Ronja Prapotnik, Virtu: Eva Kokot, Amore: Brina Vukovič, Harpsichord: E. Mihajlović, Organ positive: B. Rezić
- A. Aljabjev A: Nightingale. Flute: Anita Prelovšek, Piano: Elena Startseva Somun
- S. Rachmaninov: Vocalise. Violin: Vasilij Meljnikov, Piano: Lara Oprešnik
- C. Monteverdi/G. F. Busenello: Regina disprezzata from opera Coronation of Poppaea. Soprano: Ottavia: AlessandraTessaro, Harpsichord: E. Mihajlović, Organ positive: B. Rezić
- S. Rachmaninov: Etude Tableau Op. 33 No. 3. Piano: Lara Oprešnik
- G. Brun: Romance. Flute: Anita Prelovšek, Piano: Elena Startseva Somun
- C. Monteverdi/G. F. Busenello: Duetto Demigella and Valetto from opera Coronation of Poppaea. Sopranos: Demigella: Nives Hadžić, Valetto: Eva Kokot, Harpsichord: E. Mihajlović, Organ positive: B. Rezić
- W. A. Mozart: Alla turca from Sonata in A major. Piano: Denis Luin
- F. Chopin: Polonaise in G sharp minor, op. posth.. Piano: Matic Bogataj

#### Part II:

G. Ipavec/A. Čopi – Simon Gregorčič: Mountain flower: Chorus Studenec Poetry by Ifigenia Simonović

- H. Lavrenčič/Anonymus: The coque has sung: Chorus Studenec
- E. Adamič/O. Župančič: Evening song: Chorus Studenec

## Part III: Contemporary music

- A. von Sultanova/Titus Lucrecius: De rerum natura. Piano, Voice: Aleona von Sultanova
- S. Kralj: Topology. Piano: Samo Kralj
- H. Mancini: Pink Panther. Trombone: Emil Somun, Piano: Elena Startseva Somun
- A. von Sultanova/A. von Sultanova: For Samuel Gmelin water, water. Piano, Voice: Aleona von Sultanova
- J. Rae: Sonatine (Aquarelle, Notturne, Firedance). Flute: Anita Prelovšek, Piano: Elena Startseva Somun
- A. Schnittke: Suite in the old style. Violin: B. Brezavšček, Piano: E. Startseva Somun
- L. Oprešnik: Fugue. Piano: Lara Oprešnik
- B. Kobal: Dic verbo. Soprano: Kaya Tokuhisa, Organ: Jana Jamšek
- D. Zupanič Turković: Cantique de Baruch Spinoza from Mass in E minor. Organ: A. von Sultanova, Percussion: Bojan Ilievski, Piano: Lara Oprešnik, Flute: Anita Prelovšek

**Egon Mihajlović** studied harpsichord and early keyboard instruments at the Frankfurt Conservatory of Music and Performing Arts, where he also completed his postgraduate studies. Since 1990, he has performed as a harpsichordist, a conductor and an artistic director of baroque opera and sacred baroque music at major concert venues and festivals in Europe and the United States. He has taught at music art colleges and music academies in Wurzburg, Nuremberg, Cetinje and Pesaro. He is currently Professor of Harpsichord and Head of the Department of Early Music and Head of the Chair at the Academy of Music of the University of Ljubljana. In 2013, he was awarded a golden plaque of the University of Ljubljana for his outstanding contribution to the development of scientific, pedagogical or artistic endeavours.

Anita Prelovšek studied flute with Professor Anđela Blažeka in Ljubljana, Professor Luisa Sello in Udine and Trieste, Professor Karolina Šantl-Zupan in Ljubljana and Professor Gladys Bouchet at the Conservatoire National de Région in Rennes, France. She graduated at the Giuseppe Tartini Conservatory of Music in Bologna and specialised at the "Istituto Superiore di Studi Musicali O.Vecchi-A.Tonelli" in Modena, where her professors were Gabriele Betti, Michele Marasco and Andrea Oliva. She performs as a soloist and in various chamber ensembles in concerts at home and abroad.







**Figure 2.** Upper left: Matic Bogataj. Upper right: Anita Prelovšek. Lower left: Denis Luin. Lower right: Lara Oprešnik, all at the concert of the 12<sup>th</sup> Socratic lectures. Photo: Drago Videmšek.

Ronja Prapotnik, Eva Kokot, Brina Vukovič, Alessandra Tessaro and Nives Hadžič study singing at the Academy of Music, University of Ljubljana.

**Elena Startseva Somun** studied piano at the Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky Moscow Conservatory of Music and did postgraduate studies in chamber music at the Far Eastern Academy of Arts and Music in Vladivostok. She performs as a soloist and in chamber ensembles at home and abroad. She has taught at the Sergei Prokofiev Music School in Vladivostok, the Jilin Academy of Music in Changchun, China and the Idrija Music School.

Violinist Vasily Melynikov studied at the Minsk Academy of Music with Olga Parkomenko and at the Moscow Conservatoire of Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky with Professors Bezrodny and Belenka. In 1997, he won first prize at the Vienna Modern Masters International Competition in Vienna. He has been a member of the Belarusian State Chamber Orchestra, the Camerata Slovenica String Quartet, the Ljubljana Piano Trio and the Zagreb Soloists Orchestra. From 2004 to 2010, he was the concertmaster of the RTV Slovenija Symphony Orchestra. He has taught at the Ljubljana Conservatory of Music and Ballet and at the Academy of Music, where he was head of the string department and mentor of the Academy of Music Symphony Orchestra. Vasilij Meljnikov is the recipient of the Betetti Prize (2005) for artistic achievement in the field of creative music and for his efforts in spreading musical culture.

**Emil Somun** is studying trombone in the class of Prof. Matija Mlakar. He has been performing at the Z-STEAM events connected to the Socratic lectures in Ljubljana and Naples since 2022.

**Ifigenija Simonović** has been writing poetry, essays, book reviews, translating, and painting various objects for more than fifty years. She is the author of ten poetry collections, three books of essays, three books for children, and is also known as the publisher of eight books of poetry by Vitomil Zupan. In 2009, she received the Rožanec award. Between 2017 and 2021, she was the President of the Slovenian PEN Centre. Her poetry is often dark, but love persistently shines through the cracks that are drawn on her path by real time.





Chorus Studenec Pivka, led by Irena Rep, is composed of experienced singers. In its 22 seasons, they performed music of various genres, but the singers prefer to sing arrangements of folk songs the most. They have around 30 concerts annually, home and abroad, which includes, most importantly, visits to Slovenian societies throughout Europe.



**Figure 3.** Upper left: Ronja Praprotnik, Eva Kokot and Brina Vuković performing Prologue from Monteverdi's Coronation of Poppaea. Upper right: Jana Jamšek, Barbara Kobal and Kaya Tokuhisa performing Sic verbo by Barbara Kobal. Lower left: Ifigenija Simonović reading her poetry. Lower right: chorus Studenec performing Slovene choral. Photo: Drago Videmšek.

**Samo Kralj** has been playing piano in PhD Big Bang Band since 2007. The band includes 7 researchers from across Slovenia and it has 3 performances per year on average.

**Violinist Branko Brezavšček** graduated from the Academy of Music in Ljubljana in the class of Prof. Dejan Bravničar. He was a member of the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra, a concertmaster and a soloist of the chamber ensemble Carnium, a member and a soloist of the Slovenian Chamber Ensemble under the direction of conductor Anton Nanut, first violinist of the Muzina Quartet, concerto soloist accompanied by piano, guitar and organ. He performed in Slovenia, Austria, Italy, Germany and USA. He recorded for RTV Slovenija and Radio Trieste.

Kaya Tokuhisa studied classical singing with professors Tatjana Vasle, Maria Cristina Kiehr, Ulrich Messthaler, Harry van der Kamp, Snežana Nena Brzaković, Marianna Váradi, Thomas Heyer, Edita Garčević Koželj and Urška Arlič Gololičič, and chanson with professor Žare Prinčič. She received a Master's degree in Theatre Singing in 2023. She performs in concerts at home and abroad together with the Hungarian pianist Beata Barcza and in ensembles. In 2013, she performed at the Slovenian Philharmonic in honour of the visit by His Imperial Highnesses prince and princess Akishino. With pianist Rok Lopatič and accordionist Žiga Vehovec, they formed a band called Café Noisette.

**Barbara Kobal** attended music school in Idrija. She mainly composes music and writes lyrics for chansons and songs. Her works were performed in public. The composition "It snows" was performed at Cankarjev dom and the Slovenian Philharmonic, Ljubljana





where it was warmly received. She participated at festivals Spevslam and Slovenian chanson and at numerous cultural events. This is her first presentation at the Z-STEAM event, a satellite to the 12<sup>th</sup> Socratic Lectures symposium.

**Jana Jamšek** studied piano with Prof. Irma Hladnik and later organ at the Organ School in Ljubljana with Prof. Gregor Klančič. She has appeared as a soloist in the interpretations of piano works by J. S. Bach, C. Saint-Saens and J. Brahms, in chamber ensembles with instrumentalists and singers, and as an accompanist for classical ballet. She has been participating in the Socratic Lectures since 2008. As an organist, she performs in concerts of the Organ School and in services at the Trnovo Church.

Aleona von Sultanova received a diploma at the Music College Tchaikovsky in Kazakhstan. She studied saxophone, and is presently studying organ at the Faculty of Theology, University of Ljubljana. She is composing and performing songs (voice and piano). For her compositions, she received international awards at the Festival of Russian Romances (Škofja Loka) and Festival of Children Songs Veseli veter (Novo Mesto). She performed at the International UNESCO Sharq Taronalari festival in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. In 2024, she received an award from South Arts and Health Envoy and 2 Platinum and 2 Gold prizes at the Max Bruch International Music Competition. She is the ambassador of ESTEAM (Entrepreneurship + STEAM: Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) Program of the European Union to empower girls to pursue a STEM career and the inventor of the SMS (Stories based on Music about Scientists) method. She performed at satellite events to the Socratic lectures and Z-STEAM events in Ljubljana and Naples, Italy. In 2024, she had a concert at the Academy Enrico Caruso, Naples, Italy.



Figure 4. Upper left: Alessandra Tessaro, Ronja Praprotnik, Eva Kokot, Brina Vuković and Nives Hadžič. Upper right: Anna Romolo and Veronika Kralj-Iglič with Pupa. Lower right: Jelena Danilović Luković, Ani Barbulova, Anna Romolo, Aleš Iglič and Veronika Kralj-Iglič. At the back: Lara Oprešnik. Lower right: from the left: Elena Startseva Somun, Yelena Istileulova, Lara Oprešnik, Anita Prelovšek, Veronika Kralj-Iglič and Bojan Ilievski. Photo: Drago Videmšek.





**Davorin Zupanič Turković's** opus comprises instrumental and vocal compositions and adaptations that have been performed at the satellite events of the Socratic Lectures symposia, Z-STEAM events of scientific meetings and at the openings of cultural events in Ljubljana, Piran, Novo mesto, Šentrupert, Belgrade and Naples. In 2021, the quintet Spectrum performed the SARS ORF1 composition written especially for this event – at the opening of the 45<sup>th</sup> FEBS (Federation of European Biochemical Societies) Congress in Ljubljana. The Mass in E minor with Kyrie, Credo, Alleluia, Agnus Dei and Cantique de Baruch Spinoza was performed for the first time in 2018 at the Church of Assumption, at Tromostovje.



**Figure 5**. Up: Yelena Istileulova. Lower left: Branko Brezavšček. Lower right: Lara Oprešnik and Vasily Meljnikov. Photo: Drago Videmšek





3.3. Organ recital of Roberta Schmid

The program of the recital:

D. Buxtehude: Passacaglia in D minor BuxWV 161 J. S. Bach: Choral Das alte Jahr vergangen ist BWV 614 J. S. Bach: Choral Erbarme dich mein Gott BWV 721

A. G. Ritter: Sonate no. 2 in E minor op.19

G. Mushel: Toccata

J. Rheinberger: Passacaglia

L. Vierne: Carillon de Westminster

Roberta Schmid has contributed significantly to the Z-STEAM activities in Ljubljana and in Naples, Italy since 2019. In 2024, she participated at the concert that took place in Villino Manina organized by the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Faculty of Health Sciences, and Consiglio Nazionale delle Richerche, Napoli, Italy. At that concert, she performed on the piano the Slovene song entitled "Marinki" recently composed by Davorin Zupanič Turković, thereby promoting contemporary Slovene music internationally. Roberta Schmid took her diploma in Organ and Organ Composition at the Musical Conservatoire "S. Pietro a Maiella" in Naples under the mentorship of Prof. A. M. Robilotta and then improved her technique with maestros of international standing such as L. Ghielmi, E. Kooiman, M. Radulescu, D. Roth, K. Schnorr, L. F. Tagliavini, M. Torrent, P. Westerbrinck, W. Zerer, specializing her executive practice in different organ repertoires. After passing a national examination, she attended a three-year course in Professional training as an Organist at the Musical Academy in Pistoia and took a diploma in "Italian and German Organ Music Interpretation". She attended a three year-course in Gregorian Chant at the International Study Centre of Gregorian Chant in Cremona. She also took diplomas in Piano and in Musical Didactics, and, lately, the second-level degree specializing in Organ interpretation and composition, recently introduced at Italian Music Conservatoires. She has a very busy professional life performing at concerts as a soloist and in chamber formations. As a soloist, she has been invited to take part in numerous international organ festivals - in Europe and in Mexico - and she has always been highly acclaimed by public and critics alike. She also performs for: Quarto Festival Internacional de Organo de Zamora Michoacàn (Mexico), Primer Ciclo Internacional de Conciertos en el Organo Barroco de la Parroquia de Santiago de Querétaro (Mexico), International Organ Summer Festival in Rome, XXVIII Festival Internazionale di Noale, Rassegna Antichi organi di Piacenza, Associazione Alessandro Scarlatti di Napoli, Associazione Studi Mezzogiorno, Associazione Ricercare, Accademia Organistica Campana, Rassegna organistica internazionale di Avezzano, Rassegna organistica di Pescara, Settembre Organistico Fabrianese, Rassegna organistica veneta "Musica nell'Agordino", Rassegna "Musicalia" in Pavia, Festival Organistico Internazionale Città di Senigallia, Rassegna Organistica di Fiemme (Trento), Rassegna organistica della Svizzera italiana and for the international festivals performed at Notre Dame de Compassion in Paris, Merano Cathedral, Amalfi Cathedral, S. Vitale's Basilica in Ravenna, S. Ambrogio's Basilica in Milan and in Mexico City. She has made a record of Bach and pre-Bach music sponsored by the Goethe-Institut Italien. She is Artistic Director of the Festival "Musica intorno all'organo" at the St. Maria della Rotonda Church in Naples with the contralto Daniela Del Monaco. She was Artistic Director of the Concorso Organistico Nazionale Città di Napoli "11 Fiori del Melarancio". She taught "Organ and Organ composition" at F. Vittadini Civic Institute in Pavia and Organ at High School Alfano I in Salerno and at High School Palizzi in Naples. She is the official organist of Mascioni mechanical organ at St. Maria della Rotonda Church and at Santa Chiara's Basilica in Naples.

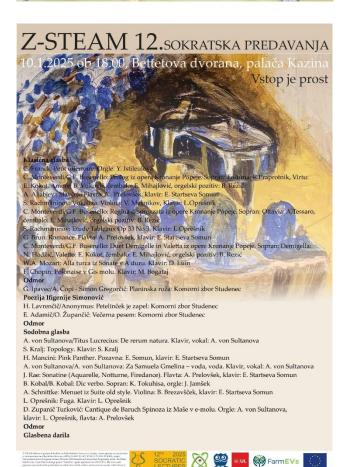












# ORGELSKI RECITAL ROBERTA SCHMID



TOREK 14.1.2025, 20:00 CERKEV MARIJINEGA OZNANJENJA TROMOSTOVJE VSTOP PROST

Figure 6. Flyers and posters for the symposium and the concert of the 12th Socratic lectures.

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