

## Enhance your foreign language song and aria preparations with ANKI flash cards

Stephen Swanson

Nearly every student pursuing an education in vocal music encounters repertoire in the standard singing languages. They are coached carefully in how to pronounce the text they are preparing and many learn to transcribe texts into the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). They learn what the text means in English. This method of teaching songs and arias produces in many cases good results. The students produce the proper sounds at the proper time and if they are conscientious with the proper inflection. What most students do NOT do is use their foreign language vocal music as a method of actually acquiring vocabulary nor do they systematically relate their song texts to foreign languages they have studied. They acquire a knowledge of how the words translates into English, but do not learn the meanings of the words they sing at an intuitive level that allows them to develop a deep relationship to the poetry they are performing.

Professor Swanson will present the Fluent Forever

<https://fluent-forever.com/chapter2/#.VyAnIzArLcs>

method of using the share-ware ANKI intelligent flash cards

<http://ankisrs.net/>

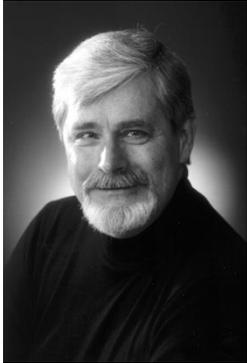
as a way of taking foreign language preparation to the next level.

Topics covered will include:

- Learning the meaning of the word rather than the English translation through pictures
- Adding IPA transcriptions and/or sound files to your flash cards
- Adding information to flash cards that will be useful in language acquisition
- Efficiently creating a flashcard deck for a song using free, on-line resources
- Carrying your vocabulary cards with you on your mobile device

Singing in a foreign language should have many virtues above and beyond the actual performance. Incorporating timed-sequence flash cards as a learning tool can open an entire new world to the vocalist. Over time, it will allow the student to amass a large vocabulary to enhance their academic language courses. If used consistently before beginning formal language study it can provide a solid basis for jump-starting language learning. It can help singers as they perform to experience the story they are relating to their audience. It can help create the ultimate bridge in foreign language performing that leads to complete involvement in the song.

After the presentation Professor Swanson will supply examples of ANKI decks of German art songs to those interested in experimenting with the exciting supplement to studying vocal repertoire. (Those interested in free decks should bring a USB thumb drive with them to the lecture.)



Stephen Swanson is a concert and opera singer, a teacher of singing, and opera stage director. He earned degrees from North Park College and Northwestern University and served a two-year American Guild of Musical Artists apprenticeship with the Wolf Trap Company. After an internship at the International Opera Studio of the Zurich Opera, Swanson sang in opera houses in Switzerland, Germany, Austria, and the Netherlands for nineteen years. In 1994 he joined the voice faculty at The University of Iowa School of Music.

Throughout his career Swanson has performed as a soloist with many renowned conductors, including concerts under Sir Georg Solti, Rafael Frübeck de Burgos, Margaret Hillis, and Vance George; and operas under Giuseppe Patanè, Nello Santi and Ferdinand Leitner. An extremely versatile performer, he sings works from the Baroque to the avant-garde as well as standard baritone concert repertoire, such as Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, and his signature piece, Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*. In 2015, he added the 104<sup>th</sup> opera / operetta / musical role to his repertoire.

Since moving to Iowa Swanson has become an active recitalist. Expanding on the opportunity to collaborate with the many excellent musicians on the faculty of The University of Iowa, he has prepared and performed theme-based recitals since 1995. Two examples of these, *Was my brother in the battle? Songs of War and Animal Songs: Bestiaries in English, French, and German* have been released on CD by Albany Records.

For a complete repertoire list, photo archives, and live performance excerpts, see [www.stephen-swanson.com](http://www.stephen-swanson.com).