

Yana Vlaeva - Full Artist Bio

Yana Vlaeva is a Bulgarian folk singer, educator, and cultural producer based in London. Her work is rooted in the rich vocal traditions of Bulgaria, combining deep respect for traditional singing styles with a commitment to sharing them with contemporary audiences across cultures and generations.

Over the past decade, Yana has trained extensively in Bulgarian vocal folklore. She began her studies with the London Bulgarian Choir before continuing her development through work with ensembles and teachers across Europe. Her most formative years were spent in Bulgaria, studying privately with renowned folk singer Neli Andreeva and singing in Nusha Choir. These experiences shaped her artistic voice and provided a direct connection to one of the most distinctive living traditions of Bulgarian folk singing.

Alongside her ensemble work, Yana has developed a solo practice centred on the expressive power of traditional Bulgarian song. Her performances move between raw a cappella singing and intimate arrangements for voice, guitar, piano, and clarinet, bringing centuries-old repertoire into contemporary performance settings. Her debut EP, *Godini (Years)*, features traditional Bulgarian songs exploring themes of love, longing, resilience, and memory, including repertoire that had not previously been commercially recorded.

As a performer, Yana has appeared in concerts, festivals, and cultural events across Bulgaria, the United Kingdom, Germany, Croatia, South Korea, India, and elsewhere in Europe. Whether performing solo or as part of an ensemble, her work is driven by a desire to create meaningful connections through traditional song and to present Bulgarian folklore as a living, evolving art form.

Education and cultural exchange are central to Yana's practice. She regularly leads workshops introducing participants to Bulgarian vocal techniques, ornamentation, harmony, and traditional repertoire. Her teaching draws on years of immersion in the tradition and is designed to be accessible to singers of all backgrounds, from complete beginners to experienced vocalists.

Beyond her own artistic work, Yana has played a significant role in developing cultural projects and international collaborations. She has been involved in the organisation and delivery of folk music programmes such as the ETHNO format, community arts initiatives, and intercultural exchanges, helping create opportunities for musicians and participants to engage with traditional music in meaningful ways.

In 2023 she founded Ethno Bulgaria, and since 2026 she is part of the team behind Flotsam Sessions, a community-focused London based organisation celebrating folk and world music through concerts, workshops, and participatory music-making. She has also contributed to a range of initiatives focused on widening access to music, heritage, education, and international exchange.

In recent years, Yana has worked closely with internationally renowned singer Neli Andreeva to develop opportunities for international singers to study Bulgarian folk singing in its cultural context, including the organisation of vocal masterclasses and immersive learning programmes in Bulgaria. Through these initiatives, she aims not only to preserve traditional knowledge but also to support its transmission to new generations of singers and audiences.

Across all aspects of her work - as a performer, teacher, organiser, and cultural advocate - Yana is committed to creating spaces where traditional Bulgarian song can be experienced not as a museum artefact, but as a living form of artistic expression that continues to inspire, connect, and evolve.