



# Angela Gheorghiu in recital

Tuesday 10 December 2019 7.30pm, Hall

**Rameau** Le grillon  
**Martini** Plaisir d'amour  
**Debussy** Nuit d'étoiles  
**Chopin, arr Litvinne** Étude, Op 10 No 3, 'Tristesse'  
**L Boulanger** Trois Morceaux  
**Paisiello** Nel cor più non mi sento  
**Bellini** Malinconia, ninfa gentile  
**Donizetti** Me voglio fa 'na casa  
**Tchaikovsky, arr Grainger** The Nutcracker Suite – 'Waltz of the Flowers'  
**Hahn** L'heure exquise  
**Rachmaninov** Son, Op 8 No 5; Vesenniye vody, Op 14 No 11

**interval** 20 minutes

**Tosti** La serenata; Ideale; Sogno  
**Respighi** Nebbie  
**Ciortea** Romanian Dance  
**Ștephănescu** Cântecl fluierașului; Mandruilă de la munte  
**T Brediceanu** Cine m-aude cântând  
**C Schumann** Notturmo, Op 6 No 2  
**Schubert** Ständchen, D957 No 4  
**Flotow** Qui sola, virgin rosa  
**Balfe** I dreamt I dwelt in marble halls

**Angela Gheorghiu** soprano  
**Alexandra Dariescu** piano

## Part of Barbican Presents 2019–20

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Programme produced by Harriet Smith; advertising by Cabbell (tel 020 3603 7930)

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# Welcome

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A warm welcome to tonight's performance, given by a soprano who needs no introduction: Angela Gheorghiu. She is joined at the piano by her compatriot Alexandra Dariescu.

It's a recital that, though centred around the 19th century, ranges wide in mood and style. From the darkness of Schubert's 'Ständchen' we move to the alluring beauty of Debussy's youthful 'Nuit d'étoiles' and Hahn's 'L'heure exquise'.

Italian opera composers are not neglected either, with songs by Donizetti and Bellini. And Angela Gheorghiu also demonstrates

a soft spot for the irresistible melodies spun by Tosti, Flotow and Balfe.

Interspersed with song are a selection of solo piano pieces, including works by Clara Schumann and Lili Boulanger, as well as Percy Grainger's irresistible reworking of Tchaikovsky's 'Waltz of the Flowers' from the evergreen *Nutcracker* Suite. The two artists celebrate their Romanian roots too, with pieces by Tiberiu Brediceanu and George Ștephănescu that revel in their folk origins.

It promises to be a very special evening. I hope you enjoy it.

Huw Humphreys, Head of Music, Barbican

# Plaisir d'amour: a journey of song through many lands

The song recital with piano accompaniment was bequeathed to us by the 19th century, in which its roots were nurtured in the salons of the newly rich middle classes and their burgeoning cultural ambitions. What better way to demonstrate your superior taste than by purchasing a very grand piano, installing it in your capacious drawing room and inviting your friends and neighbours to hear your daughters play and sing? There was, of course, a practical side to these soirées: for the daughters of the house a talent for music making, along with a gift for fine sewing and an ability as a water-colourist was a guarantee of marriageability. So you both kept up with the cultural Joneses, or Schmidts or Leblancs, and settled your daughters.

One of the pleasures of tonight's concert is precisely that song is intertwined with solo piano pieces, though it has to be said that much of what we are going to hear is well beyond the modest talents of the gifted Victorian or Edwardian amateur.

Song itself has a much older history than the piano; it was the 19th century that married them to each other. But appearances can be deceptive. *Le grillon* ('The cricket') hints at the tale of Cinderella with the poet addressing a fireside cricket whom he wants to believe is the reincarnation of a writer who died in a freezing garret and the song is credited to that master of the French Baroque Jean-Philippe Rameau, but the poem in two short verses is much younger. It was published by Pierre-Jean de Béranger, one of the most popular French songwriters of the early 19th century, the Jacques Brel of his day. So is the melody by Rameau or did he borrow it from a contemporary collector of popular songs and add his own charming musical embroidery?

Johann Paul Martini belongs to the generation of French composers who came to prominence after Rameau. And in *Plaisir d'amour* he composed a song to a text that he found in the

novel *Célestine* by Jean-Pierre Claris de Florian. This lament for the transience of human love appealed to Hector Berlioz, too, and Martini's plaintive melody was even borrowed for one of Elvis Presley's most successful songs, *Can't Help Falling in Love*. Just to balance things out it was also appropriated for an early 20th-century Christian hymn *My God Loves Me*. The Devil doesn't always have all the best tunes.

*Nuit d'étoiles*, composed in 1880, was Debussy's first published composition and one of 13 poems by Théodore de Banville that the composer set. It was perhaps Banville's easy way with traditional poetic forms that attracted the iconoclast in Debussy, but it also showed him how to write songs that simultaneously looked backwards and forwards: to the traditions of the past and to a new aesthetic. Debussy's harmonies in *Nuit d'étoiles* shift imperceptibly, matching the poet's 'calm melancholy' step by step. And the quite different approach to each of the repeated refrains in the opening verse unsettle the listener in a manner that became a hallmark of this composer's mature style.

Chopin never christened his *Étude*, Op 10 No 3, 'Tristesse' or even 'L'Adieu', although he freely admitted that the melody which threads through the piece – composed in 1832 – was one of his most beautiful. It proved irresistible for singers and in London in 1837 the composer himself pronounced himself most satisfied after Maria Malibran had performed a vocal 'adaptation'. Countless generations have since transformed this *Étude* into a Palm Court favourite, a tango and even a pop song. More seriously, Alma Rosé recomposed the final section of the piece in 1943/4 for the Women's Orchestra of Auschwitz as a secret protest by these courageous musicians since Polish music was prohibited in the death camps. It is to words by Félicia Litvinne that we are going to hear it this evening – Litvinne was a Russian dramatic soprano who made her home in Paris in the early part of the last century.

The pianist Lili Boulanger (1893–1918) was the sister of Nadia, who seems to have set just about every major 20th-century composer, both European and American, on the right musical tracks. Lili, who was the first woman to win the prestigious Prix de Rome, died at just 24 leaving a handful of compositions that hint at what might have been had she lived longer. There is a personal stamp to all of her music and it's evident in her short piano pieces, *Trois Morceaux*, composed in 1914, four years before her death. We encounter a mysterious secret garden in 'D'un vieux jardin', with more than a hint of Gallic nostalgia. Then in 'D'un jardin clair' the shadows are banished and everything seems brighter and clearer. 'Cortège', best translated as 'Procession' is a thoroughly outgoing end to the set.

Giovanni Paisiello is the other Italian composer who turned Seville's favourite barber into an opera, and while his loyal clique gave Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* the bird at its premiere in Rome in 1816, Paisiello's opera was thereafter a dead duck. But his song 'Nel cor più non mi sento' makes it plain he was a thoroughly competent composer working in the Italian tradition of his time. And in this short account of the unbearable itch felt when love gets under the skin he offers his singers all manner of opportunities to parade their virtuosity.

Bellini is everything that Paisiello is not: a fully paid-up Romantic composer with an unmistakable style of his own. You have only to hear the opening phrase of a Bellini song or aria to identify the composer. By 1829 he had made Milan his home after the success of his opera *Il pirata*, and in that same year the publisher Ricordi issued a set of *Sei ariette* which alternate minor and major modes. 'Malincolia' is the first of the six songs and the composer shows his mastery in the way he spins one of his characteristically long-limbed melodies out of no more than a single phrase of just two bars. The text by Ippolito Pindamonte is fashionably plaintive in the Romantic manner, with the poet an outsider who is content not to stray from the fountains and hills granted him by the gods, whatever desires that Melancholy – whom he personifies as a nymph in the opening lines – may suggest.

'Me voglio fa 'na casa' belongs to Naples. It's one of the songs that Donizetti wrote for his collection *Soirées d'automne à l'Infrascata*, four

songs and two duets first published in 1837. With its subtitle 'Canzone napoletana' it's a kind of proof that, while you can take the composer out of Naples, you can never take Naples out of a composer such as Donizetti. And a reminder that audiences had long been drawn to Neapolitan traditional songs. While the young man who dreams of life with the woman he loves in a handsome house by the sea is playfully Italian, the switch from major to minor in this short song is unmistakably Neapolitan.

Taking a leaf from Liszt's book, 19th-century virtuoso pianists made ever more elaborate transcriptions of the works of other composers. (Just listen to Godowsky's dazzling version of 'Tristesse' for the left hand.) The Australian-born Percy Grainger who first made a name for himself in Edwardian London as a fashionable salon pianist before becoming a professional soloist and composer was following a well-trodden path when he transcribed 'The Waltz of the Flowers' from Tchaikovsky's last full-length ballet *The Nutcracker*. 'It's awfully fun to write a march for tin soldiers, a waltz of the flowers, etc', Tchaikovsky told a friend, and the Waltz is the final movement in his own suite of orchestral music from the ballet. Grainger's version was the first of his transcriptions and given its premiere in London at the old Steinway Hall in October 1901. It's a young man's *tour de force* – Grainger was not yet 20. And the virtuoso composer-pianist is already in evidence. As one commentator has noted: 'From the outset we are propelled along on a tide of virtuosic passagework, culminating in a highly florid cadenza and a clattering apotheosis'.

Reynaldo Hahn's carefully wrought *mélodies* belong to the tradition of French song initiated by Gounod – who took the young Venezuelan under his musical wing – and brought to a kind of perfection by Gabriel Fauré. These are songs that breathe the heavily perfumed air of the *fin de siècle*. (For a time Hahn was the lover of Marcel Proust who chronicled that gilded age so meticulously in his sequence of novels *À la recherche du temps perdu*.) 'L'heure exquise', one of the composer's finest *mélodies*, is a setting of Paul Verlaine's poem of the same name that takes its cue from Antoine Watteau's 18th-century pastoral paintings in which an elegant *jeunesse dorée* inhabits an Arcadia devoted to the arts of love. As the singer, somehow only half heard, invokes a moonlit landscape, the gossamer-thin piano part seems to breathe as

one with the vocal line, which only makes the modest leaps that are the last-line invocation of each stanza all the more breathtaking.

Sergey Rachmaninov wrote a total of some 73 songs between 1890 and 1916 and it's clear that they embody his deepest feelings about Russia. So one should not be surprised that after going into exile in the West during the Great War he never composed another song for solo voice. 'Son' (A Dream) was one of a set of six songs written in 1893 when Rachmaninov had scarcely graduated from the Moscow Conservatory; all six set translations by Alexey Pleshcheyev, who had died in Paris the year the composer was working on these songs and it's not difficult to sense feelings of loss threading through the set. Heinrich Heine's original regretful feelings about past happiness in his homeland being no more than a dream is matched to a magnificent melody that curls its way around that very Russian kind of melancholy.

In 1896 Rachmaninov published a set of 12 *Romances*, his Op 14. This included 'Vesenniye vody' (Spring Waters), which has become one of the composer's most popular songs. The text is by the Russian Symbolist poet Fyodor Tyutchev and celebrates that particularly Russian moment when the winter ice breaks and the rivers begin to roar again, heralding spring. This is a demanding song for both artists, with an intense vocal line and a challenging piano part that builds to a thunderous climax.

No songwriter represents the button-backed bourgeois world of the late 19th- and early 20th-century salon better than Paolo Tosti who, in a career that spanned over half a century, composed over 350 songs in Italian, French, English and Neapolitan dialect. They were performed by Melba and Caruso and admired by Puccini, Boito, Mascagni and Leoncavallo, no less. And while they may hint at transgressive passion and talk of death and sacrifice, they are all carefully corseted in a traditional tonal language: nothing here to frighten the drawing-room audience.

In 'La serenata' you can hear the rhythms of the guitar in the piano part as a lover sends his serenade singing into the beloved's bedroom, where, burrowing down into the bedclothes, it insists on a kiss. She smiles contentedly. How revealing that Tosti omitted some of Giovanni Alfredo Cesareo's stanzas, carefully removing

any unbecoming suggestions of sensuality. 'Ideale' is not so very different from a 19th-century operatic aria, which perhaps explains its appeal to several generations of tenors. It is about the desire that absence provokes. After a delicate prelude Tosti stretches his technique in this *romanza* with different times for the piano accompaniment and the vocal line, triple and duple. In 'Sogno' a woman resists the advances of her man, before finally giving in and then awaking to discover – regretfully – that it was all a dream. An arching vocal line that delicately hints at desire is set against the lyrical piano part. When 'Sogno' (Dream) was composed in 1886 Sigmund Freud was preparing to tell his generation about the true lives they lived out in their dreams.

Ottorino Respighi sometimes abandoned the pines, fountains and festivals of Rome to write songs – some 75 altogether. 'Nebbie' (Mists) is a setting of a poem by Ada Negri, who blotted her artistic copy-book when she signed up with Mussolini's Fascists. However, Respighi's song is altogether more interesting – though just as dark – with slow-moving minor chords heralding the confession 'I suffer'. Unyielding blocks of sound slowly move through the accompaniment as the vocal line stretches over an octave and a half, embracing a remarkable dynamic range from *piano* to *fortissimo*. The final stanza – 'And repeats to me: come/the valley is dark/Oh sad, oh unloved one/Come! Come!' – demands that singers dig deep into their chest register. The mood is bleak.

George Ștephănescu was a member of that European musical generation who believed that opera should play a major role in expressing national identity and he founded the first opera company in Romania in 1885, which survived until 1902. Ștephănescu himself composed five operas, putting into practice what he had learnt while teaching singers at the Bucharest Academy at which he himself had earlier studied. His own songs are well mannered, with the piano part always there to support the singer. Often there's a quirky quality to the texts that Ștephănescu chooses. So 'Cântecul fluierașului' (The Song of the Whistle) tells a love story through the memory of little beech whistle. 'Mandrulița de la munte' (My Little Mountain Sweetheart) is a more conventional love song with an agreeable scent of traditional music about the opening melody. If only the pretty mountain sweetheart would forsake her spinning!

Tiberiu Brediceanu was born in 1877 and devoted a great deal of his professional life to arranging traditional Romanian songs. He published a collection of 170 folk melodies and wrote extensively on Romanian traditional music. 'Cine m-aude cântând' (Anyone who hears me singing) is an arrangement of one of those songs. The buzzing piano prelude is reminiscent of Bartók's *Romanian Dances* and the singer then swings into an apparently carefree set of lines about reasons to sing. But there's a sting in the tail of the song as piano and singer reach their almost shouting climax. 'I don't sing because I sing well, but because it sets my heart at ease.'

Inch by inch two of the most important women composers of the 19th century are stepping out from behind the shadows that men cast over their lives. We are beginning to appreciate what a fine composer Fanny Mendelssohn was, though much of her music remains unpublished, and Clara Schumann, née Wieck, too. Schumann's Nocturne is the second of her *Soirées musicales*, a set of six miniatures composed in 1835–6, four years before she finally married Robert. If the A–B–A structure of the nocturne suggests Chopin and John Field, Clara invests it with something entirely her own – in the lilting opening and also the slip from F major to a more troubled D minor in the development section. All's well that ends well but that D minor detour reminds us that for Clara Wieck the romantic road ahead was uncertain in the 1830s.

'Ständchen' is one of Schubert's best-loved songs, and often prised from its setting in that final song-cycle *Schwanengesang* assembled after the composer's death to be performed

on its own. Its heart-stopping melody is wrapped around a serenade to a lover that mixes hope with minor-key doubts, reflecting the sunlight and shadows that play through all of this composer's greatest music.

'The Last Rose of Summer' was a Victorian favourite composed by Friedrich von Flotow for his opera *Martha*, first performed in Vienna in 1847. Very soon the German 'Letze Rose' became the Italian 'Qui sola, virgin rosa'. However, Thomas Moore's original poem borrowed for Flotow's libretto goes back to 1805 and then it was an Irish rose. The appeal of the song is easily understood, a sugar-sweet melody and a sense of regret that summer days are gone with only the chill of the winter to look forward to. Luisa Tetrazzini sang 'The Last Rose' and Adelina Patti too.

The great sopranos of the past also clasped Michael William Balfe's 'I dreamt I dwelt in marble halls' to their generous bosoms. Indeed it probably played catch-up with Tosti's 'Farewell' on just about any diva's recital programme. Balfe was perhaps the most successful of all 19th-century British opera composers, with at least 29 stage works under his belt. 'I dreamt I dwelt in marble halls' was written for his most successful work, *The Bohemian Girl*, premiered in 1843; it is sung by Arline, who is in love with Thaddeus, a member of the Polish nobility exiled for his politics. In the aria Arline is dimly recalling the splendour in which she once lived before being abducted by gypsies.

Programme note © Christopher Cook

### Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683–1764)

#### Le grillon

Au coin de l'âtre où je tisonne  
En rêvant à je ne sais quoi,  
Petit grillon, chante avec moi.  
Qui, déjà vieux, toujours chansonne.

Petit grillon, n'ayons ici,  
N'ayons du monde aucun souci.

Non: mais en toi, je le veux croire,  
Revit un auteur qui, jadis,  
Mourut de froid dans son taudis,  
En guettant un rayon de gloire.  
Petit grillon, n'ayons ici,  
N'ayons du monde aucun souci.

Pierre-Jean de Béranger (1780–1857)

### Johann Paul Martini (1741–1816)

#### Plaisir d'amour

Plaisir d'amour ne dure qu'un moment;  
Chagrin d'amour dure toute la vie.  
J'ai tout quitté pour l'ingrate Sylvie:  
Elle me quitte et prend un autre amant.

Plaisir d'amour, etc.

'Tant que cette eau coulera doucement  
Vers ce ruisseau qui borde la prairie,  
Je t'aimerai, me répétait Sylvie:  
L'eau coule encore; elle a changé pourtant.  
Plaisir d'amour, etc.

Jean-Pierre Claris de Florian (1755–94)

### Claude Debussy (1862–1918)

#### Nuit d'étoiles

Nuit d'étoiles,  
Sous tes voiles,  
Sous ta brise et tes parfums,  
Triste lyre  
Qui soupire,  
Je rêve aux amour défunts.

La sereine mélancolie  
Vient éclore au fond de mon cœur,  
Et j'entends l'âme de ma mie  
Tressaillir dans le bois rêveur.

Nuit d'étoiles, etc.

Je revois à notre fontaine  
Tes regards bleus comme les cieux;

By the hearth where I stir the embers,  
dreaming of who knows what,  
little cricket, sing along with me,  
for though I'm now old, I still sing my mocking  
songs.

Little cricket, let's you and I  
not trouble our heads about the world.

In you, or so I'd like to believe,  
is reincarnated a writer who  
died years ago of cold in his garret,  
while waiting for a moment of glory.  
Little cricket, let's you and I  
not trouble our heads about the world.

Translation © Susannah Howe

The pleasure of love lasts but a moment:  
the pain of love lasts a lifetime,  
I forgot everything for her, for faithless Sylvie;  
now she has forgotten me, and puts her trust in  
another love.

The pleasure of love, etc.

'As long as the water flows quietly  
towards the stream around the plain  
I shall love you', the faithless woman told me –  
the water still flows – but her love has changed.  
The pleasure of love, etc.

Translation © Kenneth Chalmers

Starlit night,  
beneath your veils,  
beneath your breeze and your perfumes,  
a mournful lyre  
that sighs,  
I dream of loves that have died.

A calm melancholy  
flowers deep in my heart,  
and I hear the soul of my love  
tremble in the dreaming wood.

Starlit night, etc.

By our fountain I see again  
your eyes as blue as the sky;

Cette rose, c'est ton haleine,  
Et ces étoiles sont tes yeux.

Nuit d'étoiles, etc.

Théodore de Banville (1823–91)

**Fryderyk Chopin (1810–49)**  
**Tristesse (Étude Op 10 No3, arr Félicia Litvinne)**

Tout est fini,  
Les fleurs des prés se sont fanées,  
L'été se meurt!  
Les oiseaux peureux se taisent;  
La nature est en deuil.

Tout est fini,  
Le froid nous étreint,  
La nature entière subit l'hiver.  
Au printemps les chants des oiseaux joyeux et  
fidèles!  
Versaient la paix, la paix délicieuse dans mon  
cœur grisé.

Et maintenant  
Mon cœur lassé pleure ces chants,  
Ses rêves finis!  
Triste mon âme s'éteint,  
Le froid cruel qui me saisit  
A fait mourir tout mon bonheur!  
Notre rêve heureux s'efface,  
Tristement les fleurs se ferment.  
Ô bonheur perdu, avec le printemps,  
Adieu clair soleil! Tout est fini, tout est fini!

Félicia Litvinne (1860–1936)

**Giovanni Paisiello (1740–1816)**  
**Nel cor più non mi sento**

Nel cor più non mi sento  
Brillar la gioventù;  
Cagion del mio tormento,  
Amor, sei colpa tu.  
Mi pizzichi, mi stuzzichi,  
Mi pungichi, mi mastichi,  
Che cosa è questa, ahimè?  
Pietà, pietà, pietà!  
Amore è un certo che  
Che disperar mi fa!

Giuseppe Palomba (fl1765–1825)

this rose is your breath,  
these stars are your eyes.

Starlit night, etc.

All is ended,  
the meadow flowers are withered,  
summer is dying!  
The fearful birds are silent;  
nature is in mourning.

All is ended,  
the cold embraces us,  
all nature is enduring winter.  
In spring the song of the merry and faithful birds

poured peace, wonderful peace into my  
enraptured heart.

And now my weary heart,  
its dreams at an end,  
sings this mournful song!  
My sorrowful soul is dying,  
the cruel chill enfolding me  
has killed my every delight!  
Our happy dream is fading,  
in sadness the flowers are wilting.  
O happiness, lost with the springtime,  
farewell, bright sun! All is ended! All is ended!

Translations © Susannah Howe

I no longer feel  
the sparkle of youth in my heart;  
love, it is your fault,  
you are the cause of my torment.  
You sting me, poke me,  
pinch me and bite me,  
Alas, what is this?  
Have pity!  
Love is a certain something  
that brings me to despair.

Translation © Kenneth Chalmers



**Vincenzo Bellini (1801–35)**  
**Composizioni da camera –**  
**‘Malinconia, ninfa gentile’**

Malinconia, ninfa gentile,  
 La vita mia consacro a te;  
 I tuoi piaceri chi tiene a vile,  
 Ai piacer veri nato non è.

Fonti e colline chiesi agli Dei;  
 M’udiron alfine, pago io vivrò,  
 Né mai quel fonte co’ desir miei,  
 Né mai quel monte trapasserò.

Ippolito Pindemonte (1753–1828)

Melancholy, gentle nymph,  
 I devote my life to you.  
 One who despises your pleasures  
 is not born to true pleasures.

I asked the gods for fountains and hills;  
 they heard me at last; I will live satisfied  
 with my desires, never more shall I  
 go beyond that fountain and that mountain.

Translation © Antonio Giuliano, from the  
 LiederNet Archive

**Gaetano Donizetti (1797–1848)**  
**Soirées d’automne à l’Infrascata – ‘Me voglio’**

Me voglio fa ‘na casa miez’ ‘o mare  
 Fravecata de penne de pavune,  
 Tralla la le la ...

D’oro e d’argento li scaline fare  
 E de prete preziose li barcune,  
 Tralla la le la ...

Quanno Nennella mia se va a facciare  
 Ognuno dice ‘mò spona lu sole’,  
 Tralla la le la ...

Anonymous

I’d like to build a house in the middle of the sea  
 Plastered with peacock feathers,  
 Tralla la le la ...

With stairs of gold and silver  
 And balconies of precious stones,  
 Tralla la le la ...

When my Nennella shows herself  
 Everyone says ‘look, the sun is rising’,  
 Tralla la le la ...

Translation © Luk Laerenbergh, from the  
 LiederNet Archive

**Reynaldo Hahn (1874–1947)**  
**L’heure exquise**

La lune blanche  
 Luit dans les bois:  
 De chaque branche  
 Part une voix  
 Sous la ramée ...

O bien-aimée.

L’étang reflète,  
 Profond miroir,  
 La silhouette  
 Du saule noir  
 Où le vent pleure ...

Rêvons, c’est l’heure.

Un vaste et tendre  
 Apaisement  
 Semble descendre  
 Du firmament

The white moon  
 shimmers in the woods:  
 a voice rises up  
 from every branch,  
 beneath the canopy of leaves ...

Oh my love!

Like a deep mirror,  
 the pool reflects  
 the silhouette  
 of the black willow  
 in whose branches the wind is weeping ...

This is the moment for us to dream.

A vast and tender  
 sense of calm  
 seems to flow down  
 from the heavens

Que l'astre irise ...

C'est l'heure exquise.

Paul Verlaine (1844–96)

**Sergey Rachmaninov (1873–1943)**

**Six Romances, Op 8 – No 5, 'Son'**

I u menya byl kray rodnoy;  
Prekrasen on!  
Tam el kachalas nado mnoy ...  
No to byl son!

Semya družey zhiva byla.  
So vsekh storon  
Zvuchali mne lyubvi slova ...  
No to byl son!

Aleksey Nikolayevich Pleshcheyev (1825–93), after  
Heinrich Heine (1797–1856)

**Sergey Rachmaninov**

**12 Romances, Op 14 – No 11, 'Vesenniye vody'**

Eshcho v polyakh beleyet sneg,  
A vody uzh vesnoy shumyat,  
Begut i budyat sonny breg,  
Begut i bleshchut, i glasyat.  
Oni glasyat vo vse kontsy:  
'Vesna idyot, Vesna idyot,  
My molodoy vesny gontsy,  
Ona nas vyslala vperyod.  
Vesna idyot, vesna idyot!'  
I tikhikh, tyoplykh mayskikh dney  
Rumyany, svetly khorovod  
Tolpitsya veselo za ney.

Fyodor Tyutchev (1803–73)

**Paolo Tosti (1846–1916)**

**La serenata**

Vola, o serenata,  
La mia diletta è sola,  
E, con la bella testa abbandonata,  
Posa tra le lenzuola:  
O serenata, vola.  
Splende pura la luna,  
L'ale il silenzio stende,  
E dietro i veli dell'alcova bruna  
La lampada s'accende;  
Pura la luna splende.  
Vola, o serenata, vola.  
Ah, la!

that are bathed in moonlight ...

This is the moment of perfection.

Translation © Susannah Howe

There was a land that was my own;  
how fair it was!  
Pine trees swayed above me ...  
It was only dreaming!

I lived among friends and family;  
on every side  
loving words called me ...  
It was only dreaming!

The fields are still white with snow,  
but the waters of spring are rising already,  
flooding the sleeping earth,  
sparkling beneath the sky.  
They call across the earth:  
'Spring is coming, spring is coming!'  
We are the young spring's messengers,  
the heralds of her advance.  
Spring is coming, spring is coming!  
The bright, soft days of May return,  
and moving in a crimson dance  
they gladly throng to join the spring.

Fly, serenade,  
my beloved is alone  
and, with her lovely head relaxed,  
is resting between the sheets:  
fly serenade.  
The moon shines with a pure light,  
silence spreads its wings  
and behind the curtains of the dark alcove  
the lamp is lit;  
the moon shines with a pure light.  
Fly, serenade, fly.  
Ah, la!

Vola, o serenata,  
 La mia diletta è sola,  
 Ma, sorridendo ancor mezzo assonnata,  
 Torna fra le lenzuola;  
 O serenata, vola.  
 L'onda sogna sul lido,  
 E 'l vento su la fronda,  
 E a' baci miei ricusa ancor un nido  
 La mia signora bionda.  
 Sogna sul lido l'onda.  
 Vola, o serenata, vola.  
 Ah, la!

Giovanni Alfredo Cesareo (1860–1937)

### Ideale

Io ti seguii come iride di pace  
 Lungo le vie del cielo:  
 Io ti seguii come un'amica face  
 De la notte nel velo.  
 E ti sentii ne la luce, ne l'aria,  
 Nel profumo dei fiori;  
 E fu piena la stanza solitaria  
 Di te, dei tuoi splendori.

In te rapito, al suon de la tua voce,  
 Lungamente sognai;  
 E de la terra ogni affanno, ogni croce,  
 In quel sogno scordai.  
 Torna, caro ideal, torna un istante  
 A sorridermi ancora,  
 E a me risplenderà, nel tuo sembiante,  
 Una novella aurora.

Carmelo Errico (1848–92)

### Sogno

Ho sognato che stavi a ginocchi  
 Come un santo che prega il Signor ...  
 Mi guardavi nel fondo degl'occhi,  
 Sfavillava il tuo sguardo d'amor.

Tu parlavi e la voce sommessa  
 Mi chiedea dolcemente mercè,  
 Solo un guardo che fosse promessa,  
 Imploravi, curvato al mio piè.

Io taceva, e coll'anima forte  
 Il desio tentatore lottò.  
 Ho provato il martirio e la morte,  
 Pur mi vinsi e ti dissi di no.

Fly, serenade,  
 my beloved is alone  
 but she smiles as she lies, half-asleep  
 and she moves beneath the sheets;  
 fly serenade.  
 The waves dream on the shore  
 and the wind among the branches,  
 and my fair lady still refuses  
 to receive my kiss.  
 The waves dream on the shore.  
 Fly, serenade, fly.  
 Ah, la!

Translations © Decca

I followed you like a rainbow of peace  
 along the paths of heaven;  
 I followed you like a friendly torch  
 in the veil of darkness,  
 and I sensed you in the light, in the air,  
 in the perfume of flowers,  
 and the solitary room was full  
 of you and of your radiance.

Absorbed by you, I dreamed a long time  
 of the sound of your voice,  
 and earth's every anxiety, every torment  
 I forgot in that dream.  
 Come back, dear ideal, for an instant  
 to smile at me again,  
 and in your face will shine for me  
 a new dawn.

Translation © John Glenn Paton, from the  
 LiederNet Archive

I dreamt you were kneeling,  
 like a saint praying to the Lord ...  
 You were looking deep into my eyes,  
 your gaze sparkling with love.

You spoke, and in gentle tones  
 begged me sweetly for mercy;  
 knelt there at my feet, you pleaded  
 for just one look as my pledge.

I stayed silent and with strength of mind  
 fought off that alluring desire.  
 I suffered torment and death,  
 but conquered myself and said no to you.

Ma il tuo labbro sfiorò la mia faccia  
 E la forza del cor mi tradì.  
 Chiusi gli occhi, ti stesi le braccia,  
 Ma sognavo ... e il bel sogno svanì!

Olindo Guerrini (1845–1916)

**Ottorino Respighi (1879–1936)**  
**Nebbie**

Soffro, lontan lontano  
 Le nebbie sonnolente  
 Salgono dal tacente  
 Piano.

Alto gracchiando, i corvi,  
 Fidati all'ali nere,  
 Traversan le brughiere  
 Torvi.

Dell'aere ai morsi crudi  
 Gli addolorati tronchi  
 Offron, pregando, i bronchi nudi.  
 Come ho freddo!

Son sola;  
 Pel grigio ciel sospinto  
 Un gemito d'estinto  
 Vola;

E mi ripete: Vieni;  
 È buia la vallata.  
 O triste, o disamata,  
 Vieni! Vieni!

Ada Negri (1870–1945)

**George Ștephănescu (1843–1925)**  
**Cântecul fluierașului**

Fluieraș frumos,  
 Iți zici tu duios.  
 Dragă fluieraș,  
 Mult zici drăgălaș.  
 Zi cu glasul tău  
 Zi pe gândul meu  
 Viersul cel cu foc  
 Ce'aduce noroc  
 Ah!  
 Zi cu glasul tău  
 Zi pe gândul meu  
 Viersul cel cu foc  
 Ce'aduce noroc  
 Viersul cel cu dor.

Then your lips brushed my cheek  
 and my heart's strength betrayed me.  
 I closed my eyes, held out my arms to you ...  
 But I was dreaming ... and my beautiful dream  
 disappeared!

Translation © Susannah Howe

I suffer. Far, far away  
 the sleeping mists  
 rise from the silent  
 plain.

Shrilly cawing, the crows,  
 trusting their black wings  
 cross the heath  
 grimly.

To the raw weathering of the air  
 the sorrowful tree trunks  
 offer, praying, their bare branches,  
 How cold am I!

I am alone;  
 driven through the grey sky  
 a wail of extinction  
 flies;

And repeats to me: come,  
 the valley is dark.  
 Oh sad, oh unloved one,  
 come! come!

Translation © Thomas A Gregg, from the  
 LiederNet Archive

'Beautiful little whistle',  
 you say tenderly to yourself.  
 'Dear little whistle',  
 you often say, my dear.  
 Say it out loud  
 so I can understand  
 the burning lyric  
 that brings luck  
 ah!  
 Say it out loud  
 so I can understand  
 the burning lyric  
 that brings luck,  
 the lyric full of longing.

Fluieraş de fag,  
Îţi zici tu cu drag.  
Dragă fluieraş,  
Mult zici drăgălaş.  
Zi cu glasul tău, etc.

Vasile Alecsandri (1821–90)

### **Mandruiliţa de la munte**

Mandruiliţă de la munte  
Ce nu treci colea pe punte,  
Să te strâng la pieptul meu?  
Că te-aş face, zău, puicuţă,  
Să urăşti a ta căsuţa  
Şi să uiţi pe Dumnezeu.

De-a tot toarce nu ţi-e lene?  
Lasă furca-n buruiene  
Şi-mi sai iute cel pîrîu,  
Să culegem împreună,  
Tu la fragi de prin păşună,  
Eu la flori din sinul tău.

Sus în lunca înverzită,  
Creşte-o iarbă înflorită  
Ce se-ngîină cu-n isvor.  
Vino-n ă iarbă, mîndruiliţă,  
Tu să-mi cînţi doina, doiniţă,

Tu să-mi cînţi de dulce dor.

De-a tot toarce nu ţi-e lene?, etc.

Vasile Alecsandri

### **Tiberiu Brediceanu (1877–1968)**

#### **Cine m-aude cântînd**

Cine m-aude cântînd,  
Zice că n-am nici un gînd.

Gîndul care-l gîndesc eu  
Nu i-l dee Dumnezeu.

Că nu cînt, că ştiu cînta,  
Da-mi mai stîmpăr inima.

Anonymous

### **Franz Schubert (1797–1828)**

#### **Schwanengesang, D957 – No 4, 'Ständchen'**

Leise flehen meine Lieder  
Durch die Nacht zu Dir;  
In den stillen Hain hernieder,  
Liebchen, komm' zu mir!

'Little beech whistle',  
you say lovingly to yourself.  
'Dear little whistle',  
you often say, my dear.  
Say it out loud, etc.

My little mountain sweetheart,  
won't you come across the bridge,  
so I can clasp you to my breast?  
I would really make you, little maiden,  
hate your little house  
and forget about God.

Aren't you tired of spinning yet?  
Leave the distaff in the weeds,  
jump over the little creek,  
let's go gathering together,  
you'll pick wild strawberries from the meadow  
and I'll pluck flowers from your breast.

Here in the green meadow  
grass that's run to seed  
grows right down to a spring.  
Come into the grass, my little sweetheart,  
and sing to me the song of longing, that little song  
of longing,  
sing to me with sweet yearning.

Aren't you tired of spinning yet?, etc.

Anyone who hears me singing  
might think I have no worries.

God forbid that the thoughts in my mind  
should become reality.

I don't sing because I sing well,  
but because it sets my heart at ease.

Translations © Decca

Flüsternd schlanke Wipfel rauschen  
In des Mondes Licht;  
Des Verräters feindlich Lauschen  
Fürchte, Holde, nicht.

Hörst die Nachtigallen schlagen?  
Ach! sie flehen Dich,  
Mit der Töne süßen Klagen  
Flehen sie für mich.

Sie verstehn des Busens Sehnen,  
Kennen Liebesschmerz,  
Rühren mit den Silbertönen  
Jedes weiche Herz.

Lass auch Dir die Brust bewegen,  
Liebchen, höre mich!  
Bebend harr' ich Dir entgegen!  
Komm', beglücke mich!

Ludwig Rellstab (1799–1860)

**Friedrich von Flotow (1812–83)**  
**Martha – 'Qui sola, virgin rosa'**

'Tis the last rose of summer,  
Left blooming alone;  
All her lovely companions  
Are faded and gone;  
No flow'r of her kindred,  
No rosebud is nigh  
To reflect back her blushes,  
Or give sigh for sigh.

I'll not leave thee, thou lone one,  
To pine on the stem;  
Since the lovely are sleeping,  
Go, sleep thou with them;  
Thus kindly I scatter  
Thy leaves o'er thy bed,  
Where thy mates of the garden  
Lie scentless and dead.

So soon may I follow,  
When friendships decay,  
And from Love's shining circle  
The gems drop away!  
When true hearts lie wither'd,  
And fond ones are flown,  
Oh! who would inhabit  
This bleak world alone?

Thomas Moore (1779–1852)

Slender treetops whisper and rustle  
In the moonlight;  
My darling, do not fear  
That the hostile betrayer will overhear us.

Do you not hear the nightingales call?  
Ah! they are imploring you;  
With their sweet, plaintive songs  
They are imploring for me.

They understand the heart's yearning,  
They know the pain of love;  
With their silvery notes  
They touch every tender heart.

Let your heart, too, be moved,  
Beloved, hear me!  
Trembling, I await you!  
Come, make me happy!

Translation © Richard Wigmore

**Michael William Balfe (1808–70)**  
**The Bohemian Girl – 'I dreamt I dwelt in marble halls'**

I dreamt I dwelt in marble halls  
With vassals and serfs at my side,  
And of all who assembled within those walls  
That I was the hope and the pride.  
I had riches too great to count – could boast  
Of a high ancestral name;  
But I also dreamt which pleased me most  
That you loved me still the same.

I dreamt that suitors sought my hand,  
That knights upon bended knee,  
And with vows no maiden heart could  
withstand,  
They pledged their faith to me.  
And I dreamt that one of that noble host  
Came forth my hand to claim;  
But I also dreamt, which charmed me most,  
that you loved me still the same.

Alfred Bunn (1796–1860)

# About the performers

Decca Classics



Angela Gheorghiu

## Angela Gheorghiu soprano

Angela Gheorghiu was born in the small Romanian town of Adjud. She began singing at an early age and trained with Mia Barbu in Bucharest.

Her rise to international stardom began in 1992 with her debut at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, when she sang Mimi (*La bohème*). The same year she made her debut at the Metropolitan Opera, New York, and the Vienna State Opera. It was at the Royal Opera that she first sang her much-acclaimed Violetta (*La traviata*) in 1994. Since then she has been in constant demand in opera houses and concert halls around the world, appearing in New York, London, Paris, Salzburg, Berlin, Tokyo, Rome, Seoul, Venice, Athens, Monte-Carlo, Chicago, Philadelphia, São Paulo, Los Angeles, Lisbon, Valencia, Baalbek, Amsterdam, Kuala Lumpur, Zurich, Vienna, Salzburg, Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Prague, Montreal, Moscow, Taipei, San Juan, Ljubljana and Buenos Aires, among others.

She signed her first exclusive recording contract with Decca in 1995, recording DVDs of *La traviata* and *L'elisir d'amore* and, on CD, *La bohème*, a disc of sacred arias – *Mysterium* – and a number of discs of opera arias.

Her next exclusive recording agreement was signed in 1998 with EMI Classics (now Warner

Classics), for which she has recorded *La Rondine*, *Roméo et Juliette*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Werther*, *Manon*, *Il trovatore*, *Carmen*, Verdi's *Requiem*, duets with Roberto Alagna, plus a number of recital albums. She has also recorded *L'Amico Fritz* and *Fedora* for DG. In March 2015 Warner Classics released a celebratory box set, *Autograph*, celebrating 25 years of Angela Gheorghiu's career. Her recordings have received widespread critical and public acclaim and she has won many prizes, including Gramophone Awards and has twice been voted Female Artist of the Year at the Classic BRIT Awards (2001 and 2010).

Last month she released her new solo album *Plaisir d'amour* for Decca Classics, which features much of the repertoire she is performing this evening.

In December 2000 she performed the title-role in *Tosca*, the film directed by Benoît Jacquot. It was released in theatres around the world and received popular and critical acclaim.

She has received numerous awards and accolades for her artistry, including the 'Star of Romania', the country's highest honour, several honorary doctorates and, last year, Italy's 'Premio Puccini'.

In October 2018 her first autobiography was published: *Angela Gheorghiu: A Life for Art*, written together with Jon Tolansky.

Angela Gheorghiu is a rare phenomenon – a singer/actress with an exceptional vocal technique and profound dramatic and musical intelligence, but also a magnetic communicator who penetrates the hearts and minds of a panoramic spectrum of audience.

Her future engagements include concerts and recitals in London, Istanbul, Berlin, Oxford, China and the USA, *Tosca* in London (Royal Opera House), Dresden (Semperoper) and Berlin (Staatsoper Unter den Linden) and *La bohème* in Liège.



Alexandra Dariescu

## Alexandra Dariescu piano

Romanian-born British pianist Alexandra Dariescu impresses audiences and critics worldwide with her effortless musicality and captivating stage presence. Her vision and innovative approach to programming makes her stand out as a creative entrepreneur who likes to think differently.

Highlights of this season include debuts with the Orchestre National de France, Tonkünstler Orchestra, the Detroit, Houston, Melbourne and Sydney Symphony orchestras and the Auckland Philharmonia, as well as returns to the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Orchestre Symphonique de Québec and a UK tour with the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra. She continues her collaboration with Angela Gheorghiu, of which tonight's concert is part of an extensive tour.

In addition to core repertoire, she champions new and lesser-known works. These include Nadia Boulanger's *Fantaisie variée* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra under James Gaffigan, Germaine Tailleferre's *Ballade* with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra under Jessica Cottis and Ginastera's *Concierto Argentino* with the Stavanger Symphony and Royal Scottish

National orchestras under John Storgårds. She performs Ries's Third Piano Concerto for her debut with the Tonkünstler Orchestra this season.

Alexandra Dariescu's *The Nutcracker and I* is a ground-breaking multimedia performance for solo piano with dance and digital animation. It was premiered at Milton Court in 2017, and has since been heard across Europe, Australia, China, the Emirates and the USA. She has released an audiobook of the same name on Signum.

Her discography includes three discs of preludes for Champs Hill Records, featuring the complete preludes of Boulanger/Messiaen/Fauré, Chopin/Dutilleux and Shostakovich/Szymanowski. She has also recorded Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No 1 with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under Darrell Ang (Signum) and *Mesmerism*, a concerto written for her by Emily Howard (ECM). Last month saw the release of her new album with Angela Gheorghiu, *Plaisir d'amour* (Decca Classics).

Alexandra Dariescu has been mentored by Sir András Schiff and Imogen Cooper. After graduating from the Royal Northern College of Music with the Gold Medal, where she studied with Nelson Goerner, Alexander Melnikov, Mark Ray and Dina Parakhina, she pursued a Masters at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama with Ronan O'Hora. A former artist of the Young Classical Artists Trust (YCAT), she is a Laureate of the Verbier Festival Academy and received the UK's Women of the Future Award in the Arts and Culture category. In 2017 she was appointed patron of music in Lyddington, Cultural Ambassador of Romania and Honorary Associate Artist of the Royal Northern College of Music. In spring 2018 she received the accolade 'Officer of the Romanian Crown' and was selected as a Young European Leader by Friends of Europe.