

# Joyce DiDonato & Craig Terry: In My Solitude

**Start time:** 7.30pm

**Approximate running time:** 120 minutes including a 20 minute interval

Please note all timings are approximate and subject to change

## Programme

**Joseph Haydn** *Arianna a Naxos*

1. Recitative: Teseo mio ben
2. Aria: Dove sei, mio bel tesoro?
3. Recitative: Ma, a chi parlo?
4. Aria: Ah! che morir vorrei

**Gustav Mahler** *Rückert-Lieder*

1. Blicke mir nicht in die Lieder! (Look not, love, on my work unended!)
2. Ich atmet' einen linden Duft (I breathed the breath of blossoms red)
3. Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen (O garish world, long since thou hast lost me)
4. Um Mitternacht (At midnight hour)
5. Liebste du um Schönheit (Lov'st thou but beauty)

**Johann Adolph Hasse** 'Morte col fiero aspetto' from *Marc'Antonio e Cleopatra*

**George Frideric Handel** 'É Pur così in un giorno...Piangerò la sorte mia' from *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*

**Hector Berlioz** 'Ah!, Ah!, Je vais mourir... Adieu fière cité' from *Les Troyens*

**Giuseppe Giordani** *Caro mio ben* (arr Craig Terry)

**Alessandro Parisotti & Salvatore Rosa** *Se tu m'ami/Star Vicino*

**Duke Ellington** *(In My) Solitude* (arr Craig Terry)

**Louiguy** *La Vie en Rose* (arr Craig Terry)

**Music has a power to heal and reunite people through a sense of community, says Joyce DiDonato. After what we've all been through, this sounds just like what everyone needs, writes James Drury.**

'I've been so hungry to be back on the stage that I want to do it ALL, all at once!' enthuses mezzo superstar Joyce DiDonato about the breadth of music in tonight's concert. 'I've always had a huge musical appetite, and juxtaposing styles, languages and genres against each other has always fascinated me, in particular when they are telling different angles of the same story – in this case, one of solitude.'

Titled after a moving Duke Ellington song (which will be performed tonight in an arrangement by pianist Craig Terry), this concert is not just an opportunity to reflect on the brutality and life-changing time of the Covid-19 pandemic. It's also a celebration of life itself and that we can be together again to revel in the delight of sharing live music.

'I find it very comforting to know that through the centuries, humanity has been dealing with very similar stories to the one we are living through right now – and we're here to talk about it, as well,' says DiDonato.

This evening she's reuniting with Terry, with whom she won a GRAMMY last year for *Songplay* – that joyous record that mixes Cavalli and Chet Baker equally. 'Craig is not only an extraordinary musician, but you'd be hard-pressed to find anyone who truly enjoys that simple act of performing,' says DiDonato. 'It's in every fibre of his being, and this not only lifts me up, but the audience as well.'

Sadly they never got a chance to perform that record here, as the pandemic forced the cancellation of that concert. So tonight the two will perform music that evokes the gamut of emotions people have experienced during the last 18 months. From Haydn's dramatic *Arianna a Naxos* to Louiguy's *La Vie en Rose*, the programme is an emotional journey through poignancy, introspection and the strength of the human spirit, leading to the joyful *Se tu m'ami* by Parisotti and Rosa. As in *Songplay*, Terry has written some brilliant arrangements for DiDonato's extraordinary voice. 'I only ever programme things I truly love,' she says.

The mixture of feelings in the programme reflects the Kansas-born singer's experience over this turbulent period. 'While I have mourned greatly for the people I've lost to Covid, for the debilitating hits that our industry has suffered, and for the seismic ruptures I've witnessed in our society – I have taken great comfort in the heroic acts of

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compassion and caring I've seen on the front lines of this pandemic, in the innovative artistic endeavours that have emerged, and in the gift of nature all around that continues to do her thing, reminding me that in the grand scheme of it all, this is a blip.'

During the lockdowns, DiDonato says she spent a lot of time gardening. 'I also tried not to miss too much. But on the rare occasion I was able to step onto a stage again and sing for real-live-breathing people, I could not stop the tears and the joy of connecting again to my fellow citizens.'

Many in the audience will be sharing their first live concert in two years with DiDonato and Terry. And it was while rehearsing in the pianist's living room that DiDonato felt that rush of emotion at seeing a live performance again. 'A young tenor from South Africa, Lunga Eric Hallam, was rehearsing a piece in his native language while playing on the drum, and I was seated right next to him,' she recalls. 'Tears flooded down my cheeks as I was completely shaken to feel the presence of a beautiful human voice doing what it does so uniquely – going straight to my heart. It's not the same as when viewed through your smartphone. It moved me deeply and convinced me that our spirits need this in our lives.'

Renowned as a passionate advocate for the power of the arts to effect change, DiDonato says she feels 'profound personal gratitude' for being able to perform live again, but quickly adds: 'I also feel a strong sense of responsibility to help people connect again to the purity of life – the beauty of healing that part within us that can so easily veer towards despair, darkness and fear, and to nudge it back into hope and possibility.'

In her activism, she's talked about the 'transformative, healing power of music', and today this applies more than ever. 'Slowly, people are emerging and taking a tremendous leap of faith to return into the world and sit side by side – often with strangers – to experience something as a community. I don't know that we ever processed how sacred this is. My experience in the few performances I've given in front of audiences is not only that the quality of listening (and performing!) is heightened to beautiful effect, but there is a tremendous cathartic experience that emerges as we can once again begin to share a common, healing experience. I think these are the exact things that will begin to bring us back to life.'

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## Performers

**Joyce DiDonato** mezzo-soprano

**Craig Terry** piano

Produced by the Barbican



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