

WIGMORE HALL

Sunday 8 June 2025
3.00pm

This concert is supported by Patricia Haitink

Axelle Fanyo soprano
Kunal Lahiry piano

Kurt Weill (1900-1950)

Complainte de la Seine (1934)

Je ne t'aime pas (1934)

Youkali (1934)

Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951)

From *Brettli-Lieder* (1901)

Galathea • Der genügsame Liebhaber •
Arie aus *Dem Spiegel von Arkadien*

Sofia Avramidou (b.1988)

Entre les miroirs (2023)

George Gershwin (1898-1937)

The Man I Love (1924) *arranged by Earl Wild*

Spiritual

Sometimes I feel like a motherless child (?1870)

Florence Price (1887-1953)

Songs to the Dark Virgin (1941)
I. • II. • III.

Margaret Bonds (1913-1972)

The Negro Speaks of Rivers (1941)

William Bolcom (b.1938)

From *12 Cabaret Songs* (1977-1985)
Toothbrush time • Song of Black Max • George • Amor



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'My dear Dr Koussevitzky, To begin with I have two handicaps – those of sex and race'. So wrote Florence Price to the conductor Serge Koussevitzky, acknowledging the barriers she faced in having her music heard. Like Price, many of the composers on this programme encountered prejudice of one kind or another, yet frequently responded with music of exhilarating strength, defiance and joy.

Kurt Weill fled Nazi Germany in 1933; as a Jewish man, his safety was under threat, and he was officially denounced for his political views. Weill would settle in America, but stopped first in Paris, where he wooed French audiences by adding local flavour to the cabaret style he had developed so successfully in Weimar Germany; in 1929 he had written with pride of composing works 'consistently and uncompromisingly, against the resistance of the snobs and aesthetes'. Both *Complainte de la Seine* and *Je ne t'aime pas* were composed in 1934 to rather jaundiced words by Maurice Magre, and *Youkali* dates from the same year, originally written as an instrumental interlude for the play *Marie Galante*, for which Weill wrote the music. Bittersweet lyrics by actor and trade unionist Roger Bertrand, under the pseudonym Roger Fernay, were added later, and the song was published as a 'Tango-habanera'.

Arnold Schoenberg was another Jewish composer who, after encountering anti-Semitism in Germany and foreseeing the coming conflict, left his homeland – stopping off in France – for America. In 1924, Schoenberg wrote of the need for tolerance: 'If only we could manage to be wise enough to put people on probation instead of condemning them'. Yet his experience of life in Berlin in the early 1900s had been fruitful, including work at the *Überbrettli*, the cabaret segment of Ernst von Wolzogen's Bunter Theater, where popular styles were used to explore serious topics. In summer 1901 Schoenberg set verses in the *Überbrettli* style, resulting in his *Brettli-Lieder*, from which we hear 'Galathea', 'The contented suitor' and the 'Aria from the Mirror of Arcadia' – songs that reveal Schoenberg's playful side.

When he was in Hollywood, Schoenberg regularly played tennis with Charlie Chaplin and **George Gershwin** – who was also a great admirer of one of Schoenberg's students, Alban Berg. Gershwin's premature death curtailed the musical 'betterment' he sought through these connections, and it is tantalising to imagine how his fusion of classical and jazz disciplines might have evolved. His song 'The Man I Love' was at first intended for the musical *Lady, Be Good* (1924) before being used in *Strike Up the Band* (1927) and *Rosalie* (1928), ultimately becoming a popular stand-alone number. In 1932, Gershwin published a selection of solo piano arrangements of his songs, writing in the preface that this 'sheet music, as ordinarily printed for mass sales, is arranged with an eye to simplicity.' Yet the arrangements are not as straightforward as Gershwin implied, and they inspired in American pianist-composer Earl Wild a series of rich and intricate *études*, almost *fantasias*, showing the

influence of Liszt in their virtuosity and complexity. On this programme, Wild's arrangement of 'The Man I Love' is framed by a new work by contemporary Greek composer **Sofia Avramidou** [see next page], and the spiritual *Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child*, which became a Civil Rights anthem in the 1960s.

Florence Price is considered to be the first African American woman to gain recognition as a composer. In the 1920s, she began to win awards for her compositions, her Symphony in E minor winning first prize in the Wanamaker competition in 1932. The symphony was premièred in 1933 by the Chicago Symphony, Price becoming the first Black woman to have an orchestral piece played by a major American orchestra. When Marian Anderson performed Price's *Songs to the Dark Virgin* (1941), the *Chicago Daily News* hailed the occasion as 'one of the greatest immediate successes ever won by an American song'. This radiant work comes from Price's collection *Songs of the Weary Blues*, four settings of poetry by Harlem Renaissance poet Langston Hughes from his 1926 volume *The Weary Blues*. The plural title 'Songs...' refers to the three separate sections of the poem.

Margaret Bonds was another of the first African American composers to gain recognition in the States. She made popular arrangements of spirituals and, like Price, is particularly celebrated for her work with Hughes. Her powerful Hughes setting *The Negro Speaks of Rivers* (1941) emerged from a formative experience: in 1929, aged 16, Bonds started studying at 'this prejudiced university, this terribly prejudiced place... I was looking in the basement of the Evanston Public Library where they had the poetry. I came in contact with this wonderful poem, *The Negro Speaks of Rivers*, and I'm sure it helped my feelings of security. Because in that poem he tells how great the Black man is. And if I had any misgivings, which I would have to have – here you are in a setup where the restaurants won't serve you and you're going to college, you're sacrificing, trying to get through school – and I know that poem helped save me.'

Pulitzer prize-winning American composer **William Bolcom** studied with Messiaen at the Paris Conservatoire, and has since sought to blur the boundaries between popular and art music in his output. Bolcom has written several volumes of *Cabaret Songs*, mostly to words by Arnold Weinstein. Following the witty 'Toothbrush Time', we hear 'Song of Black Max', based on a true story told by the Dutch-American artist Willem de Kooning. He and his fellow post-war artists were known as 'the de Kooning boys', and while living in Rotterdam they became aware of a dark-clad figure known locally as Black Max; Bolcom conjures up his murky, seedy world. After the flamboyance of 'George', our recital concludes with 'Amor', the piano's syncopated rhythms, evoking Latin-American styles, underpinning the soprano's wide-ranging, unfettered – even unhinged – celebration of love.

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The inspiration for *Entre les miroirs* came from a documentary made in 2008, telling the story of a meeting that never took place: that of the Portuguese poet Pessoa and the Greek poet Cavafy, 'the night Fernando Pessoa met Constantine Cavafy'.

Entre les miroirs is a fusion of Cavafy's *La ville* and Pessoa's *Lisboa com suas casas* (written under the name Álvaro de Campos), two poems evoking the devouring energy of an imaginary city that engulfs our own desires for evolution, desires absorbed by our own contemplative inertia.

These two poems, like two monolithic mirrors placed one opposite the other, create an infinite horizontality through their reflections.

The song evolves within this initiatory path, using the sonority of the body, a reflection of Cavafy, and the voice, a reflection of Pessoa, to materialize a verticality from the earth, our roots, to the sky, our spirituality.

Entre les miroirs offers an introspection of a humanity prey to the voracity of immortal metropolises.

© Sofia Avramidou

Kurt Weill (1900-1950)

Complainte de la Seine Lament of the Seine (1934)

Maurice Magre

Au fond de la Seine il y a de l'or	At the bottom of the Seine there is gold,
Des bateaux rouillés, des bijoux, des armes	rusty boats, jewels, weapons.
Au fond de la Seine il y a des morts	At the bottom of the Seine there are corpses.
Au fond de la Seine il y a des larmes	At the bottom of the Seine there are tears.
Au fond de la Seine il y a des fleurs	At the bottom of the Seine there are flowers –
De vase et de boue elles sont nourries	nourished on slime and mud.
Au fond de la Seine il y a des cœurs	At the bottom of the Seine there are hearts
Qui souffri' de trop pour vivre la vie	that suffered too much to live.
Et puis des cailloux et des bêtes grises	And then there are pebbles and grey creatures.
L'âme des égouts soufflant des poisons	The soul of sewers spewing poison.
Les anneaux jetés par des incomprises	Rings tossed in by the misunderstood,
Des pieds qu'une hélice a coupés du tronc'	feet that a propeller has sliced from a body.
Et les fruits maudits des ventres stériles	And the cursed fruits of a sterile womb,
Les blancs avortés que nul n'aima	the aborted fetuses that no one loved.
Les vomissemens de la grand' ville	The city's vomit.
Au fond de la Seine il y a cela	All this rests at the bottom of the Seine.
O Seine clémente où vont les cadavres	O merciful Seine, where cadavers end,
O lit dont les draps sont faits de limon,	O beds with linen made of slime,
Fleuv' des déchets, sans fanal, sans hâvre	river of garbage without beacon or harbour –

Chanteuse berçant la morgue et les ponts	singer who lulls the morgue and the bridges,
Accueill' le pauvre, accueill' la femme,	welcome the poor, welcome the women,
Accueill' l'ivrogne, accueill' le fou,	welcome the drunks, welcome the insane.
Mêle leurs sanglots au bruit de tes lames	Mingle their sobs with the sound of your waves
Et porte leurs cœurs parmi les cailloux.	and carry their hearts along with the pebbles.

Please do not turn the page until the song and its accompaniment have ended.

Je ne t'aime pas (1934)

Maurice Magre

Retire ta main, je ne t'aime pas

Car tu l'as voulu, tu n'es qu'un ami.

Pour d'autres sont faits le creux de tes bras

Et ton cher baiser, ta tête endormie.

Ne me parle pas, lorsque c'est le soir

Trop intimement, à voix basse même

Ne me donne pas surtout ton mouchoir:

Il renferme trop le parfum que j'aime.

Dis-moi tes amours, je ne t'aime pas

Quelle heure te fut la plus enivrante?

Et si elle t'aimait bien, et si elle fut ingrate

En me le disant, ne sois pas charmant.

Je n'ai pas pleuré, je n'ai pas souffert

Ce n'était qu'un rêve et qu'une folie.

Il me suffira que tes yeux soient clairs

Sans regret du soir, ni mélancolie.

Il me suffira de voir ton bonheur

Il me suffira de voir ton sourire.

Conte-moi comment elle a pris ton cœur

Et même dis-moi ce qu'on ne peut dire.

Non, tais-toi plutôt... Je suis à genoux

Le feu s'est éteint, la porte est fermée.

Je ne t'aime pas.

Ne demande rien, je pleure... C'est tout.

Je ne t'aime pas.

O mon bien-aimé! Retire ta main.

Je ne t'aime pas.

I don't love you

Take back your hand, I don't love you;

for that's what you wanted, you're just a friend.

The hollow of your embrace was made for someone else,

like your dear kiss, your sleeping head.

When it's evening, don't speak to me

too intimately, with a low voice, and

above all don't give me your handkerchief:

it holds too much of the perfume that I love.

Tell me of your lovers; I don't love you -

what moment has been most intoxicating to you?

And if she loved you well, and if she was unappreciative -

in telling me about it, don't be charming.

I didn't cry, I didn't suffer -

it was nothing but dream and madness.

It will be enough for me that your eyes are clear

without either regret of that night, or melancholy.

It will be enough for me to see your happiness;

it will be enough for me to see your smile.

Tell me how she won your heart

and even tell me the unspeakable.

No, rather be quiet... I am on my knees;

the fire is out, the door is closed.

I don't love you.

Don't ask anything, I weep... That's all.

I don't love you.

Oh, my beloved! Take back your hand.

I don't love you.

Youkali (1934)

Roger Fernay

C'est presqu' au bout du monde,

Ma barque vagabonde ...

Due to copyright reasons, we are unable to produce the full original text for this song.

Almost to the end of the world,

my errant barque, drifting at the will of the waves, led me one day.

The island is very small, but the sprite who inhabits it politely invites us to tour it.

Youkali,
it's the land of our desires,
Youkali,
it's happiness and pleasure,
Youkali,
it's the land where we leave our cares behind,
it's like a beacon in our night.
The star we follow,
it's Youkali.

Youkali,
it's where we keep our promises,
Youkali,
it's the land of shared love,
it's hope
which is at the heart of all human kind,
the salvation
we are all waiting for,
Youkali,
it's the land of our desires,
Youkali,
it's happiness, it's pleasure,
but it's a dream, a folly,
there is no Youkali!

And life drags us along,
tedious and mundane,
yet the poor human soul,
seeking oblivion everywhere,
knew how, as it left this earth,
to find the mystery where our dreams are buried
in some Youkali.

Youkali ...

Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951)

From *Brettli-Lieder* (1901)

Galathea

Frank Wedekind

Ach, wie brenn' ich vor
Verlangen,
Galathea, schönes Kind,
Dir zu küssen deine Wangen,
Weil sie so entzückend
sind.

Wonne die mir widerfahre,
Galathea, schönes Kind,
Dir zu küssen deine Haare,
Weil sie so verlockend sind.

Nimmer wehr' mir bis ich
ende,
Galathea, schönes Kind,
Dir zu küssen deine Hände,
Weil sie so verlockend sind.

Ach, du ahnst nicht, wie ich
glühe,
Galathea, schönes Kind,
Dir zu küssen deine Knie,
Weil sie so verlockend sind.

Und was tät ich nicht, du
Süsse,
Galathea, schönes Kind,
Dir zu küssen deine Füße,
Weil sie so verlockend sind.

Aber deinen Mund enthülle,
Mädchen, meinen Küssen nie,
Denn in seiner Reize
Fülle,
Küsst ihn nur die
Phantasie.

Ah, how I'm burning with
desire,
Galathea, lovely child,
just to kiss your cheeks,
because they're so
enchanting.

The rapture that I feel,
Galathea, lovely child,
just to kiss your tresses,
because they're so enticing.

Never resist me, till I've
finished,
Galathea, lovely child,
kissing your hands,
because they're so enticing.

Ah, you do not sense how
I burn,
Galathea, lovely child,
to kiss your knees,
because they're so enticing.

And what wouldn't I do,
my sweet,
Galathea, lovely child,
to kiss your feet,
because they're so enticing.

But never expose your lips,
sweet girl, to my kisses,
for the fullness of their
charms
can only be kissed in
fantasy.

Der genügsame Liebhaber

Hugo Salus

Meine Freundin hat eine
schwarze Katze,
Mit weichem knisterndem
Sammetfell,
Und ich, ich hab' eine
blitzblanke Glatze,
Blitzblank und glatt und
silberhell.

Meine Freundin gehört zu
den üppigen Frauen,
Sie liegt auf dem Divan das
ganze Jahr,
Beschäftigt das Fell ihrer
Katze zu krauen,
Mein Gott, ihr behagt halt
das sammtweiche Haar.

Und komm' ich am Abend
die Freundin besuchen,
So liegt die Mieze im
Schosse bei ihr,
Und nascht mit ihr von dem
Honigkuchen,
Und schauert wenn ich leise
ihr Haar berühr'.

Und will ich mal zärtlich tun
mit dem Schatze,
Und dass sie mir auch
einmal 'Eitschi' macht,
Dann stülp' ich die Katze auf
meine Glatze,
Dann streichelt die Freundin
die Katze und lacht.

The contented suitor

My girlfriend has a black
cat
with soft, rustling, velvet
fur,
and I, I have a shining
bald pate,
shining and smooth and
silvery.

My girlfriend's one of those
voluptuous women,
she lies on the sofa all
year round,
busily stroking her cat's
fur,
my God, how she loves
that soft, velvet fur.

And when in the evening I
visit my girlfriend,
her pussy-cat's always on
her lap,
nibbling with her the
gingerbread,
and trembling whenever I
stroke its fur.

And if I become amorous
with my love,
so that she might call me
'honey-bun',
I lift the cat onto my bald
pate –
and my girlfriend strokes
the cat and laughs.

Arie aus *Dem Spiegel von Arkadien*

Emanuel Schikaneder

Seit ich so viele Weiber
sah,
Schlägt mir mein Herz so
warm,
Es summt und brummt mir
hier und da,
Als wie ein Bienenschwarm.

Und ist ihr Feuer meinem
gleich,
Ihr Auge schön und
klar,
So schlaget wie der
Hammerstreich,
Mein Herzchen immer dar.
Bum, bum, bum, usw.

Ich wünschte tausend
Weiber mir,
Wenn's recht den Göttern wär',
Da tanzt' ich wie ein Marmeltier,
In's Kreuz und in die Quer.

Das wär' ein Leben auf der
Welt,
Da wollt' ich lustig sein,
Ich hüpfte wie ein Has'
durch's Feld,
Und's Herz schlug immer
drein.
Bum, bum, bum, usw.

Wer Weiber nicht zu
schätzen weiss,
Ist weder kalt noch warm,
Und liegt als wie ein Brocken
Eis,
In eines Mädchens Arm.

Da bin ich schon ein andrer
Mann,
Ich spring' um sie herum;
Mein Herz klopft froh an
ihrem an
Und machet bum, bum,
bum, usw.

Aria from *The Mirror of Arcadia*

Since seeing so many
women,
my heart beats so
ardently,
it hums and buzzes here
and there,
just like a swarm of bees.

And if her ardour
resembles mine,
and her eyes are lovely
and limpid,
then my heart, like a
hammer,
beats on and on.
Boom, boom, boom, etc.

I wish I could have a
thousand women,
if it so pleased the gods,
I'd dance like a marmot
in every direction.

That would be a life worth
living,
then I'd have joy and fun,
I'd hop like a hare through
the field,
and my heart would skip
along.
Boom, boom, boom, etc.

A man who does not
value women
is neither cold nor warm,
and lies like a block of
ice
in a young girl's arms.

I'm a different sort of
man,
I circle women in a dance;
my heart beats happily
against hers,
going boom, boom,
boom, etc.

Sofia Avramidou (b.1988)

Entre les miroirs (2023)

Sofia Avramidou

J'irai par une autre terre
Lisbonne
j'irai par une autre mer
avec ses maisons de
diverses couleurs
mon cœur—tel un mort—y
gît enseveli.
Je veux imaginer quelque
chose
mon cœur—tel un mort—y
gît enseveli.
Je veux prolonger la vision
de ce que j'imagine être
Mais je ne peux plus voir.
Je souris
je m'endors
j'oublie que j'existe.

Between the mirrors

I'll go to another country
Lisbon
I'll go to another shore
with its houses of many
colors,
my heart- lies buried -like
something dead.
I want to imagine one
thing
my heart- lies buried -like
something dead.
I want to see farther into
the vista I glimpse
But I can no longer see.
I smile,
I can only sleep
and forget I exist.

George Gershwin (1898-1937)

The Man I Love (1924)

arranged by Earl Wild

Ira Gershwin

Someday he'll come along
The man I love...

Due to copyright reasons we are unable to reproduce the text for this song.

Spiritual

Sometimes I feel like a motherless child

(?1870)

Traditional

Sometimes I feel like a motherless child,
A long way from home.
Sometimes I feel like I'm almost gone,
A long way from home.

Florence Price (1887-1953)

Songs to the Dark Virgin (1941)

Langston Hughes

I.

Would
That I were a jewel,
A shattered jewel,
That all my shining brilliants
Might fall at thy feet,
Thou dark one.

II.

Would
That I were a garment,
A shimmering, silken garment,
That all my folds
Might wrap about thy body,
Absorb thy body,
Hold and hide thy body,
Thou dark one.

III.

Would
That I were a flame,
But one sharp, leaping flame
To annihilate thy body,
Thou dark one.

Margaret Bonds (1913-1972)

The Negro Speaks of Rivers (1941)

Langston Hughes

I've known rivers:
I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the
flow of human blood in human veins.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
I looked upon the Nile and raised the Pyramids above it.
I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln
went down to New Orleans and I've seen its muddy
bosom turn all golden in the sunset.

I've known rivers:
Ancient, dusky rivers.

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

William Bolcom (b.1938)

From *12 Cabaret Songs* (1977-1985)

Arnold Weinstein

Toothbrush time

It's toothbrush time,
ten a.m. again and toothbrush time.
Last night at half past nine it seemed O.K.
But in the light of day not so fine
at toothbrush time.

Now he's crashing round my bathroom
now he's reading my degree,
perusing all my pills, reviewing all my ills
and he comes out smelling like me.
Now he advances on my kitchen,
now he raids ev'ry shelf
till from the pots and pans and puddles and debris
emerges three eggs all for himself.

Oh, how I'd be ahead if I'd stood out of bed.
I wouldn't sit here grieving,
waiting for the wonderful moment of his leaving
at toothbrush time, toothbrush time,
ten a.m. again and toothbrush time.

I know it's sad to be alone
it's so bad to be alone,
still I should have known
that I'd be glad to be alone.
I should've known, I should've known!
Never should've picked up the phone.

Hey - uh, listen, uhm (trying to remember his name)
uh, I've got to, uh, - oh, you gotta go too?
So glad you understand.
And
by the way,
did you say
nine tonight again?
See you then.
Toothbrush time!

*Please do not turn the page until the song and its
accompaniment have ended.*

Song of Black Max

He was always dressed in black,
Long black jacket, broad black hat,
Sometimes a cape,
And as thin, and as thin as rubber tape:
Black Max.

He would raise that big black hat
To the big shots of the town
Who raised their hats right back,
Never knew they were bowing to
Black Max.

I'm talking about night in Rotterdam
When the right night people of all the town
Would find what they could in the night neighborhood of
Black Max.

There were women in the windows
With bodies for sale
Dressed in curls like little girls
In little doll house jails.
When the women walked the street
With the beds upon their backs,
Who was lifting up his brim to them?
Black Max!

And there were looks for sale, the art of the smile,
Only certain people walked that mystery mile
Artists, charlatans, vaudevillians,
Men of mathematics, acrobatics and civilians.

There was knitting needle music from a lady organ
grinder
With all her sons behind her.
Marco, Vito, Benno
(Was he strong! Though he walked like a woman)
And Carlo, who was five.
He must still be alive!

Ah, poor Marco had the syph
And if you didn't take the terrible cure those days
You went crazy and died
And he did.

And at the coffin
Before they closed the lid,
Who raised his lid?
Black Max!

I was climbing on the train one day
Going far away to the good old USA
When I heard some music underneath the tracks.
Standing there beneath the bridge,
Long black jacket, broad black hat,
Playing the harmonica,
One hand free to lift that hat to me:
Black Max!

George

My friend George
Used to say,
'Oh, call me Georgia, hon,
Get yourself a drink,'
And sang the best soprano
In our part of town.

In beads, brocade and pins
He sang if you happened in
Through the door he never locked
And said, 'Get yourself a drink,'
And sang out loud
Till tears fell in the cognac
And the chocolate milk and gin
And on the beads, brocade and pins.

When strangers happened through
His open door
George said, 'Stay,
But you gotta keep quiet while I sing,'
And then a minute after:
'And call me Georgia.'

One fine day
A stranger in a suit of navy blue
Took George's life
With a knife
George had placed
Beside an apple pie he'd baked
And stabbed him in the middle
Of *Un bel di vedremo*
Which he sang for this particular stranger
Who was from the United States Navy.

The funeral was at the cocktail hour.
We knew George would like it like that.
Tears fell on the beads, brocade and pins
In the coffin
Which was white
Because George was a virgin.

Oh call him Georgia, hon,
Get yourself a drink...

'You can call me Georgia, hon,
Get yourself a drink!'

Amor

It wasn't the policeman's fault in all the traffic roar
Instead of shouting "Halt!" when he saw me he shouted,
"Amor, Amor, Amor, Amor."

Even the icecream man (free icecreams by the score)
Instead of shouting butter pecan one look at me,
He shouted, "Amor, Amor, Amor!"

All over town it went that way.
Everybody took off the day.
Even philosophers understood
how good was the good 'cuz I looked so good!

The poor stoped taking less.
The rich stopped needing more.
Instead of saying "no" and "yes",
Both looking at me shouted "Amor!"

My stay in town was cut short.
I as dragged to court.
The judge said I disturbed the peace and the jury gave
him what for!

The judge raised his hand and instead of desist and
cease,
Judgie came to the stand, took my hand and whispered,
"Amor, Amor, Amor, Amor!"

Night was turning into day,
I walked alone away.
Never see that town again.
But as I passed the churchhouse door
Instead of singing "Amen"
The choir was singing, "Amor, Amor, Amor, Amor!"

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