

SPRING EASTER CONCERT



ΑΝΟΙΞΙΑΤΙΚΗ ΠΑΣΧΑΛΙΝΗ ΣΥΝΑΥΛΙΑ



ZOE NICOLAÏDOU - Soprano

ANDREAS ARODITIS - Tenor

ZBYNĚK MARUŠKA - Piano



Works by: Schubert,
Mendelssohn, Verdi, Dvořák,
Smetana, Suk, Franck, Gounod,
Williams, Gomez, Adams

HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC CHURCH NICOSIA - WEDNESDAY 9 APRIL 2025

20:00



ST CATHERINE CATHOLIC CHURCH LIMASSOL - THURSDAY 10 APRIL 2025

20:00

Free Admission

Organized by the Representative of the Latin Catholic Community in the House of Representatives, under the auspices of H.E. Monsignor Bruno Varriano, Bishop Patriarchal Vicar of Cyprus and supported by the Deputy Ministry of Culture

PROGRAMME – ΠΡΟΓΡΑΜΜΑ

WILLIAM GOMEZ
(1939 -2000)

Ave Maria

FELIX MENDELSSOHN
(1809 – 1847)

Ye people, rend your hearts...If with all your... from Elijah

ANTONY DVOŘAK
(1840 - 1893)

A Les Je Tichy Kolem Kol-The forest is quiet all around

Stará matka - Song my mother taught me

CHARLES GOUNOD
(1818 -1893)

Sanctus - (Messe Solennelle *de Sainte-Cécile*)

BEDRICH SMETANA
(1824 -1884)

Mařenka's Aria "Och, jaký žal "

JOSEF SUK
(1874-1935)

Píseň lásky - Song of Love - Piano Solo

GIUSEPPE VERDI
(1813 - 1901)

Ingemisco from the Requiem

Ave Maria from the Opera Otello

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS
(1872 -1958)

Easter from Five Mystical Songs

FRANZ SCHUBERT
(1797 - 1828)

Ave Maria

STEPHEN ADAMS
(1841 - 1913)

The Holy City

ΣΤΑΜΑΤΗ ΣΠΑΝΟΥΔΑΚΗ
(1948..)

Κύριε των Δυνάμεων

CÉSAR FRANCK
(1822 - 1890)

Panis Angelicus - Bread of Angels

All electronic devices must be switched off during performance

Programme Notes

An Enduring Prayer: Ave Maria

Throughout the centuries, the prayer *Ave Maria* has inspired countless composers, each bringing a unique voice to its timeless words. In this programme, we encounter three deeply expressive settings by William Gómez, Giuseppe Verdi, and Franz Schubert. Though differing in musical language, all three compositions share a reverence and intimacy that make *Ave Maria* one of the most cherished prayers in sacred music.

Ave Maria

William Gómez (1939–2000)

Soprano & Piano

Gómez's setting of *Ave Maria* is a lyrical and contemporary interpretation of the classic prayer. Its flowing melodic lines and expressive harmonies create a deeply meditative atmosphere, making it a moving addition to the repertoire.

Text excerpt:

*Ave Maria, llena eres de gracia,
Bendita eres tú entre todas las mujeres,
Y bendito es el fruto de tu vientre, Jesús.
Santa María, Madre de Dios,
Ruega por nosotros pecadores,
Ahora y en la hora de nuestra muerte. Amén.*

Ye People, Rend Your Hearts... If With All Your Hearts

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)

Tenor & Piano (from Elijah)

A moment of deep reflection from Mendelssohn's oratorio *Elijah*, this piece transitions from a solemn recitative into a soaring aria, filled with hope and faith.

Text excerpt:

*If with all your hearts ye truly seek Me, Ye shall ever surely find Me, Thus saith our God.
Oh, that I knew where I might find Him, That I might even come before His presence.*

A les je tichý kolem kol (*The Forest is Quiet All Around*)

Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904) - Soprano & Piano

This song, the third in Dvořák's *Gypsy Melodies*, Op. 55, is a tender and introspective piece set to a text by Czech poet Adolf Heyduk. It captures the stillness of a forest as a metaphor for the quiet sorrow of the soul. Through its simple yet expressive melody and evocative piano accompaniment, the music conveys deep emotional resonance and poetic dignity.

Text excerpt (translated from Czech):

*All around the woods are so still and silent, my heart beats so fearfully;
The black smoke sinks ever deeper, and dries the tears on my cheek...
(Translation © Richard Stokes)*

Stará matka (Songs My Mother Taught Me)

Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904) - Soprano & Piano

Perhaps Dvořák's most beloved song, this touching miniature speaks of memory, motherhood, and passing down traditions. The simple, heartfelt melody and tender piano part make it a moment of gentle reflection and universal emotion.

Text excerpt (translated from Czech):

*Songs my mother taught me
In the days long vanished,
Oft the thoughts come thronging
Round my heart they banish.*

Sanctus

Charles Gounod (1818–1893)

Tenor & Piano (from *Messe Solennelle de Sainte-Cécile*)

Originally written for choir and orchestra, this radiant *Sanctus* finds a luminous quality in a more intimate voice-and-piano setting. The soaring vocal lines echo the joy of divine praise, supported by a reverent, bell-like accompaniment.

Text excerpt (translated):

*Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of Your glory.
Hosanna in the highest, Blessed is he who comes,
In the name of the Lord, Hosanna, in the highest, Amen*

Mařenka's Aria "Och, jaký žal"

Bedřich Smetana (1824–1884)

Soprano & Piano (from *The Bartered Bride*)

This poignant aria expresses Mařenka's despair and emotional turmoil. Smetana's use of folk-infused melody and expressive contour heightens the drama while the piano reflects the heroine's inner grief.

Text excerpt (translated):

Oh, what sorrow fills my heart...oh how I yearn to know the truth in this difficult moment! that dream of love how fair it was, how hopefully it blossomed, and over my pitiful heart it like a star was rising.

Píseň lásky (Song of Love)

Josef Suk (1874–1935)

Piano Solo

A tender and introspective piece for solo piano, this miniature captures Suk's romantic voice with flowing lines and lush harmonies. Its title reflects the heartfelt, lyrical nature of the work—a musical love text without words.

Ingemisco

Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)
Tenor & Piano (from *Requiem*)

A soaring plea for mercy, this aria from Verdi's *Requiem* reveals both operatic brilliance and spiritual intensity. The voice's lyrical strength and the piano's rich harmonies create a moment of passionate supplication.

Text excerpt (translated):

*I groan as a guilty one,
And my face blushes with guilt.
Spare the suppliant, O God!*

Ave Maria

Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)
Soprano & Piano (from *Otello*)

Desdemona's prayer before her tragic fate, this *Ave Maria* is simple and serene yet emotionally devastating. The vocal line floats gently above a sparse piano texture, expressing innocence, resignation, and deep faith.

Text excerpt (translated):

*Hail Mary, full of grace,
Pray for us sinners,
Now and at the hour of our death.*

Easter

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)
(from *Five Mystical Songs*)
Tenor & Piano

Vaughan Williams' radiant setting of George Herbert's Easter poem captures the joyful awakening of the soul. The piano accompaniment brings out the harmonic richness while the voice soars with confident praise.

Text excerpt:

*Rise heart, thy Lord is risen;
Sing His praise without delays.
Who takes thee by the hand,
that thou likewise,
With Him may'st rise.*

Ave Maria

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)

Soprano & Piano

Schubert's setting, originally part of a German song cycle, has become one of the most cherished sacred pieces in the classical repertoire. Its prayerful elegance and flowing accompaniment offer a sense of stillness and grace.

Text excerpt:

Ave Maria, Gratia plena,

Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, Ora pro nobis...

(Hail Mary, full of grace... pray for us.)

The Holy City

Stephen Adams (1841–1913)

Tenor & Piano

The Holy City tells of a vision of Jerusalem, progressing from Palm Sunday to a triumphant vision of the new heaven and earth.

Text excerpt:

Jerusalem, Jerusalem,

Lift up your gates and sing—

Hosanna in the highest!

Κύριε των Δυνάμεων (Lord of the Powers)

Σταμάτης Σπανουδάκης (1948–)

Soprano & Piano

A deeply spiritual Byzantine hymn from the Great Compline service, capturing the essence of Lenten prayer and contemplation.

Text excerpt (translated):

Lord of the Powers, be with us.

For in times of distress,

Only You are our help.

Κύριε των Δυνάμεων, μεθ' ημών γενού,

άλλον γαρ εκτός σου βοηθόν, εν θλίψεσιν ουκ

έχομεν, Κύριε των Δυνάμεων, ελέησον ημάς.

Panis Angelicus (Bread of Angels)

César Franck (1822–1890)

Soprano, Tenor & Piano

Originally written for voice and organ, *Panis Angelicus* ("Bread of Angels") has become a staple of sacred song. In this arrangement, the serene vocal line and gentle piano accompaniment evoke the humility and reverence of divine nourishment.

Text excerpt (translated):

May the Bread of Angels, Become bread for mankind

O thing miraculous! The Lord becomes food for the poor.

ZOE NICOLAIDOU - Soprano

Praised by the French press as "a honey-colored voice with a noble sound and moving presence", the Cypriot soprano Zoe Nicolaïdou studied at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna – Magister Artium and subsequently completed the Paris Opera's Young Artists Program (Atelier Lyrique). At her graduation, she received the award for the most promising young singer of the season, Le Prix Lyrique du cercle Carpeaux. She is also the First Prize winner of the Schlossoper Haldenstein International Singing Competition and the Kyrenia Opera Award.

Nicolaïdou made her debut at the Opera National de Paris as Prima Sorella in Puccini's *Suor Angelica* under the baton of Philippe Jordan, and she returned to perform in Fenelon's *Faust* under Bernhardt Kontarsky, Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* – alongside Erwin Schrott and Dorothea Röschmann – under the baton of Dan Ettinger, Gluck's *Orpheus und Eurydike* under Thomas Hengelbrock, and the soprano solo in Mahler's Fourth Symphony.

She has appeared in renowned venues and festivals including Palais Garnier in Paris, Musikverein Wien, Kammeroper Wien, Lincoln Center in New York, Rudolfinum in Prague, Villa Medici in Rome, Montpellier Opéra, Festival Echternach, Amphitheatre of Bastille, Chapelle Royale de Versailles, Palacio Euskalduna in Bilbao, Casa da Musica in Portugal, Festival La Roque d'Antheron, Wratistavia Cantans Festival, Wiltz Festival, International Pharos Chamber Music Festival, Opéra de Toulon, Klangvokal Dortmund Festival.

Throughout her career, Nicolaïdou has tackled such diverse operatic roles as both Susanna and Contessa in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Festival Oper Klosterneuburg and Montpellier Opéra), Mae Jones in Kurt Weill's *Street Scene* (Amphitheatre Bastille), Mrs. Gobineau in Menotti's *The Medium*, Amore and Valetto in Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* (Schönbrunner Theater and Festival de Menton in France under Maestro J.C. Spinosi), Micaëla in Bizet's *Carmen*. Nicolaïdou is equally comfortable in recital and concert and her concert repertoire covers oratorio and symphonic works such as Brahms' Requiem (Festival La Roque d'Antheron), Mahler's Symphony No.4 (Bilbao Concert Hall, Palacio Euskalduna Kursaal, Vitoria Theatre, Pamplona Auditorio, Casa da Musica in Portugal and Thessaloniki State Orchestra), Bach's B minor Mass (Real Filharmonia de Galicia under the baton of Antoni Ros-Marba), Von Williams' *Serenade to Music* (Palais Garnier conducted by Philippe Jordan), Händel's *Dixit Dominus* and Vivaldi's *Gloria* (Palau de la Musica Cataluña Barcelona, Chapelle de la Trinité in Lyon, Angers Nantes Opera and Chapelle Royale de Versailles) amongst others.

Her most recent role debuts include Antonia in *Les Contes d'Hofmann* in Austria (Oper Rund um), a jump in as Violetta in *La Traviata* (Opera La Baugé) in France and Nedda in *I Pagliacci* (Ehrbaarsaal) in Vienna.

ANDREAS ARODITIS – Tenor

Praised as an "amazingly adept and versatile performer" by Opera Today (Wes Blomster) and recognized by The New York Times for his convincing portrayals on stage (Vivien Schweitzer), Andreas Aroditis has performed multiple roles in renowned venues worldwide, from Avery Fisher Hall and the Israeli Opera House to the Teatro De Bellas Artes in Puerto Rico. As a finalist in the prestigious Lyndon Woodside Oratorio Competition, he also performed at Carnegie Hall.

He has taken on lead roles in productions such as "Gianni Schicchi," "The Marriage of Figaro," "Dido and Aeneas," "The Ghosts of Versailles," and "L'Heure Espagnole." Additionally, he has enchanted audiences with his roles in musicals including "West Side Story," "Les Misérables," and "Annie."

Andreas has collaborated with esteemed artists such as Alkistis Protopsalti, Michalis Hatzigiannis, Giorgos Perris, Mariza Rizou, and Costas Cacoyannis. He participated in the world premiere of the oratorio "Weeping Madonnas" (by Marios Ioannou Ilias) with the Cyprus Symphony Orchestra at the Presidential Palace, performed in the presence of the President of the Republic. With the TrakArt Orchestra, he has appeared on stage numerous times, recently premiering Aris Antoniadis' original work "The River Will Flow" to great acclaim.

Mr. Aroditis holds a master's degree in music from The Juilliard School in New York, which he earned on a full scholarship. Throughout his career, he has received numerous scholarships and grants, including those from the Aspen Music Festival, the International Vocal Arts Institute (IVAI), the Bay Area Summer Opera Theatre Institute (BASOTI), the Novick Career Advancement Grant, and the George and Marie Vergottis Grant.

During his academic journey, he had the privilege of being mentored by legends such as Plácido Domingo and Sherrill Milnes. He has participated in summer programs and festivals in Cyprus, Israel, Italy, Bulgaria, Puerto Rico, and the United States.

Deeply committed to the education and development of aspiring performers, Andreas is a vocal performance instructor at both the University of Nicosia and European University Cyprus. He also coaches students at his private studio in Limassol. His students have won multiple international awards and distinguished honors and have been accepted into some of the world's leading universities.

ZBYNĚK MARUŠKA - Piano

The Czech pianist Zbyněk Maruška belongs to a generation of musicians nurtured within the disciplined and admirably structured musical education traditionally offered by his homeland. His studies at the Prague Music Academy under the guidance of František Rauch, and at the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow with Yevgeny Mogilevsky and Elena Richter – students of the legendary Heinrich Neuhaus – provided him with the credentials to develop a significant concert career as a soloist, either through solo recitals throughout Europe or by collaborating with orchestras such as the Prague Symphony Orchestra and the *Plzenska Filharmonie*, and joining forces with notable chamber music ensembles like the Mozart Quintet of Prague and Harmonia Pragensis.

As a pianist, Zbyněk has transitioned from the explosive, enthusiastic world of the virtuosity of a "young talent" to that of the introspection of a mature musician, a representative of European musical thought, which he passes on by teaching young musicians. For almost two decades, he has taught at international masterclasses in the Czech Republic, and since 2000, he has been a permanent member of the Jury for the annual piano competition Prague Junior Note.

Zbyněk Maruška has served as a professor at the conservatories of Prague and Pardubice, at the Music Department of the University of Nicosia from 2005 to 2009, and at the Limassol Music Lyceum. He has collaborated with the Cyprus Centre for Composers and has premiered their works both in Cyprus and abroad. His students have distinguished themselves in international piano competitions, such as Steinway Hamburg, Concertino Praga, Frédéric Chopin Mariánské Lázně, and many have gone on to hold positions in universities in the USA, Czech Republic, Germany, and England after their successful studies.

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