

Echoes of the Classics

A Voice and Piano Recital by *Chimera*

Andrew Robert Munn, bass

Rami Sarieddine, piano

HENRY PURCELL (1659-1695)

If Music be the Food of Love, Z. 379

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797-1828), Goethe Settings

Ganymed, D. 544

Prometheus, D. 674

Grenzen der Menschheit, D. 716

SAMUEL BARBER (1910-1981), *Three Songs, op. 10*

Rain has fallen

Sleep now

I hear an army

PAUSE

GEORG FRIEDRICH HANDEL (1685-1759)

I rage, I melt, I burn! from *Acis and Galatea*, HWV 49

ANDYS SKORDIS (b. 1983)

Lo...on

CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI (1567-1643)

O tu ch'innanzi morte, from *L'Orfeo* SV 318

FRANZ SCHUBERT, Schiller and Mayrhofer Settings

Fahrt zum Hades, D. 526

Gruppe aus dem Tartarus, D. 583

Memnon, D. 541

Die Götter Griechenlands, D. 677

HENRY PURCELL

Music for a While, from *Oedipus* Z. 583

Thursday April 11, 2019

Cotsen Hall

Athens, Greece

Sponsored by The American School of Classical Studies at Athens and The Athens Centre

PROGRAM NOTE

In 1607, Claudio Monteverdi completed what is commonly recognized as the first opera: *L'Orfeo*. In composing the piece, Monteverdi built on three decades of innovation driven by the Florentine Camerata, a group of intellectuals, poets, artists, and composers in Florence who sought to recreate ancient Greek theater as a synthesis of declamatory and sung drama. From *L'Orfeo*, we will present Charon's warning to Orpheus at the river Styx in this evening's program. In the centuries since Monteverdi, composers have filled operatic stages with the plights of Greek gods, heroes, and monsters, all rendered in the specific light of their time. Reinterpreted stories, symbols, and ideas from Greek antiquity also found a home in art song, classical music's distilled synthesis of poetry and music.

Franz Schubert was the wellspring of song and drew extensively on themes from Greek antiquity. This program centers on Schubert's settings of poems by Johann von Goethe, Friedrich Schiller, and Johann Mayrhofer. Goethe brings us into his expansive pantheism and seeks to define the mortal relationship to omnipotence in *Ganymed*, *Prometheus*, and *Grenzen der Menschheit*. In *Ganymed*, we are ecstatically subsumed by Zeus; in *Prometheus* we rail against the authority of divinity and crown humanity above the Gods; and in the philosophical poem *Grenzen der Menschheit* we arrive at an understanding of our place in the cosmos. Schiller's poems gave Schubert a thick oil paint of language to portray vivid scenes of Hades in *Gruppe aus dem Tartarus* and the modern world bereft of divinity in an delicately set stanza of *Die Götter Griechenlands*. In *Memnon* and *Fahrt zum Hades*, Mayrhofer, Schubert's close friend, adopts familiar symbols and characters of Greek mythology to give coded voice to his life's central contradiction: a poet who earned his living as a censor for the anti-Enlightenment Metternich regime.

True to the roots of classical vocal music as a dramatic form, our program includes multiple works for the theater. Henry Purcell composed his famous *Music for a While* as incidental music for John Dryden's English translation of Sophocles' *Oedipus*. The bass voice is often reserved for monsters, and we present Handel's aria for Polyphemus filled with lust for Galatea in the opera *Acis and Galatea*. In *Lo...on*, Andys Skordis has composed a dramatic scena using the longest word written in ancient Greek, penned by Aristophanes' in *Assemblywomen*. The 171-letter compound noun describes a dish made of all manner of animals, and Skordis' setting highlights the absurd comedy and violence inherent in such gluttony.

We dedicate this in loving memory to American baritone Sanford Sylvan. He was Andrew's voice teacher, and encouraged our collaboration from its beginning in the Bard Conservatory Graduate Vocal Arts Program. Sanford Sylvan was one of America's greatest interpreters of Schubert's lieder and a champion of art song by American composers. We include Samuel Barber's *Three Songs* on poems by James Joyce in honor of and with gratitude for his mentorship.

Andrew Robert Munn, March 2019

Sponsored by The American School of Classical Studies at Athens and The Athens Centre

ARTIST BIOS

Andrew Robert Munn, bass is a sought-after artist on operatic and concert stages in Europe and North America. He trained with internationally celebrated soprano Dawn Upshaw and baritone Sanford Sylvan in the Bard Graduate Vocal Arts Program and The Juilliard School. Operatic credits include Sarastro in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, Claudio in Handel's *Agrippina*, Falstaff in Nicolai's *Lustigen Weiber von Windsor*, Seneca in Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, Doctor Grenvil in Verdi's *La Traviata*. Most recently he sang the two bass roles of The Inspector and Uncle Albert in Philip Glass' *The Trial* with Opera Szczecin and this summer he returns to the role of Sarastro for his professional German debut with Oper Oder Spree. As bass soloist in works including Mozart's *Requiem*, Handel's *Messiah*, and Haydn's *Die Schöpfung* he has performed at Lincoln Center and Bard's Fisher Center. As a recitalist, he frequently performs with pianist Rami Sarieddine. They performed Schubert's masterpiece, *Winterreise* in 2016 at Bard College and venues throughout New York. They frequently premier new works by leading contemporary composers. In addition to his performance work, Mr. Munn is a Juilliard Global Teaching Artist, giving concerts and teaching master classes in Europe and the Middle East.

An active performer throughout North America, Europe, Asia, and the Arabian Peninsula, **Rami Sarieddine** currently maintains an active schedule as a collaborative pianist, chamber musician, soloist, and music educator. He served as a Piano Fellow at the Bard College Conservatory of Music, playing for the Graduate Vocal Arts Program led by world-renowned soprano Dawn Upshaw, working with undergraduate instrumentalists, and teaching piano as a second study, as well as a Marc and Eva Stern Piano Fellow at SongFest in Los Angeles. It is as a young scholar at the Potenza del' Arte - Hellenic Conservatory where he first begun his piano training with Georgia Markou and later with Pepy Michaelides that he first started playing with singers under the guidance of Katerina Christofidou. Under the tutelage of pianist John Perry, Rami was awarded the title of Doctor of Musical Arts with distinction, by the Thornton School of Music, USC and was nominated and inducted into the Pi Kappa Lambda National Music Honor Society. A scholar of the Nicolas Economou Foundation and the A.G. Leventis Foundation, Rami also attended the New England Conservatory in Boston and the Royal Academy of Music in London studying with Gabriel Chodos and Patsy Toh respectively. An avid advocate of music by living composers, Rami has premiered works by composers such as James Primosch and Rome Prize winner Nina C. Young. Additionally, he has worked with composers such as Mark Carlson, Libby Larsen, Steve Reich, and Frederich Rzewski. In addition to his private piano studio Rami has served on the faculty of the MusA Academy in Los Angeles, the Gledhill Arts Collective in New York City as well as the head of keyboard at the British School Al Khubairat in Abu Dhabi.

Andys Skordis is a Cypriot composer born in 1983. He studied composition at Berklee College of Music and at the Conservatorium Van Amsterdam, with additional studies in Karnatic music with Dr. Rafael Reina and in Balinese Gamelan at ISI Denpasar in Bali. His work list includes operas, orchestral and chamber pieces, Gamelan music, vocal works, and music for dance, theatre and short films. His music has been performed worldwide by many acclaimed musicians and renowned ensembles, in festivals and concerts of contemporary music. In addition, he has created various music theatre performances in unconventional spaces like quarries, temples, abandoned buildings, and so on. His music has received international recognition through various prizes including the BUMA Toonzetters prize, one of the highest composition prizes in The Netherlands, and more. At the moment he lives in Amsterdam where he teaches at the Conservatorium Van Amsterdam and composes music.

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