



A MOTHER'S LOVE

A recital of songs and arias

Presented by Wendy Silvester
Accompanied by Stephen Wood

‘The most beautiful word on the lips of mankind is the word “Mother,” and the most beautiful call is the call of “My mother.” It is a word full of hope and love, a sweet and kind word coming from the depths of the heart. The mother is everything – she is our consolation in sorrow, our hope in misery, and our strength in weakness. She is the source of love, mercy, sympathy, and forgiveness...’

Everything in nature bespeaks the mother. The sun is the mother of earth and gives it its nourishment of heart; it never leaves the universe at night until it has put the earth to sleep to the song of the sea and the hymn of birds and brooks. And this earth is the mother of trees and flowers. It produces them, nurses them, and weans them. The trees and flowers become kind mothers of their great fruits and seeds. And the mother, the prototype of all existence, is the eternal spirit, full of beauty and love.’

Kahlil Gibran

Monday 26th March 2018
Corus Recital Room
Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama

This recital follows the journey of a Mother through a lifetime, from pregnancy and birth, to seeing her children grow up. To allow the music and words to tell this story the recital will proceed without spoken introductions.

'Songs My Mother Taught Me' from *Gypsy Songs*

Dvořák

English version by Natalie MacFarren

Two songs from *Frauenliebe und Leben* (A woman's love and life)

Loewe

'Süßer Freund, du blickest mich verwundert an'

Sweet friend, you look on me with wonder,
Can you not understand why I am crying?
Let the wet pearls, those unfamiliar ornaments,
Joyfully tremble on my eyelashes.

How anxious is my bosom, how full of wonder!
I wish I knew just how to say it in words;
Come and put your face here on my breast,
I will whisper in your ear all my joy.

I have asked my Mother about the many signs,
My good Mother has told me everything,
She has instructed me that in all appearances,
Soon a cradle we must obtain.

Know you, now, why these tears I cry?
You should not see them, you beloved man.
Stay on my heart, feel its beat,
That I may tighter and tighter pull you to me.

Here near my bed is room for the cradle,
Where I can still hide my happy dream;
The morning will come when the dream is woken,
And then from there your face will laugh.

'An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust'

On my heart, on my breast, you my bliss, you my joy!
Happiness is love, love is happiness, I have said it and won't take it back.
I thought I knew what being overjoyed was, but only now am I overjoyed.
Only she who suckles, only she loves the child, to whom she gives nourishment.
Only a mother alone knows alone what love is called and what happiness is.
Oh how I pity the man, who cannot feel the Mother's joy!
You look at me, and laugh also, you lovely angel you!
On my heart, on my breast, you my bliss, you my joy!

Scene and Lullaby from *The Consul*

Menotti

Whilst hiding her fugitive son from the police, the Mother also cares for his wife and their sick newborn.

Gertrud's Aria from *Hänsel und Gretel*

Humperdinck

Hansel and Gretel's Mother returns home from work to find them playing around, instead of doing their chores.

Hello! What is this for a business!

Just wait, you ill-behaved rascals!

You call this work, bawling and singing? As at the fair, dancing and jumping?
While the parents from earliest morning until night take trouble and worry?

Take that! Let's see what you have done!

What, Gretel? The stocking not finished?
And you, you rascal, in all these hours not even the few brooms bound?
You good-for-nothing people, the stick I will get and to your idle hides properly tan over!

Jesus! Now the jug is broken!
What now do I cook for dinner?

What, imp, laughing at me?
You wait until your Father is comes home!

March! Out in the woods! There find me strawberries! Do it now!
And if you bring the basket not full to the rim, I'll beat you until you fly against the wall!

There lies the good jug in pieces.
Yes, blind zeal always brings ruin.

Lord God, throw some money down!

Nothing have I to live on, not a crumb to feed the little mites.
Not a drop in the jug, not a crust in the cupboard!
For a long time only water to drink.

Tired am I, tired of living.

Lord God, throw some money down.

Ma's Song from *The Tender Land*

Copland

Ma contemplates how quickly the time passes as she sees her daughter in her graduation dress.

'Va! Laisse couler mes larmes' from *Werther*

Massenet

Charlotte has been responsible for raising her siblings since her Mother died. Here she teaches her closest sister, Sophie, the importance of allowing yourself to cry.

Go! Let your tears fall. They do you good, my dear.

The tears that you do not cry fall back and their patient drops beat on the heart, sad and weary.
It's strength finally runs out; the heart, it opens, and weakens.
It is too big, nothing can fill it, and too fragile, everything breaks it.

‘Che dite? ... Nel silenzio di quei raccoglimenti’ from *Suor Angelica*

Puccini

After bringing disgrace on the family, Angelica was sent to a convent by her Aunt, the Princess, who has had parental responsibility for her since her parents died. For the first time in seven years the Aunt is visiting the convent and still has a lesson to teach Angelica.

What did you say? And you think that? I'm cruel? Merciless?
You invoke your Mother against me?

Often in the evening, in our chapel, I gather myself.

In the silence of those reflections, my spirit seems to float from me and it meets with your mother
in conversation, ethereal and mysterious.

How it is painful to hear the dead sorrowing and weeping!

When this mystical ecstasy passes, for you there remains on word only:
‘Repentance! Repentance!’
Offer to the Virgin, my righteousness.

‘Ah! Mon fils, sois beni’ from *Le Prophète*

Meyerbeer

After surrendering the love of his life to the Count in exchange for his Mother's life, Jean is inconsolable. Fidès comforts and thanks him for giving up everything for her.

Ah! My son, bless you.

Your poor mother was more dear to you than your Bertha, who was your love.
You come here to give your mother more than life, by giving up your happiness.

Towards heaven I lift my prayer, and you are blessed of the Father,
My son bless you, you are blessed of the Father.

My son, my son, you are blessed of the Father!
Jean! Bless you!

‘Over here! Follow me!’ from *Cendrillon*

Massenet

Madame de la Haltière knows that the Prince is looking for a bride, and when Princesses start arriving to his palace from all over the world she knows her daughters must also attend. After all, only somebody of their breeding could possibly be a perfect match for Prince Charming.

Thank you