Amalie's Cosmos
Anne-Sophie Bertrand

AMALIE'S COSMOS

Franz Liszt (1811–1886)
3 Études de concert, S.144
1 No. 3, Un Sospiro (Arr. for harp by Henriette Renié) 6. 12

Mikhail Glinka (1804–1857)
A Farewell to Saint Petersburg
2 No. 10, The Lark 5. 02

Niccolò Paganini (1782–1840)
24 Caprices for Solo Violin, Op. 1
3 No. 9, Caprice in E Major, 'La caccia' 3. 49
(Arr. for harp by Luigi Maria Magistretti)

Nimrod Borenstein (b. 1970)
4 **Capriccio, Op. 107** (*world premiere recording*) 3. 03

Fanny Hensel, geb. Mendelssohn (1805–1847)
5 **Notturno in G Minor, H. 337** 4. 25

Louis Spohr (1784–1859)
6 **Fantasie in C moll, Op. 35** 8. 03

Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826)
Die Aufforderung zum Tanze, Op. 65
7 Rondo Brillant (Arr. for harp by Anne-Sophie Bertrand) 8. 01

Elias Parish Alvars (1808-1849)
8 **Nobil Signor** (from Giacomo Meyerbeer's opera *Les Huguenots)* 3. 46

Pauline Viardot (1821–1910)
9 **Sérénade** (Arr. for harp by Anne-Sophie Bertrand) 3. 57

Albert Zabel (1834–1910)
10 **Fantaisie Op. 12 on motifs from *Faust* by Charles Gounod** 11. 57

Franz Liszt (1811–1886)
11 **Le Rossignol, S.250/1** (Arr. for harp by Henriette Renié) 4. 39

Claude Debussy (1862–1918)
Estampes
12 **I. Pagodes (Pagodas)** (Arr. for harp by Anne-Sophie Bertrand) 5. 20
13 **II. La soirée dans Grenade (The Evening in Grenade)** 5. 24
(Arr. for harp by Anne-Sophie Bertrand)
14 **III. Jardins sous la pluie (Gardens in the Rain)** 4. 35
(Arr. for harp by Alys Lautemann)

Total playing time: 78. 21

Anne-Sophie Bertrand, harp

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Welcome in Amalie Beer's Imaginary Salon!

At Mama Beer, as Karl von Holtei called Amalie's home, one might have heard Alexander von Humboldt or Philipp Franz von Siebold discuss Japonism or new discoveries, and such artists as Fanny Mendelssohn and Franz Liszt perform their own works.

From Berlin to Paris, where Amalie's son Giacomo Meyerbeer was raised as one of the leading opera composers with roles sung by Pauline Viardot, from Orient to Occident, as travellers brought back Japanese art, such as Hokusai's estampes, between poets, philosophers, and great interpreters such as harpist Dorette Spohr and Niccolò Paganini, here in an homage with *Capriccio*, a world premiere by Nimrod Borenstein, I invite the auditors to a glimpse into this philanthropic microcosm, inspired by feminine artistry and expressed through the rich palette of the harp.

Amalie Beer, born 1767 into one of the wealthiest families, was recognised as a central figure in Berlin's society and played an important role in the emancipation of Jewish society, establishing the first Reform Synagogue in Berlin with her husband. She was a charismatic salonière, supporter of artists, scientists, and musicians, and a major figure in recognising feminine talents.

Called the Queen Mother by her sons and a close friend of the Prussian royal family, Amalie received the Luisen-Orden for charitable work with war-wounded and fundraising for the Prussian army.

In her salons at Spandauer Strasse and later in her Tiergarten villa,

she invited Hegel, Heine, and Weber, continuing the legacy of the great European salons, where art, philosophy, and music flourished.

Franz Liszt (1811–1886)
Un Sospiro* and *Le Rossignol
Franz Liszt stood at the heart of Europe's artistic life, whether on stage or in the Berlin and Paris salons. He was a close friend of Giacomo Meyerbeer, Pauline Viardot, and even met the young Debussy. In his symphonic poems such as *Orpheus*, Liszt's use of the harp's enharmonic and sound colors inspired composer, harpist, and pedagogue Henriette Renié to transcribe *Le Rossignol* and *Un Sospiro* into poetical and intimate pieces for her instrument.

Mikhail Glinka (1804–1857)
The Lark
Mikhail Glinka travelled and studied in Europe, meeting Felix Mendelssohn in Italy, Hector Berlioz in Paris, and Louis Spohr in Berlin. *The Lark*, here in the transcription for piano by Mily Balakirev, is one of the most beloved songs from Glinka's 1840 cycle *Farewell to St. Petersburg*.

Niccolò Paganini (1782–1840)
La caccia
"His playing hit me like a meteor," wrote Goethe after hearing Paganini in Berlin, who was a frequent guest at Amalie Beer's salons, captivating audiences across Europe. Many of Paganini's Caprices retain the plucked-string agility and clarity of the early influence of the mandoline.

Nimrod Borenstein (b. 1969)
Capriccio
Characterised by complexity, skillfulness, and melodiousness, the music of Nimrod Borenstein has been premiered at prestigious venues worldwide, from the Royal Festival Hall in London to Hong Kong City Hall. *Capriccio* is an homage to the extraordinary virtuosity and musicality of Niccolò Paganini.

Fanny Mendelssohn (1805–1847)
Notturno in G Minor
Fanny Mendelssohn perpetuated the tradition of the Berlin salon, hosting musical gatherings in the family's Garden Hall where she shone as a composer, conductor, and pianist. Her *Notturno in G Minor* was composed before her trip to Italy; "her fondest memory, particularly thanks to the companionship and professional recognition she received from fellow artists at the Villa Medici in Rome." – The Mendelssohn Society.

Louis Spohr (1784–1859)
Fantasie in C moll
Frequent guests in European salons at the beginning of the 19th century, Louis Spohr and his wife, renowned harpist Dorette Spohr, developed the harp's virtuosic, lyrical, and sound possibilities, as described by the composer in 1806: "Given the great mastery my wife already had of the instrument, I soon succeeded in eliciting entirely new effects from the instrument."

Carl Maria von Weber (1786–1826)
Aufforderung zum Tanze, Op. 65: Rondo Brillant für das Pianoforte
Carl Maria von Weber studied with Abbé Vogler alongside Giacomo Meyerbeer, and his close relationship with the Meyerbeer family was such that he was regarded almost as a fifth son. His *Sechs Deutsche Lieder*, written for piano or guitar—both instruments he played—were dedicated to Amalie Beer.
My transcription of *L'Invitation à la valse* is inspired by both Weber's original pianoforte version and Hector Berlioz's later orchestration, in which

the harp keeps much of the piano's original writing, combining lightness with brilliance.

Giacomo Meyerbeer (1791–1864)
***Nobil Signor* from *Les Huguenots*, arranged for Harp by Elias Parish Alvars (1808–1849)**
Giacomo Meyerbeer's life is a tale of two cities, Berlin and Paris. His artistic triumph was achieved in Paris, but he never abandoned his home city of Berlin. A victim of antisemitism at the end of the 19th century, his operas are now seldom performed, though they are filled with beautiful melodies, such as Urbain's aria in a delicate transcription by Elias Parish Alvars, called by Berlioz the "Liszt of the Harp."

Albert Zabel (1834–1910)
Fantaisie on Gounod's Faust
Albert Zabel was one of the most prominent harpists of the 19th century. Through the recommendation from the Meyerbeer family, he gained admission to the Berlin Institute and became an acclaimed soloist at the Mariinsky Theatre.

Pauline Viardot (1821–1910)
Sérénade
A luminous presence in the musical cosmos of the 19th century, Pauline Viardot was a celebrated mezzo-soprano, a gifted composer, and pianist. Her salons in Baden-Baden and Paris attracted a constellation of the biggest artists and intellectuals of her time, such as Franz Liszt and Giacomo Meyerbeer.

Claude Debussy (1862–1918)
Estampes
At the heart of *Estampes* lies the spirit of exploration, echoing the scientific and artistic journeys of figures such as Philipp Franz von Siebold, who brought Eastern artistic discoveries to Europe.

In Claude Debussy's studio hung Hokusai's *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*, an inspiration for some of his works such as *Pagodes*, with its pentatonic scales that seem to imitate the colours of Javanese gamelan, discovered by the French Impressionist at the 1889 Exposition Universelle in Paris. *La soirée dans Grenade* evokes Andalusia with its shades and flamenco rhythms, while *Jardins sous la pluie* blends childhood melodies with a sudden storm.

Anne-Sophie Bertrand

Nous n'irons plus au bois
(*We will no longer go to the woods*)
image by Épinal, Imagerie Pellerin (1863)

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