

After Dark: Between Desire and Despair

Mezzo-soprano *Allison Cook*

Pianist *Aaron Wajnberg*

Allison Cook and Aaron Wajnberg invite you to an evening of song at its darkest and most daring. From cabaret stages to the edges of the art song repertoire, these works follow women pushed past their limits: broken, defiant, and unapologetically messy, demanding the listener connect with the heartbreaks and longings that most keep well hidden

Schoenberg	Brett's Lieder Cabaret Songs
Berg	Four Songs for Voice and Piano Op. 2
Ian Bell	Wombed Souls *world premiere*
Britten	Cabaret Songs
Poulenc	La Dame de Monte Carlo

Programme c. 70 minutes without interval

Extension options for programme with interval:

Weill	Cabaret Songs (selection)
Satie	La dive de L'Empire
Bolcom	Cabaret Songs (selection)

Allison Cook

Allison Cook is internationally recognised as one of today's foremost singing actresses, combining an extraordinary vocal range with a dramatic fearlessness that has made her particularly sought after for some of opera's most psychologically and vocally demanding roles. Encompassing both soprano and mezzo-soprano repertoire, she has won particular acclaim for her interpretations of 20th- and 21st-century opera and for creating major roles in new works.



Recent seasons have seen Cook return to two of her signature roles, **Salome** and **Judith** in Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle*, alongside **Kundry** in *Parsifal* with Pablo Heras-Casado, Venus in *Tannhäuser*, **Miss Jessel** in *The Turn of the Screw*, **The Foreign Princess** in *Rusalka* and Schoenberg's *Erwartung*. Other recent appearances include Mussorgsky's *Khovanshchina* at the Salzburg Easter Festival in Simon McBurney's production and *Pierrot lunaire* with Kazushi Ono in Brussels.

Most recently, Cook returned to English National Opera as **Mrs XE** in Kip Williams's new production of the UK premiere of Du Yun's *Angel's Bone*, which she performs again this season. She also made her role debut as **Elle** in Poulenc's *La voix humaine* at the Buxton International Festival and returned to Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire*. She will also reunite with conductor Eivind Gullberg Jensen in concert. Cook continues to expand her dramatic repertoire to encompass **Kostelnička** in Janáček's *Jenůfa* and **Klytämnestra** in Strauss's *Elektra*.

Aaron Wajnberg



Praised for his profound expressive depth and musical insight, Aaron Wajnberg is widely regarded as one of the most distinguished pianists of his generation. He has established himself at the highest international level, performing at many of the world's most prestigious concert halls and opera houses, including Carnegie Hall, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Kölner Philharmonie, BOZAR, La Monnaie, Teatro Municipal do Rio de Janeiro, Veronica Hagman Hall, Palau de les Arts Reina Sofía, Joseph Keilberth Saal, Bayerische Staatsoper and the Dutch National Opera, among many others.

A leading authority in the art of Lied, his

collaborations bring him together with some of the most celebrated singers of our time, including Jeanine De Bique, Axelle Fanyo, Rolando Villazón, Roberto Alagna, Ian Bostridge, Christoph Prégardien, Christianne Stotijn, Tineke Van Ingelgem, Pumeza Matshikiza, Shannon Keegan, Samantha Hankey, Sophie Karthäuser, Chen Reiss, Allison Cook and Charlotte Wajnberg.

As a chamber musician, he collaborates with leading instrumentalists such as Michael Barenboim, Artiom Shishkov, Marc Sabbah, Julien Hervé and Roman Patočka, and with internationally renowned ensembles such as Quatuor Enesco and Quatuor Danel.

He served as an accompanist at the Queen Elisabeth Competition (Voice 2018 and 2023).

A cum laude graduate of the Royal Conservatories of Antwerp and Brussels, he studied with Leonid Margarius and Victor Makarov, whose profound musical insight and artistic vision left a lasting imprint on his artistic development.