

 HANCHER AUDITORIUM

**RENÉE FLEMING**

SOPRANO

**BRADLEY MOORE**

PIANIST

***VOICE OF NATURE:  
THE ANTHROPOCENE***

Thursday, October 24, 2024

7:30 p.m.

Hancher Auditorium

**IOWA**

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# RENÉE FLEMING / SOPRANO BRADLEY MOORE / PIANIST

Thursday, October 24, 2024, at 7:30 p.m.  
Hancher Auditorium, the University of Iowa  
The Auditorium / Hadley Stage / Auditorium Seating

## PROGRAM

### ***Voice of Nature: The Anthropocene***

The following suite of songs is accompanied by a film provided by National Geographic. *The audience is asked kindly to hold applause until the end of this set.*

Hazel DICKENS	"Pretty Bird"
Georg Frideric HANDEL	"Care Selve," from <i>Atalanta</i>
Nico MUHLY	"Endless Space"
Joseph CANTELOUBE	"Bailèro," from <i>Songs of the Auvergne</i>
Maria SCHNEIDER	"Our Finch Feeder," from <i>Winter Morning Walks</i>
BJÖRK	"All is Full of Love"
Heitor VILLA-LOBOS	"Epilogo," from <i>Floresta do Amazonas</i> (piano solo)
Howard SHORE	"Twilight and Shadow," from <i>The Lord of the Rings</i>
Kevin PUTS	"Evening"
Curtis GREEN	"Red Mountains Sometimes Cry"
Burt BACHARACH	"What the World Needs Now"

### INTERMISSION

#### ENTR'ACTE

Jackson BROWNE  
Arr. Caroline SHAW  
"Before the Deluge"  
A recording with Rhiannon Giddens, Alison Krauss,  
Renée Fleming, and Yannick Nézet-Séguin

Gabriel FAURÉ	"Au bord de l'eau" "Les berceaux"
Edvard GRIEG	"Lauf der Welt" "Zur Rosenzeit"
Giacomo PUCCINI	"O mio babbino caro," from <i>Gianni Schicchi</i>
Jerome KERN	"All the Things You Are"
Andrew LIPPA	"The Diva"

# NOTE FROM RENÉE FLEMING

## ON *VOICE OF NATURE: THE ANTHROPOCENE*

When I was 14, the film *Soylent Green* was released, a sci-fi thriller about a dystopian future of worldwide pollution, dying oceans, depleted resources, and rampant starvation. The story was set in the year 2022.

The movie has faded from memory, but one scene left a profound impression. An aged researcher, unable to go on, has chosen assisted suicide at a government clinic. To ease his last moments of life, he is shown videos of a world that no longer exists: flowers and savannahs, flocks and herds, unpolluted skies and waters, all set to a soundtrack of classical music by Tchaikovsky, Beethoven, and Grieg.

This scene captured my imagination in a terrifying way. The impact increased when I later learned that the actor playing the researcher, Edward G. Robinson, was terminally ill at the time it was filmed.

Fast forward to the pandemic. After more than two decades of constant touring, usually to urban cultural centers, performances abruptly ceased, and I suddenly found myself at home. I sought comfort in long walks outside near my house. I needed this time outdoors to maintain my emotional equilibrium, and I was reminded that nature would always be my touchstone. At the same time, the news about

climate change grew more alarming: the extinction of animals we took for granted when we were children, the knowledge that white rhinos had disappeared from the wild, and daily reports of heat, fires, and flooding. I realized that the crisis we had been warned of for so long had arrived.

I thought of the great legacy of song literature that I love, when Romantic-era poets and composers reveled in imagery of nature, finding reflections of human experience in the environment. I decided to record some of this music, and to juxtapose these classics with the voices of living composers, addressing our current, troubled relationship with the natural world.

The result, in collaboration with my friend Yannick Nézet-Séguin, was the album *Voice of Nature: the Anthropocene*. When it received the 2023 Grammy Award for Best Classical Solo Vocal Album, I was thrilled, and I had the idea to tour music addressing this theme of nature as both our inspiration and our victim.

I was incredibly fortunate to connect with the imaginative, dedicated leadership at the National Geographic Society, the global non-profit committed to exploring, illuminating, and protecting the wonder of our world. It has been so exciting to work with this universally respected, landmark institution.

I am deeply grateful for the help of President and Chief Operating Officer Michael Ulica, Chief Executive Officer Jill Tiefenthaler, and Producer/Editor Sam Deleon, whose expertise and vision have been instrumental in creating the video you will see in the first half of tonight's program.

Thankfully, the stunning natural world depicted in this film still exists, unlike that movie scene so upsetting to my younger self. In blending these beautiful images with music, my hope is, in some small way, to rekindle your appreciation of nature, and encourage any efforts you can make to protect the planet we share.

Sincerely,

*Renée Fleming*

# PROGRAM NOTES

## PIECES PERFORMED AFTER INTERMISSION

### GABRIEL FAURÉ

BORN: May 12, 1845, Ariège

DIED: November 4, 1924, Paris

WORK(S) COMPOSED: August 1875 and 1879, respectively

**“Au bord de l’eau,”** from *Trois chansons*, op. 8, no. 1

**“Les berceaux,”** from *Trois chansons*, op. 23, no. 1

Gabriel Fauré’s songs showcase coloristic harmonies and, like his German contemporary Johannes Brahms, he was especially skilled at producing flawless melodic phrases perfectly tailored to the human voice. When Fauré combined these melodies with carefully chosen poems and his innately expressive piano accompaniments, he created atmospheric songs of great beauty and depth.

The two songs on tonight’s program feature texts by the French poet Sully Prudhomme, who received

the first Nobel Prize for literature in 1901. Both songs explore the rocking motion of ships on water, and the second song, “Les berceaux,” links this nautical movement with the steady rocking of a baby’s cradle. After it was published in 1877, “Au bord de l’eau” quickly became Fauré’s most popular song, so much so that it morphed into the composer’s nom-de-plume when fellow composer Henri Duparc began a letter to Fauré with the salutation, “Mon cher bord de l’eau” (My dear ‘At-the-water’s-edge’)

## EDVARD GRIEG

BORN: June 15, 1843, Bergen, Norway

DIED: September 4, 1907, Bergen

WORK COMPOSED: August 1889

**“Lauf der Welt,”** from **Sechs Lieder, op. 48, no. 3** (The Way of the World)

**“Zur Rosenzeit,”** from **Sechs Lieder, op. 48, no. 5** (Time of Roses)

*“For me, it is important when I compose songs, not first and foremost to make music, but above all to give expression to the poet’s innermost intentions. To let the poem reveal itself and to reinforce it—that was my task.”*

– Edvard Grieg, 1903

If you are acquainted with the music of Edvard Grieg, you may be surprised to learn that he wrote some 170 songs, in addition to his piano concerto, or the music he composed for Henrik Ibsen’s play *Peer Gynt*. Outside of Norway, Grieg’s songs are perhaps less familiar to audiences, but they are a rich trove well worth discovering. Grieg selected some of the finest poetry and poets, and his distinctive Norwegian-ness is present throughout.

Grieg had a ready inspiration for songwriting: the voice of his first cousin Nina Hagerup, a lyric soprano. In 1867, when he was 24 and she was 22, they married, and Nina became Grieg’s muse as well as his wife. Seven years before he died, Grieg wrote to a friend, “I don’t think I have any greater talent for writing songs than for writing any other kind of music. Why, then, have songs played such a prominent role in my oeuvre? Quite simply because

I, like other mortals, once in my life (to quote Goethe) had a moment of genius. And it was love that gave me this glory. I loved a girl with a wonderful voice and an equally wonderful gift as an interpreter. This woman became my wife and has been my companion through life down to the present day. I dare say that for me she has remained the only true interpreter of my songs ... For me it was only natural that she should sing so beautifully, so tellingly—from a full heart and from the innermost depths of the soul. ... In her singing she did exactly what I have striven for in my creative work: above all to interpret the poem.”

Tonight’s songs embody two different aspects of romantic love. In the first, “Lauf der Welt” (poem by Ludwig Uhland), two carefree young people while away Scandinavia’s elongated summer evenings with a series of amorous rendezvous. Although both love one another, neither says it aloud,

# PROGRAM NOTES

perhaps for fear of breaking the delightful spell that enchants them. Grieg's quicksilver melody evokes a lighthearted twilit scene, as the lovers embrace. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's poem "Zur Rosenzeit," (Time of Roses), portrays a profound love lost—possibly through death of the loved one. The speaker mourns the roses blooming in his

garden that she could not wear. Grieg's careful setting—the somber mood of its B-minor tonality, the sighing, sobbing opening melody, the piano's poignant reiterations—create an exquisitely beautiful and heartbreaking interlude.

## GIACOMO PUCCINI

BORN: December 22, 1858, Lucca, Tuscany

DIED: November 29, 1924, Brussels, Belgium

WORK COMPOSED: 1917–18

### **"O mio babbino caro," from *Gianni Schicchi***

This aria was featured in the score for the 1985 film *A Room With A View*, which introduced it to audiences outside the concert hall. Among singers it has been a favorite choice for concert recitals for its ravishingly opulent melody, and it is performed far more often than the opera it comes from.

Giacomo Puccini based the plot of his one-act comic opera *Gianni Schicchi* on a brief scene lifted from Dante's *Inferno*. The convoluted story features historical figures from Italy's medieval period, including the title character, who was a Florentine knight. In the *Inferno*, Schicchi is condemned to hell for impersonating another nobleman, Buoso Donati il Vecchio,

for the purpose of altering the latter's will so that Schicchi's friend and Donati's nephew Simone will inherit the bulk of Donati's fortune.

Puccini's version is replete with scheming, selfish characters. The only exception—possibly—is Schicchi's 21-year-old daughter Lauretta, whose only desire is to wed her beloved, Rinuccio. Lauretta pleads with her father—"Oh, my dear old papa," and says if she can't marry Rinuccio she will go to Florence's famous Ponte Vecchio—the old bridge—and throw herself into the river Arno. No father can resist a daughter's tears, and Schicchi agrees.



## **JEROME KERN**

BORN: January 27, 1885, New York City

DIED: November 5, 1945, New York City

WORK COMPOSED: 1939

### **“All the Things You Are,” from *Very Warm for May***

Among Jerome Kern’s most recognized and beloved songs is “All the Things You Are,” which he wrote for what turned out to be his last Broadway musical, *Very Warm for May*. Unfortunately for Kern and his lyricist Oscar Hammerstein II, *Very Warm for May*, which could have been a hit—it earned raves and sold-out houses when it opened out of town for its pre-Broadway run—fell victim to the “too many cooks” phenomenon (in this case it was the show’s producer who spoiled things by changing the plotline at the last minute). After just 59 performances, and despite some strong reviews, the show closed.

Show songs often outlive their origins, however. Just as many of George and Ira Gershwin’s songs achieved lasting fame as standards of the American Songbook while the musicals they were written for have faded from memory, “All the Things You Are” lives on as an instrumental jazz standard and part of the American Songbook. It has been recorded by a long and diverse list of artists, from Ella Fitzgerald, Judy Garland, Tommy Dorsey, and Artie Shaw to Michael Jackson, Barbra Streisand, Stan Getz, Keith Jarrett, Carly Simon, and Renée Fleming, among many others.

# PROGRAM NOTES

## ANDREW LIPPA

BORN: December 22, 1964, Leeds, England

WORK COMPOSED: 2020. Originally written as a duet for Renée Fleming and Vanessa Williams, later rearranged as a solo song.

### “The Diva”

Andrew Lippa is an award-winning composer, lyricist, singer, actor, conductor, and producer whose works include the Broadway and Off-Broadway shows *Big Fish*, *The Addams Family*, and *The Wild Party*.

Lippa composed “The Diva” as a humorous “frenemy” duet for Renée Fleming and Vanessa Williams,

which they performed at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts on September 26, 2020. In “The Diva,” Lippa and Fleming poke fun at the opera diva persona, while simultaneously making the humorous point that operatic sopranos are only human, just like all of us.

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Elizabeth Schwartz is a musician, writer, and music historian based in Portland, OR. She has been a program annotator for more than 25 years, and writes for ensembles and festivals across the United States, as well as internationally. Ms. Schwartz has also contributed to NPR’s *Performance Today*, (now heard on American Public Media).

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Renée Fleming appears by arrangement with IMG Artists, [imgartists.com](http://imgartists.com).

Ms. Fleming is an exclusive recording artist for Decca and Mercury Records (UK).

Ms. Fleming’s jewelry is by Ann Ziff for Tamsen Z.

# RENÉE FLEMING / SOPRANO

Renée Fleming is one of the most highly acclaimed singers of our time, performing on the stages of the world's greatest opera houses and concert halls. A 2023 Kennedy Center Honoree, winner of five Grammy® awards and the U.S. National Medal of Arts, she has sung for momentous occasions from the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony to the Super Bowl, the only classical artist ever to sing the U.S. National Anthem at that event. In 2023, she received the Crystal Award from the World Economic Forum in Davos, and the same year, the World Health Organization appointed her as Goodwill Ambassador for Arts and Health.

In 2023, Renée received the Grammy Award for Best Classical Solo Vocal Album for *Voice of Nature: The Anthropocene*, with Yannick Nézet-Séguin as pianist. She is currently touring with a concert program inspired by the album, with a special film created for the performance by the National Geographic Society. In May at the Metropolitan Opera, Renée starred in *The Hours*, an opera based on the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel and award-winning film. Last year, Decca released a special double-length album of live recordings from Renée's iconic performances at the Metropolitan Opera, *Renée Fleming: Greatest Moments at the Met*. Her voice is featured on the soundtracks of Best Picture Oscar winners *The Shape of Water* and *The Lord of the Rings*.

Renée's anthology, *Music and Mind: Harnessing the Arts for Health and*



*Wellness*, was published this spring. A prominent advocate for research at the intersection of arts, health, and neuroscience, and as Artistic Advisor to the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Renée launched the first ongoing collaboration between America's national cultural center and its largest health research institute, the National Institutes of Health. She created her own program called *Music and the Mind*, which she has presented in more than 60 cities around the world. She is now a founding advisor for major initiatives in the field, including the Sound Health Network at UC San Francisco and the NeuroArts Blueprint with Johns Hopkins University and The Aspen Institute.

Advisor for Special Projects at LA Opera, Renée is also Co-Artistic Director of the Aspen Opera Center and VocalArts at the Aspen Music Festival and School. Renée's other awards include Germany's Cross of the Order of Merit, the Polar Music Prize, the Fulbright Lifetime Achievement Medal, and honorary doctorates from ten leading universities.

[www.reneefleming.com](http://www.reneefleming.com)

# BRADLEY MOORE

## PIANIST

Bradley Moore has appeared in recital with Renée Fleming, Susan Graham, Ryan Speedo Green, Jamie Barton, Christine Goerke, Angela Meade, Eric Owens, and Eric Cutler, among others. He has been a piano soloist with orchestras including the National Symphony Orchestra and the Buffalo Philharmonic. He performed the Martinů harpsichord concerto with the San Francisco Ballet for the world premiere of Mark Morris's *Beaux*, and has also been heard as a recitative accompanist and continuo player with the Met Orchestra, the Wiener Philharmoniker, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the Met Chamber Ensemble. His discography includes *The House Without a Christmas Tree* and a recital with Melody Moore for Pentatone, a recital with Mr. Cutler for EMI Classics, a recital with clarinetist Julian Bliss on Signum Classics, and a recital of songs by Daron Hagen on Arsis Audio.

Mr. Moore conducted the world premieres of *The House Without*



*a Christmas Tree* (Gordon) and *Some Light Emerges* (Kaminsky) at the Houston Grand Opera, and led the company's revival of *The Little Prince*, as well as performances of *Tosca*, *L'elisir d'amore*, and *The Magic Flute*. He conducted *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Dead Man Walking*, *The Cunning Little Vixen*, and *The Crucible* at the Miami Music Festival and *Madama Butterfly* at the Castleton Festival. He has been associate music director at the Houston Grand Opera, and assistant conductor at Metropolitan Opera, the Salzburg Festival, Opéra National de Paris, Canadian Opera Company, and Los Angeles Opera.

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