Alexandra Gravas was born and grew up in Germany. She had the opportunity to grow up in two very different cultures. At school, she learned German classical music, and at home Greek songs by Theodorakis, Hadjidakis and others. She feels her identity is that of a European with a Greek heart. Alexandra studied musicology, philosophy and German literature at the University of Frankfurt, voice with the London-based Miss Loh Siew Tian and has taken masterclasses with Dame Vera Rosza and Sarah Walker.

Alexandra has performed in Germany, Austria, Great Britain, Greece, Belgium, Holland, Spain, Israel, Sweden, Cyprus, Hungary, Italy, Turkey, the United States, Malaysia, and Japan. She has also appeared on German, Austrian, British, Greek, Cypriot, Canadian, Swedish, Turkish and Israeli television and radio.

Her recordings include the symphonic work “Raven” by Mikis Theodorakis with the State Academic Cappella of St. Petersburg, conducted by the composer, “Opera” by Dante Bossetto, “Hommage a C. Cavafy” and “The Dream of Icarus” by Alexandros Karozas, conducted by Richard Williams, “Das Wort alter Seine” and “Unserer Wige” by Achim Bung, “Bitter Tears by Dinoscoenis Stephanidis, which won the Tomos Contemporary Music award in the United States.

DR. PANTELIS POLYCHRONIDIS is a collaborative pianist, educator and scholar who performs regularly in both Europe and the United States. He is currently on the piano faculty at the Institute for the International Education of Students (IES), Vienna and a Visiting Scholar at the Modern Greek Program of the University of Michigan.

He received his bachelor’s in musical studies from the University of Athens with emphasis on ethnomusicology and historical musicology. He obtained his M.A. in solo piano and collaborative piano from Bowling Green State University in Ohio. He went on to obtain a Doctorate of Musical Arts (D.M.A.) from the University of Michigan, where he studied with Martin Katz. During his studies in America, Polychronidis was supported by a Fulbright and an Onassis scholarship. He is completing two postdoctoral programs at the University for Music and Performing Arts in Vienna, in Lied accompanying and chamber music with Charles Spencer and Roswitha Heinze, respectively.

He has participated in numerous masterclasses and workshops, with such renowned artists as Lazar Berman, Paul Badura Skoda, Nikolai Petrov, Helmut Deutsch, Graham Johnson, Wolfram Rieger, Rudolph Jansen, Margo Garrett, Erik Schneider, Roger Vignoles and others. He has been in demand as a collaborative pianist and coach and has performed in Austria, Germany, Greece, Holland and the United States. His current major project is an evening-long recital with settings of C. P. Cavafy poems by several composers, which will take place on six American campuses in April 2012.

CNM Concert

Alexandra Gravas, mezzo soprano
Dr. Panolis Polychnodinis, pianist
Dr. Vassilis Lambropoulos, speaker

April 18, 2012, 7:30 p.m. UCC RECITAL HALL

PROGRAM

Pedale a 3 Voci (I’ve Looked So Much) (1925)  Dimitri MITROPOULOS
From the song cycle 14 Inventions for voice and piano
(1896-1960)

Days of 1903 (rec. 1972)  Manos HADJIDAKIS
From the 11-song cycle The Great Erotic, op. 30
for string chamber orchestra, female and male voice, and mixed choir
(1925-94)

The Next Table (2001)  William BOLCOM
From the 7-song cycle Old Addresses
for baritone and piano (tr. R. Dalven)
(1938)

Windows (1985)  Ron McFARLAND
The first movement of String Quartet No. 2 for quartet and soprano
a suite of four songs/movements set to poems by Cavafy
(tr. R. Dalven; red. RFM)
(1928)

(tr. by the composer) From the cycle Another Sleep, which
includes 19 songs for medium voice and piano on texts by 14 authors
(1923)

Alexandrie (1997)  Christian BOISSEL
From the 14-movement suite Adieu Alexandrie
(1951)

Voices (1963)  Antiochos EVANGELATOS
From the song cycle 4 Songs on Poems by C. P. Cavafy
for voice and piano
(1903-81)

Muraillés (1997) Christian BOISSEL
From the 14-movement suite Adieu Alexandrie

INTERMISSION

For the consideration of our performers and guests, please take a moment to turn off your cell phone. Thank You.

Shades of Love (2003)  David GOMPPE
Five poems within a cycle of three songs for voice and piano:
1) “To Call Up the Shades”
2) “I Went /One Night”
3) “Return/Far Off”
(tr. Keeley/Sherrard and R. Dalven)

Far Off (1999)  Calliope TSOUPAKI
From The Face of Love, a song cycle of nine Greek songs for alto
soprano and piano “on unrequited love” composed for singer
Anna Venetsanou and included in her Greek CD The Face of Love (2002)

The City (1981)  Mikis THEODORAKIS
(red. P. Polychnodinis) Based on a part of the third movement of
his Symphony No. 3 for soprano, choir, and orchestra.

Fortifications (1988)  Dimitris PAPADIMITRIOU
(red. P. Polychnodinis) First song in the song cycle
An Alexandrian Writing on an Alexandrian
(1959)

Candles (1970s)  Mimos PLESSAS
For voice and piano
(1924)

When They Come Alive (2011)  Kostas REKLEITIS
For orchestra, soprano and female choir (red. composer).
From Part II of the cantata Cavafy Cycle which includes 27 Cavafy
poems set to music, 18 in Greek and 9 in English translations (Keeley/Sherrard)

Ithaka (premiere 2012)  Demosthenes STEPHANIDIS
Improvisation for mezzo soprano and piano
(1957)

BIOGRAPHIES

The Greek mezzo-soprano ALEXANDRA GRAVAS possesses the unique gift to make her recitals a deep, almost bodily experience for her listeners, as each composition is interpreted down to the finest
nuances with a voice that changes effortlessly from one scale of musical expression to the next: tender,
strong, dramatic, soft, with a fine sensitivity for the potential of each song. Louis de Bernieres (Captain
Corelli’s Mandolin) writes in his foreword to the “Coasts of Spirits” programme, Alte Oper Frankfurt:
"Alexandra knows that it is about communication, and she dedicates herself to communicating with all
of us, disdaining the barriers of language and culture that the world has unknowingly strewn in our path...I
have the feeling that music comes not from her, but through her from somewhere beyond. She is among
those who have been picked out as one of life's messengers."

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