

# WHEN WILL I ESCAPE THE MATRIX?

A Junior Recital by Samiksha Argal, Mezzo Soprano

Accompanied by:

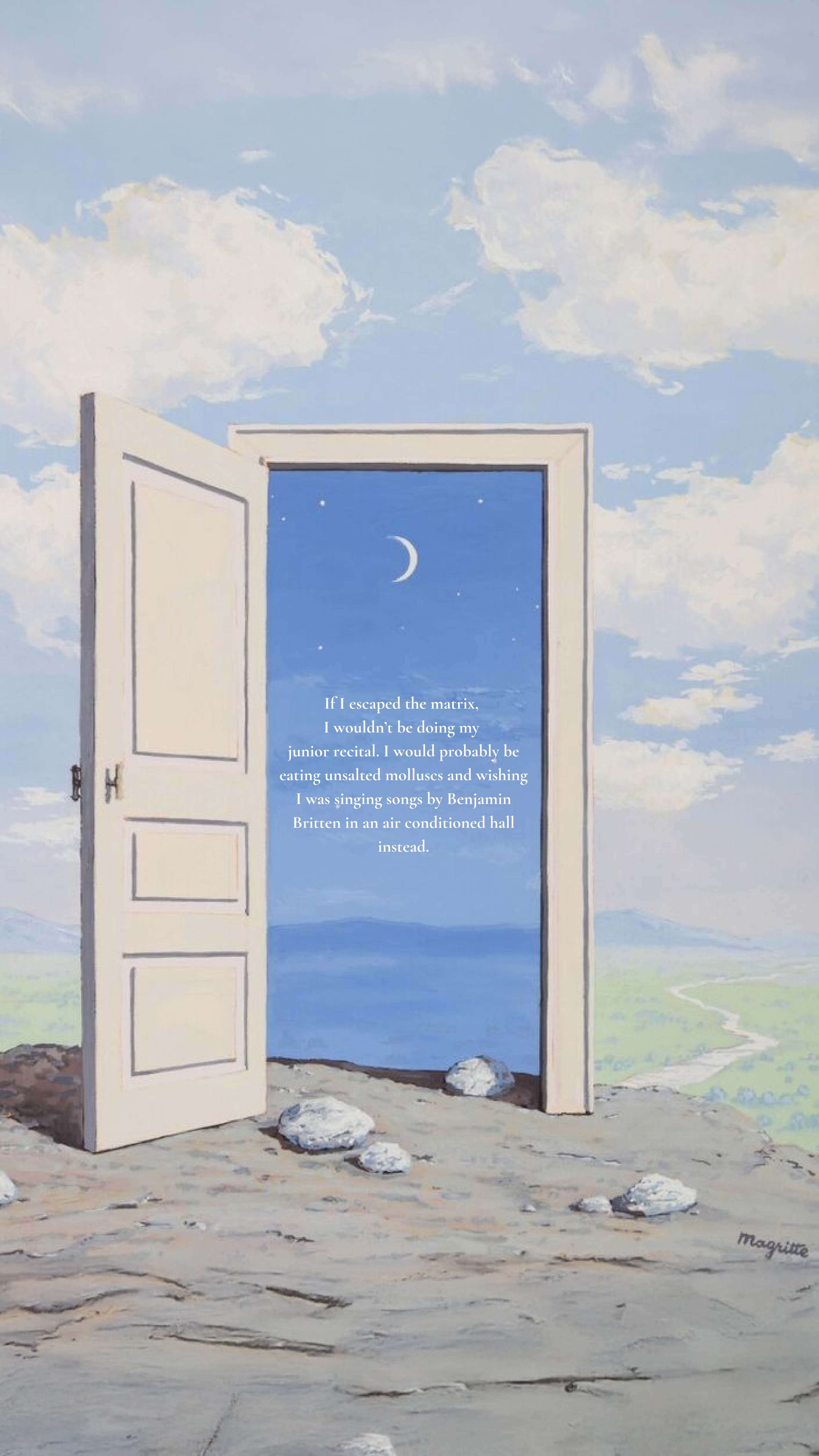
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26 NOV at YST Concert Hall  
7:30 PM

Featuring works of Britten, Rachmaninoff and Chabrier





If I escaped the matrix,  
I wouldn't be doing my  
junior recital. I would probably be  
eating unsalted molluscs and wishing  
I was singing songs by Benjamin  
Britten in an air conditioned hall  
instead.

Magritte

# Programme

A Charm of Lullabies, Op.41

Benjamin Britten

I. A Cradle Song

II. The Highland Balou

IV. A Charm

Sergei Rachmaninoff

The Heart's Secret

Like Blossom Dew'd Freshened to Gladness

As Fair as Day in Blaze of Noon

In the Silent Night

Emmanuel Chabrier

Villanelles des Petits Canards

Ballades des Gros Dindons

# Programme Notes

## Benjamin Britten

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976) was an English composer, pianist and conductor who was a central figure in 20th Century British music. He leapt to fame in 1945 when his opera *Peter Grimes* premiered, and went on to produce many more great works such as the ‘*War Requiem*’ and ‘*The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*’.

*A Charm of Lullabies*, Op.41 is a song cycle for mezzo-soprano with piano. The variety of texts lends itself to variety of music, and questions the concept of a ‘lullaby’, by portraying a threatening, violent and menacing atmosphere.



# I. A Cradle Song

Sleep, sleep, beauty bright,  
Dreaming o'er the joys of night;  
Sleep, sleep, in thy sleep  
Little sorrows sit and weep.

Sweet babe, in thy face  
Soft desires I can trace,  
Secret joys and secret smiles,  
Little pretty infant wiles.

O! the cunning wiles that creep  
In thy little heart asleep.  
When thy little heart does wake  
Then the dreadful lightnings break,  
From thy cheek and from thy eye,  
O'er the youthful harvests nigh.

Infant wiles and infant smiles  
Heaven and Earth of peace beguiles.

## II. The Highland Balou

Hee Balou, my sweet wee Donald  
Picture o' the great Clanronald!  
Brawlie kens our wanton Chief  
What gat my young Highland thief  
Hee Balou...

Leeze me on thy bonnie craigie  
An' thou live thou'll, steal a naigie  
Travel the country thro' and thro' ,  
and bring hame a Carlisle cow!

Thro' the Lawlands, o'er the Border,  
Weel, my babie, may thou further!  
Herry the louns o' the laigh Countrie,  
Syne to the Highlands hame to me!

Hee Balou my sweet wee Donald  
Hee Balou, Balou

## IV. A Charm

Quiet! Sleep! or I will make  
Erinnys whip thee with a snake,  
And cruel Rhadamanthus take  
Thy body to the boiling lake,  
Where fire and brimstones never slake;

Thy heart shall burn, thy head shall ache,  
And ev'ry joint about thee quake;  
And therefore dare not yet to wake!  
Quiet, sleep!

Quiet! Sleep! or thou shalt see  
The horrid hags of Tartary,  
Whose tresses ugly serpents be,  
And Cerberus shall bark at thee,  
And all the Furies that are three

The worst is called Tisiphone,  
Shall lash thee to eternity;  
And therefor sleep thou peacefully  
Quiet, sleep!



# Sergei Rachmaninoff

Sergei Vasilyevich Rachmaninoff (1873 – 1943) was a Russian composer, virtuoso pianist, and conductor. Rachmaninoff is widely considered one of the finest pianists of his day and as a composer, one of the last great representatives of Romanticism in Russian Classical music.

The songs I have chosen talk about a variety of topics such as the secrets we hold within us, the immense love one can feel for a child, the beauty of human love and heartbreak. This provides a refreshing contrast from the more sinister first part of my recital.



# The Heart's Secret

Есть много звуков в сердца глубине,  
Неясных дум, непетых песней много;  
Но заглушает вечно их во мне  
Забот немолчных скучная тревога.

Тяжел ее непрошенный напор,  
Издавна сердце с жизнью боролось -  
Но жизнь шумит, как вихорь ломит бор,  
Как ропот струй, так шепчет сердца голос!

Within the heart what treasures lie concealed  
A world of dreams, sweet music unexpressed;  
Secrets to mortal ears and never revealed,  
By life's great sorrow silenced and suppressed.

With heavy blows affliction drives the world,  
The heart with life will wage an idle fray  
Till spent and worn as wasted trees are felled...  
The spirit sinks and murmuring dies away

# Like Blossom Dew'd Freshened to Gladness

Дитя, как цветок ты прекрасна,  
Светла, и чиста, и мила.  
Смотрю на тебя, и люблюсь,  
И снова душа ожила...

Охотно б тебе на головку  
Я руки свои возложил;  
Проя чтобы Бог тебя вечно  
Прекрасной и чистой хранил.

Child, you are as beautiful as a flower,  
fair, pure and sweet.  
I look at you and admire you  
and my soul comes to life again ...

She is as beautiful as noonday,  
and more mysterious than Mid of night.  
Her eyes have never wept,  
her heart not sore with sorrow.



# As Fair as Day in Blaze of Noon

Она как полдень хороша,  
Она загадочней полночи.  
У ней не плакавшие очи  
И не страдавшая душа.

А мне, чья жизнь борьба и горе,  
По ней томиться суждено.  
Так вечно плачущее море  
В безмолвный берег влюблено.

She is as beautiful as noonday,  
and more mysterious than Midnight.  
Her eyes have never wept,  
her heart not sore with sorrow.

I, whose life is strife and sorrow,  
am meant to long for her.  
Just as the sea, in constant tears,  
is in love with the silent shore.

# In the Silent Night

О, долго буду я, в молчаньи ночи тайной,  
Коварный лепет твой, улыбку, взор, Взор случайный,  
Перстам послушную волос  
Волос твоих густую прядь,

Из мыслей изгонять, и снова призывать;  
Шептать и поправлять былые выраженья  
Речей моих с тобой, исполненных смущенья,  
И в опьянении, наперекор уму,

Заветным именем будить ночную мглу  
О, долго буду я, в молчаньи ночи тайной

In the silence of the mysterious night,  
your alluring babble, smiles and glances,  
your fleeting glances,  
the locks of your rich hair, locks pliant under my fingertips –

I will long be trying to get rid of the images, only to call them back again.  
I will be repeating and correcting in a whisper  
the words I've told you, the words full of awkwardness,  
and, drunk with love, contrary to reason,

I will be awakening the night's darkness with a cherished name.  
In the silence of the mysterious night.



# Emmanuel Chabrier

Alexis-Emmanuel Chabrier (1841–1894) was a French Romantic composer and pianist. His Bourgeois family did not approve of a musical career for him so he studied law in Paris and then worked as a civil servant until the age of 39. From 1880 until his final illness he was a full-time composer.

The songs I have chosen to sing are just few of the multiple animal related comic songs that Chabrier wrote. Each song cleverly uses musical techniques to enhance the rather absurd texts and aims to make the audience laugh as well as enjoy some good old Classical singing.

# Villanelles des Petits Canards

Ils vont, les petits canards, Tout au bord de la rivière,  
Comme de bons campagnards!

Barboteurs et frétillards, Heureux de troubler l'eau claire,  
Ils vont, les petits canards, Ils semblent un peu jobards,  
Mais ils sont à leur affaire, Comme de bons campagnards!

Dans l'eau pleine de têtards, Où tremble une herbe légère,  
Ils vont, les petits canards, Marchant par groupes épars,  
D'une allure régulière, Comme de bons campagnards;

Dans le beau vert d'épinards, De l'humide cressonnière  
Ils vont, les petits canards, Et quoiqu'un peu goguenards,  
Ils sont d'humeur débonnaire, Comme de bons campagnards!

Faisant, en cercles bavards, Un vrai bruit de pétaudière,  
Ils vont, les petits canards, Dodus, lustrés et gaillards,  
Ils sont gais à leur manière, Comme de bons campagnards!

Amoureux et nasillards, Chacun avec sa commère,  
Ils vont, les petits canards,  
Comme de bons campagnards!



# Villanelles des Petits Canards

They go, the little ducks, all on the side of the river  
Like good country folk!  
Paddlers and wrigglers, happy to trouble the clear water  
They go, the little ducks  
They seem a little silly, but they are at their business,  
Like good country folk

In the water full of tadpoles, where light grass trembles,  
They go, the little ducks  
Marching in separate groups, at their own pace  
Like good country folk;

In the pretty spinach green of the humid cress-plot,  
They go, the little ducks  
And what, than a little mocking, they are of a good natured  
mood,  
Like good country folk!

Making in talkative circles, a true bedlam of noise  
They go, the little ducks  
Plump, Glossy and lively, they are merry with their manner  
Like good country folk!

Full of love and nasal, each one with its hearsay,  
They go, the little ducks,  
Like good country folk!

# Ballades Des Gros Dindons

Les gros dindons, à travers champs,  
D'un pas solennel et tranquille,  
Par les matins, par les couchants,  
Bêtement marchent à la file,  
Devant la pastoure qui file,  
En fredonnant de vieux fredons,  
Vont en procession docile  
Les gros dindons!

Ils vous ont l'air de gros marchands  
Remplis d'une morgue imbécile,  
De baillis rogues et méchants  
Vous regardant d'un œil hostile;  
Leur rouge pendeloque oscille;  
Ils semblent, parmi les chardons,  
Gravement tenir un concile,  
Les gros dindons!

N'ayant jamais trouvé touchants  
Les sons que le rossignol file,  
Ils suivent, lourds et trébuchants,  
L'un d'eux, digne comme un édile;  
Et, lorsqu'au lointain campanile  
L'angélus fait ses lents din! dons!  
Ils regagnent leur domicile,  
Les gros dindons!



# Ballades Des Gros Dindons

Prud'hommes gras, leurs seuls penchants  
Sont vers le pratique et l'utile,  
Pour eux, l'amour et les doux chants  
Sont un passe-temps trop futile;  
Bourgeois de la gent volatile,  
Arrondissant de noirs bedons,  
Ils se fichent de toute idylle,  
Les gros dindons!

Across the fields the turkey-cocks  
process like a grave delegation,  
along the stream, beside the rocks,  
in a follow-the-lead formation.  
A woman of lowly station,  
spinning and humming, idly looks  
at their dimwitted resignation,  
les gros dindons.

They plod like pompous auctioneers  
attired in dumb ostentation,  
or portly bailiffs, proud and mean,  
who observe you with accusation.  
Their red wattles' oscillation  
brushes the thistles where they seem  
to be holding a convocation,  
les gros dindons.

# Ballades Des Gros Dindons

From them the nightingale's fine talk  
wins never the least acclamation;  
they stumble on behind the cock  
with the weightiest reputation.  
And when the church-bells' vibration  
rings from behind the village clock  
they return to their habitation,  
les gros dindons.

A life that's useful, gross and gruff  
expresses their whole aspiration.  
For them the pretty songs of love  
are too futile an occupation.  
The fattest bourgeois in creation,  
they couldn't ever give a stuff  
for romance or imagination,  
les gros dindons.





Samiksha Argal is a Mezzo Soprano from India who is currently based in Singapore. She developed a passion for singing at the age of 13 and more specifically discovered a talent for Classical singing four years later. Samiksha was trained under Ms Sandra Oberoi in Musical Theatre, Jazz as well as Classical singing. She went on to study her Bachelor of Music (Honours) programme at the Yong Siew Toh conservatory in Singapore, under Professor Alan Bennett. Samiksha is the winner of multiple awards including American Protégé International Vocal Competition 2020 (Classical Voice) and the Outstanding Cambridge Learner awards in both AS and A level music (2021, 2022). She has performed at prestigious venues such as Carnegie hall, Gnessin Russian Academy of Music, Asian civilisation Museum Singapore and the Indian Embassy at Moscow. Samiksha is also Fortunate to have had classes with Richard Stokes, Lynne Dawson, Steven Robertson and Roger Vignoles.

magritte





Edenia Maureen is a pianist from Indonesia. She is currently a piano undergraduate student at Yong Siew Toh Conservatory under the tutelage of Professor Ning An. Her previous teachers include Dr. Thomas Hecht and Mr. Lim Yan. Her recent achievements include being 1st prize winner of YST Piano Concerto Competition, which offered her the opportunity to perform Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No. 1 with YST orchestra in October 2024. Apart from solo performances, Edenia Maureen has been active as a collaborative pianist in chamber groups, instrumental and vocal accompaniment, piano duo, as well as orchestral works. Edenia Maureen has had the privilege to receive piano masterclasses from wonderful pianists including Vanessa Latache, Stephen Hough, Christopher Guzman, Erik Tawaststjerna, Aaron Shorr, Michel D'alberto, and many more. Her passion for music drives her to continuously strive for excellence and to enrich her skills as a musician.