

SENIOR RECITAL

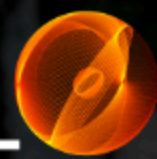
Folks,

*featuring works by Berio, Dvořák,
Greig and Bizet*

APRIL 28TH | 3:10 PM

YST concert hall

YST
Conservatory
of Music
Yong Siew Toh



50

SAMIKSHA ARGAL

mezzo-soprano

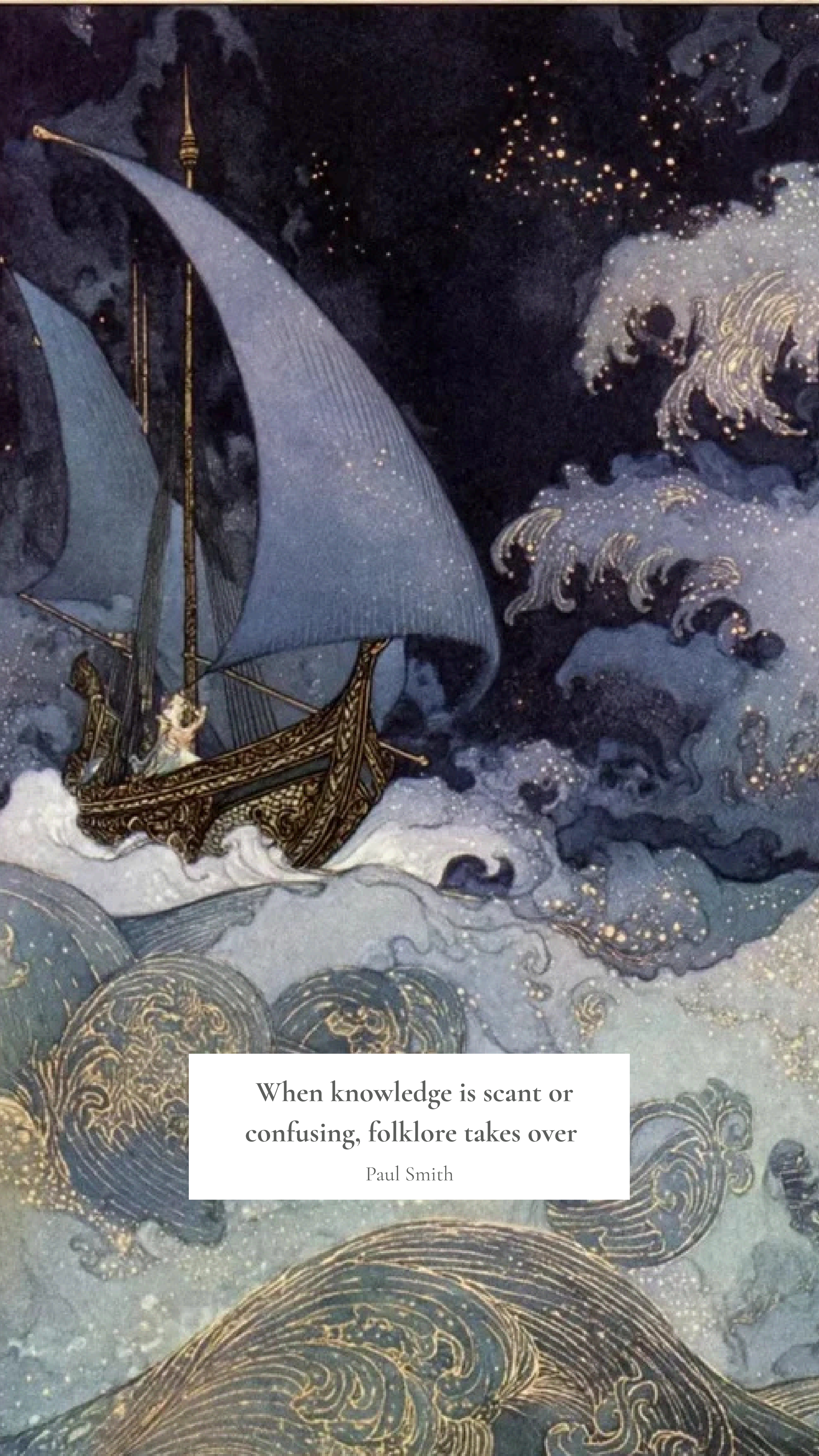
BEATRICE LIN

piano

ZHANG TONG

conductor





When knowledge is scant or
confusing, folklore takes over

Paul Smith

Programme

Gypsy songs

Antonín Dvořák

1. Má píseň zas mi láskou zní
2. Aj! Kterak trojhranec můj
3. A les je tichý kolem kol
4. Když mne stará matka
5. Struna naladěna
6. Široké rukávy
7. Dejte klec jestřábu

Haugtussa

Edvard Greig

IV. Møte

V. Elsk

VI. Killingdans

Aria's from Carmen

Georges Bizet

1. Habanera
2. Seguidilla
3. Chanson Bohème

Programme

Folk Songs

Luciano Berio

1. Black is the Colour
2. I Wonder as I Wander
3. Loosin Yelav
4. Rossignolet du Bois
5. A la Femminisca
6. La Donna Ideale
7. Ballo
8. Motteteu Tristura
9. Malurous qu'o uno fenno
10. Lo Fiolaire
11. Azerbaijani Love song

Programme Notes

Antonín Dvořák

Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904) was a Czech composer of the Romantic period and one of the most important figures in nationalistic music. He was born in the village of Nelahozeves in what is now the Czech Republic, and his music is strongly influenced by the folk traditions of his homeland, which he incorporated into symphonies, chamber music, and choral works. Dvořák's musical style combines Romantic lyricism with ethnic Romani rhythms, dance forms, and modal harmonies that evoke traditional Czech music. He later became director of the National Conservatory of Music of America in New York City, where he encouraged American composers to draw inspiration from local musical traditions.

Gypsy Songs, Op. 55, is a set of seven songs he composed in 1880. The cycle reflects Romantic-era fascination with Romani culture, portraying themes of freedom, wandering life, nature, and passionate musical expression. Dvořák's settings combine lyrical vocal lines with expressive piano accompaniments which evoke the spirit and rhythmic vitality associated with Romani music.

Programme Notes

Edvard Grieg

Edvard Grieg (1843–1907) was a Norwegian composer and pianist of the Romantic period, widely regarded as one of the leading figures in Norwegian national music. He was born in Bergen and studied at the Leipzig Conservatory, where he was trained in the German Romantic tradition. Although influenced by composers such as Robert Schumann, Grieg became known for incorporating Norwegian folk melodies and rhythms into his music. His works often evoke the landscapes and traditions of Norway, helping to shape a distinct national musical identity.

His song cycle *Haugtussa*, Op. 67, was composed in 1895. The eight songs are based on poems from the cycle of the same name by Arne Garborg. The cycle tells the story of a young shepherd girl, Veslemøy, who possesses mystical abilities and experiences love, heartbreak, and a deep connection with nature. The work is considered one of Grieg's finest vocal compositions, combining expressive melodies with richly evocative piano writing that reflects Norwegian landscapes and folklore.

Programme Notes

Georges Bizet

Georges Bizet (1838–1875) was a French composer of the Romantic period, best known for his operas and orchestral works. His music is admired for its vivid orchestration, memorable melodies, dramatic intensity in which he blends the lyricism of French Romantic opera with strong dramatic realism. His compositions often feature clear, memorable melodies, colorful orchestration, and rhythmic vitality. In his opera *Carmen*, he also incorporated musical elements inspired by Spanish culture, including dance rhythms and distinctive instrumental colors, to create a vivid sense of place and character. Although he died at the age of 36, Bizet left a lasting legacy, particularly through his opera *Carmen*, which has become one of the most frequently performed operas in the world.

Carmen is set in Seville, Spain, and tells the story of a woman named Carmen, a passionate and independent woman who works at a cigarette factory. She seduces a soldier, Don José, who falls deeply in love with her and abandons his duties and former life for her. However, Carmen eventually loses interest in him and becomes attracted to the charismatic bullfighter Escamillo. Consumed by jealousy and obsession, Don José confronts Carmen outside the bullring, where he ultimately kills her when she refuses to return to him. The opera explores themes of freedom, desire, jealousy, and fate, and is known for famous numbers such as the “Habanera” and the “Toreador Song.”

Programme Notes

Luciano Berio

Luciano Berio (1925–2003) was an influential Italian composer known for his experimental approach to music and his exploration of the human voice. In the 1950s, Berio became a key figure in the European avant-garde movement. His music often combines traditional instruments with innovative techniques, electronics, and spoken text. He collaborated closely with his wife, American mezzo-soprano Cathy Berberian, who inspired many of his vocal works. Berio's music had a lasting influence on contemporary classical music through its combination of experimentation, theatricality, and deep engagement with language and sound.

Berio's *Folk Songs* is a song cycle composed in 1964 by Luciano Berio for mezzo-soprano and a small chamber ensemble. The work consists of eleven songs drawn from various folk traditions, including music from the United States, Armenia, France, Sicily, Sardinia, and Azerbaijan. Rather than simply arranging the melodies, Berio reimagines them with inventive instrumental colors and modern harmonies, creating a dialogue between traditional folk material and contemporary classical techniques.



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 Civilisations Museum Singapore and the Indian Embassy at Moscow. Samiksha is also Fortunate to have had classes with Richard Stokes, Thomas Allen, Steven Robertson and Roger Vignoles.



Beatrice Lin is a graduate of the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, Singapore, the Royal Academy of Music, and the Haute école de Musique de Genève.

Her studies were generously supported by the National Arts Council and the Lee Foundation. She was also awarded the Adolphe Neuman Prize from the canton of Geneva upon graduation. Performances include live radio broadcasts on the Radio Suisse Romande Espace 2, keyboardist with L'Orchestre de Chambre de Genève and Ensemble Contrechamps, as well as répétiteur for the Concours de Genève. On home ground, she is collaborative pianist at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory and freelances with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra as well as the Singapore Chinese Orchestra.



Born in China, John , Zhang Tong began studying the cello at the age of six under the guidance of his father. He later received formal training at the Music Middle School affiliated with the Shanghai Conservatory of Music and continued his studies at the NUS Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music under Professor Qin Li-Wei. He has further refined his artistry through masterclasses and lessons with distinguished musicians including Aldo Parisot and Jian Wang.

As a conductor, Zhang Tong has participated in international competitions and was a semi-finalist in the Gheorghe Dima International Choral Conducting Competition. He was invited to participate in conducting masterclasses with Maestro Neeme Järvi (online), Maestro Alim Shakh, Dr. William Wright (Professor of Conducting, Eastman School of Music), and David Hill (Professor of Conducting, Royal Northern College of Music).

He is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Orchestral Conducting at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music under Jason Lai, Principal Conductor of the YST Orchestral Institute.