

FORGET THIS NIGHT

a new album of works by Lili Boulanger,
Karol Szymanowski, and Grażyna Bacewicz

recorded by
Katharine Dain, soprano
and Sam Armstrong, piano

praise for *Regards sur l'Infini*, the duo's
previous album (Edison Klassiek 2021 winner,
Best Debut):

*"an extraordinarily polished and thought-through
disc"* —Erica Jeal, The Guardian (Classical
Album of the Week)

*"impressively elegant and thoughtful ...
penetrating artistry"* —Geoff Brown, The Times



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

On 17 November 2023, Dutch label 7 Mountain Records releases "Forget This Night." The new album by **Edison-award-winning duo Katharine Dain and Sam Armstrong** features music by Lili Boulanger, Karol Szymanowski, and Grażyna Bacewicz, including the following:

- **Boulanger's *Clairières dans le ciel***, an underrated masterpiece of vast emotional scope; this duo's recorded interpretation is the culmination of several years of intense work on the complete cycle and numerous live performances together
- the **recorded premiere of a haunting monodic fragment** from Boulanger's last sketchbook
- imaginative pieces drawn from various opuses of **Karol Szymanowski**, a contemporary of Boulanger and her equal in innovation
- the first recording by a non-Polish duo of selections from the unjustly neglected song oeuvre of **Grażyna Bacewicz**, placing her songs in an international aesthetic context

Of the album, Katharine Dain says: "Our programme of passionate, pensive French and Polish songs circles a universal human question: how fully do we allow ourselves to open and blossom despite the knowledge that our bodies, desires, and relationships are ephemeral? Can we find meaning in fragile moments of love and beauty—although they pass, as they pass, because they pass? How did these composers, writing amid the political upheaval of Europe at the crossroads of two world wars, celebrate what is fleeting and cope with inevitable loss?"

About the programme

Lili Boulanger, the first woman to win France's Prix de Rome, was one of the great musical visionaries of the early 20th century and lived a vibrant creative life despite chronic debilitating illness—she died at age twenty-four. *Clairières dans le ciel* (1914), her only song cycle, is the story of one person's experience of a short, harrowingly intense love. The piece echoes the narrative arcs of the

19th-century cycles by Schubert and Schumann, but extends the form with innovative treatment of time and a bracingly modern exploration of the psychology of obsession. Infrequently performed complete due to its length and difficulty, it is a major work ripe for re-appraisal, an astonishing achievement for the twenty-year-old composer. The programme opens with Boulanger's first extant song, *Attente*, and closes with a **previously unrecorded fragment of music for solo voice** from her last composition sketchbook: a vulnerable, private admission of pain from a composer all too aware aware of her own mortality.

The same year that 17-year-old Boulanger wrote *Attente*, **Karol Szymanowski** composed his *Des Hafis Liebeslieder* Op. 24 while experiencing a profound artistic and sexual awakening. He had just traded Poland's rigid Catholic mores for radical permissiveness in Vienna; later, he expanded his horizons further with travel to Sicily and North Africa. Despite geographical and cultural distance, Boulanger and Szymanowski developed in similar aesthetic directions during the second decade of the 20th century; their vocal music combines delicate sophistication of color and texture with emotional immediacy and sonic drama. His songs on this programme explore innocence on the brink of collapse, the desolation of rejected love, and a decidedly un-Catholic embrace of impermanence.

Grażyna Bacewicz, of the generation of Polish musicians after Szymanowski, enjoyed remarkable renown in her lifetime in Poland as a violinist, pianist, composer, and conductor; virtually no women of her time—aside from Nadia Boulanger, with whom Bacewicz studied in Paris in the early 1930s—achieved such success in the field relatively unencumbered by gender prejudice. Still, **her songs, all in Polish, were not published or recorded until the last few years**. She wrote songs on many of the same themes (sometimes even on the same texts) as Szymanowski, but in a distinctly concentrated style—refreshingly direct and concise in affect. On this programme, the Polish composers' works stand alongside *Clairières* as a parallel journey from erotic anticipation to loss, and further: to acceptance.

The album's title is drawn from a poem by Rabindranath Tagore set in Polish translation by Bacewicz and in German by Szymanowski. It underlines the delight, longing, and risk of ephemeral connection, something all three of these composers innately understood and brought to beautiful realization in their too-little-known vocal works.

Further information

[Album photography \(cover, artwork, and session candids\)](#)

[Katharine Dain website](#)

[Sam Armstrong website](#)

For more information and press copies of the CD or a WAV download for review, please contact: Jo Carpenter, Music PR Consultancy. E: jo@jocarpenter.com Tel: +44 (0)7771538868

Videos

Lili Boulanger:

[Elle était descendue au bas de la prairie](#) (Clairières 1)

[Nous nous aimerons tant](#) (Clairières 7)

[Demain fera un an](#) (Clairières 13)

Karol Szymanowski:

[Das Grab des Hafis](#)

Grażyna Bacewicz:

[Mamidło](#)

Notes for editors

Label: 7 Mountain Records

Number: 7MNTN-046

Title: Forget This Night

Producer: Frerik de Jong

Running time: 70 minutes

Tracklist

- | | | |
|-----|--|-------------------|
| 1. | Attente | Lili Boulanger |
| 2. | Wysła burzycka (Pieśni kurpiowskie, Op. 58/2) | Karol Szymanowski |
| 3. | Smuga cienia | Grażyna Bacewicz |
| 4. | Mamidło (Trzy pieśni do słów arabskich z x wieku, Nr. 1) | Bacewicz |
| 5. | Die brennenden Tulpen (Des Hafis Liebeslieder, Op. 24/3) | Szymanowski |
| 6. | D'un vieux jardin (Trois morceaux pour piano, Nr. 1) | Boulanger |
| 7. | Rozstanie | Bacewicz |
| 8. | Das letzte Lied (Vier Gesänge, Op. 41/4) | Szymanowski |
| 9. | Mów do mnie, o miły | Bacewicz |
| 10. | Das Grab des Hafis, Op. posth. | Szymanowski |
| 11. | D'un jardin clair (Trois morceaux pour piano, Nr. 2) | Boulanger |
| | Clairières dans le ciel | Boulanger |
| 12. | i. Elle était descendue au bas de la prairie | |
| 13. | ii. Elle est gravement gaie | |
| 14. | iii. Parfois, je suis triste | |
| 15. | iv. Un poète disait | |
| 16. | v. Au pied de mon lit | |
| 17. | vi. Si tout ceci n'est qu'un pauvre rêve | |
| 18. | vii. Nous nous aimerons tant | |
| 19. | viii. Vous m'avez regardé avec toute votre âme | |
| 20. | ix. Les lilas qui avaient fleuri | |
| 21. | x. Deux ancolies | |
| 22. | xi. Par ce que j'ai souffert | |
| 23. | xii. Je garde une médaille d'elle | |
| 24. | xiii. Demain fera un an | |
| 25. | Pochyl się cicho nad kołyską (Trzy kołysanki, Op. 48/1) | Szymanowski |
| 26. | J'ai des fréponds (Sketchbook fragment, BN Ms 19469) | Boulanger |

Performer Biographies

Soprano **Katharine Dain** performs opera, chamber music, orchestral repertoire, and oratorio on international stages. She is also a curator of unusual programs, a writer, and a probing collaborator on artistic projects of many kinds. Her 2020 album *Regards sur l'Infini* with pianist Sam Armstrong, featuring works of Messiaen, Debussy, and others, won the 2021 Edison Klassiek for Best Debut Recording and was lavishly praised in the press: "fearless ... beautifully controlled ... exquisite"

(Gramophone). Recent highlights include a season as Artist-in-Residence with Finland's Tapiola Sinfonietta, featuring works of Barber, Beethoven, Copland, and Saariaho; a collectively-created production with Dutch National Opera; Mozart roles including Konstanze (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*) and Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*) throughout the Netherlands and France; frequent appearances with the Orchestra of the 18th Century, Nederlands Kamerorkest, and Asko|Schönberg; a solo recital debut in Amsterdam's Concertgebouw; residencies at numerous chamber music festivals throughout Europe; and the premiere of a new work for soprano by Bram Kortekaas with the Concertgebouw Orkest, later released on their Horizon series. In the 2023-24 season, Katharine will be a featured soloist with the Rotterdam Philharmonic and BBC National Orchestra of Wales and will sing Fiordiligi on tour with the Orchestra of the 18th Century.

Hailed as "a major new talent" by International Piano after his Wigmore Hall recital debut, British pianist **Sam Armstrong** brings deeply-felt interpretive power to the solo, chamber music and vocal repertoire. He has appeared in Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, Carnegie Hall New York, Seoul Arts Center, Singapore Esplanade and the Royal Festival Hall; recent and upcoming highlights include Wigmore Hall with violinist Geneva Lewis, International Lied Festival Zeist and Concertgebouw Amsterdam with soprano Katharine Dain, the Bath Festival with violinist Irène Duval, a performance of Bartok's Sonata for 2 pianos and percussion at King's Place in London as well as appearances at several European festivals. Sam recently won the prestigious Edison Klassiek award in the Netherlands for his CD with soprano Katharine Dain, "Regards sur l'Infini". The CD was also The Guardian's Classical CD of the week, "recommended" by Gramophone and in best-of-the-year lists in Dutch newspapers Parool and NRC.