

PRESS RELEASE

27 July 2017

***The Nutcracker and I*, by Alexandra Dariescu receives its world premiere on Tuesday 19 December 2017**



A ground-breaking multi-media performance piece for piano soloist, ballerina and digital animation

Performed and produced by: Alexandra Dariescu

Directed by: Nick Hillel

Art director and director of animation: Adam Smith

Choreography (live and animation) by: Jenna Lee

Ballerina: Désirée Ballantyne (6pm) Amy Drew (8pm)

Technical producer: Sander Loonen

Video design produced by: Yeast Culture

Project trailer <http://bit.ly/2tMOScj>

Concert pianist **Alexandra Dariescu** wants to challenge the traditional concert format and reach out to new audiences who might not have considered coming to a classical concert before. She has devised a ground-breaking 50-minute live multi-media performance piece for **piano soloist, ballerina and digital animation - *The Nutcracker and I*, by Alexandra Dariescu** – which receives its premiere on **Tuesday 19 December** at **6pm** with another performance at **8pm, Milton Court**.

Alexandra Dariescu has created her own personal take on this much-loved story which sees herself re-imagined as Clara: from little girl dreaming to concert pianist.

On stage will be a grand piano, played by Dariescu herself, and a ballerina behind a see-through gauze screen. Projected onto the gauze and bringing the story to life are exquisite digital animations, all hand drawn and created in advance by **Yeast Culture**. They follow the music and engage live with the pianist and ballerina as they ‘dance’ across the screen. The audience will feel like they are actually in and a part of the Nutcracker story.

Tchaikovsky’s beloved ballet music features throughout and includes favourites such as *Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy*, *Arabian Dance*, *Chinese Dance*, *Pas de Deux*, and the *Flower Waltz* in 15 virtuosic arrangements by **Mikhail Pletnev**, **Stepan Esipoff**, **Percy Grainger** and three brand new variations by **Gavin Sutherland**.

Alexandra Dariescu said, “*I believe my responsibility as a young artist is to reach out to as many people as possible and to build bridges for those new to classical music. I absolutely love what I do and realised early on that music is my calling but I am also quite aware that we have to be ever more creative to engage, connect and communicate the beauty of our art to our audiences. During one of my education workshops, a 12 year old asked me what I think of when I play. I told him I like to step into a different world by creating little stories in my mind and trying to convey them through the music I play to anyone who listens. It wasn’t until a little later when I realised that perhaps there is a way to share some of this magic during the moment when it actually happens on stage. *The Nutcracker and I*, by Alexandra Dariescu takes one of these stories and re-imagines it in a very personal context making use of some amazing technology that has never been seen quite like this before in a piano recital.*”

The world premiere of *The Nutcracker and I*, by *Alexandra Dariescu* will be immediately followed by 16 performances in Moscow's International Performing Arts Centre as well as Stavanger International Chamber Music Festival in Norway and multiple tours to China.

Arrangements for *The Nutcracker and I*, by *Alexandra Dariescu*

1. *Miniature Overture* - Stepan Esipoff
2. *Scene* - Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
3. *Opening Act One* - Gavin Sutherland
4. *March* – Mikhail Pletnev
5. *The Battle* – Gavin Sutherland
6. *Pas de Deux in the Snow* – Mikhail Pletnev
7. *Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy* – Mikhail Pletnev
8. *Tarantella* – Mikhail Pletnev
9. *Arabian Dance* – Stephen Esipoff
10. *Trepak* – Mikhail Pletnev
11. *Chinese Dance* – Mikhail Pletnev
12. *Dance of the Reed Flutes* - Stepan Esipoff
13. *Pas de Deux* – Mikhail Pletnev
14. *Flower Waltz* – Percy Grainger
15. *Finale* – Gavin Sutherland

The premiere of *The Nutcracker and I*, by *Alexandra Dariescu* is part of the Guildhall School's Alumni Recital Series. Alexandra Dariescu is currently on the Guildhall School's Creative Entrepreneurs programme, run in partnership with social enterprise *Cause4*. It is an intensive 12-month programme, which helps entrepreneurs develop ideas offering training in vision development, business planning and marketing, sales and funding and individual support. The aim of the scheme is to enable entrepreneurs to develop sustainable business and to secure vital seed funding.

Dariescu's 2017/18 season includes her debut appearance at Vienna's Musikverein celebrating Romanian pianist and composer Dinu Lipatti's 100th birthday with the **Transylvanian Philharmonic Orchestra**. Largely forgotten as a composer and with very few recordings of him existing as a pianist, Alexandra is passionate about ensuring more people hear his extraordinary music.

At the Viennese concert on **Thursday 30 November**, alongside the Grieg Piano Concerto, Dariescu performs Lipatti's *Concertino in Classical Style* for piano and orchestra which demonstrates his typical fusing of Romanian folk with the neo-classical French style. She takes the same programme to Cadogan Hall on **Tuesday 28 November 2017**, with the **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra** and conductor **Cristian Mandeal**. Dariescu returns to Austria on **Wednesday 7 March** for a recital at the Staatsoper with **Angela Gheorghiu**.

Dariescu makes her North American concerto debut, with dual programmes: firstly, going to Toronto, Canada with Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1 with the **Kitchener Waterloo Symphony Orchestra** on **Friday 2 and Saturday 3 March 2018**, conducted by **Marzena Diakun** and then in Quebec with the **Orchestre Symphonique de Quebec**, conducted by **Fabien Gabel**. She returns to North America from **Thursday 19 to Saturday 21 April**, where she plays the Grieg Piano Concerto with the **Utah Symphony Orchestra** under **Kazuki Yamada**.

As Artist in Residence at the **Iserlohner Herbsttage für Musik** in Germany, Dariescu will give a three-day masterclass with selected students from **Wednesday 11 - Friday 13 October 2017**; a recital the day before and a performance of Haydn's *Piano Concerto in D major* with the **Musikschulorchester Iserlohn** and Rachmaninov's Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini with the **Philharmoniker Hagen** both on **Sunday 15 October**.

Other performances include a recital of works by Beethoven, Lipatti, Enescu and Bartok at the **George Enescu Festival** in Romania on **Thursday 14 September 2017**; Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1 at the Brighton Dome with the **Brighton Philharmonic Orchestra** and **Barry Wordsworth** on **Sunday 8 October 2017**; and the Grieg Piano Concerto with the **Bath Philharmonia** and conductor **Jason Thornton** at the Wiltshire Music Centre on **Wednesday 8 November 2017**. She performs a programme of complete Preludes by Fauré and Messiaen on **Saturday 13 January 2018** as part of the Isle of Wight's **West Wight Arts** and takes the same programme to Biel, Switzerland on **Tuesday 16 January 2018**.

Tickets for *The Nutcracker and I*, by Alexandra Dariescu at Milton Court: £15 (£10 concessions), available from the Barbican Box Office: 0207 638 8891 barbican.org.uk from 7 August

For complete listings for Alexandra's schedule, please visit <http://alexandradariescu.com/> or Alexandra's general management Konzertdirektion Schmid <http://kdschmid.de/artistdetail/items/alexandra-dariescu.html>.

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Notes to Editors

Pianist Alexandra Dariescu dazzles audiences worldwide with her effortless musicality and captivating stage presence. In addition to numerous international ensembles she has forged relationships with key UK orchestras including the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Hallé Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, performing in venues such as London's Royal Albert Hall, Southbank Centre, as well as in recital at the Wigmore Hall, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw and New York's Carnegie Hall.

She released two contrasting recordings in autumn 2016: her first concerto recording with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra features Tchaikovsky's *Piano Concerto No. 1* and Mikhail Pletnev's concert suite of arrangements from *The Nutcracker* (Signum Records). The second recording of *Mesmerism* for piano and orchestra by British Composer Award winner Emily Howard, with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra is on the NMC Records label. In 2015, Alexandra released her second volume of complete preludes by Shostakovich and Szymanowski as part of her trilogy of preludes project for Champs Hill Records.

Alexandra receives advice from Sir Andrés Schiff and she was mentored by Imogen Cooper through the Royal Philharmonic Society/YCAT Philip Langridge Mentoring Scheme, whilst a former artist of the Young Classical Artists Trust. In 2013, Alexandra received the UK's Women of the Future Award in the Arts and Culture category and, in 2015, became the youngest musician to receive the Custodian of the Romanian Crown Medal. She has also been appointed patron of Music in Lyddington and Honorary Associate Artist of the Royal Northern College of Music in 2016.