

Elena Kokka

Elena Kokka, a unique classical artist, is the only pianist and singer on the world stage who tackles the most demanding repertoire for both piano and voice. Besides presenting unique recitals of solo piano and vocal music internationally, she is also reviving the lost art of the self-accompanied art-song recital, a performance practice extinct in the contemporary music world.

Elena Kokka was born in Athens, Greece. She moved to London to study piano and singing at the Royal College of Music and since then has appeared in England's most prominent venues, including the Cadogan Hall, St. John Smith's Square, the South Bank Centre, St Martin-in-the Fields, St. James's, Piccadilly, as well as the Clore Studio Theatre at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Highlights from appearances include her debut with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra singing excerpts from Cherubini's *Medea*.

Possessing a fine soprano voice and active as a recitalist as well as in opera, Elena's repertoire ranges from Handel's heroines to the contemporary. Opera roles include Beethoven's *Leonora* (Fidelio), Britten's *Female Chorus* (Rape of Lucretia), Cherubini's *Medea* (Medea), Handel's *Cleopatra* (Julius Caesar), Mozart's *Countess* (Marriage of Figaro) and *Electra* (Idomeneo), Puccini's *Suor Angelica* (Suor Angelica), *Magda* (Gianni Schicchi), *Mimi* (La Bohème), *Tosca* (Tosca), and *Liù* (Turandot).

She has pioneered the work of young composers, particularly from her native Greece, who have often composed works specifically written for her voice. She has premiered Othon Mataragas' cycles *Kali Dances* and *Digital Angel* at the Leeds *Lieder Plus* Festival and at the fiftieth anniversary season of the Park Lane Group. A promoter of Greek culture, she has performed at London's Hellenic Centre in programmes highlighting Greek composers. Moreover, she represented Greece in 2003 at the *Greece in Britain* series during her country's presidency of the European Union and she performed at the Cadogan Hall in a programme highlighting the influence of Greece in the operatic repertoire («Greece: Its Gods, Myths and Heroes at the Opera»). Collaborations with contemporary composers include the world premiere of the "Dalliance of the Eagles" by Graham Ross last October.

Elena is also enjoying a distinguished career as a concert pianist, winning several international awards, including the Jacques Samuel Pianos Prize, the Kendall Taylor Prize for her interpretation of Beethoven, and the Sixth International Konzertheum Piano Competition. She gave her Greek debut at the Maria Callas Concert Hall in Athens. Newspaper headlines after her appearance included titles such as "Elena Kokka: The Magician" and "Following the pathway of great artists" and has since performed extensively as piano recitalist and as soloist.

Elena Kokka has broadcast in the United Kingdom, as well as on Greek and Cypriot radio and television. She has also taken part in Yehudi Menuhin's *Live Music Now*, performing over 40 concerts a year. She was selected to participate in English National Opera's Baylis Young Artists Programme under whose auspices she performed in the premiere of David Knott's opera *Henry Purcell: His Ground*. Elena has studied under the supervision of Theresa Goble and Janis Kelly.