



Angélique Kidjo • Prom 16

singer

‘We have to acknowledge our common ancestry: we are all Africans!’ Beninese Afropop superstar Angélique Kidjo is looking way back to the origins of humanity to shed light on her own musical forays between genres. ‘I don’t like labels and classifications. I’ve always mixed genres and styles. I began this year as the soloist in Philip Glass’s new *Symphony No. 12*, then I played a few concerts in my *Talking Heads Remain in Light* project, I released an album dedicated to Celia Cruz and I’m curating four concerts in Carnegie Hall’s new season. My whole life has been about creating bridges between musicians from all over the world.’

Kidjo makes her Proms debut in a Late Night Prom on 30 July, and marks the occasion with a tribute to Cuban diva Celia Cruz, who died in 2003. ‘I grew up in Benin listening to salsa and Celia struck me because she was the only great female singer in a world of male Latin musicians. Since then, I discovered that much of her early music was inspired by Yoruba songs that had come to the Americas from Benin during the slave trade. I feel she’s like a musical sister from another continent that 400 years of history has separated. I wanted to pay homage to her by reinventing those Yoruba-infused songs in the West-African Afrobeat and juju styles, from which they originally came.’