



Danae Kontora • Prom 65

soprano

‘Should I be nervous?’ laughs soprano Danae Kontora, looking ahead to her BBC Proms debut. ‘It’s a big deal, I know. I always wondered: would I sing there one day? What would it be like?’ The Greek-born singer is a fast-rising star on both concert and opera stages, but her programme – virtuosic coloratura arias by Mozart and Richard Strauss – understandably induced some apprehension. ‘I was amazingly excited and terrified at the same time. In one way, it’s cut out for me, but these pieces are so technical and so emotional, and I’ll need huge stamina.’

Her two Mozart insertion arias bring to her mind the volatile music of *The Magic Flute*’s Queen of the Night, a role she’s sung several times. ‘You can never overestimate that part, but, because I’ve done it so much, it doesn’t feel like a threat. These arias are like huge versions of what the Queen sings.’ She is also singing Zerbinetta’s aria from Strauss’s *Ariadne auf Naxos*. ‘Strauss is one of my favourite composers, so it kind of comes naturally: my voice knows how to work on it.’

What’s the difference between performing in an opera house and in concert? ‘In the opera house you create the character with your acting, gestures, movement and voice. In a concert you need to pour all of that into your voice. It’s tricky, but very interesting. Plus in a concert you get to choose your own dress!’