

MUSIC CENTER
STRATHMORE

RENÉE FLEMING
Voice of Nature:
The Anthropocene

Wednesday, May 27, 2026



Renée Fleming, *soprano*

Bradley Moore, *piano*

When I was 14, the film *Soylent Green* was released, a sci-fi thriller about a dystopian future of worldwide pollution, dying oceans, depleted resources, and rampant starvation. The story was set in the year 2022.

The movie has faded from memory, but one scene left a profound impression. An aged researcher, unable to go on, has chosen assisted suicide at a government clinic. To ease his last moments of life, he is shown videos of a world that no longer exists: flowers and savannahs, flocks and herds, unpolluted skies and waters, all set to a soundtrack of classical music by Tchaikovsky, Beethoven, and Grieg.

This scene captured my imagination in a terrifying way. The impact increased when I later learned that the actor playing the researcher, Edward G. Robinson, was terminally ill at the time it was filmed.

Fast forward to the pandemic. After more than two decades of constant touring, usually to urban cultural centers, performances abruptly ceased, and I suddenly found myself at home. I sought comfort in long walks outside near my house. I needed this time outdoors to maintain my emotional equilibrium, and I was reminded that nature would always be my touchstone. At the same time, the news about climate change grew more alarming: the extinction of animals we took for granted when we were children, the knowledge that white rhinos had disappeared from the wild, and daily reports of heat, fires, and flooding. I realized that the crisis we had been warned of for so long had arrived.

I thought of the great legacy of song literature that I love, when Romantic-era poets and composers reveled in imagery of nature, finding reflections of human experience in the environment. I decided to record some of this music, and to juxtapose these classics with the voices of living composers, addressing our current, troubled relationship with the natural world.

The result, in collaboration with my friend Yannick Nézet-Séguin, was the album *Voice of Nature: the Anthropocene*. When it received the 2023 Grammy Award for Best Classical Solo Vocal Album, I was thrilled, and I had the idea to tour music addressing this theme of nature as both our inspiration and our victim.

I was incredibly fortunate to connect with the imaginative, dedicated leadership at the National Geographic Society, the global non-profit committed to exploring, illuminating, and protecting the wonder of our world. It has been so exciting to work with this universally respected, landmark institution. I am deeply grateful for the help of President and Chief Operating Officer Michael Ulica, Chief Executive Officer Jill Tiefenthaler, and Producer/Editor Sam Deleon, whose expertise and vision have been instrumental in creating the video you will see in the second half of tonight's program.

Thankfully, the stunning natural world depicted in this film still exists, unlike that movie scene so upsetting to my younger self. In blending these beautiful images with music, my hope is, in some small way, to rekindle your appreciation of nature, and encourage any efforts you can make to protect the planet we share.

Sincerely,
Renée Fleming

Voice of Nature: The Anthropocene
Renée Fleming, *soprano*
Bradley Moore, *piano*

PROGRAM

*The following is accompanied by a film provided by National Geographic.
The audience is asked kindly to hold applause until the end of the film.*

“Pretty Bird”	Hazel Dickens (1925–2011)
“Care selve” from <i>Atalanta</i> , HWV 35	George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)
“Endless Space”	Nico Muhly (b. 1981), Thomas Traherne (1636–1674)\Robinson Meyer (b. 1991)
“Baïlèro” from <i>Chants d’Auvergne</i>	Joseph Canteloube (1879–1957)
“All is Full of Love”	Björk (b. 1965)
“Epilogo” from <i>Floresta do Amazonas</i>	Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887–1959)
“Twilight and Shadow” from <i>The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King</i>	Howard Shore (b. 1946), Philippa Jane Boyens (b. 1962)
“Evening”	Kevin Puts (b. 1972), Dorianne Laux (b. 1952)
“Red Mountains Sometimes Cry”	Curtis Green (b. 1995), Pearce Green (b. 1998)
“What the World Needs Now is Love”	Burt Bacharach (1928–2023), Hal David (1921–2012)

INTERMISSION

Entr’acte	Jackson Browne (b. 1948) “Before the Deluge” (recording) Arranged by Caroline Shaw with Rhiannon Giddens, Alison Krauss, Renée Fleming and Yannick Nézet-Séguin, piano
“Oh Sleep, why dost thou leave me?” from <i>Semele</i>	George Frideric Handel
“To fleeting pleasures make your court” from <i>Samson</i>	
“O mio babbino caro” from <i>Gianni Schicchi</i>	Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924)
“L’heure Exquise” from <i>7 Chansons Grises</i>	Reynaldo Hahn (1874–1947)
“Les Etoiles” from <i>12 Rondels</i>	
“L’isle joyeuse”	Claude Debussy (1862–1918)
	Bradley Moore, <i>solo</i>
“We Hold These Truths”	J. Todd Frazier (b. 1969)
“A Letter from Sullivan Ballou”	John Kander (b. 1927)
“Love and Love Alone/Winter” from <i>The Visit</i>	John Kander
“I Could Have Danced All Night” from <i>My Fair Lady</i>	Alan Jay Lerner (1918–1986), Frederick Loewe (1901–1988)
“The Diva”	Andrew Lippa (b. 1964)

BIOGRAPHIES



RENÉE FLEMING is internationally celebrated for her vocal and dramatic artistry, as well as her dedicated advocacy for the powerful impacts of the creative arts in health. A 2023 Kennedy Center Honoree and winner of five Grammy awards and the US National Medal of Arts, she has sung for momentous occasions from the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony to the Diamond Jubilee for Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace. In 2008, she became the first woman in the 125-year history of the Metropolitan Opera to solo headline an opening night gala, and in 2014, she became the first classical artist ever to sing “The Star-Spangled Banner” at the Super Bowl.

Renée’s new album *The Fiddle and the Drum* will be released May 29. A collaboration with 19-time Grammy winning banjo virtuoso Béla Fleck, the album celebrates Appalachian bluegrass and folk music, with contributions from featured artists Dolly Parton, Vince Gill, Jerry Douglas, Aoife O’Donovan, Sierra Hull, and Sarah Jarosz. In 2024 at the Metropolitan Opera, she reprised her role in *The Hours*, an opera based on the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel and award-winning film. This winter, she returned to the Opéra de Paris with her acclaimed portrayal of Pat Nixon in *Nixon in China*.

Known for bringing new audiences to classical music and opera, Fleming has sung not only with Luciano Pavarotti and Andrea Bocelli, but also with Elton John, Paul Simon, Sting, Josh Groban, Dead and Company, and Joan Baez. Her voice is featured on the soundtracks of Best Picture Oscar winners *The Shape of Water* and *The Lord of the Rings*.

Fleming’s anthology *Music and Mind: Harnessing the Arts for Health and Wellness* was published in 2024. A prominent advocate for research at the intersection of arts, health, and neuroscience, she created a live program called *Music and Mind*, which she has presented in more than 70 cities around the world, earning Research!America’s Rosenfeld Award for Impact on Public Opinion and Harvard Medical School’s David Mahoney Neuroscience Prize. She is now an advisor for major initiatives in this field, including the NeuroArts Blueprint at Johns Hopkins University. She launched the Renée Fleming NeuroArts Investigator Awards, funding interdisciplinary research projects by early career scientists in collaboration with creative artists.

Co-Artistic Director of the Aspen Opera Center and VocalArts at the Aspen Music Festival, Fleming is also Advisor for Special Projects at LA Opera and Artist Development Advisor at Wolf Trap Opera. Her other awards include the 2023 Crystal Award from the World Economic Forum in Davos, the Fulbright Lifetime Achievement Medal, Germany’s Cross of the Order of Merit, Sweden’s Polar Music Prize, and honorary doctorates from 10 major universities. www.reneefleming.com.



BRADLEY MOORE has appeared in recital with Renée Fleming, Susan Graham, Ryan Speedo Green, Jamie Barton, Christine Goerke, Angela Meade, Eric Owens and Eric Cutler, among others. He has been a piano soloist with orchestras including the National Symphony Orchestra and the Buffalo Philharmonic. He performed the Martinu Harpsichord Concerto with the San Francisco Ballet for the world premiere of Mark Morris’ *Beaux*, and has also been heard as a recitative accompanist and continuo player with the Met Orchestra, the Wiener Philharmoniker, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the Met Chamber Ensemble. His discography includes *The House Without A Christmas Tree* and a recital with Melody Moore for Pentatone, a recital with Mr. Cutler for EMI Classics, a recital with clarinetist Julian Bliss on Signum Classics, and a recital of songs by Daron Hagen on Arsis Audio.

Mr. Moore conducted the world premieres of *The House Without a Christmas Tree* (Gordon) and *Some Light Emerges* (Kaminsky) at the Houston Grand Opera, and led the company’s revival of *The Little Prince*, as well as performances of *Tosca*, *L’elisir d’amore*, and *The Magic Flute*. He conducted *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Dead Man Walking*, *The Cunning Little Vixen*, and *The Crucible* at the Miami Music Festival and *Madama Butterfly* at the Castleton Festival. He has been Associate Music Director at the Houston Grand Opera, and assistant conductor at Metropolitan Opera, the Salzburg Festival, Opéra National de Paris, Canadian Opera Company, and Los Angeles Opera.

Strathmore extends its gratitude to Chevy Chase Trust for its generous support and for helping to make this program possible.