

## The Night Dances

AUSTRALIAN EXCLUSIVE

Charlotte Rampling and Sonia Wieder-Atherton, UK/France



*“Some things have their own force, their own internal logic. They lead you more than you lead them.”* **Sonia Wieder-Atherton**

Photo: Sonia Wieder-Atherton and Charlotte Rampling, *The Night Dances* © Marthe Lemelle

In an Australian exclusive, screen star **Charlotte Rampling** and renowned cellist **Sonia Wieder-Atherton** bring together two of the most important voices of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – American writer **Sylvia Plath** and British composer **Benjamin Britten**- in a rare performance of her words, his music.

For this illuminating evening of haunting poetry and powerful music at the City Recital Hall, Rampling performs text from Plath’s diary, letters and poems in French and English. Alongside her, Wieder-Atherton plays Britten’s suites for solo cello, which were inspired by Plath’s final diary entries and originally composed for the great **Mstislav Rostropovich**.

Plath’s diary entries charted the awe, despair, relentless quests and variety of people that entered her life. Her early adolescence and marriage produced many famous entries, but it was in the aftermath of her relationship with Ted Hughes that she penned a series of combatant poems. She described these as *“the best poems of my life, the ones that will make me famous”*.

Rampling and Wieder-Atherton perform a selection of poems that chronicle Plath’s life from the loss of her father in her childhood to days before her death. The repertoire includes explorations of her life, from the relationship with her German father and his experiences in concentration camps during the horrors of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, to the expressions of adoration for her children, that ‘made the night dance,’ to poems filled with rage and violent release.

“Daddy” explores the relationship with her German father and his experiences in concentration camps during the horrors of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. “Love” reveals adoration for her children that for Sylvia, made ‘the night dance’. ‘Lady Lazarus’ is driven by a period of rage and violent release. “Letter in November” and “Wintering” evince the pain of winter and her final poems, “Contusion” and “Edge”, unravelling a dark and morbid state of mind, written days before her suicide.

Britten’s cello suites are free and imaginative, powerfully complimenting the seriousness of the text. Fifty years after the death of Sylvia Plath and one hundred years after the birth of Benjamin Britten, their voices are brought to life by Wieder-Atherton and Rampling’s expressive, slightly husky timbre.

*“Britten’s world had nothing to fear from that of Plath... Always just a step ahead or behind her obsessive pacing to and fro, her deep song, her infinite colours and even her flashes of humour. And her sense of form.”* **Sonia Wieder-Atherton**

Charlotte Rampling began her career in films in 1964 with Richard Lester in *The Knack*, becoming notorious early on for her bold, meaningful characters. She gained recognition from American audiences in a remake of Raymond Chandler’s detective story *Farewell, My Lovely* (1975), Woody Allen’s *Stardust Memories* (1980) and her extensive collaboration with director Francois Ozon, including his very last movie *Jeune et Jolie* in 2012. Rampling is also acclaimed for her stage performance, including her recent reading of the correspondence of Cavafy-Yourcenar, which was presented around the globe.

A sought-after interpreter of a broad repertoire, French-American cellist Sonia Wieder-Atherton is a well-known force in the musical scene. She has played as soloist with the Orchestre de Paris, the Orchestre National de France, the Belgian Orchestre National, and the Liège Philharmonic among others. Recognizing Wieder-Atherton as one of the most dynamic musical personalities of our time, the Académie des Beaux-Arts bestowed on her the “Grand Prix Del Duca” in 1999 and in 2011, She has also received the Art prize of the Bernheim Foundation, an award that every year recognizes exceptionally innovative work in the arts, humanities and sciences.

*The Night Dances* is an opportunity to experience the intoxicating combination of Plath and Britten, at their most soul-bearing and intimate, channelled by two masters of their craft.

<b>Design</b>	Sonia Wieder-Atherton and Charlotte Rampling
<b>Design assistant</b>	Emmanuelle Touati
<b>Director</b>	Sonia Wieder-Atherton
<b>Lighting design</b>	Franck Thevenon

#### **Program to include**

Sylvia Plath, Lady Lazarus  
Benjamin Britten, Suite n° 2, op. 80, Declamato (largo)

Sylvia Plath, The Night Dances  
Benjamin Britten, Suite n° 2, op. 80, Fuga (andante)

Sylvia Plath, Edge

Sylvia Plath, Ariel  
Benjamin Britten, Suite n° 2, op. 80, Scherzo (allegro molto)

Sylvia Plath, Letter in November  
Benjamin Britten, Suite n° 2, op. 80, Andante lento

Sylvia Plath, Three Women, extracts

Sylvia Plath, Daddy  
Benjamin Britten, Suite n° 2, op. 80, Ciaccona (allegro)

Sylvia Plath, Wintering

Sylvia Plath, Medusa  
Benjamin Britten, Suite n° 3, op. 87, Barcarola (lento)

Sylvia Plath, Contusion  
Benjamin Britten, Suite n° 3, op. 87, Fuga (andante espressivo)

## MEDIA RELEASE

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# SYDNEY FESTIVAL 2015

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Sylvia Plath, Love Letter  
Benjamin Britten, Suite n° 3, op. 87, Introduzione (lento)

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