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CLASSICS

Alexandra Dariescu

PIANO

Academy of
St Martin
in the Fields

*A
Child's
Dream*



A CHILD'S DREAM

Rondo in D Major, K. 382 **WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART**

1	I. Allegretto grazioso	6.10
2	II. Adagio	2.18
3	III. Allegro	2.17
4	Child's Dream (Christmas Album, Op. 8)* EMMY SCHÄFER KLEIN	1.55
5	Humble Birth* JAMES LEE III	2.23

Three Pieces for Cello and Piano **NADIA BOULANGER**

6	I. Moderato	2.46
7	II. Sans vitesse et à l'aise	1.59
8	III. Vite et nerveusement rythmé	2.41

Three Romances for Violin and Piano, Op. 22 **CLARA SCHUMANN**

9	I. Andante Molto	2.59
10	II. Allegretto	2.50
11	III. Leidenschaftlich schnell	3.50

12	Prelude in B Minor, BWV 855a JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (Arr. for Piano by ALEXANDER SILOTI)	3.18
13	A Map of Laughter MISSY MAZZOLI	2.08
14	Harlequin (Children's Carnival, Op. 25) AMY BEACH	1.11
15	The Goblin and the Mosquito FLORENCE PRICE	1.00
16	Romance GERMAINE TAILLEFERRE	3.17
17	Songs without Words No. 5* LEOKADIYA KASHPEROVA (Arr. for Piano by GRAHAM GRIFFITHS)	1.44
18	Mazurka (Premières pensées musicales, Op. 3) CARL FILTSCH	3.32
19	Joc țigănesc* TUDOR CIORTEA	2.21
20	O polichinelo (A prole do bebê No. 1, W140: 7) HEITOR VILLA-LOBOS	0.57

Total timings: 51.36

ALEXANDRA DARIESCU, piano

TOMO KELLER, violin | **RICHARD HARWOOD**, cello

ACADEMY OF ST MARTIN IN THE FIELDS

*World Premiere Recording

ARTIST FOREWORD

Dear Listener,

Welcome to my tenth album! *A Child's Dream* is a deeply personal journey through the music that has shaped my life, from the very first pieces I played as a child to the milestones that defined me. These works have travelled with me around the world – from Mozart's *Rondo*, the first piece I ever performed with orchestra at the age of nine, to *Humble Birth*, written for me by my dear friend and brilliant American composer James Lee III.

Alongside these landmarks are hidden gems by historically overlooked composers – voices that deserve to be heard and celebrated. With four world-premiere recordings, *A Child's Dream* is both a reflection of my own story and a tribute to the inclusive, diverse world we live in today.

One of the greatest joys of this album has been recording with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, a group of extraordinary musicians and human beings I once knew only through treasured recordings that inspired me profoundly. Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine I would one day share the stage with them, let alone record my tenth album together!

Heartfelt thanks to Tomo Keller and Richard Harwood, who joined me on this adventure with such enthusiasm, dedication and truly inspiring music-making. Much gratitude to Alexander van Ingen, who has been there from the very beginning, producing my very first album. Ever thankful to the entire KD SCHMID, Signum teams and David Taylor, whose constant support over the years has meant more than words can say.

This album is dedicated to my mum and my husband, whose love, belief and encouragement have given me the strength to dream fearlessly and follow the path that led me here.

May this music awaken wonder, inspire courage and remind us that every dream – like every musical note – holds the power to shine for a lifetime.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alexandra Danescu". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

PROGRAMME NOTES

MOZART: Rondo for piano and orchestra in D Major, K. 382

After my concerto debut with this piece, I confidently declared to anyone who would listen: “I’m going to be a concert pianist.” The truth? The evening didn’t exactly start in dazzling fashion. As I stepped on stage, I tripped, sending the sheet music flying from every stand in sight. My poor mum froze in the front row, and the conductor assumed the concert was over before it had even begun. But it’s in those moments you discover what you’re made of: do you cry and give up, or pick yourself up, smile, and keep playing? Thankfully, I learned that lesson early on — I was nine years old.

Of course, I had no idea what such a statement really meant — not coming from a family of musicians. The years of training, the resilience and perseverance it would demand were still hidden ahead. But the curiosity and joy of performing lit the way.

Mozart wrote this sparkling *Rondo* in 1782 as a replacement finale for his earlier D major Concerto, K. 175, composed when he was just 17. It is full of brilliance, wit and youthful energy. For Mozart

it was a hit with Viennese audiences. For me, it was the first step on a lifelong journey — a child’s dream that came true.



EMMY SCHÄFER KLEIN: Child’s Dream (Christmas Album, Op. 8)

WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

Have you ever heard of Emmy Schäfer Klein? Don’t worry, neither had I until the pandemic, when time seemed to stand still and I found myself digging deep into forgotten shelves of repertoire. Hidden among them was this sparkling miniature, *Child’s Dream*. It has never been recorded before — which feels almost unbelievable, given its charm. Sadly, not much information exists on this composer, but *Child’s Dream* is the first of six pieces in her Christmas Album, published in 1882. After more than 140 years, it is finally given voice.

Like a snow globe shaken gently, Emmy Schäfer Klein's music captures the wonder of a child gazing at Christmas lights. This piece drifts between innocence and longing, between dream and reality. Almost forgotten in history, her voice returns here — fragile yet luminous — reminding us that every child's dream deserves to be heard. For me, discovering Klein's music in such a still, uncertain moment felt like opening a small window to joy and possibility. And now, for the first time, it gets to fly free into the world.

JAMES LEE III: Humble Birth
WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

I first met James Lee III in Detroit after performing with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Over dinner, we hit it off immediately — laughing, trading stories, and, before pudding, already plotting a new concerto together. Eighteen months later, that dream became reality when we premiered *Shades of Unbroken Dreams* with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and the BBC Philharmonic.

Since then, James has made his BBC Proms debut and became Composer-in-Residence with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, testament to his visionary and original voice. James has a wonderful sense of humour in person, but his music always carries a profound message about the world we live

in. He composed *Humble Birth* in December 2021, when I launched “Alex's Piano Advent Calendar” online. It's a piece rooted in simplicity and sincerity — a quiet reminder of what matters most. This piece is a cradle song for the world: tender, hopeful and filled with light. It was a gift born of kindness and faith. It speaks of beginnings that may seem small, but carry within them the seeds of greatness. Every note is a reminder that even the humblest birth can change the world.

NADIA BOULANGER: Three 3 Pieces for Cello and Piano

I first “met” Mademoiselle Boulanger when the BBC Symphony Orchestra invited me to perform her *Fantaisie variée* at the Barbican. Until then, I only knew her as the legendary teacher — the wise enchantress of Paris who shaped everyone from Copland to Piazzolla, Barenboim to Dinu Lipatti and Quincy Jones. Discovering her own music was a revelation! I even gave the US premiere of her *Fantaisie* with the Houston Symphony Orchestra in 2022 — surreal, considering she taught so many Americans and was the first woman to conduct the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic.

Her *Trois Pièces*, written in 1911 for organ and transcribed for cello and piano in 1914, feel like three secret postcards from Nadia herself: one

dark and smoky, one full of restless questions and one bursting into dance. For once, it's not the teacher speaking through her students — it's Nadia, in her own unmistakable voice.

CLARA SCHUMANN: Three Romances for Violin and Piano, Op. 22

Clara's Piano Concerto was my gateway into her world. I've played it across Europe, the US and Australia — even giving the Melbourne premiere! — and through it I began to sense the depth of her voice. Behind the virtuosity lies something more intimate: Clara's music is like a secret diary hidden under the pillow of a genius — full of whispers, sighs, and flashes of fiery passion.

These Romances, written in 1853 for her dear friend the violinist Joseph Joachim, sing with tenderness, mischief, and longing. They are stories of friendship and imagination, painted with the brush of one of music's bravest heroines. Clara was not only a child prodigy and one of the greatest pianists of the 19th century, but also a pioneering composer who balanced touring, motherhood, and artistry at a time when women were expected to do anything but create. Her music dares to speak with honesty and courage, and in these Romances, we hear her heart.

BACH/SILOTI: Prelude in B Minor, BWV 855a

I first learnt this Prelude as a child, never realising how much it would come to mean later in life. After my beloved professor passed away in 2006, I was asked to play it at his memorial just a few days after his death. Even now, when the Prelude begins, it feels as if he is quietly there, listening, guiding me, smiling.

Siloti's arrangement feels like stepping into an ancient cathedral at dawn, when the first rays of sun strike the stained glass and colours spill across the stone floor. It is simple and serene, yet filled with infinite depth — a quiet prayer that carries us beyond time. The music wanders in shadow, searching in minor keys, and then — right at the end — it turns to major, as if Bach himself reminds us that there will always be light after darkness.

MISSY MAZZOLI: A Map of Laughter

I first met Missy in New York over tea and cake while I was performing at the Kaufman Music Centre. She has this spark — witty, fearless and endlessly curious — and her music feels exactly the same. In 2018 she made history as one of the first women ever commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera, and her voice has been reshaping the musical landscape ever since.

Missy writes music like constellations in the night sky — dazzling, modern, alive. In *A Map of Laughter*, inspired by Schubert's *Moments musicaux No. 4*, she charts laughter itself: bursts, echoes, surprising shapes. It's like the sound of a child's imagination — unpredictable, mischievous and full of joy.

AMY BEACH: Harlequin (Children's Carnival, Op. 25: VI)

During the pandemic, my husband and I moved to Berlin for six months, and in those strange, uncertain days I found unexpected treasures at the piano. One of them was Amy Beach's *Children's Carnival*. Step right up to the circus tent: here comes Harlequin — nimble, cheeky, a trickster in a dazzling costume. Beach, the first great American woman composer, paints him with sparkling rhythms and witty twists.

Playing it for the first time, I could almost see him tumbling across our little Berlin flat, cartwheeling and bowing before vanishing with a wink. In the quiet of lockdown, Harlequin brought back colour, mischief and joy — a reminder that music always finds a way to make us smile.

FLORENCE PRICE: The Goblin and the Mosquito

This little gem has become one of my go-to encores

around the world — and it never fails to surprise audiences, many of whom have sadly never heard of Florence Price. She was the first African American woman to have a symphony performed by a major US orchestra (the Chicago Symphony in 1933), and her voice has only recently been rediscovered after stacks of her manuscripts were found in an abandoned house.

I also play her piano concerto, which I often pair with Rachmaninov's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* — both written in 1934, though one is known all over the world and the other not nearly enough.

The Goblin and the Mosquito is pure theatre — a fairytale duel where wit and rhythm collide in dazzling fun. The goblin stomps and blusters while the mosquito buzzes and teases, and by the end both pianist and audience are grinning.

GERMAINE TAILLEFERRE: Romance

I was first introduced to Germaine through the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, who invited me to perform her *Ballade*. It was a revelation — and I love pairing it in concert with Ravel's G major concerto, since she was his student and shared so much of his elegance and sparkle. As the only woman in the famous Parisian

group Les Six, she carved out her own voice with courage, wit and charm.

Her *Romance* is like a perfume bottle of Parisian elegance. Gentle, flowing and radiant, it whispers of twilight walks along the Seine, of laughter spilling from cafés, of dreams carried on the evening air. Grace in sound: simple, chic and utterly enchanting.

KASHPEROVA/GRIFFITHS:
Songs Without Words No. 5
WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

This truly was the discovery of the century for me. When the BBC Symphony Orchestra invited me to perform Kashperova's Concerto, I had to confess I had never even heard of her. Imagine my surprise when I learned that she had been Stravinsky's teacher! Kashperova (1872-1940) studied piano at the St Petersburg Conservatoire with Anton Rubinstein and composition with Rimsky-Korsakov, graduating with the highest honours. With a catalogue that includes a symphony, a piano concerto, chamber music and numerous lieder, her music has only begun to re-emerge in recent years her Symphony in B minor was featured at the BBC Proms in 2022.

Much of Kashperova's work had been lost to history until the tireless Dr. Graham Griffiths uncovered it. He has since become a dear friend — we've spent countless hours exploring her music together, fuelled by endless cake and conversation. This *Song Without Words*, arranged for piano by Graham, feels like a lullaby murmured by the fire. In it, you hear a woman's voice long silenced — at last, allowed to sing again.

CARL FILTSCH: Mazurka (Premières pensées musicales, Op. 3)

As a child I took part in many competitions and festivals — one of them was named after Carl Filtsch and that's how I first discovered him. Born in Transylvania, he moved to Paris and quickly became Chopin's favourite student. He was such a prodigy that Liszt once declared: "If the kid starts to travel the world, I will have to close my shop!" Sadly, Carl's life was heartbreakingly short — he died at just 15, most likely from tuberculosis — leaving behind only a small catalogue of works.

This Mazurka is one of those rare treasures. In it you hear both innocence and brilliance: a young boy dancing through life with Chopin's footsteps in his ear, yet already full of his own charm. Sparkling, brief, eternal.

TUDOR CIORTEA: Joc țigănesc (Suite for piano on Transylvanian folk themes)

WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

This was my party piece as a child — though back then my little hands couldn't yet span an octave, so it always felt like climbing a mountain! Now it's one of my favourite encores, bursting with energy and fun.

Tudor Ciorte (1903–1982) studied in Paris with Nadia Boulanger and Paul Dukas, but his music is deeply rooted in Romanian soil. In this *Gypsy Dance*, the sixth piece in his Suite for piano on Transylvanian folk themes, he gathers the rhythms and colours of the Carpathians, weaving them into a whirlwind of energy. It is music of earth and sky, of tradition and joy — a celebration of where I come from. Coming back to it now feels like meeting an old friend: familiar, joyful and effortless (thanks to bigger hands!)

VILLA-LOBOS: O polichinelo (A prole do bebê No. 1, W140: 7)

This is my number one encore — I've probably played it more than any other, from New Zealand to South Africa, US to Europe. Without fail, it makes the audience grin and cheer. It's so short that I always joke: if you blink, you'll miss it!

Pulcinella — the mischievous puppet of commedia dell'arte — bursts to life here with Villa-Lobos' dazzling rhythms and bright colours. It's over in a flash, but it packs all the joy and sparkle of a carnival. It's the perfect celebratory send-off, leaving both pianist and audience smiling from ear to ear.

I hope it brings the same smile to you, my dear listener. Thank you for dreaming alongside me in this album- until our next musical story!





Alexandra Dariescu with the Academy of St Martin in the Fields



Alexandra Dariescu

Alexandra Dariescu, creator of the acclaimed production *The Nutcracker and I*, is celebrated for her fearless curiosity and trailblazing innovation. A sought-after soloist on the world's great stages, she has performed with leading orchestras including the London Symphony Orchestra, Academy of St Martin in the Fields, all of the UK's Royal symphony orchestras (Royal Philharmonic, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Royal Northern Sinfonia, Royal National Scottish), and the BBC orchestras (BBC Symphony, BBC Philharmonic, BBC National Orchestra of Wales). Internationally, she has appeared with the Orchestre National de France, Oslo Philharmonic, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, Vienna Tonkünstler, Moscow Philharmonic, Sydney, Melbourne, West Australian, Houston, Detroit, Seattle and Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. She collaborates with many of today's most inspiring conductors, among them Ádám Fischer, Cristian Măcelaru, Alain Altinoglu, Sakari Oramo, John Storgårds, Fabien Gabel, Vasily Petrenko, Ryan Bancroft, James Gaffigan, and JoAnn Falletta.

Alexandra Dariescu brings fearless curiosity, innovation and deep artistic integrity to her programmes and performances. From cherished classics by Tchaikovsky, Grieg, Rachmaninov, Mozart, Ravel and Chopin, to the rediscovered works of Clara Schumann, Nadia & Lili Boulanger, George

Enescu and Doreen Carwithen, she stands out as a distinct and original voice on the international piano stage.

In the 2025/26 season, Alexandra performs with the Philharmonia Orchestra and Santtu-Matias Rouvali at the Enescu Festival in Bucharest, followed by season opening concerts in Tallinn with the Estonian National Symphony and Olari Elts, and in Belgium with the Brussels Philharmonic and Kazushi Ōno. These performances will feature the powerful *Fantasies* by Nadia Boulanger and George Enescu, alongside Clara Schumann's piano concerto, a signature piece for Dariescu. New debuts include performances with the Pacific Symphony and Tianyi Lu in the US, as well as engagements in Scandinavia with the Malmö and Aalborg Symphony Orchestras. In the UK, Alexandra reunites with the Royal Philharmonic and Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestras, and makes her much-anticipated debut in the Southbank Centre's Piano Recital Series. She will close the season in Poland with the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra under Krzysztof Urbański, followed by a UK tour, including performances in London and Birmingham.

In the 2024/25 season Dariescu made her debut with the Seattle Symphony, under the baton of Tianyi Lu. She then embarked on an Australian

tour alongside Fabien Gabel, making her return to the Melbourne Symphony and debut with the West Australian Symphony Orchestras, followed by recitals in Sydney and Canberra. In Scandinavia, Dariescu made her anticipated debuts with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic and Danish Philharmonic Orchestras, whereas in the UK she gave subscription concerts with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Academy of St Martin in the Fields and Royal Northern Sinfonia. Two significant highlights further complemented Dariescu's season: her debut with the London Symphony Orchestra as part of the LSO Discovery series in the education project she co-created with Tim Redmond "Count Me In", and her participation as presenter of the 2024 Leeds International Piano Competition, where she supported The Alexandra Dariescu Award for an outstanding performance of a piece by a female composer. This is the first time for such an accolade to be introduced in an international piano competition, underlining Alexandra's commitment to changing cultures, inspiring the younger generations and promoting gender equality in the classical music industry. The season marked yet another international tour of "The Nutcracker and I", celebrating its 100th performance at Barbican Centre's Milton Court. Further presentations took place in Paris at La Seine Musicale, Konzerthaus Dortmund, Opéra de Dijon, Megaron Athens Concert

Hall and the Macao International Music Festival.

Testament to her ethos of championing a more inclusive repertoire, recent milestones in Dariescu's career include opening the 2023/24 season for the BBC Symphony Orchestra at the Barbican Centre in the UK premiere of Dora Pejačević's Phantasie Concertante. In the same season, Dariescu gave the world premiere of a new piano concerto written for her by James Lee III - "Shades of Unbroken Dreams" - in honour of the 60th anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr's "I have a Dream" speech, with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and BBC Philharmonic. In 2022, Dariescu made the world premiere recording of a newly discovered piano concerto by Leokadiya Kashperova (1900) with the BBC Symphony Orchestra for BBC Radio 3's acclaimed programme 'Composer of the Week'. Further discoveries and important premieres of unjustly neglected concertos Dariescu has given include Nadia Boulanger's Fantaisie Variée, the recently unearthed piano concerto by George Enescu, Concierto argentino by Alberto Ginastera, Dora Pejačević's Phantasie Concertante, Doreen Carwithen Concerto for piano and strings and four piano concertos written for Dariescu: Emily Howard's "Mesmerism", Daniel Dhondy's "In Touch", Iris ter Shiphorst's "Sometimes" and James Lee III's "Shades of Unbroken Dreams".

In 2017, Dariescu took the world by storm with her successful piano recital production “The Nutcracker and I”, an original ground-breaking multimedia performance for piano solo with dance and digital animation, which has since enjoyed international acclaim and has drawn thousands of young audiences into concert halls across Europe, Australia, China, the Emirates and the US, realising Dariescu’s vision of building bridges and making classical music more accessible to the wider public.

Dariescu has released nine albums to critical acclaim, the latest being Clara Schumann and Grieg Piano Concertos with the Philharmonia Orchestra and Tianyi Lu on Signum. The discography includes a Decca album with Angela Gheorghiu, a Trilogy of Complete Preludes series featuring Chopin, Dutilleux, Shostakovich, Szymanowski, Messiaen, Faure and Lili Boulanger as well as Tchaikovsky’s Piano Concerto No. 1 with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra/Darrell Ang (Signum Records), in addition to “The Nutcracker and I” audio book.

Alexandra Dariescu is the first ever female Romanian pianist to perform at the Royal Albert Hall and performed at venues such as Carnegie Hall, Musikverein, Staatsoper Vienna, Konzerthaus Vienna, BOZAR Brussels, Staatsoper Berlin, Hamburg Laeiszhalle, Sydney Opera House, Beijing

National Centre for Performing Arts, Shanghai Grand Opera, Tokyo Musashino Hall, Dubai Opera, Wigmore Hall, Royal Festival Hall, Cadogan Hall, the Barbican Centre among many others.

Mentored by Sir András Schiff and Dame Imogen Cooper, Dariescu studied at the Royal Northern College of Music with Nelson Goerner, Alexander Melnikov, Dina Parakhina, Mark Ray; at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama with Ronan O’Hora; and in her hometown Iasi with Mihaela Constantin and Cornelia Apostol. She was a Laureate of the Verbier Festival Academy, receiving the UK’s Women of the Future Award in the Arts and Culture category. Dariescu holds many special accolades including Cultural Ambassador of Romania, Officer of the Romanian Crown from the Royal Family and Young European Leader by Friends of Europe. In 2020, Dariescu received the Order ‘Cultural Merit’ in the rank of Knight from the Romanian President and became an Associated Member of the Royal Northern College of Music, where she also held the distinguished position of Professor of Piano for two years. From September 2024, Dariescu begins a new tenure as Professor of Piano at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London.

www.alexandradariescu.com



Alexandra Dariescu with violinist Tomo Keller



Alexandra Dariescu with cellist Richard Harwood

Academy of St Martin in the Fields

Founded in 1958 by Sir Neville Marriner, the Academy of St Martin in the Fields has evolved into a musical powerhouse, an orchestra renowned around the world for its commitment to the musical freedom of its players and the sharing of joyful, inspiring performances. Over more than six decades, ASMF has built a reputation for precision, warmth, and vitality, bringing audiences closer to the music and to each performance.

Today, under the direction of Music Director Joshua Bell, ASMF continues to embrace a player-led approach. Each musician is empowered to contribute artistically, creating a direct line and an electrifying connection with audiences. This approach produces performances that are ambitious, collaborative, and full of energy, offering a distinctive alternative to the traditional conductor-led model.

ASMF's work extends far beyond the concert hall. Its long-standing social and educational programmes harness the power of music to inspire, engage, and empower people. From projects supporting individuals experiencing

homelessness to initiatives developing creativity, confidence, and independence among emerging musicians, ASMF fosters meaningful connections within communities in the UK and across the world.

Artistic collaboration is central to ASMF's identity. Its 15-year partnership with Joshua Bell exemplifies the trust and depth that develop over time. The orchestra also works with leading soloists and directors, building enduring artistic relationships that enrich every performance.

With a rich recording legacy, ASMF is one of the world's most-recorded orchestras, sharing classical music with audiences everywhere through live concerts, international tours, and digital initiatives. Its presence in the UK and abroad continues to grow, making the Academy of St Martin in the Fields one of the country's most celebrated cultural exports and a lasting ambassador for classical music.

www.asmf.org

Violin I

Tomo Keller
Amanda Smith
Catherine Morgan
Rebecca Scott
Richard Milone
Winona Fifield
Robert Salter
Jeremy Morris

Violin II

Matthew Ward
Clare Hayes
Cecily Ward
Ruth Funnell
Tanya Sweiry
Nemanja Ljubinkovic

Viola

Robert Smissen
Ian Rathbone
Nicholas Barr
Claire Newton

Cello

Richard Harwood
Juliet Welchman
Sarah Suckling
Anna Beryl

Bass

Lynda Houghton
Ben Griffiths

Flute

Silvija Ščerbavičiūtė

Oboe

James Hulme
Rachel Ingleton

Horn

Stephen Stirling
Joanna Hensel

Trumpet

Jason Lewis
William O'Sullivan

Timpani

Tristan Fry

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Photos of young Alexandra (page 9) – from the Dariescu family archive

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