

Kevin Whately, Roderick Williams and Tamsin Dalley appear in William Walton's *Henry V* and *Façade* with Orchestra of the Swan



Tuesday 11 & Wednesday 12 May 2021, 10:00-17:00

Stratford Play House, Stratford-upon-Avon

Walton *Henry V* (arr. Edward Watson)
Walton *Façade*

Kevin Whately narrator (*Henry V*)
Roderick Williams, Tamsin Dalley reciters (*Façade*)
Orchestra of the Swan

In a new recording to be released on **Somm Records** in January 2022, **Orchestra of the Swan** shows the two sides of British composer **William Walton**, from his stirring score to Laurence Olivier's 1944 adaption of *Henry V*, to his youthful and scandalous *Façade*, which sets the extraordinary poetry of Edith Sitwell. The recording is released 100 years since the first private performance of *Façade* on 24 January 1922, and 600 years since the death of Henry V in 1422. **Kevin Whately, Roderick Williams and Tamsin Dalley** join Orchestra of the Swan in the spoken roles of both works.

Orchestra of the Swan records Walton's heroic incidental music from ***Henry V*** in **Edward Watson's intriguing arrangement** for chamber ensemble: flute, oboe, two clarinets, bassoon, horn, trumpet, two cellos, percussion, piano and harpsichord. *Henry V* is narrated by English actor **Kevin Whately**, best known for his character in the crime dramas *Inspector Morse* and *Lewis*.

The 1944 Technicolor adaption of *Henry V*, which was directed by and starred **Laurence Olivier**, was created as a morale booster for Britain as it neared the end of World War II, with Shakespeare's tale of the remarkable British victory over the French at Agincourt serving as a rallying cry. *Henry V* was released to critical acclaim, with Olivier winning an Honorary Academy Award for his outstanding achievement in creating the film.

Olivier described Walton's music as "*The most wonderful score I've ever heard on a film*", adding that "*I've always said that if it weren't for the music I don't think Henry V would have been a success.*"

Henry V was the tenth film for which Walton composed incidental music; he had previously written incidental music for Olivier's 1936 *As You Like It* and would go on to score his *Hamlet* (1948) and *Richard III* (1955).

Baritone **Roderick Williams** and mezzo-soprano **Tamsin Dalley** join the orchestra in Walton's scandalous ***Façade***, which premiered to great furore when the composer was just 19. Scored for a small ensemble, *Façade* sets a series of surreal poems by **Dame Edith Sitwell** to music, with the poems originally narrated through a megaphone from behind a painted curtain. Early reviews condemned the work but it has since gained acceptance, with the music also behind Frederick Ashton's *Façade* ballet.

Considered one of the leading 20th-century British composers, **William Walton** (1902-1983) represents the period in English music between Vaughan Williams and Benjamin Britten. Besides his film scores, his Viola Concerto is regarded as one of the most important 20th-century works for the instrument, and his Crown Imperial march was first performed at the coronations of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth II.

Walton's works will be recorded in the **Stratford Play House**, in Shakespeare's Stratford-upon-Avon, where the Orchestra of the Swan is based.

Orchestra of the Swan



Formed in 1995, Orchestra of the Swan is a British chamber orchestra which, under the artistic direction of David Le Page, is passionate about audience inclusivity and blurring the lines between genres, through its adventurous and accessible programming.

The Swan presents over 45 concerts a year – both live and digital and has a catalogue of over 20 recordings. The orchestra is passionate about new music and has premiered more than 70 new works by composers including Joe Cutler, Tansy Davies, Joe Duddell, Alexander Goehr, Roxanna Panufnik, Joseph Phibbs, Dobrinka Tabakova, Errollyn Wallen, Huw Watkins, John Woolrich and many others.

Their latest album *Timelapse* creates a space where sounds of the past and present collide to form a unique musical landscape. Although the pieces were written, in some cases, centuries apart and in culturally disparate eras, it is striking how much these contrasting works inhabit such similar emotional territory. Intriguing pairings of works by Rameau and Radiohead's Pyramid Song, Schubert, and The Smiths, Adés and Grieg, Satie and Reich, complement each other beautifully and style have become irrelevant.

The recording creates a space where sounds of the past and present collide to form a unique musical landscape, where notions of time and style become irrelevant, inspired by David Le Page's multidisciplinary musical background. *Timelapse* is available at smarturl.it/OotSTimelapse To listen to tracks from the album [click here](#). *Vivaldi Sleep* is a side project of *Timelapse*, where 11 diverse musicians from Folk to Jazz improvised to the second movement of Vivaldi's Autumn. Performed by the Swan and conducted by the RSC's Head of Music Bruce O'Neil, *Vivaldi Sleep* was released February 2021.

The Swan has been enormously successful in making a positive and effective contribution to the communities at the heart of its 'immersive residencies' in Herefordshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Birmingham with an ambitious programme of work in care homes, schools and rural areas growing year by year. Based at the Stratford Play House, in Stratford-upon-Avon, the Swan is proof that an orchestra really can be an

indispensable and relevant part of the community with its aim to entertain, educate and engage in a way that truly makes it a living orchestra.

orchestraoftheswan.org

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