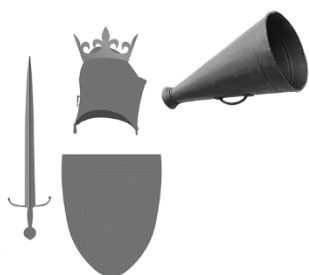




LEGENDS & HEROES

Monday 12th June, 1pm | St Giles' Cripplegate



The Berkeley Ensemble

David Wordsworth | Conductor

With speakers

Jonathan Gunthorpe & Sarah Gabriel

WALTON HENRY V SUITE FAÇADE (centenary performance)

Generously supported by the William Walton Trust

WILLIAM WALTON (1902 - 1983)

Henry V Suite (arr. Charlie Piper)

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| 1. Overture: <i>The Globe Playhouse</i> | 3. <i>Charge and Battle</i> |
| 2. <i>Passacaglia: The Death of Falstaff</i> | 4. <i>Touch her soft lips and part</i> |
| 5. <i>Agincourt Song</i> | |

Following his spectacular run of successes with *Belshazzar's Feast* (1930-1), the First Symphony (1931-5) and Violin Concerto (1938-9), the War years found Walton concentrating on suite-like genres such as the ballet scores *The Wise Virgins* (1940) and *The Quest* (1943), and film music, including *Major Barbara* (1940), *The First of the Few* (1942) and *Henry V* (1943-4).

Walton became involved in writing the music for *Henry V* through the celebrated producer-writer Dallas Bower, with whom he'd collaborated on both *As You Like It* and *Christopher Columbus*. Laurence Olivier was reportedly enthusiastic about the idea from the start – 'A real modern musician. That will be splendid!' – and as the eventual producer, director and star of the film, he also took a keen interest in Walton's work. Just how far this went is still a matter for some debate. Walton loved to tell a story as to how Olivier had in all innocence suggested his using a tune which turned out to be from Wagner's *Meistersinger*. Olivier always maintained, however, that he had never once interfered.

Whatever the truth of the matter, Olivier was absolutely delighted with the results: 'William knocked out the most fantastic score for *Henry V*; why it didn't win every award throughout the film industry, I'll never know, because it's the most wonderful score I've ever heard for a film. In fact, for me the music actually made the film; otherwise it would have been a nightmare.' For his part, Walton self-

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mockingly despaired 'How does one distinguish between a crossbow and a longbow, musically speaking?', although he admitted that 'doing films gave me a lot more fluency.'

In 1963, Muir Matheson, who had been Music Director on the original 1944 film, returned to the score and selected a sequence of extracts that popularised both the haunting *Passacaglia* and that most ravishing of all works for string orchestra, *Touch Her Soft Lips and Part*. Charlie Piper's arrangement for eleven instruments is imaginatively derived from that.

© Julian Haylock

Façade – an entertainment

Fanfare

1. *Hornpipe*

2. *En Famille*

3. *Mariner Man*

4. *Long Steel Grass*

5. *Through Gilded Trellises*

6. *Tango-Pasodoble*

7. *Lullaby for Jumbo*

8. *Mrs Behemoth*

9. *Tarantella*

10. *Daphne*

11. *By the Lake*

12. *Country Dance*

13. *Polka*

14. *Aubade*

15. *Something Lies beyond the Scene*

16. *Valse*

17. *Jodelling Song*

18. *Scotch Rhapsody*

19. *Popular Song*

20. *Fox-Trot: Old Sir Faulk*

21. *Sir Beelzebub*

Walton was the last great master of the English Romantic tradition. At a time when Elgar had entered creative semi-retirement, Walton took up the musical baton and began revitalising tonal genres – the symphony, oratorio and concerto – that had appeared to be fast approaching their sell-by date. If Elgar's late music creates the impression of a glowing sunset, Walton's, while still retaining a poignant sense of nostalgic longing, possesses a rhythmic pizzazz, harmonic pungency and melodic vitality that was entirely new.

Walton was not a prodigy in the Mendelssohn or Mozart mould. Attempts to master the violin and piano proved only moderately successful, yet he possessed a glorious treble voice and it was this that won him a scholarship to Christ Church Cathedral Choir School in Oxford. Happily exchanging the Edwardian parochialism of his native Oldham for the intellectual buzz of one of the world's great centres of learning, within two years and virtually self-taught, Walton began composing with astonishing assurance.

He quickly came to the attention of fellow-student Sacheverell Sitwell, part of a distinguished family of aesthetes and intellectuals, who invited him to stay at his family's Chelsea mansion home for a few weeks. Walton made such an impact that he remained their valued house guest for several years. Their unshakeable faith in his abilities proved well-founded when in 1923 *Façade* hit the arts scene like a musical thunderbolt. Based on Edith Sitwell's uproariously nonsensical verse, this jazzy, offbeat, utterly bizarre 'entertainment' was a landmark in English music. Stylistically gregarious and madcap in the manner of much contemporary Parisian music, Walton was an amazing nineteen when he composed it.

Exactly how the project got off the ground is still the subject of some debate. Edith Sitwell, whose verses form the basis of *Façade*, recalls Walton giving her some rhythms to set as a kind of musical-linguistic challenge, thereby providing the initial inspiration; whereas Walton's memory of the situation was that the verses came first. Whatever the truth of the matter, composer and writer became fascinated by the aural correspondences between music and verse, and attempted to bond the two together inseparably. Sitwell's poems give the impression of having been written almost as a stream of consciousness, with hilariously mismatched images colliding apparently randomly as if in free fall. Behind the seeming spontaneity of it all is a remarkably high level of sophistication, however

(one of several 'façades' invoked by the title). Indeed, the language's innate sense of rhythm, its phrasing, scan and connectivity, are mapped out with almost military precision.

Walton chose to set the reciter's part as pitchless notes with no definite time-values – a perfect match for the weightlessness of Sitwell's prose. Musically, like the poems themselves, it seems as though 'anything goes', yet behind the façade of simple, good-humoured affability is a vibrant sequence of meticulous send-ups of everything from Satie and vaudeville to Stravinsky and music-hall. Even more remarkably, every setting carries the indelible imprimatur of its creator.

Publicly premiered exactly a hundred years ago, on 12 June 1923 in London's Aeolian Hall, with Sitwell reading the verses over a megaphone while concealed (along with the musicians under Walton's direction) behind a specially designed curtain, it delighted and bewildered in equal proportions. Evelyn Waugh and Virginia Woolf were in the audience, and Noël Coward too, who reportedly left half-way through in a state of great agitation. © Julian Haylock

Sarah Gabriel

Described by *Le Monde* 'as fine an actor as she is a singer' and praised by The Guardian for her 'springwater vocals', soprano Sarah Gabriel sings opera, oratorio, recitals, concerts and cabaret spanning four hundred years for venues and festivals including Wigmore Hall, Cheltenham and Glyndebourne, across Europe and the US, and on BBC Radio 2, 3, and 4, NPR, RTE, and France Musique. She made her USA debut as Lucy Lockit (Britten's *The Beggar's Opera*) conducted by Lorin Maazel, and her European debut as Eliza Doolittle in Robert Carsen's triumphant production of *My Fair Lady* at Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris, opposite Alex Jennings as Higgins. Her collaborations with other disciplines include world premiere performances with artists and companies such as Rambert Dance Company and Matthew Bourne. As a writer, commissions include plays for Aldeburgh and Dartington festivals. Her solo musical play, *Dorothy Parker Takes a Trip* has toured the UK and will return to the National Theatre of Romania this autumn. Her first screenplay is in development with Altitude films. Her latest performance of her Weimar Berlin cabaret, *The Blue Hour*, was described by *The Guardian* as 'magic of the highest order... absolute sorcery'.

Jonathan Gunthorpe

After reading English and Russian at Leeds University, Jonathan gained an MA in Music before studying at the Royal College of Music and the National Opera Studio in London. Roles include English Clerk *Death in Venice* for La Scala, La Monnaie, the Concertgebouw and English National Opera, Nachtigall *Die Meistersinger*, Angelotti *Tosca*, Giant Gentle Giant and Colonel Bandstand *The Doctor's Tale* for the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Jonathan made his debut in the United States as Horned Thing in *Where the Wild Things Are* at the Walt Disney Concert Hall, LA, conducted by Gustavo Dudamel.

Most recently, he made his debut at the Teatro di San Carlo, Naples, as Bertie Bassett in Gershwin's *Lady Be Good*, and in China (Guangzhou and Beijing) as Niccolò Polo/Warden in the world premiere of Enjott Schneider's *Marco Polo*, as well as appearing in recital at the 2021 Presteigne Festival, premiering songs by Cecilia McDowell and Ninfia Cruttwell-Reade in two recitals of English song. Concert work has taken him to venues across Europe, covering much oratorio and recital repertoire. Future plans include the premiere of *Giant* by Sarah Angliss, opening the 2023 Aldeburgh Festival.

Outside his singing career, Jonathan has also appeared at the National Theatre in Brecht's *Mother Courage* with Fiona Shaw and written a translation for Tchaikovsky's *Onegin*. He teaches, and in 2019 was appointed Associate Head of Vocal and Operatic Studies at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, where he continues to enjoy inspiring the young artists of the future.

David Wordsworth, conductor

After studying at Leeds University, the City University (London), and the Guildhall, and then working as a teacher and in music publishing for several years, David devoted himself to a full-time professional musical career. He was Music Director of the Addison Singers 1995-2022. His choirs had a regular London season and toured many parts of Europe, appeared at the Carnegie Hall, New York, as well as at many UK festivals. David has conducted/adjudicated in Hungary, Poland, Ireland, Italy, Spain, France, Austria, Norway, Mexico, Cuba, the Philippines, and has held residencies at a number of universities in the USA. In 2016 he conducted the Marian Consort and the Berkeley Ensemble in a revival of Lennox Berkeley's *Stabat Mater*, performing at the Aldeburgh Easter, Spitalfields and Cheltenham Festivals, subsequently broadcasting the work for the BBC and recording it for Delphian Records. In 2018 David curated a year-long festival of American music at St John's Smith Square, in London, where he appeared as both pianist and conductor. His book *Giving voice to my music* – interviews with choral composers – was published by Kahn & Averil in 2021. David's most recent performances have included a concert of English music at St Stephen's Cathedral, Vienna, and the premiere of major choral/orchestral work by Judith Weir, as part of his last concert with The Addison Singers. Plans for the coming year include several performances of *Façade* with the Berkeley Ensemble and an 80th birthday concert for Gavin Bryars at the Barbican.

The Berkeley Ensemble

The Berkeley Ensemble was formed by friends in a spirit of adventure. 'An instinctive collective' (The Strad), its members have come together from diverse corners of musical life to make music in new ways, reach new audiences and, most importantly, explore new repertoire, be it newly written or inadvertently forgotten.

Its acclaimed performances and recordings celebrate contemporary chamber music, especially by British composers. Since its founding in 2008 the ensemble has premiered over forty works commissioned by or written for the group from composers including Michael Berkeley, John Woolrich and Lynne Plowman. Its eight albums include 18 premiere recordings amongst a diverse catalogue ranging from Knussen to Beethoven and have attracted considerable praise.

Away from the concert platform, the Berkeley Ensemble works tirelessly to foster the creation, appreciation and performance of chamber music at every age, level and ability. Recent highlights have included collaborations with both PRS for Music and Tŷ Cerdd on professional development schemes for composers. For amateur performers, the group runs a chamber course in Somerset, as well as a series of study days in London.

Residencies and associations with schools allow the ensemble to help create and develop musical communities of lasting and ever-deepening value. The ensemble is particularly proud of its longstanding links with Ibstock Place School in Barnes and the David Ross Education Trust.

Violin 1 Sophie Mather *
Violin 2 Gemma Bass *
Viola Dan Shilladay *
Cello Gemma Wareham
Double Bass Katy Furmanksi *
Flute & Piccolo Sarah Bennington
Oboe James Turnbull *

Clarinet & Bass clarinet John Slack
Bassoon Eanna Monaghan *
Saxophone Dominic Childs
Trumpet Stephen Peneycad
Horn Paul Cott *
Piano Viv McLean *
Percussion Sarah Hatch

**Henry V Suite* only