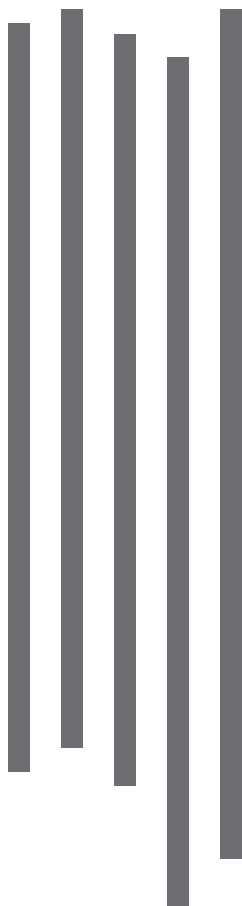


# THE MAHLER PLAYERS

# FAÇADE

an entertainment



**NIELSEN WIND QUINTET**

**MAUREEN PRINGLE** reciter

**JAMES ROSS** reciter

**TOMAS LEAKEY** conductor

**old high church, inverness 8pm 03/10**

**the stables, cromarty 4pm 04/10**

Welcome to today's concert. The Mahler Players will present two works which, though otherwise unrelated, were given their first performances within a few months of each other in 1922. Joining in with the worldwide celebrations of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Danish composer Carl Nielsen, we will perform his popular and idiomatic wind quintet. Following this is Walton's *Façade*, which comes on the back of an educational project in association with the Highland Council. As part of our continuing passion to share our music with as wide an audience as possible, we have spent the past week touring this work to several Highland secondary schools.

## PROGRAMME

**Carl Nielsen:** Wind Quintet Op. 43

I. Allegro ben moderato

II. Menuetto

III. Præludium: Adagio – Tema con variazioni: Andantino festivo

*Interval*

**William Walton and Edith Sitwell:** *Façade: An Entertainment*

Fanfare

1. Hornpipe

2. En Famille

3. Mariner Man

4. Long Steel Grass

5. Through Gilded Trelisses

6. Tango-Pasodoblé

7. Lullaby for Jumbo

8. Black Mrs. Behemoth

9. Tarantella

10. The Man from a Far Countree

11. By the Lake

12. Country Dance

13. Polka

14. Four in the Morning

15. Something Lies Beyond the Scene

16. Valse

17. Jodelling Song

18. Scotch Rhapsody

19. Popular Song

20. Fox-trot

21. Sir Beelzebub

Maureen Pringle and D James Ross reciters  
Tomas Leahey conductor

## **CARL NIELSEN** (1865 – 1931) Wind Quintet Op. 43

Carl Nielsen apparently started composing the wind quintet in the autumn of 1921, after hearing four members of the Copenhagen Wind Quintet rehearsing in the background of a telephone conversation. These were the musicians he specifically had in mind when writing the piece.

British composer and another of Nielsen's biographers Robert Simpson writes, "*Nielsen's fondness of wind instruments is closely related to his love of nature, his fascination for living, breathing things. He was also intensely interested in human character, and in the Wind Quintet composed deliberately for five friends; each part is cunningly made to suit the individuality of each player. It is more than arguable that his Wind Quintet is the subtlest and finest ever written. This is not an extravagant claim. It is perhaps a curious thing that Nielsen, who was a violinist, often wrote with greater perspicacity for wind than for strings. Nielsen shows great imagination and ingenuity in conjuring a surprising variety of sonorities and blends from the wind quintet.*"

Nielsen himself provided the following description of the work: "The quintet for winds is one of my latest works, in which I have attempted to render the characters of the various instruments. At one moment they are all talking at once, at another they are quite alone. The work consists of three movements: a) Allegro, b) Minuet and c) Prelude – Theme with Variations. The theme for these variations is the melody for one of my own spiritual songs, which has here been made the basis of a set of variations, now merry and quirky, now elegiac and serious, ending with the theme in all its simplicity and very quietly expressed."

The first movement is in sonata form, the second is a conversational minuet with a rustic quality and the third opens with a short Praeludium, featuring the darker tones of the *cor anglais*, followed by a set of variations based on Nielsen's own chorale tune *Min Jesus, lad min Hjerter faa en saaden Smag paa dig* (My Jesus, make my heart to love thee). The finale is the most complex part of the piece and consists of the theme, 11 variations, and a final restatement of the theme.

The first public performance was given on 9 October 1922 by the five musicians of the Copenhagen Wind Quintet.

*Programme note by Bruce Gordon*

## **WILLIAM WALTON** (1902 - 1983) and **EDITH SITWELL** (1887 - 1964) *Façade: An Entertainment*

One of Walton's earliest compositions, *Façade* was the work that first catapulted his name to public prominence as something of an *enfant terrible*. The concept: rhythmically recited poetry over a musical accompaniment is genuinely unique, both in relation to Walton's own output and more widely.

Walton's long association with the three literary Sitwell siblings (Edith, Osbert and Sacheverell) began when they came to his rescue by providing him with a place to stay in London after he was sent down from Oxford without a degree for failing the Responsions exam. The three of them clearly saw the great potential that he had as a composer if exposed to the right environment.

The idea for the *Façade* poems was described in later years by Edith's brother Osbert as "experiments in obtaining through the medium of words the rhythm of dance measures such as waltzes, polkas and fox-trots". As Walton's biographer Frank Howes has pointed out: "[*The poems*] are not written to develop an idea or pursue a line of thought; on the contrary they play on words which are connected by free association, sometimes of assonance, sometimes of sense...they must be appreciated as nonsense verse is appreciated". The mood varies from humour in numbers such as 'Don Pasquito' to pathos in 'By the Lake'.

The first performance was given in private on a bitterly cold evening in January 1922 in the home of the Sitwells at 2 Carlyle Square, Chelsea. As has been the case with many works that have later gone on to become accepted as masterpieces, the players found it utterly bewildering and infuriating in rehearsals, though Osbert Sitwell reported that they began to cheer up when provided with some of the cook's sloe gin. It is hard to imagine what sort of performance it was. Lacking a saxophone part (which Walton added later) and containing only six of the numbers that will be performed in today's standard version, it may have been almost unrecognisable. The first public performance was a year and a half later, in the Aeolian Hall on an afternoon in June 1923, now including the saxophone part and eleven of the numbers that will be performed today. The reception was described by Osbert as a "first-class scandal in literature and music", though his report may have been exaggerated. Although Walton later admitted that the musical execution had been a 'shambles' some of the reviews were cautiously positive.

The work contains a number of allusions to other works from many different genres, including modernist classical music, Viennese waltzes, jazz, popular music and even including quotations from famous tunes such as Rule Britannia, the Sailor's Hornpipe and 'I do like to be beside the seaside' (which nearly resulted in a court case for copyright).

*Façade* was later adapted by Walton in several different ways, the most famous of which are the two orchestral suites. The quality and independence of the music is demonstrated by the fact that other than altering the instrumentation to that of a full orchestra he made very few changes to the structure and content. *Programme note by Tomas Leakey*

#### **MAUREEN PRINGLE – reciter**



Maureen's love of the stage started in true theatrical tradition, when the leading lady broke her leg and she took over the lead in the school production of *The Pied Piper* at the age of 11!

Studying Maths & Psychology at Aberdeen University did nothing to dispel her love of the theatre. She learned her craft in Aberdeen University Student Shows and in Aberdeen Revue Group (later to become "Scotland The What?") Time spent with Reginald Barrett-Ayres in The Student Singers and playing for him in several concerts and in *Dido & Aeneas* and in *The Marriage of Figaro* helped foster her love of singing.

She admits that her working life as teacher, then lecturer, then management accountant all took second place to her love of the theatre.

Turning her hand to many aspects of theatre, she has worked not just as actor and director but also in wardrobe and on lighting. She has particularly happy memories of working high up on the lighting bridge of the old Little Theatre that used to be in Faraline Park where the Library now stands. This old set up required the use of both **hands and feet** to operate the system!

Working with several of the local groups: Inverness Opera Company (now Inverness Musical Theatre), The Florians and Starlight Musical Theatre has given her much pleasure. Directing such disparate plays as Habeas Corpus, An Inspector Calls, Stepping Out, Sleeping Beauty and The Hollow Crown and musicals such as Carousel, Guys and Dolls and Titanic the Musical certainly keeps her on her toes.

Recently she was delighted to work with James Ross in Dornoch Cathedral and Pluscarden Abbey reciting the poetry of St Theresa of Avila to guitar accompaniment. Maureen has also spent time working for BBC Radio Highland, BBC Scotland, Moray Firth Radio and with various TV and Film Companies.

### **D JAMES ROSS – reciter**



D James Ross plays a large variety of Renaissance and Baroque woodwind instruments, including recorders, whistles, early bagpipes and early clarinets and is founder/director of the early instrument consort Coronach, which performs the instrumental music of Renaissance Scotland and Europe. He performs early and traditional music with the harpist Bill Taylor in the duo The Art of Mysick, and in 2012 he formed The Marvel of Peru, devoted to the performance of Scottish and English Baroque chamber music. He also directs the early music choir, Musick Fyne, who specialize in the performance of unaccompanied choral music from the Renaissance. These groups occasionally combine forces under James's direction to present larger-scale repertoire from the Renaissance and Baroque periods. Both groups have recorded a variety of early Scottish music on a range of CDs on the CMF label.

As an actor James appeared for many years in leading roles with the Clifton Players in Nairn and has directed his own drama ensemble, The King's Players, who specialize in Scottish Renaissance Drama performed in authentic costume and in Renaissance Scots with music by Coronach. They presented acclaimed performances of 'Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis', which was released on a commercial video by Scotsoun, and 'A Tapestry of Words and Music from the life of Mary, Queen of Scots'. More recently with Coronach, Musick Fyne, the Florians and Danse Ecosse he researched and staged 'The Entry of the Gods', a masque for the marriage of Mary, Queen of Scots and Lord Darnley, 'A Birthday Masque for Elizabeth I' and 'The Beggar's Opera'.

As a musicologist James has researched music in Renaissance Scotland and has written the standard reference text on the topic, 'Musick Fyne : Robert Carver and the Art of Music in Renaissance Scotland' and has also published several scholarly articles and broadcast regularly on radio and TV on related topics as well as contributing extensively to the Dictionary of National Biography. As a music editor he has produced performance editions

of music from Renaissance Scotland published by CMF Publications. He also reviews early music recordings and music publications for the leading UK early music magazine, *Early Music Review*.

He plays modern clarinet in a semi-professional capacity, both as a solo performer and in the chamber ensemble The Mahler Players and in The Highland Chamber Orchestra, as well as in a range of local orchestras and bands. He was a director of Balnain House, served on the committee of the Nairn Performing Arts Guild and is an active member of the arts community in and around Inverness. Since 2008 he has brought out three collections of poetry entitled 'Life & Death & Stuff' and 'Orkney Strata & Mosaics' and 'American Sublime', which he incorporates in regular stand-up comedy events.

### **TOMAS LEAKEY - conductor**

Tomas Leakey's first experiences of orchestral music were as a trombonist in the Highland Regional Youth Orchestra, during which time he was a student of Rob Farmer, who appears on trumpet in today's concert. He later joined the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland.

Tomas studied conducting with the late George Hurst at the Sherborne (formally Canford) Summer School of Music, with Denise Ham at the Blackheath Conservatoire in London and with Toby Purser at the Aberystwyth *Musicfest*. In addition he has studied privately with Susan Dingle and at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama from 2013 - 2014.

In 2013 he set up and conducted an educational project in which a full performance of Stravinsky's *Soldier's Tale* was taken round several local schools. Later the same year he founded the Mahler Players with whom he has undertaken four projects in the *Mahler in Miniature* series.

### **THE MAHLER PLAYERS**

The Mahler Players was founded in 2013 for the *Mahler in Miniature* project and is a hand-picked ensemble of the highest calibre local musicians. They get together for intensive Mahler projects twice per year, each of which are performed at three different venues in the Highlands, as well as putting on smaller chamber concerts and educational projects. Their Patron is Sir Brian McMaster, former Director of the Edinburgh International Festival.

### **NIELSEN players**

FLUTE/PICCOLO Catherine O'Rourke

OBOE/COR ANGLAIS Leslie Callander

CLARINET Mhairi Callander

BASSOON Bruce Gordon

HORN Rob Farmer

### **WALTON players**

FLUTE/PICCOLO Anna Aalders

CLARINET/BASS CLARINET Rachel Farmer

ALTO SAXOPHONE Samantha Aldred

TRUMPET Rob Farmer

PERCUSSION Dougie Galbraith

CELLOS Rick Lusher and Isobel Grant

We hope you enjoyed today's performance. We would be very grateful if you can fill in the questionnaire included in this concert programme, which will give you the chance to enter a prize draw for free tickets to future concerts as well as join our mailing list. Please leave the questionnaire by the door where you picked up tickets or alternatively post it to us (the address is on the form on the back of this booklet) at a later date.

The Mahler Players have ambitious plans for the rest of 2015 and 2016 including another four concerts in our *Mahler in Miniature* series. Works featured will be the 5<sup>th</sup> (in November 2015), 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Symphonies and *Das Lied von der Erde*. The cost of each performance is always significantly higher than the income we take from ticket sales: to give an idea, our ticket prices in June 2015 were subsidised at a ratio of 4:1. Even with generous support from our audiences, public funding, support from Trusts and Foundations and corporate sponsorship, our finances operate on a very fragile footing. Therefore in order to be able to continue to give concerts with affordable ticket prices, we need your support if you can give it. There are a number of ways you can help us if you would like to support our work.

Exit collections: at both the Inverness and Cromarty performances there will be exit collections where you can make a cash donation.

By cheque: cheques made payable to 'Mahler Players' can be sent to the address on the form on the rear cover of this booklet. If you are a UK taxpayer please also detach and fill in this Gift Aid form which will allow us to boost your donation by 25%.

Online: donations can be made via JustGiving on our website: [www.mahlerplayers.co.uk](http://www.mahlerplayers.co.uk)

Major benefactors can have their names acknowledged in the concert programmes if they wish. We are also interested to hear from business owners who may wish to sponsor us.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Highland Council  
Cromarty Arts Trust  
Leakey's Bookshop

## **CONTACT US**

Email: [contact@mahlerplayers.co.uk](mailto:contact@mahlerplayers.co.uk)

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## **NEXT MAHLER PLAYERS CONCERTS, NOVEMBER 2015**

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2015, 8pm **Ardross Community Hall**  
Friday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2015, 8pm **Nairn Community and Arts Centre**  
Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2015, 8pm **Inverness Cathedral**

**Debussy** *Syrinx*

**Boulez** *Mémoriale (...explosante-fixe...Original)*

**Evans** *Variations on a theme of Hildegard of Bingen* (World Premiere)

**Mahler** Symphony No. 5 (arr. Simon)

Catherine O'Rourke flute, Tomas Leakey conductor

The Mahler Players is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) Charity No. SC044711