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DIGITAL

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WALTON



FAÇADE 1 & 2 (complete)



SUSANA WALTON · RICHARD BAKER
speakers
RICHARD HICKOX
conducts members of
THE CITY OF LONDON SINFONIA

WALTON

Façade

An Entertainment [39:47]

poems: Dame Edith Sitwell

- 1 Fanfare [0:34]
- 2 1 Hornpipe [1:11]
- 3 2 En Famille [3:10]
- 4 3 Mariner Man [0:36]
- 5 4 Long Steel Grass [2:21]
- 6 5 Through Gilded Trellises [2:35]
- 7 6 Tango-Pasodoble [1:55]
- 8 7 Lullaby for Jumbo [1:55]
- 9 8 Black Mrs Behemoth [1:03]
- 10 9 Tarantella [1:21]
- 11 10 A Man from a Far Countree [1:37]
- 12 11 By the Lake [2:03]
- 13 12 Country Dance [1:58]
- 14 13 Polka [1:17]
- 15 14 Four in the Morning [2:18]
- 16 15 Something Lies Beyond the Scene [1:00]
- 17 16 Valse [3:37]
- 18 17 Jodelling Song [2:28]
- 19 18 Scotch Rhapsody [1:14]
- 20 19 Popular Song [2:08]
- 21 20 Fox-Trot 'Old Sir Faulk' [2:02]
- 22 21 Sir Beelzebub [0:58]

Façade 2 [11:09]

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------------------|----|---|
| 23 | Flourish [0:10] | 28 | 5 The Octogenarian [1:16] |
| 24 | 1 Came the Great Popinjay [1:10] | 29 | 6 Gardener Janus Catches a Naiad [0:55] |
| 25 | 2 Aubade [3:58] | 30 | 7 Water Party [1:17] |
| 26 | 3 March [0:52] | 31 | 8 Said King Pompey [0:40] |
| 27 | 4 Madam Mouse Trots [0:45] | | |

DDD TT = 51:02



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Shuna Wilson cello Amanda Goodall cello Duke Dobing flute/piccolo
David Rix clarinet/bass clarinet Tim Holmes alto saxophone
Crispian Steele-Perkins trumpet Charles Fullbrook percussion

Behind the façade of *Façade*

The following is a chronology of *Façade*, an 'entertainment' with poems by Dame Edith Sitwell (1887-1964) and music by Sir William Walton (they weren't either 'Dame' or 'Sir' at the time, and there was precious little in the 'entertainment' to suggest they ever would be).

Date of composition: 1921-9

First private (unsuccessful) performance: London, the Sitwells' L-shaped drawing-room at 2 Carlyle Square, January 1922. 'Miss Edith Sitwell on her Sengerphone' (a special megaphone devised for operatic use) 'with accompaniments, overture and interlude by W.T. Walton'. Reciter: Sitwell, conductor: Walton. 18 numbers.

First public performance: London, Aeolian Hall (Noel Coward called it the A-E-I-O-Ulian Hall), 12 June 1923. Same reciter/conductor. 24 numbers. Harold Acton, Evelyn Waugh and Virginia Woolf in audience, also Coward. 'A disaster' (Walton). One newspaper write-up entitled 'Drivel They Paid To Hear'.

First public (successful) performance: London, the New Chenil Galleries (Chelsea), 27 April 1926. Sitwell/Walton. 26 numbers.

First performance of definitive version: London, Aeolian Hall, 29 May 1942. Constant Lambert (speaker) Walton (conductor). Curtain designed by John Piper. 21 numbers.

Façade 2: A Further Entertainment. First performed: Snape, The Maltings, 19 June 1979. Peter Pears (speaker) Stuart Bedford (conductor).

This much is straightforward. So is the fact that the 'entertainment' entertains — brilliantly. Also brilliant is the choice of title, for *Façade* is exactly what it says it is — a façade. Not all façades are worth looking behind, but anything's worth investigating if we think it may increase our enjoyment of a work of art. And knowing a little more about Edith Sitwell and her world — taking the 'entertainment' seriously for a minute — may even help us to understand why *Façade* has survived for the most part undated, whereas other 1920s confections haven't.

What are the *Façade* poems about? They are not nonsensical, although often wrongly so described. Edith Sitwell confined her own commentaries for the most part to their abstract pattern-making, to the numerous and ingenious technical experiments she had carried out in them: "enquiries into the effect on rhythm and speed of the use of rhymes, assonances and dissonances". Another variable was texture, "the subtle thickness and thinness brought about by changing one consonant or labial". It's easy enough to talk 'shop' if you can't or don't want to talk about anything else, and the genesis not merely of *Façade* but of all her early poetry belonged to such a painful period in Edith's early life she avoided discussing it. She dropped hints, and the recent

efforts of sympathetic biographer-commentators like Victoria Glendinning and Pamela Hunter have enabled us to piece together a fascinating picture. Here are a few of Edith's own *obiter dicta* which are specially relevant:-

When my poems deal with emotion, they are always the most simple and primitive emotions of simple and primitive people.

I was born by the wildest seas that England knows (Scarborough), and my earliest recollection is of the tides, the wild rush of waves, the sweep onward, heard night and day, so that it seemed the sound of one's own blood.

The world I see is a country world, a universe of growing things, where magic and growth are one... a world of rough fruitful suns, and the age of the innocence of man... to this countryside, Death comes, not as a world-enveloping shade, but as:-

"goat-footed mincing Death"
— a bucolic skeleton with a clattering, hard footfall, a rustic god, a satyr waiting for Beauty beneath the trees.

Sometimes we find a consciousness awakening from sleep seeing with a clearer, sharper vision than that of the ordinary sense dulled with custom, piercing down to the essence of the thing seen...

If some of the images in these poems seem strange, it is because my senses are like those of primitive peoples, at once acute and uncovered — and they are interchangeable; where the language of one sense is insufficient to convey a meaning, a sensation, I use another...

In *A Poet's Notebook* Edith quotes Goethe: 'To know how cherries and strawberries taste, ask children and birds.' This 'young sharp knowledge', she said, was also in folksongs and in 'many of the sweet and exquisite nursery rhymes. In these respects I, for one, am both bird and child.'

The child's mind is reflected in the artist's experience. Life is a series of sharp outlines, bright flashing colours and strange meetings.

To a child, logic does not exist, therefore circumstances cannot be the logical outcome of certain acts, but appear to be extraneous and marvellous growths... much as if a flower could be born without springing from dark roots in our common earth.

In other words a primary source of Edith's poetry was her childhood. It was a deprived childhood: not that she suffered materially, but she was unloved and unwanted by her

parents and often cruelly or at least insensitively treated. So to escape she turned to artifice and fantasy against the day when she could start transmuting them into art, into poetry. If we take the trouble to read the poems apart from the music, we notice immediately, for instance, the many recollections of Renishaw Hall in Derbyshire, the Sitwells' summer home — the gardens, the lake, the bluebells in the woods in May, the carefully-sited statues, the long vistas, the wilderness, the quietly coloured flowers and trees — all the stuff of childhood, 'the raw material of Edith's inner life' (Glendinning). Inside the house were five Louis XIV Brussels tapestries which impressed the Sitwell children with their 'Indian suavity and opulence' and their 'plumed exoticism'. Edith's imagination took permanent note of the pagodas, the clouds, the black boys, the orange trees, the fountains, the kings and queens. Again, read the poems: you'll find all or most of them *in* them.

Edith's childhood discoveries and experiences left, then, the deepest impress on her poetry and, thanks to Pamela Hunter's researches, we could compile a glossary of people and events to cover almost every poem in *Façade*. Here are some examples:-

(Façade)

3 Mariner Man — this was Henry Moat, Edith's father's valet, whose family came from a long line of whalers, and whose special attraction for Edith was his telling of sea-faring stories.

6 Tango-Pasodoble: Bank Holiday scene at the popular seaside resort of Scarborough.

8 Black Mrs Behemoth: Edith's mother was subject to uncontrollable rages.

9 Tarantella. The 'gardener' is Ernest de Taye, a Flemish horticulturalist who was a permanent and indispensable fixture at Renishaw.

20 Old Sir Faulk — was the father of two little girls, Edith's only friends when 4 or 5, who was tall and stork-like. The poem refers to a visit Edith paid them shortly after their mother died. "What's the matter, why cry?" Edith certainly wouldn't have cried if *her* mother had died.

(Façade II)

2 Aubade. The poem is ostensibly about a country servant coming down in the dawn to light the fire; she is plain, neglected and unhappy — as Edith was — but the real clue is 'tall as a crane', for Edith was very self-conscious about her height. And we can surely hear her mother's, Lady Ida's, imperious summons in

Jane, Jane come down the stair.

A work which throws up visual images in such variety and profusion is bound to suggest parallels with the art-world. Interestingly people have tended to look, not so

much to contemporary trends in the work of Cocteau and Picasso and others as to a tradition which had a profound effect on them all — the *Commedia dell'Arte*. Sacheverell Sitwell compared *Façade* to the *Balli di Sfessania* of the French artist Jacques Callot, a frontispiece and 23 woodcuts made in 1621-2, exactly 300 years before the first *Façade*. Callot as a youth — a 'Rimbaud-youth', Sacheverell called him — precociously ran away to Italy and joined a band of gypsies. His was a world of fairgrounds, of encampments of nomad actors, acrobats and charlatans, and here he observed — and preserved in his woodcuts — the poses and theatrical gestures associated with the *Commedia dell'Arte*, several of whose characters pop up in the poems of *Façade*. Can it be coincidence that Walton's 1940 overture *Scapino* is based on a Callot etching, and that around the same time he was planning a work called *Varii Capricci*, 'portraits from the *Commedia dell'Arte*'? (As far as we know there is no connection between this unrealized work and the 1976 *Varii Capricci*). Walton's book-plate and the cover-design of all his published works up to the early 1950s both have distinct *Commedia* overtones and were the work of the Italian painter Gino Severini, who also designed the curtain for the first European performance of *Façade* (Siena, 1928).

From the *Commedia dell'Arte* it is but a short step to some important exterior influences on Edith's poetry — the French symbolists (Verlaine and Rimbaud) and Diaghilev's Russian Ballet. 'By the Lake' in *Façade* is virtually a direct paraphrase of 'Colloque sentimentale' in Verlaine's *Fêtes galantes*, and there are many echoes of the Verlaine Pierrot world which found inspiration in fairs, circuses, music-halls and ballet, the musicians who played in them and the instruments they played, particularly the barrel organ. As for Rimbaud, many of the *Façade* poems almost read like an English counterpart of *Les Illuminations*: Rimbaud's childhood was even more traumatic than Edith's. Diaghilev was a revelation: Edith wrote movingly on *Petrouchka* — again the Pierrot connection — in her *Russian Ballet Gift Book*. And here Walton enters the scene, for it was seeing Diaghilev's production of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Coq d'Or* which first opened the wider doors of music for him. *Petrouchka* was a cardinal influence, *Firebird*, *Pulcinella* (the *Commedia dell'Arte* again), *The Soldier's Tale* — and when we consider the specifically musical genealogy of *Façade* the latter assumes particular significance. Composed in 1918, it is scored for speaker and much the same kind of tiny instrumental ensemble (including one percussion player presiding over a variety of instruments) as *Façade*. There the resemblance ends; similarly, though Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* and Satie's *Parade* have both often been mentioned in relation to *Façade*, it is hard not to imagine Walton being alienated by the composer's neurasthenic sensibility in the first case and by the deliberate crudeness of orchestral technique in the second. In purely musical (as opposed to conceptual) terms we should rather consider works like Stravinsky's *Pribaoutki*, Ravel's *Trois Poèmes de Stéphane Mallarmé*, and Poulenc's *Rapsodie nègre*, *Bestaire* and *Cocardes* (all scored for solo

voice and small ensembles) if we seek to fit *Façade* into its contemporary context, for Walton was definitely more Latin than German by temperament (e.g. the lifelong attachment he formed, as did the Sitwells, to Italy). Latin qualities — sybaritic and sun-loving — certainly predominate in *Façade* as we know it; many of the darker, more introspective — not to say sinister — numbers were weeded out at an early stage. Some of them re-emerged many years later in *Façade 2*. The threat of:

Then came/Courtier Death,
Blew out the candle flame/With civet breath

— presumably meant more to a man of 75 than to a youth of 19.

Since the definitive version of *Façade* was not published until 1951 — nearly 30 years after it was written — Walton had ample time to make whatever revisions he needed to (we know he re-worked some of the instrumentation in 1947-8); so we should not assume that the earliest versions of all the numbers were necessarily as accomplished and finished as we now know them. As for *Façade 2*, this is virtually a new work: eight unpublished numbers were performed during the composer's 75th birthday year, but before they could be published he rejected three (replacing them by others) and subjected the whole collection to a major overhaul. Nevertheless the music remains in essence as Walton originally conceived it, with many delightful and familiar characteristics represented in miniature: wit, fun, mischief; rhythmic verve; poetic feeling for sound-colours, for mood evocation (numbers like 'Through Golden Trellises', 'Long Steel Grass' and 'By the Lake' are tiny tone-poems of exquisite workmanship), and for popular song and dance; drama (easy to see the opera-composer-to-be in 'En famille' and 'Black Mrs Behemoth'). Pageantry and romantic lyricism are absent but not sensuous melancholy or nostalgia and the music's consistently melodic character serves to obviate any trace of dryness. Relatedly, contrapuntal skill is much in evidence, and it is remarkable that a composer whose scoring for chamber ensemble is masterly from first to last never returned to that medium in any other context.

Osbert Sitwell unwittingly summed up Walton's achievement (in *Façade*) in some remarks on poetry made in 1921:-

The great tradition of English poetry has always made use of everything new that came to it. It has swallowed up local and foreign tradition impartially.

The time has come again when it is necessary to draw bold outlines, to paint in vivid colours, and to make music like strong wine, so that in the future our poetry will mingle old and new, and all traditions in its own garment, and it will all seem one.

Edith Sitwell made several recordings of *Façade*, the first (excerpts) in 1929 with Constant Lambert (the work's dedicatee and composer of the first 11 bars of 'Four in the Morning'), the last in 1954 with Peter Pears (our present Prime Minister, Margaret

Thatcher, is alleged to have modelled her manner of public speaking on Edith's voice on this recording). All Edith's recordings reveal that, for her, all the necessary freedom and fantasy lie in the words and notes themselves, and any additional caprice or gimmick is liable to make the work sound merely eccentric, or — worse — camp. Susana Walton and Richard Baker share this conviction and have conceived their performance along these lines.

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Hinter der Fassade von *Façade*

Façade ist genau, was sein Titel ausdrückt: eine Fassade. Nicht alle Fassaden sind es wert, daß man hinter sie schaut, aber es lohnt sich immer, etwas genauer anzusehen, wenn wir glauben, daß es unsere Freude an einem Kunstwerk erhöhen könnte. Worum geht es in den Gedichten von *Façade*? Es sind keine Nonsense-Gedichte, wenn sie auch oft so beschrieben werden. Edith Sitwell beschränkte ihre eigenen Kommentare größtenteils auf ihre abstrakten Muster, aber in Wirklichkeit gehört die Entstehung nicht nur von *Façade*, sondern all ihrer frühen Gedichte einer so schmerzhaften Zeit in Ediths Leben an, daß sie die Diskussion darüber vermied. Sie machte jedoch manche Anspielungen, und hier sind einige ihrer eigenen beiläufigen Bemerkungen, die besonders relevant sind:-

Manchmal erleben wir beim Aufwachen ein Bewußtsein, mit dem wir schärfer und klaren sehen als mit den gewöhnlichen Sinnen, die von der Gewohnheit abgestumpft sind, und dringen zum Wesen der Sache vor, die wir anschauen...

Wenn einige der Bilder in diesen Gedichten seltsam scheinen, so deswegen, weil meine Sinne denen primitiver Völker ähneln, sie sind gleichzeitig scharf und unverhüllt — und sie sind austauschbar; wo eine Sinnessprache nicht ausreicht, um eine Bedeutung, ein Gefühl zu vermitteln, verwende ich eine andere...

In *A Poet's Notebook* (Notizbuch einer Dichterin) bezieht sich Edith auf Goethe: "Wenn man wissen will, wie Kirschen und Erdbeeren schmecken, muß man Kinder oder Vögel fragen." Dieses junge, scharfe Wissen, sagte sie, fände sich auch in Volksliedern und in "vielen der süßen und exquisiten Kinderlieder. In dieser Beziehung bin ich sowohl Vogel als auch Kind".

Das kindliche Bewußtsein spiegelt sich in der Erfahrung des Künstlers wieder. Das Leben ist eine Folge starker Umriss, bunt leuchtender Farben und seltsamer Begegnungen.

Für ein Kind gibt es keine Logik, und daher können Umstände nicht die logische Folge bestimmter Aktionen sein, sondern scheinen fremd und wunderlich zu wachsen... ganz als ob eine Blume geboren werden könnte ohne aus den Wurzeln in unserer gemeinen Erde zu entspringen.

In anderen Worten: eine der Hauptquellen für Ediths Poesie war ihre Kindheit. Sie hatte eine armselige Kindheit: materiell mangelte es ihr zwar an nichts, aber es fehlte ihr an Liebe, sie war von ihren Eltern unerwünscht und wurde oft grausam, oder zumindest gefühllos behandelt. Davor flüchtete sie sich in List und Phantasie bis zu dem Tag, als sie damit beginnen konnte, sie in Kunst, in Poesie zu verwandeln.

Man beachte etwa die vielen Erinnerungen an Renishaw Hall, den Sommersitz der Sitwells in Derbyshire — die Gartenanlagen, den See, im Mai die Glockenblumen im Wald, die sorgfältig platzierten Statuen, die weiten Aussichten, die Wildnis, die sanft gefärbten Bäume und Blumen — alle Kindersachen — in den Worten ihres Biographen Glendinning "das Rohmaterial für Ediths Innenleben". Im Haus gab es fünf Louis XIV Brüsseler Gobelins, die die Sitwell-Kinder mit ihrer "indischen Pracht und Üppigkeit" und "prächtigen Exotik" beeindruckten. Ediths Einbildungskraft nahm dauerhaft Notiz von den Pagoden, den Wolken, den schwarzen Jungen, den Orangenbäumen, den Springbrunnen, den Königen und Königinnen. Man lese nur die Gedichte: alles, oder wenigstens fast alles kommt in ihnen vor.

Ediths Kindheitsentdeckungen und -erfahrungen hinterließen also den tiefsten Eindruck auf ihre Poesie, und mit der Hilfe jüngerer Biographen gelang es uns, ein Glossar von Personen und Ereignissen zusammenzustellen, das praktisch jedes Gedicht in *Façade* erfaßt. Hier sind einige Beispiele:-

3 Mariner Man (Seemann). Das war Henry Moat, der Kammerdiener von Ediths Vater, dessen Familie von einer langen Linie von Walfängern abstammte, und dessen Seefahrtsgeschichten Edith besonders ansprachen.

6 Tango-Pasodoble. Eine Ferienszene in dem beliebten Seebadeort Scarborough.

8 Black Mrs Behemoth (Die schwarze Frau Behemoth). Ediths Mutter war oft unkontrollierbaren Wutausbrüchen ausgeliefert.

9 Tarantella. Der "Gärtner" ist Ernest de Taye, ein flämischer Gartenkünstler, der eine dauerhafte und unentbehrliche Einrichtung in Renishaw war.

20 Old Sir Faulk (Der alte Sir Faulk). Dies war der Vater zweier kleiner Mädchen, die Ediths einzige Freundinnen waren, als sie 4 oder 5 Jahre alt war. Er war groß und storchenhaft. Das Gedicht bezieht sich auf einen Besuch, den Edith ihnen kurz nachdem die Mutter der Mädchen gestorben war abstattete. "Was ist los, warum weint ihr?" Edith hätte sicher nicht geweint, wenn ihre Mutter gestorben wäre.

Ein Werk, das in solcher Vielfalt und verschwenderischer Fülle visuelle Bilder entstehen läßt, bietet sich natürlich für einen Vergleich mit der Welt der bildenden Kunst an. Interessanterweise schauen die meisten dabei gewöhnlich nicht so sehr nach Parallelen mit den zeitgenössischen Trends in den Werken Cocteaus, Picassos und anderer, sondern greifen eher auf eine Tradition zurück, die auf sie alle eine tiefe Wirkung ausübte — die Commedia dell'Arte. Sacheverell Sitwell verglich *Façade* mit den *Balli di Sfessania* des französischen Künstlers Jacques Callot, einem Frontispiz und 23 Holzschnitten, die 1621-22, genau 300 Jahre vor der ersten *Façade* entstanden. Callot riß als frühreifer Jugendlicher — Sacheverell nannte ihn einen "Rimbaud-Jüngling" — von zu Hause aus und schloß sich in Italien einer Zigeunerbande an. Seine Welt war die Welt der Jahrmärkte, der Lager von Wanderschauspielern, Akrobaten und Scharlatanen, und hier beobachtete er die Posen und theatralischen Gesten, die mit der Commedia dell'Arte assoziiert werden, und hielt sie in seinen Holzschnitten fest. Mehrere dieser Charaktere tauchen auch in den Gedichten (von *Façade*) auf.

Von der Commedia dell'Arte ist es nur ein kurzer Schritt zu einigen wichtigen äußeren Einflüssen auf Ediths Poesie — den französischen Symbolisten Verlaine und Rimbaud — und Diaghilews Ballets Russes. "Am See" in *Façade* ist praktisch eine direkte Paraphrase des *Colloque Sentimentale* in Verlaines *Fêtes Galantes*, und es gibt viele Echos aus der Welt von Verlaines Pierrot, die ihre Inspiration auf Jahrmärkten, in Zirkussen, im Variété und Ballett sowie den Musikern, die dort spielten, und ihren Instrumenten, besonders der Drehorgel, fand. Was Rimbaud angeht, so lesen sich einige der *Façade*-Gedichte fast wie ein englisches Äquivalent zu *Les Illuminations*: Rimbauds Kindheit war noch traumatischer als Ediths. Diaghilew war eine Offenbarung: in ihrem *Russian Ballet Gift Book* (Geschenkbuch vom Russischen Ballett) schrieb sie bewegend über *Petruschka* — auch hier die Verbindung mit Pierrot. Und hier betritt Walton die Szene, denn Diaghilews Produktion von Rimskij-Korsakows *Coq d'Or* öffnete ihm zuerst die Tore zur Musik weiter. *Petruschka* beeinflusste ihn besonders stark, dann der *Feuervogel*, *Pulcinella* (wiederum die Commedia dell'Arte), *Die Geschichte vom Soldaten* — und wenn wir die spezifisch musikalische Entstehung von *Façade* betrachten, gewinnt diese besondere Bedeutung. Sie wurde 1918 komponiert und ist für einen Sprecher und ein ähnlich kleines Instrumentalensemble (einschließlich eines Schlagzeugers, der über eine Anzahl von Schlaginstrumenten verfügt) gesetzt wie *Façade*.

Waltons Musik besitzt viele entzückende und wohlbekannte Charakteristiken, die en miniature vertreten sind: Witz, Spaß, Schalk; rhythmischen Schwung; poetisches Gespür für Klangfarben, Stimmungen (Nummern wie "Through Golden Trellises" [Durch goldene Gitter], "Long Steel Grass" [Langes Stahlgras] und "By the Lake" [Am See] sind winzige, exquisit gearbeitete Tondichtungen) und populäre Lieder und Tänze; Drama (in "En famille" und "Black Mrs Behemoth" erkennt man leicht den

zukünftigen Opernkomponisten). Prunk und romantische Lyrik als solche gibt es nicht, aber an sinnlicher Melancholie oder Nostalgie mangelt es nicht, und der durchweg melodiöse Charakter verhindert alle Spuren von Trockenheit. Damit zusammenhängend gibt es auch viel geschickten Kontrapunkt, und es ist erstaunlich, daß ein Komponist, dessen kammermusikalischer Satz von Anfang bis Ende so meisterhaft ist, dieses Medium in keinem anderen Kontext wieder aufgriff.

Edith Sitwell machte mehrere Aufnahmen von *Façade*, die erste (Ausschnitte) 1929 mit Constant Lambert, die letzte 1954 mit Peter Pears. All ihre Aufnahmen machen klar, daß für sie alle notwendige Freiheit und Phantasie in den Worten und Noten selbst enthalten sind, und alle zusätzlichen Capricen oder Gags das Werk leicht exzentrisch oder — schlimmer — übertrieben oder manieriert klingen lassen könnten. Susana Walton und Richard Baker teilen diese Überzeugung und konzipierten ihre Interpretation entsprechend.

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Übersetzung: Renate Maria Wendel

Derrière la *Façade*

"*Façade*" est exactement cela — une façade. Toutes les façades ne valent pas la peine de chercher à découvrir ce qu'il y a derrière, mais tout est bon à découvrir si la découverte fait mieux apprécier l'œuvre d'art.

Que sont ces poèmes "*Façade*"? Ils n'appartiennent pas à la poésie "absurde", bien que souvent on l'ait cru ainsi. Leur créatrice, Edith Sitwell, n'a jamais été très explicite à leur sujet, elle s'est contentée le plus souvent de remarques personnelles sur leur forme abstraite. C'est que la genèse de *Façade* — et de tous les poèmes antérieurs — appartient à une période si douloureuse de la vie de la poétesse qu'elle a toujours évité d'en parler. Cependant, elle a laissé percer des allusions intéressantes dans ses opinions et propos, dont voici d'ailleurs quelques échantillons:

Parfois nous sentons notre conscience sortir du sommeil et nous voyons avec une vue plus claire et plus nette que celle de notre sens coutumier émoussé par les habitudes; nous allons alors tout droit jusqu'à l'essence même de la chose vue...

Si quelques-unes des images de ces poèmes paraissent étranges, c'est que mes sens sont, pareils à ceux des peuples primitifs, à la fois aigües, nus — et interchangeables. Lorsque le langage d'un de mes sens est inadéquat pour donner une signification, exprimer une sensation, j'en utilise un autre ...

"Pour vous informer sur le goût des cerises et des fraises, adressez-vous aux enfants et aux oiseaux" [Goethe]. On retrouve cette connaissance, fraîche et vive, dans les chants folkloriques et dans de nombreuses poésies et chansons enfantines. Moi, de ce point de vue là, je me sens à la fois oiseau et enfant.

L'âme de l'enfant se reflète dans la création de l'artiste. La vie est une série de contours bien définis, de couleurs brillantes et éclatantes, de rencontres étranges.

Pour un enfant, la logique n'existe pas; les circonstances ne peuvent être par conséquent l'aboutissement logique de certains actes; mais les circonstances semblent de merveilleux développements sans rapport avec les actes... comme si une fleur pouvait naître sans sortir de ses sombres racines enfouies dans notre terre très ordinaire.

C'est dans son enfance qu'Edith Sitwell trouva l'inspiration poétique; une enfance déshéritée, non pas sur le plan matériel, mais sur le plan affectif; enfant non voulue, ses parents ne l'aimaient pas et la traitèrent avec cruauté ou pour le moins sans compréhension aucune. Alors pour pallier à ce terrible manque d'affection elle déguisa la vérité et plongea dans la fantaisie jusqu'au jour où elle put la convertir en art, en poésie. Dans ses poèmes on peut noter, par exemple, de nombreuses réminiscences de Renishaw Hall, la résidence d'été des Sitwell, dans le comté de Derby: les jardins, le lac, les jacinthes des bois, les statues dont les emplacements avaient été choisis avec le plus grand soin, les longues perspectives, la nature à l'état sauvage, les fleurs aux couleurs apaisantes et les arbres — tout cela constitua la nourriture visuelle de l'enfance d'Edith, "la matière première de sa vie intérieure" (d'après la biographe Glendinning). Les tapisseries de Bruxelles (période Louis XIV) suspendues à l'intérieur de la demeure avaient frappé l'imagination des enfants Sitwell par leur "suavité indienne, leur opulence... et leur panache exotique". Edith n'oublia jamais les pagodes, les nuages, les petits garçons noirs, les orangers, les fontaines, les rois et les reines; on les retrouve tous dans ses poèmes.

Donc les découvertes enfantines d'Edith Sitwell, les souvenirs qu'elle en a gardés, marquent profondément sa poésie. Si on ajoute à cela — avec l'aide de biographies récentes — une liste de personnes qu'elle a connues et d'événements survenus dans sa vie, nous avons les données nécessaires pour comprendre la plupart des poèmes de *Façade*. Par exemple:

3 Mariner Man (le marin) — il s'agit du valet de chambre de M. Sitwell père, Henry Moat, dont la famille appartenait à une longue lignée de pêcheurs de baleine; Edith se laissa captiver par ses histoires de voyages en mer.

6 Tango-Pasodoble: scène d'un jour de fête à la station balnéaire, très populaire de Scarborough.

8 Black Mrs Behemoth (Mme Behemoth la noire — de Behemoth le gigantesque monstre biblique) — la mère d'Edith était sujette à des accès de rage "noire" incontrôlable.

9 Tarantella — le "jardinier" est Ernest de Taye, horticulteur flamand, employé de longue date à Renishaw où il s'était rendu indispensable.

20 Old Sir Faulk (Le vieux Sir Faulk), homme haut sur jambes comme une cigogne, père de deux filles, les seules amies qu'Edith ait connues lorsqu'elle avait environ 4/5 ans. Edith alla les voir après le décès de leur mère et le poème a trait à cette visite: "Qu'y a-t-il? Pourquoi pleurer?" Il est certain qu'Edith n'aurait pas pleuré s'il s'était agi de la mort de sa mère à elle.

Une œuvre qui contient une telle variété et une telle profusion d'images visuelles ne peut manquer de susciter des comparaisons. Il est curieux de constater qu'on a cherché à déceler les tendances artistiques contemporaines, peut être moins du côté de Cocteau, Picasso et autres que du côté de la tradition qui les a inspirés — tous — la Commedia dell'Arte. Sacheverell Sitwell (l'ami de Walton, et le frère d'Edith) comparait *Façade* au *Balli di Sfessania*, un frontispice et 23 gravures sur bois datant de 1621-22, 300 ans exactement avant la première édition de *Façade*. Leur créateur, l'artiste français Jacques Callot, avait eu — Sacheverell dit — "une jeunesse à la Rimbaud"; il avait fui en Italie et suivi une bande de gitans. Son monde était celui des fêtes foraines, des camps de nomades, acteurs, acrobates et charlatans; on peut les voir tels qu'ils les a observés et reproduits dans ses gravures sur bois; leurs poses et leurs gestes sont ceux des comédiens de la Commedia dell'Arte. Or plusieurs des personnages de celle-ci font irruption dans les poèmes de *Façade*.

Toujours dans le cadre des influences extérieures qui ont marqué la poésie d'Edith Sitwell, de la Commedia dell'Arte il est facile de passer à Verlaine et Rimbaud, puis au Ballet russe de Diaghilev. Prenons Verlaine et son "Colloque sentimental" (in *Fêtes galantes*); et nous voyons que "By the Lake" (Au bord du lac), de *Façade* en est virtuellement une paraphrase où l'on entend les échos de Pierrot, de son monde de fêtes foraines, cirques, music-halls et ballets, des musiciens de ces lieux, des instruments, l'orgue de barbarie surtout. Passons à Rimbaud (dont l'enfance fut encore plus traumatique que celle d'Edith Sitwell), et plusieurs poèmes de *Façade* se lisent comme un quasi-équivalent anglais des *Illuminations*. Quant à Diaghilev, ce fut une révélation. Edith Sitwell en parle avec émotion, et s'attarde sur *Petrouchka* — encore une analogie au Pierrot — dans son *Livre d'Or du Ballet russe*.

Et c'est ici que Walton entre en scène, car c'est en voyant le *Coq d'Or* de Rimski-

Korsakov, réalisé par Diaghilev que les portes de la musique s'ouvrirent en grand devant lui, pour la première fois. *Petrouchka* ensuite pesa de son influence, sans parler de l'*Oiseau de Feu*, de *Pulcinella* (la Commedia dell'Arte une fois de plus) et de l'*Histoire du Soldat*. Cette dernière œuvre mérite qu'on s'y arrête quelques instants car entre sa généalogie et celle de *Façade* existent des particularités communes. L'*Histoire*, que Stravinski composa en 1918, est écrite pour récitant et ensemble de musiciens, dont un percussionniste qui préside un groupe d'instrumentistes variés, similaire à celui de *Façade*.

La musique de Walton présente, en miniature, des caractéristiques délicieusement familières: esprit, badinage, espièglerie, zeste rythmique, un profond sentiment poétique dans la couleur des sons et l'évocation d'un état d'esprit (les morceaux intitulés "Through Golden Trellises [A travers les treillages dorés], Long Steel Grass [longue herbe métallique] et "By the Lake" [Au bord du lac] sont de minuscules poèmes symphoniques, ravissants, du beau travail d'orfèvre), une affinité pour les chants et danses populaires, un sens dramatique (il est facile d'entendre dans "En famille" et "Black Mrs Behemoth" le futur compositeur d'opéra). L'apparat et le lyrisme romantique, en tant que tels, sont absents, mais la mélancolie sensuelle ou la nostalgie ne font pas défaut. Le caractère mélodique, constant, de cette musique permet d'éviter toute trace de froideur. Sa compétence de contrapuntiste est bien évidente. Il est étonnant que Walton n'ait plus rien écrit pour ensemble de musique de chambre, domaine dans lequel il se révèle ici passé maître.

Edith Sitwell, participa en personne à plusieurs enregistrements de *Façade*; le premier (il s'agit d'extraits), avec Constant Lambert, date de 1929; le dernier, avec Peter Pears, date de 1954 et ces enregistrements témoignent que, pour elle, toute la liberté, toute la fantaisie nécessaires résidaient dans les mots et les notes mêmes; et donc toute addition, caprice ou stratagème pour attirer l'attention, ne peut que donner à l'œuvre un caractère excentrique ou au pire affecté. Susana Walton et Richard Baker partagent cette conviction et leur interprétation montre qu'ils l'ont respectée.

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FAÇADE

An Entertainment

1. Hornpipe

Sailors come
To the drum
Out of Babylon;
Hobby-horses
Foam, the dumb
Sky rhinoceros-glum

Watched the courses of the breakers' rocking-horses and with

Glaucis,

Lady Venus on the settee of the horsehair sea!
Where Lord Tennyson in laurels wrote a gloria free,
In a borealic iceberg came Victoria; she
Knew Prince Albert's tall memorial took the colours of the floreal
And the borealic iceberg; floating on they see
New-arisen Madam Venus for whose sake from far
Came the fat zebra'd emperor from Zanzibar
Where like golden bouquets lay far Asia, Africa, Cathay,
All laid before that shady lady by the fibroid Shah.
Captain Fracasse stout as any water-butt came, stood
With Sir Bacchus both a-drinking the black tarr'd grapes' blood
Plucked among the tartan leafage
By the furry wind whose grief age
Could not wither — like a squirrel with a gold star-nut.
Queen Victoria sitting shocked upon the rocking horse
Of a wave said to the Laureate, 'This minx of course
Is as sharp as any lynx and blacker-deeper than the drinks and
quite as
Hot as any hottentot, without remorse!
For the minx'
Said she,
'And the drinks,
You can see
Are hot as any hottentot and not the goods for me!'

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2. En Famille

In the early spring-time, after their tea,
Through the young fields of the springing Bohea,
Jemima, Jocasta, Dinah, and Deb
Walked with their father Sir Joshua Jebb —
An admiral red, whose only notion
(A butterfly poised on a pigtailed ocean)
Is of the peruked sea whose swell
Breaks on the flowerless rocks of Hell.
Under the thin trees, Deb and Dinah,
Jemima, Jocasta, walked, and finer
Their black hair seemed (flat-sleek to see)
Than the young leaves of the springing Bohea;
Their cheeks were like nutmeg-flowers when swells
The rain into foolish silver bells.
They said, 'If the door you would only slam,
Or if, Papa, you would once say "Damn" —
Instead of merely roaring "Avast"
Or boldly invoking the nautical Blast —
We should now stand in the street of Hell
Watching siesta shutters that fell
With a noise like amber softly sliding;
Our moon-like glances through these gliding
Would see at her table preened and set
Myrrhina sitting at her toilette
With eyelids closed as soft as the breeze
That flows from gold flowers on the incense-trees.'

The Admiral said, 'You could never call —
I assure you it would not do at all!
She gets down from table without saying "Please",
Forgets her prayers and to cross her T's,
In short, her scandalous reputation
Has shocked the whole of the Hellish nation;
And every turbaned Chinoiserie,
With whom we should sip our black Bohea,
Would stretch out her simian fingers thin
To scratch you, my dears, like a mandoline;
For Hell is just as properly proper
As Greenwich, or as Bath, or Joppa!'



3. Mariner Man

'What are you staring at, mariner man
Wrinkled as sea-sand and old as the sea?'
'Those trains will run over their trails, if they can,
Snorting and sporting like porpoises. Flee
The burly, the whirling wheels of the train,
As round as the world and as large again,
Running half the way over to Babylon, down
Through fields of clover to gay Troy town —
A-puffing their smoke as grey as the curl
On my forehead as wrinkled as sands of the sea! —
But what can that matter to you, my girl?
(And what can that matter to me?)'

4. Long Steel Grass

Long steel grass —
The white soldier's pass —
The light is braying like an ass.
See
The tall Spanish jade
With hair black as nightshade
Worn as a cockade!
Flee
Her eyes' gasconade
And her gown's parade
(As stiff as a brigade).
Tee-hee!
The hard and braying light
Is zebra'd black and white
It will take away the slight
And free,
Tinge of the mouth-organ sound,
(Oyster-stall notes) oozing round
Her flounces as they sweep the ground
The
Trumpet and the drum
And the martial cornet come
To make the people dumb —
But we
Won't wait for sly-foot night

5. Through Gilded Trellises

'Through gilded trellises,
Of the heat, Dolores,
Inez, Manuccia,
Isabel, Lucia,
Mock Time that flies.
"Lovely bird, will you stay and sing,
Flirting your sheen'd wing, —
Peck with your beak, and cling
To our balconies?"
They flirt their fans, flaunting —
"O silence enchanting
As music!" then slanting
Their eyes,
Like gilded or emerald grapes,
They take mantillas, capes,
Hiding their simian shapes.
Sighs
Each lady, "Our spadille
Is done..." "Dance the quadrille
From Hell's towers to Seville;
Surprise
Their siesta", Dolores
Said. Through gilded trellises
Of the heat, spangles
Pelt down through the tangles
Of bell-flowers; each dangles
Her castanets, shutters
Fall while the heat mutters,
With sounds like a mandoline
Or tinkled tambourine...
Ladies, Time dies!

6. Tango-Pasodoble

When

Don

Pasquito arrived at the seaside

Where the donkey's hide tide brayed, he

Saw the banditto Jo in a black cape

Whose slack shape waved like the sea —

Thetis wrote a treatise noting wheat is silver like the sea;

the lovely cheat is sweet as foam; Erotis notices that she

Will

Steal

The

Wheat-king's luggage, like Babel

Before the League of Nations grew —

So Jo put the luggage and the label

In the pocket of Flo the Kangaroo.

Through trees like rich hotels that bode

Of dreamless ease fled she,

Carrying the load and goading the road

Through the marine scene to the sea.

'Don Pasquito, the road is eloping

With your luggage, though heavy and large;

You must follow and leave your moping

Bride to my guidance and charge!'

When

Don

Pasquito returned from the road's end,

Where vanilla-coloured ladies ride

From Sevilla, his mantilla'd bride and young friend

Were forgetting their mentor and guide.

For the lady and her friend from Le Touquet

In the very shady trees upon the sand

Were plucking a white satin bouquet

Of foam, while the sand's brassy band

Blared in the wind. Don Pasquito

Hid where the leaves drip with sweet...

But a word stung him like a mosquito...

For what they hear, they repeat!

7. Lullaby for Jumbo

Jumbo asleep!

Grey leaves thick-furred

As his ear, keep

Conversations blurred.

Thicker than hide

Is the trumpeting water;

Don Pasquito's bride

And his youngest daughter

Watch the leaves

Elephantine grey;

What is it grieves

In the torrid day?

Is it the animal

World that snores

Harsh and inimical

In sleepy pores? —

And why should the spined flowers

Red as a soldier

Make Don Pasquito

Seem still mouldier?

9. Tarantella

Where the satyrs are chattering, nymphs in their flattering

Glimpse of the forest enhance

All the beauty of marrow and cucumber narrow

And Ceres will join in the dance.

Where the satyrs can flatter the flat-leaved fruit

And the gherkin green and the marrow,

Said Queen Venus, 'Silenus, we'll settle between us

The gourd and the cucumber narrow.'

See, like palaces hid in the lake, they shake —

Those greenhouses shot by her arrow narrow!

The gardener seizes the pieces like Croesus for gilding the potting-shed barrow.

There the radish roots,

And the strawberry fruits

Feel the nymphs' high boots in the glade.

Trampling and sampling mazurkas, cachucas and turkas,

Cracoviaks hid in the shade.

8. Black Mrs Behemoth

In a room of the palace

Black Mrs Behemoth

Gave way to wroth

And the wildest malice.

Cried Mrs Behemoth

'Come, come,

Come, court lady,

Doomed like a moth,

Through palace rooms shady!

The candle flame

Seemed a yellow pompion,

Sharp as a scorpion,

Nobody came...

Only a bugbear

Air unkind,

That bud-furred papoose,

The young spring wind,

Blew out the candle.

Where is it gone?

To flat Coromandel

Rolling on!

Where, in the haycocks, the country nymphs' gay flocks
 Wear gowns that are looped over bright yellow petticoats;
 Gaiters of leather and pheasants' tail feathers
 In straw hats bewildering many a leathern bat.
 There they haymake
 Cowers and whines in showers
 The dew in the dogskin bright flowers;
 Pumpkin and marrow
 And cucumber narrow
 Have grown through the spangled June hours.
 Melons as dark as caves have for their fountain waves
 Thickest gold honey. And wrinkled as dark as Pan,
 Or old Silenus, yet youthful as Venus
 Are gourds and the wrinkled figs
 Whence all the jewels ran.
 Said Queen Venus, 'Silenus
 We'll settle between us
 The nymphs' disobedience, forestall
 With my bow and my quiver
 Each fresh evil liver:
 For I don't understand it at all!'

10. A Man from a Far Countree

Rose and Alice,
 Oh, the pretty lassies,
 With their mouths like calice
 And their hair a golden palace —
 Through my heart like a lovely wind they blow.
 Though I am black and not comely,
 Though I am black as the darkest trees,
 I have swarms of gold that will fly like honey-bees,
 By the rivers of the sun I will feed my words
 Until they skip like those fleeced lambs
 The waterfalls, and the rivers (horned rams),
 Then for all my darkness I shall be
 The peacefulness of a lovely tree —
 A tree wherein the golden birds
 Are singing in the darkest branches, oh!

11. By the Lake

Across the thick and the pastel snow
 Two people go... 'And do you remember
 When last we wandered this shore?'... 'Ah no!
 For it is cold-hearted December.'
 'Dead, the leaves that like asses' ears hung on the trees
 When last we wandered and squandered joy here;
 Now Midas your husband will listen for these
 Whispers — these tears for joy's bier.'
 And as they walk, they seem tall pagodas;
 And all the ropes let down from the cloud
 Ring the hard cold bell-buds upon the trees — codas
 Of overtones, ecstasies, grown for love's shroud.

12. Country Dance

That hobnailed goblin, the bob-tailed Hob,
 Said, 'It is time I began to rob.'
 For strawberries bob, hob-nob with the pearls
 Of cream (like the curls of the dairy girls),
 And flushed with the heat and fruitish-ripe
 Are the gowns of the maids who dance to the pipe.
 Chase a maid?
 She's afraid!
 'Go gather a bob-cherry kiss from a tree,
 But don't, I prithee, come bothering me!'
 She said —
 As she fled.
 The snouted satyrs drink clouted cream
 'Neath the chestnut-trees as thick as a dream;
 So I went,
 And leant,
 Where none but the doltish coltish wind
 Nuzzled my hand for what it could find.
 As it neighed,
 I said,
 'Don't touch me, sir, don't touch me, I say,
 You'll tumble my strawberries into the hay.
 Those snow-mounds of silver that bee, the spring,
 Has sucked his sweetness from, I will bring
 With fair-haired plants and with apples chill



13. Polka

Cried the navy-blue ghost
Of Mr Belaker
The allegro negro cocktail-shaker;
'Why did the cock crow,
Why am I lost
Down the endless road to infinity toss'd?'
The tropical leaves are whispering white as water:
I race the wind in my flight down the promenade,—
Edging the far-off sand
Is the foam of the sirens' Metropole and Grand, —
As I raced through the leaves as white as water
My ghost flowed over a nursemaid, caught her
And there I saw the long grass weep,
Where the guinea-fowl plumaged houses sleep
And the sweet ring-doves of curded milk:
Watch the Infanta's gown of silk
In the ghost-room tall where the governante
Whispers slyly fading andante.
In at the window then looked he,
The navy-blue ghost of Mr Belaker;
The allegro negro cocktail-shaker, —
And his flattened face like the moon saw she, —
Rhinceros black yet flowing like the sea.

Something lies beyond the scene, the encre de
 chine, marine, obscene
 Horizon
 In
 Hell
 Black as a bison
 See the tall black Aga on the sofa in the alga
 mope, his
 Bell-robe
 Moustache (clear as a great bell!)
 Waves in eighteen-eighty
 Bustles
 Come
 Late with tambourines of
 Rustling
 Foam.

25

They answer to the names
 Of ancient dames and shames, and
 Only call horizons their home.
 Coldly wheeze (Chinese as these black-armoured
 fleas that dance) the breezes
 Seeking for horizons
 Wide; from her orisons
 In her wide
 Vermilion
 Pavilion
 By the seaside
 The doors clang open and hide
 Where the wind died
 Nothing but the Princess
 Cockatrice
 Lean
 Dancing a caprice
 To the wind's tambourine.

16. Valse

'Daisy and Lily,
 Lazy and silly,
 Walk by the shore of the wan grassy sea, —
 Talking once more 'neath a swan-bosomed tree,
 Rose castles,
 Tourelles,
 Those bustles
 Where swells
 Each foam-bell of ermine,
 They roam and determine
 What fashions have been and what fashions will be, —
 What tartan leaves born,
 What crinolines worn,
 By Queen Thetis,
 Pelisses
 Of tarlatine blue,
 Like the thin plaided leaves that the castle crags grew,
 Or velours d'Afrique:
 On the water-gods' land
 Her hair seemed gold trees on the honey-cell sand

When the thickest gold spangles, on deep water seen,
 Were like twanging guitar and like cold mandoline,
 And the nymphs of great caves,
 With hair like gold waves,
 Of Venus, wore tarlatine.
 Louise and Charlottine
 (Boreas' daughters)
 And the nymphs of deep waters,
 The nymph Taglioni, Grisi the ondine,
 Wear plaided Victoria and thin Clementine
 Like the crinolined waterfalls;
 Wood-nymphs wear bonnets, shawls,
 Elegant parasols
 Floating are seen.
 The Amazons wear balzarine of jonquille
 Beside the blond lace of a deep-falling rill;
 Through glades like a nun
 They run from and shun
 The enormous and gold-rayed rustling sun;
 And the nymphs of the fountains
 Descend from the mountains
 Like elegant willows
 On their deep barouche pillows,
 In cashmere Alvandar, harège Isabelle,
 Like bells of bright water clearest wood-well.
 Our élégantes favouring bonnets of blond,
 The stars in their apiaries,
 Sylphs in their aviaries,
 Seeing them, spangle these, and the sylphs fond
 From their aviaries fanned
 With each long fluid hand
 The manteaux espagnoles,
 Mimic the waterfalls
 Over the long and the light summer land.

So Daisy and Lily,
 Lazy and silly,
 Walk by the shore of the wan grassy sea,
 Talking once more 'neath a swan-bosomed tree.
 Rose castles,
 Tourelles,

Those bustles!
 Mourelles
 Of the shade in their train follow.
 Ladies, how vain, — hollow, —
 Gone is the sweet swallow, —
 Gone, Philomel!



17. Jodelling Song

'We bear velvet cream,
Green and babyish
Small leaves seem; each stream
Horses' tails that swish,

And the chimes remind
Us of sweet birds singing,
Like the jangling bells
On rose trees ringing.

Man must say farewell
To parents now,
And to William Tell
And Mrs Cow.

Man must say farewells
To storks and Betties,
And to roses' bells,
And statuettes.

Forests white and black
In spring are blue
With forget-me-nots,
And to lovers true

Still the sweet bird begs
And tries to cozen
Them: "Buy angels' eggs
Sold by the dozen."

Gone are clouds, like inns
On the gardens' brinks.
And the mountain djinns, —
Ganymede sells drinks;

While the days seem grey,
And his heart of ice,
Grey as charmois, or
The edelweiss.

And the mountain streams
Like cowbells sound —
Tirra lirra, drowned
In the waiter's dreams

Who has gone beyond
The forest waves,
While his true and fond
Ones seek their graves.'

18. Scotch Rhapsody

'Do not take a bath in Jordan,
Gordon,

On the holy Sabbath, on the peaceful day!
Said the huntsman, playing on his old bagpipe,
Boring to death the pheasant and the snipe —
Boring the ptarmigan and grouse for fun —
Boring them worse than a nine-bore gun.
Till the flaxen leaves where the prunes are ripe,
Heard the tartan wind a-droning through the pipe,
And they heard Macpherson say:
'Where do the waves go? What hotels
Hide their bustles and their gay umbrellas?
And would there be room? — Would there be
room? Would there be room for me?'

There is a hotel at Ostend
Cold as the wind, without an end,
Haunted by ghostly poor relations
Of Bostonian conversations
(Like bagpipes rotting through the walls.)
And there the pearl-ropes fall like shawls
With a noise like marine waterfalls.
And 'Another little drink wouldn't do us any
harm'

Pierces through the sabbatical calm.
And that is the place for me!
So do not take a bath in Jordan, Gordon,
On the holy Sabbath on the peaceful day —
Or you'll never go to heaven, Gordon Macpherson,
And speaking purely as a private person
That is the place — that is the place — that is the
place for me!

19. Popular Song

Lily O'Grady,
Silly and shady,
Longing to be
A lazy lady,
Walked by the cupolas, gables in the
Lake's Georgian stables,
In a fairy tale like the heat intense,
And the mist in the woods when across the fence
The children gathering strawberries
Are changed by the heat into negresses,
Though their fair hair
Shines there
Like gold-haired planets, Calliope, Io,
Pomona, Antiope, Echo, and Clio.
Then Lily O'Grady,
Silly and shady,
Sauntered along like a
Lazy lady;
Beside the waves' haycocks her gown with tucks
Was of satin the colour of shining green ducks,
And her fol-de-rol
Parasol
Was a great gold sun o'er the haycocks shining,
But she was a negress black as the shade
That time on the brightest lady laid.
That a satyr, dog-haired as trunks of trees,
Began to flatter, began to tease,
And she ran like the nymphs with golden foot
That trampled the strawberry, buttercup root,
In the thick gold dew as bright as the mesh
Of dead Panope's golden flesh,
Made from the music whence were born
Memphis and Thebes in the first hot morn,
— And ran, to wake
In the lake,
Where the water-ripples seem hay to rake.
And Charlotte, Adeline,
Round rose-bubbling Victorine,

And the other fish
Express a wish
For mastic mantles and gowns with
a swish;

And bright and slight as the posies
Of buttercups and of roses,
And buds of the wild wood-lilies
They chase her, as frisky as fillies.
The red retriever-haired satyr
Can whine and tease her and flatter,
But Lily O'Grady,
Silly and shady,
In the deep shade is a lazy lady;
Now Pompey's dead, Homer's read,
Heliogabalus lost his head,
And shade is on the brightest wing,
And dust forbids the bird to sing.

20. Fox-Trot 'Old Sir Faulk'

Old
Sir
Faulk,
Tall as a stork,
Before the honeyed fruits of dawn were ripe, would walk,
And stalk with a gun
The reynard-coloured sun,
Among the pheasant-feathered corn the unicorn has torn, forlorn
the
Smock-faced sheep
Sit
And
Sleep;
Periwigged as William and Mary, weep...
'Sally, Mary, Mattie, what's the matter, why cry?'
The huntsman and the reynard-coloured sun and I sigh;
'Oh, the nursery-maid Meg
With a leg like a peg
Chased the feathered dreams like hens, and when they laid
an egg
In the sheepskin
Meadows
Where
The serene King James would steer
Horse and hounds, then he
From the shade of a tree
Picked it up as spoil to boil for nursery tea', said the mourners.
In the
Corn, towers strain,
Feathered tall as a crane,
And whistling down the feathered rain, old Noah goes again —
An old dull mome
With a head like a pome
Seeing the world as a bare egg,
Laid by the feathered air; Meg
Would beg three of these
For the nursery teas
Of Japhet, Shem, and Ham; she gave it
Underneath the trees,
Where the boiling
Water
Hissed,

Like the goose-king's feathered daughter — kissed,
Pot and pan and copper kettle
Put upon their proper mettle,
Lest the Flood — the Flood — the Flood begin again through these!

21. Sir Beelzebub

When
Sir
Beelzebub called for his syllabub in the hotel in Hell
Where Prosperine first fell,
Blue as the gendarmerie were the waves of the sea,
(Rocking and shocking the bar-maid).
Nobody comes to give him his rum but the
Rim of the sky hippopotamus-glum
Enhances the chances to bless with a benison
Alfred Lord Tennyson crossing the bar laid
With cold vegetation from pale deputations
Of temperance workers (all signed in Memoriam)
Hoping with glory to trip up the Laureate's feet,
(Moving in classical metres)...
Like Balaclava, the lava came down from the
Roof, and the sea's blue wooden gendarmerie
Took them in charge while Beelzebub roared for his rum.
...None of them come!



FAÇADE 2

1. Came the Great Popinjay

Came the great Popinjay
Smelling his nosegay:
In cages like grots
The birds sang gavottes.
'Herodiade's flea
Was named sweet Amanda,
She danced like a lady
From here to Uganda.
Oh, what a dance was there!
Long-haired, the candle
Salome-like tossed her hair
To a dance tune by Handel,'...
Dance they still? Then came
Courtier Death,
Blew out the candle flame
With civet breath.

2. Aubade

Jane, Jane
Tall as a crane,
The morning light creaks down again;

Comb your cockscomb-ragged hair,
Jane, Jane, come down the stair,

Each dull blunt wooden stalactite
Of rain creaks, hardened by the light,

Sounding like an overtone
From some lonely world unknown.

But the creaking empty light
Will never harden into sight,

Will never penetrate your brain
With overtones like the blunt rain.

The light would show (if it could harden)
Eternities of kitchen garden,

Cockscomb flowers that none will pluck,
And wooden flowers that 'gin to duck.

In the kitchen you must light
Flames as staring, red and white,

As carrots or as turnips, shining
Where the cold dawn light lies whining.

Cockscomb hair on the cold wind
Hangs limp, turns the milk's weak mind...
Jane, Jane,
Tall as a crane,
The morning light creaks down again!

3. March

Ratatantan, ratatantan, ratatantan:
The marshal's harrier
Bites and fights
The water carrier,
Mossed as a druid,
Under the wall
Thin waters fall
And turn into fluid
Petals of tulips, and hard regalias
Of lilies and dahlias.
Then, as they brawl,
Jupiter leaned from his vast snow cage,
Cuffed the marshal's harrier —
Still in a rage he bites and fights
The wall grown mouldier,
Where stiff as a soldier
Stands the breeze,
Like a handy andy,
And words they bandy
Under the dandy
Dinmont trees.

4. Madam Mouse Trots

Dame Souris trotte gris dans le noir.
VERLAINE

Madam Mouse trots,
Gray in the black night!
Madam Mouse trots:
Furred is the light.
The elephant-trunks
Trumpet from the sea...
Gray in the black night
The mouse trots free.
Hoarse as a dog's bark
The heavy leaves are furled...
The cat's in his cradle,
All's well with the world!

5. The Octogenarian

The octogenarian
Leaned from his window,
To the valerian
Growing below
Said, 'My nightcap
Is only the gap
In the trembling thorn
Where the mild unicorn
With the little Infanta
Danced the lavolta
(Clapping hands: molto
Lent' elegantal).'
The man with the lanthorn
Peers high and low;
No more
Than a snore
As he walks to and fro...
Il Dottore the stoic
Culls silver herb
Beneath the superb
Vast moon azoic.

6. Gardener Janus Catches a Naiad

Baskets of ripe fruit in air
The bird-songs seem, suspended where

Between the hairy leaves trills dew,
All rusting of fresh green anew.

Ma'am, I've heard your laughter flare
Through your waspish-gilded hair:

Feathered masks,
Pots of peas,
Janus asks
Naught of these.
Creaking water
Brightly striped,
Now, I've caught her —
Shrieking biped.
Flute sounds jump
And turn together,
Changing clumps
Of glassy feather.
In among the
Pots of peas
Naiad changes —
Quick as these.

7. Water Party

Rose Castles
Those bustles
Beneath parasols seen!
Fat blonde pearls
Rondine curls
Seem. Bannerols sheen
The brave tartan
Waves' Spartan
Domes (Crystal Palaces)
Where like fallacies
Die the calices
Of the water-flowers green.

Said the Dean
 To the Queen,
 On the tartan wave seen:
 'Each chilly
 White lily
 Has her own crinoline,
 And the seraphs recline
 On divans divine
 In a smooth seventh heaven of polished pitch-pine.'
 Castellated,
 Related
 To castles the waves lean
 Balmoral-like;
 They quarrel, strike
 (As round as a rondine)
 With sharp towers
 The water-flowers
 And, floating between,
 Each châtelaine
 In the battle slain —
 Laid low by the Ondine.

8. Said King Pompey

Said King Pompey the emperor's ape,
 Shuddering black in his temporal cape
 Of dust, 'The dust is everything —
 The heart to love and the voice to sing,
 Indianapolis
 And the Acropolis,
 Also the hairy sky that we
 Take for a coverlet comfortably.'
 Said the Bishop, 'The world is flat...
 But the see-saw Crowd sent the emperor down
 To the howling dust — and up went the Clown
 With his face that is filched from the new young Dead
 And the Tyrant's ghost and the Low-Man-Flea
 Are emperor-brothers, throw shades that are red
 From the tide of blood (Red Sea, Dead Sea),
 And Attila's voice or the hum of a gnat
 Can usher in Eternity.'



*Illustrations:
 etchings by Jacques Callot,
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WALTON: FAÇADE - City of London Sinfonia/Hickox

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SIR WILLIAM WALTON
(1902-1983)

Façade

An Entertainment [39:47]

poems: Dame Edith Sitwell

- 1 Fanfare [0:34]
- 2 1 Hornpipe [1:11]
- 3 2 En Famille [3:10]
- 4 3 Mariner Man [0:36]
- 5 4 Long Steel Grass [2:21]
- 6 5 Through Gilded Trellises [2:35]
- 7 6 Tango-Pasodoble [1:55]
- 8 7 Lullaby for Jumbo [1:55]
- 9 8 Black Mrs Behemoth [1:03]
- 10 9 Tarantella [1:21]
- 11 10 A Man from a Far Countree [1:37]
- 12 11 By the Lake [2:03]
- 13 12 Country Dance [1:58]
- 14 13 Polka [1:17]
- 15 14 Four in the Morning [2:18]
- 16 15 Something Lies Beyond the Scene [1:00]
- 17 16 Valse [3:37]
- 18 17 Jodelling Song [2:28]
- 19 18 Scotch Rhapsody [1:14]
- 20 19 Popular Song [2:08]
- 21 20 Fox-Trot 'Old Sir Faulk' [2:02]
- 22 21 Sir Beelzebub [0:58]

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Façade 2 [11:09]

- 23 Flourish [0:10]
- 24 1 Came the Great Popinjay [1:10]
- 25 2 Aubade [3:58]
- 26 3 March [0:52]
- 27 4 Madam Mouse Trots [0:45]
- 28 5 The Octogenarian [1:16]
- 29 6 Gardener Janus Catches a Naiad [0:55]
- 30 7 Water Party [1:17]
- 31 8 Said King Pompey [0:40]

DDD TT = 51:02

SUSANA WALTON
RICHARD BAKER speakers

RICHARD HICKOX
conducts members of

THE CITY OF LONDON SINFONIA

Shuna Wilson cello Amanda Goodall cello
Duke Dobing flute/piccolo David Rix clarinet/bass clarinet
Tim Holmes alto saxophone Crispian Steele-Perkins trumpet
Charles Fullbrook percussion

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