

Press Release



16th March 2015 – For immediate use

Façade – An Evening’s Entertainment.

Thurs 7th May, 8pm – Square Chapel Arts Centre, Halifax

Fri 8th May, 7.30pm – University of Leeds International Concert Series

Sat 9th May, 7.30pm – Music In Lyddington, St Andrews Church, Lyddington, Rutland

On the 7th, 8th and 9th of May, the Glasgow-based **Auricle Ensemble** will present performances of **Façade** in Halifax, Leeds and East Midlands. *Façade* is described as ‘an entertainment for reciters and ensemble’ with music by William Walton accompanying poems by Edith Sitwell.

The ensemble, comprising flute, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, cello and percussion, is conducted by Christopher Swaffer. The poems are recited by Joanna Tope and Crawford Logan, two actors who are well-known for their theatre, TV and radio performances.

Christopher Swaffer said: “Façade is a favourite of Auricle's and we always relish returning to it. The title is something of a misnomer - the work is as intricate as a Swiss watch with many layers of imagery and meaning both in the text and the music. Of course there is great humour and wit and a dazzling virtuosity in the writing, but there are also quieter and more reflective poems that give rise to moments of great sadness and beauty.

"The joy of working with Crawford and Jo over the years, is that they are very much part of Auricle rather than guest artistes. This has proved invaluable in performing something as challenging as Façade, where the text and music are so inextricably linked.

"Façade encompasses a huge range of styles from popular song to dreamy pastorales and from tangos to naval hornpipes with a number of pastiches of classical composers thrown in for good measure too, such as Rossini, Ravel and Stravinsky. It is this mélange of quick-changing style that makes the work as exciting to play as it is to listen to."

"No performance is ever the same - the actors are firmly part of the chamber group and as such will adjust and react with the music as well as to the audience and the atmosphere."

Further Information for Editors

Music - William Walton, Text - Edith Sitwell

Auricle Ensemble:

Flute: Emma Roche,
Clarinet: Nicola Long,
Sax: Richard Ingham,
Trumpet: Alistair Douglas,
Violoncello: Emily Walker,
Percussion: Phil Hague
Reciters - Joanna Tope and Crawford Logan
Conductor - Chris Swaffer

Contact: Derek Warby at Derek Warby Artist Management:

+44 (0)1903 856831 / auricleensemble@derekwarby.co.uk / www.derekwarby.co.uk

www.auricleensemble.org.uk

Photographs: Press pack and hi-res images available on request. Sample:

<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/8588501/Auricle/Auricle%20Facade.jpg>

Biographies:

Joanna Tope studied for a degree in Drama at Manchester University and spent the next ten years fully employed in the Repertory Movement in Britain which included creating roles in plays by Alan Ayckbourn, Edward Bond and Henry Livings. She enjoyed a stint on Emmerdale Farm amongst her television and radio credits at that time. She married and came to live in Scotland and has since appeared frequently at the Citizen's Theatre, the Royal Lyceum and the Traverse in Edinburgh. Three years ago Joanna premiered a one-woman play, Promises Promises, by Douglas Maxwell which played in Scotland, London and then a year later at E59 St Theater in New York resulting in a Nomination for a New York Drama Desk Award in the Outstanding Solo Performance category. Her most recent theatre performance was at the Traverse for the Edinburgh Festival in another play by Douglas Maxwell, A Respectable Widow Takes to Vulgarity, which is set to go to New York in April. Radio work is a favourite and she has recorded many plays, Short Stories, Books at Bedtime, Books of the Week and several Audio Books. Joanna is delighted to be reprising Facade with the Auricle Ensemble and working with Crawford Logan again with whom she has appeared in several plays for Radio.

Crawford Logan has worked with Auricle a number of times, including narrating Copland's 'The City' live to film in Edinburgh and at the Glasgow Film Festival, and narrating to a reconstruction of the score to 'Glencoe'. Crawford has appeared 319 times in 'The Woman In Black' at the Fortune

Theatre in London's Covent Garden, seeing in both the 25th year of this famous play and its 10,000th performance. Crawford is well known as the voice of the suave eponymous detective, Paul Temple for BBC Radio 4. He also recorded both the voice of Sir Walter Scott and Sir Walter's dog for the new visitor facilities at Scott's home at Abbotsford near Galashiels. It is always the greatest pleasure to work alongside musicians, and as well as Auricle, Crawford has appeared with the Fidelio Trio, the Carducci Quartet, the Rose Consort of Viols, the Tallis Chamber Choir, Red Note Ensemble, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and a band called The Martians, among others, and has also performed works by the composer Sally Beamish. He has been a familiar voice on BBC radio for many years, as well as recording dozens of audiobooks and hundreds of voiceovers for radio and television. And at the same time he has been very fortunate to have had a real theatrical life all over the country, from Wick to Southampton.

Chris Swaffer is currently Artistic Director of the Auricle Ensemble and the Universities of Scotland Symphony Orchestra. He has guest conducted many ensembles, including the St. Petersburg Academic and Ukrainian State Symphony Orchestras and the Metropolitan Ensemble of London and recently made his debut with the Orchestra of Opera North conducting Copland's complete ballet score to Appalachian Spring. With Auricle he has directed several critically acclaimed projects including, Schoenberg's Pierrot Lunaire, a two-year Mini Mahler project and two European premieres of works by Copland, one of which, The City, was performed live to film at the Glasgow Film Festival.

Chris was educated at Chetham's School of Music and holds a Masters degree in composition and conducting from the University of Manchester. He has actively participated in many master-classes across the world and gained a place at the Bard Summer Music Festival, New York where he conducted Mahler's Sixth Symphony.

The **Auricle Ensemble** burst into being with intriguing programmes, virtuoso playing and an inclusive performance style. Since starting in 2007, the ensemble has gained an enviable reputation and invitations to perform widely. 2010 began Auricle's residency at St Bride's, Glasgow and its acclaimed two-year Mini Mahler project performing the reduced versions of Mahler's works arranged for Schoenberg's Private Music Society in Vienna.

Other projects include Walton's Façade, the European premiere of Copland's 'The City' performed to film and Maxwell Davies' music theatre works.

"...completely enraptured...utterly absorbing...truly magical sound...*****"

Broadway Baby (Mini Mahler)

“A delicate, technically impeccable and sensitive reading - an intoxicating performance. ****”

Glasgow Herald (Pierrot Lunaire)