



THE ENGLISH SEMINAR CHOIR

DIRECTOR: Michel Uhlmann

PIANIST: Olivier Wyrwas

LOVE BEAUTY HONOUR BETRAYAL ILLUSION DISGUISE Shakespeare in Music

RIEHEN Thu 9 June 19.30 - Landgasthof Riehen
MULHOUSE Sun 12 June 17.00 - Temple Saint Jean
BASEL Tue 14 June 19.30 - English Seminar, Nadelberg 6

Free Entrance – Collection

Works by: Henry Purcell, Charles Wood, Nils Lindberg, Michel Uhlmann (creation)



William Shakespeare

Born: 1564, Stratford-upon-Avon, England

Died: 1616, Stratford-upon-Avon, England

William Shakespeare IN STATISTICS

BORN AND DIED ON
APRIL 23RD

HAD 7 SIBLINGS
& 3 CHILDREN

LIVED UNTIL 52

INTRODUCED ALMOST
3,000 WORDS TO THE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE, AND
USED OVER 7,000 WORDS
ONLY ONCE IN HIS
PLAYS

HE WROTE CLOSE TO 1/10
OF THE MOST QUOTED
LINES EVER WRITTEN OR
SPOKEN IN ENGLISH, AND
IS THE 2ND MOST QUOTED
WRITER IN THE ENGLISH
LANGUAGE.



THERE ARE MORE
THAN 80
VARIATIONS
RECORDED FOR THE
SPELLING OF HIS
NAME

HIS PLAYS ARE MADE
UP OF A TOTAL OF
884,429 WORDS

HE WROTE 37 PLAYS AND
154 WORKS THAT WE
KNOW OF.

Love, Beauty, Honour, Betrayal, Illusion, Disguise *Shakespeare in Music*

As the world is commemorating the life and works of William Shakespeare, who died 400 years ago, what could be more rewarding for an English Seminar Choir than to join in the celebrations? Indeed texts of the great poet and playwright have found their way into exquisite choral music.

This programme takes the audience from Henry Purcell (1659-1695) to the works of contemporary composers like Nils Lindberg (1933 -). Last but not least, the programme features a premiere as the choir director, Michel Uhlmann, has composed a piece in which no less a personage than Macbeth himself will take the lead.

Michel and the English Seminar Choir portray Shakespeare's astonishing range from love sonnets celebrating beauty and innocence, through the world of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with its forest of fairies, dreams and illusion, to the betrayal, witchcraft and bloodthirsty deeds of "the Scottish Play"*.

* Shakespeare's play Macbeth is said to be cursed. As a result actors avoid saying its name when in the theatre by using the euphemism "the Scottish Play" - since the play is set in Scotland!

Programme

Henry Purcell
1659 – 1695

If Music be the food of love
Verses By Colonel Henry Heveningham,
Loosely based on Twelfth Night
Act 1, scene 1: Entry of a love-sick Duke Orsino

Richard John Samuel
Stevens
1757- 1837

Ye spotted snakes
A Midsummer Night's Dream
Act 2, scene 3: Titania, Queen of the Fairies, is serenaded to sleep by her Coterie of fairies

John Christopher Smith
1712 – 1795

Overture to the Tempest

Charles Wood
1866 - 1926

Full Fathom five
The Tempest
Act 1, scene 2: the spirit Ariel lures the shipwrecked Ferdinand to her master, the sorcerer Prospero with this song

Nils Lindberg
* 1933

Shall I compare Thee to a Summer's Day
Sonnet 18

Olivier Wyrwas *Prelude improvisation to
Michel Uhlmann's "To-morrow"*

Michel Uhlmann *To-morrow*
* 1952 Macbeth
Act 5, scene 5: speech by Macbeth on
hearing of the death of his wife

Composed for the English Seminar Choir Basel. World premiere!

Felix Mendelssohn- *Notturmo of the incidental music to*
Bartholdy 1809 - 1847 « *A Midsummer Nights Dream* »
Moritz Moszkowski Op.61 Nr 7 in the piano arrangement of
1854 - 1925 Moszkowski

Matthew Locke *Incidental music to Macbeth in the 3*
c 1621/3 - 1677 *voice arrangement of Samuel Wesley*
Samuel Wesley Macbeth
1766 – 1837 Act 3, Scene 4: Three witches meet on
the heath with their goddess Hecate to
plan and rejoice in the horrors to come.
Act 4, Scene 1: Hecate meets the witches
in a cave and helps them to prepare an
evil charm in their bubbling cauldron.

« The music in Macbeth as it is now performed on the Stage.
Newly arranged in three parts and a Piano-Forte accompaniment
by Samuel Wesley. » published 1816 in London.



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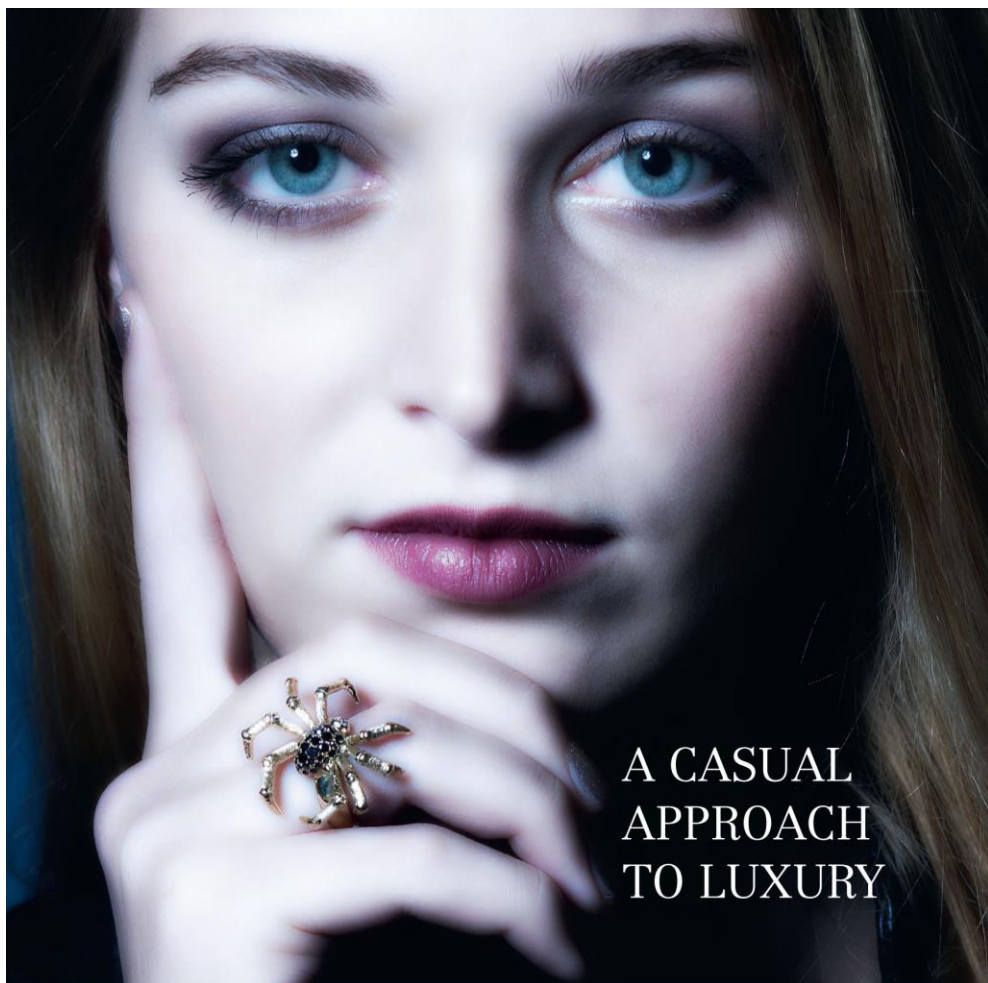
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“Tomorrow” by Michel Uhlmann

Amanda Zurbrügg and Simon Waldner, two of the students in the choir who attend the English Seminar, interviewed choir director, Michel Uhlmann, about his creation “Tomorrow”.

“Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more: It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.”

The piece *Tomorrow* was composed by the choir’s musical director Michel Uhlmann in honour of the 400th anniversary of William Shakespeare’s death. Based on the tragedy *Macbeth*, a story full of witchcraft, intrigues and murder (first performed at the Globe Theatre in April 1611), Michel wrote this song for the English Seminar Choir. In light of the premiere, Michel agreed to answer some questions about his experience and motivation behind composing *Tomorrow*, which we would like to share with you.

As an improvisation exercise, Michel asked the choir to recite their favourite passages from Shakespeare. Of the many speeches given, it was the passage *Tomorrow and Tomorrow* from *Macbeth* that spoke to him most and that inspired him to compose something about the topic himself, bearing the characters and abilities of the choir members in mind. In connection with Shakespeare’s anniversary, Michel reflected on the time of Elizabethan England, which he describes as a “time for going into darkness and melancholy to look deeper”. The drama was a device to reveal what was not possible to be said publicly by putting the words into the mouths of actors.

Shakespeare’s tragedy *Macbeth* revolves around the namesake of the play; a brave Scottish general incidentally called Macbeth. A trio of witches prophesy his ascension as King of Scotland. After further persuasion by his wife, he ends up killing King Duncan and taking the Scottish throne for himself. Soon afterwards he is marred with guilt and paranoia, which eventually leads to a tyrannical rule as he is forced to repeatedly kill in order to secure his kingdom and himself. But he is not

able to subdue all opposition and consequently a bloody civil war erupts to which both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth fall victim.

The piece starts with Macbeth hearing a cry of Lady Macbeth's ladies in waiting. Upon the announcement of Lady Macbeth's death, Macbeth reflects on the transience of life and experiences a moment of clarity: "I am no longer foolish – I look to tomorrow". Living in the past would be foolish, but Macbeth is looking forward to finding Lady Macbeth again after death. This emerging clarity is brought to Macbeth by means of the dynamic involvement of the choir alluding to a Greek 'anti-choir'.

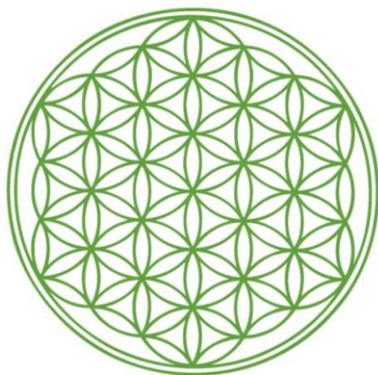
Besides Macbeth and the choir, the shadow and the three witches provide further contrast. As "*life is but a walking shadow*" the shadow unconsciously intermingles with the very self of human nature. He ejects what Macbeth is not permitted to say – he therefore only emphasises the nouns; true substance. By accepting his shadow, Macbeth gains clarity about who he has become and is ennobled before death.

The three witches on the side "have no access to music" rather they are also voicing what nobody else dares to say. Corruption and ridicule is their tool to obtain the power of vocalising the unsaid – the taboo. Moreover, the choir also proclaims certain words of the text to give them a certain emphasis in contrast to the sung words constituting their finality.

These elements serve to intensify the words of *Tomorrow* be it by means of ejection, opposition or mockery. Their validation is rooted in the dynamics deployed, which enhance the narrative created to allude to an additional aural perception of the words of the play.

We would like to thank Michel for taking the time to answer our questions, and Rosie Hammond-Muse and Robert Grantham for their help throughout the process of this interview. Michel would like to thank his friend Danilo Clamer for his inspiration and his ongoing support.

Enjoy the concert!



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Michel Uhlmann

Michel Uhlmann began his musical formation in his hometown Strasbourg. He studied organ and musicology, followed by studies in choir conducting with Hans-Martin Linde at the Basel conservatory and orchestra conducting with Francis Travis, then principal conductor of the Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana. He attended numerous master classes, amongst others with Eric Ericson and Franco Ferrara.



While still studying he was put in charge of the vocal training courses at the music school in Basel, and after his final degree he was appointed director of the vocal ensemble of the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, both of which he pursues until today.

He founded the vocal ensemble *piacere vocale*, with which he gave concerts at renowned festivals both at home and abroad, amongst others at the Festival de St. Céré and the Festival de Caunes. The ensemble won the first prize at the national choir competition at Charmey as well as the first prize at the international choir competition at Montreux.

Besides conducting work, Uhlmann has been working as musicologist at the Ensemble Baroque de Limoges for ten years and manages the local research department as assistant of Christophe Coin. In this context he publishes previously unreleased scores and is engaged in the reconstruction of lost musical instruments. He also holds symposia on voice, articulation and musical semiotics.

Currently, in addition to the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, Michel directs the English Seminar Choir, which has evolved into one of the most ambitious amateur ensembles in Basel since he became Musical Director in 2009.

In his widespread occupation as musician and musicologist Michel has worked with such outstanding musicians as Oliver Messiaen, Anthony Rooley, Edward Tarr and Bruce Dickey.

Olivier Wyrwas

Born in Moselle in 1991, Olivier Wyrwas began his musical studies at the Metz Music Conservatory. With Norbert Pétry he discovered early music and his path took a decisive turn when he came in contact with the renaissance organ at the Saint Etienne Cathedral in Metz. He further perfected his skills at the Schola Cantorum in Basel (Switzerland), where he studied organ, harpsichord, basso continuo and improvisation. Wolfgang Zerer, Lorenzo Ghielmi, Jörg-Andreas Bötticher, Andrea Marcon, Jesper Christensen and Dirck Börner are amongst those who have marked his studies, which resulted in two masters degrees. In addition to recitals, some of which have been recorded by France Musique radio station, he frequently plays chamber music and has participated in several ensembles, for instance the Chapelle Rhénane. Today settled in Alsace, Olivier Wyrwas is currently titular of the Saint Jean and Saint Etienne organs in Mulhouse.



The English Seminar Choir

The English Seminar Choir was founded in 1989 by Allan Turner, a former lecturer at Basel University, in order to provide an opportunity for students to practice English through song. With his profound knowledge of English choral repertoire and his dedication to his "hobby", the choir grew and thrived to become an integral part of the University and of Basel cultural life.

The choir is a non-profit making organisation, funded by members' dues, concert donations and sponsors contributions. Support in the form of concert attendance and donations, and assistance in the form of arts grants and sponsorship is greatly appreciated.

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Et le Samedi (Samstag) de 9h à 17h

If music be the food of love, play on,
Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die.
That strain again! It had a dying fall;
O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet
sound
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odour! Enough, no
more;
'Tis not so sweet now as it was before.
Twelfth Night, Act 1, Scene 1
Shakespeare

If music be the food of love,
sing on, till I am fill'd with joy
for then my listening soul you move
with pleasures that can never cloy,
your eyes, your mien, your tongue
declare
that you are music ev'rywhere
Colonel Henry Hevingham, 1692
Set to music by Henry Purcell

**Soprano**

Carine Dessemontet
Kasia Frycz
Simone Hiltcher
Verena Schiffmann
Anna Stolz
Amanda Zurbrügg

Alto

Karin Ahlstrand
Rosemary Hammond
Éva Kónya
Kristin Kranenberg
Catherine Lezon
Marisa Pellicer
Alison Roy
Aniela Schacher
Marianne Schweizer
Natalia Varga

Tenor

Harry Benjamin
Robert Grantham
Cristian Pretti
Herbert Wäckerlin
Simon Waldner

Bass

David Hughes
Richard Lewis
Christoph Moss
Roland Österle
Evgeniy Ozonov



Wherefore was that cry?
 The queen, my lord, is dead.
 She should have died hereafter:
 There would have been a time
 for such a word.
 — To-morrow, and to-morrow,
 and **to-morrow**,
 Creeps in this petty pace from
 day to day,
 To the last syllable of recorded time;
 And all our yesterdays have
 lighted fools
 The way to dusty death. Out, out,
 brief candle!
 Life's but a walking shadow, a
 poor player
 That struts and frets his hour upon
 the stage
 And then is heard no more: it is a tale
 Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
 Signifying nothing.
Macbeth, Act 5, Scene 5



Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of
May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course,
untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his
shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st;
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.
Sonnet 18

Full fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes;
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
Ding-dong.
Hark! now I hear them — Ding-dong, bell.
The Tempest, Act 1, Scene 1.

Ye spotted snakes, with double tongue,
Thorny hedge-hogs, be not seen;
Newts and blind-worms do no wrong;
Come not near our Fairy Queen.
Philomel with melody
Sing in your sweet lullaby;
Lulla, lulla, lullaby; lulla, lulla, lullaby;
Never harm, nor spell, nor charm
Come our lovely Lady nigh:
So good night, with lullaby
*A Midsummer Night's Dream, Act 2,
Scene 3.*

A short synopsis of Shakespeare's Macbeth.

The play opens as three witches plan a meeting with the Scottish nobleman Macbeth, who at that moment is fighting in a great battle. When the battle is over, Macbeth and his friend Banquo come across the witches who offer them three predictions: that Macbeth will become Thane of Cawdor and King of Scotland, and that Banquo's descendants will become kings.

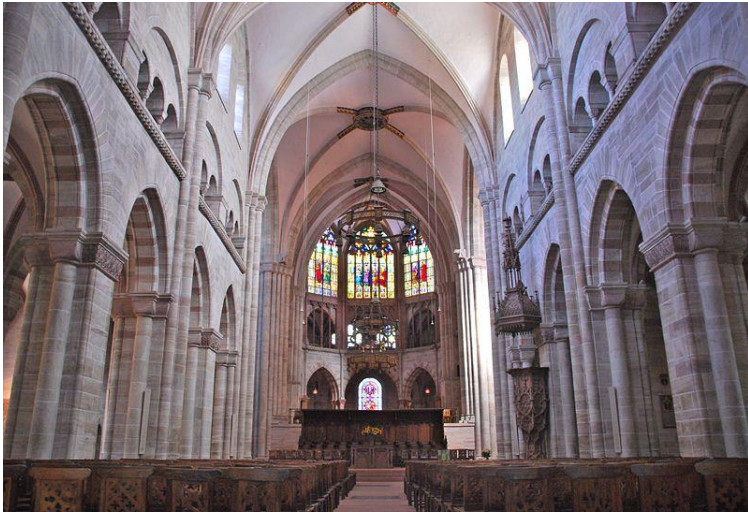
Banquo laughs at the prophecies but Macbeth is excited, especially as soon after their meeting with the witches Macbeth is made Thane of Cawdor by King Duncan, in return for his bravery in battle. He writes to his wife, Lady Macbeth, who is as excited as he. A messenger tells Lady Macbeth that King Duncan is on his way to the castle and she invokes evil spirits to help her slay him. Macbeth is persuaded to kill Duncan by his wife and stabs him to death. No-one is quite sure who committed the murder and no-one feels safe, but Macbeth is crowned king.

Now that Macbeth is king he knows the second prediction from the witches has come true, but he starts to fear the third prediction (that Banquo's descendants will also be kings). Macbeth therefore decides to kill Banquo and his son, but the plan goes wrong – Banquo is killed but the son escapes. Macbeth then thinks he is going mad because he sees Banquo's ghost and receives more predictions from the witches. He starts to become ruthless and kills the family of Macduff, an important lord. Macbeth still thinks he is safe but one by one the witches' prophecies come true. Lady Macbeth cannot stop thinking about Duncan, and she becomes deranged and dies. A large army marches on Macbeth's castle and Macbeth is killed by Macduff.

(BBC GCSE bitesize)

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