

Coventry Cathedral launches £1 million Diamond Jubilee Organ Appeal at a concert of remembrance with Orchestra of the Swan, Michael Collins and Rachel Mahon



Saturday 11 June 2022, 19:30

Coventry Cathedral

Arvo Pärt *Cantus in Memoriam Benjamin Britten*

Vaughan Williams *Five Variants of Dives & Lazarus*

Mozart *Serenade No 6 for Orchestra in D major K. 239, 'Serenata Notturna'*

Derek Nisbet *Symphony of Remembering**

Mahler *Adagietto* from Symphony No 5

Poulenc *Concerto for Organ, Strings and Timpani*

Orchestra of the Swan

Michael Collins conductor

Rachel Mahon organ

***Amy Kakoura** narrator

This Jubilee concert on Saturday 11 June, will be raising money for the Coventry Cathedral Diamond Jubilee Organ Appeal, featuring Canadian organist **Rachel Mahon** and the **Orchestra of the Swan**, conducted by **Michael Collins**.

Coventry Cathedral is a unique synthesis of old and new, born of wartime suffering and forged in the spirit of post-war optimism, famous for its history and iconic architecture. Poulenc's *Concerto for Organ, Strings and Timpani* will showcase the magnificent organ alongside a programme of Mahler, Vaughan Williams and Mozart. Orchestra of the Swan will also perform Derek Nisbet's *Symphony of Remembering* created especially for the cathedral and featuring testimonies of people who have suffered most recent losses.

The Harrison and Harrison pipe organ was specially commissioned for the new Cathedral in 1962 and funded by Healey Willan, a British-Canadian organist and composer who delivered fundraising concerts across Canada to raise money to repair British organs destroyed in World War II. As a grateful benefactor of these funds, Coventry Cathedral set a giant bronze Maple Leaf in the floor of the west end of the cathedral in recognition of the generosity of Willan and the Canadian people. As a further testament to the relationship between the UK and Canada, the ceiling was made from Canadian cedar wood, donated by Canada. This is particularly pertinent in a year that will see the staging of the

Commonwealth Games in Birmingham this summer; even more so as Canada is one of only six countries to have participated in every Commonwealth Games since 1930.

This concert has a dual purpose both as a moment of contemplation and an appeal for regeneration.

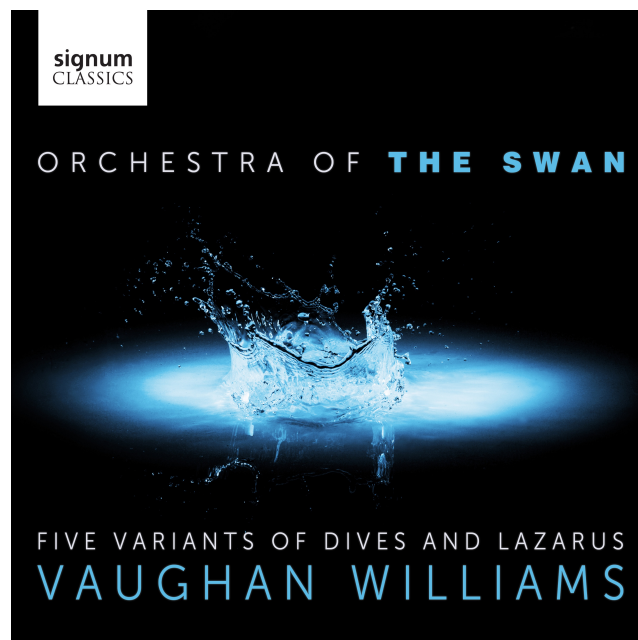


Director of Music at the Cathedral **Rachel Mahon**, was surprised to discover the links between the cathedral and her homeland when she took up the post. She commented, "It's a stunning instrument. It's lovely to play as well. I think most organists are in agreement that it is one of the top organs in the UK - they got it completely perfect for the building. The way the organ sounds, it completely fills the space and everything blends."

After 60 years of daily use and wear, the organ is now in need of restoration and repairs. The entire instrument with its nearly 5000 pipes, needs to be individually cleaned and put back together, as well as replacing broken pipes and outdated electrics. The Diamond Jubilee Organ Appeal Fund aims to raise £1 million for the total cost of the repairs.

The cathedral saw 46,400 visitors in 2019, and continues to remain a favourite amongst those who visit, attracting thousands every year. And with the restoration of one of the most treasured organs in Britain, the organ will be there to see many more thousands of visitors for years to come.

Orchestra of the Swan released a single of Vaughan Williams' *Dives and Lazarus*, based on a tradition English folk tune on the Signum Classics Label in February 2022 and the piece was included in their digital concert *Labyrinths*, free to view on YouTube (click the album cover below):



The concert is made possible by the generous support of Coventry University.

Orchestra of the Swan



Formed in 1995, Orchestra of the Swan (The Swan) is a British chamber orchestra which, under the artistic direction of David Le Page, is passionate about audience inclusivity and blurring the lines between genres, through its adventurous and accessible programming.

The Swan presents over 45 concerts a year – both live and digital and has a catalogue of over 20 recordings. The orchestra is passionate about new music and has premiered more than 70 new works by composers including Joe

Cutler, Tansy Davies, Joe Duddell, Alexander Goehr, Roxanna Panufnik, Joseph Phibbs, Dobrinka Tabakova, Errollyn Wallen, Huw Watkins, John Woolrich and many others.

Their latest mixtape album *Labyrinths* was released in November 2021 and reinterprets music by Syd Barrett, Britten, Trish Clowes, Joy Division, Brian Eno, Maxwell Davies, Nico Muhly, Piazzolla, Purcell, Max Richter & Yann Tiersen.

The Swan has been enormously successful in making a positive and effective contribution to the communities at the heart of its 'immersive residencies' in Herefordshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Birmingham with an ambitious programme of work in care homes, schools and rural areas growing year by year. Based at the Stratford Play House, in Stratford-upon-Avon, the Swan is proof that an orchestra really can be an indispensable and relevant part of the community with its aim to entertain, educate and engage in a way that truly makes it a living orchestra.

In Stratford and Southam, the Swan's new monthly dementia friendly café Café Muse, generously funded by the Stratford Town Trust and Warwickshire County Council, is now underway; proof that an orchestra really can be an indispensable and relevant part of the community.

orchestraoftheswan.org

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