

Bach & Sonnets



Ronnie Scott's Upstairs 3rd October 2019



SHAKE-SPEARES

SONNETS.

Neuer before Imprinted.

AT LONDON

By *G. Eld* for *T. T.* and are
to be solde by *John Wright*, dwelling
at *Christ Church gate.*

1609.

Shakespeare's Sonnets

Sonnets had been fashionable for a while before Shakespeare wrote any himself.

The fashion originally came from Italy: The traditional Italian sonnet always was dominated by the tension of a praise of the beauty of the lady adored by the writer and of a lament about her not yielding to the writer's advances.

Shakespeare's sonnets, however, tend to expand this formula and put it upside down: "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun" and the whole of Sonnet no. 130 reads like a parody of the beauty ideal of the time and it ends in a couplet that confirms that the writer, while he acknowledges that his lady does not fit the beauty ideals of his time, is still the one he prefers over all others.

Like so many other things that we like to believe to be inventions by Shakespeare, this un-Italian and very English sarcasm already was in use when he came onto the scene. There is no need to make Shakespeare the inventor of novel, intriguing approaches, though: He was a true master in adopting and perfecting them.

Shakespeare followed the form that was "en vogue" in late 16th Century London: 3 x 4 lines (quartets), followed by 2 lines that usually form a conclusion or surprising turn compared to the 12 lines before. While the first 12 lines are cross-rhymes, the sonnets end with a rhyming couplet. Due to a shift in pronunciation, these are not always full rhymes in modern English.

Thus, in Sonnet no. 112, which is so popular at weddings, the first 12 lines praise persistence and strength of "true love", but the couplet subverts it all, exclaiming that if all that praise turns out to be misplaced, well, then there is no love in the world.

The self-important, narcissistic way that Oliver uses in our show to present his character's attitudes to love gives these lines exactly that kind of dark power that extinguishes all light.



Wolfgang Mittelmaier, director

Wolfgang studied Comparative Literature, Drama, and Dance at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich, Germany, where he graduated with an MA, at St. Patrick's College Maynooth in Ireland and at the Samuel Beckett Institute for Theatre and Drama Studies at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland.

He produced and directed the one-women shows "Shakespeare's Women" and "Shakespeare's Women: When I love thee not" for Beyond Productions at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

In 2018, he premiered a new show called "Bach & Sonnets" at Ronnie Scott's Upstairs, which he recast for 2019.

Wolfgang also has a long career as a translator and writer. He has published books on technology topics and habit formation and has written articles for the Financial Times. After studying Sports and Remedial Massage with Mel Cash at the London School of Sports Massage, he founded the mittelmaier clinic in 2002.

Germans have a long tradition of being obsessed with Shakespeare, and Wolfgang certainly is no exception: His love for Shakespeare's plays started at an early age, a passion he expanded on at school and university and he has a strong interest in critical editions and performance history.

He studied Shakespeare with Ina Schabert in Munich and used the Shakespeare Research Library at the English Department of Munich University both of which broadened and deepened his knowledge of the bard and his social, literary and historical context by an order of magnitude. The British Library continues to be one of his favourite haunts in London, getting inspiration from first editions of Shakespeare's plays, printed in his lifetime.

Wolfgang has always had a passion for dance (he studied dance history and theory with Claudia Jeschke in Munich). He is particularly happy to have been invited to open the conference "Shakespeare and Dance" by the German Shakespeare Society in April 2020 with the 30-minute solo dance theatre piece "Ophelia. No more but so.", which he created with Greek choreographer Athina Vahla and Czech dancer Eliška Bouzková.



Sophie Haynes, cellist

Sophie Haynes' passion for the cello has been her constant companion throughout her life. In fact, her early years read like a list of prizes and scholarships.

She studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and graduated there in 2017 with a Master of Performance. However, it was during her undergraduate studies that she discovered her love for the baroque cello. Ever since then she has made Historically Informed Performance part of her repertoire.

Sophie plays on a cello by an unknown maker from Mittenwald, Germany made in the mid-eighteenth century and a modern replica of a high baroque bow skilfully made by Tim Richards in 2016.

Classical musicians commonly are not used to being part of a theatre production. While Sophie has no speaking part in *Bach & Sonnets*, her interaction with Oliver is essential in creating the narrative arc from his revisitation of memories from a previously joyful union to an intense disagreement and finally irreversible rejection.

For the director of "*Bach & Sonnets*", it was essential to find a cellist who remains unfazed by a theatrical setting and who is willing and able to integrate herself into the subtle story-telling that our arrangement of these 12 sonnets aims to produce.

It was at John Landor's innovative "Music in Motion" project that Wolfgang spotted Sophie as part of a well-rehearsed ensemble of expressive musicians. Arguably, "Music in Motion" is a bigger challenge for a classical musician than "*Bach & Sonnets*": John divides the voices of the orchestra into groups that move through the performance space like military formations in a battle, which brings music to life in a novel and intriguing way.

A quick audition confirmed that Sophie was perfect for the part of the disenchanted cellist: Her warm and confident rendition of the cello suite contrasts perfectly with her air of cold sophistication towards the narcissistic and overbearing sonneteer as presented by Oliver Hayes.



Oliver Hayes, actor

Oliver Hayes is an actor with a great passion for Shakespeare and a natural penchant for romantic roles. We wanted to find an actor who could transform the rich poetry of the sonnets into a natural conversation, avoiding the pathos that they are often presented with.

His broad expressive range makes it easy for him to cover the vast emotional journey represented by our selection of the sonnets: From being deeply in love, exalted, confident, doubting, angry and jilted to an ending in complete melancholy.

Born in Stratford-upon-Avon, he grew up in a seemingly universal atmosphere of Shakespeare-enthusiasm from a very young age. During his time at Warwick University, he engaged with the sonnets critically and was able to delve deeply into the emotional flow that can be seen to develop throughout the sequence.

While Oliver has previously encountered Shakespeare in an academic setting, he has also done so in a theatrical one, even before being signed on for "Bach & Sonnets". Already quite early in his career, he was given the chance to prove his substantial talent in a production at the prestigious Royal Shakespeare Company.

At the same company, he also had the chance to attend workshops to expand his abilities even more and even found himself in conversation with none other than Sir Ian McKellen, one of the greatest Shakespearean actors there is, on a few occasions.

Most recently, Oliver could be seen in the leading part of Sherlock Holmes in the theatrical spoof adaptation of "The Hounds of Baskervilles", which was originally performed in The Drayton Arms Theatre before going on a tour all around the UK.

For sonnet no. 116 in "Bach & Sonnets", he received one-to-one coaching in Original Pronunciation by Professor David Crystal, the prime authority in that field.

Sonnet no. 128

How oft, when thou, my music, music play'st,
Upon that blessed wood whose motion sounds
With thy sweet fingers, when thou gently sway'st
The wiry concord that mine ear confounds,

Do I envy those jacks that nimble leap
To kiss the tender inward of thy hand,
Whilst my poor lips, which should that harvest reap,
At the wood's boldness by thee blushing stand.

To be so tickled, they would change their state
And situation with those dancing chips,
O'er whom thy fingers walk with gentle gait,
Making dead wood more bless'd than living lips.

Since saucy jacks so happy are in this,
Give them thy fingers, me thy lips to kiss.

Sonnet no. 145

Those lips that love's own hand did make
Breathed forth the sound that said: 'I hate',
To me, that languished for her sake;
But when she saw my woeful state,

Straight in her heart did mercy come,
Chiding that tongue that ever sweet
Was us'd in giving gentle doom;
And taught it thus anew to greet:

'I hate' she altered with an end
That followed it as gentle day
Doth follow night, who like a fiend
From heaven to hell is flown away.

'I hate' from 'hate' away she threw,
And saved my life, saying 'not you'.

Sonnet no. 78

So oft have I invoked thee for my Muse,
And found such fair assistance in my verse
As every alien pen hath got my use
And under thee their poesy disperse.

Thine eyes, that taught the dumb on high to sing
And heavy ignorance aloft to fly,
Have added feathers to the learned's wing
And given grace a double majesty.

Yet be most proud of that which I compile,
Whose influence is thine, and born of thee:
In others' works thou dost but mend the style,
And arts with thy sweet graces graced be;

But thou art all my art, and dost advance
As high as learning, my rude ignorance.

Romeo and Juliet

R: If I profane with my unworhiest hand
This holy shrine, the gentle sin is this:
My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

J: Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,
Which mannerly devotion shows in this;
For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,
And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.

R: Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?

J: Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.

R: O, then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do;

They pray — grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.

J: Saints do not move, though grant for prayers' sake.

R: Then move not, while my prayer's effect I take.

Sonnet no. 18

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 no. 116 (Original Pronunciation)

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:

O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark,
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wand'ring bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.

Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.

If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

Sonnet no. 55

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme;
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone, besmear'd with sluttish time.

When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword, nor war's quick fire shall burn
The living record of your memory.

'Gainst death, and all oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom.

So, till the judgment that yourself arise,
You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

Sonnet no. 130

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red, than her lips red:
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.

I have seen roses damasked, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.

I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound:
I grant I never saw a goddess go,
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground:

And yet by heaven, I think my love as rare,
As any she belied with false compare.

Sonnet no. 8

Music to hear, why hear'st thou music sadly?
Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy:
Why lov'st thou that which thou receiv'st not gladly,
Or else receiv'st with pleasure thine annoy?

If the true concord of well-tuned sounds,
By unions married, do offend thine ear,
They do but sweetly chide thee, who confounds
In singleness the parts that thou shouldst bear.

Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,
Strikes each in each by mutual ordering;
Resembling sire and child and happy mother,
Who, all in one, one pleasing note do sing:

Whose speechless song being many, seeming one,
Sings this to thee: 'Thou single wilt prove none.'

Sonnet no. 129

The expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action: and till action, lust
Is perjured, murderous, bloody, full of blame,
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust;

Enjoyed no sooner but despised straight;
Past reason hunted; and no sooner had,
Past reason hated, as a swallowed bait,
On purpose laid to make the taker mad.

Mad in pursuit and in possession so;
Had, having, and in quest to have extreme;
A bliss in proof, and proved, a very woe;
Before, a joy proposed; behind a dream.

All this the world well knows; yet none knows well
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

Sonnet no. 149

Canst thou, O cruel! say I love thee not,
When I against myself with thee partake?
Do I not think on thee, when I forgot
Am of my self, all tyrant, for thy sake?

Who hateth thee that I do call my friend,
On whom frown'st thou that I do fawn upon,
Nay, if thou lour'st on me, do I not spend
Revenge upon myself with present moan?

What merit do I in my self respect,
That is so proud thy service to despise,
When all my best doth worship thy defect,
Commanded by the motion of thine eyes?

But, love, hate on, for now I know thy mind:
Those that can see thou lov'st, and I am blind.

Sonnet no. 87

Farewell, thou art too dear for my possessing,
And like enough thou know'st thy estimate,
The charter of thy worth gives thee releasing;
My bonds in thee are all determinate.

For how do I hold thee but by thy granting?
And for that riches where is my deserving?
The cause of this fair gift in me is wanting,
And so my patent back again is swerving.

Thyself thou gav'st, thy own worth then not knowing,
Or me, to whom thou gav'st it, else mistaking;
So thy great gift, upon misprision growing,
Comes home again, on better judgment making.

Thus have I had thee, as a dream doth flatter,
In sleep a king, but waking no such matter.



Janet Rodney's costume for the 2018
production of "Bach & Sonnets"

Janet Rodney, costume designer

Janet is first and foremost a fashion designer, which is why we were so keen to work with her. While she has an in-depth awareness and detailed knowledge of costume history, she goes far beyond traditional theatrical costume design by creating clothes that are on the forefront of today's fashion.

It does not come as a surprise that last year's costume was bought by one of her clients for her own use.

Janet uses the most exclusive materials from leading suppliers in the United Kingdom and designs each costume not only to fit the show and help create the character, but also to fit the individual performer.

The whole manufacturing process happens in Janet's factory in a former mill outside Nottingham. Every part of the process is done by hand and with meticulous quality control which is usually reserved for Haute Couture.

Sophie's dress, designed in close co-operation with Wolfgang, uses the "Firefly" tone of the handwoven Silk Dupion range by James Hare, a traditional fabric supplier that first started trading in 1865.

Oliver's outfit is almost entirely Janet's brain child, inspired by her attendance of the audition and then constant revision of the first draft based on feedback from our rehearsals and also his costume's interplay with the design of Sophie's dress. Again all fabrics were sourced from James Hare.

With her boutique factory, Janet serves some of the most exclusive brands in the UK, enabling them to offer products that can carry the label "Made in England" and provide a level of quality that can be matched but not exceeded.

Janet's drive is best described as a combination of a relentless pursuit of perfection and an inexhaustible fountain of creativity, which is a natural fit for what we stand for as a theatre company.

Professor David Crystal

OP Coach

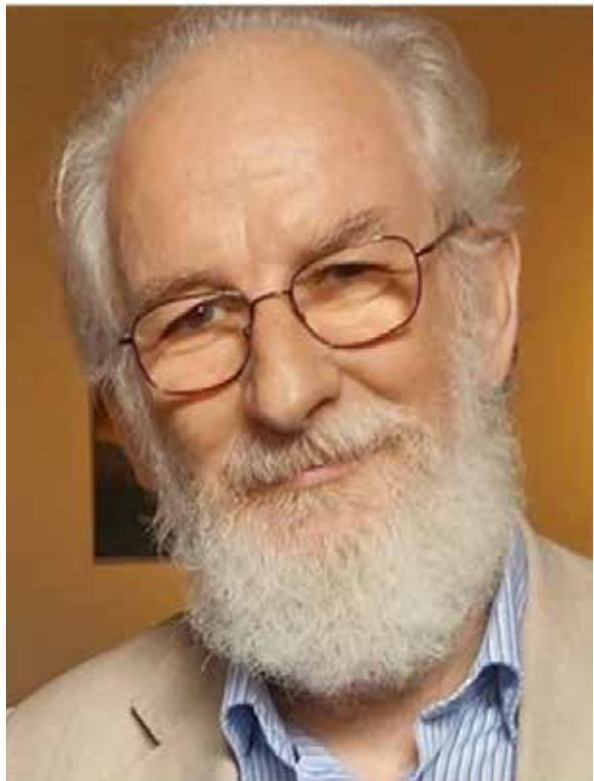
Professor David Crystal is one of the foremost British linguists of our time. He has published over a hundred books about the English language and linguistics and has been a lecturer at Reading University and Bangor University. He was awarded the OBE in 1995 for his services to the English language and became a Fellow of the British Academy in 2000.

He is not only a well-known figure in the linguistic world, however, but also in the world of Shakespeare research and performance. Concerning himself with the Original Pronunciation (OP) of Shakespeare's works, he has co-operated with the Globe Theatre to create productions that are performed true to the nature of how they would have sounded during the playwright's time.

In 2002, his language companion "Shakespeare's Words" was released and 2005 saw the publication of his book "Pronouncing Shakespeare", which has been updated for its 2nd edition this year.

David Crystal kindly agreed to coach Oliver Hayes to deliver the famous sonnet no. 116 in original pronunciation.

You can find out more about his work on www.shakespearewords.com.



Ophelia. No more but so.

This is our next project, a 30 minute dance theatre production for a female dancer (Eliška Bouzková) tracing the emotional development of Ophelia in Shakespeare's "Hamlet".

Language is the core of Shakespeare's work. His insight into the internal world of his characters becomes three-dimensional life due to his precise and skilful choice in the dialogue ascribed to them.

In this production, the physical expression, the performance stems from the written source, the text. The physicality lends the words emotional depth and provides a refreshing context to a familiar tale. It also is much more, though:

Choreographer Athina Vahla creates a third language to emerge from the synergy of the two, text and movement, a language that ideally speaks to us in a subliminal way, softening the barriers between audience, performer, and character.

The show will premiere in 2020 and has been invited to open the annual DSG conference in Germany on "Shakespeare and Dance" in Bochum.



This fundraiser benefits our three favourite musical charities:

Ronnie Scott's Charitable Foundation

The Ronnie Scott's Charitable Foundation is a non-profit organisation dedicated to the support of jazz education programmes both in the UK and overseas. The charity aims to ensure that music education is accessible to every child and young person, especially those who are under-privileged, by raising and distributing funds and gifting musical instruments to organisations that create or develop youth jazz and music programmes.



Play for Progress

Play for Progress is a London-based charity that delivers therapeutic and educational music programmes for young people impacted by conflict, to help them engage with, learn through, and explore their capabilities in music.



Music Fund

Music Fund is a humanitarian project that supports musicians and music schools in conflict areas and developing countries. Music Fund collects instruments, repairs them and gives them a second life in 16 projects in Africa, the Middle East and Central America.

Music Fund also trains instrument repairers and offers the exchange of teaching skills.



Why Bach and Shakespeare?

Naturally, I would say: Why not? I love Bach. I could listen to him all day long for the rest of my life. Something similar happens with Shakespeare's sonnets, once you hear or read them a few times.

Shakespeare's sonnets yield an infinite variety of interpretations and therefore can adjust to the changes in your life. They also are varied enough in themselves that different ones will suggest themselves to you at different times of your romantic life.

The sequence here is curated to go from naive and fairly happy in an emotional curve via a precarious vanity to an almost hateful celebration of obsessive lustfulness to rejection, and utter dejection.

The justification for putting Bach's wonderful cello music (note how we changed the sequence of the movements to suit the mood of the poems) together with Shakespeare's cleverly subversive love poetry is quite simple – I wanted to and I felt it would be fun.



Both poetry and classical music can often be presented in much too tepid and lifeless a scenario. We want to jazz them up and make them exciting and novel.

Having playful ushers who welcome you personally to the show, getting a leading linguist to train the actor to present one of the sonnets in original pronunciation, designing costumes for both performers in a mix of Tudor and high fashion styles - it all is done in the spirit of what Shakespeare was so good at:

Create a pleasant party atmosphere, where everybody can enjoy themselves, while also adding a healthy sprinkling of depth to the experience.

The Company

Mittelmaier Entertainment produces innovative theatre in spaces that range from traditional to urban contemporary.

Classic texts are looked at in depth in the context of their times, and given a modern interpretation and a fresh and dynamic approach.

Costume design reflects and supports this style by integrating historical elements into clothing that reflects today's fashions.

The focus of the company is to create theatrical experiences that are relevant and thrilling to present day audiences. We also aim to integrate and highlight classical music in a way that creates curiosity in those who might not choose to listen to such pieces.

The company has strong charitable connections and is proud to support organisations that bring musical instruments and education to those who would otherwise have little access to them.

The People

Sophie Haynes - Cello
Oliver Hayes - Sonnets

Janet Rodney - Costumes

Fatine Boumaaz - French Vocalist

Rose Reade - Social Media & PR
Veruschka Haas - Programme

Eliška Bouzková - Assistant

Wolfgang Mittelmaier - Director
Programme, IT, Production, Concept, Research

List of sponsors

This charity fundraiser could not have taken place without the generous donations of the following friends and patrons:

Andrew Short, Anonymous, Brigitte Mittelmaier, Cynthia Maharaj, Hartwig Mittelmaier, Jenny Brophy, Martin Guan, Niri Shan, Sharad Sagar.

Thank you to Jerwood Space for providing highly professional rehearsal space and a friendly and supportive atmosphere.

Thanks also to the following wonderful people for their help:

Angelina Mittelmaier, Bruce Thomas, Christian Conteh, Dina Pavic, Fabienne Pasquion, Fatine Boumaaz, John Landor, Levi De Sousa, Pavlina Bracken, Peter Luckham, Rory Mulholland, Sabine Lang, Simon Parker, Stewart Who. And a big thank you to all at Ronnie Scott's!

Book "Bach & Sonnets" for your own venue

From the start "Bach & Sonnets" has been developed as a concept that can easily tour. It has its set actor and cellist, without needing a complete team to work behind the scenes.

To book this show, contact Wolfgang at Mittelmaier Entertainment Ltd.

Please consider supporting us!

If you want to help us with a donation, please go to www.bachandsonnets.com and click on "Support us". Our secure online payment system accepts all major debit and credit cards – we will be truly grateful.

Mittelmaier Entertainment Ltd.
107 Fleet Street
London EC4A 2AB
United Kingdom
tel. +44 (0) 20 7099 9401
email wolfgang@mittelmaierentertainment.com
web www.bachandsonnets.com

arrangement

Johann Sebastian Bach: cello suite no. 3, C major BWV 1009

William Shakespeare: selected sonnets

Bach 2nd movement - Allemande

128 - How oft, when thou, my music, music play'st

145 - Those lips that Love's own hand did make

Bach 3rd movement - Courante

78 - So oft have I invoked thee for my Muse

Romeo and Juliet

Bach 5th movement - Bourée

18 - Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

116 - Let me not to the marriage of true minds

- interval -

55 - Not marble, nor the gilded monuments

130 - My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun

Bach 4th movement - Sarabande

8 - Music to hear, why hear'st thou music sadly?

129 - The expense of spirit in a waste of shame

Bach 1st movement - Prélude

149 - Canst thou, O cruel, say I love thee not

87 - Farewell! thou art too dear for my possessing

Bach 6th movement - Gigue