

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53 STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DR. EDITH SITWELL TO PRESENT "FAÇADE"

WITH MUSIC BY WILLIAM WALTON AT MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

The first complete American performance of FAÇADE with words by Dr. Edith Sitwell and music by William Walton will be given by Dr. Edith Sitwell and a six-piece orchestra, directed by Frederick Prausnit, in the Auditorium of the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, on January 19 at 9 p.m. The performance will be introduced by Sir Osbert Sitwell. Designs executed by the Spanish painter Esteban Frances will be projected on a screen through which Dr. Sitwell's voice and the instrumental music will be amplified.

The performance is being held for the benefit of the Museum's Program Fund. Tickets at \$15 are available only to members of the Museum of Modern Art. The Museum Auditorium seats only 496 people, and requests for tickets will be filled strictly in order of receipt. Any tickets not sold to members by January 12 will be placed on public sale at \$24 each.

THERE WILL BE NO COMPLIMENTARY TICKETS. RELATED PRESS MAY ATTEND THE DRESS REHEARSAL ON JANUARY 17 AT 11:30 A. M. BY MAKING RESERVATIONS. TELEPHONE CI. 5-8900, EXT. 228. PRESS PHOTOGRAPHS MAY BE TAKEN ONLY AFTER THE REHEARSAL, WHICH WILL BE OVER AT ABOUT 12:45.

A NOTE ON FAÇADE

by Dr. Edith Sitwell

"The poems in Façade are abstract patterns, in the sense in which certain pictures are abstract patterns. I wrote them at a time when a revivification of rhythmic patterns in English poetry had become necessary, owing to the verbal deadness then prevalent.

"The poems tell no story, convey no moral. Some have a violent exhilaration, great gaiety, others have sadness veiled by gaiety, many are exercises in transcendental technique - virtuoso exercises; but they are inspired, too, by high spirits. Many were meant to make people laugh. But a section of the public perceived that what Doctor Walton and I did was done unconsciously. We were clowns, tumblers, and acrobats, malgré nous. Alternately, we were pulling the legs of the public - a vulgar and stupid activity of which we have never been guilty.

"The fury inspired by the work was interspersed with loud laughter at our expense. It was, of course, impossible that we could know what we were doing!

"The manner of presenting the work was the idea of Sir Osbert Sitwell, who devised the use of curtain and mask in order to eliminate the

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personality of the reciter. The use of a megaphone - found for me by Mr. Sacheverell Sitwell (this was, at that time, the only instrument by means of which the sound of the words could be amplified) - was in order that the words might be heard above the music; for no other reason.

"But it was perceived at once that, in direct contradiction to the whole reason for these uses, I was wishing to obtrude my personality.

"The public fled in a panic. Waylaying a passing postman, and the fireman of the hall in which the first public performance took place, they asked their opinion. They opined that we were mad. A well-known revue-writer and other such custodians of the purity of the English language, and of style in literature, were of the same opinion. We were subjected to floods of abuse, often of an exceedingly personal and scurrilous nature.

"But that is twenty-five years ago, and the work is now, in England, a most popular entertainment. For we have been forgiven. The postman is at peace, the revue-writer has ceased to rail. The fireman is no longer called in."