

***Multi-sensorial experience:
from Villa to Viola***



<http://www.lamortella.org-photo gallery 1>

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10-05-2017

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Heartfelt thanks to: my coach Rik Bastiaens for the masterful guidance, the careful dedication, critiques and minutiae, to my teacher Marc Tooten for the compelling and detailed teaching of the Walton Viola Concerto, to the President Alessandra Vinciguerra for her availability and generous reception and to the Fondazione William Walton e La Mortella for the information and for the extraordinary mission that offered me the opportunity to enter the Garden as musician first and later as student-researcher, and which focuses its attention to the music and welcomes every year many musician and guests. Many thanks to my family which supported and followed me constantly during my work.

Summary

The topic of my research is an experiment about “if and how” my experience, including the trip to La Mortella, the journey and the interview, could give me more ideas and inspire me to play the 1st movement of the Walton Viola Concerto. The main question of my work was how my experience could change my vision of the musical work and consequentially how could it affect my performance. The method that I followed has been based on a plan structured in this way: to contact the responsible of the Foundation, to learn information from the available sources about it and about Walton, to collect the necessary material for my visit, interview and notes, to organize the trip and, coming back, to order the material collected, to make a catalogue with the data obtained, and at the end to make a video, combining music and pictures taken in person in the Garden according to my ideas, feelings, memories and inspiration. So, the main result that I gained has been playing again the Viola Concerto aware of a new vision and interpretation of it. I built my story into the score, based on my experience and that can be a new access key to the piece.

Introduction

This research investigates how an experience can influence an interpretation. This was done by staying at the Giardini La Mortella (La Mortella Gardens) located at Forio d' Ischia, an island at the coast of Naples, where inside is built the Walton's Villa and where I interviewed Alessandra Vinciguerra, the President of the foundation "William Walton e La Mortella". Through my experiences gained during this stay, walking through the Garden, sitting at the coffee bar, the flowers, the journey to and from the island by boat and my knowledge gained by the interview I experimented how the combination of all my senses influenced my view of the Viola Concerto composed by William Walton.

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Personal motivation

In 2013 I went for the first time in the Giardini La Mortella as a player with the Italian Youth Orchestra. We went there as guests during the Festival of Youth Orchestras that the Foundation William Walton e La Mortella organizes every summer. So we rehearsed and performed on the stage of the Greek Theatre, built in the Garden after the death of Walton and inaugurated in 2006 for the 80th birthday of Lady Walton. The first Festival of Youth Orchestras took place in 2007 and received so much enthusiastic acclaim from both audience and critics, so that La Mortella earned the name as the "Salzburg of the Mediterranean for Youth Orchestras". One year later, when I started my studies at the

Conservatory of Maastricht and I was choosing the program for my Recital of Bachelor 4, I discovered the beautiful and fascinating Walton Viola Concerto, one of the main pieces in the Viola's repertoire. At the beginning this Concerto seemed to me not easy to interpret, for the technical skills that it requires, for the unfamiliar development of the melodic lines and of the rhythmic changes. Moreover the atmosphere of the piece is sometimes mysterious, or sudden funny, in some cases so sweet and then melancholic, occasionally it brings you into a jazz bar of the '20s and after that it gives you feelings of anguish. Walton wrote music for sound tracks and often I can feel and listen the changing of the elements that I said before like a slide succession. So, during my progress of learning and analysing the Viola Concerto, came to my mind like a flashback the experience that I did in the Giardini La Mortella during the Orchestra Festival in 2013 and I thought that maybe I could find a link between the wonderful and magic place of the botanic Garden and the fascinating musical piece. I have started to wonder if there was a connection and I have begun my research, looking for specific information and thinking about possible ideas. The first answer that I found it was that a possible link can start from the several elements present into the Garden that refer to Walton. The main one, defined in the interview like "the place of greatest union between Garden and Music and where the Garden starts a new life" (A.Vinciguerra, personal communication 4 Aug 2016), is the fountain in the tropical greenhouse "Victoria House", dominated by the "Bocca" (mouth). It is a sculpture by Simon Verity that reproduces the mask painted by the British artist John Piper on the curtain for performances of *Façade*, Walton's famous setting of poems by his dear friend Edith Sitwell. The fountain into the greenhouse where lives the *Victoria Amazonica*, the undisputed queen of waterlilies, stays behind a pool. The flowers which emerge from the water have an intense fragrant and a special way of blooming: the first day the flowers open at dusk and they are white and female till the following morning. The second day, in the late afternoon they open again but their colour is red and they are male till when they sink into the water and disappear in the night (Mortella). Maybe, for the cohabitation of the "Bocca" and the *Victoria Amazonica*, came the definition of the place of the strongest union between nature and music. From my point of view, the sculptured mask evokes the masterly work of Walton and the flower represents Lady Walton and her love for the Garden. Another element that attracted my attention was the Temple of the Sun. It is born as a rainwater irrigation cistern when the Walton bought the property, because at that time the island was

still devoid of a water connection system and once a week some cistern-ships brought water to the land. After years, in 2003, the Temple has been renewed and decorated with several musical paints and bas-reliefs made according to the project of the same sculptor of the "Bocca", S.Verity. The structure is dedicated to Apollo, God of Sun and Music. The element of the sun is connected with the geographical position the Temple, extremely exposed to the sunlight being in the upper part of the Garden, and the element of the Music is connected to Walton's figure. The Temple has three rooms, more or less illuminated by the filtered rays of the sun, which narrate Apollo's life. In the first room is represented the birth: water is pouring out from a source which has the shape of an egg, symbol of the birth and of femininity but the shape reminds also to the silhouette of a lyre. That means that music is a primitive and spontaneous action, like the birth. In the second room is represented the maturity. In the bas-reliefs Apollo, in full of his glory, runs on his sun tank, and the rays coming from it became pentagrams with notes. These notes are extracts from Walton's music. Other mythological figures plays music or make love, the main activities that for Lady Walton make life worthy to be lived, and water is calm in a pool. In the third and last room is represented the end of the life. Water disappears in an eddy where it is recycled. On the place overlooks the figure of the Sybil, which according to the legend, suggested to Aeneas to take a golden branch, that was right a branch of myrtle, to be save into the underworlds. So all the Temple's allegory holds this sense: life is a big and continuous cycle that repeats itself and thanks to love and music it is possible to reach deeper levels of knowledge and existence (A.Vinciguerra, personal communication 4 Aug 2016). Moreover I cannot omit the William's Rock, which contains Walton's ashes. It is a natural pyramidal rock, which Sir Walton declared to be "his rock" on the day the property was acquired. This is one of the most suggestive and beautiful places of the Garden. Last but not least, at the entrance of the Garden, there is a bizarre request on the board which reports the opening hours for the visits and says: "It is forbidden to introduce food, dogs and to use little radios". In the interview I made in the summer 2016, Vinciguerra told me that this was a specific request from Sir Walton, who detested ugly sounds.

Even though I found two main problems into find a link between William Walton and La Mortella Gardens:

1st problem: deepening and looking for written sources, I discovered soon that Sir Walton wrote the Viola concerto much before moving to his Villa (1949)! When he composed the Viola Concerto in 1929, he was in Italy not far from Forio d' Ischia, in Amalfi, in the Sitwell's summer house. For sure he highly appreciated the Italian landscape, inspired by the by the atmosphere of the suggestive Costiera Amalfitana, rich of sunlight, typical traditional flavours, colours and folklore, but he was living in another context, he even did not meet yet his wife Susana, and some melancholic parts of the concerto probably refer to the sadness he felt about forthcoming loss of the sick and loved woman, confidant, financial supporter and receiver of the dedication of the Viola Concerto, Christabel.

2nd problem: the project of the Garden. The Walton went to Ischia after their marriage in 1949. They lived first in a rental house and then decided to buy a land in a place called La Mortella, because of the presence of *Myrtus communis*, myrtle bushes. Of course both loved and wanted to live in such beautiful area, but at the beginning the land was just a great wild space and the project of building a botanic garden with exotic plants, has been of the William's Argentinian wife Susana Valeria Rosa Maria Gil Passo. She had already a strong passion and a deep love for plants, trees, flower, animals and nature in general. She loved to visit gardens open to the public and in that moment she could realize a dream with the project of building her Garden, where to live with his great love. So the Walton contacted the famous English landscape designer and a great admirer of Walton's music Russell Page, whom realized the plan that still today is living and developing. So since when the couple moved to Forio, the monitoring and organization of all the work, the choice of the plants and the creation of every single detail was due to Lady Susana who for more than 50 years dedicated her life, energy, passion, botanic knowledges and and love to the Garden, open to the public in 1991.

In front of this two problems I felt stuck about the developing of my idea, I found the link not enough exhaustive and not logical. I thought that maybe I had to change the topic of my Research. But after this doubt I asked to myself: " Well, does it matter? Are not we as artist free to use anything as a source of inspiration? And what is inspiration?"

From the Late Latin *inspiratio-onis* come two main meanings, however connected between each other:

a) Intervention of a divine spirit, gifted of supernatural capacity, which influences and determines the will of man to act or think in a certain way, or reveals to his mind certain truths

b) State of enthusiasm and great excitement in which the artist creates his work, and that becomes the real reason which stimulates and harbour his imagination.

In my opinion, inspiration is an idea that comes sudden to our mind and affects our thoughts and feelings. It can come from a word, an image, a detail from a story that we listen or read, an object that we see, from a smell which makes us staying in a determinate condition or which brings us back in special memories, from a sound or a melody that we ear, from the feelings that we feel in a specific day because it is raining or sunny, or because we are more sensitive than in another moments. Or also it can come because some realities that we experience can have an impact to us that impress us and wake us up thoughts or feelings. One or more of these things can be source of inspiration to create something new, something unique. It can be paint for painter, a score for a composer, a poem for a poet, just a new creation coming from an unexpected idea. Of course inspiration for me is strongly connected to the mood and the moment that we are living. But still inspiration can also come from knowledge, in the meaning that we can know something and from that consciousness we can create a link, have a new idea and build a new reality, a new fact. So I would resume defining inspiration as the enlightening spark which gives us the key to create something new.

How I have been inspired

Staying to my wonderful journey by La Mortella Gardens, I experienced many things that I really did not aspect could be so relevant and so affecting to my feelings and thoughts and that inspired me. Starting from my arrival at the Garden, the big gate at the entrance with the two engraved W of William Walton, was so impressive and emotional that I sudden felt the solemn respect for the big Maestro who lived there. I felt like if I was accessing to another world, dreaming a bit of when the Walton used to enter into their home. The old British style of the room in which I slept for two nights, the Garden full of details that showed the passion and the love of Susana for nature and for his husband, the elements referring to the music and so to Walton's works. Things like these, little details, like the multiple variety of flowers, the impressive energy issued by the William's Rock that I

touched and that was still warm because of the rays of the sun that warmed it during the all day, the pictures into the museum, the strong and energetic passion of every single person who is working to take daily care of the Garden, to carry on the double mission of keeping the Garden living and developing like an oasis and like a place where to host and invite music and musicians. Observing all the things I was constantly thinking on Walton, on him composing, on when he was there, on whom was he, on his life with his loved, on his music and on his Viola Concerto and slowly I started to associate places, colours, sounds, smells, shadows, elements to the Viola Concerto. It was curious that the waitress of the bar, on the second morning I was there, came gently to me and asking: "For you Miss, the same of yesterday?". I still can't believe that I was experiencing and living all that. I was having breakfast on the bar built into the Garden after the death of the Maestro, where Susana Walton was having breakfast, living relaxing moments of her life and talking about her William... and then I ask myself: "Can a cup of coffee be a source of inspiration?" And so: "Can my biggest question turn from a problem into an opportunity?"

Research main question and sub-questions

Main question:

What is the influence of my stay at the Villa Walton on my interpretation of his Viola Concerto?

Sub-questions:

1. What did I see, experience and learn at the Villa? Staying
2. Which ideas did I get from this stay about Walton and the Garden? Reflecting on my staying
3. Which relations did I find between my experiences at the Villa and the Concerto? Working with my experiences

My method

In the spring of 2016 I contacted by e-mail A.Vinciguerra, President of the Foundation Giardini La Mortella. I told her that I was a viola player, student of Conservatory of Maastricht and that I have been in 2013 as guest with the Italian Youth Orchestra (Orchestra Giovanile Italiana) in occasion of the Summer Orchestra Festival. I wrote her that I remained so fascinated from the atmosphere of the Garden and from the gentle reception that she had given to us that, learning the Walton's Viola Concerto, I decided to focus my final Research on the link between Walton Viola Concerto and La Mortella Garden. I told her that my plan was to organize a trip to Forio d' Ischia during the summer and to stay there, if possible as their guest, to visit the Garden and to make to her an interview about Walton's works and personality . She quickly answered to me with great enthusiasm and she told me that she was available to be interviewed from me and that it was possible to let me stay as a guest and in the guise of student-researcher. She told me that she was glad to invite me for a couple of days and she asked me which my exact plan was. So I told her that I wanted to make a video interview, making her some question about Walton, about the Garden and about the Mission of the Foundation William Walton Giardini La Mortella. Then I told her that my intention was also to visit again the Garden and to experience it, walking through it in the different moment of the day, taking pictures, recording sounds. So we exchanged some more e-mails, I prepared and sent her the questions that I intended to ask her during the interview and we fixed the dates of my journey during the summer. In the months before my trip I made a list of the necessary material, so: a good camera, a camera tripod, a recorder to catch the sound from a closer distance, an extra collaborator responsible for checking that the video was working fine and who could take some picture during my interview. Then I did some little simulation at home thinking to be in front of her making the interview so that I could be fluent and I could get a bit used to do this new experience. I brought anyway with me the paper with my questions, a pen and my note book. To take pictures I had my smartphone and my tablet, working very well. From the 3rd till the 5th of august 2016 I spent my journey there. I went and back by train, from Rome to Naples and by boat in one hour from Naples to Forio d' Ischia and from the port I took a bus to the Garden. Once in the Garden, on the 3rd afternoon, I arranged an appointment for the day after with Vinciguerra and on the 4th I made to her two interviews, one in the morning and the second

one in the late afternoon of the same day. My questions were the same, but the answers of the afternoon were a bit more personal and detailed, so at the end I collected two different interviews. So On the 5th I just collected my information and I walked through the Garden for the entire day experiencing it. Coming back I wrote a reflection about my impression and I continued thinking on what I lived together with the music of the Viola Concerto that was constantly into my mind. In the next months I made a catalogue of what I had: 2 interviews that I transcribed to save them on paper, pictures of the Garden and of its details and pictures from the Garden looking at the wonderful landscape on the Mediterranean sea, the video that I bought entitled "La Mortella", my short reflection written on the back trip, the score of the Concerto, the pages copied from the material of the private library of the Villa, a written interview made to Lady Walton from an Italian guy, Paolo Petrocelli and some audio interviews that young students made to Vinciguerra on the radio channel "Radio Treccia". I had a lot of spread but precious information so I wrote a list of what I had in my hands. I divided the information in two big groups: the ones coming from the sources and the ones that I gained through my experience. So the things that I learned from other interviews, from internet, from the books, from the video that I bought in the Garden became part of my preparation, knowledge and study to go deeper into the subject and for my research I tried to use mostly the data that I collected living my experience and making questions in the interview. In my catalogue I focused my attention on my personal material and on the feelings that I sensed and that brought me to write things or take specific pictures instead of other. So, after made my catalogue, I started to write the introduction of my Research and I decided to make a video as final resume of my experience. I thought to combine score, after analysing it, and images. In the video I took a recording that I estimate and the score of the 1st movement of the Concerto. So I connect the different parts of the piece to pictures or feelings that in certain moments the music reminds me. During doing that I built in my mind a story, where I include Walton's life, which I narrate with the synchronization of melody and pictures. Before to make the video I was wondering if it could be enough to transmit what I experienced, if it really could bring the reader into my story and if it could become a new key of interpretation for other violists and musician. Therefore during my work, I presented the video on my research circle class, receiving useful feedbacks and suggestions from my coach and colleagues. To conclude I can say that today, by the video, I want to represent what I imagine if I close my eyes and I follow the

music having in my mind not just what I have seen or what I feel, but what I experienced. So the video is an invitation to think, read and play the Walton Viola Concerto from a new point of view, combining and melting the essence of Walton, nature and music.

Results section

Chapter 1 – My stay at Villa Walton

In this chapter I am going to describe my stay at Villa Walton in a chronological order, from my arrival till my departure. Here I want to tell about my journey and about the great and unforgettable opportunity that I had being a guest of the Garden, living in it for three days, meeting the people that work to support the Foundation responsible of the Garden and walking freely around the nature of that wonderful oasis.



Arriving at the Giardini La Mortella on the 3rd of August I have seen the impressive big metal gate characterized by the decorate “W” and on one of its side a round blue plaque which says:

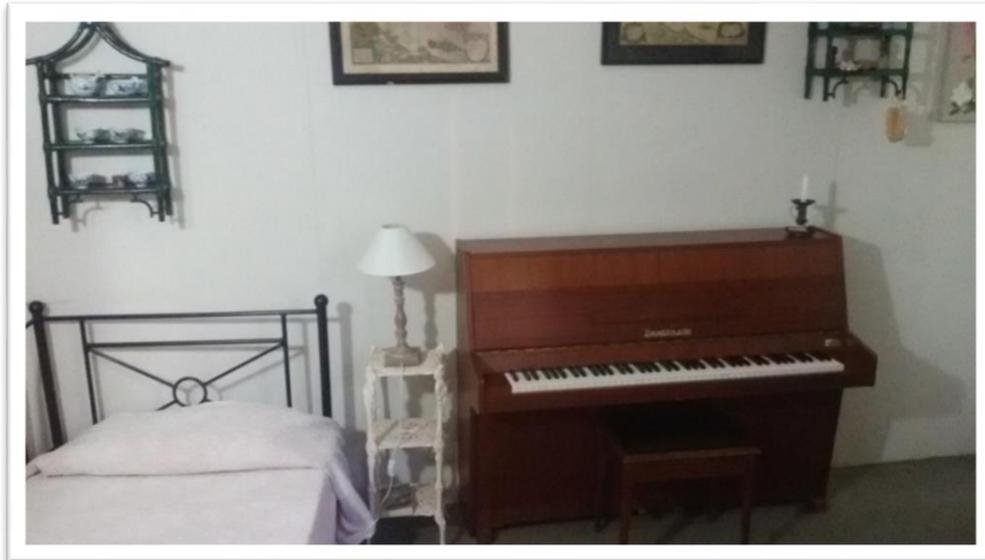


**SIR
WILLIAM WALTON, O.M.
1902-1983
Composer
lived and
died here**

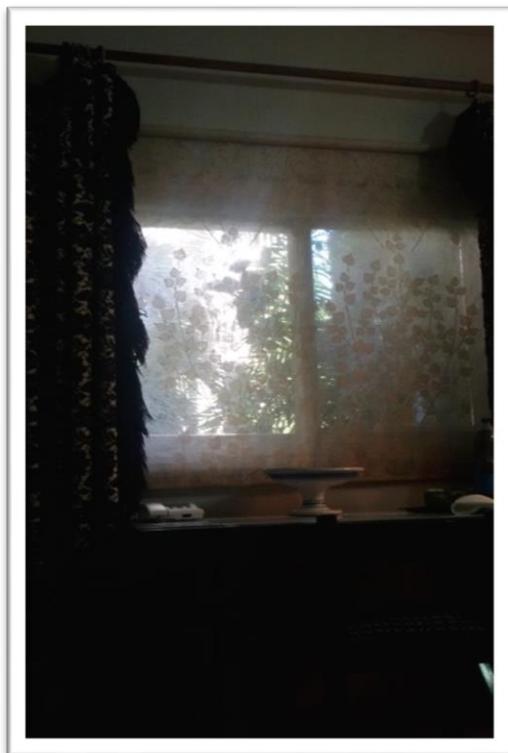
[Giorgia Martinez-Forio d'Ischia 3/08/'16 2](#)

Suddenly I felt the magnificence, the solemn respect and the tender devotion to William Walton. I was almost sensing the presence of his soul. So the gate opened and in front of me there was a long pattern going uphill wrapped between coloured flowers, tropical trees and huge plants. I started walking, still unbelieving, and Vinciguerra was coming to welcome me. We met, introduced each other, and she accompanied me to my room, totally immersed into the green and located in front of the Victoria House. She left me the key and we agreed to meet two hours later, so that I could leave my stuff and rest a bit and she could look at some books into the private library. I entered the room, there was a piano perfectly tuned, and the style of the room was a bit “old” and cared in every single detail. The Walton built some rooms more than their big Villa, to receive guests and I was in one of them. Well, I was actually feeling like their guest and my experience started to be really magic. I was not a common visitor of the Garden, who enters when is allowed, paying a ticket and respecting the opening and the closing hours of the Garden. No. I had a room just for me where to stay for two nights and the key of the gate of the Garden! Realizing that was feeling incredibly excited and happy. Two hours later Vinciguerra brought to me two books about Walton’s biographies that I could use to find interesting information: “William Walton Muse of Fire”

by Stephan Lloyd, where I found some interesting data about the Viola Concerto and the other book, that Vinciguerra given to me like a present, was “Pot Pourri” by Michael Aston.



Giorgia Martinez-Forio d'Ischia 3/08/'16 3



Giorgia Martinez-Forio d'Ischia 3/08/'16 4

The day after, 4th of August, I went to the bar for the breakfast and after that we have spoken few minutes to decide where and how to seat, I put play and we started the interview. I placed the camera and the phone close to us to record the audio and we started. I was a bit nervous at the beginning because I am not used to make questions to a relevant figure and because I knew that the information I was receiving were coming from a person who directly met Sir and Lady Walton. But the time went very fast even though it have been taking about 30 minutes and the conversation have been fluent and interesting. In the afternoon I had time to listen to the recording and check the video. I liked it but I asked her the chance to have a second interview and we met again in the late afternoon. In the time in between I looked at the books and I photocopied the pages that I found interesting. So we met again for the interview and this second time I was feeling more free in the conversation, I changed the order of the questions and Vinciguerra also added some details much more personal. She spoken about little gossips, or about the personality of Walton, telling me that “he was apparently a very private person with people but very ironic and playful with family and friends”. She told me that “the first journey that Walton had in Italy during his youth impressed and attracted him a lot, especially for the lightness, because he was born in a small city where the weather was basically constantly rainy” (Personal communication 4 Aug 2016)



Giorgia Martinez-La Mortella 4/08/'16 1

So after the second interview first I went to watch a video that later I decided to buy. It was a video-documentary of the Garden in which Lady Walton was there as a touristic guide. It would be amazing to be led by the owner of the place! After that I had all the rest of the time to walk into the Garden, reflecting on the interview, observing every single detail, like the knobs of the little taps distributed in several parts of the Garden, each one different from the other one and each one representing an animal, then again looking at the vast range of flowers, plants, at the huge variety of aloe plants in the high part of the Garden, the Hill, the Crocodile pool, the birdhouse, the Temple of the Sun, really suggestive and even more impressive have been the William's Rock and the Nymphaeum. The Rock which contains the Maestro's ashes is a natural stone pyramid which brings on one of its sides a marmoreal plate with a dedication from Susana:



**WILLIAM WALTON O.M.
1902 – 1983
SING A SONG OF PRAISE
BELOVED AND REVERED MASTER
THIS ROCK HOLDS HIS ASHES
THE GARDEN HE SURVEYS
RUSSELL PAGE DESIGNED
TOGETHER WE HAPPILY
BROUGHT IT TO LIFE.
SUSANA
"ALL BLISS CONSISTS
IN THIS
TO DO AS ADAM DID"
TRAHERNE 1637 – 1674**

And the Nymphaeum, not far from the Rock and surrounded by hedges, lies in the centre of a stainless steel pool reflecting the sky. This is a deeply suggestive part of the Garden and I still feel thrilled if I remember of it. Around the pool there is a marmoreal ring which brings the text:

“This green harbour is dedicated to Susana, who loved tenderly, worked with passion and believed in immortality”



Giorgia Martinez-La Mortella 4/08/'16 3

So, after the long day I collected all the materials that I had and I went to sleep listening the squawking of the frogs.

The day after, 5th of August, my last day into the Garden, I was totally free before my leaving at 12:00 and I spent the whole morning walking still up and down from the Valley to the Hill and vice-versa, observing every possible detail. That day the Garden was closed to the public. I took more pictures and I wrote on my notebook the relevant parts from the books that then I would have used for my catalogue and for my work. I took the time to experience more the Garden, dreaming a bit to live there, paying attention and meditating a bit on its sounds, colours, smells. I recorded sounds during the three days and I listened them again and sent them by email to my mail box to save them. Something that really made me feeling comfortable in the three days has been the reception from Vinciguerra and from the rest of the staff working and collaborating in the Garden. As I told in my introduction, I had for two days breakfast in the wonderful bar that Lady Walton wanted to be built since the opening to the public of the Giardini La Mortella. The second day the waitress came to serve me "the same of the previous day: a glass of water, of pineapple juice, a slice of apple cake and a cup of coffee". I was feeling considered like part of the people collaborating to take care of the Garden, loving it and living it every day. So, at the end of the morning, I greatly thanked Vinciguerra, telling her that I spent a beautiful experience and that it would for sure affect my work about the Research and my memories for ever. She told me that if I need some more info I could contact her by e-mail or call and I left, directed to the port for the boat Forio d'Ischia Naples and then the train Naples-Rome. Something that happened to me and was unexpected was that coming back, waiting for the boat, I was sitting on a bench at the port and, like a smell that stays into your nose even if you left the source of it, I felt like surrounded of a halo of feelings. I had inside so many emotions, colours, odours, sounds, memories that I needed to say something and I wrote spontaneously what I thought. And what surprised me, after few days that I read it again, was that it was not a kind of stream of consciousness, but a sensed description of my thought still part of the experience in the Garden.

Summarizing, after these journey I discovered a place, a botanic garden inspired and dedicated to a musician, which could be considered one of the most beautiful places in the world. I think that it stands out not just for its marvellous aspect, but for its unique atmosphere created by the union of the human passionate activity and creativity and the amazing reaction and develop of nature.



Giorgia Martinez-5/08/'16 1



Giorgia Martinez-5/08/'16 2

Chapter 2 – Reflecting on my stay at Villa Walton

In this chapter I am going to expose first my thought written during my coming back, then my reflection about my journey, thinking of the walks into the Garden and listening to the testimony of Vinciguerra in the interview. So I will talk about something that really impressed me and that I found special: the double mission of the Foundation Giardini la Mortella which takes care of the botanic garden and of the musical activity in the Garden. To conclude I will explain how I organized my thoughts for my catalogue after my experience.

Leaving the Villa: first moment of reflection

After my journey I started to build up the second part of my work. Sitting on a bench at port of Forio and waiting for the boat that had brought me back from the island to the peninsula, I wrote a thought inspired still by the atmosphere of the Garden:

“Living into the garden has been an unforgettable experience. There is a vital energy that you can breath and that you can absorb just walking between plants and rocks. Harmony and Love flutter into the Garden, the perfume of flowers is heady together with the sound of the environment. A vibrant immortality, in continuous development, a constant breathing of a nature which wakes up every morning, which change its colours during the day and which cradles and hugs into its delicate majesty. Cared in every single detail, with love and tender, with attention, passion, minutiae, wisdom, competence, ability, creativity and elegance, the Garden is a charming reality which brings you back to a real sensorial and spiritual route. A primordial contact with the marvels of the nature, united in a colours vortex, sound and smells”

(Forio d’Ischia, port, 5 Aug 2016)

After staying and reflecting on my staying and on the things that mostly affected me. A couple of things caught my attention: the colours and the variety of the flowers and the passionate story of the couple. After the whole experience, the staying there, the reflecting on the journey, the trip, the interview, the catalogue, started to be always more concrete in my mind the idea of a story, mixed by flashes of images, narrated in the 1st movement of the Viola Concerto. Listening to it and playing it, I associated always more things, elements, stories, details, moods and feelings, ideas about the personality of Walton, parts of his life,

his playing in a jazz band, his passion for Italy, his love in the youth for Christabel who was going to die and his last great love story with his wife Susana. Remembering then of the places that I have seen, of the story that I knew about the couple owner of La Mortella, thinking of the interview and about the love and devotion that Vinciguerra and the staff reverse today in the double mission of the Foundation, I progressively built into my imagination some relations that changed my interpretation. During and after my journey I had the impression that in a certain way I shared the intention of the musical and naturalistic mission that Sir and Lady Walton had and I now feel a testimony of a wonderful experiment which is developing year by year. What I report here is specially my personal experience done living into the Garden, smelling the perfume of the flowers on a midsummer in Ischia, of the odour of the resin coming from the exuding trees, of the smell of the damp ground, listening the singing of some birds in the morning and of some other birds in the evening; the frog of the frogs in the night. During my journey of three days at Villa Walton I observed the fascinating colour change of the flowers between the sunrise and the sunset. I really had the impression that the Garden was breathing and living and somehow I felt that the intention, the ideas, the love and the souls of Sir and Lady Walton were still there in the air. That is what I felt and always more I was finding connections between past and present, between death and life, between immortality of nature constantly evolving and music always living. Still today we can feel and see the love of Susana for nature and her extreme dedication to the art of his husband. After the death of Walton, because of Susana's will, has been built the Greek Theatre, opened during the summer for concerts, the Temple of the Sun has been renewed with musical painted decorations, has been sculpted the mask of the fountain in the Victoria House in memory of Walton's Façade, the Garden has been open to the public to be visited and to collect economics funds and to increase awareness of the people for such a beautiful natural resource and for Walton's music, and started the musical activity of the Summer Festivals for youth orchestras and masterclasses.

[Fondazione Giardini La Mortella: a double mission](#)

Moreover Susana created two Foundations: the William Walton Trust in England and the Fondazione Giardini La Mortella in Italy. About this second one, today a non-profit cultural organization leaded by the President Alessandra Vinciguerra, one of the things that most

touched me and that transmitted me the uniqueness of this initiative is the double mission that it carries on. On the list of questions for my interview, I reserved a specific one to Vinciguerra right about this matter. She told me so that from 2000 she worked on the side of Lady Walton, on 2003 she received the responsibility of directing the Garden and from 2010, when Lady Walton passed away, she entirely had the management of the Garden. Well, so the double mission that Lady Walton wanted to follow and that today is prosecuting is about the attention of naturalistic aspect and about the care of musical activity. Vinciguerra told me that Lady Walton asked to her and to the people working in the Garden to “love it a lot, to make it loved by the people and visitors, to make it always beautiful and to live it”. She recommended to do not make it like a museum, to do not crystalize it, but to care it and leave it developing. She knew that the Garden was going to change and never stay as she and Walton had seen it, but it was part of the building project of a botanic space. So today the mission of who is working on the Garden is to follow this idea. On the other hand, the musical mission is mainly based on a Walton’s desire. He came from a humble family and just thanks to the help of the Sitwell he could live his experience and his career as musician. So his dream was to give to the young talented musician a place where they could play and perform in front of a public to experience and to be known, a space where to attend Masterclasses and develop their professionalism and their skills and to give them scholarships. So today the Foundation dedicates to the musical activity of young single talented artists, to concerts of youth orchestras and it has a rich program of concerts and musical events, an opera season, following the initial intention of Sir Walton to help young musician to emerge in the musical context. Coming back I reflected a lot on this missions and I thought that thanks to this purposes, I could have a first access to the Garden, receiving directly the magic atmosphere, the passion that wafts in the Garden and into the spirit of those people that work there today and collaborate with the Foundation. The first impact accessing the botanic Garden impressed me a lot from the first time and it stays into my memory since then. The experience of the journey together with this knowledge of the Foundation’s mission fascinated me a lot, inspired and influence me in the interpretation of the Walton's Viola Concerto and in general in the conception of Walton’s music and today I can associate to his compositions stories, anecdotes, colours, smells, sounds from the Garden, images that I enjoyed on person, thoughts and feelings.

Creating the catalogue: extracting ideas from objects

An important part of the work made after the journey has been to collect the material and build the catalogue. I made a list of the material that I collected so: pictures that I took in the Garden, pictures that I have chosen from internet, video and recording of the two interviews that I made, 4 kind of sound recorded from the nature of La Mortella, 2 biographies of Walton, "William Walton: Muse of Fire" from S.Lloyd and "Pot Pourri" from M.Aston, my written reflection, a DVD from the Garden where Susana Walton is touristic guide and lead the visitors of the Garden, several interviews from "Radio Treccia", an Italian channel where Vinciguerra talks about the Garden, an interview that an Italian guy made in 2010 to Lady Walton and the score of the 1st movement of the concerto. After that I organized my thought staying constantly connected to the idea of the concerto: I connected stories, knowledges and parts of the Garden to certain emotions that these elements transmitted to me (from the object to the feeling). To be concrete I associate the coloured flowers to the sweetness of the musical lines, the two elements of death, so the William's Rock and the Nymphaeum added to the isolated Thai Pavilion with two chairs looking at the landscape to nostalgia and melancholy, the severe and impressive mask of Façade to anguish and at the same time to the surprising irony, the Walton's one. Moreover I connected the mystical atmosphere of the Temple of the Sun to a meditating state of the mind, the long shadowy pattern wrapped by tall palms and exotic plants at the entrance of the Garden to feeling of uncertainty, the empty Greek Theatre to Susana's idea dedicated to William and to Williams figure as artist, the pictures of Sir and Lady Walton that I found and that I have seen in the Villa, from their youth to their old age, to their love and life into the Garden, the opening and closing of the gate of the Garden like the beginning and the end of Walton's life and, compared to my experience, to the beginning and the end to my staying there, the awesome of the Garden, which develops in height on the rocky terrain and which has several stairway dug in the rock and that bring from the valley to the hill, connected to the stately mission of Walton, of the Foundation and to the success of Walton's music, especially on his times. Finally I cannot omit the four different sounds that I recorded (birds, frogs, water and cicadas) that made me thinking that could be source of inspiration for Walton during his pattern into the Garden. All these things structured my catalogue and

contribute to give me ideas to organize my work, to make the video and to look at the concert in a new way.

Self-portrait: Reflection on my reflection

My aim of this chapter was to reflect on what I carried with me after staying at the Villa Walton. I discussed my own writings, the impressions and the material that I created at the Villa and afterwards back home.

The thoughts that were most dominant were the fairy atmosphere that I felt and experienced in the Garden through the amazing plant and wild life and where Walton lived and composed. The element that most influenced me has been the variety of colours that I easily connect to the colours of the music. Moreover I have been caught also by the human sensibility, strength and collaboration and by the capacity to realize such a big project that the Foundation supports. I found unique and extremely noble the spirit that animates people on one hand to the care of the nature and on the other hand the organization of the musical activity.

Chapter 3 – Putting the reflection at work

In this chapter I talk about how the new ideas coming from my experience brought me to my final result: making a video. In this video I combine music and pictures, synchronizing them and building inside two stories: the life of William Walton and my journey at Giardini La Mortella. I explain so why and which relations between figures and music.

Working concretely on my experience I arrive to my creative result, which consist into making a video. To make it I have chosen a recording for Viola and Orchestra and I combined it with the sliding of pictures. Of course I made a totally personal association between the music and the picture based on how the experience that I did influenced me in the reading of the score. It is not anymore a visual reading but it involves more of my senses and involves my memories. So, together with some pictures of the Garden or sometimes just of the score that I selected just because in some spots I focus on my hands and on the physical feelings, I add also some pictures of Walton, of Susana and of both together. In base of the developing of the score, I associated picture combining the timing of the changes of images with the flow of the music. In the video I also find out a story, entirely coming from my creativity: following a chronological order, I inserted pictures of Walton in

his youth, at work (composing and conducting), of the couple in the first years of their relationship, of them in their old age and of Susana as guide of the Garden, after the missing of his husband. I associate Walton's life to the develop of the music and to the time of my journey that started and finished, like life is. So the basic idea of my work is built on the narration of my experience, of my story in the Garden like a source of inspiration for a new interpretation of the Concerto. At the beginning I chose images in which the sunlight is filtered by the exotic plants and we have still some shadowy areas, because in the music I see some figures in the distance and not yet clear. Sonority are dark and we listen some far melodic lines played by instruments that have a low register and that seem to try to start the melody that finally the viola starts in a higher register. Then, like in the experience that I had into the Garden where there were continuous changes and evolutions, I was imagining different kind of flowers associated to the line played by the viola. Here the viola is accompanying the theme played by other instruments and stays in a high register, so it results to me like something important but delicate. That is why the association with flowers. Sometimes, between this figures, appear musical ideas that remind me to fairy and surreal images. From a high register and dreaming melodies suddenly the soloist jumps to a very low voice, playing more regular and rhythmical figures. I combine this surprising musical element for example with the huge leaves of the Colocasia (also called plant with the leaves like elephant's ears shaped) that also live seemed to me incredible to be real for its enormous size! Another aspect that I found following the score was a kind of mysterious atmosphere that I represented with the pictures of the Temple of the Sun, rather mystical also in real life. In the video, the Temple of the Sun, that for me was fascinating but also a bit disquieting, corresponds to a sequence of bichord, played in agitato way. After that I could see something clear, like the born of new ideas, a hope that I associated to the tallest fountain of the Garden, located in the middle of a water lilies pool. There is a change of harmony, from minor to major and the viola introduces a new musical theme, that for me hold characteristic of elegance and charm. It makes me thinking on a faraway jazz idea, so we enter in total new atmosphere. But this situation is soon interrupted by an appearing calm, mixed with anguish that I associated to the empty Greek Theatre (when I photographed it) built for Walton after his death. Here the viola plays a melody, repeated in different tonalities and with rubato, that in musical meaning for me that means right anxiety and anguish. After that we have a scary musical section that I associated to the sever

expression of the “Bocca”, that seems to screen in a strict way. Here the viola plays again a new theme, in the low register and this theme is repeating always faster like if the protagonist is going to lose the control, the mind, going to the madness. Sometimes the music is full of strong accents, for me a bit aggressive, even though fascinating and beautiful, as like the leaves of the Victoria Amazonica. Following this chaotic moment comes a very nostalgic and melancholic part, where I have chosen the Nymphaeum, the sunset on the landscape viewable from the Nymphaeum and a picture of the couple in their old age. Double stops plays sixth in a high register, and the melody is really lonely. These three elements remained me to something very melancholic and nostalgic. After that the music becomes angst and I put some pictures of the Garden where I was feeling a bit lost and alone: the Thai Pavilion with the two empty wooden chairs and the Crocodile pool from its back. Some fantasy images came back to my imagination listening to the viola retaking one of the previous theme with new character and a lot of energy and listening to the brilliant orchestra part. So I chose for those big palms, big plants and some part of the hill of the Garden, looking like unreal for its shape and colours. In final part, when the orchestra plays the theme and the viola plays the accompaniment, I put pictures of Walton in his old age, a paint of him in his memory and pictures of Susana busy as guide of the Garden once opened to the public. The piece is going to the end, as my journey and as the life of the couple. The accompaniment and then the melodic line with the theme, come back varied in the rhythm to the Viola and I come back to flowers. But this time it goes to the end, so the end of life connected to the William’s Rock, the end of the great couple represented by a picture of them in their old age, and the end of the story and of the narration of my journey, with the closed beautiful gate. From that video I think that I could receive and give influence on and trough my performance.

Conclusion

Making the video I found that I could add some more creativity to my previous interpretation of the Viola Concerto. Before this experience I analysed the score, following the notes, the indications about dynamics, tempos and character, creating my own musical pattern of the movement. I checked where was the climax of the concerto, which were the

words used and the adjectives chosen like “sognando” so “dreaming”, a very representative indication on the 6th bar of N.4 because it is connected to the intention of the way of playing, to the attitude and expressivity and it is used by Walton just one time in the movement, so it means that he really wanted that kind of atmosphere just there. Moreover we find the expressions like “cantabile”, “spiccato”, “martellato” and then “pp molto espressivo e rubato”. So I first observed and learned the score, reading it and playing it. During the learning I spontaneously associated some specific moments to specific moods and after the journey and making the video even more. For example in the beginning, when I chose the plants filtering the sunlight I feel sweetness, mystery and elegance. In violistic words it means that we should use a very good legato with left and right hand. The bow should be in contact with the string, but without pushing and the left hand needs a clear articulation and has to vibrate all the notes. In N.1, when I select the different kind of flowers, the bow has to be lighter with more air and the left hand really precise and the fingers should touch the fingerboard with the fingertip because the dynamic is p pp and the hand is in a high position. From N.3, if we think of the Temple of the Sun that we see in the video, I think that we can receive a lot of inspiration by the mysterious atmosphere and we can give more power and density to the double stops. From N.4, where I chose the pictures of the Greek Theatre, we can play thinking of Walton’s desire of offering to the young musician opportunities to play; we can think on the festival that have been organized every summer and so we can interpret the rubato and the sognando in a much more free and personal way! We can vibrate some notes more and some less and change quickly the speed of the bow, giving the impression of freedom and at the same time of instability or better to say not regularity. From N.5 start musical sentences with new tempo every time, from 108, 120, 132 till con spirit 138. Here I associate in the video the mask of Façade, before the fountain and then the paint. This bizarre and unexpected accelerando reminds me to Walton’s irony, that came out from the beginning of his career and indeed the mask of Façade the mask represents just the double side of a truth. So as musician we can also play in an odd way, using a lot of agility in the bow and going always faster, in a kind of virtuoso way. Oestrus and folly go on in a jazzy style and here again we can change our clothes of classical musician and think to be in a bar of the 20’s and think to be a saxophone improvising in a jam session. I know that between N.7 and N.8 the score is challenging, but we can learn it very patiently and then feel free to “improvise” like jazz musician. Sudden

the atmosphere change on N.9, and looking at the pictures that I have chosen, knowing the story, we can paint in music a nostalgic landscape. Double stops in sixth build a melody that we can play going deeply into the string with the bow and making some portamenti with the left hand. We also need a lot of legato and we can take once more some freedom going to the close the phrase. After that the atmosphere change again and in N.10 it communicates sensations of anxiety and anguish. In music and in a violistic meaning we can here also use a different speed of the bow, making the rubato and tenuto on a more free choice. I feel that when the melodic line goes up and the viola remains solo, also the feeling is that one. Indeed I associate the picture of the wooden chairs empty in the Thai Pavilion. So in this moment the protagonist of the scene is alone, it is scared and a bit lost and we can make a marcato on the ascending scale and a nervous and fast vibrato on the higher note. So the developing of the orchestra grows up till the new and last entrance of the viola in N.14. I see certain calm but it is not real calm. It is a kind of peaceful resignation. It is like an intimate consideration, a personal reflection about a long and full life. We are in *p espressivo* on the c string and we should use a deep and wide vibrato. The vibrato and the full-bodied sound stay deep, in a meditative mood till N.15, where the viola accompanies in *mf*. Here we need a totally different attitude, the bow stays light, the left hand is agile and I think on a butterfly following the speed and the waves of the wind. Left hand light, articulated and *dolce*. So we arrive at the end on N.16. Again the theme, but varied this time, decorated with double stops, *poco largamente* and then *rallentando*. I think on what Walton and Lady Walton left, on the feeling that their souls are still living. The Garden and the Viola Concerto, both living. I imagine like the end the gate closed and I close the 1st movement, but it is a nuanced end that for me means the beginning to new interpretations and the evolution of the nature, almost like an eternal creature. If I look back at my research method: visiting, gathering, talking, experiencing, collecting, cataloguing, reflecting and making the video I think that it has been a very useful and efficient experience. To learn a piece making an active experience like travelling and live a new reality helps a lot to acquire ideas and sources of inspiration to play and interpret the music. To visit, and if possible to live, in the place where the composer was living and that he loved gives already a huge awareness of the context and of the atmosphere that he had around him. So for me that was somehow a way to experience and share the same feelings that he lived. Moreover, the contact with Vinciguerra, who met Sir and Lady Walton was also a great opportunity to have information

and feedbacks from a person who has been close to the composer about whom I investigate with passion and curiosity. From the interview, that for me was a totally new experience, I learned a lot. First because I had to build my own project in every single detail, then because I had to be the protagonist of the scene, contacting the Foundation and asking if I could go there for an interview. I like dreams and creativity, but I have to admit that I needed courage to realize this project and it was worth it. So collect the necessary material, use a camera for my interview, transcribe the interview reflecting once again about what I learned and through that, gain precious information for which I was looking for! After that, after making the video that is the concrete translation and explanation of my new vision, I honestly suggest to my colleagues to repeat the experience. May be not exactly in the same way, but the main thing that I appreciate today and that I would recommend to do is to go in the place where the composer lived, to meet if possible people that he met and ask them as many information as possible. So after this amazing experience I can affirm that now I can play conceiving in a new way the music that before I just learned from the score and I can give a new interpretation on the Viola concerto that can inspire the listeners and the players of the Concerto and on Walton's beautiful and coloured music.

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Appendix

- DVD
- William Walton
- Viola Concerto
- Catalogue of objects
- Transcription of the Interview with Alessandra Vinceguerra

William Walton

Sir William Tuner Walton (Oldham 1902- Forio d' Ischia 1983) was born in a humble family of musician. His father was choir conductor and at the age of ten Walton was accepted in the choir of the Christian Cathedral of the University of Oxford, and that was for him a great chance. He spent many hours in that place looking through musical compositions from Gustav Holst, Igor Stravinskij, Béla Bartók, Sergej Prokof'ev, Richard Strauss, e Arnold Schoenberg and learning in composition as autodidact. He composed several woks in that years and his talent was sudden recognized in the University. In the while he became a very close friend of Sacheverell Sitwell and in 1919, on leaving the University, he was adopted by the Sitwell that took care him and of his cultural education. So from his humble origin he had the opportunity to live and experience the elegant and refined world of London's high Society. His first work, *Façade* (1922), consisted in a collaboration with Edith Sitwell. William wrote live music for the theatrical texts by Edith and because of the inner meaning of *Façade*, referred to the double face of reality, his music was stinging and ironic, combining to the words and it brought him notoriety as a modernist. In 1929 he wrote his *Viola Concerto*, dedicated to his confidential, financial supporter and loved Christabel McLaren (Lady Aberconway). This piece made Walton quickly famous and made him standing out among the composer of his nationality. In *The Manchester Guardian*, Eric Blom wrote, "This young composer is a born genius" (Blom, 1930). In the years of the Second World War Sir Walton continued to compose, he wrote music for cinema and he travelled a lot, having so the chance to meet many famous composers and artistic figures. He played in a jazz band, composed his *Symphony No.1* in 1936 and the *Violin Concerto* for the musician Jascha Heifetz in 1939. In his private life he had a relationship with a society lady, Alice Wimborne,

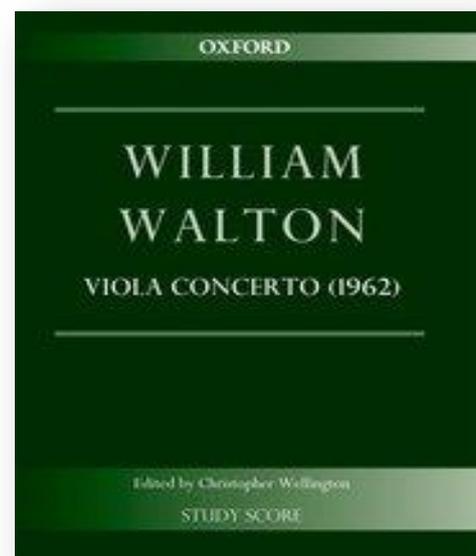
who supported him to pursue his inspiration and to build up his career. After that, alone again, he met in Argentina in 1947, Susana Gil, with whom he fell in love and that he married soon. The passionate couple decided to move to Italy, because William's great love for the country since 1919, his first time there. They wanted to enjoy the light and the place of the Bay of Naples and they bought a land in Ischia, then called La Mortella, where they created a botanic garden and where they lived together for 35 years. His most famous compositions are the three concertos, for the Viola (1929), Violin (1939) and Cello (1955), Symphony 1 and Symphony 2, the lyric opera Troilus and Cressida, a comic opera The Bear, the choral work Belshazzar's Feast, the film scores and the marches for two coronations: Crown Imperial for King George VI and for Queen Elizabeth II, Orb and Sceptre, and a coronation Te Deum. In 1951 he was knighted and in 1967 Queen Elizabeth conferred on Sir William the further high honour of the Order of Merit.

Viola Concerto

The Viola Concerto by William Walton was written in 1929 for the English violist Lionel Tertis, principal viola of the London Symphony Orchestra. The suggestion to compose for him has been given by Sir Thomas Beecham, conductor of the Orchestra. But Tertis rejected the manuscript saying:

« One work of which I did not give the first performance was Walton's masterly concerto. With shame and contrition I admit that when the composer offered me the first performance I declined it. I was unwell at the time; but what is also true is that I had not learnt to appreciate Walton's style. The innovations in his musical language, which now seem so logical and so truly in the mainstream of music, then struck me as far-fetched. »

(Tertis, 1974, p. 33)



So Walton, after the refusal of Tertis, asked him a suggestion for another violist. Tertis named Paul Hindemith, who accepted with excitement Walton's request and gave the first performance on the 3rd of October of 1929 in the Queen's Hall. After the première Tertis defined Hindemith's interpretation technically precise but limited, because performed with a too small viola and Walton defined it a bit rough. The work, anyway, was greeted with enthusiasm. It brought Walton to the forefront of British classical music, more than with his previous works *Façade* and *Sinfonia No.1*, and Tertis, listening to the première, changed his mind repenting a lot for his refusal and took the work up performing it in 1932 at the Royal Philharmonic Society. Indeed, still before the première, Walton wrote to his good friend and pianist August Morrison that he felt his progress with the concerto, and that his style was "maturing". Morrison then was amused to hear this from such a young composer, he was just 27, but changed his mind when Walton played the concerto for him later that spring:

«In this work he had, in fact, reached complete maturity of style and given full rein, for the first time, to his entirely personal lyrical gift»

(Lloyd, 2001, p. 91)

The Concerto, revised in 1961, is structured in three movements:

I *Andante comodo*, II *Vivo e molto preciso*, III *Allegro moderato* and it carries the dedication "To Christabel", lady with whom Walton was in a relationship and that was his financial supporter.

At Walton's time, when he often could even conduct the performances, we could remember some interpreters like:

-Paul Hindemith, Henry Wood Symphony Orchestra, W.Walton, 3 October 1929, Queen's Hall (London)

-Bernard Shore, BBC Symphonic Orchestra, 1930



-Lionel Tertis , 1st at the ISMC Festival, W.Walton, 4 September 1930, 2nd Royal Philharmonic Society, Ansermet, Queen's Hall, 26 March 1931, 3rd Zürich Tonhalle, VolkmarAndrae, November 1931

-Fredrick Riddle, violist, the first one who recorded the Concerto. William Walton Conductor, London Symphonic Orchestra, Kingsway Hall, 6 December 1937

-William Primrose, violinist-turned-violist, Sir Thomas Beecham, 27 February 1936. Later he recorded with William Walton Conductor, Philharmonia Orchestra in EMI's abbey road studios, July 1946.

-John Coulling, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Malcom Sargent, 18 February 1962 (new orchestral revision)

Some musician really expressed their admiration writing comments:

-Benjamin Britten who wrote in his diary:

«Walton's Viola Concerto (beautifully played by Tertis) stood out as a work of genius. I feel no music of that generation can be compared to works like Walton's Viola Concerto» (Britten)

-Arthur Benjamin, Britten's Teacher, was equally impressed by the Walton's Viola Concerto and dedicated his own Violin Concerto of 1931 to Walton "with great admiration" (Lloyd, 2001)

-Edmund Rubbra whom in a seventieth-birthday tribute said:

«I first became acquainted with Walton's work when, in the latest Twenties, I visited Constant Lambert, taking with me a score I had dedicated to him. On Lambert's piano there was Walton's Viola Concerto, which had not then been performed, and I remember how we both went through it with enormous enthusiasm. It seems to me now, as I did then, to be a work of phenomenal maturity in its assured musical progress, and in the certainty of the orchestral presentation of the ideas» (Lloyd, 2001)

-Arnold Bax whom to an invitation for an informal dinner between musician where also Walton was invited said "I like the idea of the party and I am ever glad to meet William Walton" (Lloyd, 2001)

- Eric Blom in the Manchester Guardian wrote:

«This young composer is a born genius" and said that it was tempting to call the concerto the best thing in recent music of any nationality » (Blom, 1930)

Catalogue of objects

- my pictures and videos (garden, trip, me during the interview)
- pictures taken by internet about Walton and Lady Walton
- sounds recorded in the Garden (birds, water, frogs, cicadas)
- books: "William Walton: Muse of Fire" (S. Lloyd) and "Pot Pourri" (M.Aston)
- DVD "La Mortella", bought in the shop of the Garden where Lady Susana is the touristic guide of the oasis
- William Walton Concerto, score
- Interviewes and transcription
- my personal written reflections about the experience

Transcript of interview 1

Forio 4/08/2016 Intervista (1) ad Alessandra Vinciguerra, Presidente della Fondazione William Walton e La Mortella:

G-Quali erano gli aspetti salienti della personalità di W.Walton?

A-Walton aveva un carattere molto particolare, apparentemente era una persona chiusa, molto riservata, in questo senso impersonava quasi il tradizionale gentiluomo inglese, silenzioso, controllato, riservato. In realtà tutto questo nascondeva uno spirito estremamente acuto, aveva un grandissimo senso dell'umorismo e amava molto fare battute, anche pungenti. Era un tipo che colpiva improvvisamente con queste sue espressioni. Inoltre era una persona molto molto meticolosa: aveva un orario della giornata in cui lavorava, rispettava sempre lo schema mentale che si era fatto, aveva una vita molto

regolare, almeno negli ultimi 35 anni della sua vita, quando lavorava non voleva assolutamente essere disturbato, gli dava fastidio la minima distrazione, non sopportava rumori e suoni sgradevoli, per non parlare di radio e radioline che usavano le persone all'epoca per andare al mare, o magari qualcuno che cantava in maniera stonata. Questo lo faceva veramente impazzire.

G-Nel Giardino c'era una zona che lui prediligeva per comporre?

A-Dunque, quando William Walton era vivo, era sviluppata soltanto la parte inferiore del Giardino, la Valle. Tutta la parte superiore del Giardino, la Collina, era ancora selvaggia. Lui componeva soltanto nel suo studio, come dicevo era molto meticoloso e metodico. Tutte le mattine a una certa ora entrava nel suo studio di musica, si metteva al pianoforte e iniziava a comporre, a volte usciva per fare due passi in Giardino, ma non portava il lavoro fuori, era sempre all'interno, anche perché il suo studio era completamente insonorizzato, quindi lui poteva isolarsi da qualsiasi cosa succedesse al di fuori. Usciva soltanto all'ora dei pasti, nel pomeriggio tornava a lavorare e poi la sera smetteva. Nel suo processo creativo aveva bisogno di un grande rigore che esercitava rispettando questi orari.

G-Ho letto nelle sue biografie che in tarda età è stato definito bonariamente un Grand Old Man della musica inglese. In che senso?

A-Io credo che questo sia un po' un equivoco in fondo. Avendo lui scritto due marce per l'incoronazione, a un certo punto è stato visto un po' come *establishment* (l'insieme dei detentori del potere economico e politico, e dei loro sostenitori, che in un paese vigilano sul mantenimento dell'ordine costituito e occupano un posto di rilievo nella vita sociale e culturale), come membro di una certa casta, che non era, perché lui non veniva dalla nobiltà, anzi da una famiglia molto modesta. Nonostante ciò aveva avuto modo di comporre due o tre lavori che poi sono entrati a far parte dello standard e quindi verso gli anni '70 è stato un po' visto come il rappresentante di un mondo che ormai stava scomparendo.

G- Tornando al Giardino, ho apprezzato in modo particolare nella parte superiore il Tempio del Sole, in cui ho notato diversi riferimenti alla musica. Che cosa rappresentano?

A-Il Tempio è una creazione interamente di Lady Walton ed è stato fatto nel 2003. La struttura inizialmente era stata creata per avere una cisterna per l'acqua. Quando i Walton

vennero ad abitare qui, non c'era acqua sull'isola e loro non avevano neanche un pozzo perché questa è una zona molto rocciosa. Provarono a scavare dei pozzi ma non è mai uscito nulla, quindi tutta l'acqua era comprata attraverso delle navi-cisterna che raggiungevano l'isola una volta a settimana e scaricavano l'acqua, che era un bene molto costoso. Per questo motivo Lady Walton fece costruire una cisterna in muratura sperando di raccogliere l'acqua piovana. In realtà però questo sistema non ha mai funzionato, perché sull'isola non piove con continuità e tanto da poter riempire una cisterna di cemento, quindi il progetto fu abbandonato e questa struttura rimase per molti anni inutilizzata. Nel 2003 come dicevo, Lady Walton decise di trasformarla in un Tempio. Fece scavare la parte frontale, poiché era quasi interamente interrata, per poter ricavare una porta e uno scalone di accesso e poi studiò il tema decorativo iconografico con l'aiuto di un amico e un artista, Simon Verity, uno scultore inglese. Il Tempio è dedicato ad Apollo che è il Dio del Sole, perché la posizione dell'edificio è tale che i raggi del sole battano direttamente sulla porta d'ingresso, soprattutto in alcuni periodi dell'anno, se ci si mette dentro il tempio, la porta inquadra il sole al tramonto. Essendo dunque Ischia un'isola mediterranea, c'è questo legame col sole, che è l'elemento fondamentale di questa terra. Il Dio Apollo oltre ad essere il Dio del Sole è anche il Dio della Musica, e questa coincidenza non poteva passare inosservata. Il Tempio era già suddiviso in tre parti per motivi di pressione dell'acqua. Questa divisione ha ispirato Lady Walton a creare tre camere dedicate alla vita di Apollo: nella prima stanza, entrando a sinistra, troviamo la Camera della Nascita. In un bassorilievo si vede la madre di Apollo, la Dea Latrona, che dà alla luce il figlio sostenendosi a una palma, secondo alcune leggende lei aveva avuto l'aiuto di questo albero. Poiché nel giardino ci sono moltissime palme, a Lady Walton è sembrato interessante creare questo rapporto. In questa prima stanza si vede l'acqua che sgorga da una sorgente e tale sorgente rappresenta un oggetto inventato dall'artista che raffigura un uovo, ossia l'inizio della vita e il sesso femminile, ma è anche una lira, attraverso la quale sgorga l'acqua. Dunque è come se volesse dire che la musica è un atto primigenio, un atto spontaneo, così come lo è la nascita. In un altro bassorilievo presente in questa stanza, che è ancora piccola e modesta, si vede il Dio Apollo, ormai giovanetto che su un cocchio trascinato dai cigni, si reca verso l'olimpio. Secondo la leggenda Apollo è nato su un'isola e, una volta raggiunta la maggiore, età è stato accolto da tutti gli altri Dei dell'Olimpo. In questa stanza l'acqua nasce, ha un getto dirompente e vivace che si manifesta in una cascata ed è il simbolo dell'inizio della vita. Nella stanza centrale abbiamo

la maturità, la pienezza della vita. In questa stanza l'acqua rallenta il suo corso e diventa pacata, calma, ha raggiunto un equilibrio. I bassorilievi sulle pareti sono ispirati ancora alla vita del Dio Apollo, si vede Apollo nel grande carro del fuoco e del sole, che ormai esercita la sua funzione di dominatore e di colui che dona la vita, nello stesso tempo i raggi del sole si trasformano in pentagrammi e si vedono delle note. La musica riportata contiene dei brevi estratti della musica di William Walton. C'è una citazione da Belshade che parla dell'amore, dei raggi del sole, dell'oro e quindi di nuovo di temi vitali. Le altre decorazioni rappresentano figure mitologiche e sono occupate a fare le due grandi cose e qui arriviamo al cuore della mortella: o fanno l'amore o fanno musica, le due attività che nella visione di Lady Walton rendono la vita degna di essere vissuta e sono i due perni su cui s'incardina tutta la storia della mortella perché il giardino è nato per amore, per amore di questa donna nei confronti del marito e continua nell'amore e nella musica, quindi il simbolo è questo, tant'è vero che ci sono delle strutture per far arrampicare le piante che sono guardandole bene delle eliche del DNA, quindi sono la base fondamentale della vita.

La terza stanza è la stanza della morte o meglio della fine della vita. Qui l'acqua, dopo aver fatto, tutto il suo corso entra in una specie di gorgo e scompare. In realtà viene riciclata, quindi termina un corso e ne inizia uno nuovo, proprio come il ciclo della vita che va a concludersi per poi ricominciare. Questa stanza così buia è decorata da una citazione dell'Eneide. Secondo l'Eneide a un certo punto Enea attraversa un bosco buio, cupo ed è alla ricerca dell'ingresso dell'oltretomba perché la Sibilla umana gli ha detto che nell'oltretomba troverà la risposta a tante delle sue domande. Si vede, infatti, la statua della Sibilla, una vecchia che soppresiede a questa specie di gorgo in cui scompare l'acqua. Secondo alcune interpretazioni della leggenda la Sibilla gli consigliò di cercare una pianta che aveva un ramo d'oro e due colombe gli indicarono la pianta. Con questo ramo d'oro Enea riuscì ad acquietare il pericolosissimo cane Argo che era all'ingresso degli inferi e quindi riuscì a entrare nell'oltretomba. Per molti interpreti, questa pianta dal ramo d'oro era una mortella, un mirto, che è la pianta che dà il nome al giardino, quindi sempre secondo l'interpretazione un po' divertita e un po' incuriosita di Lady Walton ci ricollegiamo a quest'antico mito e la mortella, in cui si svolgono le attività dell'amore e della musica, diventa un tramite per accedere a uno stato più profondo di conoscenza. Quindi tutta l'allegoria del Tempio ha

questo senso: la vita è un grande ciclo, continuo che si ripete e attraverso l'amore e la musica si raggiungono dei livelli più profondi di conoscenza e dell'esistenza.

G-L'altra zona legata profondamente alla musica di Walton è la Victoria House. Può dirmi di più?

A-La V.H. è stata costruita immediatamente prima del 2000 e la costruzione di questa serra per coltivare la Victoria, una ninfea gigantesca, è stato un momento di ripresa dell'attività del Giardino. Infatti, dopo la morte di William Walton nell' '83, Lady Walton si è dedicata alla creazione della Fondazione e all'avvio delle grandi attività musicali, masterclass, borse di studio, concerti e così via, e ha reso il giardino accessibile al pubblico perché i biglietti di ingresso al Giardino mantengono tutta la struttura e finanziano le attività musicali. Quindi lavorò dal punto di vista della sicurezza e della comodità per rendere il giardino pratico, ma non aveva continuato a sviluppare l'aspetto paesaggistico del giardino. Con la costruzione della Victoria House invece ha ripreso una fase di costruzione e la Victoria House è proprio un simbolo perché il mascherone che si trova alle spalle della fontana da cui viene l'acqua è ispirato a un quadro fatto da John Piper, un noto artista inglese per una rappresentazione di *Facade*, la prima opera che ha fatto conoscere William Walton e che lui scrisse a vent'anni. *Facade* è un'opera che ha musica e poesia insieme ed è tutta giocata sul tema della facciata, del doppio, su quello che appare e quello che invece è. Le poesie sono scritte da Edith Sitwell, molto amica di William Walton, parlano di vari personaggi che si comportano in modi bizzarri e particolari e quest'opera era messa in scena in un teatro in cui una tenda copriva la voce recitante che parlava attraverso un buco nella tenda con l'aiuto di un megafono. Quindi JP dipinse per la tenda questo grande viso un po' ieratico come se fosse una scultura antica e poi Lady Walton fece copiare da S.Verity questa immagine per riportare nel giardino il simbolo della musica, quindi per noi la V.H. è il punto in cui giardino e musica si fondono e inizia una nuova storia del giardino.

G-I Sitwell, molto amici, lo ospitarono nella residenza estiva ad Amalfi, dove scrisse il Concerto per Viola. Cosa lo influenzò?

A-L'amicizia e la convivenza con i Sitwell hanno significato molto per Walton. Lui veniva da una famiglia umile e solo grazie al mecenatismo dei Sitwell ha potuto spostarsi a Londra e dedicarsi interamente alla composizione della musica. Per più di dieci anni lui ha vissuto in

questa famiglia di nobili e intellettuali che lo aiutavano in tutto, anche perché la musica allora non poteva permettergli di mantenersi. Quindi è stato un rapporto anche difficile, perché da un lato era molto grato a questa famiglia, ma allo stesso tempo non deve essere semplice per un ragazzo sapere di dipendere completamente dalla generosità di queste persone. Però con i Sitwell c'è stato un rapporto molto stimolante e creativo, che è culminato nella scrittura di *Facade*. Inoltre i Sitwell frequentavano quella che era all'epoca l'*intelligenza* a Londra, quindi Walton entra a contatto con altri artisti, musicisti, poeti, danzatori, coreografi, diciamo un mondo cui non avrebbe potuto accedere viste le scarse risorse economiche e di contatti, quindi Sitwell sono stati fondamentali.

G-Perché Tertis rifiutò di eseguire il concerto per viola?

A-Walton inizia a scrivere il Concerto per Viola su suggerimento di un famoso direttore d'orchestra dell'epoca Thomas Beecham che era patrono e direttore della London Symphony Orchestra e all'epoca la prima viola era Tertis, famoso e virtuoso per cui tanti scrivevano. Così fece quindi Walton, ma quando gli consegnò lo spartito, Tertis rifiutò di eseguirlo dicendo di non stare bene in quel periodo. Successivamente definì quel rifiuto come uno dei grandi errori della sua vita, dichiarò di essersi pentito di non aver eseguito la prima e confessò di non aver saputo capire la musica di Walton, perché risultava troppo innovativa, dissonante e sul momento non gli piacque. La prima, eseguita da Hindemith, ebbe invece un grande successo. Inizialmente Walton non fu contento di questa scelta poiché disse di aver scritto il concerto pensando allo stile di Tertis, ma poi ne fu contento e i due divennero anche grandi amici, tant'è che poi lui scrisse anche le variazioni.

G-In che modo la Fondazione porta avanti la duplice Mission di Lady e William Walton?

A-Oggi la nostra missione è duplice appunto. Da una parte abbiamo il compito di portare avanti questo Giardino, di aprirlo al pubblico, di farlo conoscere in modo anche particolare. LW era una donna di straordinaria intelligenza, molto competente del campo del giardino; sapeva benissimo che non si può cristallizzare un giardino e ha proprio lasciato detto "non cercate di mantenere il Giardino così com'è ora, non cercate di congelarlo, perché le piante crescono, non saranno mai come le ho viste io né come le ha viste William. Il giardino deve continuare a vivere, deve svilupparsi, deve evolversi, deve crescere, ci saranno piante che muoiono, altre che verranno sostituite". Quindi non ha lasciato ordini o dettami. Ha solo

detto “amatelo molto, fatelo amare dalle persone, rendetelo sempre bello e vivetelo”. La sua paura, dopo aver visitato molti giardini, era che il giardino e la casa venissero privati della loro anima e resi come muse, come posti vuoti. Ha chiesto pertanto che questi ambienti venissero sempre tenuti vivi e fossero vissuti e amati. Il nostro compito è oggi quello di mantenere il Giardino vivo e vibrante dal punto di vista dell'orticoltura, ma soprattutto molto vissuto in modo molto intenso. Per questo permettiamo alle persone di rimanere qui anche tutto il giorno, leggere, dipingere, scrivere o meditare. Questa è la nostra missione: renderlo gradevole, amabile e vissuto, farlo sviluppare, aggiungere sempre delle cose, mantenendo ovviamente la linea di paesaggio inimitabile creato da Lady Walton, con il suo spirito che aveva alla base proprio l'amore per le piante. Per quanto riguarda la musica, il nostro compito è di sviluppare questo giardino proprio come centro per la musica e per le arti. Quindi abbiamo un programma molto ricco di concerti, sia di musica da camera sia di musica sinfonica per le orchestre giovanili, abbiamo rappresentazioni teatrali, borse di studio, un archivio molto ricco che può essere consultato. Il focus della fondazione è sui giovani perché siccome William Walton da giovane era povero e non avrebbe mai potuto emergere senza l'aiuto dei Sitwell, lui voleva a sua volta aiutare i giovani. Quindi voleva che ci fosse uno sforzo particolare per incoraggiare i giovani e per avviarli alla carriera musicale, quindi dare loro la possibilità di farsi conoscere in pubblico e di fare concerti.

G-A partire da quando è iniziata quest'attività dedicata ai giovani?

A-Lady Walton ha iniziato nel '92 con le prime masterclass, l'apertura della sala concerti, le prime borse di studio. Durante i primi dieci anni dalla morte del Maestro, a parte un primo periodo in cui ha dovuto riorganizzare la sua vita, ha iniziato a muoversi in questa direzione, a creare delle strutture di appoggio per realizzare questa complessa operazione, dando luogo a una foresteria dove poter ospitare i giovani musicisti, aprendo la sala concerti, costruendo, il teatro greco, il bar. Il Giardino è stato reso accessibile alle sedie a rotelle, facciamo programmi educativi molto intensi per le scolaresche con dei laboratori e per fortuna Lady Walton è riuscita a creare una struttura in grado di supportare tutto questo.

G-Quali testimonianze restano delle persone che hanno visitato il Giardino?

A-Possediamo un libro delle firme in cui tutti quelli che vengono in visita possono lasciare dei commenti e le parole scritte sono molto intense. Evidentemente i visitatori percepiscono

la particolarità di questo giardino. Dicono che si sente la passione, l'amore, sono affascinati dalla storia di Susana e William, restano incantati quando possono assistere ad un concerto e persone di qualsiasi estrazione culturale e provenienza dicono di aver apprezzato lo spirito del giardino. Lady Walton diceva "lo spirito di Walton è rimasto qui" e oggi io dico "lo spirito di Susana è rimasto qui".