The Swingles

Vocal Ensemble

Mallika Bhagwat (soprano)
Sarah Alison (soprano)
Laura Moisey-Gray (alto)
James Botcher (tenor)
Owen Butcher (tenor)
Jamie Wright (baritone/vocal percussion)
Tom Hartley (bass)

The Swingles have been challenging the boundaries of vocal music for over 60 years, earning 5 Grammy® Awards and establishing themselves as one of the world's most beloved and admired vocal groups.

Throughout its various iterations (Les Swingles Singers / Swingle II / The New Swingle Singers / The Swingles / The Swingle Singers (and since 2014, The Swingles again), the group's signature and instantly-recognisable sound has remained constant and timeless and their intricate arrangements remain unparalleled. The current singers are masters of their craft, constantly seeking new ways of reimagining jazz, folk, pop and classical music from their ever-growing repertoire, alongside creating a rich vein of new original material. Their combination of close-microphone amplification paired with the extraordinary range and vocal dexterity of the group's seven individual voices to create one seamlessly-blended vocal sound, has captured the admiration of composers and collaborators alike, who have embraced the sheer versatility of the group and its genre-crossing possibilities.

American-born Ward Swingle first assembled a group of Parisian session singers to sing through Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* as a vocal exercise in 1962. The resulting album 'Jazz Sebastian Bach' (recorded initially for friends and family), became a huge hit, breaking new musical ground and launching The Swingles to fame. Several of the singers had previously sung with Mimi Perrin's group Les Double Six (who with Quincy Jones and Dizzy Gillespie recorded the 6 voices twice in order to create a much larger sound and richer chord structure). The Swingles of today employ a similar technique in their current shows - an immersive layering up of vocals using live-looping technology to record themselves in the moment and have it play back later, producing mesmeric (and potentially massive) musical textures.

The group has released more than 50 albums encompassing a huge range of music in many different styles, fuelled by Ward Swingle's pioneering spirit and varied musical tastes. Their arrangements tend either to give a little twist to the original or turn it completely on its head. The group's genre-inclusive approach to music-making has led to collaborations with artists such as Jamie Cullum, Gareth Malone, Kurt Elling, New York Voices, and Labrinth. They co-wrote and performed a song for the end credits of Alexander Payne's film *Downsizing* and have appeared on many film and TV soundtracks, including *Grey's Anatomy*, *Sex and the City*, *Wedding Crashers*, *The Holdovers*, *The Two Popes*, and *Glee*.

The group's latest album 'Theatreland' (a spectacular celebration of some of the greatest musical theatre songs as you've never heard them before) was released in 2024.

Revered experimental composer, Luciano Berio, was one of the first composers to explore the sound of The Swingles' amplified voices in an orchestral setting with his ground-breaking Sinfonia, first performed in 1968. The work has become something of a post-modern cult classic with orchestras across the globe, with The Swingles rightly recognised as the original and leading interpreters of the highly demanding vocal parts within the work. Notable recent performances include those with San Francisco Symphony (with Michael Tilson Thomas), ORF Vienna Radio (with Marin Alsop), London Philharmonic Orchestra (with Vladimir Jurowski), and the Orchestra of La Scala, Milan (with John Axelrod).

In 2024, The Swingles commissioned a major new work *The Gorgeous Nothings* by Anna Clyne and performed the world premiere at the BBC Proms to critical acclaim. Having had such an immersive heritage in experimental electronic vocal music they are excited at the possibilities of the Augmented Orchestra and the sheer sonic potential of this new work.

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