

UNCONVENTIONALLY CLASSY

Tilda Swinton

Nella sua fortunata carriera, l'attrice scozzese continua a riscuotere importanti riconoscimenti: a sessant'anni è ancora una delle interpreti più amate dai registi internazionali che la scelgono per la sua versatilità, dovuta anche alla raffinata bellezza androgina che la contraddistingue.

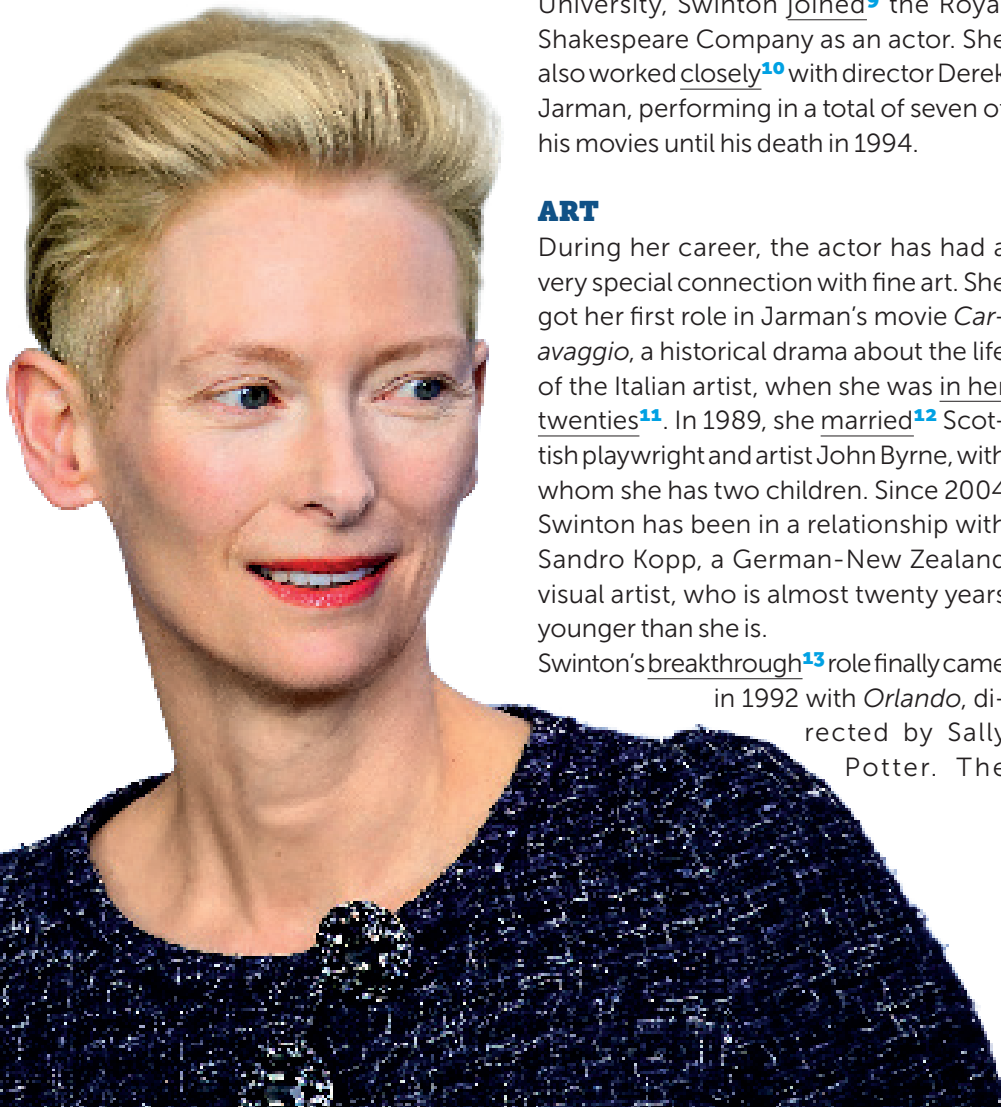
LOWER INTERMEDIATE **B1**ON CD 3 

GLOSSARY

- 1 **to turn sixty:** compiere sessant'anni
- 2 **although:** tuttavia
- 3 **pale:** pallida
- 4 **otherworldly:** ultraterreno
- 5 **Army officer:** ufficiale dell'esercito
- 6 **to attend:** frequentare
- 7 **to feel homesick:** avere nostalgia di casa
- 8 **to befriend:** fare amicizia
- 9 **to join:** unirsi
- 10 **closely:** a stretto contatto
- 11 **in her twenties:** a vent'anni
- 12 **to marry:** sposare
- 13 **breakthrough:** della svolta
- 14 **screen:** per il grande schermo
- 15 **to tackle:** affrontare
- 16 **gender identity:** identità di genere
- 17 **journey:** viaggio
- 18 **to lay still:** giacere immobile
- 19 **asleep:** addormentata
- 20 **to award:** premiare
- 21 **supporting actress:** attrice non protagonista

Scottish actor Tilda Swinton turned sixty¹ last November, although² her age certainly doesn't show.

Her pale³ skin, short golden hair and green eyes give her an otherworldly⁴ appearance. Her thin, androgynous figure redefines conventional beauty standards, and her unique looks and enigmatic character have helped her distinguish herself in the film industry for over thirty years.



ORIGINS

Katherine Matilda Swinton was born in the Scottish Lowlands into an aristocratic family. Her father was a British Army officer⁵ and Lord of the Kimmerghame House. Swinton attended⁶ West Heath Girls' boarding school where she was bullied and felt homesick⁷. She did, however, befriend⁸ the future princess Diana Spencer.

After studying English at Cambridge University, Swinton joined⁹ the Royal Shakespeare Company as an actor. She also worked closely¹⁰ with director Derek Jarman, performing in a total of seven of his movies until his death in 1994.

ART

During her career, the actor has had a very special connection with fine art. She got her first role in Jarman's movie *Caravaggio*, a historical drama about the life of the Italian artist, when she was in her twenties¹¹. In 1989, she married¹² Scottish playwright and artist John Byrne, with whom she has two children. Since 2004 Swinton has been in a relationship with Sandro Kopp, a German-New Zealand visual artist, who is almost twenty years younger than she is.

Swinton's breakthrough¹³ role finally came in 1992 with *Orlando*, directed by Sally Potter. The



Clockwise from top left: Swinton in *The Human Voice* (2020) directed by Pedro Almodóvar based on a play by Jean Cocteau; in *Orlando* (1992) directed by Sally Potter based on a book by Virginia Woolf; in an art installation in 1995; with her Oscar for her role in *Michael Clayton* in 2008.

screen¹⁴ adaptation of Virginia Woolf's novel about a young nobleman and poet who changes sex and lives for centuries seemed perfect for her. The novel and film tackle¹⁵ themes such as liberty and gender identity¹⁶, but it is also a journey¹⁷ through four hundred years of English history.

In 1995, Swinton performed in a conceptual art piece called *The Maybe* at the Serpentine gallery in London. For eight hours a day, the actor lay still¹⁸ inside a transparent box, apparently asleep¹⁹.

PRIZES

In 2008, Swinton was awarded²⁰ the Oscar for best supporting actress²¹ for her role in legal thriller *Michael Clayton*, also starring²² George Clooney. In the years that followed, she featured²³ in many international productions. They include the psychological thriller *We Need to Talk About Kevin*, in which she played the mother of a teenage murderer²⁴, and *Suspiria*, a remake of Dario Argento's classic horror movie; in this new adaptation by

Italian director Luca Guadagnino, Swinton played three different characters — including an old man —, proving her incredible versatility as an actor.

Her most recent appearance is in *The Human Voice*, a short film by Spanish director Pedro Almodóvar, adapted from a 1930 play by Jean Cocteau. The film premiered²⁵ last September at the Venice International Film Festival, where Swinton won²⁶ the prestigious Honorary Golden Lion award. ☉

GLOSSARY

- 22 to star: recitare
- 23 to feature: apparire
- 24 murderer: assassino
- 25 to premiere: essere proiettato per la prima volta
- 26 to win: vincere

SPEAK UP Explains

Boarding school. Convitto. Con il termine *boarding school* si indica un 'collegio', una scuola in cui i ragazzi possono anche risiedere per tutta la durata dell'anno scolastico. Il sostantivo *boarding*, infatti, significa 'vitto e alloggio', e il verbo *to board* indica l'azione di 'alloggiare'. Nel convitto gli alunni hanno a disposizione una mensa e camere. In genere queste scuole dividono i maschi dalle femmine, ma ci sono anche collegi misti. Nel Regno Unito questo tipo di scuole sono spesso private e quindi molte sono riservate all'élite, come quella frequentata da Tilda Swinton per ragazze di famiglie alto borghesi e nobili.