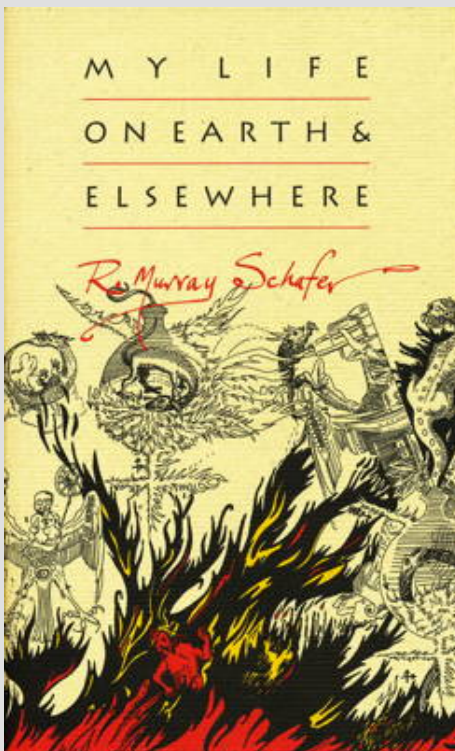


Schizophonia — Issue 124, 1 August 2018

SPONSORED FEATURE — 'MY LIFE ON EARTH & ELSEWHERE'



My Life on Earth & Elsewhere by
R Murray Schafer
2012, The Porcupine's Quill,
280pp, ISBN 9780889843523

A P Virag: It is a sad fact that in Canada far too few of its people know the name R Murray Schafer and far more know hockey players and certain pop singers better left unmentioned.

In this autobiography Schafer recollects his life, his work, his personal responses to literature, people and nature — the last most especially in its sounding form, for Schafer is above all a composer. And sadly, he recalls the people who either stood in his way, maltreated him or behaved in unprofessional fashion. Depending on your character (optimist or pessimist), you will read this as a pean to creativity or a litany of uncalled-for struggles.

Both views are correct: one way, and the other. Schafer wrote a novel entitled *Wolftracks*, which can be read either from the first right hand page to the end or from the last left hand page to the front. The tale is an 'ouroboros' and circles forever. But both 'sides' are present.

The negative experiences might give a certain dramatic fervour (*how* could they have done that?), but it is probably better to focus upon the good. Further, when it is

a matter of Schafer's creativity, there is so much to be amazed at.

Surprisingly, Schafer retains the usual pattern of autobiographies: from beginning until now. Born in Sarnia, Ontario in 1933, but raised in Toronto, Schafer writes of the terrible pain of losing an eye as a child at the hands of a (malicious) doctor, of the misunderstanding of teachers in school, of his debacles with professors at university and then his life as a deck hand on a Great Lakes ship. Of what he experienced he is always attentive and responsive:

Another memorable experience occurred one night on Lake Huron. I had by this time graduated to the position of watchman, and part of my duty was to spell off the wheelsman from time to time. It was always an indescribable thrill to take the wheel of this gigantic machine coasting over the waves under the moon and stars at night. In those days, the navigator plotted the course of the ship by listening to radio signals from transmitters at different points around the lake. Each signal had its own pitch and pulse: long-short-long ... short-short-short-long ... etc. On this night, as we were coming down Lake Huron, something went wrong with our receiver. The only signal we could bring in was that of a distant radio station playing Sibelius's Fifth Symphony. I will never forget that night: the foaming waves tossed over the fo'c's'le in the moonlight, blending with Sibelius ... No one spoke. We just listened to the symphony and the waves for a good half hour until the navigation signals returned. It was a good thing they did since we were nearing the shallow waters of the St Clair River where a lot of shipwrecks had occurred over the years. The position of these wrecks appeared on our maps and we had to keep clear of them, for some of the carcasses lay just a few metres below the surface of the water.

Schafer's spare and precise language simply presents the beauty while revealing his insights and he often makes no comment. Conclusions are left for the reader.

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SPONSORED FEATURES

A P Virag's review of R Murray Schafer's book *My Life on Earth and Elsewhere* recently received a *Music & Vision Magazine* Article Sponsorship, which was timed to coincide with Schafer's eighty-fifth birthday on 18 July 2018.

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As shown here, any *M&V* review, article or feature can be sponsored — it needn't be a recently published article. The Schafer review was first published in 2013.

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Ethel Smyth (1858-1944) in cheerful mood. She was to witness the triumph of women in securing the vote in 1918, a cause she wholeheartedly supported.

Roderic Dunnett: Ethel Smyth's *Mass in D*, a real *Missa Solemnis* for its age, is to receive a performance at the Royal Festival Hall, on Thursday 15 November 2018, with the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Sakari Oramo. It's the only other current performance I've spotted, which, in this, the centenary of the granting of the long delayed right of women's suffrage, looks like an opportunity missed by choral societies up and down the country. Of Dame Ethel, who conducted parts in 1925 and her complete *Mass* at Gloucester in 1928, amusing anecdotes are recorded in Anthony Boden and Paul Hedley's magnificently researched **The Three Choirs Festival: A History**, published in 2017 by The Boydell Press.

But Hereford and the Philharmonia — what players — have got in first. One assumes that Bowen knew and some time ago conceived an admiration for this piece, for which the centenary now offered a golden opportunity. It's big, it's

dramatic, it's splendidly structured, the familiar words admirably and originally approached. There is only one comparison I have long felt applies. It is to Beethoven: indeed to his *Missa Solemnis* in the same key, D major, which is, it will be remembered, a work conceivably more massive than his Ninth Symphony. I keep hearing Beethoven in this work: Smyth's ability to stretch out movements to a quite massive scale put all the more pressure on the conductor, that is, Geraint Bowen, to maintain the momentum throughout. This work could not possibly sag, but it could falter. No such thing here. Again, Bowen's pacing and dynamic were superb, and the orchestra responded by adhering scrupulously to the latter. It could have overborne. It never did.

The Kyries began with men only, here deeply atmospheric. But with the women's voices added, an intense slow fugue emerged — we might think of Bach's B minor, too. Smyth makes quite amazing use of woodwind and horns, probably during the 'Christe', before they settle down for the repeated Kyrie. Then instead of the Gloria — Smyth postpones this to the end, and to what brilliant effect — came the massive burst of the Credo. How clever of the chorus, as well as the composer, to reduce suddenly from still forte 'visibilium' to a pianissimo 'invisibilium'. How does one get a chorus of over 110 to sing pianissimo, let alone after a split second? It beats me. But that's what Bowen got them to do; an instant (and unexpected) dynamic transition. Wonderful. [READ MORE ...](#)



Geraint Bowen, Artistic Director of the Hereford Three Choirs Festival and the programmer of an extraordinarily imaginative and original week of music.

THREE CHOIRS FESTIVAL IN HEREFORD

Roderic Dunnett was writing about the opening concert of the 2018 Three Choirs Festival at Hereford, on 28 July. The festival continues until Saturday 4 August. Amongst other events, the remaining evening concerts (all at 7.45pm in Hereford Cathedral) feature Bruckner's *Te Deum* and Mendelssohn's *Lobgesang* (Wednesday 1 August), a Parry centenary tribute — *Blest pair of Sirens*, *Symphony No 5 (Symphonic Fantasia)* and *Invocation to Music* (Thursday 2 August), Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms*, Walton's *Viola Concerto*, Ravel's *Le tombeau de Couperin* and Lili Boulanger's *Du fond de l'amême* (Friday 3 August) and, in the festival's final concert, Vaughan Williams' *Toward the Unknown Region*, Parry's *Elegy for Brahms* and Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem* (Saturday 4 August 2018).

[MORE INFORMATION](#)

Roderic Dunnett was also at Winslow Hall Opera for *Il Trovatore*, at Garsington Opera for David Sawer's new opera *The Skating Rink* and at Bampton Classical Opera for Nicolò Isouard's *Cendrillon*:

I go to Bampton Classical Opera for several reasons. I go for the sheer charm of the surroundings in the old Oxfordshire Deanery gardens, and the easygoing picnic atmosphere (found also at their Gloucestershire venue, the Orangery at Westonbirt). For the unpretentious, homely feel. For the huge sense of fun filling every production. For its

unfailing ability to trawl through eighteenth century operas and have the daring to put on repertoire no-one else would dream of. For the flair of the acting, and invariable quality of the singing. For the humour of the set designs, and the cheek and wit of the translations. For an orchestra that responds to the challenge, nursed by some highly talented younger conductors.

In fact, for just about every merit one could possibly look for in summer opera, I head to Bampton without fail. For the whole enjoyable experience ...

Now with their usual flair they have revived the reputation of Maltese-born composer Nicolò Isouard (1775-1818), who made a huge reputation — twenty performances, we are told, netted a cool 110,000 Francs, a huge sum in theatrical terms — amid the fluctuating fortunes of post-Revolution, Napoleonic Paris, at the same time as Cherubini, Grétry, Méhul and Le Sueur were ruling the roost. It was the beginning of music in transition, France leading Germany in yielding the first pioneering indications of what would become the Romantic era ...

As usual, Bampton had amassed a very capable, youngish cast, one or two of them — Nicholas Merryweather, Aoife O'Sullivan — old Bampton hands, all well able to embrace the tongue-in-cheek quality (and indeed cheek) that characterises Jeremy Gray's regular, enjoyably formulaic comic stagings. But just as noticeable this time was the quality of the orchestra: conductor Harry Sever made of this 'routine'

score a work of some sensitivity, eliciting fire and zest in the racier ensembles yet inducing enticing, gentle sounds with a minimum of movement — slight upward hand gestures, skilful use of both hands independently, coaxing lightly to attractively restrained effect. One noticed the eloquent harp touches of Rita Schindler. The contributions of sometimes subtle and delicate woodwind (2221) lent essential variety to Isouard's score.



Mutual attraction and blossoming true love —
Kate Howden as Cinderella and
Bradley Smith as the Prince.

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Giuseppe Pennisi: Do you remember the old farce *No Sex Please, We're British* by Alistair Foot and Anthony Marriott? It came to my mind on 27 July 2018 at the Terme di Caracalla, the summer home of Rome's Teatro dell'Opera, a stunning open air theatre for an audience of four thousand in the midst of Roman ruins. I was at the premiere of a new production of Sergey Prokofiev's ballet *Romeo and Juliet*. Many composers have based their work on Shakespeare's tragedy: eg Vaccaj, Bellini, Marchetti and Zandonai, to name only the Italians, as well Gounod, Berlioz and Bernstein, to recall some of the best-known international musicians. Prokofiev is well appreciated by Rome's audiences. For the last forty years, Kenneth MacMillan's production, originally conceived for the British Royal Ballet, has often been staged, alternating with stagings by Carla Fracci and Yuri Grigorovich. The most applauded has been MacMillan's production, which sweats eroticism.

Prokofiev's ballet was commissioned in the mid-1930s but was stored for a few years because the Soviet Board of Censors considered it 'too erotic'. It was premiered in Brno, in Moravia and later reached Leningrad, a more liberal town than Moscow. During the years he composed the ballet music, Prokofiev was having a rather complex personal life. The work became a major international hit after a 1958 John Cracko production for Stuttgart Ballet.

The score is very illuminating: Prokofiev was at full artistic maturity when he began work on *Romeo and Juliet* in 1936. He was long past his experimental period in Chicago, Paris and Brussels. Fully integrated into the Soviet musical world, he had even composed the rather boring 'patriotic opera' *Semyon Kotko*. He had quite a lot of experience in composing for ballet. The *Romeo and Juliet* music is not merely functional to dancing. Prokofiev even contemplated the possibility of a 'happy end' with a final dance full of joy.

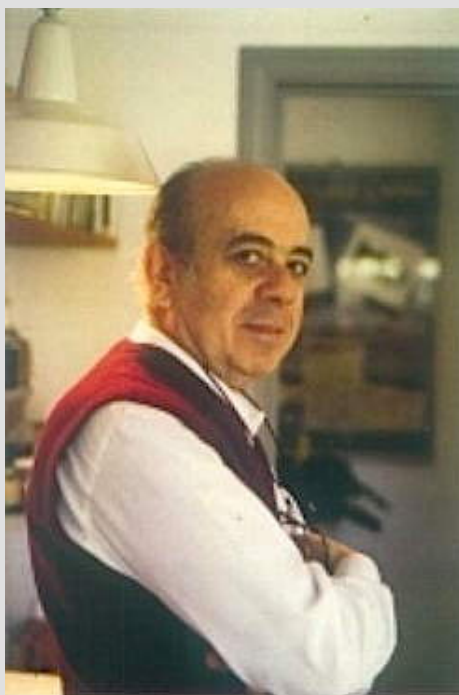
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Claudio Cocino as Romeo and Susanna Salvi as Juliet in Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* at Rome's Terme di Caracalla.
Photo © 2018 Yasuko Kageyama

Giuseppe was also at *La Traviata* at the same outdoor venue in Rome. And in two reviews covering events at Rome's two week Opus Summer Festival, he asks if Japan and Portugal are an odd pairing in the world of classical music, and hears music by his cousin, the Sicilian-born Francesco Pennisi (1934-2000) :

This two week Summer Festival, titled Opus [2-14 July 2018], features the most diverse music, taking the audience on an imaginary journey around the world, made possible by collaboration with the embassies and cultural institutes of India, Austria, Malta, Korea, Slovak Republic, Spain, Japan and Portugal. The program includes two concerts each evening: one at 8pm and one at 9.45pm. In between the audience can have a light dinner and drinks in the garden.



Francesco Pennisi (1934-2000)

The concerts focus on modern and contemporary music, and were preceded by three evenings of round table discussions on how music facilitates dialogue between different eras and cultures.

I attended the opening evening [2 July 2018] of the festival as such: two concerts as a tribute to a cousin of mine, Francesco Pennisi (1934-2000), who was a well-known composer in Italy and Germany, as well as a painter and a writer. He was born in Acireale, Sicily, and moved to Rome in his twenties; he studied composition with American composer R W Mann. In the 1960s he was one of the founders of the Association Nuova Consonanza, one of the key institutions to develop and promote contemporary music. He composed mostly chamber music but also five operas, staged in several Italian theatres. The last of these was *Tristan*, a forty-five-minute single act on a libretto by Erza Pound, conceived for the Japanese No theatre. Pennisi did not belong to any specific school. He was a member of important musical institutions such as

the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia. His compositions can be considered calligraphic minimalism, elegant and sophisticated with a Mediterranean flavor.

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Mike Wheeler: The first movement of Widor's Symphony No 5 made a welcome change from the ever-present Toccata with which it ends. Variation 2 had a clear sense of dialogue between manuals, while No 3 emerged as a slightly spooky scherzo. *Intermezzo*, by the tragically short-lived Jehan Alain (1911-1940) shows the composer at his most exploratory, with winding melodic lines twining round each other. The more active second half had just the right amount of forward movement.

Geoffrey Bush wrote his *Trumpet March* for the wedding of Prince Charles and Princess Diana. Morris' performance left a distinct impression that Bush wanted to create a more quirky piece than he felt able to in the circumstances. *Elegy*, by George Thalben-Ball (who, incidentally, inaugurated Derby Cathedral's Compton organ in 1939) was played with a dignity that kept sentimentality firmly at bay.

To end the recital, another set of variations, Duruflé's *Choral varié sur le thème du 'Veni Creator'*, included some delectably liquid sonorities in the brief Variation 2, and the sparkingly-realised toccata writing of Variation 4 led to an imposing, but not hectoring, return of the theme at the end.

Sadly, this was Hugh Morris' final recital as Derby Cathedral's Director of Music, as he is about take over as Director of the Royal School of Church Music. We wish him well, but he's not leaving the area, so it's not a complete goodbye.

[READ MORE ...](#)

Mike was also at Derby Cathedral for the Cathedral Choir's end-of-term concert, and for a recital by Naples-born clarinettist and composer Luca Luciano, and he made several visits to the Buxton Festival to hear recitals by Jennifer Davis and Caroline Dowdle, and by Lizzie Ball and Morgan Szymanski, plus Mozart's *Idomeneo*, Verdi's *Alzira* and Donizetti's *The Daughter of the Regiment*:



Hugh Morris



Charles Johnston as Sulpice, Jesús Álvarez as Tonio and Elin Pritchard as Marie in Donizetti's *The Daughter of the Regiment* as interpreted by Opera Della Luna at the Buxton Festival. Photo © 2018 Robert Workman

Opéra comique meets *Easy Rider* in Opera Della Luna's take on Donizetti's *La fille du régiment*. Instead of nineteenth-century soldiers, this regiment is a gang of Los Angeles bikers. First staged at Iford Arts Festival in 2014, the production owes much of its success to director Jeff Clarke's racy new English version, which keeps to the original plot outline, but re-writes both lyrics and dialogue from the ground up, making liberal use of bikers' slang at its most colourful.

Bikers may be tough and leathery on the outside, but they have a strict code of honour that includes being kind to women, children and animals. So when an abandoned baby girl turns up on The Regiment's turf, they're duty-bound to look after her. But now Marie is grown up, and an honorary gang member, the complications set in. First, there's Tonio, here a Mexican immigrant — the topical point is left to speak for itself — who earlier saved her life in a near-fatal accident, and it looks like they're falling in love, to the gang's evident displeasure. Then there's Marsha Berkenfeld, the high-society matriarch of the Berkenfeld Mansion, San Francisco, out joyriding with her chauffeur-valet Mr Hortensius, getting caught up in the action by straying into the latest spat between The Regiment and rival gang The Wild Cards. She turns out to know more about Marie's origins than she at first lets on, and spirits Marie away to her mansion and the prospect of a society marriage. But thanks to her secret, everything works out.

Elin Pritchard's Marie is a hugely likeable, sassy tomboy — a kind of Annie Oakley of the Harley-Davidsons, with a nice line in flirtatiousness, and it speaks volumes for the company's collective strength that she doesn't just walk away with every scene she appears in. Her Act II aria, contemplating a future without the gang, is touching in its pathos.

Jesús Álvarez suggests an initial diffidence as Tonio, but the character grows in stature as the opera proceeds, to become a commanding presence. High C-fanciers will be well satisfied, too. [READ MORE ...](#)

Alice McVeigh: Well, *L'ange de Nisida* [seen 18 July 2018, Royal Opera, London UK] was an opera of two halves, for sure: Donizetti in manic-depressive mode: the first half as frothy as up-market Gilbert and Sullivan — the second turgid, melodramatic — and risible in quite another fashion. The first half was dominated by the machinations of the King's chamberlain — the second by unconvincingly *Traviata*-like death throes of the heroine and with half the cast either (a) contemplating signing up for the convent/cloisters or (b) doing it. There were enough misunderstandings to supply two shows-worth of *The Gondeliers*, yet, as long as one ignored the surtitles (assuming one's French is as weak as mine) there was still much to enjoy.



Joyce El-Khoury, who took the role of the Countess Sylvia in *L'ange de Nisida*

(Just as an aside, this is the Royal frigging Opera House. Who edited the surtitles — not

once but twice — to read, 'It is her!' Whoever it was deserves to be banished to the outer darkness, where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth.)

To reiterate, there were some stunning moments — and the performance (which was recorded) was near-exemplary — but, well, an undiscovered masterpiece it ain't.

Mark Elder was the fervent advocate, and conducted superbly. The Royal Opera House orchestra — like moles dug out from their burrow — clearly relished their moment on stage, with woodwinds, horns and the violas being particularly outstanding. The chorus at the back, the men particularly, shone too, though there were some very odd, reddish lights, making one or two of the men look underworldish, or as if they'd mistakenly strayed in from another ROH production.

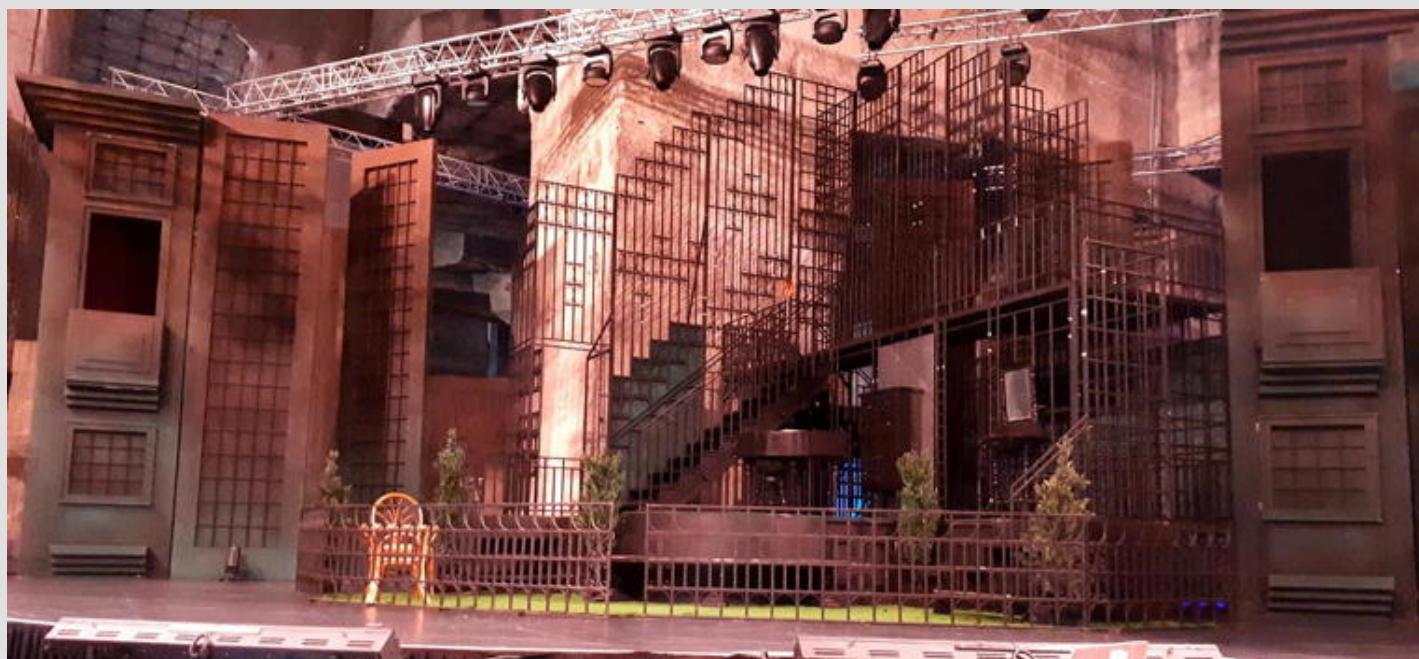
As for the two principals, Joyce El-Khoury, wearing a frock so magnificent that she could scarcely walk in it, scintillated as the Countess Sylvia (the King's mistress) — her last, dying, foreshortened 'Adieu' and other purely glorious soft singing almost redeemed the plot.

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Anett Fodor: Having entered the grounds of the Quarry Theatre in Fertőrákos, Hungary, I was astonished. Huge, overpowering grey boulders protrude skywards and made me remember the forced labour workers who toiled and suffered there in the twentieth century; many of them were to lose their lives. Some strange, ambiguous feelings came over me. Was this really a suitable venue for an *opera buffa*, I wondered?

As I continued my slow walk from the entrance into the depths of The Quarry, the sun set. I was attending an evening performance of Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* on 6 July 2018.

Arriving slightly early, I spent a few minutes looking around the inside of the cool stone theatre. The 750 heated seats of the auditorium were arranged in a semicircle. Interestingly enough, the medium-sized, revolving stage and audience were not separated by a curtain.



The Quarry Theatre stage at Fertőrákos in Hungary. Photo © 2018 Anett Fodor

The set was simple, but creatively designed by László Székely: a wrought iron-like construction represented Bartolo's house with its indispensable balcony. There was a long narrow orchestra pit for sixty musicians between the two. On both sides of the great hall, subtitles could be read on two LED boards — this time in German. (As Fertőrákos is situated next to the Hungarian/Austrian border, many Austrian visitors come to enjoy performances there.) Above, a modern, newly-installed and very versatile lighting system illuminated the rather eerie grotto. By this time, my curiosity was aroused by the extraordinary setting. [READ MORE ...](#)

Malcolm Miller: There are many ways to celebrate the gifts of great composers — Immersion Days, Composer Portraits, Themed Concerts, dedicated Festivals at certain times of year. One especially remarkable way is embodied in a Festival launched in 2004 in the Tuscan walled city of Lucca near Pisa, and devoted to the *oeuvre* of one of Lucca's greatest artistic 'sons', Giacomo Puccini. The unique feature of the 'Puccini and his Lucca' Festival, launched in 2004 for the 80th anniversary of his death, is that it comprises no less than a concert each and every day of the week, bar Sundays, and on some days, more than one!



The Puccini statue near the composer's birthplace museum in San Lorenzo Square, Lucca. Photo © 2018 Malcolm Miller

The programme format of an hour of music in two parts, starting around 7-7.15pm allows the audience, including many tourists, to continue their evening after the concert, perhaps enjoying some of the numerous restaurants and cafes in the narrow cobbled streets of the ancient city ...

I chanced upon the Festival on a recent visit to the city and was delighted on 20 June 2018 to experience the enthusiasm and Italian fire of two young and promising Italian opera singers, soprano Francesca Maionchi and tenor Mattia Nebbai, partnered by a superbly stylish accompanist, Diego Fiorini. The young artists exploited to the full the resonant acoustic of San Giovanni, especially in their suspense-filled *tenuti*, either at full throttle or with precisely-engineered *pianissimi*.

The recital began with a display of Mattia Nebbai's vibrant rich and powerful high tenor, full of dramatic character and passion in 'Recondita Armonia' from *Tosca*, matched later by his stirring 'Nessun dorma', his thrilling breath control eliciting cheers from an audience obviously delighted to be hearing Puccini in the city of his birth and childhood ...

Just as the *Puccini e la sua Lucca International Festival* celebrates the art of melody and operatic characterisation with a different concert each day, so it seems fitting to record and applaud it in an online journal dedicated to offering a new article each day, *MV Daily*, in affectionate memory of its founder Basil Ramsey, and in admiration of its current editor and technical manager Keith Bramich who, fortunately, is ensuring both its continuity and communicative excellence. [READ MORE ...](#)



Music & Vision's founding editor, Basil Ramsey (1929-2018), looking out to sea from the East Yorkshire coast. Photo © 2005 Keith Bramich

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CLASSICAL MUSIC NEWS — OLIVER KNUSSEN (1952-2018)

'Oliver Knussen quotes from *Boris Godunov* in his children's opera *Where the Wild Things Are*. You could be forgiven for thinking Oliver Knussen is Boris himself : a gentle Mussorgskian giant, he seems, at a casual glance, to embody many of the characteristics, not so much of the opera's bullish, precocious hero as of the shy, rumped, peace-loving wild creatures themselves, stirring from their amiable slumber.' — Roderic Dunnett, writing in 2001



Oliver Knussen (1952-2018)

British composer and conductor Oliver 'Olly' Knussen was born in Glasgow on 12 June 1952 into a well-connected musical family. (His father was principal double bass of the London Symphony Orchestra.) He began writing music at about six years old, and later studied composition with John Lambert and Gunther Schuller. He also received encouragement from Benjamin Britten.

At the age of fifteen, commissioned to write his first symphony by the LSO, Olly stepped in to conduct the orchestra in the work's first performance in London, when István Kertész was ill. Knussen's *Symphony No 3* (1973-9), dedicated to Michael Tilson Thomas, is widely regarded as a modern classic.

As a composer, Olly was with Faber Music for over forty years, and is well-known for his two major works from the 1980s — the children's operas *Where the Wild Things Are* and *Higglety Pigglety Pop!*, both with libretti by Maurice Sendak, and based on Sendak's books. This operatic double bill, originally produced by Glyndebourne Festival Opera, has been performed extensively in the USA and Europe. His 1988 *Flourish with Fireworks* has become a frequently used concert opener, and his horn and violin concerti have also entered the standard orchestral repertoire. *Requiem — Songs for Sue* (2006) honours the

memory of Knussen's wife Sue, the American-born TV producer who died in 2003. Knussen and Sue Freedman met at Tanglewood and married in 1972.

As a conductor he was an advocate for a wide range of contemporary music, and recorded prolifically. Various first performances include those by Julian Anderson, Elliott Carter and Hans Werner Henze.

Knussen lived in Snape, Suffolk, and was artistic director of the Aldeburgh Festival from 1983 until 1998, where, with Colin Matthews in 1992, he established the Britten-Pears Programme's Contemporary Composition and Performance courses.

Knussen's music received the honour of a BBC Symphony Orchestra 'Total Immersion' festival at London's Barbican Centre in 2012, as part of the composer's sixtieth birthday celebrations. In 2014 Knussen became the inaugural Richard Rodney Bennett Professor of Music at the Royal Academy of Music in London, where he recently received an honorary doctorate. In 2015 he received the Queen's Medal for Music. In 2018 his manuscripts were acquired by the Sacher Foundation in Basel.

Oliver Knussen died on 9 July 2018, aged sixty-six, following a short illness.

We also mark the passing of Khayyam Mirzazade, Brian Kellow, Bullumba Landestoy, Anthony Caesar and Franz Beyer.

In other news, a new free online directory of living black classical composers has been launched by the Rachel Barton Pine Foundation; Opera Rara and Warner Classics announce a new partnership; Chamber Choir Ireland will hold auditions for a regular first tenor position on Friday 7 September 2018; Ex Cathedra and Royal Birmingham Conservatoire announce unique UK choral scholarships for 2018-19; Four singers were presented with awards at the last night of Garsington Opera's season; the Beethoven Piano Society of Europe celebrates the life and work of Michael Tippett in its August Tippett/Beethoven concert series in London. [READ OUR LATEST NEWS ...](#)

CD SPOTLIGHT – A MUSICAL BOND



'The interpreters ... are high level and accustomed to working with Hosokawa and his music.'

Giuseppe Pennisi: I was enthralled by Toshio Hosokawa's music several years ago, when in July 2004 at the Aix-en-Provence Festival I attended the world premiere of his chamber opera *Hanjo*. Based on a modern Noh play by Yukio Mishima, this delicate and dreamy work fitted perfectly the small Jeu de Pomme theater, had excellent musical direction by Kazushi Ono and perfect staging by Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker. I remember quite vividly the impression and the feelings I had during the performance. Thus, I was quite interested in this recording of his recent orchestral works.

Hosokawa studied with Yung Isang at the Berlin University of the Arts. From 1983 until 1986 he studied with Klaus Huber and Brian Ferneyhough at the Hochschule für Musik Freiburg. From 1998 to 2007 he served the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra as Composer-in-Residence. In 2001, Hosokawa became a member of the Academy of Arts, Berlin. In 2004, he took up a

guest professorship at the Tokyo College of Music. These biographical aspects are important because in his compositions, Japanese music — even Japanese traditional music — merges with German contemporary music. Hosokawa's music is often performed in Germany, but less so in other European countries. In Italy, his works can mostly be heard in contemporary music festivals organized by contemporary music societies. He received a commission by MI.TO (the September Milan-Turin Music Festival) to write *Autumn Wind* for orchestra and shakuhachi, a traditional Japanese pentatonic flute.

This recording provides a good sample of his recent works. *Meditation — to the victims of Tsunami 3.11*, *Nach dem Sturm* and *Klage* are an engrossing triptych on the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami. [READ MORE ...](#)

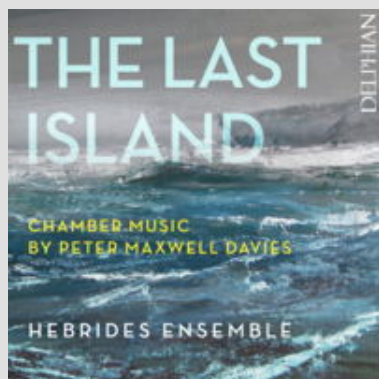
Gerald Fenech: This CD encompasses works by composers from Russia and Poland — two contemporaries whose lives and styles could not have been more different.

Born in St Petersburg in 1904, Dmitry Kabalevsky spent all his artistic life serving the dictum of the Communist Party. He was a man who did not want to risk his life and career by being himself, such as Shostakovich and Prokofiev among others, so he composed music that was tuneful and catchy, and this pleased his Soviet overlords who showered him with three Stalin prizes and four Orders of Lenin. To save his bacon he even went as far as throwing another composer under the bus. But even apparatchiks and purveyors of neo-classical simplicity can write good music, and since the Cold War is over, if it really is, the time is opportune to rediscover his music beyond that half-way famous *Comedian's Galop*.



'Innovative stuff worthy of some serious investigation.'

Composed between 1947 and 1948, the Cello Concerto No 1 is an enjoyable piece with many good tunes, but although always interesting, it is rarely deep. Kabalevsky wanted us to breathe easily and, if warranted, even dance to his music. Maybe that is why this concerto is filled with several folksongs. [READ MORE ...](#)



'As an approach to Maxwell Davies' music, this could scarcely be bettered.'

Roderic Dunnett: It's not an overstatement to suggest that this disc is sensational, not just for the beautifully judged recording quality by Delphian and the exquisite playing of members of the Hebrides Ensemble, who worked closely with Maxwell Davies later in his life, but for the marvellous late repertoire that it brings together. One could not ask for a finer tribute to Davies, the hugely productive composer, who died in early 2016, leaving a rich legacy of masterworks in all genres.

Having known Max since 1969, I always felt that he would turn to chamber works late in life. This was in part due to his deep admiration for, and understanding of, the late Beethoven Quartets, whose intensity, like that of the last Beethoven

sonatas, provided inspiration for many of his works (such as the ten Naxos Quartets) and underlay much of his musical thinking. Although he wrote chamber works earlier on, sometimes (like *Ave Maris Stella* and *A Mirror of Whitening Light*) for his brilliantly virtuosic ensemble The Fires of London, or sometimes with voice or solo instrument added, it was notable that not till the age of almost seventy did he launch upon that astounding, intense series of string quartets given the title *The Naxos Quartets*.

The quality and depth of that cycle of ten quartets is beyond question. But some of the works written nearer the end of his life are still less well known, and several of those included here, superbly and insightfully played by members of the Hebrides Ensemble, who worked closely with Davies later in his life before his death in March 2016, reveal the composer at the apex of his powers: in other words, come close to the major achievements that litter his closely worked, endlessly perceptive and daring output.

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NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE

We're building an archive of our monthly classical music newsletters. They've been published in this PDF format since September 2013, and you can download and read any of them from **this page**.

THE MANY HATS OF ALLAN RAE

Endre Anaru: The Canadian composer Allan Rae has worn many hats. In celebration of his birthday, I'd like to talk about a few of them.

ELECTRONIC MUSIC AND MUSIC COPYING: In 1970 Allan Rae took his family to Toronto where he studied electronic composition with the renowned Samuel Dolin for four years at the electronics studio of the Royal Conservatory.

But, he was not a cult member. He said:

The whole problem with electronic music has always been the gimmicks ...

It is not known what works he composed in this period. But, four years in the life of Allan Rae, with a very decided hat for electronic music, would lead one to believe that there were many works created. Many, for Allan Rae never does things by halves. Sadly, these works are lost.

Along side these years of studies, he worked as a music copyist for the Canadian Music Centre. That does not mean he duplicated CDs and posted them online. I am appalled at the lack of knowledge that modern people possess. Music copying is the process of turning the composer's handwritten score into something legible by a musician. In some cases this is a wide gulf. In days past this could be done by hand using a variety of pens and rulers and Rae's hand was clear and beautiful ...

CLASSICAL MUSIC COMPOSER: Calgary beckoned in 1974 and he returned, placing the hat of a serious classical composer upon his head. He had written a symphony in 1972 with the subtitle of 'In the Shadow of Atlantis'. (Two more symphonies were to follow.) He quickly began receiving numerous commissions for concert works.



Allan Rae (c 1970)

There is a vast range of his works for various ensembles that fall into the category of classical concert music. Many have evocative titles, some are based upon literary sources, others nature (like the Chinook winds of Alberta). There are separate individual *concerti* for harp (1976), double bass (1977), piano (1979), violin (1979), and trumpet (1996); works for chamber ensembles of widely varied formulations, numerous piano works, and even a few works for chorus. Many works are slow to develop, contrasting peaceful and active sections, structured by overlaying addition of material followed by its subtraction to reflective conclusions. The deep spirituality of Rae's soul is present at all times ... [READ MORE ...](#)

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