

Side 1 (20:57)
Peter Maxwell Davies
ST. THOMAS WAKE
Foxtrot for Orchestra

Richard Duffallo, conductor

Side 2 (22:00)
George Antheil
SYMPHONY NO. 5

- (1) 8:29
- (2) 6:54
- (3) 6:30

Richard Duffallo, conductor

St. Thomas Wake (1969)
by Peter Maxwell Davies

Born in Manchester, England, September 8, 1934.

The very titles of the works of Peter Maxwell Davies suggest a composer of daring imagination and restless experimentation. In 1969 alone, the same year in which St. Thomas Wake was premiered in Dortmund, Davies published *Vesalii Icones*, a chamber work featuring dancer and cellist in fourteen movements based on fourteen anatomical drawings by the sixteenth-century Flemish anatomist Andreas Vesalius; an instrumental motet entitled *Eram Quasi Agnus*; *Solita* for solo flute and music box; and the remarkable *Eight Songs for a Mad King*. The present work was commissioned by the City of Dortmund, a West German industrial town near the Ruhr, and premiered there by the composer and the City of Dortmund Philharmonic Orchestra on June 2, 1969. Subtitled "Foxtrot for Orchestra on a Pavan by John Bull," the audacious work features a main orchestra and a band with an "out-of-tune honky-tonk" piano. Among the instruments are a police whistle, empty piano, a large biscuit tin filled with pieces of glass, two hammers, a referee's whistle, and a large empty biscuit tin. All this may seem a bit removed from the work's original inspiration, a pavane by the English organist and composer John Bull (1562-1628), but the juxtaposition of the courtly dance so

beloved of the English virginalists and the modern American ballroom step is curiously convincing, and the work earned this accolade from *The Daily Telegraph*: "The skill and the imagination shown in this montage of two pasts, one present and an ugly implied future rivals Stravinsky in his experiments with musical time."

Raised in Manchester and educated at the Royal Manchester College of Music and Manchester University, Peter Maxwell Davies is at forty-five at the very forefront of modern music composition. In 1957, he won an Italian Government Scholarship and studied in Rome with Goffredo Petrassi. A Harkness Fellowship in 1962 brought him to Princeton University where he studied with Roger Sessions. After his appointment as Composer in Residence at the University of Adelaide in Australia, Davies returned to England where he devotes himself to composing, conducting and lecturing. Davies has nearly fifty published works to his credit in virtually every medium from opera to piano solo. His 1957 work for seventeen wind instruments entitled *St. Michael Sonata* has been recorded by Jorge Mester and The Louisville Orchestra on First Edition Records LS-756.

Mr. Davies has kindly provided a detailed analysis of the present work:

This work is based on the *St. Thomas Wake Pavan* of John Bull, the 16-17th century English composer. This pre-existing material is "projected" through a progressive series of mathematical curves, which affect it as much, in visual terms, as would distorting mirrors of systematically varying degrees of convexity and concavity. At the outset, however, the Pavan is not given in its original form but appears already in the process of transformation into a slow foxtrot played by a small band seated apart from the orchestra. The orchestra immediately takes this up and, in "commenting" upon it, transforms it into a complex isorhythmic structure in which stylistic elements of the band are exaggerated. This "comment" leads to a slow dissolution from which the band takes up fragments of ideas in the process of disintegration and refashions these into a sequence of five foxtrots, each

in a distinct style. Over the last of these dances, the orchestra starts a slow, declamatory reworking of its material, leading to a further fast "commentary" upon all five foxtrots. A final foxtrot from the band cuts across this, having the exact harmonic skeleton of the John Bull Pavan, which is now heard simultaneously from the harp in the orchestra in its original form.

There is no attempt to integrate the styles of the band and the symphony orchestra — each goes its own way on its own terms. The use of the separate band is not meant to imply in any sense a kind of *sinfonia concertante* nor even a parodic element. The foxtrot band music exists as an *object*, and the orchestra music implies, if such a thing is possible, an attitude in purely musical terms towards this object. The use of a Renaissance pavan as the binding factor throughout is not gratuitous. The historical reality of the original may be destroyed in the process, refurbishing one dead dance form in terms of a more recent dance form which is just as dead. Moreover, thirties dance music was the first music I myself heard, therefore having personal, rather sentimental associations. Heard now, at a distance, it can perhaps become not only a comment on the political and moral climate of its time (because it completely ignored that irresponsible climate) but, by extension, on our own time as well.

P.M.D.

Symphony No. 5 (1947)
by George Antheil

The "bad boy" of American music, as it turned out, was nothing of the kind. The early works of George Antheil caused a sensation on two continents because of their highly dissonant harmonies and outlandish concepts. The famous *Ballet Mecanique*, brought to Carnegie Hall in 1927, featured eight pianos, electric bells, a player-piano and airplane propellers. Born in Trenton, New Jersey, on July 8, 1900, Antheil studied at the Philadelphia Conservatory and later with Ernest Bloch. There was little in his training to prepare his audiences for his highly inventive flair, and sometimes there were no audiences. In the thirties, the resourceful Antheil made a living writing newspaper advice to

the lovelorn, and must surely be the only composer to have been made an honorary member of the Paris police force for his study of glandular disturbances in criminals!

Hollywood offered Antheil the security to continue serious composition, and his music after his move there in 1936 seems to blend his personal modernism with a more moderate accessible style. The *Fifth Symphony*, subtitled "Joyous," represents in addition a marked departure from the pessimism and pathos of the *Third* (1942) and *Fourth* (1944), written in the midst of World War II. Yet the symphony was doubtless inspired by the overture to the most famous opera of Antheil's early "enfant terrible" period, *Transatlantic*. This work, incidentally, has the distinction of being the first American opera to be produced by a foreign opera house (Frankfurt, May 25, 1930). The *Fifth Symphony* was commissioned by Eugene Ormandy in the summer of 1947 and completed that fall. The three-movement piece was first performed by Ormandy and The Philadelphia Orchestra on December 31, 1948, to high critical praise. Another success soon followed in Paris, as well as its radio premiere by William Steinberg and the San Francisco Symphony. It was chosen in 1950 as the official closing work of the midsummer conference of the National Music Teachers Association, and published in the same year by Leeds Music Corporation.

George Antheil died in New York on February 12, 1959. Three years earlier, The Louisville Orchestra commissioned and recorded his one-act opera *The Wish*, still available on First Edition Records 564.

Notes by Marshall A. Portnoy
Cover art © Judith Lerner 1980

THE LOUISVILLE ORCHESTRA
333 West Broadway
Louisville, Kentucky 40202

Jack M. Firestone, General Manager
Andrew Kazdin, Producer

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The valley where I live, in a remote island off the north coast of Scotland, since Viking times a thriving crofting and fishing community, is now all but deserted. The islanders gradually left through the first half of this century, the contrasts between their own hard life and the comparatively easy life of the Scottish cities being too cruel. A few crofts were worked till quite recently, but there were ever fewer young people, and the final blow for the community was the drowning of the last two children — brothers — in the mid-'50s. They made a raft and sailed it on the burn where it widens before joining the sea, far away from all possibility of rescue. Their death was as a sign to the inhabitants remaining, who, with the exception of one farmer who is still there, left what they could only see as a doomed place, and the school, shop, crofts, byres, fell into disrepair, open to the birds and sheep.

The two poems I have set by George Mackay Brown concern these events; the first, "The Drowning Brothers," relates the circumstance which led to the final exodus, and the second, "Dead Fires," is a litany of the deserted crofts. The title of the guitar solo separating the two settings, "Dark Angels," which I gave to the whole work, refers to the silent hills brooding around the deserted valley. The work is imbued with the sound of the island, where, however, at one of the deserted crofts listed in "Dead Fires," the fire burns again in the hearth, and the ground is once more fertile.

PETER MAXWELL DAVIES

Side One (17:04)

PETER MAXWELL DAVIES
(b. 1934)

DARK ANGELS (1974)
for soprano & guitar

1. *The Drowning Brothers* (6:10) —
 2. *Dark Angels* (guitar solo) (2:52) — 3. *Dead Fires* (7:49)
- publ. Boosey & Hawkes, Inc. (ASCAP)

Side Two (18:25)

RICHARD WERNICK
(b. 1934)

SONGS OF REMEMBRANCE (1974)
for mezzo-soprano & shawm/English horn/oboe
(in memory of Susan Phillips, 1964–73)

1. *Athanatous men prota theous* (3:08) —
 2. *Pallida mors* (7:06) — 3. *Omnem, quae nunc obducta* (5:18) —
 4. *Upon a Child that Died* (2:38)
- publ. Theodore Presser Co. (ASCAP)

JAN DeGAETANI, mezzo-soprano
OSCAR GHIGLIA, guitar
PHILIP WEST, shawm/English horn/oboe

engineering & musical supervision/Marc J. Aubort, Joanna Nickrenz
(Elite Recordings, Inc.)

mastering/Robert C. Ludwig (Masterdisk Corp.)
a Dolby-system recording

Peter Maxwell Davies, born in Manchester, England, attended the Royal Manchester College of Music and Manchester University. Upon winning an Italian Government Scholarship in 1957, he studied with Goffredo Petrassi in Rome; from 1962 to 1964 he pursued further studies at Princeton University. He has received commissions from the BBC, the London Philharmonic, New Philharmonia, Scottish National, and English Chamber orchestras, as well as the City of Dortmund and Covent Garden. In 1967, Mr. Davies formed The Fires of London, a chamber ensemble devoted to 20th-century music, for which he has written some of his best-known pieces; the group has also commissioned and premiered works from other composers. In addition to his worldwide tours with The Fires of London, Mr. Davies lectures widely, and he has taught at the University of Adelaide, Australia (where he was Composer-in-Residence), and at the Dartington, Montepulciano, and Aspen music festivals. Since 1970, Mr. Davies has resided in the remote Orkney Islands.

Richard Wernick, born in Boston, studied composition with Irving Fine and Harold Shapero at Brandeis University, with Leon Kirchner at Mills College, and with Ernst Toch, Boris Blacher, and Aaron Copland at Tanglewood. He is the recipient of numerous awards, including Ford Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, Naumburg, National Institute of Arts & Letters, Guggenheim, and, most recently, the 1977 Pulitzer Prize for Music for *Visions of Terror and Wonder*. Mr. Wernick has taught at the State University of New York at Buffalo, the University of Chicago, and, since 1968, at the University of Pennsylvania, where, in addition to teaching composition, he is presently conductor and musical director of the Penn Contemporary Players.

Jan DeGaetani, born in Ohio, has been internationally acclaimed for her presentation of contemporary works, many of

them written especially for her; she is equally noted for her work in early music. Miss DeGaetani has appeared with major symphony orchestras and in chamber recitals throughout the United States, Europe, and the Far East. Since 1971, she has taught at the Aspen Music School, and in 1973 she joined the faculty of the Eastman School of Music, Rochester, as Professor of Voice. Miss DeGaetani has recorded for Acoustic Research, CRI, Columbia, Decca, Desto, Music Guild, Vanguard, Vox, and Nonesuch.

Oscar Ghiglia, born in Livorno, Italy, studied at the Conservatorio di Santa Cecilia in Rome and with Andres Segovia at the Accademia Chigiana in Siena. Since winning First Prize at the International Guitar Competition in Santiago di Compostela, Spain, in 1963, Mr. Ghiglia has appeared in recitals and with major orchestras throughout the Western hemisphere, Australia, and the Far East. He has directed master classes and seminars in cities throughout the United States and has been Artist-in-Residence at the Aspen Music Festival since 1969. Mr. Ghiglia has recorded for EMI; this album marks his first appearance on Nonesuch.

Philip West, born in Asheville, N. C., holds degrees from the Cincinnati College of Music and the Manhattan School of Music, where he studied with Marcel Dandois and Harold Gomberg, respectively. He has performed with numerous chamber ensembles and orchestras, including the New York Pro Musica, Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, New York Philharmonic, and the New York City Ballet. Since 1972 Mr. West has taught at the Aspen Music Festival; in 1973, he joined the faculty of the Eastman School of Music, where he is the founder and director of InterMusica, a program of varied chamber ensembles. Mr. West has recorded for CRI, Columbia, Decca, RCA Victor, and Vanguard; this album marks his first appearance on Nonesuch.

DARK ANGELS

The Drowning Brothers

The boy said (his arm a long white stone)
"The burn is a fish in a net of fences
The burn is a glancing shuttle"
A crofter turned a homing rudder.
Corn, a prodigal, stood in the door of the sun
Arrayed in harvest patches.
The crofter beached. The ripe hands of the wind
Throttled his haddocks.
He shouted the women from loom and fire.
The brother said (his thigh a struck gleam)
"The burn is a lark in a cage. The silver tongue
Years on and out"
The burn thrills between hills and beach all day.
Pigeons fretted the stubble.
Women stooped to the sheaves with bronze throats.
The first boy said (half marble and half flesh)
"The tinker burn hurries from field to field.
He begs for small things.
Heather to cornstalk to seaweed he burbles gossip.
He spreads his pack at every stone,
Torrents of sapphire and lace,
Among the reeds a swatch of green silk"
An oat, a can, a straw, left the slow valley.
Ikey slouched by the stubble edge,
Banished that day with larks, rats, fishermen.
The brother said (his throat a sculpted psalm)
"The burn is our angel. He praises.
He fills our pails.
He flames in the face of the drinking beasts.
He carries the valley filth
Out to the seven brightnesses of the bay.
He has turned a key.
Quick, now, follow the cold one.
They will drag us back to their old sweat and dung"
Those hills, The Ward and Moorfea, brooded upon them,
Dark angels.
The tractor throbbed with one urgent image, bread.
Heavy with images, the statues drowned.

Dead Fires

At Burnmouth the door hangs from a broken hinge
And the fire is out.
The windows of Shore empty sockets
And the hearth coldness.
At Bunerton the small drains are choked.
Thrushes sing in the chimney.
Stars shine through the roofbeams of Scar.
No flame is needed
To warm ghost and nettle and rat.
Greenhill is sunk in a new bog.
No kneeling woman
Blows red wind through squares of ancient turf.
The Moss is a tumble of stones.
That one black stone
Is the one where the hearth fire was rooted.
In Crawnset the sunken hearth
Was an altar for priests of legend,
Old seamen from the clippers with silken beards.
The three-toed pot at the wall of Park
Is lost to woman's cunning.
A slow fire of rust eats the cold iron.
The sheep drift through Reumin all winter.
Sheep and snow
Blanch fleetingly the black stone.
From that sacred stone the children of the valley
Drifted lovewards
And out of labour to the lettered kirkyard stone.
The fire beat like a heart in each house
From the first cornerstone
Till they led through a sagging lintel the last old one.
The poor and the good fires are all quenched.
Now, cold angel, keep the valley
From the bedlam and cinders of A Black Pentecost.

— George Mackay Brown
(from *Fishermen with Ploughs*,
London: the Hogarth Press, Ltd., 1971)

John Aldis
conducting
the John Aldis Choir

Geoffrey Shaw
baritone

Pauline Stevens
contralto

Rosemary Phillips
contralto

Mary Thomas
soprano

John Carewe
conducting
members of
the Melos Ensemble

Richard Adeney, flute and piccolo/*Peter Graeme, oboe
Gervase de Peyer, clarinet/William Waterhouse, bassoon
Philip Jones, trumpet/Arthur Wilson, trombone

*Osian Ellis, harp/Terence Weil, cello

†Lamar Crowson, piano/†James Blades †Stephen

Whittaker, percussion/†Emanuel Hurwitz, violin

†Cecil Aronowitz, viola

*in Leopardi Fragments only

†in Calendar only

A leaflet containing analytical notes and documentation
is enclosed with this record.

Timings: Side One, 25' 15" — Side Two, 26' 52"

STEREO

S 36387



side one, bands 1 & 2 [4' 25" & 3' 38"]

Alexander Goehr two choruses, op.14

I had hope when violence was ceas'd
from Milton's 'Paradise Lost'
Take but degree away
from Shakespeare's 'Troilus and Cressida', 1.3

side one, band 3 [17' 12"]

Peter Maxwell Davies Leopardi fragments for soprano, contralto and chamber orchestra

Received the 1966 Koussevitzky International Recording Award of the American International Music Fund, New York.

During the late 1950s, the first generation of British composers to have accepted the innovations of the Viennese serialists was beginning to gain a hearing. The time-lag characteristic of British music, together with a certain innate conservatism, has produced a group of composers whose methods are especially interesting. They have avoided the paths of some of the extreme continental experimenters, and have taken what best suits them from various sources.

All four composers represented here conform to this pattern. Typically, none of them has found it necessary, in accepting the Schoenbergian experience, to restrict himself to twelve note [or even serial] methods. Each writes against the background of serialism, but has also to a greater or lesser extent integrated it with other methods.

The case of Williamson, who is the eldest of the four composers, is slightly different from that of the other three. Having studied composition at Sydney Conservatorium, he left his native country for England in 1953 with a sound academic training, but little or no knowledge of advanced compositional techniques. His subsequent discovery in Europe of serial innovations, although a formative experience, occurred at a stage when he could only accept them on a basis of highly personal compromise. Several of his early English works make a determined use of serialism, but other equally important elements were to become prominent, including deliberate and sophisticated reference to the popular idioms of the 'musical'. It has been the composer's task to forge these and other equally disparate elements into a unified whole. In this he has shown considerable courage, for he could easily have achieved unity by exclusion. His preference for the harder task of giving importance to every facet of his style has led to a richer and more personal manner. The element that has been banished from this eclectic world is 12-note serialism. We are left as in the *Symphony for Voices* with an ingeniously rigorous motivic and rhythmic idiom where pithy statement and expansive melody occur in a strongly tonal context that owes most perhaps to Stravinsky, Britten and Messiaen.

side two, band 1 [14' 58"]

Malcolm Williamson symphony for voices

Invocation
Terra Australis
Jesus
Envoi
New Guinea

side two, band 2 [11' 54"]

Richard Rodney Bennett calendar for chamber ensemble

Allegro
Lento espressivo
Molto animato

Peter Maxwell Davies [b. 1934] is another composer who has ultimately discovered himself in terms of a freely developing harmony and melody that are no longer confined to strict serialism. In his case, however, the early strict serial phase which produced works of great complexity in *Prolation* and the *St. Michael Sonata* was more personal than Williamson's, and many of the broader facets of that style have remained with him. However, a work like the *Leopardi Fragments* shows a new richness in melody and harmony. This is intimately connected with the composer's interest in Mediaeval and Renaissance music, whose world of feeling and compositional techniques [isorhythm, hocket paraphrase etc.] is increasingly important to him. Davies represents one ideal of the modern English composer: alive to current trends, yet relegating post-Weberian writing to a subsidiary role, and returning to the traditions of old English music.

Both Alexander Goehr [b. 1932] and Richard Rodney Bennett [b. 1936] are more obviously in the line of succession to the second Viennese school, though Bennett has proved himself an astonishing master of every style. His light music, his third-stream jazz, his film scores and his serial music are all composed with impeccable technique, and show real personality—above all in the warmly romantic atonalism which recently he has made his own.

Goehr, too, has tended to follow paths that stem from Schoenbergian expressionism. Despite the high norm of dissonance, his idiom can be accepted on comparatively few hearings as harmonically euphonious in the traditional sense. Witness the *Two Choruses*. The complex rhythmic developments and variations particularly need the listener's concentration. They stem mostly from Messiaen, whose classes Goehr attended when studying in Paris in 1955. Goehr's vision is rich and powerful. Like many post-war artists he has occupied himself, in works such as *The Deluge*, *Sutter's Gold* and *Hecuba's Lament*, with the subject of tragic desolation.

note © Anthony Payne, 1965

Born in Berlin, son of conductor Walter Goehr 1932
 Comes to London [where he has lived ever since] 1933
 Studies at the Royal Manchester College of Music
 with Richard Hall 1952–5

Alexander Goehr

Five Songs of Babel op.1 1953

Sonata for piano op.2 1953

With Harrison Birtwistle, Peter Maxwell Davies and John Ogdon,
 founds the New Music Manchester Group 1954

Fantasia for orchestra 1955

Is awarded a French Government Scholarship,
 and studies in Paris at the Conservatoire with Messiaen
 and privately with Yvonne Loriod 1955–6

String Quartet op.3 1956

The Deluge op.7 [cantata after da Vinci] 1959

Sutter's Gold, for chorus, soloists and orchestra 1961

Suite op.11 for chamber ensemble 1961

Hecuba's Lament for orchestra 1961

Violin Concerto 1962

Two Choruses op.14 1962

Little Symphony [in memory of the composer's father] 1963

Little Music for Strings op.16 1963

Five Poems and an Epigram of William Blake

[for chorus and solo trumpet] 1964

Three pieces for Piano op.18 1965

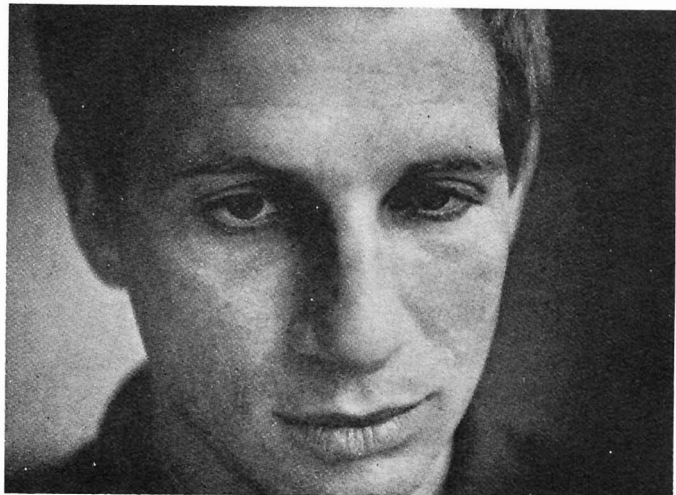
The Two Choruses, op.14, were completed in October 1962, and first performed on November 27, by the John Alldis Choir, conducted by John Alldis, at the Holy Trinity Church, Prince Consort Road [London]. They are dedicated to the memory of the Austrian composer Hanns Eisler, who died while Goehr was writing the work. The score is published by Schott and Co [London].

To the memory of Hanns Eisler

Alexander Goehr Op. 14 / 1

BARITONE SOLO
 Con moto (♩ =)
 f mp
 I had hope when violence was ceased and
 mp mp p (i) sempre cresc. poco
 War on Earth, All would have then
 (BARI-TONE SOLO) (mf) poco sostenuto a tempo (♩ = ♩)
 gone well, peace would be
BASSI
 peace would have crowned with

Music example [from the composer's autograph]
 by permission of the publishers, Schott and Co [London].



Note by the Composer

My **Two Choruses**, op.14, are written for solo voices [baritone in the first Chorus; soprano and contralto in the second], various groupings of solo voices in consort as well as for chorus in full. The conception of the choral writing was suggested to me, in some details, by the *Cinq Rechants* of Olivier Messiaen, and more immediately by the virtuosity of the group for which they are intended.

The first piece is a setting of a passage from Milton's 'Paradise Lost', Book XI, 779–805 :

I had hope
When violence was ceased and war on Earth,
All would have then gone well, peace would have crowned
With length of happy days the race of Man ;
But I was far deceived, for now I see
Peace to corrupt no less than war to waste.
How comes it thus ? . . .
Those whom last thou saw'st
In triumph and luxurious wealth, are they
First seen in acts of prowess eminent
And great exploits, but of true virtue void :
Who, having spilt much blood, and done much waste,
Subduing nations, and achieved thereby
Fame in the world, high titles, and rich prey
Shall change their course to pleasure, ease, and sloth,
Surfeit, and lust, till wantonness and pride
Raise out of friendship hostile deeds in peace.
The conquered, also, and enslaved by war,
Shall, with their freedom lost, all virtue lose,
And fear of God – from whom their piety feigned
In sharp contest of battle found no aid
Against invaders ; therefore, cooled in zeal,
Thenceforth shall practise how to live secure,
Worldly or dissolute, on what their lords
Shall leave them to enjoy ; for the Earth shall bear
More than enough, that temperance may be tried.

The second piece is a setting of Ulysses' speech in Act I, Sc 3 of Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* :

Take but degree away, untune that string,
And, hark ! what discord follows ; each thing meets
In mere oppugnancy : the bounded waters
Should lift their bosoms higher than the shores,
And make a sop of all this solid globe :
Strength should be lord of imbecility,
And the rude son should strike his father dead :
Force should be right : or, rather, right and wrong—
Between whose endless jar justice resides—
Should lose their names, and so should justice too.
Then every thing includes itself in power,
Power into will, will into appetite ;
And appetite an universal wolf,
So doubly seconded with will and power
Must make, perforce, an universal prey,
And, last, eat up himself.

Peter Maxwell Davies

Born in Manchester, September 8 1934

Studies at the Royal Manchester College of Music
under Richard Hall 1952–7

With Harrison Birtwistle, Alexander Goehr and John Ogdon
founds the New Music Manchester Group 1954

Studies in Rome with Goffredo Petrassi,
on an Italian Government scholarship 1957

Alma Redemptoris Mater,

for flute, oboe, 2 clarinets, horn and bassoon 1958

Sonata for 17 Wind Instruments ['St Michael'] 1958

Prolation for orchestra 1958

Director of Music, Cirencester Grammar School 1959–62

Ricercar and Doubles for instrumental ensemble 1959

O Magnum Misterium

for instrumental ensemble, organ and chorus 1959

String Quartet 1961

Leopardi Fragments 1961

Holds a Harkness Fellowship at Princeton University,

where he studies with Roger Sessions 1962

Sinfonia for small orchestra 1962

First Fantasia on an In Nomine of John Taverner 1962

Veni sancte Spiritus for chorus and orchestra 1962

Second Fantasia on an In Nomine of John Taverner 1963

Shakespeare Music for eleven instruments 1964

Five Motets for soloists, double chorus and instruments 1959–62

The Shepherds' Calendar for school choir and orchestra 1964–5

in progress:

an opera about the 16th century composer John Taverner

Leopardi Fragments was written in 1961, and first performed at a BBC Thursday Invitation Concert on July 19, 1962, by Dorothy Dorow, Rosemary Phillips and the New Music Ensemble conducted by John Carewe.

The instrumentation is as follows: flute doubling piccolo, oboe, clarinet [A and B flat], bassoon, trumpet [B flat and D], trombone, harp, cello. The score is available on hire from Schott and Co [London]. A study score is in preparation.

Leopardi Fragments is one of the three works by Davies – the others are the *String Quartet* and the *Sinfonia* – which are inspired by Monteverdi's *Vespers* of 1610, and which isolate and develop certain aspects of it. *Leopardi Fragments* derives in particular from the techniques of vocal and instrumental decoration in the solo sections of the *Vespers*.

At two points in the work, Davies dispenses with precise metrical controls. In the instrumental section following the third fragment – that is, following the words 'fremebonda della disperazione' – the length of the notes of the cantus firmus [begun by flute and trumpet] progressively diminishes, but the exact values are not fixed. The values are related to the surrounding melismas, whose rhythmic *proportions* are given exactly, but whose *speed* is in turn related to the cantus notes. The point of entry for each instrumental melisma is approximately indicated in the score.

The same general principles obtain in the instrumental section between the fourth and fifth 'fragments':

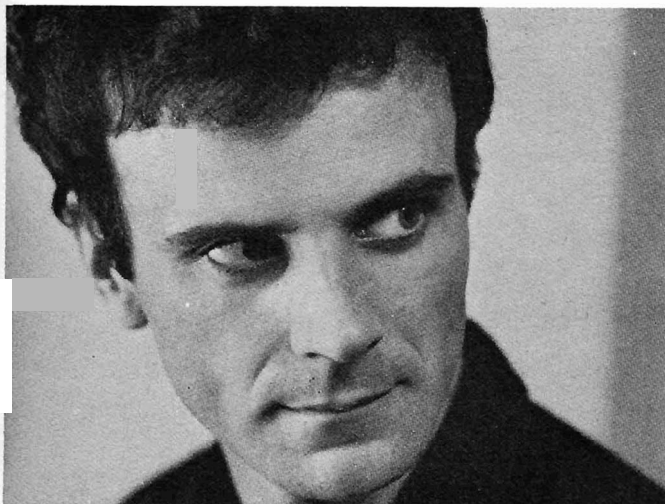


Photo Erich Auerbach

Here the groups of small notes [thirty-seconds with stroke] are to be played as quickly as possible; the point of entry is approximately indicated by the spacing. The 'X' in the first bar indicates that time signatures are in abeyance.

Music example [from the composer's autograph] by permission of the publishers, Schott and Co Ltd.

Frammenti

Soprano and Contralto

Stridore notturno delle banderuole traendo il vento.
Vedendo meco viaggiar la luna.

Soprano

La speme che rinasce in un col giorno.
Dolor mi preme del passato, e noia
Del presente, e terror de l'avvenire.

Soprano and Contralto

Mi diedi tutto alla gioia barbara e fremebonda della
disperazione.

Contralto

Campagna in gran declivio veduta alquanti passi in
lontano, e villani che scendendo per essa si perdono
tosto di vista, altra immagine dell'infinito.

Soprano and Contralto

Ahi tu passati, eterno
Sospiro mio : passati : e fia compagna
D'ogni mio vago immaginar, di tutti
I miei teneri sensi, i tristi e cari
Moti del cor, la rimembranza acerba.

Soprano and Contralto

Nocturnal creaking of the weather-vanes borne on the wind.
Seeing with me the moon in its course.

Soprano

Hope which is reborn in one with the day.
Grief of the past oppresses me, and ennui
Of the present and terror of the future.

Soprano and Contralto

I gave myself up entirely to the wild and furious joy
of despair.

Contralto

The steep slope of the countryside seen some paces
in the distance and peasants who, descending this,
soon disappear from view – another image of Infinity.

Soprano and Contralto

Ah ! you have left me, my eternal sigh ;
you have left me ; let bitter memory become
the companion of my every vague imagining, of all
my tender feelings, the dear, sad
impulses of my heart, the bitter memory.

English translation by Dr Nigel Fortune.

The Italian poet Count Giacomo Leopardi was born in 1798 and died in 1837. He had an unhappy life – physical deformity added to his many personal misfortunes – and expressions of bitterness and regret are typical of his writings. Some authorities regard him as the greatest lyric poet since Dante.

PETER MAXWELL DAVIES

Side 1 · Face 1 · Seite 1 (24:36)

1. RENAISSANCE SCOTTISH DANCES (9:00)
2. HYMN TO ST. MAGNUS
(beginning · début · Anfang) (15:30)

Side 2 · Face 2 · Seite 2 (30:46)

1. HYMN TO ST. MAGNUS
(conclusion · conclusion · Fortsetzung) (21:00)
2. PSALM 124 (9:40)

DSLO 12

THE FIRES OF LONDON
directed by Peter Maxwell Davies

Mary Thomas, soprano
Judith Pearce, flute/alto flute
Alan Hacker, basset clarinet/bass clarinet/folk
clarinet
Duncan Druce, violin/viola
Jennifer Ward Clarke, cello (baroque cello in
Psalm 124 and *Renaissance Scottish Dances*)
Stephen Pruslin, piano/harpsichord/
glockenspiel/drone
Gary Kettel, percussion
with Timothy Walker, guitar

Bösendorfer piano · Goble harpsichord

PETER MAXWELL DAVIES was born in Manchester in 1934. He now holds an international reputation as the leading British composer of his generation, with major works to his credit in every medium. His opera, *Taverner*, attracted enormous attention when it was first produced at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in 1972. Important recent performances include the orchestral works *Worldes Bliss* and *Stone Litany*, the virtuoso chamber works, *Hymn to Saint*

Magnus and *Ave Maris Stella*, and the music theatre work, *Miss Donnithorne's Maggot*. Maxwell Davies is currently working on several major orchestral commissions, chamber works for the Fires, and is planning a second opera. He is in constant demand as a lecturer and teacher, but he now devotes himself principally to composition, on a remote Orkney island, and to his appearances with:

THE FIRES OF LONDON, who have appeared with outstanding success in concert, and on radio, television, disc and film throughout Britain, Eastern, Western and Northern Europe, Australia and New Zealand, many of these appearances being at the major international festivals, including those of Venice, Holland, Edinburgh, Flanders, Prague, Warsaw, Zagreb, Royan, Adelaide, Auckland, York, Cheltenham and Bath. Their reputation precedes them to future destinations even further afield. The group is concerned with music-theatre — which genre they virtually brought to world attention in the late sixties and early seventies — and with the lucid performance of contemporary classics and all manner of recent chamber music. Their programmes almost always include exhilarating performances of the works of early composers, so as to provide a cross-fertilisation between the old and the new.

RENAISSANCE SCOTTISH DANCES

These dances are selected from Kenneth Elliott's

monumental volume of Early Scottish music in the 'Musica Britannica' series, and also from his 'Scottish Keyboard Music', both published by Stainer and Bell. The Renaissance originals are here freely adapted for the Fires of London instrumentation, but tribute is paid to the vintage and local colour of the music in many instrumental touches, such as the use of a folk-clarinet and a baroque cello, the allusions to folk-fiddling, the sometimes drone-like string writing, and the use of an actual drone in several of the dances.

HYMN TO SAINT MAGNUS

The *Hymn to Saint Magnus* is based on the 12th-century original from Saint Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall, Orkney, of which the manuscript is now in Uppsala. A realisation of the original is heard at the outset, but immediately transformation processes commence, engendering enormous interlocking isorhythmic structures of great complexity, finally crystallising out into a metamorphosis of the original. The whole work is permeated by bell-sounds, literally from handbells and from suspended metal rods of different materials and sizes, and the extension of these into the domain of instrumental sound. The soprano is conceived as an *obligato* part within the work. In the short first movement, she dedicates the work to Saint Magnus, 'whose voice will be heard in the wind, and whose memory will live forever'. She is silent in the second

movement, and during the long third movement, she sings, repeatedly, 'Sancte Magne, ora pro nobis' (Saint Magnus, pray for us). In the final movement, she sings a eulogy of the virtues of the Saint.

Saint Magnus was martyred on the island of Egilsay on 16 April, 1117 during a dispute with his cousin, Earl Hakon, over the just division of the Earldom of Orkney. The cathedral in Kirkwall was erected by his nephew, Earl Rognvald, in his memory, the founding of the cathedral taking place in the year 1137, but the completion of the building not coming until the late fifteenth century. This work was written in total isolation in a remote part of Orkney. The central parts of the work are permeated by the violence of the martyrdom and the violence of the sea.

PSALM 124

This work has three sections, linked by guitar solo recitatives. The first section uses the melody of Psalm 124 (after David Peebles), the second, a line of 'O God Abufe' (after John Fethy), and the third, an outline from 'All Sons of Adam' (after an anonymous sixteenth century motet). The work's formal shape is based on the chorale-prelude, and it in fact originated as an organ work, written for Elizabeth Bevan, organist at Stromness Church, Orkney. The 'originals' are again to be found in Kenneth Elliott's 'Early Scottish Music, 1500-1750'.