

biography



SIR PETER MAXWELL DAVIES

Universally acknowledged as one of the foremost composers of our time, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies has made a significant contribution to musical history through his wide-ranging and prolific output. He lives in the Orkney Islands off the north coast of Scotland, where he writes most of his music. In a worklist that spans more than five decades, he has written across a broad range of styles, yet his music always communicates directly and powerfully, whether in his profoundly argued symphonic works, his music-theatre works or witty light orchestral works.

Maxwell Davies' major dramatic works include full-length ballets *Salome* and *Caroline Mathilde*, music-theatre works *Eight Songs for a Mad King* and *Miss Donnithorne's Maggot*, and operas *Resurrection*, *The Lighthouse*, *The Doctor of Myddfai*, and *Taverner*, which was recently released by NMC Records on a Grammy-nominated disc with the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Oliver Knussen. Maxwell Davies's most recent opera *Kommilitonen! (Young Blood!)* received critical acclaim for its world premiere run of performances at London's Royal Academy of Music, with *The Daily Telegraph* labelling the composer "A Master Symphonist." Written specifically to be performed by students to a libretto by the work's director David Pountney, *Kommilitonen!* received its US premiere last season at The Juilliard School in New York, the opera's co-commissioner.

Maxwell Davies' huge output of orchestral work comprises nine symphonies - hailed by *The Times* as "the most important symphonic cycle since Shostakovich" - as well as numerous concerti including most recently his violin concerto *Fiddler on the Shore*, written for Daniel Hope and first performed in 2009 by the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig and at the BBC Proms. Maxwell Davies' light orchestral works include *An Orkney Wedding with Sunrise* and *Mavis in Las Vegas*, and five large-scale works for chorus including the oratorio *Job*. His most recent series is the landmark cycle of ten string quartets, the *Naxos Quartets*, described in the *Financial Times* as "one of the most impressive musical statements of our time", and in 2009 the Southbank Centre hosted the first presentation of the complete *Naxos Quartet* cycle by the Park Lane Group.

Maxwell Davies' latest major work is his Ninth Symphony, co-commissioned by the Liverpool Philharmonic and Helsinki Philharmonic, which receives its London premiere at the BBC Proms in summer 2012. Other notable premieres of the 2012/13 season include a new piece for string orchestra, *Concerto Accademico*, co-commissioned by the Accademia Filarmonica di Bologna and the Stuttgarter Kammerorchester. Maxwell Davies is Composer in Residence at this season's edition of the Trondheim Chamber Music Festival, as well as at the 2013 Beijing Modern Music Festival.

Maxwell Davies has held the position of Composer/Conductor with both the Royal Philharmonic and BBC Philharmonic Orchestras. He has guest-conducted orchestras including the Cleveland Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Russian National Orchestra, Oslo Philharmonic and Philharmonia Orchestra. He retains close links with the St. Magnus Festival, Orkney's annual arts festival which he founded in 1977, is Composer Laureate of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Visiting Professor at Canterbury Christchurch University and the Royal Academy of Music.

Many of Maxwell Davies' works have been recorded over the years, and most recently Naxos launched a major re-release of a seventeen-disc series of recordings including a number of significant works such as the symphonies, *The Lighthouse*, *An Orkney Wedding with Sunrise* and the Strathclyde concerti.

Maxwell Davies was knighted in 1987 and appointed Master of the Queen's Music in 2004, in which role he seeks to raise the profile of music in Great Britain, as well as writing many works for Her Majesty the Queen and for royal occasions.

Sir Peter Maxwell Davies is represented by Intermusica. www.maxopus.com
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