

Book Reviews

Notes from a Cold Climate: Antarctic Symphony (Symphony No. 8)

*Edited by P.M. Davies
Browns (2001)
ISBN 0 9533730 3 7. 152 pages.*

Sir Peter Maxwell Davies conducted the première of his eighth symphony on 6 May 2001 at the Royal Festival Hall in London. It was not just another première. The symphony itself was an Antarctic symphony inspired by his visit to Antarctica and commissioned by the British Antarctic Survey and the Philharmonia Orchestra. In addition to the music this lavish publication was produced based on Sir Peter's diaries and a collection of splendid photographs by Pete Bucktrout.

It was certainly a most memorable event and obviously a unique opportunity for BAS to reach an audience well outside the polar community. There is a long tradition to bring artists to the Polar Regions. Historically the purpose was focussed on documentation, especially before the era of photography and film. Today many polar programmes invite artists with the purpose of creating art in its own right which can attract the interest and enrich the imagination of people with no knowledge of the polar regions as well as creating good will for polar science. The BAS initiative and the Antarctic Symphony has served this purpose well.

Music is a basic expression of human experience but subtler and more difficult to relate to geography or nature in the way an author or painter would be able to express such relations. One may wonder if the fact that a composer gets the chance to actually travel to the ice makes an imprint on the music. It is well known that a great deal of music about exotic places and landscapes has been conceived by composers thinking about or longing for places rather than actually travelling there. Of course the famous predecessor of Sir Maxwell Davies, Vaughan Williams wrote his *Sinfonia Antarctica* with only second hand ideas of what Antarctica is all about. Does it make a difference? Maybe not. Sounds of breaking ice, snowstorm or silence are

in a sense archetypal and would come to mind for any composer writing polar music. After all the music will be judged and will eventually survive on its own merits, regardless of why and where it was written.

Still, I would argue that there is an added value to open up the experience of Antarctica to creative people of many different kinds, to relate artistic expressions to scientific work, and to involve cognitive as well as emotional aspects of such experiences. There is no doubt that a great master such as Maxwell Davies can combine these two roles in an eminent way through his music and his diaries from his travels. While Sir Peter's music is highly personal his diaries expresses sentiments and discoveries which are almost universal. This combination makes the reading of the book "Notes from a Cold Climate /Antarctic Symphony" especially interesting. The notes cover some well-known material, but also tells us that the feelings and thoughts on which a great composer like Sir Peter Maxwell Davies builds his art are very similar to those which any of us, as Antarctic travellers have and will experience.

ANDERS KARLQVIST

Physical Principles of Remote Sensing

*W.G. Rees
Cambridge University Press, 2nd ed. (2001)
343 pp. Price Hardback: £70/\$110. Softback: £24.95/\$39.95
ISBN 0521 66034 3/ 0521 66948 0*

First issued in 1990 (reviewed in *Antarctic Science*, 3, 225 (1991)) this edition has been substantially revised and expanded with the addition of a further 96 pages. Additions include SAR interferometry, an expanded discussion of image processing techniques, a new treatment of atmospheric sounding and an up-to-date account of all the main sensor types. This new edition will ensure that the book remains a valuable reference source for researchers and an excellent resource for undergraduate courses on remote sensing.

DAVID W.H. WALTON