Tempo 62 (252) 37–43 © 2010 Cambridge University Press
doi:10.1017/S0040298210000173 Printed in the United Kingdom


Barcelona, 1996 (photo: Calum MacDonald)

DAVID DREW: TRIBUTES & MEMORIES (III)

When I heard the shocking news of David's death, I thought of favourite pieces of writing, the pick of which would be his Preface to the paperback edition of the first two books of Stravinsky's Conversations with Robert Craft. Plucking this cherished volume from the shelves and glancing at David's text, I was struck by the following line: 'The true craftsman must at some point be a fanatic (and the fanatic who is a bad craftsman is an impostor or a lunatic)'. David may have been writing about Stravinsky, the 'great Poet' of the fable which tops and tails his Preface, but he could no less aptly have been referring to himself. To describe David's fanaticism and craftsmanship as complementary, or reciprocal, is hardly adequate: their relationship was symbiotic. Each spurred on the other and the coupling was extraordinarily fertile.

It is possible that David mock-modestly thought of himself as the Scribe of his own fable, but he himself was a great Poet. One aspect of this is the immediacy of his writing. He had no inclination to hang about for the sake of stragglers. The thinking was so abundant, and so pure, that one was always enriched, even when names might drop and roll out of reach.

Howard Skempton
31 December 2009

~

Four things I will treasure most about the memory of David:
1) His smile.
2) His utterly undaunted devotion to living composers of every kind.
3) His deep (and deeply moral) commitment to the music of the many fine and sometimes downright great composers once disagreeably marginalized by the various (and often, thanks to his intervention, transitory) modernist orthodoxies that held the less inquiring in their thrall for too long.
4) His mastery of the eccentric dissolve.

In connexion with 4), I remember a particularly perplexing and entertaining conversation with him, somewhere in the upper reaches of the old Boosey & Hawkes building, perhaps 15 years ago. Matters began relatively normally as we enthused noisily and in two-part counterpoint about a piece of music that intrigued us both, the Fifth Symphony of Valentin Silvestrov. There were some fine tongue-clicks of disapproval from a couple of other people in the room, as I recall, which only made us more determined. But then, almost imperceptibly, over the course of about 20 minutes, I began to find the train of David's argument stranger and more surreal. I was baffled until I realized that he had moved in his mind from the Silvestrov 5 to Górecki 3 and that we were now talking about a completely different piece.

The essentially Davidesque point of this anecdote is that there was no mistake on either of our parts and no jump cut on his, but instead a weirdly slow and quite seamless dissolve from one subject into another.

Gerard McBurney

~

I cannot do what I wish to do in a few sentences and in a way I find adequate and passend for David, ich verdanke ihm zuviel – the possibility of writing the Spinner book undisturbed, his support of my research for that, especially in London, in so many ways, the contacts he made for me, the friends I got – you remember well – and he did so much for Spinner which I should and want to mention. And I think I would like to show his really very large Großherzigkeit; for instance: how it must have been for him to be in contact with somebody (like me) who loves and respects Webern (etc.) and relies on his Urteil – you know what Webern said about Weill, according to Dallapiccola in his diary, in the 1940s? I have no idea what David's true feelings and thoughts about Webern, and Schoenberg, were. You certainly do remember his understanding not at all Spinner's insisting on the pianist (Katharina Wolpe, I think) playing not *mf*, not *f*, but *p*, only what was written in the score, in a rehearsal of his Piano Concerto. Whereas I was happy and delighted about this story, for I saw that Sp. really was a Vienna School person? …

One of David's favourite anecdotes about *Dr. Spinner* (you remember David laughing?) was the one with Spinner's answer, after being invited to lunch: 'I never eat lunch'. After all, David got him to answer those famous 12 Questions, and he liked so much to tell how Spinner began, slowly, with one-word-answers, ending up in that wonderful *quasi furioso* Litanei of composers whose Präsenz and influence can be heard and seen, apart from Webern's, in his, Spinner's music, from Bach to Mahler (12 all in all: that was one of Spinner's secret jokes, I am sure) … David was always proud of this result of his Bemühungen, mit Recht, I think. I am sure he did very much for many other composers as well, nicht aus Pflicht, sondern aus Neigung; in respect to Spinner I am, so to say, a witness for how he really *cared* for Spinner and his work. Although in our – his and mine – favourite kinds of music there was nearly no – keine Gemeinsamkeit – not very much common interest and love, he was always friendly and supportive, even patient, in answering my sometimes very detailed questions, if possible. He never seemed to be angry, although he must have been disappointed, whenever he came across my disliking (or not estimating enough) what he had recommended, presented, even mir an's Herz gelegt – especially not his Weill. But he was *very* astonished at my not having read Primo Levi's *E questo è un uomo* – that really was inexcusable (and he was right, of course). By all means I would have wanted to say something about David as a writer: through his articles and books I became aware of the 'high art' of writing an essay, which is not very much developed in German language, not in German language musicology, at least.

Also, remember how he seduced musicians to perform Spinner, as well as other composers to at least take notice of his music; and the other way around, how he made me listen to Schwertsik, for instance – during driving through London in his car to show me the most interesting pubs; of course I was to listen to Nali's Violin Concerto (and Nali was to ask me how I liked it); … überhaupt, his ways of getting people together were so phantasievoll and charming, and often really came as a surprise. He made me read a new Goldschmidt score (unter den Augen von Goldschmidt himself!) in the lobby of that ugly Hilton Hotel in

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0040298210000173 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Vienna, we three waiting for the Flughafenbus; or how sophisticated his arrangement for my first encounter with Goldschmidt: he took us to a bench high above the Mürztal (wonderful view down to the Abtei Neuberg and up to the Schneealpe – Webern often was there), David himself lying nearby in the grass, pretending to sketch some pages of his Weill Book: he was always like a father and protector, watching that everything went well, and at the same time he felt and acted as a director (Regisseur) who enjoyed seeing us 'move' and develop what he had initiated. – How he managed to get even the B&H people to have some (temporary) respect for Spinner; his tricks in doing so …

What a wonderful atmosphere he established for me to work in the Regent Street second floor offices, the Spinner manuscripts being kept in the safe … then I remember us travelling to Spinner's family in South London in a taxi: Hofrat Brosche of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, David (on the Klappsitz, as so often trying to keep himself back in his favourite position as observer), and me, in order to sign the contract about the estate. David was so happy about finally and gloriously having succeeded in getting this done, he also was amused about his arrangement of such different people in one room, whereas he himself, decently in the background, tried to 'disappear' among the toys of Spinner's grandson.

Regina Busch
From an e-mail to the Editor of Tempo

~

My memories of David go back to working in a temporary capacity at Boosey & Hawkes, and in particular, shoe-horned into part of the tiny *Tempo* office, working on the vocal score of *The Duenna*, then a facsimile in Roberto Gerhard's flowing hand. It was to have its long-delayed stage première in Madrid, an important event for David who had worked with Gerhard long before on making various revisions. I attended the splendid production at the Zarzuela Theatre and was enchanted by the opera.

David invited me to collaborate with him on his private work (that was how he put it, though this has been more a case of my doing my best to assist, he forging ahead and I running in his wake, trying to keep up), and so began many happy years of working on whatever project he was engaged upon.

Two particular qualities stand out. One was his amazing memory for minute detail, together with an unending attention to research and the establishment of the correct facts. What a joy it was to present him with the results of a successful internet search, which would be read with great interest, absorbed and processed for the current book. I was also impressed by his courtesy, generosity and compassion. He would expend so much effort on helping and supporting everyone. Composers, living and deceased, benefited from his enthusiastic and practical promotion of their works, and he would keep in touch with numerous friends, all while busy writing his books and articles.

To work for him was a whole education, all endlessly fascinating and better than going to university. The memory of his kindness and of his inspirational example will never leave me.

Gillian Ward
7 January 2010

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0040298210000173 Published online by Cambridge University Press

~

I first became aware of the existence of David Drew when, as an undergraduate in the early sixties, I read his extraordinary chapter on French music in Howard Hartog's *European Music in the Twentieth Century*. Though it's years since I've re-read that chapter, I still remember particular ideas, not necessarily because I agreed with them (I hardly knew enough to form an opinion one way or the other), but because they were expressed with such precision and vigour that they made the mind tremble with excitement. I remember thinking: that's how one should write about music – lucidly and without fear. Afterwards I always looked out for David's pieces, which were at that time few and far between not only because of his multitude of other activities, but because – in utter contrast with the apparent immediacy of what appeared in print – he was a perfectionist who seems to have handed work over only with extreme reluctance.

When one got to know him, all was (so one thought) explained. A certain hesitancy in his way of expressing himself seemed at constant war with an intellectual fury seething just below the surface. The frequent 'ah's and fermatas were a kind of deprecation of his own excessive seriousness, but they were not, one realized, themselves to be taken too seriously. I shall never forget his raging against the Weill establishment for its cavalier treatment of him. It was angry, but wonderfully funny and even good-natured. Like many who can't compromise on matters of importance, he tended to bump into the institutions for or with whom he worked, and he often, I suspect, came off the worse. But his complete lack of pomposity and terrific sense of humour ensured that the anger amused rather than disturbed in conversation, while doing both in print.

David Drew and Kim Kowalke outside the Schott-Universal showroom in Great Marlborough Street, London, 12 June 2009. Their mirth was occasioned by the window display of the publications of the Kurt Weill Edition, complete with a composer photograph of … Hanns Eisler (photo: Ben Newing).

I shall never forget him and Judy taking the trouble to attend an improbable book-launch in our Herefordshire garden one July day in 2006. 'I may need to consult you about "onward" transport', David had e-mailed, 'having this-morning been informed by the call centre in Bombay that our rail system will take us no further in your direction that Gloucester or Newport. Car isn't quite the easy solution it might appear to be. Plane??? Helicopter?' I've no idea how they got here in the end, but their presence was an act of typical, outrageous generosity. I never saw him again, and Judy next only at his funeral. So my last memory is incongruous: the master-critic of the musically urbane,

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0040298210000173 Published online by Cambridge University Press

eating blinis and sipping vodka on a remote country lawn. His death leaves a deep, unfillable hole in both landscapes.

Stephen Walsh
January 2010

~

David liked to laugh. Possessed of a ready smile, disarming spontaneity, and a quick (sometimes even wicked) wit, he empathized little with people or endeavors that took themselves too zealously. Yet his own perfectionism rarely allowed an otherwise endearing boyish enthusiasm to embrace performances or recordings of works he cared about deeply. 'Aber etwas fehlt' seemed inevitably to cloud his response to enterprises adjudged as triumphs by others (including me). I witnessed just one exception, when David's rapture was uncharacteristically unmodified: the concert performance of *The Firebrand of Florence* on the closing night of the BBC's Weill Weekend in January 2000. Having served as the program consultant for the South Bank centenary celebration, David had no official role in the Barbican's. And, like virtually everyone else in the audience, he was hearing Weill's biggest Broadway flop for the first time. At intermission he bounded out of the hall, threw his arms around me, and literally bounced us both up and down, exclaiming 'That's it!' as if his near half-century of efforts for Weill had been vindicated in this very moment, which he could so enjoy because he didn't have to bear responsibility for its execution.

Almost a decade later, a few weeks before David's death, his new doctor inquired, 'What gives you pleasure?' Without a second's hesitation, David responded: 'writing a sentence that has both rhythm and sense'. In this, however, full responsibility for execution could not be abdicated. David's quest for perfection in every sentence, every paragraph, accounts both for the 'grace, wit, and lucidity' of his published prose (Richard Taruskin's characterization of the *Handbook*) and for the many missed deadlines and abandoned essays – as well as for the vast unpublished literary legacy that would have met all but his own lofty standards. Anyone familiar with the graceful elegance – indeed, the extraordinary rhythm and sense – of David's writings will be surprised to learn how their author agonized to find precisely the right formulation in a compositional process best described as Beethovenian in its obsessive drafting and redrafting.

And those of us whose own scholarly endeavors required us to read and re-read every word he wrote still marvel at (and invoke) the Drewian metaphors that so powerfully and unforgettably framed central issues and debates: Weill's significance as 'one of music's great "might-have-beens" ' (an indictment of Reger by Gerald Abraham that David refunctioned for Weill). How the 'domestic radiators, central furnaces and reactors' of Vulgar Brechtism 'threaten to overheat at the very mention of Weill's independence from Brecht'. The 'ramshackle' nature of the libretto of *Mahagonny*, which, like Begbick's lorry, 'lost its shock-absorbers during its long and arduous retreat from the world of law and order', leaving 'the Girl of the Golden West far behind' to arrive 'in a desert where no libretto and no opera has been before'. The 'winged creatures of Broadway, birds and insects alike', flying 'toward known practical requirements and unpredictable contingency, away from the cabins and cages of Urtext'. The flora and fauna alongside the precipitous and serpentine byways of the Patagonian Andes that mark the path from Drew's 1975 edition of Weill's selected writings to a complete collection of such specimens.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0040298210000173 Published online by Cambridge University Press

In his now classic essay 'Kurt Weill and His Critics'[1] from 1975, David argued that

> it would be folly to conclude that Adorno's contributions to the pre-war Weill literature are of anything less than commanding importance. Just as he could convey more about music in a mere parenthesis than many writers on music contrive to say in a lifetime, so do his occasional critical errors prove more illuminating than much that is incontrovertible in the work of lesser men.

Much the same could be said of David's analogous post-war critical oeuvre, so much of which remains unpublished. I return again and again, for example, to his 'Introduction' to the 1976 London Sinfonietta 3-LP landmark recording of Weill's works for Deutsche Grammophon. Surely these five paragraphs are the most essential and eloquent ever written about Weill, the last sentences of which can now stand, unedited, as a eulogy for their author:

> a just, loyal, and friendly man, who knew his own worth, and yet dissociated himself from the contemporary cult of genius by preserving – as far as his characteristic irony allowed – a deceptively mild and self-effacing exterior in his everyday encounters; a man for whom democracy was a fundamental and humane truth which should inform every level of activity; a man profoundly aware of the tragedies and follies of his time, but one whose laughter could so convulse him – as he tried to mop away the tears – that it became quite noiseless; a man who was much loved.

Kim Kowalke

~

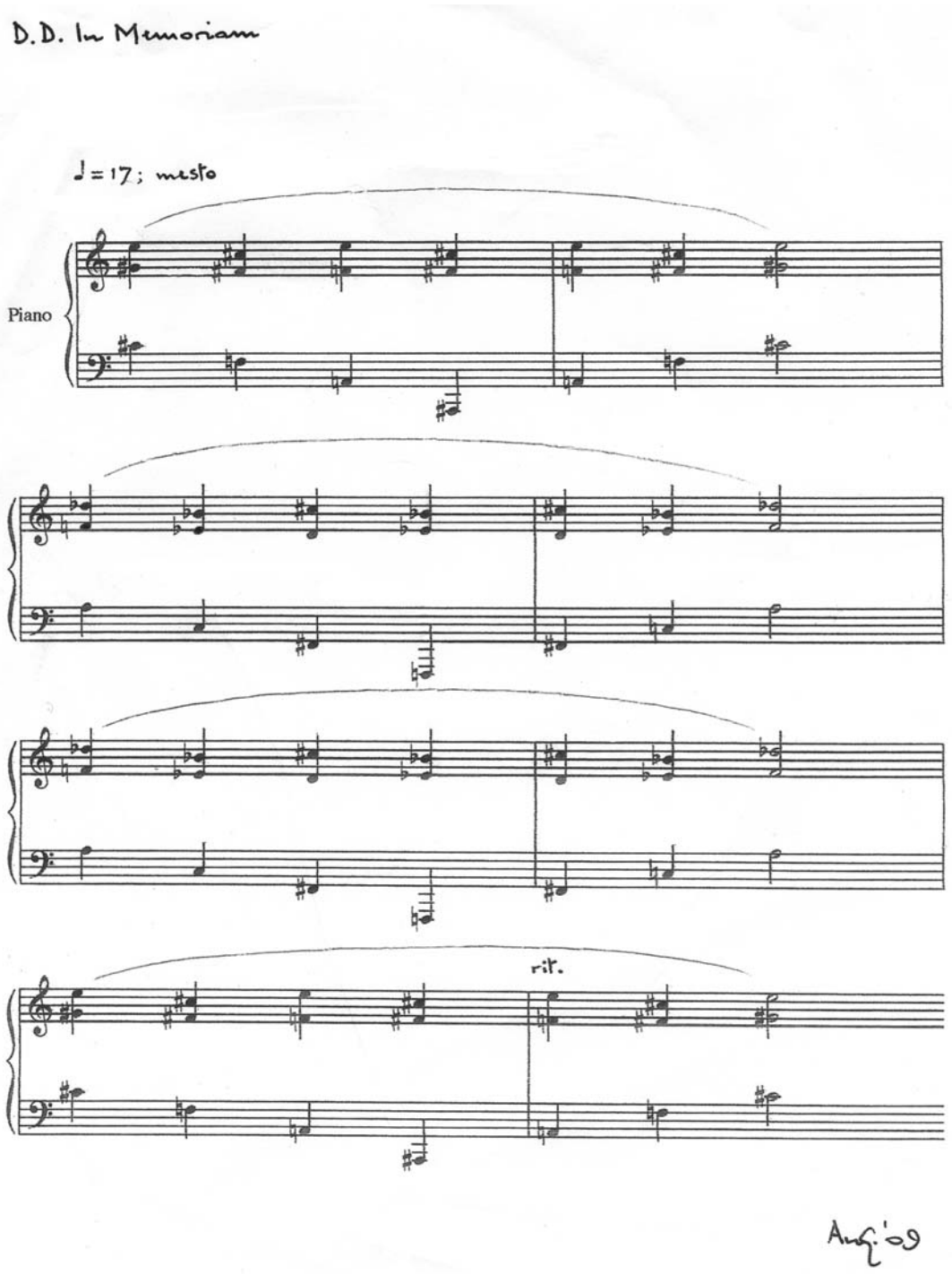
Things are as they are.
Just one thing I would ask:
Between my death
        and the time when they forget me,
Let me overhear
        the things they say.

Martin Anderson

~

[1] First published in German as the 'Vorwort' to *Über Kurt Weill* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1975); the English version appeared in two successive numbers of the *Times Literary Supplement*, 3 and 10 October 1975 (Ed.).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0040298210000173 Published online by Cambridge University Press



Mark R. Taylor

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0040298210000173 Published online by Cambridge University Press