

<b>Institution:</b> Royal Academy of Music		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies		
<b>Title of case study:</b> The late music of Peter Maxwell Davies		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2010 – March 2016		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b> Peter Maxwell Davies	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b> Professor of Composition	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b> September 2006 – March 2016
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 1 August 2013 – 31 July 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>In his last works Sir Peter Maxwell Davies consolidated his long-held anti-authoritarian views within compositional statements of large-scale public forms. Taking the form of a dialectical relationship between celebration and questioning, creative acts of public protest frame issues of music education and participation, student activism against authoritarianism, cultural remembering and belonging, and interventionist foreign policy. While he had been in the public eye for all of his creative life, Davies' appointment as Master of the Queen's Music in 2004 provided a platform for these late works to make an impact on creativity, culture, and society.</p>		
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>In a Gresham College Lecture in 2009, making particular reference to the authoritarian political regimes of the twentieth century, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies asked why we write music. He offered three answers: first, to bear witness; second, to preserve memory by our record, which could or would be obliterated; third, to defy death, not so much as an individual, but on behalf of all participants in our culture. These central tenets are explored throughout Davies's later works, often in relation to a political message with which he wished to engage his audiences. For example, issues of environmentalism and the traditions of Orkney play a central role in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Violin Concerto, in which a celebration of Orkney fiddle music draws attention to the threats posed against traditional music by both commercialism and climate change.</p> <p>The REF2014 commentary for <i>Kommilitonen!</i> stated that the opera is underpinned by the exploration of two compositional questions. The first, how to make best use of a cast and orchestra of advanced students, required close collaboration with the students themselves; this research question was returned to, with broader educational scope, in <i>The Hogboon</i>. The second question bears out Britten's remark that to write successfully for the stage requires the writing of 'many types of music'. The opera contains the widest range of musical grammar to summon the spectator instantly to different epochs and cultures, and yet at no point is any 'authentic' material quoted. The fact that the score comes across with a sense of unified sensibility suggests that Davies's style at its most 'pure' may result from a virtuosic level of stylistic impurity. This has been discussed before as a form of composing through 'masks': the court jester can speak truthfully to a king, protected by his 'act' in a way that others are not.</p>		

The technical and contextual concerns of Symphony No. 9 grow from *Kommilitonen!* in continuing the theme of protest by articulating the composer's feelings about the interventions in the Middle East and Afghanistan. That the Symphony has a dedication to the Queen, in the year of her Diamond Jubilee, compounds the levels of potential transgression. In its scoring for symphony orchestra and an obligato band, the work has a precedent in *St Thomas Wake* (2012). There, Davies depicts the Luftwaffe air raids on Manchester and the sounds of domestic music making he heard in the air raid shelters; in the Symphony it is the 'serious' music of the orchestra that frames the whole discourse. In returning to the concept of remembering, Symphony No. 10 sets texts by Leopardi, Borromini, and an anonymous sonnet that attacks Borromini's creative process. This internal dialectic is mirrored technically in a composition that draws on the mathematical principles of Borromini's architecture, described by commentator Christopher Austin as 'a deeply moving meditation on the nature of creativity, the artist's relationship with the past and, ultimately, mortality.'

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

1. *Kommilitonen! (Young Blood!)* lyric opera in two acts (Chester Music, 2010)

Commissioned by the Royal Academy of Music and the Juilliard School. Libretto by David Pountney. First performed by students of the Royal Academy of Music, Jane Glover (conductor), Royal Academy of Music, 18 March 2011. American premiere given by students of the Juilliard School, Anne Manson (conductor), 16 November 2011.

Performances at Royal Academy of Music, London, 18, 21, 23, 25 March 2011; Juilliard School, New York, 16, 18, 20 November 2011; Bristol, 12 June 2012; Hessischer Rundfunk Frankfurt, 2 May 2013; Giessen, 5, 11, 25 May, 2, 20 June 2013; Orchester des Stadttheaters Bremen, 29 March, 4, 17, 27 April, 3, 14, 19 May 2014; Hochschulorchester Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdi Leipzig, 28-31 May, 1, 2 June 2016; Barry Memo Arts and Welsh National Opera, Cardiff, 27-31 July 2016.

Submitted in REF2014.

2. Symphony No. 9 for orchestra and brass sextet (Chester Music, 2012)

Commissioned by the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra.

Performances by Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Vasily Petrenko, Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, 9 June 2012 and BBC Proms, 23 August 2012; Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, John Storgårds, Helsinki Music Centre, 4, 5 December 2013; BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Thomas Dausgaard, City Hall Glasgow, 10 December 2016.

Submitted in REF2014.

3. Symphony No. 10 (Alla ricerca di Borromini) for solo baritone, SATB chorus and orchestra; texts by Francesco Borromini, Giacomo Leopardi and anon (Schott, 2013)

Performances by London Symphony Orchestra, Antonio Pappano, Barbican Hall London, 2 February 2014; Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Antonio Pappano, Sala Santa Cecilia Rome, 27 June 2014.

4. *The Hogboon* children's opera for a combination of professional musicians, students and children; duration 55 minutes; libretto by Peter Maxwell Davies (Schott, 2015)

Performances by London Symphony Orchestra, Guildhall Symphony Orchestra, LSO Discovery Choirs, London Symphony Chorus, Guildhall School Semi-Chorus, Simon Rattle, Barbican Hall London, 26 June 2016; Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg, Karina Canellakis, Philharmonie Luxembourg, 6 May 2017.

**4. Details of the impact** (indicative maximum 750 words)

In the late works of Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, public protest in the form of a dialectical relationship between celebration and questioning is framed by issues of music education and participation, student protests against authoritarianism, cultural remembering and belonging, and interventionist foreign policy. The impact of these late works on creativity, culture, and society was effected by four mechanisms: first, the public performances of the works themselves; second, his public position as Master of the Queen's Music; third, his work as an educator; fourth, the response of the arts and publishing communities upon his death, and the consequent public discourse surrounding the legacy of his late works.

Shortly after the composer's death in 2016, many tributes were published that attest to this legacy. Stephen Lumsden wrote, 'as Master of the Queen's Music he took the role to new heights, using his position to voice important opinions about music education and the value of culture to our society, never afraid to point up where he felt the Establishment and politicians in particular had fallen short in recognising those values. He leaves a remarkable body of work enhanced by several outstanding works in recent years including his opera *Kommilitonen!*, the recent 10th Symphony and several works for children including his new children's opera *The Hogboon*, which he will sadly never get to hear' (1). Sally Groves, the former Creative Director of Schott Music, stated that 'Max was a truly unique musician. A remarkable composer who created music theatre works of searing power, great symphonies, intense chamber music, works of universal popularity. A fierce fighter for music in the community and in education, and on environmental issues.... The last years, even when battling against the leukaemia which came on him so suddenly, were an Indian Summer of wonderful, richly imagined works' (1). Lengthy obituaries were also published in leading newspapers, including the *New York Times*, *Telegraph*, *Guardian*, *Independent*, *Economist*, *Scotsman*, *Financial Times*, *Express*, and *Australian*. The press response to his final work, *The Hogboon*, also took a summative approach. For example, *The Arts Desk* observed 'it's a measure of the man that his final work, *The Hogboon*, should fill a stage with hundreds of children, professional singers beside students and amateurs, a world-class orchestra – and Sir Simon Rattle; that it should be as rich and complex as it needed to be, with no concessions to its younger performers. Max lived out his belief that his art was genuinely to be made for everyone, and that children "must get their hands dirty in the music"' (2).

The late works of Sir Peter Maxwell Davies also had a long-term educational impact on those who participated in their performances. Dame Jane Glover has attested that 'the world premiere of *Kommilitonen!* at the Royal Academy of Music prepared our opera students for their future careers in new music in several ways. Sir Peter Maxwell Davies and Sir David Pountney made a substantial drama by interweaving three distinct historical plots about student protest. The opera is, in effect, a blended trilogy with rapid cross-cutting between the different strands. The complexity of the production, and the precision it demanded of the participants (including the orchestral players), provided an outstanding training ground in the creation of new theatrical repertoire. Max's music underpinned the cross-cutting with rapid changes of style — each placing significant musical demands on the singers. Several of those who sang in the world premiere have gone on to have significant careers in contemporary opera, including Katie Bray, Johnny Herford, Jonathan McGovern, Marcus Farnsworth, Aoife Miskelly, and Jennifer France' (3).

Feedback collected by LSO Discovery included this comment from the parent of a child in the choir for the first performance of *The Hogboon*: 'I know [my daughter] was so excited to have

performed – I am sure she will remember the performance for life and no doubt that being part of it will contribute to building her personality, confidence, motivation and enjoyment of music' (4). At a similarly personal level the following comment was made to camera by a pupil of Haverstock School, Camden, following an education project in which a devised piece of music, made in response to *Kommilitonen!*, was performed to Sir Peter Maxwell Davies: 'He's a great composer, I think, and very inspiring.' [Off camera: 'he gave you some nice advice; what did you get from him?'] 'Follow your dreams and never give up' (5).

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- [1.] Intermusica Press Release: Sir Peter Maxwell Davies CH CBE (1934-2016), March 2016, [www.intermusica.co.uk/artist/Sir-Peter-Maxwell-Davies](http://www.intermusica.co.uk/artist/Sir-Peter-Maxwell-Davies) (accessed 30 November 2020).
- [2.] Helen Wallace, 'The Hogboon, LSO, Rattle, Barbican, *The Arts Desk*, 27 June 2016, <https://theartsdesk.com/classical-music/hogboon-lso-rattle-barbican> (accessed 8 March 2021).
- [3.] Correspondence between Dame Jane Glover and Professor Timothy Jones, 22 March 2021.
- [4.] LSO Discovery, feedback from participants of Peter Maxwell Davies *The Hogboon*, June 2016.
- [5.] Loud Minority, 'Kommilitonen! Young people from Haverstock School devised a piece in response to a new opera by Sir Peter Maxwell Davies called Kommilitonen.' <http://loudminority.co.uk/?portfolio=kommilitonen> and <https://vimeo.com/118127764>, uploaded 29 January 2015 (accessed 24 January 2020).