

Peter
MAXWELL DAVIES

Strathclyde Concertos Nos. 9 and 10
Carolísima

Nicholson • Dooner • Checker • Pacewicz • Ellis • Green
Scottish Chamber Orchestra • Maxwell Davies



Peter Maxwell Davies (b. 1934)
Strathclyde Concertos Nos. 9 and 10 • Carolísima

Strathclyde Concerto No. 9, Op. 170 (1994)
For six woodwind players and string orchestra

The ninth concerto in the series was designed as an opportunity for those members of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra who had hitherto had no chance to shine as soloists to do so – hence the unusual 'concertante' line-up of piccolo, alto flute, cor anglais, clarinet in E flat, bass clarinet and contrabassoon, with string orchestra.

The work has basic material in common with a short work composed for the choir of St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh, called *Mercurius*. The colours of the concerto were inspired by the infinite variety of shading within the winter greys of my Orkney home, where all light is refracted and reflected back from the sea three hundred feet below the house; this – particularly in November – makes me think of transparent, translucent or opaque Mercury, ranging from a cloud-shadowed near-purple to the brightest, suddenly sparkling silver. I believe this will be clearest in the slow, quiet sections which constantly interrupt the concerto's flow, opening up like a 'laconismus' lachrymabundus*** in stormy weather.

There is one movement only. A slow introduction heralds a fast exposition, closed by a short *lento* featuring a high contrabassoon solo. The development is characterized by sudden 'cadenzas' for the soloists and leads not to the usual varied reprise of the exposition but to a slow and gently rocking 'lullaby' for all the soloists, standing in for a slow movement proper. The quick recapitulation that follows is capped by an 'apotheosis', where the strings have the melody in unison, while the soloists decorate this with swirling 'snowstorm' figurations. The ending is not in the opening key of F major but relaxes into D flat, the major version of the arrival point of the work's first long paragraph.

* A fashion of speaking in few words with much matter.

** Weeping ripe, ready to weep (used of clouds).

Strathclyde Concerto No. 10, Op. 179 (1996)
Concerto for Orchestra

This is a concerto for orchestra, in three movements.

The first, *Allegro non troppo*, is on a symphonic scale, turbulent and urgent, with maximum virtuosity required of all members of the orchestra – even back-desk string players find themselves suddenly spotlighted, playing chords alone. Particularly demanding are the cadenzas and flourishes for horns, trumpets and timpani.

The second movement is slow, with gentle triple-time rhythms (lower strings, pizzicato), and long melodies on flute and alto flute – led by questing horn and trumpet calls into an elegiac and intense middle section, scored first for strings alone, then with an extended cor anglais solo and finally for full orchestra. A varied reprise of the movement's opening is again heralded by horns and trumpets.

The finale starts with the kind of melody (on piccolo) with which such concerto cycles should perhaps end – cheerful and perky, suggestive of a type of Gaelic gathering known as a *ceilidh*. I took great pleasure in undermining and splintering this figure before subjecting it to a most thorough sequence of transformations: the blaze of celebratory E major triumphalism is dissolved on a calm B flat major triad, which triggers not direct quotes from all the previous *Strathclyde Concertos*, played by their respective soloists, in order, but treatments of the material of this concerto to suggest its predecessors – pure nostalgia! The close is, indeed, triumphant, but not absolutely – I have left the door ajar for further concertos, for further music with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra.

Carolísima, Op. 168 (1994)
**Serenade for chamber orchestra
or instrumental ensemble**

The *Serenade* was commissioned by my Edinburgh friend and neighbour, the Danish Consul Jens Hogel, as a surprise present for his wife's fiftieth birthday. Preparations had to be top secret, and even the members of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra were unaware of the occasion for which they were about to rehearse. We were smuggled through the back entrance into an Edinburgh hotel, where Mrs Hogel's birthday party just happened to be a reception for the Cleveland Orchestra during the Festival: the first performance was given for her and for the visiting orchestra – much to everybody's delight and astonishment. The title *Carolísima* is derived affectionately from her first name, Carol.

Jens requested that there be at least two tunes suitable for whistling, and something to dance to, in the course of the *Serenade*. There are at least three singable tunes: the *Introductions*, the central *Adagio*, and the *Epilogue* – all very Scottish, but I also played with references to Aaron Copland, one of the dedicatee's favourite composers (she is American), and a dear friend and mentor of mine. The first *Allegro* is energetic and virtuosic, and the second suggests a *ceilidh*.

Peter Maxwell Davies

David Nicholson



David Nicholson was born in 1938 in Newcastle and educated at Newcastle Royal Grammar School. He studied flute under Geoffrey Gilbert at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and then also in Nice with Jean-Pierre Rampal and Canterbury with Marcel Moyse. He moved to Edinburgh in 1963 to teach and develop his love of chamber music. There he founded the Bernicia Ensemble and the Amphion Wind Quintet and was a founder member of the New Music Group of Scotland, directed by Edward Harper. In 1974 he was instrumental in founding the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, in which he served as principal flute until his retirement in 2000. His passion for teaching led to an association with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland lasting over forty years. He also taught in Edinburgh and Aberdeen, ran the Edinburgh Flute Course and gave many classes around Britain and abroad. He died in October 2010 at his home in Fife. His legacy is memorialized by his bequest of music, papers and a scholarship fund at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Elisabeth Dooner

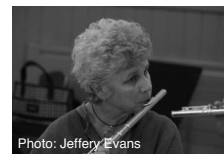


Photo: Jeffery Evans

Elisabeth Dooner was born in Edinburgh and studied music in Glasgow and London, where her flute teachers were David Nicholson and William Bennett. After a busy freelance career in London, in 1988 she returned to Scotland to join the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, with which she has completed some 25 years, during that time having worked with many international soloists and conductors including Alfred Brendel, Sir Charles Mackerras, Joseph Swensen, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, and Robin Ticciati. She is the Baroque Flute tutor at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Maurice Checker



Emerging from the Royal College of Music in London and studies in Paris, Maurice Checker joined the London Philharmonic Orchestra in 1955. The orchestra took him to Russia, where it played to Shostakovich, and later on tours of the USA and the Far East, as well as to Glyndebourne. He then took six months off to drive and play his way through the former Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Israel, and rejoined the LPO before moving to Scotland and joining the Scottish Chamber Orchestra in 1976. After a brief appearance as an 18th century bandsman he retired in 1997.

Josef Pacewicz



Photo: Tom Finnie

In 1979 after studying at the Royal Academy of Music in London Josef joined the Scottish National Orchestra as Associate Principal Clarinet/Principal E flat Clarinet, a position he still holds today. During this time he has appeared with all the Scottish orchestras and most of the major British orchestras including the London Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia, Royal Philharmonic, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Hallé, Birmingham Symphony and BBC Symphony Orchestras, under such conductors as Gergiev, Tilson Thomas, Sir Andrew Davis and Neeme Järvi. Since 1985 he has been on the teaching staff of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, formerly the RSAMD, where he teaches both clarinet and saxophone.

Ruth Ellis



Photo: Paul Hampton

Ruth Ellis was born in Leek, Staffordshire. She studied with Neville Duckworth and Sidney Fell at the Royal Northern College of Music as both a junior and senior student. In 1987 she joined the Scottish Chamber Orchestra as sub-principal clarinet, also playing bass and E flat clarinets. After 22 wonderful years with the orchestra she left in 2009 to concentrate on teaching clarinet and piano. She is married to a guitar-making crofter in the West Highlands of Scotland and also works as a relief library assistant in the local community school.

Alison Green



Photo: Chris Christodoulou

Alison Green studied at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow with Edgar Williams and with Roger Birnstingl in Geneva, where she acquired a great deal of playing experience, performing with orchestras all over Switzerland. On her return to Scotland she had a busy freelance career with all of the Scottish orchestras and in 1990 was appointed to her present position of second bassoon in the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. After joining the SCO she received a Scottish Arts Council grant and studied contrabassoon with Nicholas Reader.

Scottish Chamber Orchestra



Photo: Marco Borggreve

The Scottish Chamber Orchestra was formed in 1974 with a commitment to serve the Scottish community. It is recognised as one of Scotland's major cultural ambassadors, touring internationally and appearing regularly at the Edinburgh, St Magnus and Aldeburgh Festivals and the BBC Proms as well as performing throughout Scotland. Principal Conductor Robin Ticciati took up his post from the 2009/10 season and has established a highly successful partnership. The SCO's long-standing relationship with its Conductor Laureate, the late Sir Charles Mackerras, resulted in many exceptional performances and award-winning recordings. The Orchestra enjoys close relationships with many leading composers and has commissioned more than a hundred new works, including a number of pieces by its Composer Laureate Sir Peter Maxwell Davies. The Scottish Chamber Orchestra receives funding from the Scottish Government.

Sir Peter Maxwell Davies

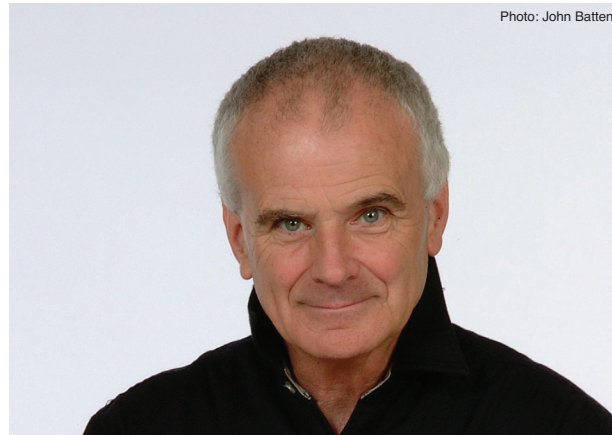


Photo: John Batten

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 work list spanning 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 two full-length ballets, music-theatre works *Eight Songs for a Mad King*

and *Miss Donnithorne's Maggot*, and operas including *Resurrection*, *The Lighthouse*, *The Doctor of Myddfai*, *Taverner* and *Kommilitonen!* (Young Blood!). His huge output of orchestral work comprises numerous symphonies and concerti, and light orchestral works such as *An Orkney Wedding, with Sunrise* and *Mavis in Las Vegas* (8.572348). His substantial chamber and instrumental catalogue includes the landmark cycle of ten string quartets, the *Naxos Quartets* (8.505225), described in the *Financial Times* as "one of the most impressive musical statements of our time". 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, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, 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 is Visiting Professor at London's Royal Academy of Music and Christchurch University Canterbury. Maxwell Davies was knighted in 1987 and appointed Master of the Queen's Music in 2004, in which rôle 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.

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Peter Maxwell Davies's *Strathclyde Concertos*, jointly commissioned by Strathclyde Regional Council and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra in 1987, have given rise to a whole family of concertos for different and unusual instruments. The *Ninth Concerto* provides an opportunity for woodwind instruments to shine as soloists, the music inspired by the infinite shades of winter light reflected from the seas of Orkney. The final *Tenth Concerto* is "a concerto for orchestra that's as bracing as a gale on the rugged Orkney cliffs" (*BBC Music Magazine*), and the delightful *Carolísima* is filled with dances and singable tunes.



Sir Peter
MAXWELL DAVIES
(b. 1934)

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| 1 | Strathclyde Concerto No. 9, Op. 170 (1994)* | 25:44 |
| | Moderato – Allegro – Lentissimo | |
| | Strathclyde Concerto No. 10, Op. 179 (1996) | 31:40 |
| 2 | 1. Allegro non troppo | 12:59 |
| 3 | 2. Lento | 9:25 |
| 4 | 3. Moderato | 9:16 |
| 5 | Carolísima, Op. 168 (1994) | 19:37 |
| | Introduction – Allegro – Adagio – Allegro – Epilogue | |

David Nicholson, Piccolo* • Elisabeth Dooner, Alto flute*
Maurice Checker, Cor anglais* • Josef Pacewicz, E flat clarinet*
Ruth Ellis, Bass clarinet* • Alison Green, Contrabassoon*

Scottish Chamber Orchestra • Peter Maxwell Davies

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