

DAVID DORWARD

David C F Wright DD

David Campbell Dorward was born in a Dundee nursing home on 7 August 1933. Both of his parents were schoolteachers in Scotland. His mother, Margaret Edward Boyle, briefly taught mathematics at Dalkeith High School until her marriage to his father, David Gardyne Dorward, who was a country schoolmaster first at Logie Pert near Montrose in North Angus, and from 1938 at Monikie, near Dundee.



David responded to music from infancy; his mother recalled that at less than a year old David burst into tears at some sentimental ditty on the radio. However, he remembers his first awakening to music as being an obsession with the local church bell, which sound he accurately – misleadingly so – imitated with an old kettle and pot lid. While at Primary School he began piano lessons at the age of eight with Nora C Leggatt in nearby Monifieth. These continued till her death six years later.

After Monikie Primary between 1938 and 1945 he went on to the Morgan Academy in Dundee, travelling daily in from the country until 1951. He says he was averagely competent at school at most subjects; the exception being English for which he won the school medal. Music was not part of his formal studies at school, but he sang in the select school choir, which was joined by the school orchestra for the annual Christmas concert of choruses from the Messiah.

David had a visual fascination with musical symbols since early childhood, long before he knew what they signified. When he started piano lessons and learned notation he wrote a lot of little pieces for the black keys, revelling in their pentatonic delights. In the bookcase was a set of Arthur Mee's Children's Encyclopedia, featuring in volume 1 a page with pictures of the Great Composers, the central one having a strikingly proud and fierce countenance. Who is "Beeth-awven?" he asked his mother, who corrected his pronunciation and looked out for his music on the wireless. "I wanted to be a composer when I first heard the 5th symphony" he says, "the way the last movement emerged from the mysterious darkness gave me the biggest thrill of my life".

But his parents didn't think that he was to have a career in music. "I wrote laboriously on hand-drawn staves – I didn't know that you could buy pre-printed sheets – and was no prodigy like Mozart and the other famous names hailed by Arthur Mee as geniuses practically from the cradle". As he had not studied the curricular music class and showed no signs of exceptional musical talent (his piano playing became competent only much later), this obsession wasn't encouraged. His father had his own obsession – his garden. "I had to spend a lot of time weeding, which I hated: but it was a huge and wonderful garden. My father was as obsessed in his pursuit as I was in mine, but the work involved in tending to his garden, I later discovered, needed a lot of slave labour. I still love to sit in a fine garden, but not to work in one!"

Despite homework and working in the garden he filled a few manuscript books (staves pre-printed by now) with ambitious but unfinished masterpieces. But it was only much later when he went to the RAM that he had the freedom and stimulation to concentrate on composing. He would become a prolific composer; but the signs were there, for as early as his teenage years he was profoundly influenced by such works as the symphonies and sonatas of Beethoven; the Stravinsky ballets particularly Orpheus, Apollo and the Rite of Spring and that towering masterpiece of Messiaen – the Turangalila Symphony.

For four years from 1951, Dorward read English and Philosophy at St Andrews University, graduating with an MA Honours. But before he went up to University he had applied for a place on the General Music Course there, run by the composer Cedric Thorpe Davie, whose Symphony he had heard on the wireless. "I went to the interview with a bundle of scores and no little apprehension, as Thorpe Davie was the first composer I'd ever met. As it happened I had to wait another 20 minutes before he appeared, with a dazzling smile and many apologies: 'So sorry to keep you waiting - the dentist was running late!'. I remember that he asked me a few questions while he scrutinised my manuscripts (which included a 'comedy overture' for full orchestra based on the bothy ballad The Cooper o'Fife) then said I'd be admitted to the General Music course in my second year as the class was full for the first year".

David's only obligation was to sing in the Chapel Choir, starting immediately in the first term. That was no problem - he wanted to take part in music-making as much as he could and also joined the University Orchestra, having learned the violin over the summer holidays after his last term at school. "I was in the back desk of the second fiddles, and played discreetly, as the small orchestra's backbone consisted of gifted amateurs, and I didn't want to lower the standard. It was fun, and I learned a lot - especially from Cedric's approach to conducting an amateur orchestra. From later experience I didn't realise what a rare gift he had."

CTD was free of any self-importance but with a certain charisma, and had an attractive and boyish sense of fun. As the University organist he trained the Chapel Choir every Sunday morning before the service, but he also rehearsed the orchestra every week. In Dorward's third year he gave him a viola and told him to practice it in the summer holidays - "'we're short of violas' he said, so this humble back desk violinist joined the first - and only - desk alongside a very good viola player, poor chap".

Cedric and his wife were immensely hospitable and, as a teacher, Davie impressed Dorward; Davie was always clear-headed and practical in his attitudes to music and, as a pupil of Vaughan Williams, believed in writing music which would be of use to the community of which he felt an integral part. Dorward has emulated this in some measure too. About this time Davie was composing a film score for Disney's Rob Roy. He bought a car which he named Rob Roy and in which Dorward remembers a high-speed drive to Glasgow for the first performance in Scotland of Walton's Troilus and Cressida. He was also writing much theatre music particularly with Tyrone Guthrie, but perhaps his award winning Symphony in C is his finest musical achievement. I have heard it said that this is one of the finest symphonies to be written by a Scot, a verdict with which I readily concur.

With this distinguished composer, Dorward studied music history, musical analysis (in the Tovey style), harmony and counterpoint but, having a keen mind also taught himself. There was an active student life involving music including singing in the chapel choir which boasted a wide repertoire from Bach to Britten. Occasionally he rehearsed the orchestra in order to play in the University Orchestra. In his final year he also conducted the music society choir and made his public conducting debut with a selection from Brahms's Lieberslieder Waltzes. Earlier he was the rehearsal pianist for the music society choir's first performance of Davie's By the River, for female voices, piano and strings, written specially for the choir and the orchestra's strings - the latter including pragmatically a simple part for third violins, whose number included the rehearsal pianist. Dorward's first performed composition was at a musical society concert, a now lost violin and piano piece, in 1952, followed the following years by a piece for trumpet and piano and a few songs. These are also lost, to Dorward's relief; in his last year the general public had their first taste of his promising abilities as a composer with Three Scotch Songs This manuscript is missing too, rather to the composer's regret as he regards it as a good early work, though he has a studio recording, a gift from the singer namely the late Rev. William Niven - one of the several vocally gifted theology students of the time.

Two years of National Service in the Royal Artillery followed. He was a gunner in the regimental survey team. Apart from a threatened participation in the Suez adventure, the army life was mainly undemanding, and he had time to read widely free from the rigours of a university honours course. It

also enabled him for the first time to enjoy the pleasures of London's cultural life on weekend passes, staying at the Union Jack Club where there were often free tickets for concerts, theatre and opera at Covent Garden and Sadler Wells.

Towards the end of his army life after two years he entered for the Royal Academy of Music's Blumenthal scholarship, submitting three scores including the early Cooper o'Fife overture. He won the scholarship, and spent the next three years at the RAM. His first composition teacher was Manuel Frankell who installed confidence and imbued encouragement and boldness, particularly in revising the orchestration of the youthful Cooper of Fife overture. It won the Royal College of Music's Patrons Fund Award which led to the work's first performance by the Halle Orchestra under George Weldon at the Academy in 1958. A year or so later the young Colin Davis conducted its first broadcast with the BBC Scottish Orchestra. In that year after Frankell's sudden death his second teacher, for a short period only, was John Gardner whose opera *The Moon and Sixpence* had impressed Dorward on one of his London visits when on weekend leave. His blend of enthusiasm and criticism was stimulating, which Dorward found helpful as it was thought-provoking without being in the least overbearing. As his 'first' study he also studied the piano with Patrick Cory and took his LRAM as a piano teacher.

He went in for many composition prizes, partly because the money would be useful if he won, but mainly as an incentive to write as if for a commission. One of these he won was offered by the clarinettist (a professor at the RAM) John Davies for a work for six clarinets. These *Diversions*, played by six of his students, were performed at a Society for new Music concert with the composer conducting. He went in for the prize again in the following year, arranging a sketched song for the forces required - baritone and three clarinets. Dorward won with this *Meditations on a text of Thomas Browne*. In 1959 he won the prestigious Royal Philharmonic Society prize for his *Fantasy for large orchestra* which he has since withdrawn, considering it to be overscored and meandering;. The *Concerto for wind and percussion of 1960* won first prize in a competition promoted jointly by the Wind Societies of London and New York. Dorward was still a student at the Academy. The first performance was in London in 1961 by the Polyphonia Orchstra conducted by Bryan Fairfax, who shortly after recorded it for the Third Programme with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. The first performances in Scotland were conducted by Sir Alexander Gibson as part of the 1968 Scottish National Orchestra season.

The score is extremely skilful and the three movements are strongly contrasted in character. The contrapuntal fluency and sensitivity to texture is admirable. The central slow movement, in the form of a palindrome, is overstandingly successful. The finale is a rondo of excitement and high spirits. It is a work of brilliance, colour, variety and makes a lasting impression. Given publicity and performances it could become a best seller.

Another early broadcast was a piano suite, mainly written during his army days, *Aspects of Artists*, performed by Robin Wood in 1961. Maureen Hall had played it earlier at a Society for the Promotion of New Music concert in the Wigmore Hall.

Following a couple of years spent teaching and freelancing, in August 1962 Dorward left London to join the BBC as music producer in Edinburgh.

Over the next seven years Dorward composed many impressive works. The *Festivities for a Young Orchestra of 1962* is far from being a childish composition, as the title might suggest. It is tremendous fun, positively brimming with expertise and panache. The third movement is a modern young persons guide to the orchestra, complete with aleatoric effects for each section of the orchestra. The following year saw another 'utility work', the *Variations on an Old Scots Air* written for the Stirlingshire Youth Orchestra. The first variation is strong, percussive and stirring; the second causes one to wonder if we are in Spain, not Scotland; the third is strident and menacing; the fourth hints at Elgarian slush; the fifth is infectious with an irresistible swagger; the sixth suggests more than a hint of tragedy and possesses a tender violin solo; the finale is very Scottish and swaggers with wonderful audacity.

The String Quartet No 2 waited seven years before its first performance by the Edinburgh Quartet in 1970. It is in four movements each based partly on the motif that opens the piece. This quartet is magnificently conceived for the medium with a strong sense of form and memorable material. Every single bar is purposeful and the music is thoroughly accessible embodying as it does something of the charm of Mozart and the dream of Beethoven or Bartok, yet it speaks an individual language as well as having impeccable craftsmanship and clarity. The second movement is deeply felt, occasionally with a convincing tension and tremendous style. The mischievous scherzo hints at nationalism and has an unashamed foot-tapping bias. The finale constitutes a rich variety of colour with a touch of the macabre and a violin theme of unbearable beauty. Without a doubt, this is a masterpiece. The cantata *The Fervent Fire* of 1964 is Dorward's first major choral work, a setting for soloists chorus and orchestra of various old Scots texts from Henryson to Montgomerie, first performed in St Andrews as part of the annual concert of the University Music Society conducted by Cedric Thorpe Davie. The Scotsman reported that the music shows "the composer's distinctive flair for setting words effectively". The Violin Concerto was first performed by Miles Baster and the Glasgow String Orchestra under Adrian Secchi in May 1965. "The work is most accessible; fluently written in a style that presents no problems" wrote The Glasgow Herald. It is a piece of glowing beauty, attractive textures and perfect organisation of its material.

The String Quartet No 3 was completed in 1966. It was the McEwen Bequest Commission for that year from Glasgow University where it was first performed by the Edinburgh Quartet. The distinguished composer Anthony Payne wrote of "intricacies of its long single movement and, at times, the continuity seemed obscure but there was no doubt of the memorability and personality of it". The Glasgow Herald hailed it as "an arresting work which exhibits a strong and assured handling of the medium; its highly dramatic nature giving point to its numerous expressive contrasts. Not least among these were the eloquent recitative statements against a static background, the fleetingly fragmented scherzo, the vigorous dancing fugue and the works striking individual close". Conrad Wilson in the pages of The Scotsman called it "a compelling work". It certainly has a grip; it is more 'advanced' than its predecessor and is often sinister, recalling the menacing sound of the persistent flapping of birds as portrayed in Bernard Herrman's score for the Hitchcock film. It is a tough, gritty work of intellectual power. The Cello Concerto of the same year was written for Joan Dickson who gave the first performance with the Pro Arte Orchestra of Edinburgh under Eric Roberts in November 1967. It is designed in five movements all based on the C major scale that opens the work. The sensitivity to colour, the technical assurance in what Malcolm Rayment calls an "exceptionally ingenious score" are among the remarkable features of this work.

In June 1968 Dorward married a nurse, Janet Offord and have three children and four grandchildren. He retired from the BBC in 1991

Composition makes little money for him and he sees it as hard work. He admits to "often having scrapped a work". This creative urge is born of obsessive compulsion although in younger days his varied hobbies of photography, computers, drawing and painting and astronomy often distracted him from the need to compose and difficulties in getting down to it. He once told me that composing "has to be done alone, almost secretly and without anyone's help and advice".

Specific events have not continuously influenced his works although private thoughts, personal ideas and experiences do exert an influence as, to a lesser extent, do the composers he enjoys most; Beethoven, Richard Strauss and late Stravinsky. He has an affinity with Bach (which he prefers on the whole to play rather than listen to), Mozart, and Wagner who "has the ability to tap something deep in the psyche". He acknowledges, however, that Debussy helped to free him from the Teutonic sense of form, harmony and texture. As for British music he identifies with the sound world of another east coast composer, Britten, admiring particularly the three orchestral song cycles which Dorward claims to be "unique masterpieces". He values the earlier Tippett, such as the first opera and the Double String Concerto, but Elgar has, for a long time, been for the most part a "blind spot". As for composers

with more original gifts Dorward accepts that the serial technique has produced masterpieces but that the only exponent of the aleatory method who has been of help to him is Lutoslawski. He says “this method is just a method as, for example, is the fugue”. There are, as with all of us, composers that do not have much appeal. For Dorward these include late Brahms, Schonberg, Hindemith, Boulez, Rubbra and Bax, although they have occasionally made some impact both to his surprise and delight.

Dorward is a modest and honest man. He admits a disaffection for some of his works, although he might agree that his Cello Concerto was the first piece to give him satisfaction.

He has a deep love of the music of Sibelius. He enjoys company for relaxation but is equally happy alone. His political views lean towards the Guardian rather than the Telegraph; he is indifferent about independence for Scotland although he finds xenophobic nationalism in all its forms hateful. He is of no religious persuasion believing that organised creeds have caused far more harm than the personal comfort and strength it may give to individuals. Dorward’s modesty means that he is reluctant to discuss his work yet, paradoxically, he will continue to compose because “I optimistically feel that the next piece is going to be the best so far: something is there unsaid which must eventually be said. That is why I keep going”.

From the late 1960s to date numerous compositions have been produced by David Dorward including a musical A Christmas Carol which has an instant and enduring appeal. The Guardian of 1968 called it “a real success”. David Buchan in the Edinburgh Evening News refers to the song “I thought he’d never go” as a “real show stopper” and refers to the whole piece as “the great entertainment which it is”. This highlights the composer’s amazing versatility. The vaudeville numbers recall pages of his Symphony No 1 of 1960. His only opera to date Tonight, Mrs Morrison dates from 1968, and was a BBC commission. This one-act work lasts about 35 minutes. A Faustus Scena was composed for the Bridge of Allan Music Club and first performed in 1970. The work is scored for baritone and piano trio and is both a sombre and strongly-characterised setting of passages from Marlowe’s play, graphically depicting Faust’s life and downfall.

The year 1970 saw two impressive orchestral works: the Sonata Concertante which one reviewer describes as “an enjoyable portmanteau-like piece filled with wry little waltz tunes and rhythms, cadenzas, aleatory passages, even a fugue, all coherently put together, sharply etched, and not at all discursive”. The Ode for Small Orchestra was written for the Glasgow Chamber Orchestra and is in four movements alternating fast and slow, the last of which takes us back in time alluding to several styles of the last hundred years. The Golden Targe for chorus and orchestra, which dates from 1972 is a setting of the sixteenth century poem by William Dunbar. As it was written for the annual conference of the National Federation of Music Societies the music does not make heavy demands on the singers, or, for that matter, the listeners. The choral writing is basically diatonic as if showing that the composer is restricted and would feel more at home with his personal more modern style as in the splendid String Quartet No. 4 There are four movements linked together by a varied passage on the notes D, G, D (the initials of Dorward’s father who had died in September 1971). It is a busy, well-integrated work with fascinating contrasts. Often it is rich with very human feeling; in fact, the music is as close to speech as one could imagine; the communicative skill is exemplary. The range of emotion is vast - sometimes the intensity is unbearable but realistic. One phrase in the third section is repeated relentlessly as if a dog with a bone. The finale captures brilliantly the mood of disintegration as if the composer was contemplating his own mortality. The music is often angry but its masterly and powerful impact can only be admired. The splendid Analogues for string orchestra of 1973 has the appearance of a fifth quartet for a larger body of players.

Sobriety is not always a feature of Dorward’s work. Histoire of 1974 for eight instrumentalists was described by Conrad Wilson as “not at all a conventional octet but one in which the players tended to form splinter groups – sometimes disruptively as when the trombonist marches off the platform towards the end blaring away to hilarious effect. It is music about other people’s music or, at least, their styles. The results were captivating unfolding at times like a comic story yet avoiding the pitfalls that

lie in wait for composers who attempt to be humorous". The Piano Concerto of 1976 is a coherent and impressive piece, strong in character; the slow middle section may be overlong despite its admirable impressionism; the finale is mainly robust.

His latest concerto is the fine Viola Concerto, a work of tremendous warmth and skill which has an amazing ability to lift the spirits, a work I treasure.

Dorward's Golden City for orchestra dates from 1988. It was commissioned by the Edinburgh Youth Orchestra and has, as its starting point, two Scottish children's singing games, which work into luminous and highly effective triadic textures. At one point the strings of the orchestra whistle a Scottish playground tune to clarinet and timpani accompaniment. It is a very agreeable piece which went down well in the EYO's tour of Southern California in 1989

Since leaving the organisation Dorward has been twice commissioned by the BBC: first a work for tenor trombone and piano for composer and trombonist John Kenny, O How I love thee (1993) then his Second Symphony (1995), first performed by the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra under Alun Francis. Among other works is Amazon Moonflower (1992) for the free-bass accordionist Owen Murray, first performed at the Royal Academy of Music by one of his senior students, Adriana Kuwazka.

Other recent works include a suite for strings, Aldhammer Album (about Prestonpans, where he lives), an orchestral work Danilion, described by the composer as 'an imaginary ballet about an imaginary mythical being', a fifth String Quartet, and a work for bass recorder and string quartet written for John Turner, Elegiac Nocturne. The composer and musicologist David Johnston got to hear about this when it was still a 'work in progress' and planned to have it premiered at a concert to celebrate his 67th birthday in October 2009. The concert (featuring John Turner and the Edinburgh Quartet) took place as Johnston had planned, but became, because of his unexpected death, a celebration dedicated to his memory. Dorward's work in progress was coloured by this event, and the Nocturne became an elegy. So far (2010) this is most recent completed work, and (along with the orchestral Danilion and the 5th string quartet), as yet unperformed.

Dorward is a fine all round musician, very knowledgeable in all types of real music and a fascinating conversationalist. He is modest and not self-promoting, a genuine and sincere man.

There are many other musicians deserving mention but sincere recommendation is no consolation for performance. Here is an advanced and original musical voice from Scotland covering a wide range of music. His music must be heard... it really must!

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[*Quartet No 2*](#) (PDF)

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A handwritten musical score for a piece titled "The Cooper o'Fife". The score is arranged in three systems, each containing four staves. The notation is dense and includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, beams, and slurs. The first system features a complex rhythmic pattern with many beamed notes. The second system shows a more melodic line with some slurs. The third system continues the melodic and rhythmic development. The handwriting is clear but shows signs of being a working draft or a personal manuscript.

Sonatina

for flute and piano

David Dorward (1991)

Allegro

The musical score is written for Flute and Piano. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system (measures 1-2) shows the Flute part starting with a forte (*f*) dynamic, followed by a piano (*p*) dynamic. The Piano part starts with a fortissimo (*sf*) dynamic. The second system (measures 3-4) shows the Flute part with a forte (*f*) dynamic, followed by a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The Piano part continues with a fortissimo (*sf*) dynamic. The third system (measures 5-8) shows the Flute part with a forte (*f*) dynamic, followed by a piano (*p*) dynamic, and then a piano cantabile (*p cantabile*) dynamic. The Piano part continues with a fortissimo (*sf*) dynamic.

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Commissioned by Chicago Chamber Music Society, 1972

String Quartet no 4

David Diamond, op. 55

Violin I (1-2)

Musical score for Violin I (1-2). The staff shows a melodic line with various dynamics including *ff* and *p*. The music is in 4/4 time and features complex rhythmic patterns and phrasing.

Musical score for Violin II (3-4). The staff shows a melodic line with various dynamics including *ff* and *p*. The music is in 4/4 time and features complex rhythmic patterns and phrasing.

Musical score for Violoncello. The staff shows a melodic line with various dynamics including *ff* and *p*. The music is in 4/4 time and features complex rhythmic patterns and phrasing.

Musical score for Contrabasso. The staff shows a melodic line with various dynamics including *ff* and *p*. The music is in 4/4 time and features complex rhythmic patterns and phrasing.

Chicago Chamber Music Society

CONCERTO

DAVID BOWEN (1960)

for Wind & Percussion

Musical score for Wind & Percussion section, measures 1-4. The score includes staves for Flutes I & II, Piccolo, Oboes I & II, Cor Anglais, Clarinets I & II, Bass Clarinet, Bassoon I & II, and Contrabass. The music is in 4/4 time and features complex rhythmic patterns and dynamics.

Andante (1-2)

Musical score for Horns, Trumpets, Trombones, and Tuba section, measures 1-4. The score includes staves for Horns I & II, Trumpets I & II, Trombones I & II, and Tuba. The music is in 4/4 time and features complex rhythmic patterns and dynamics.

Musical score for Timpani, Percussion, and Piano section, measures 1-4. The score includes staves for Timpani, Percussion, and Piano. The music is in 4/4 time and features complex rhythmic patterns and dynamics.