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To begin at the beginning...

Peter Seabourne was born in 1960. At the age of ten he moved to a large farmhouse to live with his grandmother - the isolation and her support fostered a love of music and a passion for composing.

In 1980 he won a place at Clare College, Cambridge, studying composition with Robin Holloway, an inspirational figure. Though initially there was little common ground, some of his teacher's idiosyncratic single-mindedness was already reflected in the student pieces produced. Perhaps the stylistic gap has since narrowed (considerably)! Two prizes were won in national competitions and performances took place on London's South Bank, and in many festivals. Five pieces were selected by the Society for the Promotion of New Music, and the last of these, "Fragilitá", was given by Lontano under Odaline de la Martinez at the Institute for Contemporary Arts in London in 1993.

Silence

Even by this time, however, he had already abandoned writing, disowning all his work to this point; this partly due to a growing dissatisfaction with it, but also to an intensifying feeling of alienation from the prevailing wider contemporary music scene.

Re-awakening

In 2001 a "musical gauntlet" ("*you write something again, and I will play it*") was thrown down by a pianist friend, Michael Bell. This, combined with the inspirational playing of a talented young pupil, "drew up the veil", revealing music to be beautiful once more and to remind the composer of what had been neglected for too long. There followed an intense outpouring of work. Almost in a single package a 'voice' arrived (at last), with a cohesive sound world and an individual musical landscape; predominantly lyrical, often overtly emotional. Alongside came a wonderful sense of freedom from the constraints of external approval.

Prizes and commissions

Recognition followed. In 2004 his "Piano Concerto no.1" was awarded shared 3rd prize in the 1st International Uuno Klami Composition Competition, and an orchestra prize in Finland, performed twice and broadcast by Teppo Koivisto and the Kymi Sinfonietta. His "Soaring" also took 3rd prize in the 3rd International Ivan Spassov Composition Competition in Bulgaria in 2004 and subsequently in 2006 1st prize in the IMRO International Composers' Competition in 2006 in Ireland. In 2005 his "Sappho Songs" were "Highly Commended", also in the IMRO Competition. The septet "My River", was chosen in anonymous submission from over 200 scores submitted by the North/South Consonance Ensemble, and was played in New York in June 2006 under Max Lifchitz.

In August 2007 the Rio 'Cello Festival in Brazil commissioned a 'cello and piano duo, for performance by its director David Chew. Further commissions have followed; the Vestfold Festival in Norway for a (collaborative) solo violin work for Henning Kraggerud based around an exhibition of Edvard Munch's paintings; the Paul Klee Ensemble of Bern for a double bass concertino; Daniel Raiskin and the Staatsorchester Rheinische Philharmonie for performance and broadcast in Koblenz in April 2012; and the Spalding Festival for an opening fanfare. The Moravian Philharmonic have recently asked for a horn concerto for 2012.

In 2007 Peter Seabourne was appointed a composer-in-residence for the EMFEB orchestral/chamber music project in London by anonymous audition, and he has subsequently had pieces played by them.

Performances and recent work

Peer recognition has been especially warming. For example, Danish pianist Mario Ramon Garcia commented,

"I have listened to the whole of "Steps 2: Studies of Invention" with great pleasure. Your musical language is very much your own, clear and strong, never sentimental, yet with great inventiveness for rhythms and harmony, and always very pianistic. And there is a deep thoughtfulness about it, that makes one sit and dwell further when the piece is finished...."

Performances in recent years have taken place in Budapest, London, Chicago, Lahti, Bologna, Reutlingen, Bern etc.. by such great names as Giuseppe Modugno, Konstantin Lifschitz, Henning Kraggerud, Alberto Bologni, and Corrado Giuffredi. More will follow in Koblenz, Vienna, Lviv, Olomouc, Stamford, Sligo and Brussels. There has been a predominant focus on chamber and piano music in recent years but now orchestral projects have begun to emerge as a priority, with commissioned works in Germany and the Czech Republic scheduled for 2012.

"I find your grip of composition and use of instrumental colours really excellent. Your music is so full of interest and energy as well as being obviously quite emotional, almost romantic in parts, so very approachable, yet neither incomprehensibly complex and dense, nor childishly minimalist."

Sir Charles Mackerras